



take a deeper dive
into the arts

hello

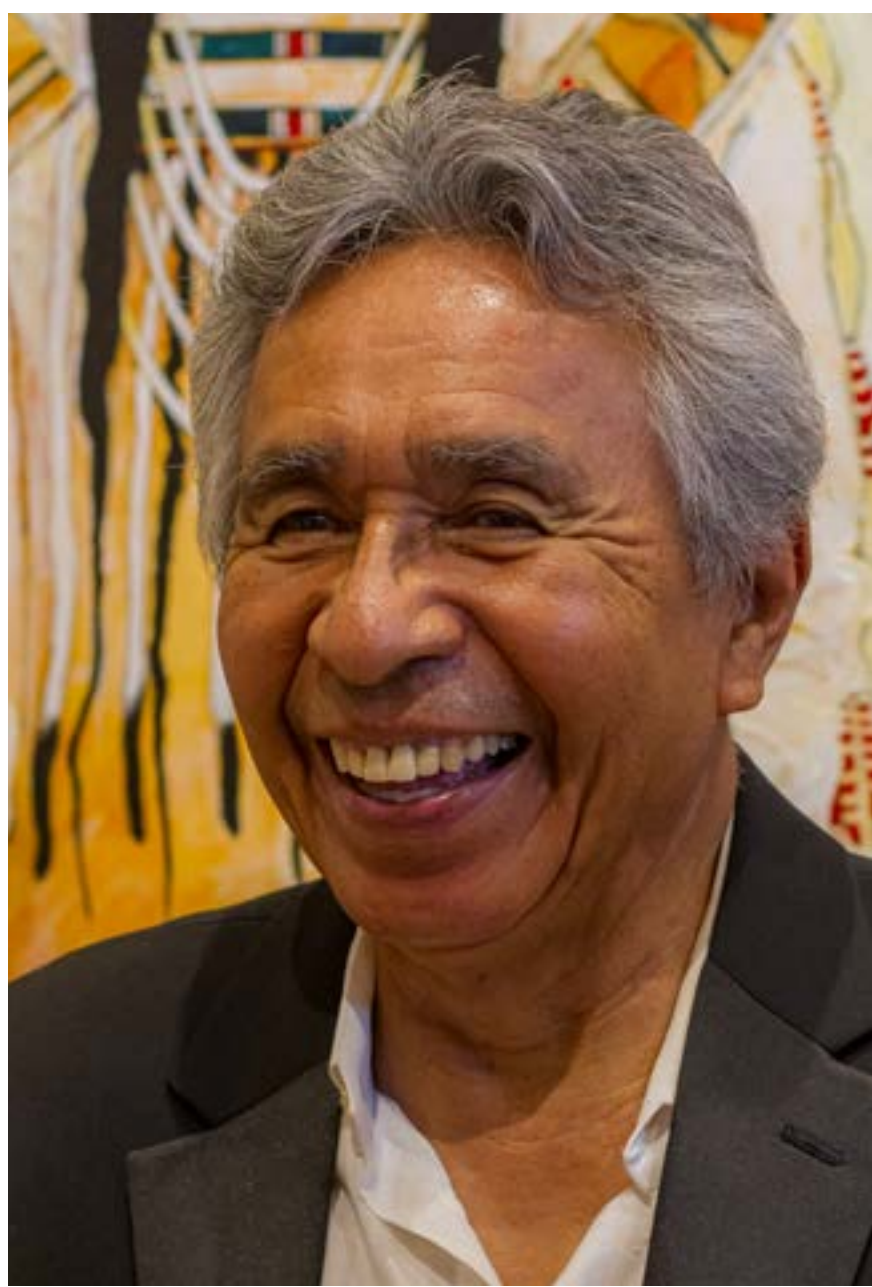
And welcome to the first of our quarterly newsletters from the Danforth Museum of Art (DMA). Our goal is to bring you the stories behind the art works including thoughtful commentaries from artists and viewers, insightful features providing pertinent background information, and little-known quirky tidbits we encounter when researching and curating exhibitions.

