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Dedication of Vermillion's New Community Mural Wanáhča Is Saturday

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Vermillion, SD- The Vermillion Community Mural Project & the Vermillion Cultural Association are hosting a dedication event celebrating the completion of Wanáhča, the second installation of a two-part mural designed and created by Reyna Hernandez, Elizabeth Skye, Inkpa Mani, and assisted by Amber Hansen, Jenae Porter, Sonia Perea-Morales as well as members of the community. The dedication will be held by the east-facing wall of the Coyote Twin Theater located at 10 East Main Street in Vermillion SD, Saturday, Oct. 2 at 2 p.m.

The artists will share information about the process and inspiration behind the design, as well as reflections on painting during the pandemic. The mural dedication is an event meant to bring members of the community together in celebration of Vermillion's growing interest and investment in creating public art spaces throughout the city.

Preparation for this project began in April of 2019, with the artists planning community meetings and researching public art. The first half of the mural, Eúŋkičhetupi: Come Back to Life was installed 2019. The second half of the mural, Wanáhča: to Blossom was installed during the summer of 2020. Painting for the second portion of the mural was paused as the team worked to raise money to support the materials and labor to complete the second portion of the mural. Over the course of the year, the group worked to raise a little over \$13,000 through local grant organizations such as the Vermillion Rotary Club, through a fundraiser held at The Bean and through IOBY's (In Your Backyard) crowd sourcing platform which matched local individual donations.

The painting of the second half of the mural began in the early summer of 2020. During this time, the lead artist conducted the majority of the painting, inviting members of the community to join during



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scheduled times and in small groups. A celebration for the mural was postponed due to the pandemic.

Both murals incorporate varying perspectives from members of the Vermillion community on topics ranging from identity, water, motherhood, landscape, femininity, and the importance of representation. At each meeting, the artists invited members of the community to share their thoughts on what they would like to see represented in a mural through workshops that included storytelling, drawings and poetry. From these conversations, the artists found that there is a need to create space for women, specifically indigenous women. The mural pays tribute to the importance of women in all cultures, while telling the Sioux creation story. The muralists hoped to create an image that is both unique and challenging while speaking to overarching themes taken from the community meetings.