

Bob Boyer - Although he lived his entire life in Saskatchewan, Boyer's work was inspired by his extensive travels throughout North and Central America, Asia, Europe and Scandinavia. Boyer began his artistic career in the late 1960s, painting highly representational portraits and landscapes. By the late 1970s, he experimented with large-scale abstract oil paintings, using vibrant colours informed by personal experiences and the artistic traditions of Northern Plains Aboriginal people. While Boyer worked in a variety of media throughout his career, he is perhaps best known for his acclaimed series of blanket paintings completed between 1983 and 1995. Using flannel blankets as the painting surface, Boyer combined elements of historical Northern Plains design with personal symbology and contemporary references. For the most part, these "blanket statements" are politically-charged depictions of the devastating impact of colonial imperatives upon Aboriginal philosophies, land, religions and cultures. During the last decade of his life, Boyer experimented with a variety of media, including fresco, and produced work which celebrated Indigenous experience, cosmology and spirituality throughout the world. While his untimely death in August 2004 leaves an enormous sense of the incompleteness of an abundant life, Bob Boyer's art leaves a legacy of a life's work that is fully complete.

Born in 1948, Boyer was a virtual renaissance man in his efforts within the Aboriginal community. Through his own work and tireless support of Aboriginal artists, he helped foster the recognition and importance of Aboriginal art in Canada. As head of the Department of Indian Fine Arts and Associated Professor of Indian Art History at the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, Bob inspired many students through his lectures on Native art and culture.

Past solo exhibitions include a critically acclaimed show at Gallery Gevik and exhibitions at the Mackenzie Art Gallery and the Edmonton Art Gallery. Prestigious group exhibitions include the Museo de Arte Contemporaneo de Monterey show "1492" where he was exhibited alongside Eric Fischl and Jean Michel Basquiat. Bob Boyer is represented in many museums across Canada including the National Gallery, the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, the Museum of Civilization, Calgary's Glenbow Museum, and the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatchewan.

Benjamin Chee Chee - (born Kenneth Thomas Benjamin 26 March 1944 in Temagami, ON; died 14 March 1977 in Ottawa, ON). After an unstable youth, Chee Chee, of Ojibwe descent, moved to Montréal in 1965 and was encouraged to develop his love of drawing. His first exhibition, held after his move to Ottawa in 1973, featured colourful abstract compositions of block-stamped geometric motifs. By 1976 his work had dramatically changed to spare, linear representations of birds and animals of great clarity and elegance, animated by a lively sense of humour and movement. Unlike other Aboriginal artists, Chee Chee denied that his images had symbolic meaning; they were rather "creatures of the present" whose forms expressed aesthetic concerns. At the height of his success, after a renewal of a long-term problem with alcoholism, he committed suicide in an Ottawa jail.

Robert Houle - From his experience growing up on the Sandy Bay First Nation/Kaa-wii-kwe-tawang-kak in Manitoba to his studies, exhibitions, curatorial work, and residencies, Saulteaux artist Robert Houle has had

a meaningful influence on the field of contemporary art and Indigenous culture. Houle's resignation from his position as curator of contemporary Indian art at the National Museum of Man (now the Canadian Museum of History) in 1980, proved to be a significant marker in the artist's career, setting the path towards a body of remarkable artistic production. With an emotional desire to free ceremonial objects from relegation to anthropological artifacts, Houle made a promise to devote the rest of his art career to changing perspectives on what constitutes contemporary Indigenous art through his artistic and curatorial practice.

Robert Houle is a contemporary artist, curator, and critic who has played a significant role in the recovery of Aboriginal heritage. He draws on Western art conventions to tackle lingering aspects of European colonization of First Nations people. He relies on the objectivity of Modernism and the subjectivity of a postmodernism to bring text and photographic documents into his work.

During his formative years Houle was immersed in native spiritual practices and was influenced by Catholicism. The dual experiences of these traditions are present in his work where Native symbols and ritual objects are combined with Western sculptural and painting techniques. Houle studied art history at the University of Manitoba, and graduated from McGill University in Montreal with a degree in art education. He has been exhibiting in group and solo shows since the mid-1970's. He was the curator of Contemporary Indian Art at the Canadian Museum of Civilization from 1977 to 1980. During his tenure, he opposed the relegation of contemporary Native art to anthropological or ethnographic artifact. This experience resulted in his introducing themes of Native ceremonial objects into his art, such as the parflèche, or medicine bag, and the warrior spear and shield. In 1991 Houle took a position as the first professor of Indigenous Studies

at The Ontario College of Art (now OCAD University), where he taught for fifteen years, mentoring artists including Shelley Niro, Bonnie Devine, and Michael Belmore.

