

Lyle Omeasoo Captures Blackfeet Culture in His Artwork

The homepage of the new Blackfeet Nation website features two paintings by Lyle James Omeasoo, internationally acclaimed Blackfeet artist. His unique and instantly recognizable style brings to vivid and compelling life Blackfeet culture in a way that few others can. His art can be found on prominent display throughout Indian Country and Montana public buildings.



"My culture, that is sacred to me, is expressed through my art," says Lyle "Having pride in the Blackfeet people and living among the resources of my culture and history, I strive to be a role model for both young and old."

Lyle was born June 24, 1971, in Browning Montana, to Ferdinand and Maybelle Omeasoo. He began drawing when he was a small child, and was heavily influenced by a high school art teacher who encouraged him to draw, first with oils, later with acrylics, then mixed media including airbrush.

Lyle was a 2000 First People's Fund Artist Fellowship Recipient and has attended and contributed to galleries and exhibitions in Hobbema, Alberta, Great Falls, Montana, and Sioux Falls, South Dakota as well as closer to home in Cut Bank and the Blackfeet Heritage Center & Art Gallery in Browning, Montana.

In 2002, Lyle, who is also a certified electrician, discovered the wide appeal of his art. Despite his quiet and shy nature, he screwed up his courage and drove the 1,100 miles from Browning, ND, to Santa Fe, NM, by himself with a small stack of portraits and landscapes in his trunk to try to sell his work at the annual Santa Fe's Indian Market. Within hours he had sold \$4,500 worth of paintings. From this, Lyle has come to believe that until an artist is forced to interact with the buying public and realize the level of professionalism required to make a sale, they cannot succeed.

Lyle is known for sharing his talent with local aspiring artists. Lyle participated in three Montana cross-country championships in high school and, today, continues to encourage youths in running and sports.

Lyle is the sort of role model the Blackfeet need more of: Someone who works hard to be the very best they can be and then generously shares their talent and energies with others. He is an inspiration to us all and that's why he is this week's Tribal Hero.