

Exhibitions & Galleries

Anishinaabeg: Art & Power | Level 3, Centre Block



Beaded decorative bands woven on a loom by an Anishinaabeg woman, collected in 1908 by Edmund Morris, the artist, at the Agricultural Fair in Brandon, Manitoba. Sir Edmund Walker Collection.



June 17 to November 19, 2017

Explore the life, traditions, and sacred stories of the Anishinaabeg as told through their powerful art over the last two centuries. *Anishinaabeg: Art & Power* takes you on a journey through the artistic evolution of one of the most populous and diverse Indigenous communities in North America.

With their homeland in Ontario, and communities stretching from Quebec to Alberta and Michigan to Montana, the Anishinaabeg have communicated and expressed their knowledge and cultural traditions through art for centuries, depicting the relationships between humans, their ancestors, nature, ceremony and supernatural beings known as spirits. Over time, their art was deeply influenced by both inter-community relationships with other Indigenous groups and the arrival of the Europeans to Canada. From early art forms and intricate beaded regalia to paintings and drawings from the Woodlands School art movement, these richly colourful and vibrant pieces reveal

the artistic transformation of Anishinaabeg art. By showcasing the great beauty and power of this cultural history, *Anishinaabeg: Art & Power* highlights the shared connections among Indigenous groups, and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians.

See these stunning works steeped in tradition, and gain a greater understanding of Indigenous art forms, beliefs and worldviews.

Co-Curators



The exhibition was developed by three curators (left - right): Arni Brownstone, the ROM's specialist on cultures of the North American Great Plains, in collaboration with Saul Williams, a painter and Woodlands School of art member from North Caribou Lake First Nation in northern Ontario, and historian Alan Corbiere from M'Chigeeng First Nation on Manitoulin Island.

Arni Brownstone

Assistant Curator

Royal Ontario Museum

Arni's curatorial responsibilities at the ROM primarily rest in the North American plains, southwest U.S., and Latin American ethnographic collections. He curated the sections pertaining to those collections in both the ROM's **Daphne Cockwell Gallery of Canada: First Peoples** and **The Shreyas and Mina Ajmera Gallery of Africa, The Americas, and Asia-Pacific**. He is currently responsible for the entirety of the Museum's ethnology collections of the Americas. Arni is the the ROM's curator of *Anishinaabeg: Art & Power*, collaborating with two Indigenous guest curators.

Arni joined the ROM in 1974 as an aspiring painter with an undergraduate degree in Fine Arts from York University. Before that he had worked in several contemporary art galleries including the Isaacs Gallery, Carmen Lamanna Gallery, and La Galerie du Siècle. He also worked summers in Manitoba and Saskatchewan's remote Indigenous communities. Against this background, Arni's primary task for his first 10 years at the ROM was the physical reorganization of its collection of over 30,000 ethnographic artifacts from around the world. Handling these objects had a profound effect on both his painting and research interests. In 1982, he received a Canada Council "B" grant, allowing him to paint full time for a year and travel to European museums where he studied ethnographic collections. This experience enhanced Arni's understanding of the distribution of geometric motifs having a worldwide presence in ethnographic art. This trip was a turning point that several years later led to his giving up painting in favour of studying museum objects.

Since the mid 1980s, Arni's research has largely focussed on the material culture of the North American Great Plains. This has followed two paths, with one primarily directed toward specific collections, deepening our knowledge of museum objects, so that they may speak more eloquently about the history and culture of the people that produced them. The other is a more specialized study with the long-term goal of describing the art history of the known corpus of pictographic paintings on the plains. Both lines of research depend on the ethnohistorical approach and on primary archival sources, but the latter principally hinges on stylistic analysis based on the comparative method. Arni has published numerous articles in both areas, many of which are accessible through his **biographic page** on the ROM's website, as well as the books "War Paint", published in 1993 by ROM Press and "War Paintings of the Tsuu T'ina Nation", co-published by the University of Nebraska Press and University of Alberta Press in 2015. That same year, he edited and contributed to a book on the ROM's sixteenth century

Indigenous document from Mexico and the , “The Lienzo of Tlapiltepec”, co-published by ROM Press and the University of Oklahoma Press.

Saul Williams

Co-Curator

Education Director, North Caribou Lake Education Authority

Saul Williams was born in North Caribou Lake called Neehakooyank (Where the Tree Leans over Calm Waters) in spring 1954. His family moved to Weagamow Lake to live in North Caribou Lake First Nation Reserve where he became a Band Member.

