



KENT MONKMAN

Life & Work

By Shirley Madill

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BIOGRAPHY

Known for his provocative interventions into Western European and American art history, Cree artist Kent Monkman (b.1965) grew up in Winnipeg, passionate about art and profoundly aware of how colonialism had affected Indigenous communities. Drawing on early experiences in illustration and theatre, he has worked in painting, photography, installation, film, and performance. Through his

gender-fluid alter ego, Miss Chief Eagle Testickle, a shape-shifting, supernatural being, Monkman created opportunities to confront colonial injustice, challenge received notions of history, advocate for social change, and honour the resistance and resilience of Indigenous peoples. His major exhibitions in Canada and the United States have been unprecedented interventions of decolonization.

EARLY YEARS

Kent Monkman, a member of the Fisher River Cree First Nation of northern Manitoba, was born in 1965, the third of four children. His Anglo-Canadian mother, Rilla Unger, and his Cree father, Everet Monkman, visited Rilla's hometown of St. Marys, Ontario, for his birth, but they returned soon after to northern Manitoba and the Cree community of Shamattawa First Nation, where they had been living with Monkman's two older brothers. Before they married, Monkman's mother had been a schoolteacher. His father grew up on Lake Winnipeg and initially earned a living as a commercial fisherman. After moving to Winnipeg, he supported his family as a social worker and by driving cabs and selling vacuums door to door.



Kent Monkman at age four, with his parents and siblings, photographer unknown. Monkman is the third of four children: his oldest brother is Mark, his other older brother is Don, and his sister Sheila is the youngest.

Hoping to secure a better environment for his children than the one he had experienced as a child, Everet moved the family to the middle- and upper-class neighbourhood of River Heights so that Monkman and his siblings could attend one of the better public schools in the city. However, many in the community did not welcome Everet. "There were people who wouldn't talk to my dad when he moved into the neighbourhood," Monkman recalls. "It was hard for him to accept that, but he knew that putting his kids into better schools was going to give us a better shot down the road."¹

Monkman was close to his paternal great-grandmother, Caroline Everette, who spoke only Cree and lived with his family on and off until he was ten. He felt a strong connection to her birthplace, St. Peters, Manitoba, and considers it his ancestral home.² Caroline Everette's life was marked by the cruelties and oppression of Canada's colonizing forces. Her community was subject to Treaty 5 between Her Majesty the Queen and the Saulteaux and Swampy Cree Tribes of Indians at Beren's River and Norway House.³ Signed in 1875, the same year as Everette's birth, the treaty resulted in her family being forcibly relocated three



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times. Only three of her thirteen children survived into adulthood. A number of her children were forced to attend residential school.



Brandon Indian Residential School, Brandon, Manitoba, c.1900-10, photographer unknown. Elizabeth (Everette) Monkman, Kent Monkman's grandmother, Walter Everette, his great-uncle, and Margaret Everette, his great-aunt, all attended this school.

The strength of Monkman's family within the history of Canadian racism, colonization, Christianization, residential schooling, and language loss deeply informs his work. As he has said, "I was fortunate enough to have parents and grandparents who were very confident in knowing who they were and who were confident in their own culture. They knew that you can exist in the modern world and still carry your roots and your culture with you."⁴

Though the household's modest finances did not allow for many toys or extracurricular activities, Monkman took up art with his parents' encouragement. At an early age he was already using coloured pencils to produce one-page images laden with stories.⁵ "My whole identity as an artist was basically shaped very early, as a kid," he notes.⁶ He was fortunate to be one of two children in his elementary school selected to take free Saturday morning classes at the Winnipeg Art Gallery—his parents would have struggled to



LEFT: Albrecht Dürer, *The Little Courier*, c.1496, engraving, 11 x 7.9 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. RIGHT: Anthony Van Dyck, *Charles I (1600-49) on Horseback*, c.1635-36, oil on canvas, 96.0 x 86.3 cm, Royal Collection Trust.

afford them otherwise. Having access to high-level art instruction changed his life: "I felt such a sense of belonging at the Winnipeg Art Gallery because I spent so much time there as a kid, not just in the art classes, but walking through the galleries."⁷ He had a book of paintings of horses that inspired him—it included works by Honoré Daumier (1808-1879), Théodore Géricault (1791-1824), Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641), Pieter Bruegel the Elder (c.1525-1569), and Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519). In 1990 he saw an exhibition of work by Saulteaux artist Robert Houle (b.1947), and the inspiration of Houle's modernist approach and the experience of seeing an Indigenous artist's work amplified his feelings of connection.⁸

Another Winnipeg institution would have a different, yet equally important, impact. Monkman remembers seeing the dramatic dioramas featuring mannequins dressed in traditional Indigenous clothing on field trips to the Manitoba Museum. These tableaux depicted Indigenous peoples prior to the arrival of settlers, as if frozen in time, hunting bison or camping in idyllic prairie landscapes. From an early age he perceived a dramatic dislocation between these romanticized presentations and the enduring and catastrophic fallout of colonization that was evident outside the museum, where many Indigenous people were living on the streets. Winnipeg is a city riven by race and class, and most of the Indigenous population live in the culturally diverse, economically challenged North End, not the predominantly middle-class, white, Anglo-Saxon neighbourhood of River Heights, where the Monkman family resided. At the museum, Monkman was very aware that he looked different from his white classmates—a contrast that he embraced.⁹ In his words, the visits "were inspirational and scarring at the same time."¹⁰



Clarence Tilenius, *Bison Diorama*, n.d., taxidermy and mixed media, 8.7 x 7.5 m, Orientation Gallery, Manitoba Museum, Winnipeg.

STUDIES IN ART AND EARLY CAREER

In 1983, having graduated from Kelvin High School at the age of seventeen, Monkman enrolled in the Illustration program at Sheridan College of Applied Arts and Technology in Brampton, Ontario. His older brother was there a year ahead of him, so Sheridan was familiar. As well, the curriculum offerings, which



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included fundamental courses in painting and drawing, appealed to him. At the time, he was interested in artists such as Bob Boyer (1948–2004), Joane Cardinal-Schubert (1942–2009), Jane Ash Poitras (b.1951), Robert Houle, and Ivan Eyre (b.1935). After completing his degree in 1986, he worked in Toronto as a designer for Native Earth Performing Arts, which was led by artistic director and Cree playwright Tomson Highway (b.1951). The highly acclaimed organization is the oldest professional Indigenous theatre company in Canada.

Monkman created sets and costumes for the plays *Lady of Silences*, 1993, by Floyd Favel and *Diva Ojibway*, 1994, by Tina Mason, among other productions. His work occurred at a most opportune time: in the 1970s, Indigenous theatre grew rapidly, and by the 1980s it had become a crucial part of mainstream Canadian theatre.

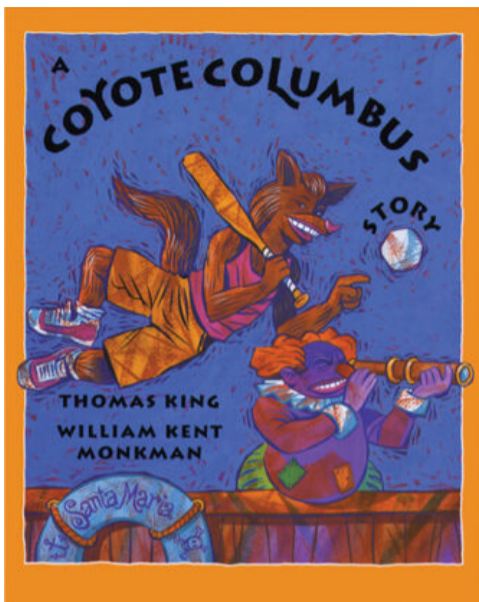
Native Earth Performing Arts had major successes with *The Rez Sisters*, 1986, and *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*, 1991. Monkman's talents in theatrical design, along with his interest in performance, would later become significant influences on his art practice. He notes, "My time with Native Earth was a period when I started working collaboratively with other artists. Designing for theatre also introduced my practice into a third dimension which led to film, video, and installations."¹¹

Monkman also worked as a freelance illustrator and acquainted himself with the city's cultural scene. There were points when he struggled financially, and he even questioned his path as an artist. He ran independent exhibitions with other artists out of his own studio space, and in 1991 participated in his first professional exhibition, *The Toronto Mask Show* at Lake Galleries, Toronto.

Monkman first gained public attention when he illustrated Cherokee writer Thomas King's children's book *A Coyote Columbus Story* (1992), which was written as a protest against the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's 1492 invasion of the Americas.¹² Monkman's vibrant, cartoon-like renditions of the trickster named Coyote, combined with King's humorous, deeply powerful text, caused political outrage.¹³ *A Coyote Columbus Story* counteracted the dominant colonialist doctrine that celebrates explorers and the "discoveries" they made. In contrast to *miyo-wîcêhtowin*, the Cree term for living in harmony together, the explorer's discovery was depicted as a violent and hostile takeover of land—a perspective that would become a defining feature of Monkman's oeuvre.



LEFT: Kent Monkman, set for Floyd Favel's *Lady of Silences* at Native Earth Performing Arts, Toronto, 1993. RIGHT: Kent Monkman, sets and costumes for *Night Traveller*, Tipiskaki Goroh, Canada Dance Festival, Ottawa, 1994.



LEFT: Cover of Thomas King's children's book *A Coyote Columbus Story* (1992), featuring illustrations by Kent Monkman. RIGHT: Pages from Thomas King's children's book *A Coyote Columbus Story* (1992), featuring illustrations by Kent Monkman.

As Monkman's artistic career was developing, political events were galvanizing Indigenous solidarity. Massive land claims were proceeding in British Columbia, Ontario, and the Yukon. In 1989, the Quebec government announced plans to begin Phase 2 of the James Bay hydroelectric project, a decision that resulted in major protests (and the eventual suspension of the work). The following year, Elijah Harper, a Cree member of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly, said no to the Meech Lake Accord, the proposed constitutional legislation that would have denied recognition of Indigenous peoples while affirming Quebec as a distinct society with special status.¹⁴



LEFT: June 19, 1990: NDP MLA Elijah Harper sits in the Manitoba Legislature holding an eagle feather for spiritual strength as he continues to delay the house debate on the Meech Lake Accord. RIGHT: Alanis Obomsawin, *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance* (film still), 1993, documentary film, 1 hr, 59 min, National Film Board of Canada, Montreal. Photo credit: Shaney Komulainen.

In the summer of 1990, a land dispute exploded between the Quebec town of Oka and the Mohawks of Kanehsatà:ke, who were protecting a burial ground from being developed into a golf course. Monkman was inspired by the artists and activists involved, including Ellen Gabriel, also known as Katsi'tsakwas, who was the official spokesperson chosen by the People of the Longhouse, and Joseph Tehawehron David, who became known as the protests' warrior; the

crisis was recorded in the film *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance* (1993) by Alanis Obomsawin (b.1932). Shortly after the crisis ended, Phil Fontaine, a former national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, disclosed the abuse he had experienced in the residential school system. His story shed light onto one of the darkest periods in Canadian history. The following year, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney launched the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, a national inquiry that examined the relationship between Canada and Indigenous peoples.

In 1992, amid the celebrations on both sides of the Atlantic marking the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Western hemisphere, two landmark exhibitions confronted colonialism. *Indigena: Contemporary Native Perspectives in Canadian Art* at the Canadian Museum of Civilization (now the Canadian Museum of History) in Gatineau, Quebec, was curated by Lee-Ann Martin and Gerald McMaster (b.1953), and *Land, Spirit, Power: First Nations at the National Gallery of Canada*, Ottawa, was curated by Robert Houle, Charlotte Townsend-Gault, and Diana Nemiroff. In addition to further exposing him to the work of Bob Boyer and Jane Ash Poitras, these shows introduced Monkman to a number of Indigenous artists, many from an older generation, including Carl Beam (1943–2005), Edward Poitras (b.1953), Mike Macdonald (1941–2006), Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun (b.1957), Rebecca Belmore (b.1960), Robert Davidson (b.1946), Alex Janvier (b.1935), and Zacharias Kunuk (b.1957).



LEFT: Carl Beam, *Meltdown*, 1984, acrylic, pen and ink on canvas, 217 x 164.5 cm, Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau. RIGHT: Jane Ash Poitras, *Shaman Never Die V*; *Indigena*, 1989, mixed media on canvas, 110.4 x 242.7 cm, Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau.

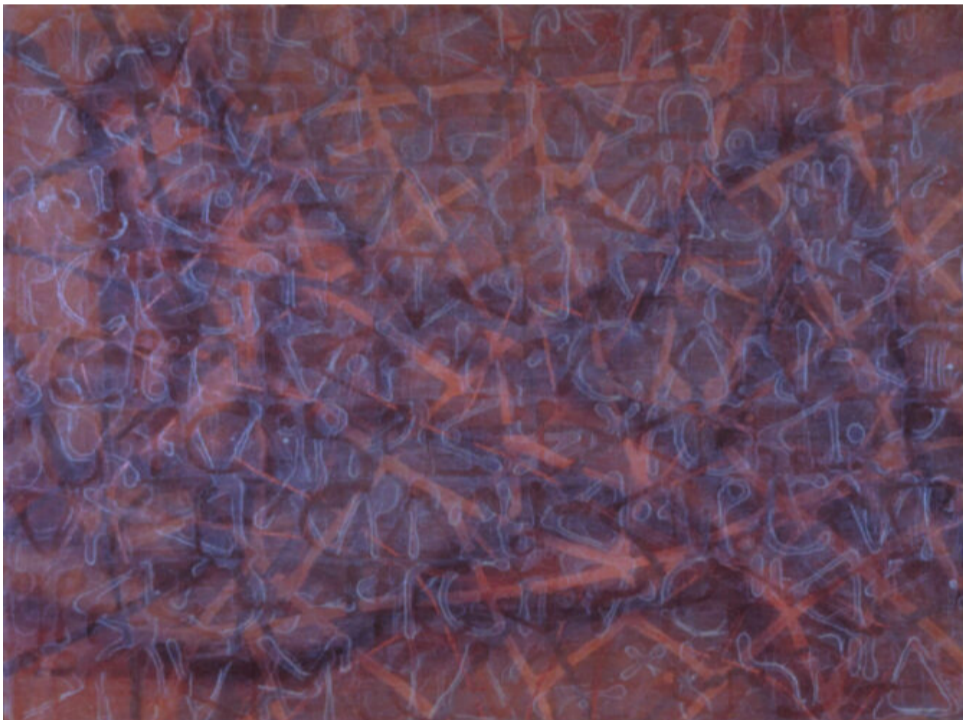
Both exhibitions marked unprecedented critical attention for contemporary Indigenous art, which many museums, including the National Gallery of Canada, did not exhibit prior to the 1980s. Yet, even as these artists achieved mainstream recognition, Monkman and a younger generation of Indigenous artists working in performance, new media, photography, and installation, including KC Adams (b.1971), Mary Anne Barkhouse (b.1961), Terrance Houle (b.1975), and Brian Jungen (b.1970), were seeking to redefine the future of Indigenous art.

As he continued his training at various institutions in Canada and the United States—including the Banff Centre for the Arts, Alberta, in 1992; Sundance Institute, Los Angeles, in 1998; and the National Screen Institute, Winnipeg, in 2001—Monkman was simultaneously making his mark as an artist. He had been interested in Abstract Expressionism since the late 1980s, and he had an eye on



this style before he was making his own works in this vein. He began experimenting with abstraction in the 1990s while reflecting on the impact of Christianity and government policies on Indigenous communities.

In a major series of abstract paintings titled *The Prayer Language* and including works such as *When He Cometh, Shall We Gather at the River*, and *Oh For A Thousand Tongues*, all 2001, Monkman combined syllabics taken from his parents' Cree hymn book with ghostly, homoerotic images of men wrestling. The translations of Christian hymns into Cree became a vehicle to investigate questions of sexuality and power and the complex history of Indigenous and European relations. Prior to contact, many Indigenous cultures honoured gender-fluid identities and same-sex attractions; it was Christianization that instilled shame and judgment about gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. With this series, Monkman not only addressed colonialism but also drew inspiration from his own history and imprinted his sexuality on his work.



LEFT: Kent Monkman, *When He Cometh, Shall We Gather at the River*, 2001, acrylic on canvas, 91.4 x 121.9 cm, Collection of the artist. RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *Blood River*, 2000, film, 23 mins, colour, English.

Monkman did not have an easy time accepting his own sexuality. However, in his thirties, he began to express his Two Spirit identity in his art. He compared his upbringing to that of a friend, artist and illustrator Maurice Vellekoop (b.1964), who talked of “the legacy of fear and shame” they dealt with because of their family’s religious beliefs (like Monkman, Vellekoop has chosen to explore sexuality in his art through projects such as the book *Pin-Ups* [2008]).¹⁵ Monkman had relationships with men and women, including artist and filmmaker Gisèle Gordon (b.1964), an early supporter of his work who remains a close friend and collaborator—the two have worked together on most of his film and video projects, such as *Blood River* (2000) and *Shooting Geronimo* (2007), as well as exhibitions. When he eventually accepted that he preferred relationships with men, his family was “ultimately supportive.”¹⁶

NEW DIRECTIONS IN PAINTING

Around the year 2001, Monkman continued his explorations with watercolour. Searching for clearer communication with viewers, he turned from abstraction to representational art. He made several works depicting male figures in simplified yet ambiguous landscapes, but, unsatisfied, he began recreating a series of paintings by Tom Thomson (1877-1917) and Group of Seven artists such as Lawren S. Harris (1885-1970). He focused on iconic pieces, including Thomson's *The Jack Pine*, 1916-17, and Harris's *North Shore, Lake Superior*, 1926. The romanticized images of the Canadian landscape as an unpopulated wilderness became significant to Monkman, who regards history as a mythology forged from relationships of power and subjugation.¹⁷ For Monkman, these landscapes are representative of a national identity—one that shows no evidence of Indigenous life on Turtle Island—needing to be countered.



LEFT: Lawren S. Harris, *North Shore, Lake Superior*, 1926, oil on canvas, 102.2 x 128.3 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *Superior*, 2001, watercolour on paper, 26 x 36 cm, Collection of the artist.

In works such as *Superior*, 2001, Monkman inserted couplings between submissive cowboys and dominant “Indians”¹⁸ into appropriated historic landscapes (in this case, from Harris), then overlaid the images with violent and racist texts culled from pulp Western novels and explicit narratives from gay erotic fiction. His objective was to use sexual power dynamics as a means of exploring larger issues of Christianity and colonization. These watercolours were serious, but their use of humour was instrumental, as it drew attention to a difficult subject matter.

Monkman also embarked on a series of acrylic paintings inspired by nineteenth-century representations of the North American West. He recalls, “When I was completing *The Prayer Language* series around 2000-1, I was drawn towards landscape paintings as a way to speak more specifically about Indigenous/settler conflict.”¹⁹ He became particularly fascinated with Romantic artists who depicted Indigenous men as doomed “noble savages,” perpetuating a myth that Indigenous people were a “dying race,” while propagating their own personas as heroic adventurers. Famous works by artists such as Paul Kane (1810-1871), John Mix Stanley (1814-1872), and Thomas Cole (1801-1848) were critical sources. He was also affected by the monumental canvases of American artist Albert Bierstadt (1830-1902), in which Indigenous peoples, if portrayed at all, were miniscule keepers of nature, appearing as small players in

his panoramic, majestic views of the West. Monkman reproduced paintings in the vein of Cole's *The Garden of Eden*, 1828, with masterful accuracy but revisionist intent, exposing the inherent racism of the original works.

Monkman decided to move away from the use of text and focus on landscapes, in which he included figures from frontier mythology such as trappers, pioneers, missionaries, and explorers, as well as "cowboys and Indians" trading, fighting, and engaging in sexual antics. One of the earliest pieces in the series was *Daniel Boone's First View of the Kentucky Valley*, 2001, quoted from a work of the same title by William Tylee Ranney (1813-1857).