We hope to educate and entertain you!

IN THIS ISSUE

Notes from
Kevin Red Star:
*Legends of the
Horse People*





ABOUT KEVIN RED STAR

Kevin Red Star grew up on the Crow reservation in southern Montana. A member of a highly creative family, he was known as the go-to artist for all school projects. He was chosen to be in the first group of students at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe in the 1960s. The school provided a learning environment of tribal tradition, world art history, and current trends, and encouraged collaboration and experimentation. Red Star continued his studies at the San Francisco Art Institute.

“

I see myself as a romantic and feel as if I am a recorder or historian of sorts. I do a lot of experimentation in my work but I want people, when they see it, to recognize it and know it is part of this country and the Northern Plains Indian culture. —KRS



Blue Dress

Acrylic
40 x 44 inches
1974

“‘Blue Dress’ is an unfinished painting that has always been in Kevin’s family collection and hung in his mother, Amy’s house until her death. He would work on it when home from the Institute of American Indian Art in Santa Fe. His mother one day in 1974 told him that’s it – don’t touch it – it is finished!”

In the decades that followed, year after year, through difficulty and triumph, grief and joy, Kevin has continued to paint. His fame has grown along with the increasing clarity and complexity of his paintings. He is known for his attention to historical detail in his depictions of warriors, ceremonies, costumes, and tipis. Each element, no matter how small, has specific meaning and significance within the context of tradition.

Above and beyond accuracy, Kevin Red Star’s deep experience is expressed in the color and composition of image after image. Each one is a complete statement in itself; each remains in the mind’s eye long after viewing it. Tipis cluster in close community, their long, graceful poles fanning out to catch the stars and sunbeams. Women gather for ceremonies in richly ornamented clothing. Warriors go forth on proud Appaloosa ponies, their bows and shields at the ready to protect their encampments. In every painting, the subject springs vividly to life, reflecting the mastery of style and technique he has gained over the course of the years.

Kevin Red Star continues to evolve and refine his art every day in his spacious studio, located near the Crow reservation in Roberts, Montana. His work is in a number of important museum collections, including The Smithsonian Institution/National Museum of the American Indian, CM Russell Museum, Heard Museum, Denver Art Museum, Eiteljorg Museum, Southwest Museum, Whitney Museum of Western Art, Institute of American Indian Arts Museum, and the United States Department of State.

PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION

Legend of the Horse People

Acrylic, mixed media on acrylic horse sculpture

Approx. 80 x 65 x 31.5 inches

Private collection



Kevin Red Star's painted Crow Indian war pony is set in the northern plains of Montana. The pony is decorated with symbols and colors representative of the happenings and events that occur during a war or a hunt.

The horse's right side is decorated with tokens of spirit guardianship. Lightning crashes along the horse's neck and runs down each foreleg, intended to please the Crow god of war and bring power and speed. Portraying home, family, and the significant role of Native women, a teepee camp is settled along the horse's flank. Crow ponies wait to run with the buffalo. A Crow mother, "Pretty Shawls," poses with her children: "Winter," the boy, and "Butterfly," the girl. On the horse's rump, handprints mark the number of enemies on which the rider has counted coup.

The left side of the horse is male oriented. Four warriors on horseback paraded down the neck, returning from a successful raid. (When riders returned from a raid or a hunt, they would either have their war bonnets on or off, signifying whether they had been successful or not). On the pony's shoulder is the Crow chief "Running Horse" with his full eagle war bonnet. Next to him are two Crow warriors. On the left rump is the Crow medicine man, "Two Rattles."

The horse's spine is intricately adorned with the "Little People," helpers of the Crow, while the horse's chest is blessed with the symbol of the "Big Dipper." The rings around the horse's right eye and left leg insure alert vision and sure-footedness.

— ADAPTED FROM THE *TRAIL OF PAINTED PONIES*, 2001



Crow Indian Tipi in Full Moon

Acrylic, mixed media on canvas

56 x 68 inches | 2020

"The abstract tipi...is one of the series of Abstract Tipi's I have painted over the past sixty years. They are unique with symbolism, shape and size. They represent the home and the blessings of the Creator-protection from the elements, food, family gathering and rest."

