



THUNDER BAY
ART GALLERY

Newsletter

Drawings by Frank Big Bear

June 4 to September 5

Organized by the Tweed Museum of Art, University of Minnesota Duluth



Frank Big Bear, *Fawn*, 2003, colour pencil on paper, 111.8 cm x 76.8 cm.,
Tweed Museum of Art, Alice Tweed Tuohy Foundation Purchase Fund

Drawings by Frank Big Bear, a travelling exhibition organized by the Tweed Museum of Art, Duluth, introduces the vibrant, colour pencil drawings of Frank Big Bear. Largely autobiographical in nature, the drawings are informed by the artist's Ojibway roots, on Minnesota's White Earth Reservation, and by his subsequent observations and experiences of life lived "on the edge," in the urban environment of Minneapolis-St. Paul.

A comprehensive survey of the artist's work, the exhibition includes examples of early drawings, from the 1980s, when Big Bear favored modest formats for his work, to increasingly complex compositions, executed on a much grander scale, during the past decade. Characteristic of the artist's oeuvre, drawings in this exhibition teem with energy and with forms that run the gamut between easily recognizable figures and abstract patterns that fill voids, or fracture and consume the familiar with the pulsating colours of fantasy.

Big Bear's themes range from images derived from dreams and childhood traumas to politically-charged messages filtered through the lenses of introspection and reconciliation. While his earlier works focus on memories and on Native American issues, the artist's later works are more visceral and personal in nature, inviting viewers to delve into and unravel his densely packed imagery and to decipher his meanings, both elegant and disturbing in their tendency to dissect flesh and esteemed icons equally. Viewers will be drawn back into the artist's work repeatedly, attracted by a previously concealed image or, perhaps, a previously unrecognized allusion to an idea eliciting a response not yet fully formed. There is much here to ponder and admire. While some will enjoy Big Bear's complex compositions and riotous use of colour purely for their aesthetic appeal, others will appreciate his provocative statements about a life lived to the fullest.

See Yourself Here

SUMMER 2010

Aloft - Ravens & Other Flyers from the Permanent Collection

June 4 to September 5

Organized by the Thunder Bay Art Gallery

Artist Michele Coslett Goodman of Dryden spent the winter of 2009-10 creating eleven over life-size ravens from wood, wire, fiberfill, and rubber inner tubes. Entitled *An Unkindness of Ravens*, the piece is currently under consideration for acquisition by the Gallery and is on loan from the artist for this permanent collection exhibition. This piece has spurred the organization of this exhibition concentrating on ravens and other birds represented in the Gallery's holdings.

In Northwestern Ontario, and indeed in many parts of Canada, crows and ravens figure prominently, both in the natural environment, where they often outnumber and overwhelm other avian species, and in Aboriginal legends and stories. In many Aboriginal traditions ravens are tricksters, creatures possessing spiritual powers, which permit them to traverse boundaries that confine lesser creatures. Images of the raven and of other birds – owls, geese, thunderbirds, eagles, loons and even hummingbirds are important subjects in the Gallery's permanent collection which is largely comprised of work by contemporary Aboriginal artists.

Organizing an exhibition around specific subject matter has allowed a concise, if small, survey of the collection (which numbers over 1500 pieces) featuring artists from across Canada, working with all manner of media, and addressing both traditional and contemporary ideas, methods, and subjects.

Art Thompson's *Raven-Human-Moon Transformation Mask* is included in the exhibition alongside a glorious white leather wedding dress trimmed with feathers by Deborah Pitawanakwat. Paintings by Northwestern Ontario Woodland artists including Carl Ray, Roy Thomas, and Goyce Kakegamic illustrate the importance of flying creatures to the Ojibway people of the region. Work by Benjamin Chee Chee, Carl Beam, Alex Janvier and others are included. Not to be missed is an exquisite quill basket decorated with an eagle motif by Rebecca Morrisseau.



Michele Coslett Goodman,
An Unkindness of Ravens, 2010
rubber, wood, wire, fiberfill,
635 x 304.7 x 254 mm (average
raven)



Blake Debassige, *Seven Birds on a Limb*, 1976, acrylic on canvas,
63.5 x 154.9 cm, Gift of L. Bruce Lierce

Let us assure you that the ravens that are always in the vicinity of the Gallery – in the treetops, perching on the edge of the roof, and circling as visitors arrive - are not intentionally part of this exhibition. They may, however, think otherwise.

