



At left: "Horse Medicine" (2014) carries echoes of Buffalo Spirit's grandfather, a medicine man. "He had a gift of horse medicine that could be used for aching legs." Above: "Playing the Seed Game" (2010) honors a grandmother who delighted in the game.

fledgling artist to use them for her work.

Buffalo Spirit immediately took to the medium and found herself swept up in what has become a ledger art renaissance. People find old account books in attics and business archives, then give the paper to Native artists. A commission for a painting often accompanies the supply of paper.

From the start, Buffalo Spirit has brought feminine insight to this medium, which is still predominantly a male domain. "I want to bring out the women's stories," she says. "What were the women doing? Women were beading, caring for the children, holding the family together."

Addressing this question, Buffalo Spirit painted "Cheyenne Elegance," which depicts four Cheyenne women seated in a lodge together. The women represent the artist's mother, grandmother, sister, and aunt—each figure wearing clothing that contains patterns these women designed. This piece set the tone for future work.

The artist is now known for a unique integration of Cheyenne and Northwest Coastal motifs, honoring both her own heritage and the fact that her grandchildren are

also related to the West Coast tribes. Family beadwork patterns abound, as do symbols for lightning, crossroads, and mountains. So do dragonflies. There will be several in "Angels Walk the Earth." "They're sacred to the Cheyenne; a lot of our beadwork uses images of dragonflies," Buffalo Spirit says. "They led our people to water when they were on the open prairies."

As her artistic voice grew, her unique imagery and subjects drew attention at Western art festivals. First there was a second place award at the 2006 Northern Plains Indian Art Market in South Dakota. Then, Buffalo Spirit was twice selected as one of 19 Native artists at the National Folk Festival in Butte, Montana. Ever since the national event moved on to other cities, she has been invited to return to Butte each year for the juried Montana Folk Festival.

Somewhere in that process, Buffalo Spirit finally realized that her work had not only restored her own soul, it was having an impact on other people. As she grew stronger, so did her art. Painting was no longer something she did to