

John Beheler



John Beheler, Mahed Wayanka (Sees Within) was born and raised in Fort Thompson. He is currently the Superintendent at Marty Indian School. Beheler uses his art to educate others about the culture of his people. Art is a form of ceremony that has been passed from our ancestors. It requires following a vision that begins with the first stroke of the pen or paintbrush. It requires patience and skills that grow with practice. It involves integrity that comes from within and so it's therapeutic in that it can release you from the present and make you feel good moving forward. Like the powwow circle, our ancestors smile upon us when we walk in their footsteps.

I can be the poorest man ever but be rich in spirit and it upsets me when I hear wasicu label us as secondary or falling behind the rest of society. As native peoples we need to listen to the ancestors and get back to telling stories and educating others and ourselves through our art. More now than ever, our people need to pick up a brush, follow a vision and heal our nation.

We need to ask, "If our community was a work of art would we win any awards?" We need to empower artists with the same investment we make for powwows. Where are our museums that house our history, where are the public art forms that you only see in larger cities?

We need to promote artists, the ambassadors of our community and invite artists from other nations to come and share with ours.

What's wrong with building our own Eiffel Tower, Statue of Liberty, Crazy Horse Mountain or Dignity? Not necessarily for others to come see but to generate positive feelings and a sense of pride in what we can do together.

Just start painting (sculpting or building) and when kids ask what your doing, hand them the brush (chisel or hammer). When others comment about how nice it looks, kids gain pride. Teach them the story and empower them to tell it.

We already know this method of learning that has been among our people forever. Let it be our canvas or ruler for measuring success and maybe in the end our community will win a few awards. - Aho Mitakuye' Owasinrapeutic in that it can release you from the present and make you feel good moving forward. Like the powwow circle, our ancestors smile upon us when we walk in their footsteps.

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