Houle's considerable influence as an artist, curator, teacher and writer have led to his being awarded the Janet Braide Memorial Award for Excellence in Canadian Art History in 2003; the 2001 Toronto Arts award for the Visual Arts; the Eiteljorg Fellowship in 2003 and in 2006. In 2015 he was awarded the Governor General's Award for Visual Arts

"Art has the capacity to lift people's spirits. Culture is an essential ingredient to any improvement in social and economic conditions. For that reason the special status of native peoples must be acknowledged and protected not only in a constitutional but also in cultural context."

Robert Houle, 1990

Alex Janvier from Cold Lake First Nations in Alberta has been a professional artist for several decades. Janvier is a trendsetter, renowned for his distinct curved lines and use of bright color combinations. His unique abstract style has blazed the trail for the newcomers in First Nations Art, but also Canadian Art.

Janvier is multi-talented, creating original works of art in many different mediums throughout his career. Numerous Janvier murals, enjoyed by many, adorn public buildings. In 1993, while painting the magnificent "Morning Star" in the Canadian Museum of Civilization, he was nicknamed "Alexangelo". Another large commission is at County Hall, Sherwood Park, Alberta. Alex's first mural was painted at the Indian Pavilion at Expo 1967.

Starting in 1964, numerous galleries have exhibited Janvier paintings in solo and group shows, both nationally and internationally. In 2012, the Art Gallery of Alberta hosted a major exhibition of over ninety paintings, including very large canvas originals and works that were shown to the public for the first time. One of Alex's highest achievements was the major solo travelling exhibition that was curated by the National Gallery of Canada in 2016-2018.

Alex is the recipient of many prestigious awards including the Order of Canada, Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts, and the National Aboriginal Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2008 he was honored with the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Marion Nicoll Visual Arts Award, while in 2010 he was invested into the Alberta Order of Excellence. He has also been acknowledged with several honorary Doctorate Degrees from educational institutions across Canada.

Although Alex is known internationally as an artist, he has a very humble approach to life. He is grateful to be able to paint full time for it is what he loves to do. His paintings are full of culturally significant themes and history, sometimes recording the pristine beauty of our Mother Earth. The magnitude of spirituality in his paintings will keep his art alive for many centuries yet to come.

Kimowan Metchewais - was a significant figure in the Native art world. He was born in Oxbow, Saskatchewan, October 2, 1963. He used his step-father Bruce's name- McLain, until later in life when he began to go by his mother Ada's maiden name - Metchewais. He spent his childhood and early adulthood on the Cold Lake First Nations reservation in Alberta. He began his artistic career working as an illustrator and later editor at Windspeaker Native Newspaper from 1983 to 1989. From 1992 to 1996 he attended the University of Alberta

in Edmonton, receiving his Bachelors of Fine Arts. It was during this time, in 1993, at age 29, that he was diagnosed with oligodendroglioma, a rare form of brain tumor. The surgery to remove the tumor and following radiation left McLain with a permanent bald spot on the back of his head would feature in his art in later years. He was told that life expectancy for this condition was 11-12 years. Despite his illness, in 1995 McLain received the Ellen Battel Stoekel Fellowship to spend the summer at Yale University and in 1996 he received a National Award from the Canadian Native Arts Foundation. He continued on to complete his Master of Fine Arts at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico, from 1996 to 1999. It was there he met life-long friend Larry McNeil. McLain then made the move to Chapel Hill, North Carolina where he began teaching in the Art Department at the University of North Carolina, and continuing to exhibit his own work in both solo exhibitions and group exhibitions.

In Chapel Hill he lived in the neighborhood of Carrboro, a small, relaxed community attached to the larger college town. At this time, McLain developed an interest in "hooping" – hula-hooping as a spiritual activity--founding a collective and developing many close friendships through the hobby. He also began making trips home to Cold Lake and documenting the people and places there. In 2005, following symptoms of his tumor returning, McLain underwent a relatively complication-free surgery that allowed him to return directly to work, including participation in the well-received Loom exhibition. In 2007 McLain underwent surgery once again but due to complications from the surgery, McLain was left partially paralyzed. For a year, McLain worked diligently at rehabilitation, even developing his own rehab program he called "Kimochi," and was eventually able to return both to work and hooping. During his time at the hospital he met his eventual fiancée, Antje Thiessen.