Thomas Cole, *The Garden of Eden*, 1828, oil on canvas, 97.8 x 134 cm, Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth.



LEFT: William Tylee Ranney, *Boone's First View of the Kentucky Valley*, 1849, oil on canvas, 91.4 x 135.9 cm, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa. RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *Daniel Boone's First View of the Kentucky Valley*, 2001, acrylic on canvas, 20.3 x 25.4 cm, Collection of John Latour and Pierre-François Ouellette.

Research also led Monkman to Charles Ferdinand Wimar (1828-1862), who is known for his "abduction" paintings in which Daniel Boone's daughter Jemima is snatched by seemingly dangerous Indigenous men. Monkman's humorous yet poignant retaliation of this legend is evident in his Captivity paintings, such as *The Rape of Daniel Boone Junior*, 2002, where he reverses the narrative by replacing the image of Jemima Boone with a half-nude Daniel Boone, who prances gleefully out of a canoe guided by two Cherokee Shawnee. It was a Jean A. Chalmers grant from the Ontario Arts Council in 2003 that finally gave Monkman time to produce what he called "pivotal" work, and he was able to unleash his "mature direction as an artist."²⁰ He created paintings for his Moral Landscape series, riffing on compositions by nineteenth-century artists like Bierstadt, Kane, and Alfred Jacob Miller (1810-1874) in works including *Red Man Teaches White Man How to Ride Bareback*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, and *Fort Edmonton*, all 2003.



Kent Monkman, *The Rape of Daniel Boone Junior*, 2002, acrylic on canvas, 45.7 x 61 cm, private collection.

Monkman's new direction was grounded in the history of Canadian art, as well as a departure from it. He was aware of the art historical lineages born from abstraction of the 1950s and 1960s, found in movements such as Abstract Expressionism in New York and Painters 11 in Toronto. Abstraction in Canada was a reaction against what was idealized by the Canadian establishment for many years, art embodied by the Group of Seven, whose members promoted landscape painting as a distinctly Canadian art form. Both movements were not copacetic to representing the nation through an Indigenous lens. Monkman's painting gradually evolved, becoming increasingly socially and culturally pointed and revealing a new consciousness in revisiting and revising history not previously evident in Canadian art. By employing techniques related to nineteenth-century painting, Monkman was able to return an Indigenous presence not only to art history but to history itself.

THE ARRIVAL OF MISS CHIEF EAGLE TESTICKLE

In 2004, as part of a three-week visiting artist program at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C., Monkman was given access to the collections at this museum and others affiliated with it. He came across the painting *Dance to the Berdash*, 1835-37, by American artist George Catlin (1796-1872), a work he had previously only encountered as a reproduction in books. Seeing this image, which depicts a ceremonial dance celebrating a Sac

and Fox Two Spirit person, prompted Monkman to create a persona that would embrace and honour this tradition.²¹

The idea of sexuality and gender as fluid, an accepted element of many Indigenous cultures, was something that Europeans did not understand, as Catlin's disparaging and racist remarks in his journal indicate.²² When Monkman looked for a figure who could "live inside his work," a person who could represent empowered Indigenous sexuality, study European settlers, and ultimately reverse their gaze, Miss Chief Eagle

Testickle—or Miss Chief for short—was born. The name is a play on the words "mischief" and "egotistical." Early on, Monkman also incorporated the name "Cher" (or "Share"), a reimagining of the pop star and gay icon, who the artist noted "had her 'half-breed' phase which was glamorous and it was gender bending at the same time."²³ In the video for the 1973 hit song "Half-Breed," Cher is seen riding a horse, wearing a white feathered headdress and beaded breastplate and loincloth.

Another significant element not lost on Monkman was Catlin's fondness for inserting himself into his pictures as a handsome and heroic central player. Miss Chief's own presence in Monkman's work was announced subtly, prior to her appearance. Her signature appeared as author of the painting *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*, 2001 (the title of which alludes to a famous work of the same name by the Belgian surrealist René Magritte [1898-1967]), in the form of the initials S.E.T. (Share Eagle Testickle), and her spirit was insinuated in the composition's sexually explicit image of an "Indian" warrior mounting a cowboy.



LEFT: George Catlin, *Dance to the Berdash*, 1835-37, oil on canvas, 49.6 x 70.0 cm, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C. RIGHT: Carl Beam, *Cher*, 2000, serigraph on paper, 76.2 x 55.9 cm.



Kent Monkman, *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*, 2001, acrylic on canvas, 20.3 x 25.4 cm, private collection.

The first visual record of Miss Chief is in *Portrait of the Artist as Hunter*, 2002, where nearly naked Indigenous riders on horseback race into a herd of buffalo across a majestic prairie landscape. Whereas artists like John Mix Stanley, Paul Kane, or Catlin would have portrayed such a scene as a lament for the past, Monkman transforms it through the inclusion of two distinctive figures: a cowboy (naked except for chaps), who is being pursued by Miss Chief, the diva warrior wearing a pink headdress, fluttering loincloth, and stiletto heels.²⁴ She makes another poignant appearance in *Study for Artist and Model*, 2003, a work that can be considered a self-portrait (it is signed with the initials S.E.T.). Positioned with her back to the viewer, she is painting a glyph of her model on a piece of birchbark. At this point in Monkman's career, Miss Chief becomes firmly established as the "other self." His identity is subsumed into hers, and the relationship between artist and subject becomes ambiguously ever changing.



Kent Monkman, *Portrait of the Artist as Hunter*, 2002, acrylic on canvas, 59.9 x 91.3 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Like the Cree trickster *wisahkêcâhk*, whose adventures are mischievous, Miss Chief is a supernatural being, a friend of humankind who questions and disrupts ways of thinking for the better good. She can choose any disguise or form, travel through time, and use her sexuality to disempower the colonizer. For Monkman, Miss Chief is part of the Cree worldview and broader Indigenous notions of the sacred.

Although he is an urban Indigenous person influenced by mainstream gay culture, Monkman situates Miss Chief not as a drag performer but as a Two Spirit figure grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing.²⁵ His goal of challenging the accounts of Indigenous histories as told by colonizers is realized through the lens of Miss Chief. She becomes the narrator of her own imagined autobiography in which she can reverse the gaze of the colonizers by proposing an equally false history—one full of assumption, mischaracterization, and fetishization.

RESIDENCIES AND PERFORMANCES

In 2004, Monkman accepted an invitation for a weekend residency at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Kleinburg, Ontario. The opportunity came soon after a controversial dispute about the museum's mandate between the McMichael's board of directors and its founders Robert and Signe McMichael.²⁶ The McMichael, billed as "the spiritual home of the Group of Seven," was known for its conservative approach, embodying the canon of what the institution thought constituted Canadian identity through a focus on landscape. Contemporary art was not a priority. In addition, although the McMichael was one of the first museums to exhibit and collect contemporary

Indigenous work, it separated pieces by leading artists such as Alex Janvier, Norval Morrisseau (1931-2007), Daphne Odjig (1919-2016), Carl Ray (1943-1978), Allen Sapp (1928-2015), and Bill Reid (1920-1998) from the rest of the collection.

During his residency, Monkman toured the First Peoples Gallery and came across the silent film *In the Land of the Head Hunters*, 1914, by the American photographer Edward S. Curtis (1868-1952), whose documentaries have been criticized for inaccurate portrayals of Indigenous life seen from the perspective of a colonizer. This film was a fictionalization of the world of Kwakwaka'wakw peoples of the Queen Charlotte Strait region of the central coast of British Columbia.

It was an opportune time for Miss Chief to intervene in Curtis's story. She made her first physical appearance in the performance (2004) and film (2005) *Group of Seven Inches*, co-directed by and produced with Monkman's long-time collaborator Gisèle Gordon. Echoing early Super 8 silent films, it stars Monkman as Miss Chief. Fashionably dressed in a feathered headdress, platform shoes, and a diaphanous breechcloth, she rides a horse into the grounds of the McMichael, encounters two white men dressed in moccasins and breechcloth, takes them into the Tom Thomson shack (a historic building on the property), dresses them in European costumes, and paints their portraits. Miss Chief effectively mocks the artists and diarists who were both fascinated by and exploitative of Indigenous peoples. Here, the white men act like well-behaved children and do everything that Miss Chief wants. The reversal is also evident in Miss Chief's sexually charged identity, which displays both hyperfemininity and masculine authority.



Masked Dancers in Canoes—Qágyuhl, 1914, in Edward S. Curtis, *The North American Indian, Volume 10* (Boston: John Andrew & Son, 1915). This image is a production still from Edward S. Curtis's 1914 silent film, *In the Land of the Head Hunters*.



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LEFT: Kent Monkman, *Group of Seven Inches* (film still), 2005, film, 7:35 mins, colour, English, Collection of the artist. RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *Group of Seven Inches* (film still), 2005, film, 7:35 mins, colour, English, Collection of the artist.

In 2005, Monkman brought Miss Chief's performance *Taxonomy of the European Male* to Compton Verney, a museum in Warwickshire, England, for a group show co-curated by Cree art historian Richard William Hill. Miss Chief arrived at the museum on horseback and encountered Robin Hood and Friar Tuck along the way, both of whom she subsequently engaged in an archery match. Monkman referred to these performances as "Colonial Art Space Interventions." With this work of performance art as well as *Group of Seven Inches*, Monkman drew on his early-career years when he worked in set and costume design.



Kent Monkman, *Taxonomy of the European Male*, 2005, performance, Compton Verney, Warwickshire, U.K.

ACHIEVING NATIONAL RECOGNITION

The year 2004 was pivotal for Monkman: it was when the National Gallery of Canada purchased his work *Portrait of the Artist as Hunter*, 2002. Four years later, it would buy *The Triumph of Mischief*, 2007, a signature large-scale piece offering, in libidinous revelry, a glimpse into the history of Western art and the troubled interactions between First Nations peoples and Europeans. These purchases were official endorsements of the highest order.²⁷ Other art museums, corporations, and collectors followed with major purchases; among these were the Royal Bank of Canada, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, and David Furnish and Elton John. As part of the 2008 renovation of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, by architect Frank Gehry, Monkman was commissioned to do a work for the Canadian Galleries, then being curated by Gerald McMaster and David Moos. The result was *The Academy*, 2008, a painting in which Miss Chief appears wearing the bridal gown of Harriet Boulton Smith, whose gift of her art collection was critical to the establishment of the AGO. Monkman himself appears on the far right, wearing a Cree coat and speaking with the French Neoclassical painter Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825).



Kent Monkman, *The Academy*, 2008, acrylic on canvas, 205.7 x 297.2 cm (framed), Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

Monkman and Miss Chief Eagle Testickle were soon on their way to becoming famous figures in Canadian art with the power to undermine important institutional collections. In 2007, Monkman's first major touring solo exhibition, *The Triumph of Mischief*, opened at the Art Gallery of Hamilton.²⁸ The titular painting shows a setting that resembles Yosemite Valley and echoes the sublime Romanticist landscapes of Albert Bierstadt. The composition is conceptually similar to George Catlin's *Dance to the Berdash*, 1835-37, but Monkman's interpretation is subversively twisted and sexually charged. It includes artists,



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trappers, explorers, and mythical characters engaged in a wild gathering of homoeroticism, violence, and debauchery, all orchestrated around Miss Chief. *Trappers of Men*, 2006, is a similar work, one where power relations are played out in a landscape resembling Bierstadt's *Among the Sierra Nevada, California*, 1868. In Monkman's tableau, Miss Chief floats like the goddess in *Birth of Venus*, 1485-86, by Sandro Botticelli (1445-1510), amid an array of historical references to important art world figures.



LEFT: Albert Bierstadt, *Among the Sierra Nevada, California*, 1868, oil on canvas, 183 x 305 cm, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C. RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *Trappers of Men*, 2006, acrylic on canvas, 262 x 415 x 9 cm, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

As the exhibition circulated across Canada, Monkman travelled to each hosting museum and researched their collections. He would then produce a new work based on local histories and contexts; for the Winnipeg Art Gallery, for instance, he created *Woe to Those Who Remember From Whence They Came*, 2008. This method allowed for unprecedented adaptability, and it marked the beginning of his revisionist work in museum collections.

Prior to 2006, Monkman worked alone in a storefront studio on Christie Street in Toronto's west end. As his reputation grew, so did the demands of exhibition invitations, residencies, and commissions. He struggled to balance his administrative duties with creating art. In 2008 he purchased a small factory building on Sterling Road in Toronto's Junction Triangle, renovated it into a living and working space, and hired assistants to help with administrative and painting tasks.



Joseph Hartman, *Kent Monkman*, 2014 (printed 2017), chromogenic print mounted to archival board, 68.6 x 86.4 cm. Here Hartman captures Monkman's studio space.

RESPONDING TO EUROPEAN ART HISTORY

Though he first visited Europe when he was in his early 20s, beginning in the 2000s Monkman made a point of travelling there annually. His extensive research led him to connect with artists whose work ranged from history painting to modernism. At a time when he was standing on the cusp of global acclamation, these trips opened the door to new challenges and barriers to assail. What he discovered, in his words, was that "Europeans have no concept of Indigenous people.... they don't know what colonization really means."²⁹

Monkman had an epiphany during his only visit to the Museo Nacional del Prado in Madrid in June 2011. He was moved and "unexpectedly transported" by a Spanish history painting by Antonio Gisbert Pérez (1834-1901), *Execution of Torrijos and His Companions on the Beach at Málaga*, 1888. The quiet emotional resonance in a work that was politically charged intrigued him. "Over many years of looking at and studying great paintings, many have impressed me with their virtuosic technical achievements, but never had a painting reached across a century to pull me into the emotional core of a lived experience with such intensity," he wrote.³⁰

Monkman realized that there were no history paintings that “conveyed or authorized Indigenous experience in the canon of art history.”³¹ This understanding subsequently led to a body of work in which he appropriates images from European masters or visual quotations from specific modernist artworks to unveil the true Indigenous experience. *Miss America*, 2012, for instance, refers to a fresco by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1696-1770), as does the later painting *Miss Europe*, 2016.



Antonio Gisbert Pérez, *Execution of Torrijos and His Companions on the Beach at Málaga*, 1888, oil on canvas, 392.5 x 602.5 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.



LEFT: Kent Monkman, *Miss America*, 2012, acrylic on canvas, 213.4 x 335.3 cm, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. RIGHT: Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, *Apollo and the Four Continents* (detail), 1750-53, ceiling fresco above staircase, Residence of the Prince-Bishop, Würzburg.

In 2014, Monkman enjoyed his first solo exhibition in Europe at the Musée départemental d'art contemporain de Rochechouart (now the Musée d'art contemporain de la Haute-Vienne) in France, located west of Limoges in what once was the Château de Rochechouart. Titled *The Artist as Hunter*, the exhibition featured paintings, photographs, prints, films, and several installations, including Miss Chief's quiver, beaded moccasins, and assorted hunting gear in the château's “hunt room,” which is adorned with sixteenth-century wall paintings of a stag hunt. Another installation in the show was *The Collapsing of Time and Space in an Ever Expanding Universe*, 2011, in which a melancholy Miss Chief is seen as an aging diva in her Paris apartment. It is presented in quintessential French château style, a rendition of affluent life frozen in time, echoing the natural history dioramas Monkman had encountered as a child at the Manitoba Museum, Winnipeg.



LEFT: Kent Monkman, *Louis Vuitton Quiver*, 2007, cow leather, synthetics, approx. 46 x 25 x 13 cm, Collection of the artist. RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *Beaded Moccasins*, 2007, beads and vinyl shoes, approx. 30 x 30 x 30 cm, Collection of the artist.

That same year, Monkman was invited to take part in the Artist-in-Residence program at the McCord Museum in Montreal, a place with holdings of the most comprehensive collection of archival prints by photographer William Notman (1826-1891). For his installation there, Monkman brought together two artistic legacies: the McCord's archive of Notman's photographs and *The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory Summing Up Seven Years of My Artistic and Moral Life*, 1854-55, a masterpiece by French artist Gustave Courbet (1819-1877). In his enormous canvas, Courbet surrounded himself with his muse, patrons, critics, and fellow artists—the summation of the social and economic ecosystem of art's production. He was aware of the impending influence of photography, which supported his passion for realism. At the same moment in Canada, Notman was setting up his studio in Montreal, where he became known for innovative photographic techniques such as creating composites and setting up *tableaux vivants* wherein individuals and groups were posed in costume against theatrical backdrops.



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LEFT: Kent Monkman, *Welcome to the Studio: An Allegory for Artistic Reflection and Transformation* (detail), 2014, acrylic on canvas, 180 x 730 cm, McCord Museum, Montreal. RIGHT: Wm. Notman & Son, *Percival Molson, Montreal, QC*, 1898, 1898, silver salts on glass-gelatin dry plate process, 15 x 10 cm, McCord Museum, Montreal.

Monkman's curiosity about Courbet's and Notman's employment of photography and the medium's impact on painting inspired him to set his scene in a tableau that quoted the works of both artists. *Welcome to the Studio: An Allegory for Artistic Reflection and Transformation*, 2014, is also a reflection of his own space and practice where his team works, and where curators, directors, funders, and collectors visit. Monkman strategically placed Indigenous peoples in the painting and positioned himself in the centre, thereby focusing on Indigeneity and satirizing historical practices expressed in the work of Notman and Courbet.³²



LEFT: Kent Monkman, *Welcome to the Studio: An Allegory for Artistic Reflection and Transformation* (detail), 2014, acrylic on canvas, 180 x 730 cm, McCord Museum, Montreal. RIGHT: William Notman, *Capt. Huyshe, Montreal, QC, 1870, 1870*, silver salts on paper mounted on paper–albumen process, 17 x 12 cm, McCord Museum, Montreal.

LANDMARK EXHIBITIONS

In 2015, Monkman received an invitation from Barbara Fischer, executive director and chief curator at the Art Museum of the University of Toronto, to curate a solo exhibition that would provide a critical response to the upcoming 2017 sesquicentennial of Canadian Confederation. At the time, significant events related to Indigenous rights and sovereignty were informing the work of cultural institutions and the work of artists, including Monkman.

On June 11, 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper, on behalf of the Government of Canada, delivered a formal apology in the House of Commons to former residential school students, their families, and Indigenous communities. Four years later, the Idle No More movement was established, and Treaty People in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta protested the Canadian government's dismantling of environmental protection laws, an act that would endanger First Nations peoples who live on the land. In June 2015, the Resistance 150 movement was created by Anishinaabe traditional storyteller and teacher Isaac Murdoch, Métis visual artist Christi Belcourt (b.1966), Cree activist Tanya Kappo, and Métis author Maria Campbell. The group's intention was to inspire Indigenous peoples to reclaim what was taken during colonization and to bring attention to climate change and resource extraction in Canada.³³ The following year, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was launched. Leading up to the Canada 150 celebrations, Indigenous activists planned counter-celebrations to challenge the commemoration of a history that ignores the tumultuous and traumatic relationship between Indigenous peoples and the rest of Canada.

Canada 150 also marked a critical period for museums as they began to move toward decolonizing by revisiting collections and making significant changes in policy. With the "reoccupation" protest on Parliament Hill in advance of Canada Day festivities in 2017, Indigenous activists succeeded in defining the sesquicentennial as an occasion to consider past harms and broken and unmet promises. Museums across the nation were responding to the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, which included a section directed toward them.³⁴



Prime Minister Stephen Harper (bottom left) and other members of Parliament listen as National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Phil Fontaine speaks in the House of Commons on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, June 11, 2008, photograph by Chris Wattie.



Indigenous rights activists march after the “Unsettle Canada Day 150 Picnic” in Toronto, July 1, 2017, photograph by Mark Blinch.

