



ABORIGINAL ART IN CANADA

WHAT IS ABORIGINAL ART?

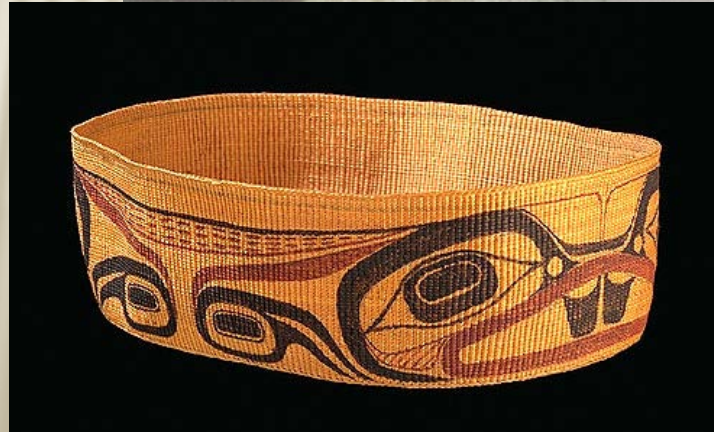
- ✘ Aboriginal peoples have always made objects of artistic value
- ✘ Those objects usually had functional uses or spiritual significance
- ✘ Most Aboriginal peoples moved during the course of the year so they had few pieces of purely decorative art
- ✘ Artistic expression varies by nation or group although there are some regional similarities

TRADITIONS EVOLVE

- ✘ Like all artistic traditions, Aboriginal art has continued to evolve
- ✘ With the arrival of Europeans, new materials (e.g. glass beads and metals) were incorporated into Aboriginal art work
- ✘ Recently, Aboriginal art has begun to take on a decorative function although it often includes traditional design elements

TRADITIONAL ARTS—FIRST NATIONS

- ✘ Traditional materials involved leather, bone, wood, quills, shells, grasses, feathers, fur, etc.
- ✘ Dyes and paints were made from natural materials
- ✘ These objects had practical or spiritual significance



TRADITIONAL ARTS–METIS

- ✘ Métis culture emerged in the late 18th and early 19th century
- ✘ It borrowed from both First Nation and European cultures but is a unique creative expression of the people



TRADITIONAL ARTS–INUIT

- ✘ Inuit created regionally distinct designs on parkas and boots
- ✘ They also made small carvings
- ✘ Because they moved around during the year they did not make many purely decorative objects

Ansgar Walk



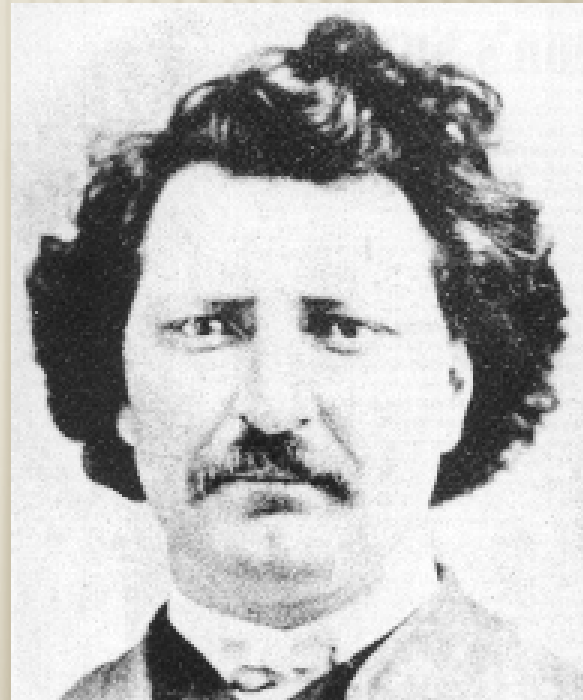
MODERN DEVELOPMENTS

- ✘ Because of Residential Schools and the government's attempts to destroy traditional Aboriginal cultures, many Aboriginal artistic traditions almost died out
- ✘ Since WWII there has been a great renaissance in Aboriginal arts which incorporate both traditional and newer methods, themes and symbols

MODERN DEVELOPMENTS

- ✘ “My people will sleep for one hundred years, but when they awake, it will be the artists who give them their spirit back.”