Following his return to work, McLain continued to evolve his artistic practice – producing what some called his magnum opus - *Cold Lake* in 2004 and the evocative self-portrait *Raincloud* in 2010. Both pieces are examples of the space McLain gracefully navigated, between Native and Western sensibilities and artistic practices in his work. In 2011 his symptoms returned for a final time and he returned to his mother's home in St. Paul, Alberta, with Thiessen, for palliative care. He passed away on July 29, 2011. A retrospective of his work *Horizon: Kimowan Metchewais (McLain)* was shown that fall at the John and June Allcott Gallery, University of North Carolina.

SUSAN A. POINT O.C., DFA., RCA., D.Litt. (1952–) is a descendant of the Musqueam people; she is the daughter of Edna Grant and Anthony Point.

Susan inherited the values of her culture and traditions of her people by her mother Edna– who learned by her mother, Mary Charlie-Grant “I continue trying to push myself one step beyond my goals, or one step in a new direction so often. There is always another stride to make. My art is never really finished; there is just a point where I have to stop myself. This applies to my whole life; therefore, my artwork is evolving all of the time. New situations, new experiences have always played fundamental roles in my art, an example is my sometimes-playful use of colour after a tropical retreat and my embraced understanding of my ancestral visual language. Thirty years ago I was re-introducing ancestral artefacts; I am now pushing my artistic boundaries in every contemporary sense. While, the most valued part of my artwork

remains the same, my mark, and I leave this with every brushstroke, every- whittle of wood, every line that I leave, I insist is just the way I meant it. That is my signature. From the time when I pulled silkscreens on my kitchen table, I have stayed the course because my family helps me. All of my children are artists, and my grandchildren are too. I am obliged to lead them by example— Coast Salish art has forever been a way to honour and remember significant details of our social lives. My hope is that my children remember to tell not only our cultural accounts, but also their own stories as well.” - (Susan)

Susan’s distinct style has stimulated a movement in Coast Salish art. She draws inspiration from the stories of her ancestors and commences the use of non-traditional materials and techniques, therefore inspiring a whole new generation of artists.

Susan is an Officer of the Order of Canada, and has been presented with the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for her contributions to Canada.

She has been recognized with: an Indspire Achievement Award, a YWCA Woman of Distinction Award, a B.C. Creative Achievement Award, appointed lifetime member to the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, was selected to the International Women’s Forum, was listed one of B.C’s 100 most influential women, and was one of Vancouver’s 2012 Remarkable Women. Susan has Honorary Doctorates from: the University of Victoria, Simon Fraser University, University of B.C. and Emily Carr University of Art and Design.

Rick Rivet - was born in Aklavik, Northwest Territories. He holds four degrees in art and art related subjects. His work is contemporary,

incorporating elements of abstract expressionism with aspects of ancient cultures (Indian, Inuit, African, and Oceanic). Iconography and symbols are brought together in large scale mixed media paintings that express social, cultural, spiritual and environmental issues in relation to Indian reality and sensibility. He does not refer to his work as limited or restricted to the genre of Indian art. He states that his work reflects his interest as an artist and the themes are universal. He has exhibited in several major Canadian exhibitions including *Indigena: Perspectives of Indigenous Peoples on Five Hundred Years* (1992) and *Topographies: Aspects of Recent B.C. Art* (1997). His work is in numerous private and public collections, such as the Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, Quebec; Canadian Embassy, Moscow, Russia; Provincial Government of British Columbia, Victoria, B.C.; Thunder Bay Art Gallery, Thunder Bay, Ontario; and the Essex Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts. In 1999, Rivet was one of five Canadian and American Indian artists selected for the prestigious Eiteljorg Fellowship Award from the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art in Indianapolis, Indiana.

“Influences in my artwork are varied and derive from Shamanistic imagery of ancient peoples the world over (North American Indian, Inuit, Australian Aborigine, Norse, Oceanic, Siberian and so forth). Equally influential are Western and Contemporary influences from various artists and art movements (Edvard Munch, German Expressionism, Abstract Expressionism, Antoni Tapies, Paterson Ewen, Robert Rauschenberg, John Dubuffet, David Milne, Art Povera, Art Informel, J.M.W. Turner, Paul Klee, Kathe Kolwitz and Primitivist Art) to name a few.

My work involves combining and re-interpreting the iconography of various aboriginal peoples in a contemporary perspective. The art is intuitive, expressionistic and individualistic in means and method. The

approach is Expressionist/Primitivist with concerns related to aspects of my Native-Canadian reality and viewpoint. These concerns are expressed in two ways – in relation to the shamanistic/spiritual tradition and the historical/cultural/socio-political/eco-environmental viewpoint in the examination of issues related to my experience. The approach is introspective, involving the existential nature of being – the spiritual, the psychic and the physical aspects of human experience.