After conducting extensive research into a dozen Canadian museums’ permanent collections, Monkman unveiled *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience* at the Art Museum of the University of Toronto in January 2017. It was dedicated to his paternal grandmother, Elizabeth Monkman, “who like many of her generation,” Monkman wrote, “was shamed into silence in the face of extreme prejudice.”³⁵ The title riffs on Jane Austen’s 1813 novel *Pride and Prejudice*, and the show was framed around Miss Chief’s trickster relations with colonizers. *Pride* is replaced with *Shame* to highlight Canada’s mistreatment of Indigenous peoples.

Experiencing the exhibition was compared to walking into a book. The installation consisted of nine “chapters” in which Miss Chief, via excerpts from her memoirs, reframed Canada’s foundational myths.³⁶ In the first section, she was present in a life-size diorama titled *Scent of a Beaver*, 2016, dressed in lace and beaver fur and seated on a swing, evoking the work of French Rococo painter Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732–1806). Attending to her were General Montcalm and General Wolfe, who led the French and British forces, respectively, at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759, the decisive conflict in which the latter’s victory led to Canada becoming part of the British Empire.



Kent Monkman, *Scent of a Beaver*, 2016, mixed-media installation, installation view of *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience* at the Art Museum at the University of Toronto, 2017, photograph by Toni Hafkenscheid.

An adjacent work, *The Massacre of the Innocents*, 2015, set the tone for what was to come. Quoting the Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) painting of the same name from c.1610, the work depicts thirteen white and Métis settlers slaughtering beavers. In the exhibition narrative, Miss Chief spoke about the early politics that shaped Turtle Island and the fallout of colonialism. She told the story of what Monkman calls “the worst 150 years in Indigenous peoples’ history.”³⁷ The exhibition challenged the nation’s interpretation of itself by telling the truth about the dark themes of colonialism while also sending a message of Indigenous resilience. It warranted two significant accolades for Monkman: the Ontario Premier’s Award for Excellence in the Arts and an honorary doctorate degree from OCAD University, Toronto.



LEFT: Peter Paul Rubens, *The Massacre of the Innocents*, c.1610, oil on panel, 142 x 183 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *The Massacre of the Innocents*, 2015, acrylic on canvas, 182.9 x 259.1 cm, private collection.

In 2019, New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art commissioned *mistikôsiwak* (*Wooden Boat People*), a diptych, as part of its series for contemporary projects responding to works in its collection. The work would be presented in the Great

Hall, an imposing space with a conspicuous aura of cultural authority and achievement.³⁸ By this time, fortuitously, Monkman had sold his studio and living quarters on Sterling Road in Toronto and purchased a building in North York, which he converted to a combined living and studio space big enough to take on large-scale projects and accommodate more assistants. In December 2019, he opened *mistikôsiwak (Wooden Boat People)* at the Met. It consisted of two related, monumental paintings: *Welcoming the Newcomers* and *Resurgence of the People*.



Kent Monkman, *mistikôsiwak (Wooden Boat People)* (installation view), 2019, acrylic on canvas, 335.3 x 670.6 cm (each painting), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, photograph by Anna-Marie Kellen.

For Monkman, the project represented the pinnacle of many years of work and served as an international showcase for his practice. He shared, "I'm very proud that I was given that opportunity and welcomed into the museum to speak candidly to their collection and to museum practices, which are on the edge of significant change. I think with these commissions the Met showed leadership in moving the conversation forward, further forward than some of the other institutions that are still lagging behind."³⁹

The paintings illuminate how "encyclopedic" art museums perpetuate settler perspectives of history.⁴⁰ The title *mistikôsiwak* derives from a Cree word meaning "wooden boat people." It originally applied to French settlers, but Monkman uses it to refer to all the Europeans who colonized the so-called New World. The left painting of the diptych, *Welcoming the Newcomers*, dramatically recreates their arrival, as they brought with them institutions of religion and slavery. *Resurgence of the People* is a testament to, and celebration of, Indigenous resiliency. Both compositions teem with references to European and North American paintings and sculptures in the Met's collections, with nods to European Old Masters such as Titian (c.1488-1576) and Rubens. Monkman's paintings are particularly poignant in their references to works by Euro-American artists who depicted Indigenous subjects as noble and in a state of inevitable extinction. In 2020, the museum announced it had acquired the diptych for its permanent collection.



LEFT: Kent Monkman, *Welcoming the Newcomers*, 2019, acrylic on canvas, 335.3 x 670.6 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *Resurgence of the People*, 2019, acrylic on canvas, 335.3 x 670.6 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

As the new decade began, the cultural landscape was changing profoundly in the wider world with #MeToo, Black Lives Matter, and a global pandemic opening up dialogue about injustice and inequality in radical new ways.⁴¹ Indigenous communities across Canada were angered by the 2018 acquittal of a white farmer in Saskatchewan who killed Colten Boushie, a young Cree man. A wave of uprisings against police violence and systemic racism took place after the killing of George Floyd, a Black man in Minneapolis who was murdered by police officer Derek Chauvin.

Among a younger generation of multidisciplinary Indigenous artists, including Meryl McMaster (b.1988), Duane Linklater (b.1976), and Tania Willard (b.1977), the reassessment of Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples has become even more pronounced. Several Black, Indigenous, and racialized artists, such as Deanna Bowen (b.1969), have joined in Monkman's advocacy toward decolonization in art museums alongside curators such as Wanda Nanibush, Patricia Deadman, and Lisa Myers. Now a mature artist, Monkman continues to be a significant catalyst toward these shifts in the cultural landscape. His work and Miss Chief's critical interventions are needed more than ever in the move forward to restitution. Believing that art can be a powerful force for social change, and inspired by Indigenous resistance and resilience, past and present, Monkman focuses on how to transform darkness to create a transcendent experience. With the ambitious goal to "decolonize Canada," Miss Chief remains a force to be reckoned with.



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Kent Monkman with the study for *Welcoming the Newcomers*, 2019, photograph by Aaron Wynia.



KEY WORDS

As a young artist, Kent Monkman experimented with abstraction, but he has become famous for representational works that draw on historic Western painting and contemporary popular culture to confront colonial realities. In addition to his mastery of medieval and Renaissance iconography, Monkman has a finely tuned understanding of the history of painting, particularly of the grand European works of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In his art, disparate sources converge and are recontextualized in relation to Indigeneity, sexuality, nationalism, and climate change, emphasizing that the allegories of the past are warnings for the future.



SHALL WE GATHER AT THE RIVER 2001



Kent Monkman, *Shall We Gather at the River*, 2001

Acrylic on canvas, 182.9 x 243.8 cm

Collection of the artist

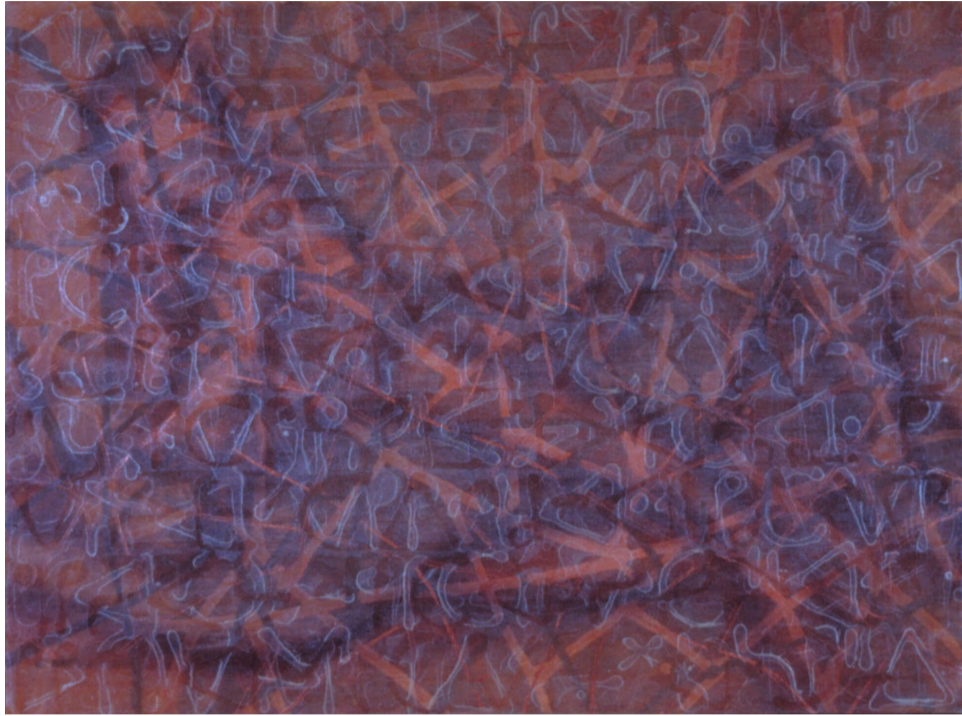
Shall We Gather at the River is part of a series titled *The Prayer Language*, which was inspired by a book of Cree hymns owned by Kent Monkman's parents, and the work incorporates Cree syllabics quoted from the hymn of the same name that gives the piece its title. Layers of thick, semi-transparent acrylic paint mimic human skin, with a surface resembling veins, muscles, and bone.¹ Underneath these markings are ghostlike figures sourced from photographs of men wrestling, entwined in either ecstasy or struggle. Intrigued by Michel Foucault's notion of sexuality as an exchange of power, Monkman explores the body as a site of contention inflected by conquest, struggle, and implicit questions of identity, using his ancestral language of Cree.² This act of layering—body, language, and history—is a powerful reference to the impact of Christianity on Indigenous communities, a critical issue Monkman has explored for many years.

Cree was called “the prayer language” on the reserve where Monkman’s great-grandmother was born in St. Peters, Manitoba,³ and Christianity was part of his personal history, with lasting effects passed along from his great-grandmother to the present. While the invention of Cree syllabics dates to 1840 and is attributed to James Evans, an Anglican missionary in northern Manitoba, many Cree people, including Monkman, believe that syllabics existed on birchbark scrolls and that Evans learned about them through his contact with the Cree community. In Evans’s hands the syllabics were deployed through a non-Indigenous

perspective, accentuating the Church’s association with the colonizer.⁴

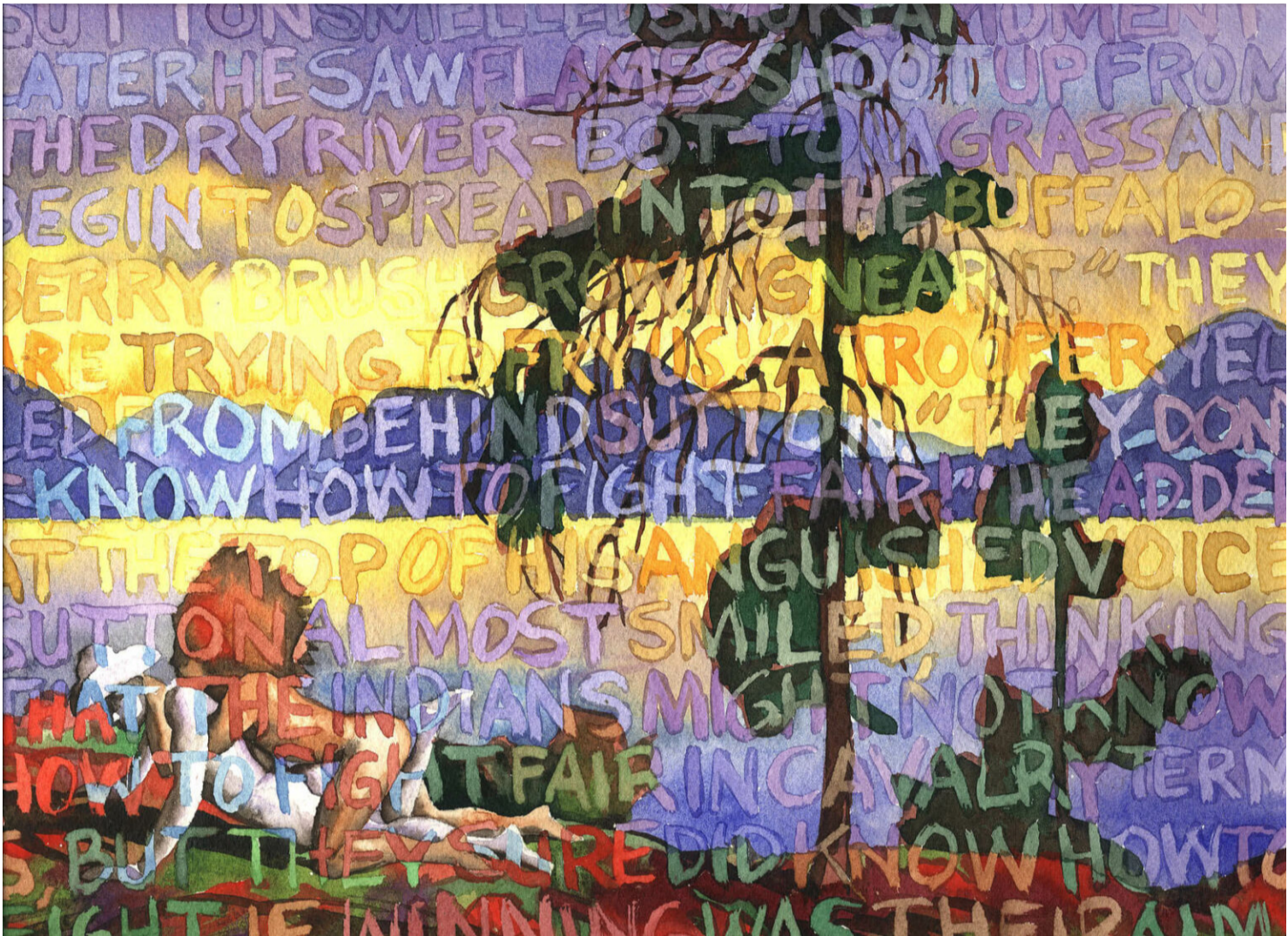
Christianity established its presence through this language, encoding marks signifying teachings of the Bible. Monkman could not speak or read Cree at the time he created this work (he is currently learning the language), but he saw the language as an abstraction, and the syllabics became abstract marks within his art.

Monkman also addresses sexual power relations in the history of Indigenous and European contact by bringing together elements of hymns and homoeroticism. Some titles in The Prayer Language series are cheeky double entendres that push against Christian sexual morality, such as *When He Cometh*, 2001. “I was thinking of colonized sexuality,” he explained. “It was through the process of colonization and the impact of the Church and missionaries that resulted in homophobia in our communities.”⁵ The series was exhibited at the Indian Art Centre (now the Indigenous Art Centre) in Ottawa in 2001.



Kent Monkman, *When He Cometh*, 2001, acrylic on canvas, 91.4 x 121.9 cm, Collection of the artist.

JACK PINE 2001



Kent Monkman, *Jack Pine*, 2001
 Watercolour on acid-free paper, 22.9 x 30.5 cm
 Private collection

In *Jack Pine*, Kent Monkman appropriates the iconic work *The Jack Pine*, 1916–17, by Tom Thomson (1877–1917), subverting the original painting’s visual language and meaning. In this watercolour, Monkman obscures the famed Canadian landscape with a scrim of violent, racist text from a pulp Western novel that he culled from his research on the fetishization of Indigenous men. Two men are depicted near the base of the tree, one wearing a cowboy hat, and the other a feathered headdress. Their ambiguous embrace implies both a struggle and a sexual act, and the land is the focus of the encounter.¹ The text appears camouflaged in parts of the composition, yet it resonates clearly in red on the warrior’s body and blue over the cowboy’s body. After his early explorations in abstraction, Monkman wanted to find a means of deeper and clearer communication, so he turned toward figurative imagery, and *Jack Pine* is part of this shift in his art.

When he took up representational painting, Monkman began by depicting people in ambiguous landscapes. He later quoted directly from well-known paintings by Group of Seven artists. With a focus on homosexuality, he decided

to include two key players in his new narrative, creating, in his words, “one as a brown man and one as a white man; one a ‘cowboy’ and the other an ‘Indian.’”² Monkman’s objective was to use sexual power dynamics to explore issues of Christianity and colonialism, with particular emphasis on how Indigenous peoples accepted homosexuality and how the Church repressed it.

Other works in which Monkman referenced the Group of Seven include *Superior*, 2001, where the artist lifts the composition from Group of Seven member Lawren S. Harris (1885–1970). In his characteristic humorous style, he turned the tree stump in the painting *North Shore, Lake Superior*, 1926—which Harris intended as a majestic symbol of nature’s regenerative power—into a blatant phallus. These works take aim at male artists’ colonialist chauvinism, as well as their notorious exclusion of women. The use of layered image and text is reflective of the complex stratification of power, eroticism, morality, and xenophobia at the root of Canadian identity.³

Monkman has identified this series as part of an important development in his work, noting:

My Group of Seven interventions were transitional influences from my Prayer Language series; I made a suite of watercolours that shows my visual transition from abstraction to landscape. I focused on the Group of Seven because I was interested in the graphic quality of their work. Their landscape paintings suited the more graphic style of my earliest watercolour pieces after the Prayer Language, in which I continued to experiment with an overlay of text over the work... Taking on this series was a reflection on conflicts around land in North America. Looking at their work, I was struck by how the Group of Seven painted Canadian landscapes as empty and unpopulated, devoid of people. The Canadian artists in the Group of Seven “disappeared” first peoples and reinforced concepts of the North American landscape as an empty wilderness. I wanted to challenge that.⁴

Monkman’s *Jack Pine*, among other paintings in the series, was installed in the Members’ Lounge of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Kleinburg, Ontario, as part of his 2004 residency there. This can be read as an ironic placement, given the McMichael’s history as the institutional authority on Canadian identity in the work of the Group of Seven.



Tom Thomson, *The Jack Pine*, 1916–17, oil on canvas, 127.9 x 139.8 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



STUDY FOR ARTIST AND MODEL 2003



Kent Monkman, *Study for Artist and Model*, 2003
Acrylic on canvas, 50.8 x 61 cm
Collection of the artist

Study for Artist and Model is one of the earliest of Kent Monkman's paintings to represent his alter ego Miss Chief Eagle Testickle, a central figure in many of his works. She is depicted standing at an easel, confidently rendering a portrait in pictographic style on birchbark. Her subject is a cowboy photographer, stripped naked and bound to a tree, with his camera broken on the ground beside him. He has been pierced by arrows, seemingly by Miss Chief, who carries her signature Louis Vuitton quiver, and his pose echoes that of Saint Sebastian, a martyr often depicted in Renaissance paintings and an icon of homosexual desire. The work is signed in the bottom left-hand corner "S.E.T.," which stands for Share Eagle Testickle, an early form of Miss Chief's name.

The composition of *Study for Artist and Model* is loosely based on *Catlin Painting the Portrait of Mah-to-toh-pa-Mandan*, 1861/1869, by George Catlin (1796-1872). In Monkman's version, he takes considerable mischievous licence. The ambiguous landscape resembles the painterly renditions of forests by Paul Kane (1810-1871) and the vistas of Thomas Cole (1801-1848), but it is more closely associated with the work of Asher Brown Durand (1796-1886) of the Hudson River School. Miss Chief's pose is more aligned with that of the Mandan chief in Catlin's painting than with Catlin himself. Monkman renders the scene in an exquisitely Romanticist style while Miss Chief's painting within the painting is divergent, thereby accentuating an acute aesthetic difference.