*Louis Riel, executed
Métis leader in 1885*



PAINTING

- ✘ Many Aboriginal artists produce works which are based on traditional styles and topics, while others have developed new forms and styles
- ✘ The Woodlands School uses traditional Anishinaabe themes and bold lines; it builds on rock art

- ✘ **Norval Morrisseau** was a founder of the Woodlands School



PAINTING

- ✘ Cree artist **Allen Sapp** paints realistic visions of earlier times



- ✘ **Alex Janvier** was one of the so-called “Indian Group of Seven” which included Daphne Odjig, Jackson Beardy, and Carl Ray

PAINTING

- ✘ Métis artist Christie Belcourt recreates Métis embroidery using dots of paint



- ✘ Jim Logan paints the life and times of Aboriginal people today



PAINTING

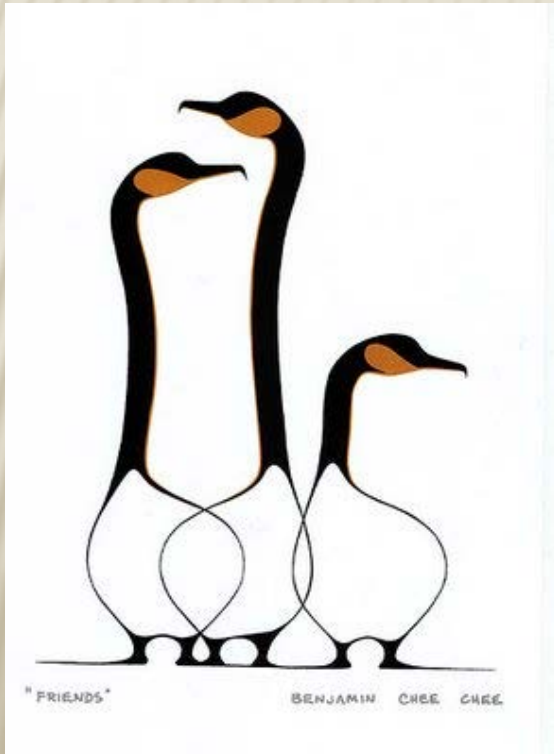
- ✘ Carl Ray belonged to the Woodlands School



- ✘ George Littlechild paints vibrant works that meld contemporary and traditional themes

PAINTING

- ✘ Benjamim Chee Chee created minimalist art in the Woodlands School style



- ✘ Maxine Noel signs her artwork with her Sioux name Ioyan Mani, which means "Walk Beyond"

PRINTMAKING

- ✘ Inuit printmaking started in the 1950s and has become an important form for Inuit artists; each community has its own style
- ✘ West Coast printmaking started about the same time

- ✘ Kenojuak Ashevak is still creating powerful work



PRINTMAKING

- ✘ Germaine Arnaktauyok is from Igloolik; her works illustrate Inuit stories and traditions



- ✘ Kananginak Pootoogook, *Sign of Summer*

PRINTMAKING

- ✘ Andy Everson is from Comox, B.C. and creates vibrant images



- ✘ Reg Davidson uses traditional styles and design elements

PRINTMAKING

✘ Joe Wilson of the Cowichan people creates Coast Salish art

✘ Roy Henry Vickers is a successful and world-renowned artist



SCULPTURE

- ✘ Aboriginal peoples have always made sculptures
- ✘ Recently the sculptures have become larger and more experimental
- ✘ *The Dancing Bear has become very popular.*