“

...[F]or Kevin Red Star...myth is vitally alive...Crow characters abandon their private lives and individual destinies, transforming instead into mythic figures who leap into our consciousness, who hover at the edge of dreams. Those figures symbolize the eternal postures of mankind: seeker, warrior, healer, wise woman. —MARY TERRANCE MCKAY, WRITER

KEVIN RED STAR ON HIS WORK



Crow Indian Lady –
Little Willow

Acrylic, mixed media on canvas
20 x 20 inches | 2022

“Grandmother named her ‘Little River’ for daily fetching water for the camp. Names were given as children grew and associated with a task, person or animal.”



Red Willow
(Crow Indian Lady)

Acrylic, mixed media on canvas
20 x 20 inches | 2023

“This young Crow couple standing with their son in front of the lodge are posing for a portrait. The horses indicate that they are part of the group responsible for caring for the horses: feeding, doctoring and making sure they are in their proper places for warring, hunting or burden; this is very important to the tribe.”



Red Willow
(Crow Indian Lady)

Acrylic, mixed media on canvas
20 x 20 inches | 2022

“Willows were used for backrests and the making of making of sweat lodges. Her name was given to her by grandmother, as she was often found hiding in the willow patch.”



War Stories Told

Acrylic, mixed media on canvas
60 x 48 inches

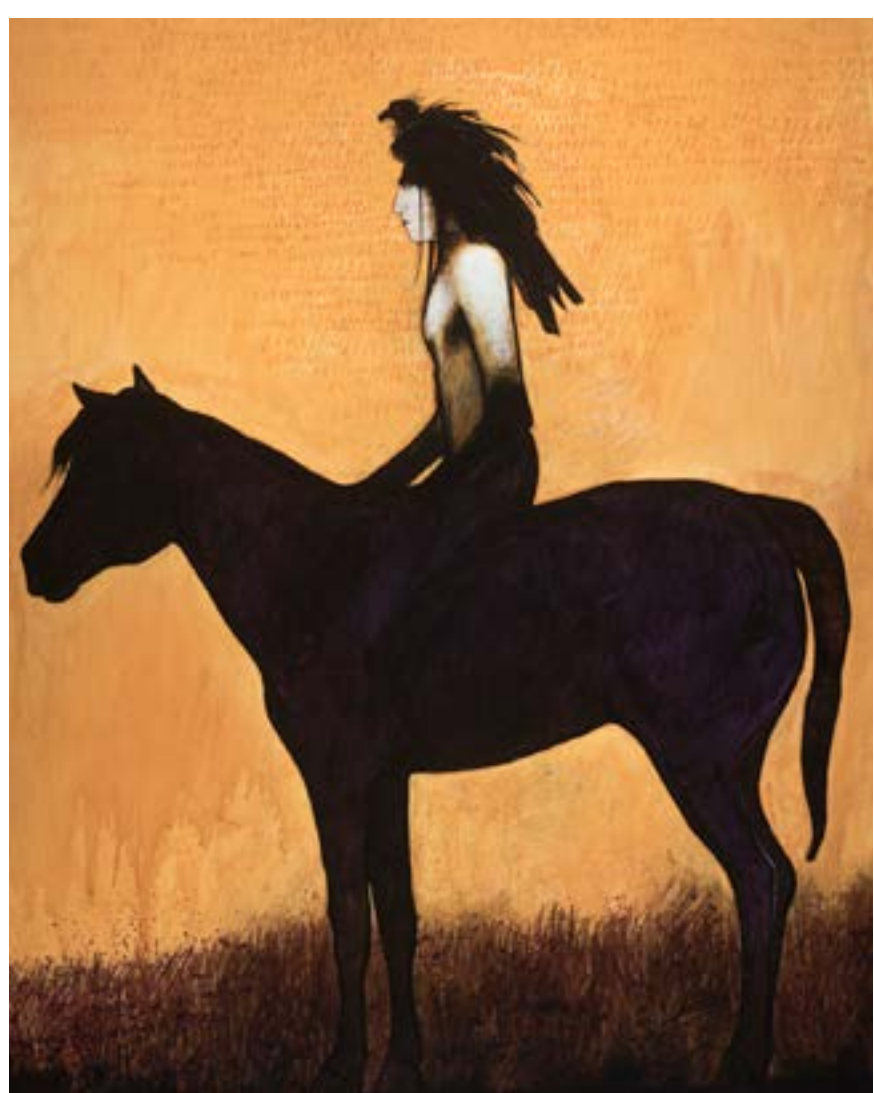
“A warrior has put on his warpaint and dances as the elders talk of his deeds in battle. The stories are told to the young warriors explaining why the battle is necessary for protection, land and the people.”