George Catlin, *Catlin Painting the Portrait of Mah-to-toh-pa-Mandan*, 1861/1869, oil on card mounted on paperboard, 47 x 62.3 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Monkman's engagement with Catlin's work was the catalyst for the creation of Miss Chief Eagle Testickle. Recognizing how Catlin mingled self-promotion with the nineteenth-century Romantic idea of Indigenous peoples as a "vanishing race," Monkman decided that he would—as Catlin had—insert a persona to live inside his art. In this way, he could re-address historical narratives and reverse the white, settler-colonialist gaze—whereas Catlin showed himself observing Indigenous subjects, here it is Miss Chief who holds authority in the scene as she paints the white man. Miss Chief Eagle Testickle's name embraces Catlin's self-aggrandizement and self-promotion as "egotistical." With this painting, she becomes firmly established as the "other self." Monkman's identity is subsumed into hers, and the relationship between artist and subject is ever changing.



THE IMPENDING STORM 2004



Kent Monkman, *The Impending Storm*, from *The Trilogy of Saint Thomas*, 2004
Acrylic on canvas, 152.6 x 242.4 cm
Montreal Museum of Fine Arts

In *The Impending Storm*, Kent Monkman tells of a mythological tragic romance between Miss Chief Eagle Testickle and her Orangeman lover, the young Thomas Scott. We see two figures—Miss Chief and Scott—fleeing together from a dark, ominous cloud hovering over a landscape inspired by the monumental works of American painter Albert Bierstadt (1830–1902). The painting is part of a series that Monkman refers to interchangeably as *The Moral Landscape* or *Eros and Empire*, and it is the first in a three-part narrative titled *The Trilogy of Saint Thomas*, 2004.

The Impending Storm offers a fictional narrative about the story of Scott, who was an Irish Protestant who moved to the Red River Colony (now part of Manitoba) in 1869. The following year, Scott was convicted of treason and executed by the provisional government, led by Métis leader Louis Riel, on March 4. The event led to the Red River Expedition, in which Prime Minister John A. Macdonald sent a military force to the colony to confront the Métis at Red River.

The storm is used as an allegory for an ending of innocence and the suggestion of impending doom, as if representing the threats that were about to encroach on Indigenous existence following the events in Red River. Rather than portraying conflict or rivalry, Monkman decided to use the paintings as a vehicle for reconciliation through a love story. The tale is conceived as a metaphor for the entwined histories and relationships between white settlers and Indigenous peoples.¹

By adapting the conventions of nineteenth-century artworks and by fusing fact and fiction, Monkman projects his own stories upon landscapes that are sites of contact and contention.² Historically, Indigenous peoples were represented as insignificant or minute in comparison to the landscape, if they were depicted at all. In this work, the couple flees the gathering storm, a natural event often depicted in Romantic paintings as evidence of the environment's power over humans and a metaphor for the threat that the untamed wilderness faces from human activity.



LEFT: Kent Monkman, *The Fourth of March*, from *The Trilogy of Saint Thomas*, 2004, acrylic on canvas, 183.4 x 274.8 cm, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *Not the End of the Trail*, from *The Trilogy of Saint Thomas*, 2004, acrylic on canvas, 183.7 x 274.7 cm, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

Completing the trilogy are *The Fourth of March*, 2004, and *Not the End of the Trail*, 2004. The former references Scott's execution, an event that had a significant political impact on what was to come for the Cree people. His death in 1870 led the Canadian government to send forces to Manitoba, which became a new province that same year, and once it had joined Confederation, federal oppression of Indigenous peoples intensified. In the final painting, Miss Chief buries her lover. She is depicted very much alone on her horse, an allusion to the colonizers' desire to view Indigenous peoples as "a disappearing race." The imagery of Miss Chief in this composition is a deliberate echo of the sculpture *End of the Trail*, 1918, by James Earle Fraser (1876–1953), which casts Indigenous people as being on the cusp of tragically vanishing from the world.



GROUP OF SEVEN INCHES 2004 AND 2005



Kent Monkman, *Group of Seven Inches* (performance photograph), 2004
Performance and film, 7:35 mins, colour, English
Collection of the artist

In August 2004, Kent Monkman staged an intervention at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Kleinburg, Ontario, through a filmed performance titled *Group of Seven Inches*. Channelling pop star Cher, Miss Chief Eagle Testickle, in her first public appearance, rides a horse down the long road leading into the museum's grounds. She encounters two white males dressed in moccasins and breechcloth, takes them into what was a studio belonging to Tom Thomson (1877-1917), and proceeds to feed them liquor and spank them with snowshoes, canoe paddles, and a cast-iron frying pan. Eventually she dresses them in the traditional late eighteenth-century European garb of powdered wigs and ruffled shirts and sets out to paint their portraits.

The film, which echoes the style of early silent movies, subverts the art of George Catlin (1796-1872) and Paul Kane (1810-1871) and the documentaries of Edward S. Curtis (1868-1952). These men were known for studying Indigenous nations, and here Monkman reverses their gazes, positioning Miss Chief as an artist observing white people. She prepares for her account of the ethnography of the European white male, and in one clip she presents a declaration of her intent, a statement that upends a similar text Kane wrote about his commitment to studying Indigenous peoples: "I have determined to devote whatever talents and proficiency I possess to the painting of a series of pictures illustrative of the European male. The subject is one in which I have felt a deep interest since childhood having become intimately familiar in my native land with the hundreds of trappers, voyageurs, priests and farmers who represent the noblest races of Europe."¹



Kent Monkman, *Group of Seven Inches* (performance photograph), 2004, performance and film, 7:35 mins, colour, English, Collection of the artist.

The *Group of Seven Inches* film was featured in the *Triumph of Mischief* exhibition at the Art Gallery of Hamilton in 2007 in the installation *Théâtre de Cristal*, 2006. This too was intended as a critical response, one that looked back to Catlin's presentations of his work. Catlin had created a travelling Indian Gallery to show exhibits of his pictures and collections, and at the centre he placed a tall, white Crow tipi, decorated with a series of hunting and battle scenes. The tipi in Monkman's exhibit is one of the ways that Miss Chief mirrors and transforms Catlin's project.



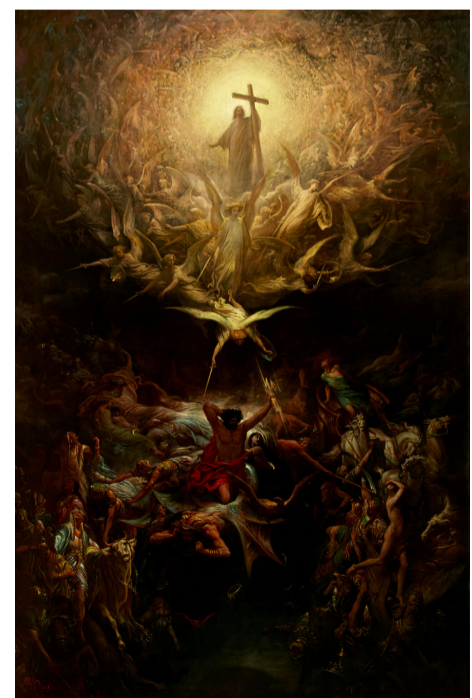
THE TRIUMPH OF MISCHIEF 2007



Kent Monkman, *The Triumph of Mischief*, 2007
Acrylic on canvas, 213 x 335 cm
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

The Triumph of Mischief is a seminal work that provides a multi-layered critique of colonization. Kent Monkman's alter ego, Miss Chief Eagle Testickle, wears only a pair of pumps and a pink shawl draped and fluttering over her arm as she strolls through a wild and detailed scene of homoerotic imagery, violence, and debauchery.¹ Indigenous peoples, trappers, and explorers circle around her. Also making appearances are the late eighteenth-century explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark (depicted at the far left of the painting grappling with a bear, with Sacagawea just beyond them); artists Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) (seen just to the right of Miss Chief, wearing a striped shirt and surrounded by Black men in poses reminiscent of his *Les Femmes d'Alger*, 1907), George Catlin (1796-1872), and Paul Kane (1810-1871) (both on the far right, wearing buckskin); and figures from Indigenous culture and prophecy, including the white buffalo, the shape-shifter who gave the gift of seven sacred ceremonies to the Lakota people.²

In the foreground meadow, a variety of transgressions take place that are cultural, sexual, and social in nature. Created in response to Catlin's *Dance to the Berdash*, 1835-37, which Monkman viewed at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., in 2004, the work also nods to *The Triumph*



Gustave Doré, *Le triomphe de Christianisme sur le paganisme* (*The Triumph of Christianity Over Paganism*), 1868, oil on canvas, 300 x 200 cm, Art Gallery of Hamilton.



of Christianity Over Paganism, 1868, a masterpiece by Gustave Doré (1832–1883), in its playful, sexually charged reversal where Miss Chief takes the central position of Christ, and pokes at iconic nineteenth-century paintings of the western frontier.

The use of sexuality in Monkman's works is a deliberate deconstruction of the logics of power and knowledge that came with colonization. Through humour and camp, Monkman playfully draws viewers into a scene that counters preconceived notions of historical and contemporary settler-Indigenous relations.³ The work challenges us to envision an alternative version of the dominant narrative of North American history.

The Triumph of Mischief was the central work in Monkman's first national solo touring exhibition, which opened at the Art Gallery of Hamilton in 2007. The National Gallery of Canada acquired it for its permanent collection the following year.



LOT'S WIFE 2012



Kent Monkman, *Lot's Wife*, 2012

Fibreglass, Styrofoam, wood, taxidermy deer, artificial grass, and video projection, 243.8 x 243.8 x 243.8 cm (sculptural element), 274.3 x 487.7 cm (video projection)

Denver Art Museum

Presented like a diorama, the multimedia installation *Lot's Wife* includes a mannequin of Kent Monkman as Miss Chief Eagle Testickle, dressed in a white diaphanous tunic and holding a beaded purse. She stands in the midst of long grasses and wildflowers that are native to Manitoba and crafted out of plastic, Styrofoam, and wood. A taxidermy fawn rests in the reeds. The figure gazes at a screen upon which a video is projected of the Red River as it flows south from Lake Winnipeg near St. Peters, Manitoba. The film is accompanied by ambient sounds of the natural environment. The work's title comes from the Biblical story of Lot's wife, who turns to take a final, forbidden glance at her home in Sodom before God destroys it. For her defiance, God punishes her by turning her into a pillar of salt. With the installation, Monkman addresses remembrance, memory, and the land.

Lot's Wife, which premiered in *Winnipeg Now* at the Winnipeg Art Gallery in 2012, foregrounds the theft of the ancestral territories of Monkman's family. His great-grandmother, Caroline Everette, grew up in St. Peters. She and her family were forcibly removed and relocated three times, through claims by white colonizers from the Anglican settlement supported by Canadian government policies. St. Peters was a community in the Red River Valley, in what is today southern Manitoba.¹ A band of Saulteaux people, led by Chief Peguis, and Swampy Cree people established it as an agricultural settlement in the early nineteenth century.



Kent Monkman, *Woe to Those Who Remember From Whence They Came*, 2008, acrylic on canvas, 182.9 x 274.3 cm, Balsillie Collection.

The beauty of the image underscores the poignancy of the loss suffered by Everette, Monkman, and, by inference, generations of Indigenous peoples. Multi-layered, the installation addresses both Monkman's family history of dispossession and Christianity's negation of Indigenous peoples. It is described by the artist as a "critique of European settler modernity and their creed of amnesia that refutes the idea of erasing memory of place."²

The theme of loss and memory was also evident in a painting Monkman produced earlier, *Woe to Those Who Remember From Whence They Came*, 2008, in which a prairie vista overlooking Fort Garry sets the stage. A former Hudson's Bay trading post, this is the site where Treaty No. 1 was made on August 3, 1871, between the Ojibwe and Swampy Cree of Manitoba and the Crown. At the centre of the composition is the apparitional figure of Miss Chief. As she is commanded to leave, she glances back to her homeland. As a result of her disobedience, she is turned into a pillar of salt. While Monkman acknowledges that past events cannot be changed, he proves that the representation of these events can be rewritten.

MISS AMERICA 2012



Kent Monkman, *Miss America*, 2012
Acrylic on canvas, 213.4 x 335.3 cm
Montreal Museum of Fine Arts

Miss America is the first work in the Four Continents series that Kent Monkman produced between 2012 and 2016, which was shown in its entirety at the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery the year it was completed. In a triangular composition, Miss Chief Eagle Testickle is seen riding an alligator, raising a feather to the sky, and holding court over a diverse tangle of figures that include a basketball player, a British soldier, a mermaid that looks like Marilyn Monroe, Indigenous peoples of ambiguous gender identities, and Aztecs and Mayans.

The Four Continents is a reinterpretation of the Rococo ceiling fresco *Apollo and the Four Continents*, 1750-53, by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1696-1770), which Monkman had seen in books in the early 2000s and in person at the Würzburg Residence in Germany, the former home of the prince-bishops, in 2013 or 2014. At each edge of the curved ceiling are



LEFT: Kent Monkman, *Miss Africa*, 2013, acrylic on canvas, 213.4 x 335.3 cm, private collection. RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *Miss Asia*, 2015, acrylic on canvas, 213.4 x 335.3 cm, Claridge Collection.



symbolic representations of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. In Monkman's series, each continent is personified by a Two Spirit sovereign with Miss Chief playing the roles of Africa, America, Asia, and Europe. His reworking of Tiepolo's fresco challenges the history of the so-called Enlightenment or Age of Reason in the 1700s, revealing a barrage of colonialist aggression on a global scale. Monkman turns Tiepolo's pageant of benevolent "exploration" into something resembling an action movie, where violence and sexual desire play out with warnings of environmental destruction and terrorism.

Miss America incorporates a mash-up of symbolism: a Catholic priest accepts the one-armed embrace of a Mohawk warrior; a canoe features a Mercedes Benz logo; and a man wears a wolfskin hood and carries a pale lavender parasol. There is also a homoerotic image of Saint Sebastian in jeans, cowboy boots, and a belt with a Chanel logo. The inclusion of emblems of modernity (like the logos) alludes to the multiple ways in which trade and theft are manifested in global narratives.¹ "I wanted to think about a contemporary version of globalism and how consumer culture and corporate culture have impacted indigenous people on the various continents," Monkman said.²

Tiepolo's cycle uses the aesthetics of classical antiquity coupled with Enlightenment worldviews to bring order from chaos—the artist has organized the entire world in his fresco. Monkman, although appropriating Tiepolo's compositional and iconographic tools, piles Indigenous and non-Indigenous bodies into a climax of the colonizing of the Americas that simultaneously asserts and undermines the "rationalism" of our age. By monumentalizing the Indigenous experience in the Americas, he posits a different historical trajectory that skewers the apocryphal fantasies of colonial supremacy. Indigenizing a canonical piece in the history of European art, he creates a masterwork of subversion and sensuality that responds to and engages with anti-colonial discourse.

LE PETIT DÉJEUNER SUR L'HERBE 2014



Kent Monkman, *Le Petit déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 2014
 Acrylic on canvas, 213.4 x 320 cm
 Collection of the National Bank of Canada

Le Petit déjeuner sur l'herbe is a part of the Urban Res series that Kent Monkman produced between 2013 and 2016, which focuses on Winnipeg's North End community, home to many Indigenous peoples. The setting is the compressed, confined space of the city. There is little landscape except for what is seen through a chain-link fence. The naked figures of women lying in the street are made of multiple flattened planes, sharp angular shapes, and chopped, distorted forms appropriated from Cubism and the radical reinventions of female nudes by Pablo Picasso (1881-1973). They are a parody of that artist's *Les Femmes d'Alger*, 1907, a famous group portrait of prostitutes in Barcelona. An expensive car is parked outside, implying that the owner is upstairs with one of the women. The abuse and violence implicit in the scene are underscored by a figure modelled on Picasso's air-raid mural, *Guernica*, 1937. Monkman has described the series as depicting a hostile environment of "the predator and prey," and in particular, the reality that "Indigenous women are preyed upon."¹

The title of this painting references *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 1863, by Édouard Manet (1832-1883), which was considered groundbreaking in its time as a key example of modernism. In that work, a nude woman gazes directly at the viewer as she sits with two clothed men on the grass in a park. Manet's representation of the woman countered the demure, idealized nude of the academic tradition, and in collapsing pictorial space he favoured a flattened, modernist approach. Commenting on the composition, Monkman noted that Manet "transformed conventions of pictorial space and set Modernism on its path," and suggested that "the painter's flattening of pictorial space echoes the shrinking of space for Indigenous people, who were forced onto reserves that are tiny fractions of their original territory now comprising only 0.2% of Canada."²



LEFT: Pablo Picasso, *Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J.) version O*, June–July 1907, oil on canvas, 243.9 x 233.7 cm, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. © Picasso Estate / SOCAN (2022).
RIGHT: Édouard Manet, *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe (Luncheon on the Grass)*, 1863, oil on canvas, 207 x 265 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

Monkman's appropriations represent the colonialist and modernist violence inflicted on the female form and spirit. Referring to Picasso's "butchering of the female nude," Monkman's work refutes European ideas and the impact of modernism that Indigenous cultures have faced, as well as the dehumanization endured by Indigenous women in particular.³ Monkman sees the whole modernist period in European art in parallel with the effects on Indigenous communities wrought by other symptoms of modernity, including the railways and the Indian Act. Picasso also acts as a foil for Monkman's own sensibility and sexuality.

The angels seem to be a mysterious ambiguous presence in Monkman's paintings. They hearken to the cherubs often seen in Baroque paintings, Renaissance ceilings, and sacred European frescoes, yet the angels in this work resemble women. They may signify grace but also the destructive impact of Christianity on First Nations communities—are they preying on souls or saving them? This duality allows Monkman to allude freely to the Old Master paintings he interrogates.



CASUALTIES OF MODERNITY 2015



Kent Monkman, *Casualties of Modernity* (installation view), 2015
Mixed media installation with HD video, 14:45 minutes, (no fixed height) x 272 x 525 cm
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

Casualties of Modernity is a seminal work that encapsulates the depth of Kent Monkman's practice and his investigations of modernism. Initially created as a performance, it then became an installation and a film. In the installation, in a simulated hospital room high above a city, a mannequin of Miss Chief Eagle Testickle, dressed as a nurse, tends to a prone and flattened Cubist construction of a female patient, who bears a remarkable resemblance to one of the women in *Les Femmes d'Alger*, 1907, by Pablo Picasso (1881-1973). Next to the patient, an electrocardiogram machine monitors her heartbeat, while intravenous lines feed her twisted arms. There is the faint sound of wheezing as her chest rises and falls with each laboured breath. In addition to a red and white uniform, Miss Chief, in customary fashionista style, is wearing seven-inch red patent platform heels and diamond accessories, modelled after a fetishized "sexy nurse" persona.

Opposite the bed, a television airs an episode from Miss Chief's popular syndicated TV show, *Casualties of Modernity*, in which she stars with the erudite Doctor of Fine Arts and a cast of vulnerable or forgotten art traditions that include abstract art, performance art, Conceptual art, and Romanticism. The video recalls daytime hospital soap operas like *General Hospital*, as well as the evening dramas *Dallas* and *Dynasty*. In this instance, the patients in the hospital are ailing art movements.



Kent Monkman, *Casualties of Modernity* (film still), 2015, mixed media installation with HD video, 14:45 minutes, (no fixed height) x 272 x 525 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. This scene shows Miss Chief with the Doctor of Fine Arts.

The project had originated with a performance on October 18, 2013, when Miss Chief made an official visit to the modern wing of the Denver Art Museum. Led on a tour by the institution's Doctor of Fine Arts, in her first speaking role on video, Miss Chief's words were inspired by Princess Diana as a philanthropist and a compassionate, sympathetic, and caring soul, who comforts the crushed, lifeless "casualties of modernity." (Monkman felt that Miss Chief and Princess Diana shared a special bond, as they both experienced a contentious relationship with the Crown.)