Copper Thunderbird - Thirty Years A Selection of Paintings and Drawings by Norval Morrisseau (1958 - 1988) from the Permanent Collection of the Thunder Bay Art Gallery

June 4 to September 5

Organized by the Thunder Bay Art Gallery

The Thunder Bay Art Gallery is fortunate to hold in trust in its permanent collection ninety pieces by Norval Morrisseau created during the first thirty years of his career. Many private collectors in the city and region knew Morrisseau when he lived here and during that time, collected his early work. A number of these collectors have donated pieces to the Gallery. In addition, another 18 paintings were given to the Gallery from the Estate of Helen E. Band. Ms Band collected work by many Aboriginal artists, including Morrisseau, during the late 1960's and early 1970's before the Thunder Bay Art Gallery existed. The thoughtfulness of these generous collectors has contributed to the Gallery's impressive collection. Their legacy is the opportunity that they have made possible for the public to see this important work.

The selection of work in this exhibition, albeit just a fraction of what the Gallery holds, allows the viewer to follow the development of Morrisseau's personal style and to see a good range of his subject matter.

The earliest piece held by the Gallery is a small painting on birchbark from 1958 depicting a fish in an early attempt at the now familiar 'x-ray style' invented by Norval Morrisseau. This piece, as well as a number of acrylic paintings on kraft paper and millboard introduce viewers to the early works of Morrisseau.

Highlights of this selected exhibition, and indeed, of the collection are two pieces that were included in the major retrospective *Norval Morrisseau: Shaman Artist* organized and circulated by the National Gallery of Canada in 2006. The first of these, *The Gift*, 1975, refers to the 'gift' of smallpox unwittingly bestowed upon Aboriginal people by Europeans upon contact.

Coming Away, a detailed ink and ballpoint pen drawing contains visual evidence of the inspiration of Morrisseau's graphic style. According to Greg Hill, Curator of *Norval Morrisseau: Shaman Artist*, elements of the pictographic tradition embodied in the Midewiwin scrolls (most likely introduced to the artist by his grandfather) provided the foundation for Morrisseau's distinctive graphic style.

The artist's Ojibway name, Copper Thunderbird, was given to him by a Medicine Woman when, at the age of 19, Morrisseau suffered a severe illness. The power of this new name is said to have cured him, and became his artist identity which he rendered in Cree syllabics on his paintings from then on.



Norval Morrisseau, *In Honour of Our Grandchildren*, 1994, acrylic on canvas, 121 x 121 cm., purchased with the support of The Canada Council for the Arts Acquisition Program.

Western Treaty 5 and its 1910 Adhesion: Commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the Signing of the Adhesion

June 4 to June 13

On loan from Library & Archives Canada

This is a rare opportunity for the people of Northwestern Ontario to view the original Treaty 5 documents.

On June 9, 2010, Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) and Treaty No. 5 will commemorate this historic Treaty. The Adhesion to Treaty No. 5 was signed on June 9, 1910 in Deer Lake by Chief Robert Fiddler. On this 100th anniversary, a special commemoration with the theme “*A Journey to Remember/ Honouring our Treaty*” will be held in Sandy Lake, a signatory community of the Treaty.

The Thunder Bay Art Gallery was approached by the Nishnabe Aski Nation (Nan) and asked to act as the ‘official borrower’ of these important Treaty documents. Both the original Treaty, signed in September 1875 and the 1910 Adhesion will be on display at the Gallery from June 4 - 13. The 1910 Adhesion will be flown to Sandy Lake on June 9 and displayed at Thomas Fiddler Memorial High School as part of the Commemoration activities. The official website for the Centennial Commemoration is www.treaty5.ca.

Treaty No. 5 was signed in Beren’s River between the Government of Canada and Saulteaux and Swampy Cree non-treaty tribes and people around Lake Winnipeg in the District of Keewatin. Present-day central and northern Manitoba and some of present-day Saskatchewan and Ontario were covered by the Treaty. The 1910 Adhesion

included Northern Manitoba Bands as well as the Band at Deer Lake (which would be included within the boundary of the province of Ontario two years later). The Treaty and its Adhesions cover an area of approximately 233,400 square miles.

