

OPINION

KWE! return to Quebec to celebrate the natives



By **Ashley** April 21, 2022

The KWE! Meeting Indigenous Peoples will return to Place Jean-Béliveau in Quebec City for its fifth edition this summer, from June 17 to 21. A rich program, including cultural and culinary activities, discovery exhibitions and shows, will showcase the 11 Aboriginal countries of Quebec and invite cultural rapprochement.

It's a frontal comeback for the festival, which was presented in hybrid mode last year due to the pandemic.

Our resilience was challenged, but that didn't stop our team from showing off again this year, and providing an opportunity to learn more about our cultures, our people, our identity and what makes us stand out. them., says Ghislain Picard, president of KWE! and Leader of the Quebec-Labrador Assembly of First Nations.



Among the new features announced Thursday at the time of the program's unveil, there is an immersive exhibition of traditional Aboriginal dwellings, set up thanks to a \$ 288,000 investment from the provincial government. For Ian Lafrenière, Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, this exhibition will be a great opportunity to discover the heritage and traditional way of life of First Nations and Inuit.

We're together, we're close to each other, but we kind of know each other mentioned the Minister on a provincial tour to visit Aboriginal communities. This meeting is important. It allows you to discover

the 11 Aboriginal countries of Quebec, their way of life, their culture. It was a time of fun [...] It is also a unique opportunity to promote rapprochement between countries.

Explore folk art and cuisine

Several musical performances will take place throughout the event on the Radio-Canada stage, including an Atikamekw hip-hop evening. Literary presentations will also be presented there. Kathia Rock, Scott Pien Picard and Florent Vollant will perform to close out the celebration on National Aboriginal Day.

The culinary component will also be the centerpiece of the KWE event! Through various activities, we invite guests to go and surprise their taste. Launched by Dave Laveau, General Manager of Quebec Aboriginal Tourism.

Discovery boxes will return this year. Food boxes have been a huge success in the past year. Gone after a day, recalls Mr. Laveau. This year, 600 discovery boxes will be available. These meal boxes for two, developed by Aboriginal culinary talents from Quebec, will focus on the themes of hunting, fishing and gathering.

A truck that will offer bannock-themed meals, a market of flavors and cooking demonstrations will complete this part.

The dialog space myth and fact, the 11 Nations trail and the manufacturing workshop space will also provide an opportunity to get to know the province's Aboriginal communities better.

It is a cohesive and enriching program, a harmonious blend between fun activities and opportunities for awareness and education. said Rémy Vincent, Grand Chief of the Huron-Wendat Nation.

It is a unique festival in the country; a very important opportunity to travel for free to the 11 Aboriginal countries of Quebec in five days. said the leader of the host nation.

An opportunity for discussion

The KWE event! is the celebration of the Aboriginal people of Quebec, but it is also a story of encounters. According to Stanley Vollant, official spokesman for the festival, this annual meeting is of great importance in the current context.

Reconciliation is not just words, it is also actions, pointed out the Innu surgeon, who was pleased with the population's growing interest in KWE! and, in general, for indigenous communities.

Every year I am surprised to see how many people come and ask me questions. We talk a lot about reconciliation, about the resilience of the natives.

The discovery of unknown graves near former Aboriginal residential schools across the country, and the Joyce Echaquan affair clearly made an impression.

People often ask me: "what can I do as a Quebecer to improve the First Nation situation?" A very simple thing is to go and meet us. Kwe, I mean I'm reaching out to you. Kwe is a call to meet, shake hands, get to know each other, respect each other and build together. Kwe is an action for reconciliation explained Mr. Vollant.

As part of the celebration, he will participate in the Puamun Meshkenu march. This annual activity, which he founded, aims to encourage young people to adopt healthy lifestyles, to develop their full potential and also create links for reconciliation.

On this five-kilometer walk, Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals walk together, getting to know each other and talking to each other. When we walk, the masks seem to fall off. We speak to our hearts. It allows discussions, meetings and perhaps also to form friendships.

Source: Radio-Canada