With *Casualties of Modernity*, Monkman employs a variety of media and continues his research into the dynamics of the European gaze—in this instance, focusing critical eyes on the modernist era. Revolutionary developments in figuration by Picasso, Henri Matisse (1869–1954), Alberto Giacometti (1901–1966), and others drew upon and perverted the traditions of Oceanic and African art, reducing and reassembling living things and inanimate objects into two-dimensional planes and geometries. Monkman sees the reductive character of their art as metaphor for modernity's compression of Indigenous cultures.



THE DADDIES 2016



Kent Monkman, *The Daddies*, 2016
Acrylic on canvas, 152.4 x 285.6 cm
Collection of Irphan Rawji

The Daddies is an appropriation of *Meeting of the Delegates of British North America to Settle the Terms of Confederation, Quebec, October 1864, 1884*, by Robert Harris (1849-1919), which was intended to document the 1864 Conference where political leaders discussed plans for the formation of the Dominion of Canada—the painting is often referred to as *The Fathers of Confederation*. In Kent Monkman's work, Miss Chief Eagle Testickle perches on an ottoman covered with a Hudson's Bay blanket, a salute to the Indigenous hunters and trappers who worked for the company.¹ She is nude save for her signature black Louboutin heels.² She has invited herself to this gathering of white men who are deciding her people's fate, and she gestures to the fathers, asking them to consider Indigenous title to territory. Miss Chief subverts both official portraiture conventions and Canadian political history by imposing an Indigenous, queer presence on the origins of Confederation.

This work was created just before a critical national moment. In 2017, Indigenous rights activists occupied the grounds of Parliament Hill four days before Canada Day celebrations marking the 150th anniversary of Confederation in protest of the concept of commemorating a history that ignores the tumultuous relationship between Indigenous peoples and the rest of Canada. #Resistance150 was a way to inspire other Indigenous people to reclaim what they lost during colonization.³ In this painting, Miss Chief, by being present, establishes a reoccupation as well. With a gesture of her arm, she raises attention to the confiscation of Indigenous lands brought on by the



government, highlighting a serious issue concurrent with #UnsettlingCanada150, the National Day of Action.⁴

In Harris's composition, twenty-three men in velveteen nineteenth-century British attire were arranged in a semi-circle around a long table, with John A. Macdonald, Canada's first prime minister, gripping a document and presumably about to launch into oratory.⁵ The original painting was destroyed in the Parliament Hill fire of 1916. Forty-eight years later, in anticipation of the centennial celebrations of 1967, Confederation Life Insurance Company commissioned Rex Woods (1903-1987) to recreate the work, which still hangs in the House of Commons in Ottawa as part of the permanent collection.

The Daddies was included in the exhibition *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience*, organized by the Art Museum at the University of Toronto in January 2017 and curated by Monkman.



Rex Woods, *The Fathers of Confederation*, 1968, oil on canvas, 213.4 x 365.7 cm, House of Commons Collection, Ottawa.



THE SCREAM 2017



Kent Monkman, *The Scream*, 2017
Acrylic on canvas, 213.4 x 335.3 cm
Denver Art Museum

Kent Monkman's *The Scream*—which derives its title from *The Scream*, 1893, by Norwegian painter Edvard Munch (1863-1944)—references the horrors of the residential school system. In the late nineteenth century, the Canadian government imposed “aggressive assimilation” on Indigenous peoples. More than 150,000 Indigenous children were forced to attend residential schools between the late 1800s and the 1990s. First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children were taken from their parents and placed in institutions whose objective was to strip them of their language, culture, and identity. Many children suffered physical, psychological, and sexual abuse, and several thousand died. Monkman's *The Scream* viscerally and unflinchingly captures the violence of these facilities, depicting children being ripped from the arms of their mothers by members of the Catholic clergy and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. At the centre is a mother who lunges forward with her arms outstretched toward her child, who has been pulled away from her by a priest. The work testifies to the Canadian government's systematic effort to exterminate Indigenous peoples, their languages, and their cultures.

In *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience*, the exhibition Monkman curated in 2017, *The Scream* was part of “Chapter V: Forcible Transfer of Children,” where it hung in a room with black walls. The entrance to the gallery space featured toys and crafts made by students at the Grouard Residential School circa 1925, and these objects carried the cultural identity of the children who incorporated hide and seed beads into their making. The walls were lined with *askotâskopison* (traditional cradle boards) crafted by mothers for their babies. Some were plain wood frames or chalk-marked outlines suggesting missing and deceased children. In the accompanying brochure written in Miss Chief Eagle Testickle’s voice, the pain is inexplicable: “This is the one I cannot talk about. The pain is too deep. We were never the same.”¹

The Scream does not relegate its action solely to a colonial past. Monkman recreates the abduction in a modern setting with contemporary clothing, indicating that the forcible removal of Indigenous children from their parents and relations continues—from the time of the Sixties Scoop to the child welfare system of today.²



LEFT: Kent Monkman, *Sisters & Brothers* (film still), 2015, film, 3 minutes, NFB archival footage, English. RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *Sisters & Brothers* (film still), 2015, film, 3 minutes, NFB archival footage, English.

The work has a powerful relationship with Monkman’s haunting black and white film *Sisters & Brothers*, 2015, which draws parallels between the annihilation of the bison in the 1890s and the devastation inflicted on the Indigenous population by the forced assimilation of children in government- and Church-run institutions. Two years after painting *The Scream*, Monkman created *The Deluge*, 2019, which also calls attention to the legacy of residential schools and the continued removal of Indigenous children by child welfare agencies. Harkening back to the Trail of Tears and the brutal forced relocation of Indigenous peoples by the U.S. government in the 1830s, the painting depicts Miss Chief saving children from the flood of settler cultures displacing Indigenous peoples from their lands in Arkansas.

Since May 2021, through the use of ground-penetrating radar technology, hundreds of unmarked graves of Indigenous children have been discovered in Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Ontario, prompting calls for accountability from both the Canadian government and the Roman Catholic Church, which ran day-to-day operations at many of the institutions.



RESURGENCE OF THE PEOPLE 2019



Kent Monkman, *Resurgence of the People*, 2019

Acrylic on canvas, 335.3 x 670.6 cm

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

The monumental installation *mistikôsiwak (Wooden Boat People)* was created for the Great Hall of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in conjunction with the institution's 150th anniversary in 2019. For Kent Monkman, the commission represented the pinnacle of many years of work. It consists of two paintings: *Welcoming the Newcomers*, a visual interpretation of migration to Turtle Island (the North American continent), and *Resurgence of the People*, which portrays an optimistic path forward to a new future for Indigenous peoples.

Created by a team of ten painters under Monkman's direction and based on photo shoots that employed about forty models, the project represents the artist's sophisticated deployment of revisionist history painting.¹ Asserting the continued relevance of representational art as a medium to deliver a message, Monkman addressed histories told through artworks in the permanent collection of the Metropolitan. His works were installed in the museum's entrance hall, a symbolically charged place of arrivals and departures and a magnet for tourists.

Resurgence of the People

introduces the theme of migratory agency, reflecting the diversity of the North American settler state.² Monkman describes this painting as a conversation between the “arrivals and migrations and displacements of people around the world” and Indigenous

generosity.³ He took inspiration

from news images of migrants and refugees fleeing in small boats and used as his main visual source *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, 1851, by American-German artist Emanuel Leutze (1816-1868), a work in the Metropolitan’s collection that was painted seventy-five years after George Washington victoriously led a boat full of troops across the Delaware River during the American Revolution.



LEFT: Emanuel Leutze, *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, 1851, oil on canvas, 378.5 x 647.7 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *Welcoming the Newcomers*, 2019, acrylic on canvas, 335.3 x 670.6 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

In Monkman’s composition, Miss Chief Eagle Testickle presides over the boat, representing the resilience of Indigenous peoples and the resurgence of values that are essential to the survival of humankind.⁴ Mimicking the pose of Washington, she stands tall as she navigates the waters of a cataclysmic world where Indigenous peoples offer salvation to displaced individuals. Her pose also evokes the figure of New York City’s Statue of Liberty, which celebrates the victory of American revolutionaries—only Miss Chief holds an eagle feather instead of a torch. Monkman replaces the flag in Leutze’s painting with the coup stick that is used by Indigenous warriors on the prairies as a sign of bravery in battle, and Washington’s sailors are replaced by Indigenous peoples offering salvation to those cast adrift.

On the opening night of the exhibition at the Metropolitan, the Great Hall was populated with contemporary art curators, directors, and artists, all there to praise Monkman. Miss Chief’s performance was met with a standing ovation. It was truly a celebration marking a moment of change in a step towards decolonization of major American museums. The *New York Times* relayed, “Miss Chief is an avatar of a global future that will see humankind moving beyond the wars of identity—racial, sexual, political—in which it is now *perilously immersed*.”⁵ It was a sign of things to come. The Metropolitan acquired the diptych in October 2020, and the project has inspired future commissions on the part of museums for Monkman to dig into their collections as a means of reworking and re-addressing colonialist history.



SIGNIFICANCE & CRITICAL ISSUES

By exposing the complexities of historic and contemporary Indigenous experiences, Kent Monkman has raised awareness of critical challenges facing communities today. He has brought together explorations of Two Spirit identity and sexuality with a commitment to investigating treaties and recognizing lived realities for Indigenous peoples in cities and on reserves, and he has developed groundbreaking projects to decolonize museums across Turtle Island. Through deeply personal and compelling work, he has provoked transformative conversations about identity and history in Canada.

RECLAIMING TWO SPIRIT IDENTITY

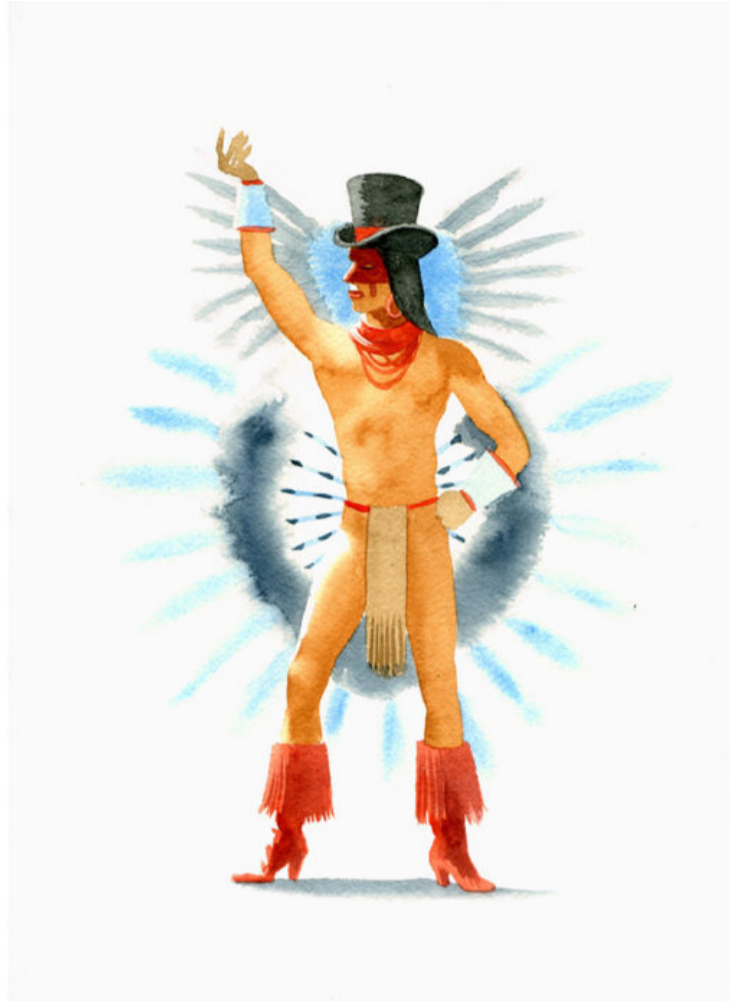
When he created his alter ego Miss Chief Eagle Testickle, Monkman set out to challenge dominant Western discourses of sexuality, power, knowledge, and gender, and the persisting misrepresentations of Indigenous peoples by Europeans. Prior to colonization, many First Nations honoured those who were Two Spirit or had other non-binary genders and sexualities as sacred members of society. The term "Two Spirit" is derived from *niizh manidoowag*, an Anishinaabemowin term. It is used to express the existence of "a third gender" that is both a spiritual and physical state of being.¹ Early Christian European settlers were openly hostile toward these individuals because they did not fit into accepted colonial belief systems. Some Two Spirit people were referred to as "berdache," a derogatory name given to feminine males by French explorers and anthropologists.²

In bringing Miss Chief to life, in works ranging from paintings like *Study for Artist and Model*, 2003, to films such as *Dance to Miss Chief*, 2010, Monkman uses his own sexuality to support his goal of deconstructing imperial historical constructs. "I got a lot of empowerment about my own identity and my own sexuality the more I learned about Two Spirit sexuality, the fact that Indigenous cultures had a place for Two Spirit people."³ Monkman mines complex, difficult, and continuously evolving cultural connections in his work, engaging with histories that have potent racist and homophobic elements, and embodying the Two Spirit presence through Miss Chief's appearances.

Monkman often employs irony to confront those early artists and explorers who expressed fascination for Indigenous peoples, even as they exploited them. In 2008 he created a group of watercolours (including *Faint Heart 27,148* and *Faint Heart 7,558*) responding to George Catlin (1796–1872) and his encounters with "dandies," a term Catlin used in reference to gender-variant people in Indigenous nations such as the Mandan (now North Dakota). Also called "faint hearts," the "dandies" vexed Catlin—despite disparaging them in his journals as being feminine, he harboured a secret fascination with their appearances and fancy outfits. He wrote about them "pluming themselves with swan's down and quill of ducks and plaits of sweet-scented grass... looking pretty and ornamental."⁴ Catlin began a portrait of one of these men that reportedly caused a ruckus, since they were not considered as high ranking as chiefs and therefore were not appropriate subjects. He ultimately abandoned the painting, having only rendered the figure in preliminary outline.⁵



Kent Monkman, *Dance to Miss Chief* (film still), 2010, film, 4:49 minutes, colour, English and German with English Subtitles.



LEFT: Kent Monkman, *Faint Heart 27,148*, 2008, watercolour on paper, 30.5 x 22.9 cm, Collection of Raja Hanna and Marylène Debay, Montreal. RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *Faint Heart 7,558*, 2008, watercolour on paper, 30.5 x 22.9 cm.

In another series, Monkman repopulates Catlin's scenes of warrior Mandan chiefs with "dandies." *Eagle's Ribs with Tinselled Buck No. 6,932*, 2008, and *Old Bear with Tinselled Buck No. 10,601*, 2008, depict, respectively, a warrior and a shaman. Each figure is paired with a chalky, ghostlike sketch of a lounging "dandy." The title numbers, arbitrarily assigned by Monkman, refer to Catlin's form of documentation.⁶ The works are reminiscent of Catlin's renditions of stoic, romanticized, and colourfully dressed Indigenous men. In Monkman's versions, however, the ghostly images command more attention than those in front, emphasizing the erasure of non-heteronormative forms of Indigenous sexuality and gender by colonial artists. Writer Mark Kingwell remarks that it is "only through the processes of virtual auditing that Monkman was able to rescue the dandy from obscurity."⁷



KENT MONKMAN

Life & Work by Shirley Madill



LEFT: Kent Monkman, *Eagle's Ribs with Tinselled Buck No. 6,932*, 2008, acrylic on canvas, 76.2 x 61 cm, Collection of Martin Demers.
RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *Old Bear with Tinselled Buck No. 10,601*, 2008, acrylic on canvas, 76.2 x 61 cm, Collection of Martin Demers.

"Dandies" also make an appearance in Monkman's painting *Clouds in the Canyon*, 2008. Resembling a typical nineteenth-century painting, the work depicts an artist with his back turned, painting the Grand Canyon and seemingly unaware of the vibrantly clothed "dandies" lounging in the landscape around him. But they are difficult to miss, clad as they are in vibrant colours, wearing lavender boots, blue leggings, pink and purple loincloths, and sporting green parasols. For Monkman, the "dandies" are reoccupying colonized territories, and by inserting them into paintings, he returns power to Two Spirit peoples.



Kent Monkman, *Clouds in the Canyon*, 2008, acrylic on canvas, 157.5 x 213.4 cm, private collection.

DECOLONIZING THE MUSEUM

As colonial institutions, museums have constructed, circulated, and reinforced narratives that oppress Indigenous people and perpetuate systemic racism. Collection, interpretation, and display practices are interconnected with processes of plunder and subjugation. Museums have accepted donations of stolen art and objects, and even human remains. They have represented Indigenous peoples as if frozen in time and obscured vast cultural and linguistic diversity. Yet when institutions invite Indigenous artists and curators to intervene critically within them, museums can be transformed into important spaces for Indigenous counter-narratives and self-representation—both of which have been significant for Monkman.

Curator and art historian Ruth B. Phillips notes that in the late twentieth century, some Canadian museums began to shift their practices in relation to Indigenous peoples. Many were embracing multiculturalism, becoming more pluralistic, and finding it increasingly difficult to ignore Indigenous communities' demands for justice. The beginnings of museum transformation occurred within the spaces created by new constructions of nationhood and Indigenous activism against controversial exhibitions.⁸ Still, Indigenous work existing in non-Indigenous spaces is complicated by issues of racism, appropriation, and neocolonialism. Decolonization entails a dramatic reimagining of relationships with land and people and demands an “unlearning” of existing power structures for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.



KENT MONKMAN

Life & Work by Shirley Madill

Monkman recognizes that creating truth-telling spaces within museums can upend colonial narratives and transform identities and relationships. His insistent research into permanent collections is a strategic move to get inside the works of art and to revisit and correct history. It is an approach that has informed several bodies of his work. For instance, prior to the *Triumph of Mischief* exhibition opening at the Winnipeg Art Gallery in 2008, Monkman gathered source material from three iconic works in the museum's permanent collection: *Femmes de Caughnawaga*, 1924, a bronze by Marc-Aurèle de Foy Suzor-Coté (1869-1937); *The Dakota Boat*, c.1875, a painting by Washington Frank Lynn (1827-1906); and *A Halfcast with His Wife and Child*, c.1825, a watercolour by Peter Rindisbacher (1806-1834). Visual quotations from these works are seen in Monkman's painting *Woe to Those Who Remember From Whence They Came*, 2008, which retells the story of his people leaving their ancestral land. A prairie vista overlooking historic Fort Garry (today the location of central Winnipeg) sets the stage as the site where Treaty No. 1 was signed by the Ojibwe and Swampy Cree of Manitoba and the Crown. In the centre of the canvas, walking behind a Métis family, is the apparitional figure of Miss Chief. As she is commanded to leave, she glances woefully back to her homeland, and this act of disobedience results in her being transformed into a pillar of salt like Lot's wife in the Bible.



LEFT: Marc-Aurèle de Foy Suzor-Coté, *Femmes de Caughnawaga*, 1924, bronze, 43.1 x 32.1 x 57.6 cm, Winnipeg Art Gallery. RIGHT: Washington Frank Lynn, *The Dakota Boat*, c.1875, oil on canvas, 66.6 x 91.8 cm, Winnipeg Art Gallery.



Kent Monkman, *Woe to Those Who Remember From Whence They Came* (detail), 2008, acrylic on canvas, 182.9 x 274.3 cm, Balsillie Collection.

Monkman's appropriation of historical paintings with the integration of museum collection objects sets a new paradigm for the decolonization of these spaces. His radical method was evident in the work produced for the Great Hall at the

Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the epitome of an “encyclopedic” museum that is thoroughly Western in its development. In the installation *mistikôsiwak (Wooden Boat People)*, two paintings, *Welcoming the Newcomers* and *Resurgence of the People*, both 2019, are heavily populated with identifiable references to European and North American artworks in the museum’s collection. They make particular reference to pieces that perpetuate the myth of a “dying race” through their depictions of Indigenous subjects.