In the summer of 1968, Saul met Dr. Mary Black. He and his friends performed chores for her including carrying wood and water and translating for Elders who came to visit her. For his efforts, Saul was happy to be paid in spaghetti and meat balls. Having seen him constantly doodling and sketching, Mary brought Saul tubes of acrylic paint on one of her trips down south. With her go-ahead, Saul painted her wall and finished his first painting of a stylized raven for which he was paid five dollars. This painting—Saul’s first sale—is in the ROM collections.

For most of his younger years, before he was a labourer and, eventually, a school counsellor, Saul made his living by selling artwork. In 1984, he was one of the first Indigenous artists to have an exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO).

Saul is currently an education director with the North Caribou Lake Education Authority. Working closely with parents and the community’s leadership, he continues to advocate for the inclusion of Aboriginal knowledge, language, traditions, and culture in the school’s program. While doing so, Saul works within the requirements of the Education Funding Agreement with the Federal Government as well as the Ministry of Education. Saul firmly believes Aboriginal teachings and values are integral to the community.

Alan Corbiere

Co-curator

Lakeview School, M’Chigeeng First Nation on Manitoulin Island

Alan is a Program Coordinator, Anishinaabemowin Revitalization Program, Lakeview Elementary School, M’Chigeeng, on Manitoulin Island, Ontario. He is also a curator, writer and editor, historical researcher, public speaker at conferences and events, and teacher.

Alan’s first job as curator came in 2001 at the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation, where he researched, developed, and curated an exhibition on the residential school experience. He organized workshops for residential school survivors to create works of art to process their healing. An accompanying catalogue called “*Remembrance, Reflection, Rejuvenation: Healing from the residential school experience through the arts*” was published by the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation.

Alan next curated *The Sword of Mookomaanish* aka ‘*Chief Little Knife*’ showcasing a silver mounted sword presented to Odawa Chief Mookomaanish in 1815 for his bravery and compassion during the War of 1812. Alan’s other exhibitions have included *The Manitoulin Treaty of 1862* (2002) which commemorated the 140th anniversary of the Treaty’s signing and featured excerpts from petitions and treaty councils alongside reproductions of historic portraits of chiefs, many originally painted by Paul Kane in 1845. His next exhibit was *Gchi-Miigisaabiigan ‘The Great Wampum of 1764’* which included photographic reproductions, excerpts from recorded speeches, and replica wampum belts. The wampum belts symbolize the Anishinaabe-British relationship and serve as the basis for the

treaty in which the British promised to deliver 'Indian presents' to the Anishinaabeg and allied tribes. These exhibits, developed prior to formal training, were well-received by the community and led Alan to pursue museological, archival, and oral tradition research. For the last decade, Alan's career has focused on trying to use all three disciplines to create a more holistic version of the Anishinaabe story.

GOVERNMENT PARTNER



Comments

Comment by Brian MacLean

March 2, 2017 - 22:05

Any further info available? As a volunteer with First Story Toronto, I'm very happy to promote this coming exhibit on our social media.

Comment by Elizabeth Wabegijig

April 26, 2017 - 15:25

How do I get access to this upcoming exhibition? Do I need to purchase a general admission ticket or will there be separate ticket that should be purchased?

Comment by Lead Concierge

June 20, 2017 - 08:35

This exhibition will be included with our general admission, no surcharge required.

Comment by Jodi pape

September 8, 2017 - 06:52

Want to
Visit the Gallery exhibit please

Comment by Lead Concierge

May 3, 2017 - 13:29

Hi Brian,

Thank you for sharing! I have emailed you our marketing teams contact information

Comment by Pamela

May 18, 2017 - 09:42

Is this only on for one day? Is there an admission fee if I am a member, if so how do I go about doing so?

Comment by Lead Concierge

May 23, 2017 - 12:04

Hello Pamela,

This exhibit is included with general admission. As a member of the ROM, you have access to our general admission and specially ticketed exhibitions with your membership.

Anishinaabeg: Art and Power will be at the ROM for a few months!

Comment by GS

May 30, 2017 - 10:52

Hello, how large is the upcoming Anishinaabeg: Art & Power exhibit? How many pieces are in the show? Is it one room, two rooms, etc? Major or minor exhibit? I am from out of town so I want to decide whether to come in for it or not, and I can't get a sense of it from the website description. Thank you.

Comment by kate

June 18, 2017 - 18:12

it is one room, but dense with artifacts/art and information. We came for out of town and are so glad we did. Great mix of historic and contemporary pieces, thought provoking as well.

Comment by Lead Concierge

June 20, 2017 - 08:33

The exhibition will include approximately 120 photographs, artworks and historical artifacts. It will be on display on our third Floor, center block. This exhibition will be included with our general admission - no surcharge required.

