

Artist to host first solo show



A photo of Rene Lonechild's first finished painting "Buffalo Spirit Rising." Wildewood Gallery will be hosting his work in his first ever solo gallery April 14. / SUBMITTED

By Sarah Sobanski

Rene Lonechild is returning to Wildewood Gallery for his first ever solo show.

The eldest son of artist Michael Lonechild, Rene or "Ren" to his friends, grew up amongst art shows, galleries and in his father's studio. Over 40 years he developed his drawing expertise, honing his technique. He was a comic book fan in his youth. He'd re-sketch the images he saw.

It wasn't until 2016 that Lonechild tried his hand at acrylic painting and completed his first work, "Buffalo Spirit Rising."

A few short weeks later, the Plains Cree artist from White Bear Reservation in Saskatchewan would share a gallery with experienced painter Ken Balmer. The Wildewood gallery Two Spirits showed in September of that year.

Gallery co-owner Joey Shulman told *Bancroft This Week* Lonechild was approached by Johl Ringuette, owner and head chef of Nish Dish marketeria and catering in the months following.

"Johl had hired an artist to paint the face of his marketeria, but was not quite pleased with the outcome, and asked Ren if he could take over the project," he explained. "He agreed." [It] result[ed] in a captivating birch forest in the middle of downtown Toronto, complete with images of peeling bark, chaga and elders peering within the trees. Since then Ren has never stopped painting and continues to bring images of animals, people, and beautiful landscapes to life.

Shulman said Lonechild "has been working diligently to have sufficient paintings to show" which will open April 14 in Maynooth. He's looking forward to Lonechild's return to the gallery. "

"We are friends and admirers of Ren's work ethic and lineage. His father and uncle were talented artists and Ren has followed in their footsteps," he said. "We've enjoyed watching him grow in confidence since his first show with us and the sales of his work to an appreciative list of patrons, as far afield as the prairies."