An earlier project of Monkman’s, *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience*, which was on view at the Art Museum at the University of Toronto in 2017, was a seminal decolonizing venture. Launching it the same year that Canada was marking its sesquicentennial, Monkman deployed Miss Chief Eagle Testickle to disrupt the celebration. In paintings, installations, and texts, she travelled back in time before Confederation to trample on foundational myths and tell the dark, shameful story of legislated genocide. Spanning multiple rooms, Monkman’s exhibition began with a portrayal of Indigenous peoples as equal partners in the fur trade, and then moved the narrative through decades of colonization. The exhibition intentionally challenged and subverted the very space it occupied—the colonial power of the museum itself.⁹ For instance, with *Nativity Scene*, 2017, Monkman offers a contemporary reinvention of the museum diorama, one that highlights the poor housing on reserves. Through works like this one, *Shame and Prejudice* overthrew museological conventions to foreground Indigenous resilience within structures of ongoing colonialism.

Monkman tells the story from the point of view of the colonized, and through his provocative pairings of paintings with museum objects, he upends representational practices that are common in museum displays. Through Miss Chief, he exposes and ridicules structures of patriarchy, racism, and colonialism. His paintings create a place in Canadian art history for First Nations, with an emphasis on those who have been most subjected to colonial violence: mothers and their stolen children, missing and murdered women and girls, Two Spirit people, and incarcerated individuals. By virtue of their presence in the space, viewers become implicated in the retelling. As they are seduced by Monkman’s tableaux and scenarios, a startling decolonizing provocation occurs.



Kent Monkman, *Nativity Scene*, 2017, mixed-media installation, Museum London.



Installation view of “Chapter III: Wards of the State/The Indian Problem” in *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience* at the Art Museum at the University of Toronto, 2017, photograph by Toni Hafkenschied.

URBANIZATION, INDIGENOUS IDENTITY, AND MODERN ART

While much of Monkman’s work from 2004 onward focused on subverting historical narratives within natural landscapes, in 2014 he transported *Miss Chief* to an urban setting. His aim was to expose how Indigenous cultures have been displaced by colonization and to counter dominant stereotypes of Indigenous peoples as authentic only if they live in remote areas or on reserves.¹⁰ The circumstances of many contemporary Indigenous peoples are exposed in his *Urban Res* series, 2013–16, which stresses displacement. Monkman noted, “I wanted to re-stage some of these scenes in urban environments, because a lot of Indigenous people live in cities. In Canada, more than half are living in cities. And a lot of urban environments are places where Native people once inhabited. This ties back to some of the themes in my current work—this amnesia in the face of modernity.”¹¹

Winnipeg’s North End inspired the *Urban Res* body of work. “What I love about Winnipeg is that this is my territory,” Monkman said. “I feel very much like I belong here. My view of the world, everything that I think about, is shaped by being from here...places like Winnipeg were gathering places for Indigenous people, so this is Indigenous territory as much as any other place. And yet people live in substandard conditions and there’s lateral violence here and in this part of the city there’s a visible difference between how Indigenous people live and how non-Indigenous people live.”¹² The North End neighbourhood is home to the largest population of Indigenous residents in the country and is one of Canada’s lowest income centres.¹³

For the series, Monkman revisited sites in Winnipeg that provided inspiration for paintings such as *Le Petit déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 2014, which is named after a work by French artist Édouard Manet (1832–1883) and depicts women resembling the sex workers in *Les Femmes d'Alger*, 1907, by Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) in front of an inexpensive hotel. Similarly, in *The Deposition*, 2014, Miss Chief cradles a female figure quoted from Picasso's *Guernica*, 1937, while she herself is caught by a group of young Indigenous men as she collapses.



Northern Hotel, Main Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 2009, photograph by Bryan Scott.



LEFT: Kent Monkman, *The Deposition*, 2014, acrylic on canvas, 213.4 x 320 cm, Winnipeg Art Gallery. RIGHT: Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937, oil on canvas, 349.3 x 776.6 cm, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid.

In *Death of the Female*, 2014, Monkman juxtaposes modern and historical imagery through the intersection of European Christian symbols and traditional Indigenous cultural signifiers. At the corner of Chambers Street and Alexander Avenue in Winnipeg, four young Indigenous men attend to another woman who appears to be a victim of some sort of assault, her naked form twisted and in distress. With clear allusions to Picasso in his rendering of Cubist female figures, Monkman does not limit the iconography in *Death of the Female* to geography, religion, or Indigenous symbolism. He has described Picasso's approach as "butchering the female nude," and for him it became "a way of speaking about and representing the violence being perpetrated against Indigenous women."¹⁴



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Kent Monkman, *Death of the Female*, 2014, acrylic on canvas, 213.4 x 320 cm, Tia Collection, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

One of the men in *Death of the Female* is traditionally dressed, wearing a buffalo horn headdress with an eagle feather bustle that reaches down to the ground, similar to one in *Penn's Treaty with the Indians*, 1771–72, by Benjamin West (1738–1820). However, in contrast, the figure in Monkman's work is also wearing jeans and white Adidas sneakers. Countering stereotypical representations of Indigenous men in history, Monkman reveals their present-day reality. Paying close attention to detail, he exposes dichotomies contemporary Indigenous men contend with, such as having long versus short hair, or religious versus traditional tattoos. Despite their conflicting appearances, the men in the painting all exhibit concern for the woman. They represent binary stereotypes of Indigenous peoples today: those who have assimilated and lost the traditional teachings and language, and those who have not assimilated and practise traditional ceremonies.

In Monkman's *Bad Medicine*, 2014, angels face off against bear spirits, revealing how Indigenous spirits move through urban environments amid drug use and violence. *Cash for Souls*, 2016—set outside an actual pawnshop on Main Street, located a short drive from the Manitoba Museum in Winnipeg—portrays a realistically rendered street fight between guards, transgender women, and prisoners in orange jumpsuits. The work parodies *The Abduction of the Sabine Women*, 1633–34, by Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665). The themes of displacement, violence, and incarceration permeate the series through this remixing of history.

Monkman also depicts the city as a prison.¹⁵ The installation *Minimalism*, 2017, in which a mannequin of an Indigenous inmate is held in a shockingly minimal space that echoes the modernist sculptures of Donald Judd (1928–1994), is also

a metaphor for the reduction of First Nations territories. While Monkman aggressively questions the language of modernism and its flaws, he also points out that Indigenous peoples, especially women, are trapped in cycles of violence and alienation. In *Struggle for Balance*, 2013, female casualties and mourners are caught up in a maelstrom of rioting and gun violence. The urban cataclysm includes humans, animals, and fantastical creatures drawn from the history of painting. They appear as victims and aggressors, fatalities and survivors. This representation of Indigenous culture as current, authentic, and active creates a critical commentary that exposes the aftermath of colonization.



Kent Monkman, *Bad Medicine*, 2014, acrylic on canvas, 213.4 x 320 cm, Collection of Paul Desmarais III.



LEFT: Kent Monkman, *Minimalism*, 2017, mixed-media installation, 152.4 x 243.84 x 243.84 cm, Collection of the artist. RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *Struggle for Balance*, 2013, acrylic on canvas, 213.4 x 320 cm, private collection, Hamilton, Ontario.

HONOURING TREATIES

The loss of ancestral territory is a constant issue for generations of First Nations, as colonization has alienated Indigenous peoples from their land and homes. In several projects, Monkman has drawn attention to how Indigenous peoples and lands share a common fate as victims of colonial violence. For instance, his site-specific installation at the Gardiner Museum, *The Rise and Fall of Civilization*, 2015, revealed the stark contrast of Indigenous sustainable hunting practices with the catastrophic slaughter brought about by colonialism by juxtaposing the traditional buffalo hunt with ceramic shards alluding to the bones of the animals killed by settlers and the china made from the skeletal remains.



Kent Monkman, *The Rise and Fall of Civilization*, 2015, mixed-media installation, Glenbow Museum, Calgary, installation view from Gardiner Museum, Toronto, photograph by Jimmy Limit.

Monkman's subversive appropriation of nineteenth-century landscapes, such as the works of Thomas Cole (1801-1848) and Albert Bierstadt (1830-1902), is a means to address the colonial desire for territorial expansion. He doesn't merely reproduce these empty landscapes that erased the presence of Indigenous peoples; as critic June Scudeler notes, he shows how these landscapes are not "neutral territory but riddled with the ideologies, desires and sensibilities of their makers."¹⁶ His are landscapes of the trauma of colonization, cultural compression, spatial dislocation, and historical amnesia.¹⁷

In the multimedia work *My Treaty is With the Crown*, 2011, which was exhibited at the Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery in Montreal, Monkman took specific aim at the issue of sovereignty. His intervention as a curator, history painter, and Miss Chief evoked two significant events in Canadian history: the Battle of the Plains of Abraham on September 13, 1759, where the British victory ended the French empire in North America, and the Prince of Wales's visit to Canada in 1860. For the project, Monkman borrowed objects from the McCord Museum, Montreal, and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. In a room that looked back to the pivotal battle, historical objects represented the demise of General Montcalm, portrayed in a French etching from 1760 and a French Canadian painting from 1903, and General Wolfe, pictured on a nineteenth-century English painted ceramic. Monkman also installed tents—one decorated with fleurs-de-lis and the other with a Union Jack, representing the French and British, respectively. Inside them were two paintings depicting Miss Chief entering the battlefield. In scenes inspired by the Biblical character Delilah, who cut off Samson's hair to take away his strength, Miss Chief is shown cutting the generals' hair, signalling their impending deaths and making her the author of that moment in Canadian history and a disrupter of sovereign power.

With the large-scale multi-figure history painting *My Treaty is With the Crown*, 2011, Monkman staged Miss Chief meeting the Prince of Wales on the banks overlooking the St. Lawrence River and the Victoria Bridge. Miss Chief enacts an ancient ritual of washing the feet of the visitor, echoing the story of Mary Magdalene washing and anointing Christ's feet. In sharp contrast to the Biblical narrative, Monkman's accompanying video, *Mary*, 2011, takes on a darker tone. Miss Chief, in a short, sequined red dress and knee-high red boots, hair billowing behind her, kneels and begins lovingly stroking the feet of the actor portraying the Prince of Wales. As tears flow from her eyes, black mascara drips onto his feet. The text in the video clip reads: "We had an agreement / we agreed to share not surrender/how could you break your promise." Harkening back to the confines of the Indian Act, the interpretation of treaties differs between Miss Chief and the Prince of Wales.¹⁸



Kent Monkman, *Wolfe's Haircut*, 2011, acrylic on canvas, installation view from the exhibition *My Treaty Is With the Crown*, Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, 2011.



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LEFT: Kent Monkman, *My Treaty is With the Crown*, 2011, acrylic on canvas, 152.4 x 243.8 cm, The Bailey Collection. RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *Mary* (film still), 2011, film, 3:18 mins, colour, English, An Urban Nation Production.

Where First Nations saw treaties as agreements of kinship and shared obligations and responsibilities, European settlers interpreted treaties as transfers of ownership. *Mary* is about the breaking of treaties—something Monkman takes personally. One of the largest unceded territories was the ancestral land of his family in St. Peters, Manitoba. Monkman's connection to the dispossession of this land is deeply felt, because his great-grandmother spent the first ten years of her life in turmoil as her family was forcibly relocated three times. "Because I had a relationship with this amazing person for the first ten years of my life, I feel connected to this history in a personal way," Monkman has said.¹⁹ The loss of ancestral land also plays out in *Lot's Wife*, 2012, and *Woe to Those Who Remember From Whence They Came*, 2008.

Monkman has also looked back to earlier treaties. At the centre of the 2018 exhibition *Beauty and the Beasts* at the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris was *Miss Chief's Wet Dream*, 2018, a monumental canvas that took inspiration from two iconic French paintings: *The Raft of the Medusa*, 1818–19, by Théodore Géricault (1791–1824), and *Liberty Leading the People*, 1830, by Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863). Two vessels are shown: a canoe carrying Indigenous travellers, and a boat with European occupants. The content for the work was taken from the Two Row Wampum, also known as *Teiohate Kaswenta*, of 1613, which was an agreement between the Haudenosaunee people and Dutch settlers. Wampum belts made as symbolic representations of that treaty contained two rows of purple beads on a white background with the rows representing equal parties, each travelling in their own canoe, who will not interrupt each other's paths.²⁰



Kent Monkman, *Miss Chief's Wet Dream*, 2018, acrylic on canvas, 365.7 x 731.5 cm, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.

IMPACT

The critical issues that Monkman addresses in his work include racism, the erasure of Two Spirit individuals, Indigenous sovereignty, the revision of historical representations of Indigenous peoples, and the process of decolonization. His intent is to accentuate Indigenous resilience and the survival and vibrancy of Indigenous ways of knowing—specifically Cree knowledge. With many powerful paintings that look back to Old Masters, such as *Cash for Souls*, 2016, and *Resurgence of the People*, 2019, Monkman is often situated within art historical criticism as rewriting the Western art historical canon—but it is crucial to note that he does so with a Swampy Cree holistic worldview. Central to his approach toward restitution is the Cree concept of good relations that leads to strong and stable nations: *miyo-wîcêhtowin*.

According to Cree curator, critic, and art historian Richard William Hill, Monkman's art marks "a shift in the discourse around Indigenous representation. He is certainly not the first Indigenous performer or artist to address the history of colonial ideology as visualized in the arts, [but] he is the first to explicitly recognize, respond to, and manipulate the operations of desire at work in those representations... [he is] able to intervene in a different and perhaps ultimately more subversive way."²¹



Kent Monkman, *Cash for Souls*, 2016, acrylic on canvas, 121.9 x 182.9 cm, Collection of Jany and David Godard.



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Monkman has been hard at work for years, provoking conversation and engagement with Indigenous issues in a deeply personal way and with a curious juxtaposition of horror and beauty that destabilizes as much as it compels. As his work gets shown across Turtle Island, momentous waves of change in museums and other colonial institutions are occurring. Through revisiting and reinventing iconic moments in Canadian consciousness, he creates work that enters the canon in a new way, reflecting other truths and revealing other experiences with paintings and installations so monumental that the truth can never be hidden away again.



Kent Monkman, *The Scoop*, 2018, acrylic on canvas, 213.4 x 320 cm, Collection of Rob and Monique Sobey. With this chilling painting, Monkman emphasizes the role of the Canadian government and the Church in seizing Indigenous children from their families.



STYLE & TECHNIQUE

Kent Monkman's stylistic approach is the culmination of many years of experimentation. His practice includes a variety of media and disciplines, including performance, painting, sculpture, installation, film, video, and photography. Monkman's agent provocateur and artistic alter ego, Miss Chief Eagle Testickle, underpins many of his representations, which present serious narratives in the modes of social satire and burlesque, often using camp and humour to deliver the *coup de grâce*. As both artist and curator, he has developed a richly collaborative practice that generates groundbreaking interventions in museums and the art world.

FROM ABSTRACTION TO REPRESENTATION

Early in his artistic career, Monkman pursued Abstract Expressionism, a style that he eventually rejected in favour of more widely legible representational styles of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century paintings. His attention to abstract art was partly a means to distance himself from his work as an illustrator.¹ “I thought the apex of painting was abstract expressionism and that I had to make my individual mark as a painter, whether that was a drip, or a stripe or something else,” he has said. “I inherited the idea that the

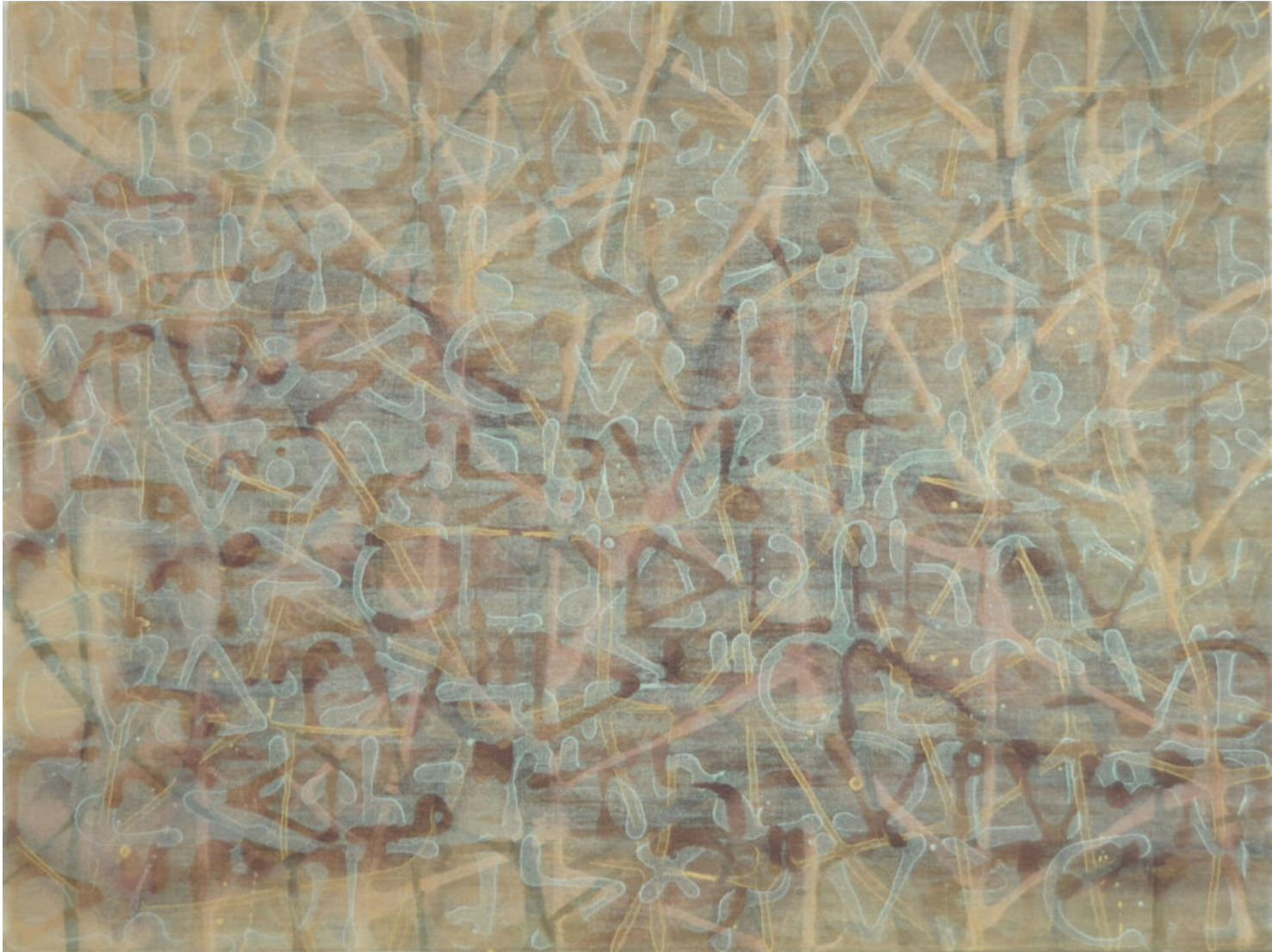


Jackson Pollock, *Convergence*, 1952, oil on canvas, 237.5 x 393.7 cm, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York.

ultimate goal in painting was to find our own way of making a mark.”² Yet Monkman was opposed to the machoism associated with Abstract Expressionist artists such as Jackson Pollock (1912-1956).

Monkman’s “mark” came when he embarked on a series titled *The Prayer Language*, 2001, that incorporates syllabics quoted from his parents’ Cree hymn book. His process entailed pouring paint directly on the canvas, moving it around, and then reducing the density by scraping with a squeegee. Partially obscured images of entangled male bodies seem to emerge from behind a transparent veil of paint overlaid with syllabic forms, as can be seen in *Softly and Tenderly*, 2001.