Comment by Sylvia

June 14, 2017 - 15:33

Besides Saul Williams and Arni Brownstone, who were the other curator(s) of this exhibit?

Comment by Lead Concierge

July 18, 2017 - 13:46

Hello Sylvia,

Alan Corbiere is also a curator of this exhibit.

Comment by Mia

June 14, 2017 - 20:36

We continue to learn about the Aboriginal history of North American, the Art & Power Anishinaabeg is one of those exhibits that will teach and allow us to experience history and learn how a culture evolved. I applaud the ROM for bringing this exhibit at a time that is needed. Through expression (art, storytelling) we learn and heal. Can't wait to see the exhibit.

Comment by Robert DesJarlait

June 18, 2017 - 13:49

Is there an exhibition catalog available for Anishinaabeg: Art & Power?

Comment by Lead Concierge

June 22, 2017 - 13:45

Hello Robert,

We currently do not have a catalogue for this exhibit but we do have many books available in our Boutique and I recommend checking them out! You can reach our Boutique at Phone: 416.586.5766, Saturday to Thursday from 11:00 AM to 6:30 PM and on Fridays from 11:00 AM - 9:00 PM.

Comment by Mae Whaley

June 22, 2017 - 12:11

Will an illustrated catalogue of the exhibits be published later and be available for purchase?

Comment by Lead Concierge

July 1, 2017 - 14:12

Hello Mae,

We currently do not have a catalogue for this exhibit but we do have many books available in our Boutique and I recommend checking them out! You can reach our Boutique at Phone: 416.586.5766, Saturday to Thursday from 11:00 AM to 6:30 PM and on Fridays from 11:00 AM - 9:00 PM.

Comment by Jason Bellchamber

November 5, 2017 - 00:02

This exhibition is very powerful. I asked one of the staff at the gift boutique if there was a publication of this exhibit and she said there was but it had sold out. Im very curious about obtaining one to study as there are so few books on the Woodland school of art. This exhibit solidifies the uniqueness of the Woodland style. Thank you for the exhibit.

Comment by Susana Wald

June 28, 2017 - 17:47

I am delighted to see the work of Arni Brownstone and his two collaborators commented on the ROM page. His longstanding commitment to the themes he has explored and illuminated for us has been an inspiration to me. I treasure an Anishinaabeg card pouch he has given me and I carry it with me everywhere.

Comment by Peter Albinger

July 19, 2017 - 22:38

Is photography permitted in the exhibit?

Comment by Dee McGrath

July 30, 2017 - 14:31

This is a fascinating exhibit, beautifully displayed - I will definitely be back before it leaves in Nov.is it going elsewhere? I hope so, it deserves a broader audience. And, if I may say, some more attention/promotion while it's at the ROM thank you!

Comment by Rebecca Wood

August 26, 2017 - 23:24

Will this exhibit contain works by Carl Ray, Daphne Odjig and other members of native group of seven?

Comment by Lyn Ibson

September 26, 2017 - 22:32

Yes, saw the show yesterday and both artists are represented there.

Comment by Lyn Ibson

September 26, 2017 - 22:34

Yes - visited the show yesterday and pieces by both artists are included.

Comment by Lead Concierge

October 4, 2017 - 15:31

Hello,

Ray and Odjig have works in the exhibition as they are related to the Woodlands School

Comment by Robin Kraft

September 19, 2017 - 10:53

Saul: A long overdue and eagerly anticipated initiative.

Simply

Robin

Comment by Amelia Thompson

September 20, 2017 - 14:06

I will be taking my son, Saul Williams grandson to his his Grandfathers work. Kyle will be so excited to see this, as he had been wanting to actually go visit ROM for sometime and now seems like the right time to do so.

Comment by Fenton

October 4, 2017 - 07:54

Will come to ROM asap. Have several Saul Williams. Glad to learn more. A. F.

Comment by Don Colby

October 22, 2017 - 13:24

This was a most interesting exhibit. I took may photos of the beautiful works and learned quite a bit from the postings about them. Thank you.

Comment by Diane Shiffman

November 4, 2017 - 11:18

Are there guided, information tours of the exhibit.

When?

Comment by Lead Concierge

November 7, 2017 - 14:03

Hello Diane,

We offer daily guided tours of our galleries and is included with general admission. Our Anishinaabeg: Art and Power Tours occur every few days. I recommend calling us or visiting our **Tours Page** (http://www.rom.on.ca/en/whats-on/activity?field_event_type_tid_i18n=224) to confirm our tours of the day before visiting.

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