

Shared Horizons exhibition is on at the WA+C

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Winkler Arts and Culture's September exhibition shines a spotlight on Indigenous art.

Shared Horizons: Métis Legacy and Life in Color features the work of oil painter JD Hawk.

The Winnipeg artist has brought over two dozen of his pieces to the Park St. gallery that reflect his love of nature, people, and his connection to his Métis heritage.

Each piece has a story behind it, Hawk says, sharing with a chuckle how a pair of paintings of an inquisitive seagull came about.

"I was travelling through Oregon on my motorcycle, along the coast, and I pulled over to admire the ocean. This one seagull stopped and flew right in front of me because he saw I was eating a granola bar. So he was like, 'What'cha doing? Are you going to share?'"

The paintings perfectly capture the seagull's questioning head tilt as it waited for its part of the meal.

While he enjoys painting wildlife, Hawk's real love is doing portraits of people.

His most recent series seeks to capture modern Métis leaders and community members. The Winkler show includes paintings he's done of fiddler Jason Lepine, Manitoba Métis Federation vice-president Andrew Carrier, and Hawk's friend Ron Poirier wearing a century-old moosehide jacket and beaded mitts.

"For me, the portraits are really important as a personal project because every artist in the Métis community wants to paint Louis Riel and some of those people," he says. "There's this huge gap in history of Métis citizens. So it was important for me to grab Métis citizens of today and paint



PHOTOS BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE
JD Hawk's artwork is on display at the Winkler Arts and Culture Centre this month.

them to really close that gap."

Hawk has several more such portraits in the works. He's also done a self-portrait for the series featuring himself in traditional Métis dress.

"The beaded vest I'm wearing tells a story, it's not just for decoration," he explains. "It talks about hardships, hopes and dreams, meeting my partner right now and her kids and how they've influenced my life in a positive way."

"The biggest part of my story that most people find fascinating is that I was homeless for five years," Hawk says, sharing that he struggled with mental health challenges and found himself travelling Canada and the U.S. trying to find healing and his place in the world.

His artistic talents were on the back burner on and off during those years—at one point, after losing all

his possessions, including pieces of his art, he decided he'd never create again—but eventually, once he'd gotten back on his feet, he found his way back to his craft.

He and his partner were travelling throughout the East Coast when Hawk had a powerful revelation upon hearing the story of Canadian folk artist Maud Lewis. Lewis spent much of her life in poverty and grappled with rheumatoid arthritis, but she became known for her cheerful paintings.

"She lived in a home that was about 12 feet by 13 feet ... and in this little tiny space, she painted her joy of life, which was inspiring," Hawk says. "It got me thinking: how selfish am I not to continue something that I have a gift for?"

Upon returning to Manitoba, Hawk dove back into art. He has spent the

past few years making a career out of his life's passion. He's been commissioned nationally and internationally, including assignments for Parks Canada, Festival du Voyageur, the Royal Canadian Mint, and the Manitoba Métis Federation.

"I've met so many nice people through my art, making connections and telling stories," Hawk says. "I'm not this person in the shadows anymore where I'm ashamed or embarrassed about my situation. Mental health is a real nasty thing to be stuck in. But although I've really lived through some things, I get to paint so much joy."

Hawk's work will be on display at Winkler Arts and Culture until Sept. 28.

Hawk will also be in town for a public reception on Wednesday, Sept. 13 at 7 p.m. Admission is free.

Tickets on sale now for PHAC art raffle, gala

By Lorne Stelmach

The Pembina Hills Arts Council wants people to dress up for its next fundraising event.

It is holding an art raffle and gala Thursday, Sept. 28 at Bella's Castle in Morden, with all proceeds supporting the arts council's programming and outreach initiatives.

"We wanted to do a little bit more of a major event, have a fundraiser that's also a black tie kind of affair to attract more people," explained director Liza Isakov. "I think the city is just really ready for an event that's a little more

up and coming and have a fundraiser that's done in a little bit of a different way.

"Since we are trying to be a bit more of a cultural hub here, I think this is a really good opportunity for us not to just showcase local art but also the type of events that we could be doing more of here as well."

Tickets are limited to 80 and are available for \$100 each. The evening will include music, games, beverages (two complementary drink tickets), and delicious treats. Dress is black tie formal.

Every ticket guarantees you an art

print donated by a roster of about a dozen talented artists. When your ticket is randomly drawn, you'll have the chance to pick the piece you'll take home.

Participating artists include Isakov as well as Jean Mackie, Heidi Friesen, Julia Schnurawa, Halley Ritter, Tye Dandridge-Evancio, Mishelle Aminov Kosonovsky, Dani Johnson, Margie Hildebrand, Susan Crawford-Young, and Esther Hildebrand.

The evening will also include a silent auction with five pieces of art up for grabs.

The gallery will be open for previews

of the donated works of art from Sept. 18-26 during regular hours.

"We're going to have the gallery set up with moving walls and all of the prints are going to be available for people to look at them along with a little catalogue to take home and review it at home," Isakov said.

Stop by the gallery to get a ticket or purchase one online at www.pembinahillsarts.com.

"I'm very optimistic that we will be able to sell it out," said Isakov. "It's a more high class style of event."