Yet the visual vocabulary of *The Prayer Language* failed to adequately address the theme that most engaged him—the impact of colonialism on sexuality. To communicate more clearly, he felt he needed to be more specific: the barely discernible men wrestling had to “come out.” He turned to figurative work, a liberation from what he perceived as the oppressive limits of abstraction.



Kent Monkman, *Softly and Tenderly*, 2001, acrylic on canvas, 91.4 x 121.9 cm, Museum London.

REWRITING ART HISTORY

As he moved away from abstraction, Monkman developed an interest in landscape painting, and several historic works inspired new directions in his art. His earliest research led him to the Group of Seven and their nationalistic renditions of the Canadian wilderness. In the watercolour *Superior*, 2001, Monkman appropriated the iconic *North Shore, Lake Superior*, 1926, by Lawren S. Harris (1885-1970) and inserted images of sexually engaged “cowboys and Indians.”



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He also became fascinated with the Hudson River School and nineteenth-century painters such as Paul Kane (1810–1871), John Mix Stanley (1814–1872), George Catlin (1796–1872), Thomas Cole (1801–1848), and Albert Bierstadt (1830–1902), who depicted the expanding frontier with sublime mountains and valleys. “I wanted to deal with themes in my own life and my community, like colonization, the impact of Christianity and homophobia,” Monkman has said. “I started looking at landscape painting and North American art history as it was painted by Europeans and how they saw Indigenous people... that narrative needed to be challenged.”³ To Monkman, the landscapes—with the occasional animal or Indigenous person sprinkled in—were empty stages with huge potential, a perfect avenue for inserting a different story based on his lived experience.



Albert Bierstadt, *Wind River Mountains, Nebraska Territory*, 1862, oil on board, 30.5 x 45.9 cm, Milwaukee Art Museum.

While Monkman’s language of painting is informed by Western art traditions, his art centres on contemporary Indigenous themes. In *Ceci n’est pas une pipe*, 2001, *The Rape of Daniel Boone Junior*, 2002, *Fort Edmonton*, 2003, and *Cree Master 1*, 2002, Monkman appropriated landscapes and infused them with camp, irony, and kitsch to skewer conventional images of Indigenous cultures. By reproducing the historical compositions, he conceptually reclaims them. In creating such works, he first painted the landscape and scenery, always followed by figures and their stories. With this approach, Monkman devised a method by which he could alter a story, whether from the Bible, classical mythology, the Renaissance, or modern art. Through Miss Chief’s colourful, erotic encounters with European and Western men from centuries past, Monkman reverses power dynamics. In contrast to nineteenth-century depictions of Indigenous peoples as somehow diminished, Miss Chief is strong and confident. As well, her presence counteracts the erasure of Two Spirit people from colonial narratives.⁴



LEFT: Kent Monkman, *Fort Edmonton*, 2003, acrylic on canvas, 61 x 91.4 cm, private collection. RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *Cree Master 1*, 2002, acrylic on canvas, 25.4 x 30.5 cm, private collection.

Another tactic Monkman uses is the fusion of time frames, art periods, and locations. In *The Fourth of March*, 2004, for instance, a dramatic scene unfolds before a lake and mountain vista, where three Métis riflemen are about to open fire on Thomas Scott, an Irish immigrant. The painting quotes from *The 3rd of May 1808 in Madrid, or "The Executions,"* 1814, by Francisco Goya (1746–1828), which was intended to pay tribute to Spaniards who were executed in 1808 for rising against Napoleon's armies. In 1870, Métis leader Louis Riel had Scott tried for sedition and condemned to death; the shooting took place at Upper Fort Garry in Manitoba's Red River Colony, not in an alpine setting as depicted. Monkman takes liberties with his narrative so that an understanding of this history is aptly muddled.



LEFT: Francisco Goya, *The 3rd of May 1808 in Madrid, or "The Executions,"* 1814, oil on canvas, 268 x 347 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid. RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *The Fourth of March*, from *The Trilogy of Saint Thomas*, 2004, acrylic on canvas, 183.4 x 274.8 cm, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

Other visual mash-ups are evident in the paintings *God and Man, No Religion*, 2012, where a Sasquatch joins a form that resembles a futurist sculpture by Umberto Boccioni (1882–1916); *Struggle for Balance*, 2013, with angels by Titian (c.1488–1576) flying over street fights and burning cars in Winnipeg's North End; and *Teaching the Lost*, 2012, where figurative sculptures by Ossip Zadkine (1890–1967), Alberto Giacometti (1901–1966), Henry Moore (1898–1986), and Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) appear in a setting that resembles views by John Constable (1776–1837) or Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665). In *Sunday in the Park*, 2010, appropriating the monumental *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte*—

1884, 1884/86, by Georges Seurat (1859–1891), Monkman replaced haughty Parisians with half-nude “dandies” who witness Miss Chief painting their portraits as she stands in front of a landscape reminiscent of Bierstadt’s work.

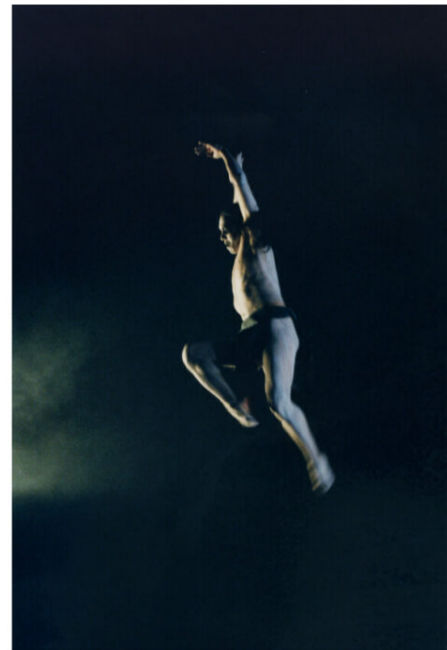


LEFT: Kent Monkman, *Sunday in the Park* (detail), 2010, acrylic on canvas, 182.9 x 243.8 cm, private collection. RIGHT: Georges Seurat, *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte*—1884, 1884/86, oil on canvas, 207.5 x 308.1 cm, Art Institute of Chicago.

Monkman was also inspired by modernist movements, particularly Cubism with its characteristic flattening of pictorial space and renditions of fragmented figures. To him, the distortion became a metaphor for how Indigenous cultures have been oppressed and how women have been violated in modern art.⁵ Through appropriation, Monkman rewrites the past from an Indigenous perspective, all the while asserting the continued relevance of painting.

FILM, VIDEO, AND PERFORMANCE

Monkman’s entry into film occurred in 1996 with *A Nation is Coming*, produced with Gisèle Gordon (b.1964), his collaborator in the film production company Urban Nation. Although he did not address sexuality in the film, he used disease as a metaphor for colonization. Based on the Lakota Ghost Dance and the Anishinaabe seventh fire prophecy, the film uses images of viruses and contamination to reflect on how unfamiliar technologies and sicknesses changed the lives of First Nations. Another film, *Future Nation*, 2005, addresses the coming out of an Indigenous gay youth in a dystopic Toronto of the future as he finds love during a “megapox” epidemic.



LEFT: Kent Monkman, *A Nation is Coming*, 1996, 24:00 minutes, colour, English, An Urban Nation Production. RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *A Nation is Coming*, 1996, 24:00 minutes, colour, English, An Urban Nation Production.

In the exhibition *The Triumph of Mischief*, 2007, Monkman included a presentation of two silent films projected inside two tipi installations: *Group of Seven Inches*, 2005, in the *Théâtre de Cristal*, 2006, and *Shooting Geronimo*,



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2007, inside the *Boudoir de Berdashe*, 2007. Recalling early stereopticon technology, which photographer-ethnographer Edward S. Curtis (1868–1952) used, *Shooting Geronimo* is a split-screen “movie within a movie” that takes specific aim at Hollywood’s role in perpetuating Indigenous stereotypes in Westerns. In Monkman’s film, which adopts Curtis’s style of exhorting two perplexed Cree men to perform “The Ghost Dance of the American Indian,” Miss Chief intervenes in her supporting role as a “Lonesome Rider,” orchestrating a breakdance instead.⁶ The recollection of the Indigenous tradition of the dance of the berdache is an important thread in Monkman’s work. In the video installation *Dance to the Berdashe*, 2008, and the film *Dance to Miss Chief*, 2010, Monkman reimaged the lost honour dance by resurrecting the Two Spirit figure that has been obscured by colonial history.



Kent Monkman, *Shooting Geronimo* (production still), 2007, 11:11 minutes, B&W, Super 8.

Performance permeates Monkman’s work, informing projects in many media: characters from performances become the subjects of his paintings, painters are depicted within paintings, and paintings are incorporated into installations and documented on video. In Monkman’s words, “you can say and create art in performance language that you can’t in a painting, so it’s really expanded my abilities to communicate with people.”⁷ His performances, which he calls “colonial art space interventions,” are modelled after the travelling exhibitions that George Catlin staged in the 1840s, during which he toured paintings, costumes, and *tableaux vivants* that featured Iowas and Ojibwe actors who would enact scenes and dances conceived by Catlin as “authentic” Indigenous experiences.



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LEFT: Plate No. 10 in *Catlin's Notes of Eight Years' Travels and Residence in Europe with His North American Indian Collection with Anecdotes and Incidents of the Travels and Adventures of Three Different Parties of American Indians Whom He Introduced to the Courts of England, France, and Belgium*, vol. 2 (New York: Burgess, Stringer & Co., 1848), Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. RIGHT: Karl Girardet, *Le roi Louis-Philippe assiste à une danse d'indiens lowas (King Louis-Philippe Watches a Dance by Iowa Indians in a Salon of the Tuileries)*, 1845, oil on canvas, 39 x 53.5 cm, RMN-Grand Palais (Château de Versailles).

Performance allows Monkman to speak in a language that is closer to traditional Indigenous perspectives, and it provides access to a continuation of oral storytelling in a modern context. But Monkman also adapts these practices to create a space for himself and Two Spirit sexuality in the past and present. Miss Chief is the key player and colonial intervener in these works, employing elements of the trickster. A figure in many forms of Indigenous storytelling, the trickster is a mischievous rebel, a jester who challenges authority and is unbound by the rules of time.⁸

In *The Emergence of a Legend*, 2006, Miss Chief is imagined as a character in Catlin's Indian Gallery. The series of five chromogenic prints, produced in collaboration with photographer Christopher Chapman, designer Izzy Camilleri, and makeup artist Jackie Shawn, constitutes studio portraits in which Miss Chief wears various guises. She appears as a warrior, a trapper's bride (an invention of Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West shows, with reference to Cree brides who married French trappers), a hunter, a burlesque vaudeville star, the 1920s actor Cindy Silverscreen (a character of Monkman's invention), and a film director. She is also photographed in front of a backdrop of Monument Valley, which is located on the Arizona-Utah border and has been a setting for racist movies such as *The Searchers*, 1956, starring John Wayne.



LEFT: Kent Monkman, *Miss Chief as Cindy Silverscreen in The Emergence of a Legend*, 2006, portfolio containing 5 chromogenic prints on metallic paper, fabric, frames, 43 x 36 cm each (framed), National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *Miss Chief as Vaudeville Performer in The Emergence of a Legend*, 2006, portfolio containing 5 chromogenic prints on metallic paper, fabric, frames, 43 x 36 cm each (framed), National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

In these images, Miss Chief is, in part, a glance back at Molly Spotted Elk, a Penobscot actor and dancer who performed in New York and Paris in the 1920s and 1930s. By playing the starring role in these pastiches, Miss Chief subverts stereotypical pictures of Indigenous peoples, and Monkman questions the work, motivations, and egos of artists such as Catlin and Curtis.

In 2007, Miss Chief appeared in *Séance*, a performance in which she communicated with the spirits of Catlin, Paul Kane, and painter Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863) as part of the *Shapeshifters, Time Travellers and Storytellers* exhibition held at the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. Monkman was responding to the exclusion of his work from the museum's First Peoples Gallery for fear that his art would challenge the historical legitimacy of paintings by Kane. His retaliation is shown in *Duel after the Masquerade*, 2007, in which he portrays a defeated Kane, masquerading as an "Indian" in a buckskin outfit, being held up by a group of white male friends wearing the traditional west coast Nisga'a masks depicted in Kane's "*Medicine Mask Dance*," *Northwest Coast Peoples*, 1849-56, while Miss Chief walks away victoriously.



LEFT: Paul Kane, "*Medicine Mask Dance*," *Northwest Coast Peoples*, 1849-56, oil on canvas, 45.3 x 73.8 cm, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *Duel after the Masquerade*, 2007, acrylic on canvas, 50.8 x 76.2 cm, private collection.

In *Miss Chief: Justice of the Piece*, 2012, Miss Chief dives into a contentious and multi-faceted issue of contemporary North American Indigenous identity. Questions of blood quantum, race, and tribal enrolment are deconstructed as members are inducted into the Nation of Miss Chief.⁹ In the performance, a gay white man who married a Cherokee man asks for entry into her nation, since Cherokee nations banned gay marriage in 2004. Implicit is an understanding of identity as a series of performative acts rather than an inborn trait. For Monkman, performance becomes a sovereign act.

Miss Chief is not without precedent in art history. For example, in 1921, Dada artist Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968) transformed himself into Rose Sélavy (a pun on the French phrase “*Eros c’est la vie*,” or “Eros is life”). Once created, Rose Sélavy took on a life of her own and lent her signature to works of art.

The idea of identity as performance can also be found in the work of several contemporary Indigenous artists, such as Anishinaabekwe artist Rebecca Belmore (b.1960), who is known for politically conscious and socially aware pieces. In 1991, Kanien’kehaka artist Shelley Niro (b.1954)

embarked on a series of photographic self-portraits, *Mohawks in Beehives*, in which she and her sisters appear done up in beehive hairdos, wearing 1950s fashions and posing like pin-ups. Acclaimed artist James Luna (1950–2018), who was of Payómkawichum, Ipai, and Mexican descent, pushed boundaries in his installations by inserting himself into museum displays in *Artifact Piece*, 1987/1990, which raised concerns of ethnic identity. Luna relayed that performance and installation offered opportunities like never before for Indigenous artists to express themselves without compromise.¹⁰



LEFT: Kent Monkman, *Miss Chief: Justice of the Piece*, Friday, February 4, 2012, Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, D.C. RIGHT: Man Ray, *Marcel Duchamp as Rose Sélavy*, c.1920–21, gelatin silver print, 21.6 x 17.3 cm, Philadelphia Museum of Art.



LEFT: James Luna, *Artifact Piece*, first performed in 1987 at the San Diego Museum of Man. RIGHT: Shelley Niro, *Mohawks in Beehives*, 1991, hand-tinted black-and-white photograph, 20.3 x 25.4 cm.

FASHION AND CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

Monkman employs fashion to discuss identity, gender, sexuality, and issues pertaining to racism and colonization. Seeing clothing as a signifier of cultural change, he has used costumes—as early as *The Emergence of a Legend*, 2006—to highlight how the fashion industry appropriates Indigenous culture.

Initially inspired by pop star diva Cher, Miss Chief's flamboyant wardrobe consists of feather headdresses, beaded sashes and purses, bone breastplates, a dreamcatcher bra, a signature Louis Vuitton quiver, loincloths, fur jockstraps, Louboutin stiletto heels, platform shoes, fetish boots, and a white mink robe. A faux headdress is the signature item in Miss Chief's wardrobe, and Monkman wears it as a sign of cultural appropriation. It was seen in *Tall Tails*, 2007, an installation with music at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Toronto, and was included in the *Triumph of Mischief* exhibition in 2007. Miss Chief wore three successively larger and more outlandish headdresses during the performance *Séance* at the Royal Ontario Museum in 2007.



LEFT: Kent Monkman, *Being Legendary*, 2018, acrylic on canvas, 121.9 x 182.9 cm, private collection. Miss Chief wears distinctive high heels in many of Monkman's paintings. RIGHT: Kent Monkman as Miss Chief, *Xtra Magazine*, no. 547, October 13, 2005, photograph by Paula Wilson.

Fashion has been critical to Miss Chief's performances. At a reception at The Drake Hotel in Toronto in April 2005, Monkman donned four costumes over the course of the evening and made dramatic entrances into the lounge area of the bar. A variety of Miss Chief's adopted personas appeared: Cher's glamorous Bob Mackie look, with the floor length headdress; Mrs. Custer from Monkman's remake of the William S. Jewett (1821-1873) painting *The Promised Land – The Grayson Family*, 1850; Miss Tippy Canoe, a trapper's bride in a fur bikini; and Warrior Princess, decked out in "Oka-chic." The latter costume, designed by Monkman, consisted of a floor-length sheath skirt in grey and black camouflage, slit to the top and paired with a scarlet, sequined, stretch tank top emblazoned with a Mohawk Warrior flag. The outfit echoed the persona of the fictional TV character Xena on *Xena: Warrior Princess*, a lesbian pop-culture icon of the 1990s. It also referenced the Oka Crisis, 1990, when the people of Kanehsàtà:ke fought the governments of Oka, Quebec, and Canada to protect their traditional lands.

Miss Tippy Canoe's outfit was connected to the 1811 Battle of Tippecanoe, in which General William Henry Harrison, charged with securing newly acquired Indiana territories, defeated Tecumseh, who was building a First Nation. The bustled wedding gown of bug screen mesh that she wore, which was embroidered with tiny wooden canoes, was designed and created by fellow Anishinaabe/Ojibwe artist Bonnie Devine (b.1952) and Paul Gardner.

Underneath, Miss Chief wore a fur jockstrap that was fashioned from the coonskin cap of late *Globe and Mail* film and art critic Jay Scott. The costumes were displayed in the hotel lobby, along with several paintings, for the duration of the exhibition.



LEFT: Kent Monkman, *Raccoon Jockstrap*, 2007, raccoon fur, silk, approx. 35 x 25 x 15 cm, Collection of the artist. RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *Dreamcatcher Bra*, 2007, leather, string, beads, approx. 33 x 25 x 15 cm, Collection of the artist.

On September 8, 2017, Monkman gave a performance in connection with the exhibition *Love Is Love: Wedding Bliss for All à la Jean Paul Gaultier* at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. The show included a white feathered headdress with a wedding gown from Gaultier's 2012-13 haute couture collection. In the context of the debate over cultural appropriation, Monkman felt it demanded a response.¹¹ To Plains First Nations, the hallowed headdress, or war bonnet, has spiritual significance.¹² It is not something simply worn; it is earned, one feather at a time, with each gifted in gratitude for honourable deeds over the course of one's life. To be presented with an eagle feather is a sign of great respect. In his live performance, Monkman, through Miss Chief, reclaimed the white feathered headdress by wearing it and "marrying" Gaultier, one of the fashion world's most legendary iconoclasts. Through the symbolic union, both artists came together to challenge ideas of cultural appropriation and gain deeper understanding.¹³



Kent Monkman, *Another Feather in Her Bonnet*, September 8, 2017, performance, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, photograph by Frédéric Faddoul.

The act of cultural appropriation is significant in the fashion industry, which is often guilty of the explicit use of Indigenous pattern traditions in commercial clothing design without consideration of the meaning behind them. Forever 21, Urban Outfitters, and other fast fashion brands have used Indigenous aesthetics as “inspiration,” sometimes leading to horrible ends.¹⁴ The majority of these labels have had little to no collaboration with members of Indigenous communities or with Indigenous fashion designers. One rare exception was the collaboration between the House of Valentino and Métis artist Christi Belcourt (b.1966). Italian designer Valentino transferred images from Belcourt’s painting *Water Song*, 2010-11, onto clothing for his 2016 Resort collection. Belcourt’s work inspired Miss Chief’s dress in Monkman’s work *The Deluge*, 2019.