My art is eclectic in that both approaches are influenced by traditional symbolism and imagery along with contemporary ideas and techniques in the manipulation of visual imagery and artist materials. Elements from the two approaches are often incorporated together.

My art explores mark-making, colour, shape, texture, line, volume, figure-ground interaction and other formal relationships; paint and collage as part of process; draughtsmanship within painting and by itself; graphic qualities from printmaking experience; symbolic imagery in a contemporary context; and various other elements of visual art as language/process.

In my art I seek poetic expression – a visual language which uses the visible universe as a metaphor for the invisible, a communication between the world and the spirit, a mystical relationship between physical/metaphysical realities. The context is the human existential journey through the matter/space/time continuum.

Creative art is the result of a process of integration and actualization of conscious/unconscious experience, a transformative process which gives form to artistic vision.

My work aspires to the spiritual, to the recovery of the main tradition of creativity. The encounter with shamanic ideology and culture compels the contemporary artist to admit to the binding ties of a

common spiritual heritage. The creative experience and it's profound link to the unconscious forces artists to confront the on-going history of the human spirit, with it's echoes from pre-history to the present.”
(Rick Rivet)

Linus Woods is a Dakota/Ojibway Indian artist from the Long Plain First Nation in Southern Manitoba where he was born June 3, 1967.

While he has taken a few art and Native studies courses at Brandon University, and has studied with artists such as Jane Ash Poitras, he is largely self-taught. Linus sees his paintings as expressions and extensions of his spiritual journey. His art: acrylic, oil and collage on canvas are subtle works featuring pastel pallets and geometric shapes, and often including collaged images.

Linus Woods is a winner of the Peace Hills Trust Company Art Competition and his work is in the Peace Hills Trust Collection and in a number of other collections including Winnipeg Children's Hospital, Long Plain First Nation, Curtis Joony Productions, Brandon University and Mae Moore.

Katia Kak'wa Kurtness is from Mashteuiatsh, Québec. Katia completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in Geography and Land Use Planning from l'Université du Québec in Chicoutimi and is presently completing her Masters degree in Regional Planning. She is a self-taught artist who learned about design and aesthetics from the rich culture, art and stories of the Innu (Montagnais) of the Pekuakami. Katia has been

painting for 11 years. Her first solo exhibition “Nil Pekuakamishkuess - where I come from” was held at the Indian and Inuit Art Gallery, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Gatineau, Québec in 2005 where Katia featured paintings of contemporary Innu life. Katia’s works are included in the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada Collection and in various private collections. (May 2008)

Ann McLean is Cree from Grande Prairie, Alberta. A graduate of the University of Alberta’s Fine Arts program, McLean creates prints and linocuts. She has exhibited in The Alberta Collection of Aboriginal Art, Harcourt House Art Centre, Edmonton, Alberta, Mark Makers - First Nations Graphics, Mackenzie Art Gallery, Regina, Saskatchewan, Sharing the Circle, Wanuskewin Heritage Park, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Catch the Rising Spirit, Beaver House Gallery, Edmonton, Alberta, and Asum Mena, Front Gallery, Edmonton, Alberta, where she was a first prize scholarship winner. Her work can be found in the collection of the Indian Art Centre, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Hull, Quebec.

Helen Wassegijig (Odawa/Ojibwe) was born on the Wikwemikong Reserve, Manitoulin Island, Ontario. She signs her work Wassegijig which means "Bright-Day". She graduated from the University of Ottawa with both a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a Bachelor of Visual Arts.

Wasegijig also holds a Master of Arts degree from Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario. Her work is based upon woven basket designs, which she arranges into abstract forms. Her media include drawing and printmaking. Wasegijig has exhibited in President's Night Art Auction, Native Art Foundation, Toronto, Ontario, Ontario Native Arts Conference, Ontario College of Art, Toronto, Ontario, Indian Art '88, Woodland Cultural Centre, Brantford, Ontario, Contemporary Indian and Inuit Art of Canada, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario, Keepers of Our Culture, Woodland Cultural Centre, Brantford, and To Catch a Vision, Thunder Bay Art Gallery, Thunder Bay, Ontario. Her work is in the collections of the Brignall Gallery, Toronto, Ontario, the Indian Art Centre, DIAND, Hull, Quebec, and the Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, Quebec. She is also a dedicated teacher of the Ojibwe language.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linus_Woods

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