

Residential School Memorial Public Art Update

Indigenous Temporary Artwork

Goal of the Project:

- To begin to build relationships with Indigenous Advisors with experience in visual and public art before beginning a larger project.
- To add the visual culture of Indigenous Peoples into our exterior Public Art Collection.

Actions taken:

- Formed an informal Guiding Circle of Indigenous Advisors including:
 - Elder Patricia Littlechild from Maskwacis
 - Métis Adjunct Curator (AGA) MJ Belcourt
 - Métis Artist Sharon Rose Kootenay
- Released Request for Expression of Interest (RFEI)/Call to Artists.
- Project selection panel included members of the informal guiding circle and practicing artist Bruno Canadien, originally from Deh Gah Got'ie K'et' First Nation in NWT.
- Administration is currently finalizing negotiations with two artists for two temporary memorial art projects.
- Funding for the projects will come from the Cultural Reserve, including \$40,000 for the two projects and \$10,000 for additional Indigenous engagement.

Proposed Temporary Public Art Project 1

A temporary installation composed of 4 artworks by Métis Artist Heather Shillinglaw that will be on display in the Community Centre from approximately September 12, 2022, to January 13, 2023.



Each artwork is 4.5 feet wide by 2.5 feet high.

Heather Shillinglaw's family is from the LeGoff Indian Reserve (now Cold Lake First Nations) and roots her mixed-media art in both traditional and modern quilting methods. She honours the language of her nohkums and kookums (grandmothers) and their teachings about the land her family lived and travelled. Heather was raised in Strathcona County, and her mother still lives in Sherwood Park.

In these artworks, Heather references aerial photographs of lakes and the river that are well known to Strathcona County residents and very significant to her family history. She creates this work to move her family through the healing process from the harm inflicted by the residential school system and the other injustices her Indigenous family members have faced over time. She asks us "to remember, remember, remember."

These small photographs do not do her artwork justice. These artworks are exquisitely rich and tactile in person, and layered with a diversity of beadwork, cloth, ribbon, embroidery, and quilting.

Heather would welcome a smudging and unveiling celebration on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (September 30). She would provide a ten-minute presentation and performance piece speaking about her family's stories of these lands and her artwork.

Below is the location the artist has chosen. The Public Art budget will cover the cost of painting the wall. A suitable new home for the current artwork and touchscreen will be found.



Proposed Indigenous Temporary Public Art Project 2

The second Indigenous temporary public art project is an installation of an exterior mural on the southwest wall of the Sherwood Park Arena. Alexis Nakota Sioux First Nation artist Eugene Alexis will create a painting on a canvas that is 7 feet wide by 3 feet high. The canvas will then be retained permanently in the County Art Collection while a large vinyl reproduction is made and installed on the Sherwood Park Arena wall. This same vinyl material is used for the murals in the Millennium Place Gymnasium.

Eugene Alexis is Stoney Nakoda from Alexis #133 Reservation on the shores of Wakamne (Lac Ste. Anne). Eugene is a fluent speaker, and certified translator, transcriber, and

curriculum developer of the Stoney Nakoda Language. He currently works with the Alexis Language and Heritage Department, Yellowhead Tribal College in Edmonton, and serves on the Elders' Councils for the Boards of the Royal Alberta Museum and Parks Canada. Eugene was named after his late grandfather, Chief Joseph Alexis who signed Treaty for the Alexis Nation.

Although there is a small hand-full of Indigenous mural artists in Alberta, many are not from Treaty Six territory. Eugene Alexis was the favoured artist by the Indigenous Selection Panel and the advising Elder Patricia Littlechild because he is a very skilled painter on canvas and from the Alexis First Nation in Treaty Six territory.



The image represents a mock-up of what a vinyl reproduction may look like on the arena wall. Eugene will take his inspiration from one of his artworks (above, "Dancing into the Future") and create 3 designs for the wall. He would also adjust his design so that it seamlessly blends into the wall, and not appear cut-off as it does in the mock-up.

The life-expectancy of the mural could be up to 5 years or more. The County will retain the contractual right to choose when the mural is removed. The Cultural Reserve will cover the cost of returning the wall to a solid colour or providing artists with a new public art opportunity.

The artist is expected to complete the artwork in late-2022 the mural will be installed in the spring of 2023.

Indigenous Permanent Memorial or Artwork

Goal of the Project:

To create an outdoor public site of reflection to honour the Indigenous children and adults who fell victim to the Residential School System, and to bring awareness of and empathy for the children, adults and families who survived the experience and are still dealing with intergenerational trauma today.

Expectations:

- This outdoor public site includes public art, a memorial bronze sculpture, or gardens, interpretive or memorial signage, or a place for ceremony.
- The concept for this permanent memorial project should be led by those who were impacted; therefore, it is recommended that the project direction be set in collaboration with an Indigenous Advisory Committee.

Potential Sites:

Although the site should be chosen by the Indigenous Advisory Committee and therefore may change, some potential sites could include:

- Along the trail system on the river,
- At the edge of the North Strathcona County Regional Park
- As part of the North Strathcona County Regional Park
- At the Strathcona Wilderness Centre
- Closer to County Hall in Peace Park or Herb Belcourt Park

Actions taken:

- Budget established at \$300,000.
- Intergovernmental Affairs is recruiting an Indigenous Advisory Committee.

Suggested Next Steps

- Once an Indigenous Advisory Committee is established, a presentation on possible memorials and public spaces will be required to begin discussion with our partners.
- Once Advisory Committee provides direction, the County will determine next steps, including a potential Request for Proposals.