

Dennis Weber, AFCA, CIPA. (b. 1951)

Metis artist Dennis Joseph Weber was born in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan in 1951 and lived most of his life in Calgary. Dennis moved to the Okanagan Valley in 1999. He is the son of Philip Weber and Marie Eileen Pilon. His mother's family was from Gabriel's



Crossing near Batoche, Saskatchewan, an area important to the Metis as well as significant to the formation of Canada itself. His great-grandfather Joseph Pilon¹ and great-great grandfather Joseph Sr. fought in the 1885 Resistance at Batoche.² Dennis feels his art has been greatly influenced by his mother's Métis heritage. Dennis is a Fellow of the Canadian Institute of Portrait Artists and an Associate of the Federation of Canadian Artists.

The fascinating story of the Métis' 17th century origins, through to the eventual recognition of Nation Status in the 20th, could be told through Dennis' ancestors. Louis Riel, Canada's most renowned Métis (and Dennis' 1st cousin five generations removed), was not only instrumental in the creation of Manitoba, but also a poet, visionary and ultimately a martyr. He stated in 1885, the year of his death: "My People will sleep for one hundred years. When they awaken, it will be the artists who give them back their spirit."

About a century after Riel's prediction, Dennis started to explore the possibility of becoming a full-time artist, and since then has achieved not only this, but is also considered

¹ **Pilon, Joseph Jr. (1855-1941)**

Joseph was the son of Joseph Pilon Sr. and Angelique Normand. He was the oldest of their sons participating in the Resistance. Later, on February 6, 1893, he married Julianne Guillemine Branconnier at Batoche. His name appears as #72 in Philippe Garnot's list of Resistance participants.

² **Pilon, Joseph. (1837-1915)**

Joseph was born at St. Norbert in 1837. He married Angelique Normand at St. Norbert January 12, 1858. They moved to St. Laurent, Saskatchewan in 1882. Joseph was a member of Captain William Boyer's company, one of the 19 *dizaines* led by Gabriel Dumont during the 1885 Metis Resistance. Joseph's name appears as #71 in Philippe Garnot's list of Resistance participants. Joseph was active at the battle for Tourond's Coulee but left before the Metis were totally pinned down. Edouard Dumont's account mentions Pilon:

Around ten or eleven o'clock, Edouard Dumont sets out again with Pierriche Parenteau, Moise Parenteau, and old Jean-Baptiste Boucher – this time, just the four went, as Boniface stayed behind on this occasion. At Le-noir Parenteau's they begin to meet some of the Indians who have left the battle. They do not want to return to Fish Creek with Edouard. At Ignace Poitras', they meet old Pilon and three others who do not want to go back either.²

Father Cloutier's journal notes that at the battle for Batoche: "Gilbert Breland, William Boyer, Joseph Pilon, Joseph Sauvé, et d'autres (une 30ne environ) sont dans les trous distants de 5 à 6 pieds les uns des autres, le long de la belle prairie, ils n'ont pas grouillé de la journée."

Joseph was arrested on May 12, 1885, and on August 14, 1885 at Regina was given a conditional discharge for his Resistance participation. He died March 25, 1915 at Batoche. He is buried at St. Antoine de Padoue Cemetery, Batoche.

one of Canada's foremost Métis artists. He paints primarily in Genesis paints. His passion is Portraiture but his body of work also includes Western and Still Life. His personal collection of Métis artifacts is often on display at cultural events alongside his art, most notably the 2007 exhibition "We Are Métis" at the Kelowna Museum. He is proud to identify with the revitalized Métis Nation.

In 1999 Dennis moved to Kelowna and now works out of his home studio. His preferred media are pencil, charcoal or oil and he often glazes layer after layer to achieve a unique look. Dennis has accredited Signature Status in both the Federation of Canadian Artists and the Canadian Institute of Portrait Artists. His weekly class, as well as his portrait demonstrations is very much in demand, and he's been invited to teach at various 3-day workshops.

Dennis enjoys the challenge of drawing from life and his demonstrations are always popular at art shows:

"When someone responds to my work, they often tell me it's because it reminds them of a past experience, favourite place or someone they know. Creating a bridge between our common experiences is what I value most about the art I produce."



Lawrence Barkwell with Sharon and Dennis Weber at Metis Fest,
August 2009, International Peace Gardens.

Dennis travels to a number of events and art exhibitions. In August he joins the Artist's Ride in South Dakota, which is an invitational event attended by fifty artists from across North America. There on the Shearer Ranch, beside the Cheyenne River, models and movie extras are available for artists to photograph for reference in their Native and Western art. In July, he attends the prestigious Calgary Stampede Western Art Show and *Kiyanaw* at the Capital EX in Edmonton. Throughout the year his art can be seen at various Métis events.



Dennis is a youth mentor for the Métis Community Services Society of BC. He collaborated with noted author David Bouchard in producing the art work for *The Secret of Your Name: Kiimooch shinikashooyen*, published in 2009. He is represented by Turtle Island Gallery in Kelowna, Eagle Feather Gallery in Victoria and the Bay of Spirits Gallery in Toronto. Dennis' works of art can be found in the permanent collections of the Louis Riel Institute and the Gabriel Dumont Institute as well as collections throughout the world, many have been donated to worthy causes. His art work has also appeared on the cover of *New Breed Magazine*.

Reference: <http://www.webergallery.com/>



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