The Treaty adhesion process was just as significant as the Treaty negotiation process. Adhesions were signed with First Nations throughout the areas dealt with in the initial Treaty negotiations because some bands were not present at the original Treaty negotiations. From the First Nations’ perspective, Treaty adhesions are just as significant as the Treaties themselves. Adhesions are sacred agreements that created an ongoing relationship with the Crown, exactly like the original Treaties.

The Board of Directors and Staff of the Thunder Bay Art Gallery extend congratulations to Nishnawbe Aski Nation and Treaty No. 5 on this important anniversary. We are honoured to play a role in brining the documents to Thunder Bay and the Adhesion to Sandy Lake.

We also acknowledge the genuine enthusiasm for this project by the staff of Library and Archives Canada whose invaluable assistance has made the presentation of these documents in Northwestern Ontario possible.

SCHOOL TOURS & WORKSHOPS

Students participating in workshop inspired by Christi Belcourt’s exhibition *Identity, Land and Spirit*.



Students enjoying *Celebrating the Creators*.



Art Classes - Summer 2010

SKILLED INSTRUCTION AND QUALITY MATERIALS
5 DAY SESSIONS - MEMBERS \$75, NON-MEMBERS \$100

Ages 5 - 8
Mornings 9am - noon

To Register
Call 577-6427

Ages 9 - 13
Afternoons 1pm - 4pm

Hurray For Clay
Learn about clay and use it to create pinchpots, figures and animals.

July
5 - 9

Clay Works
Create and learn to add detail to pinch pots, coiled pots, figures and animals. Two of the projects will be fired in a kiln.

Learn to Draw Anime
...and other cartoons. Bring in favourite characters to use in various projects.

July
12 - 16

Drawing on Graphic Novels
A graphic novel is the start. Draw the characters, create action scenes and design fun artifacts that relate.

Outdoor Artists
The outdoors provide materials and a place for the imagination to grow.

July
19 - 23

Get Out and Create
Inspired by artist Andy Goldsworthy, a series of outdoor pieces will be made. Indoor projects include weaving and basket making.

Funny Faces
Have fun with portraits. Try out different styles, materials and expressions. Mask making included.

July
26 - 30

Portraits and Figure Drawing
If you like drawing people - from toes to noses, with conte to pastel, try different techniques to portray people.

Little Worlds (4 day fee: Members \$60, Non-members \$84)
Create magical worlds inside different style boxes.

August
3 - 6

Box Art/Small Worlds (4 day fee)
Design your own unique 'small worlds' in match boxes and pizza boxes. The art of Joseph Cornell and Liz McGrath will be looked at.

Create With Clay
We love clay! Create different projects with time to decorate and paint within the week.

August
9 - 13

More Than Just Clay
Another great week with clay! Projects include creating a decorative tile and sculpting a stylized clay bird or animal.

Animal Crazy
Study the form of your favourite animals and use it in drawings, paintings and more.

August
16 - 20

Any Animal You Can Draw
Learn many 'tricks' for portraying animals by studying similarities in their forms. Use pastel, paint and other media for this theme.

Micro Macro
Size is the theme this week! Make a large scale painting and some mini projects too.

August
23 - 27

More Micro Macro
Practice large scale drawings on easels and do one large painting. Discover the 'miniature' and create several small scale works.

Thunder Bay Art Gallery Welcomes New Curator

The Thunder Bay Art Gallery is pleased to announce the appointment of Nadia Kurd as the Gallery's new Curator who takes up her new role on August 9, 2010.

Ms. Kurd earned a BFA in art from the University of Ottawa, in 2002, and an MA in art history from York University, in 2005. In addition, she will soon be receiving her PhD in art history from McGill University, in Montreal, with a concentration in Islamic art.

Ms. Kurd's academic and professional interests lie in "issues related to identity, architecture and politics within contemporary art." Her academic focus on Islamic art and architecture serves as a platform for her interrogation of cultural identities, historical knowledge, and narratives in Canadian culture, as these issues impact particular marginalized communities and their artists. Writing about late nineteenth and early twentieth century exhibition practices, Ms. Kurd has examined the modes by which such practices both reflected and reinforced European colonial aspirations. It is this awareness that Ms. Kurd expects to bring to her endeavors in our community.

Between 2005 and 2007, Ms. Kurd served as the Programming Coordinator for the South Asian Visual Arts Collective in Toronto, an artist-run, not-for-profit organization dedicated to the development and presentation of art by contemporary artists of South Asian origin. In this capacity, Ms. Kurd conducted research and then solicited and selected themes, artists, and collaborators for the Collective's programming.