SCULPTURE

- ✘ Bill Reid made monumental sculpture and jewelry



- ✘ Inuit sculpture has gotten larger and more elaborate



SCULPTURE

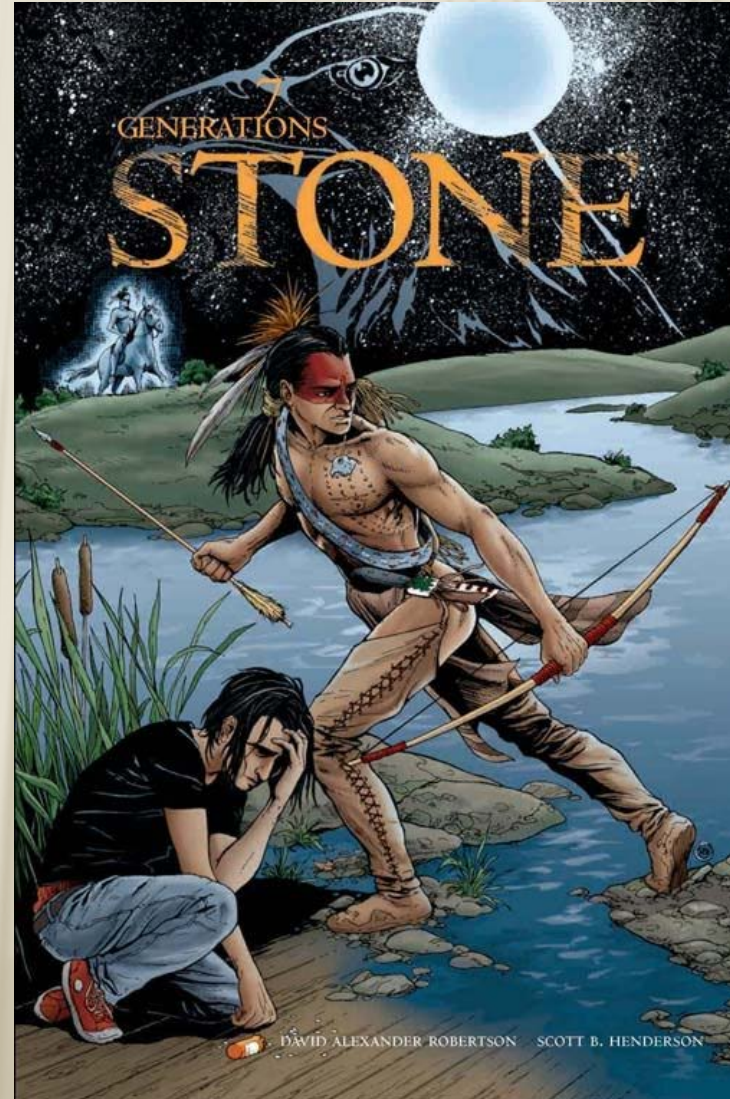
- ✘ Haida masks have a long history which continues to this day



- ✘ David R. Maracle of Tyendinaga is a sculptor and musician

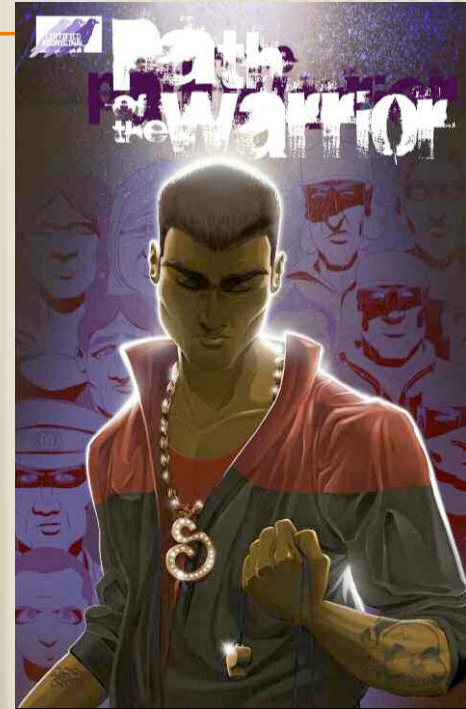
GRAPHIC NOVELS

- ✘ The *7 Generations* series created by Swampy Cree author David Robertson and illustrated by Scott Henderson



GRAPHIC NOVELS

- ✘ Kevin Belmore from Thunder Bay created *The Sleeping Giant*



- ✘ *Path of the Warrior*, illustrated by Steven Keewatin Sanderson, is a gang prevention graphic novel

MIXED MEDIA

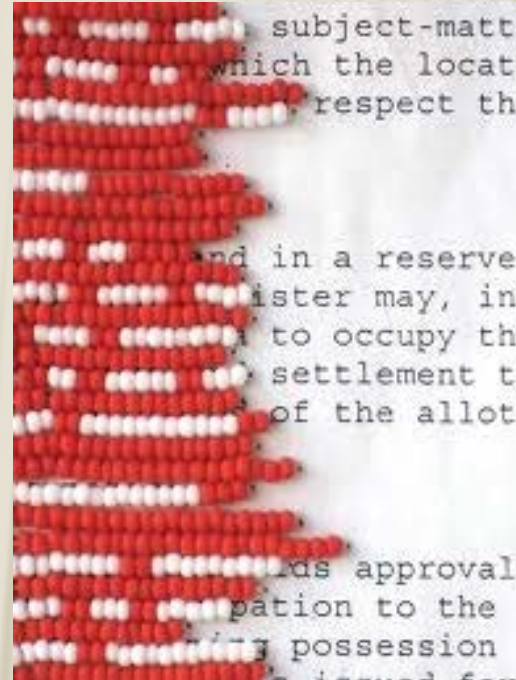
- ✘ Mixed media works involve more than one type of artistic medium
- ✘ They could combine painting and photos, cloth and buttons, beads and leather

This work by Morgan Wood is called Hands Off My Genes and uses porcupine quills and jeans.