Big Hail Storm

Acrylic, mixed media on canvas
60 x 48 inches | 2021

“A Crow Indian Scout. He is a protector of the Camp. On his vision quest he was given the hail stones as his personal medicine. He was saved once by hail stones of a big storm that allowed him to hide from and escape the enemy which had him cornered. Thereafter, the bad weather was a good omen for him.”



Black Hawk (Crow Indian Man)

Acrylic, mixed media on canvas
60 x 48 inches | 2023

“He was a brilliant warrior and led many successful raiding parties against the adversaries of the Crow. Known for his powerful bird medicine he was everywhere and nowhere, being very illusive to his foe.”

“

[Indian culture] is for me...a rich source of creative expression...An intertwining of my Indian culture with contemporary art expression has given me...greater insight concerning my art. I hope to accomplish something for the American Indian and at the same time achieve personal satisfaction in a creative statement through my art. —KRS

RECENT PAINTINGS CREATED FOR THE DANFORTH MUSEUM OF ART



Prayers for the Vision Seeker
(Leading the Foothills for the Quest –
Crazy Mountains, Montana)

Acrylic, mixed media on canvas
60 x 48 inches | 2023

“The vision seeker will walk to the place that is chosen by the elder and he will do a protective sacred ceremony for success of the quest. The vision seeker will pray, fast and stay alone for 3-4 days for the vision of his medicine power.”



Crazy Dogs”
(Crow Indian Ultimate Warriors –
Yellowstone/Elk River)

Acrylic, mixed media on canvas
60 x 48 inches | 2023

“They are warriors dedicated to protecting the tribe and ready to die in battle. They are raised in isolation from other tribal members and family. They have no wife or children. They are cared for by the old women, given the best food and clothing. One does not talk to them or touch them. They are sacred.”



**Three Tipi Camp at the Crazy Mountains,
Montana (Crow Indian Camp)**

Acrylic, mixed media on canvas
60 x 48 inches | 2023

“This camp is set up for the Vision Seeker used before and after his trek up the mountain to find his place where he will fast for 3-4 days until

his dream of his medicine comes. He is accompanied by an elder and protector that remain in the tipi while he is at his place in the mountain the elder had chosen for him. After his dream he returns to camp to eat and rest and tell of his experience. He is then given his medicine name.”



UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS:

*The Last Glacier
& The Glacier
Drawing Project*

OPENING AUGUST 25, 2023



please help support the DMA!

The Danforth Museum of Art (DMA) is entirely supported by generous donations. Exhibitions at the DMA showcase contemporary and historic art relevant to the area with the goal of inspiring ideas and conversation, as well as providing a resource for local and regional artists. As a member, your support enables the DMA to continue building a collection preserving the region's artistic legacy into the future, to provide arts education and community outreach programs, and to present exceptional art exhibitions with free admission for all.

Become a Member: <https://thedanforth.org/membership>

Sponsor an Exhibition: danforth@thedanforth.org or call (406) 222-6510

Volunteer: <https://thedanforth.org/volunteer>



DANFORTH MUSEUM OF ART

106 North Main Street
Livingston Montana 59047
406 222 6510

danforth@thedanforth.org
thedanforth.org

Credits & references
(Photos & pull quotes)