Nadia Kurd, Curator, Thunder Bay Art Gallery

Because the Collective does not operate its own exhibition space, Ms. Kurd's role required her to select venues, as well as schedule exhibitions for the artists with whom she worked. Her responsibilities for the Collective also included writing essays and assisting with lectures and programs. Given her experience and background, Ms. Kurd will be a valuable asset for the Thunder Bay Art Gallery. We heartily welcome Nadia Kurd both to our institution and to our community.

John Rae's Visit Sponsored by the Ontario Historical Society

On May 10 and 11, the Gallery welcomed John Rae, Vice President of the Alliance of Equality for Blind Canadians. During his visit John presented a talk to interested community members where he discussed ways that museums and art galleries can improve accessibility for people with vision loss and people who are blind.

Thunder Bay Art Gallery Director Sharon Godwin met John Rae when he was a speaker at the National Gallery of Canada conference entitled "Connection, Collections, Communities – Making Museums and Galleries in Canada Inclusive and Accessible" in 2009. She invited John to Thunder Bay to 'experience' the Gallery's collection and exhibitions in the best way possible for him, through tactile access. As a result of John's visit and his ideas and advice, the Gallery will be presenting future programs for people who are visually impaired.

The Gallery thanks the Ontario Historical Society and Executive Director Rob Leverty who sponsored John's trip to Thunder Bay. John Rae generously delivered his talk in exchange for time spent with Gallery staff looking at the collection. We thank John for his very valuable assistance and look forward to working with him again.

16th Annual Birdhouse Auction A Great Success!



Original artwork by Heather Cranston

The 16th Annual Birdhouse Auction took place this year on Friday May 28th.

Along with all of the incredibly creative birdhouses contributed, beautiful spring or nature-themed paintings, garden art, ceramics and decorations were also generously donated to the Auction by over 35 local and regional artists and crafts people.

There was also a ticketed raffle, live performance art, music by Maverick Entertainment, hors d'oeuvres and desserts by Anne Scott and Salt & Pepper Catering and a cash bar to round out the evening.

As well, one lucky winner took home the Raffle Extravaganza prize of a trip for 2 to Quebec City which includes round trip airfare with Porter Airlines, 2 nights accommodation at the Grand Times Hotel, dinner for two at Le Cochon Dingue and 2 tickets to Cirque du Soleil's latest show TOTEM.

Thank you to our Bird House Auction Sponsors



Canadian Heritage

Patrimoine canadien

The Thunder Bay Art Gallery gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance of Canadian Heritage. Funding through the Exhibition Circulation Fund made it possible for the Gallery to recently host two travelling exhibitions – *Terrance Houle: GIVN'R* organized and circulated by the Plug In Institute of Contemporary Art, Winnipeg and *Alison Norlen: Glimmer* organized by Kenderdine Art Gallery, Saskatoon.

Monthly E-Link

Monthly updates of Gallery activities are now available by email.

If you wish to receive these, contact us at info@theag.ca

In the subject line, insert **E-Link request**.



Thunder Bay Art Gallery

GARDEN TOUR 2010

Sunday, July 25

10 am - 4 pm

A self-guided tour of seven diverse gardens.

Visual artists and musicians will perform at selected gardens

DEMONSTRATIONS

THUNDER BAY MASTER GARDENERS at all gardens

LOONIE RAFFLES at each garden

TICKETS \$15 ON SALE IN JUNE

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Gallery Viewing & Gift Shop Hours

Tuesday - Thursday
Noon - 8 pm
Friday - Sunday
Noon - 5 pm

Office Hours

Monday - Friday
9 am - 5 pm

Admission

Adult \$3
Seniors & Students \$1.50
Children under 12 FREE
Members FREE

Admission Free on Wednesdays

**CITY OF
Thunder Bay**
Superior by Nature



Funding & Ongoing Support

Thunder Bay Art Gallery is a registered charity supported by the City of Thunder Bay, Department of Canadian Heritage, The Canada Council for the Arts, FedNor, Ontario Arts Council, Government Ontario, The Ontario Trillium Foundation, Lakehead Public Schools, Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board, and private and corporate donations.

Thank you to Confederation College for its ongoing support.

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