MIXED MEDIA

- ✘ *Sleeman Makazin* by Charlene Vickers makes a traditional item out of contemporary items



- ✘ Nadia Myre
embroidered the Indian Act
- ✘ http://www.nadiamyre.com/Nadia_Myre/portfolio/Pages/Indian_Act.html

MIXED MEDIA

- ✘ Jane Ash Poitras creates images using paint, photographs and words



- ✘ Button Blankets from the West Coast use traditional European trade goods

TRADITIONAL FORMS

- ✘ A Raven paddle by Ken Anderson



- ✘ A cedar bent wood box from the West Coast



TRADITIONAL FORMS

- ✘ A Maquinna Hat by Lena Jumbo, an Ahousaht elder, is made of woven cedar



- ✘ Primrose Adams received a BC Creative Lifetime Achievement Award for her spruceroot hats



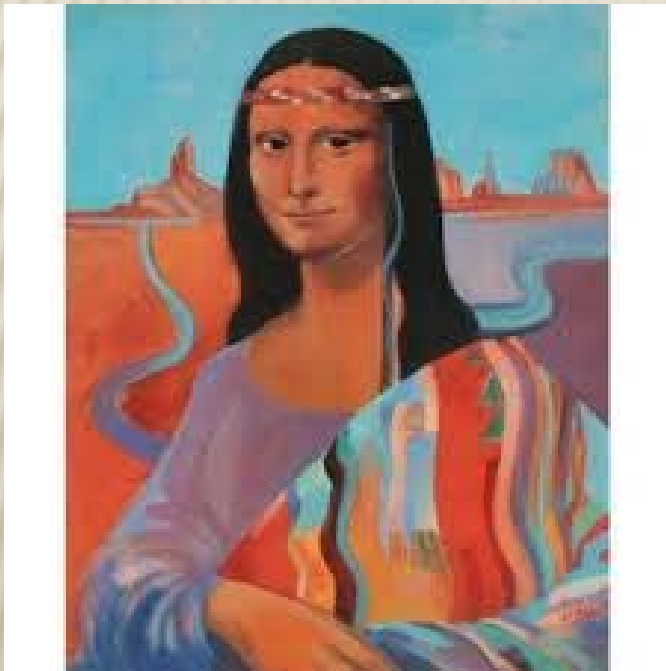
TRADITIONAL FORMS

- ✘ Mary Mitchell received a BC Creative Lifetime Achievement award for her clothing created from hides and beads



POSTMODERN ART

- ✗ George Littlechild takes on the Mona Lisa



- ✗ This type of art often makes comment about the relationship between European and Aboriginal cultures
- ✗ The art often involves jokes and irony

POSTMODERN ART

- ✘ The theme of identity and how we construct our identities is common
- ✘ In this piece of art, *First Nations Joe, Mixed Blood Joe, Second Nations Joe, George Littlechild* comments on identity



POSTMODERN ART

- ✘ Anishinaabe artist, Rebecca Belmore, created a disturbing photograph entitled *Fringe* which comments on violence against women



POSTMODERN ART

- ✘ In *A Rethinking of the Western Front*, Jim Logan indigenizes an image from Michelangelo's famous fresco in the Sistine Chapel in Rome



POSTMODERN ART

“I went through art history in school and was taught how glorious European art was. It seems to be the standard to judge all other art, and I question that. . . . Is it the standard, and [if so] why is it the standard? What makes masters masters?”

Jim Logan questions the assumption that European Art is the standard of excellence

POSTMODERN ART

- ✘ Sonny Assu plays with identity using famous brands
- ✘ Kent Monkman's *High-heeled Moccasins*



SOME WEBSITES

- × <http://www.native-art-in-canada.com/index.html>
- × <http://www.civilization.ca/exhibitions/online-exhibitions/first-peoples>
- × <http://www.civilization.ca/myhistorymuseum/stories-and-objects/>
- × <http://www.civilization.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/haida/haindex.shtml#menu>
- × <http://www.parl.gc.ca/About/Senate/Aboriginal/Aboriginal-e.htm>
- × <http://www.museevirtuel-virtualmuseum.ca/edu/ViewLoitLo.do?method=preview&lang=EN&id=11005>
- × <http://www.museevirtuel.ca/Exhibitions/Holman/english/index.php3>
- × http://cybermuse.gallery.ca/cybermuse/showcases/aotl/index_e.jsp
- × <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1311950522326/1311950645844>
- × http://www.uleth.ca/artgallery/?page_id=2826

- × <http://resources.curriculum.org/tcf/teachers/projects/repository/AboriginalArt.pdf>