LEFT: Dress from the 2016 Resort collection of Valentino, featuring design by Métis artist Christi Belcourt. RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *The Deluge*, 2019, acrylic on canvas, 304.8 x 259.1 cm, private collection.

THE MUSEUM DIORAMA

Through dioramas, Monkman addresses museum conventions of representation, a critical theme in his work. Dioramas were introduced into North American natural history museums at the end of the 1880s. As three-dimensional tableaux, they presented a strange mixture of reality and fiction: they usually contained human figures or taxidermy creatures, positioned in pseudo-naturalist environments and set against panoramic backdrops painted in *trompe l'oeil* fashion.

The ethnographic dioramas that Monkman encountered as a child at the Manitoba Museum in Winnipeg employed the myth that Indigenous peoples were a “vanishing race,” a belief that was widespread in the field of anthropology. It was based on a dramatic demographic decline in Indigenous populations—quite real at the end of the nineteenth century—and fuelled by the idea that the “noble Indian” could not resist the assault of modern civilization and would soon be completely assimilated by it.¹⁵ Several historic artists perpetuated this narrative, which Monkman responded to in paintings such as *The Impending Storm*, 2004.

While touring the Native American wing of the American Museum of Natural History in New York in 2008, Monkman noticed some troubling representational practices. The mannequins of Indigenous bodies at the museum were not only grouped in with animals but also shared identical stereotypical features.¹⁶ “You walk through the museum and you see signage for primates this way and Native people this way, and it’s a very disturbing experience. In the Native American section, you see one face used to standardize all of Indigenous North America, regardless of nation, sex, or gender,” he noted.¹⁷ Soon after this visit, Monkman began placing a cast of his head on all figure sculptures in his dioramic installations.



Blackfoot tipi ceremony to god of thunder, Hall of Plains Indians, 1978, American Museum of Natural History, New York.

The museum diorama’s pre-film aesthetic, with its combination of painting, sculpture, photography, and theatre, fascinates Monkman, and in revisiting it, he critiques it. The installation *The Atelier*, 2011, offers a glimpse into his employment of the idiom. A space is transformed into the corner of an artist’s studio, complete with furniture, studies, drawings, reference materials, and etchings. It resembles a museum display, with antique furniture and vintage wallpaper that captures the historical flavour of the nineteenth century.

Monkman plays with anachronisms, fact, and fiction, and complicates ideas of what is authentic and historically correct. He also critiques nineteenth-century Western novels that show a fascination with Indigenous cultures; the texts enticed people to dress up and play “Indian” during summer vacations. *Dance to Miss Chief*, 2010, which was screened as part of *The Atelier* exhibition, uses the idiom of the music video to remix footage from German Westerns and Monkman’s seminal multi-channel video installation *Dance to the Berdashe*, 2008.



LEFT: Kent Monkman, *The Atelier*, 2011, mixed-media installation, Collection of the artist. RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *Dance to Miss Chief*, 2010, film, 4:49 mins, colour, English and German with English subtitles, presented as part of *The Atelier*, 2011, mixed-media installation, Collection of the artist.

Miss Chief has also appeared in other settings. In the full-scale diorama *The Collapsing of Time and Space in an Ever Expanding Universe*, 2011, Monkman recreated a Parisian apartment lodging Miss Chief with various stuffed animals, including a beaver, coyote, and raven. She is presented as an aging diva alone with her faithful animal companions, listening to her one hit record and longing for lost youth.

The Big Four, 2012, was a diorama produced for the 100th anniversary of the Calgary Stampede and commissioned by the Glenbow Museum. The numerical theme was inspired by the Stampede's founder and four financial backers, who had insisted that the local First Nations be included in the first Stampede in 1912 but had to exert considerable political influence to make it happen, as Indigenous communities were incarcerated on their reserves.¹⁸ Using this historical separation as a starting point, Monkman's *The Big Four* is a playful yet serious reflection on imprisonment, mobility, and freedom, and also a critique on the representation of First Nations people in institutions like the Glenbow Museum.



Kent Monkman, *The Collapsing of Time and Space in an Ever Expanding Universe*, 2011, life sized mannequin, antique furniture, paint, wallpaper, wood, taxidermied animals, audio, approx. 640 x 426.7 x 487.7 cm, Collection Antoine de Galbert, Paris.

Four vehicles (a minivan, a pickup truck, and two sedans) were situated in the gallery space, each with its own vignette, depicting some aspect of First Nations life and cheekily taking on the typical scene found in museum dioramas. In the minivan, a woman sits in the back selling clothing and beads; in the pickup truck, a cowboy loads in his gear, with sparkly jewellery slipping out from under his shirt; in one sedan, a spectator watches TV in the trunk; and in another, a troublemaker is behind the wheel and fleeing with few possessions. Each character bears Monkman's face, a direct critique of the tendency by museums to feature one face for many cultures and different genders. As has been noted



by Deena Rymhs, the use of the four automobiles “explores Indigenous people’s confinement in various settings—the reserve, the museum, the administrative borders of the state, and outdoor Wild-West-inspired exhibitions that sidelined Indigenous people to stock anachronistic figurations.”¹⁹ Monkman also used the cars as museum cases—or vitrines, in a way—to show objects from the museum’s collection.



Kent Monkman, *The Big Four*, 2012, multi-media installation, Glenbow Museum, Calgary.

The Rise and Fall of Civilization, 2015, and *Bête Noir*, 2014, also make forays into the diorama idiom. In the former, a realistic cliff, models of buffalo, and a mannequin of Miss Chief come together as entities frozen in time. Some buffalo appear lifelike at the top of the cliff while others are abstracted, resembling line drawings or pictographs and Cubist forms reminiscent of Pablo Picasso’s works. The diorama appears to flow from prehistoric times to the present day, functioning as a metaphor for the disappearance of buffalo by European settlers. The flattening of pictorial space in Monkman’s work runs concurrently with the suppression of Indigenous cultures within the reservation system and residential schools. In *Bête Noir*, the famous and inaccurate painting *The Last of the Buffalo*, 1888, by Albert Bierstadt, which depicts an Indigenous man on horseback battling a buffalo, sets the backdrop. Here, Monkman turns the tables by presenting the buffalo as living and thriving, while a flattened, Picasso-style bull made from pieces of real cowhide is situated in the foreground.



LEFT: Albert Bierstadt, *The Last of the Buffalo*, 1888, oil on canvas, 180.3 x 301.63 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *Bête Noire*, 2014, painted backdrop (acrylic on canvas), sculptural installation (mixed media), 487.7 x 487.7 x 304.8 cm, Winnipeg Art Gallery.

INCORPORATING MUSEUM OBJECTS

Monkman has often incorporated objects and paintings from the permanent collections of museums in his art. By presenting these pieces in revisionist contexts, Monkman works toward decolonizing the museum. According to Toronto-based activist Syed Hussan, decolonization is “a dramatic reimagining of relationships with land, people and the state.”²⁰ It involves an unlearning of existing power structures—for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. In museums that have both questionable collecting practices around Indigenous objects and artworks by settler artists that portray Indigenous peoples, the act of unlearning and revision is a necessary action. It takes the form of rejecting, reviewing, and revising practices inherited from a colonizing regime in order to move forward. This practice is pronounced in exhibitions such as *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience*, 2017.

In preparation for the show, Monkman and his team visited museums across Canada, researching artifacts to display with his paintings in the different sections of the exhibition, which he called chapters. For example, “Chapter III: Wards of the State/the Indian Problem” included *The Subjugation of Truth*, 2016, which depicts an imagined scene where pîhtokahanapiwiyin (Chief Poundmaker) and mistahimaskwa (Big Bear) sign a treaty with Prime Minister John A. Macdonald. It was accompanied by a display of Poundmaker’s actual moccasins, borrowed from the Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau. Macdonald also appeared in the painting *A Country Wife*, 2016, this time with Miss Chief.



LEFT: Kent Monkman, *The Subjugation of Truth*, 2016, acrylic on canvas, 182.9 x 129.5 cm, Collection of Rob and Monique Sobey. RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *A Country Wife*, 2016, acrylic on canvas, 152.4 x 91.4 cm, Collection of Marie-Claude Rochon & Paolo Notarnicola.

In “Chapter IV: Starvation,” a long dining table is set for a celebratory meal. At one end, symbols of nation building appear on the dishes: a portrait of General Wolfe, and an image of a beaver, a railroad, and the Fathers of Confederation. At the other end, as the surface of the table changes into rough boards, there is less food, a spilled glass of wine, and a plate with an image of Queen Elizabeth II atop a yellowed, tattered-lace table runner. Monkman’s *Starvation Plates*, 2017, which are decorated with archival-photograph reproductions of mounds of buffalo bones, are set amid the scattered bones of small animals. By the early 1880s, with buffalo on the brink of extinction and food scarce, First Nations communities on the Plains were starving, and in order to be fed, the Canadian government, led by Sir John A. Macdonald, forced them to live on reserves; desperate to feed their families, many First Nations women were forced into prostitution and were abused by local government officials.²¹



Installation view of “Chapter IV: Starvation” in *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience* at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2019-20, photograph by MaryLou Driedger.

In “Chapter VI: Incarceration,” Monkman included a pair of handcuffs and a pair of leg irons from the collection of the Museum of Vancouver, objects that were used on Louie Sam, a Stó:lō teen in British Columbia who was lynched by an American mob while awaiting trial in 1884. Photographs of Poundmaker and Big Bear and Riel Rebellion prisoners under arrest, borrowed from the Glenbow Museum, flanked the objects. Through juxtapositions like these, the exhibition emphasized the dark themes of colonialism while also sending a message of Indigenous resilience.



Installation view of "Chapter VI: Incarceration" in *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience* at the Art Museum at the University of Toronto, 2017, photograph by Toni Hafkenscheid.

COLLABORATION AND THE STUDIO PROCESS

As Monkman's career has catapulted onto an international stage and the demand for his work has increased, his studio practice has adapted. It now operates like a Renaissance atelier, where a team of apprentices assists a master artist. Historically, when works were commissioned, apprentices would often complete a large portion of the painting, leaving the difficult details to the master. When Monkman worked alone, his plans began with a sketch, followed by a small painting. The "image study" served as a reference for a bigger canvas, where Monkman would fill in gaps and improvise along the way.

Monkman's compositions are realized through collaboration, a process that he first began when working with Gisèle Gordon in 1996. Describing the development of *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience*, where he was both artist and curator, Monkman noted, "the images came first, as did the structure of the exhibition and curation of the objects. Miss Chief's narrative came at the end. Gisèle Gordon wrote them and was able to get inside my brain and unpack all the layers and intentions behind the work."²² Monkman acknowledges that a vital part of his work is the involvement of makeup artists, fashion designers, and filmmakers.



Kent Monkman and studio assistants working on *Welcoming the Newcomers*, 2019.

In 2006, with numerous speaking engagements compounded by a busy exhibition schedule, Monkman moved from the traditional method of working alone to working with a team who paint under his direction. He begins with making sketches, then enlists live models and actors who pose for specific works; for the paintings *Welcoming the Newcomers* and *Resurgence of the People*, both 2019, he worked with dozens of different people. The enactments are photographed, then projected onto canvas. The team paints sections of the canvas until the final stage, when Monkman completes it alone.



LEFT: Kent Monkman demonstrating a pose for models during the preparation of *Welcoming the Newcomers*, 2019, photograph by Aaron Wynia. RIGHT: Kent Monkman working with models during the preparation of *Resurgence of the People*, 2019, photograph by Aaron Wynia.

Monkman's first project to employ real actors was *Death of the Virgin* (after *Caravaggio*), 2016, which draws on *Death of the Virgin*, c.1601-6, by Caravaggio (1571-1610) but replaces the Virgin Mary with a young Indigenous woman in a contemporary setting. She lies in a hospital bed surrounded by loved ones who drum, smudge, and pray, and the work is a sharp commentary on the issue of murdered and missing Indigenous women.



KENT MONKMAN

Life & Work by Shirley Madill



LEFT: Michelangelo Merisi (known as Caravaggio), *Death of the Virgin*, c.1601-6, oil on canvas, 369 x 245 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *Death of the Virgin (after Caravaggio)*, 2016, acrylic on canvas, 182.9 x 129.5 cm, Collection of Rob and Monique Sobey.

Similarly, in *They Are Warriors*, 2017, Indigenous and white models posed for a tableau depicting a scrummage between Indigenous “warriors” and white police, a scene quite common in today’s media. Monkman collected recent news images of the arrests of Indigenous protesters at Standing Rock Indian Reservation in North and South Dakota, who were attempting to stop the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline, as well as images of battle scenes from art historical sources. Like *Death of the Virgin (after Caravaggio)*, the painting possesses a hyperrealist style that heightens the emotions and amplifies the reality of the issues affecting Indigenous peoples.



KENT MONKMAN

Life & Work by Shirley Madill



Kent Monkman, *They Are Warriors* (detail), 2017, acrylic on canvas, 182.9 x 121.9 cm, Collection of Rob and Monique Sobey.



WHERE TO SEE

The works of Kent Monkman are held in public and private collections in Canada and internationally. Although the following institutions hold the works listed below, they may not always be on view.



ART GALLERY OF NOVA SCOTIA

1723 Hollis Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
902-424-5280
artgalleryofnovascotia.ca



Kent Monkman, *Miss Chief's Wet Dream*, 2018

Acrylic on canvas
365.7 x 731.5 cm

ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO

317 Dundas Street West
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
416-979-6648
ago.ca



Kent Monkman, *The Academy*, 2008

Acrylic on canvas
205.7 x 297.2 cm (framed)

CHIEF POUNDMAKER MUSEUM AND HISTORIC SITE

Box 640
Cut Knife, Saskatchewan, Canada
306-398-2316
poundmakercn.ca/get_in_touch/historical_center.html



Kent Monkman, *Poundmaker Intercedes*, 2018

Acrylic on canvas
81.3 x 127 cm



DENVER ART MUSEUM

100 W 14th Avenue Parkway
Denver, Colorado, U.S.A.
720-865-5000
denverartmuseum.org



Kent Monkman, *Lot's Wife*, 2012
Fibreglass, Styrofoam, wood,
taxidermy deer, artificial grass,
and video projection
243.8 x 243.8 x 243.8 cm
(sculptural element), 274.3 x
487.7 cm (video projection)



**Kent Monkman, *The Scream*,
2017**
Acrylic on canvas
213.4 x 335.3 cm

GLENBOW MUSEUM

130 9th Avenue SE
Calgary, Alberta, Canada
403-268-4100
glenbow.org



**Kent Monkman, *The Big Four*,
2012**
Multi-media installation



**Kent Monkman, *The Rise and Fall
of Civilization*, 2015**
Mixed-media installation



MCCORD MUSEUM

690 Sherbrooke Street West
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
514-861-6701
musee-mccord.qc.ca



Kent Monkman, *Welcome to the Studio: An Allegory for Artistic Reflection and Transformation*, 2014

Acrylic on canvas
180 x 730 cm

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

1000 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York, U.S.A.
212-535-7710
metmuseum.org



Kent Monkman, *Resurgence of the People*, 2019

Acrylic on canvas
335.3 x 670.6 cm



Kent Monkman, *Welcoming the Newcomers*, 2019

Acrylic on canvas
335.3 x 670.6 cm



KENT MONKMAN

Life & Work by Shirley Madill

MONTREAL MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

1380 Sherbrooke Street West
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
514-285-2000 or 1-800-899-6873
mbam.qc.ca



Kent Monkman, *The Fourth of March*, from *The Trilogy of Saint Thomas*, 2004
Acrylic on canvas
183.4 x 274.8 cm



Kent Monkman, *The Impending Storm*, from *The Trilogy of Saint Thomas*, 2004
Acrylic on canvas
152.6 x 242.4 cm



Kent Monkman, *Not the End of the Trail*, from *The Trilogy of Saint Thomas*, 2004
Acrylic on canvas
183.7 x 274.7 cm



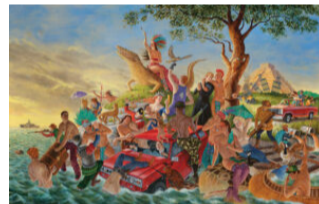
Kent Monkman, *Théâtre de Cristal*, 2006
Mixed-media installation



Kent Monkman, *Trappers of Men*, 2006
Acrylic on canvas
262 x 415 x 9 cm



Kent Monkman, *Mary*, 2011
HD colour video, 1/3, 3 min 18 s



Kent Monkman, *Miss America*, 2012
Acrylic on canvas
213.4 x 335.3 cm

MUSEUM LONDON

421 Ridout Street North
London, Ontario, Canada
519-661-0333
museumlondon.ca



Kent Monkman, *Softly and Tenderly*, 2001
Acrylic on canvas
91.4 x 121.9 cm



Kent Monkman, *Nativity Scene*, 2017
Mixed-media installation



NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA

380 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
613-990-1985
gallery.ca



Kent Monkman, *Portrait of the Artist as Hunter*, 2002

Acrylic on canvas
59.9 x 91.3 cm



Kent Monkman, *The Emergence of a Legend*, 2006

Portfolio containing 5
chromogenic prints on
metallic paper, fabric,
frames
43 x 36 cm each
(framed)



Kent Monkman, *Boudoir de Berdashe*, 2007

Mixed-media
installation, installation
dimensions variable



Kent Monkman, *The Triumph of Mischief*, 2007

Acrylic on canvas
213 x 335 cm



Kent Monkman, *Casualties of Modernity*, 2015

Mixed media installation
with HD video, 14:45
minutes
(No fixed height) x 272 x
525 cm



WINNIPEG ART GALLERY

300 Memorial Boulevard
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
204-786-6641
wag.ca



Kent Monkman, *Bête Noire*, 2014
Painted backdrop (acrylic on canvas), sculptural installation (mixed media)
487.7 x 487.7 x 304.8 cm



Kent Monkman, *The Deposition*, 2014
Acrylic on canvas
213.4 x 320 cm

WOODLAND CULTURAL CENTRE

184 Mohawk Street
Brantford, Ontario, Canada
519-759-2650
woodlandculturalcentre.ca



Kent Monkman, *Two Kindred Spirits*, 2012
Multi-media installation
304.8 x 487.7 x 243.8 cm



NOTES

BIOGRAPHY

1. Kent Monkman, quoted in Jordan Timm, "Landscape with Sexy Transvestite," *Maclean's*, December 31, 2007, 95.

2. The Indigenous community in St. Peters, Manitoba, is composed of Anishinaabe, Cree, and Saulteaux peoples.

3. Treaty 5, also known as the Winnipeg Treaty, covers much of present-day central and northern Manitoba, as well as portions of Saskatchewan and Ontario.

4. June Scudeler, "'Indians on Top': Kent Monkman's Sovereign Erotics," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 39, no. 4 (2015): 23.

5. Melissa Martin, "Once Inspired, Now Inspiring," *Canadian Press*, October 6, 2017.

6. Robert Everett-Green, "A Trickster with a Cause Crashes Canada's 150th Birthday Party," *Globe and Mail*, January 6, 2017.

7. Everett-Green, "A Trickster with a Cause."

8. The exhibition was *Robert Houle: Indians from A to Z*.

9. Timm, "Landscape with Sexy Transvestite."

10. Kent Monkman, in conversation with author, September 20, 2019.

11. Kent Monkman in email to the author and the Art Canada Institute, February 10, 2022.

12. For more on this book, see June Scudeler, "oskisihcikêwak / New Traditions in Cree Two-Spirit, Gay and Queer Narratives" (PhD Dissertation, University of British Columbia, 2016), 123-27.

13. For more on the book's reception, see Philip Marchand, "Author Concocts Skewed View of 1492," *Toronto Star*, November 18, 1992, B5.

14. Lee-Ann Martin, "Anger and Reconciliation: A Very Brief History of Exhibiting Contemporary Indigenous Art in Canada," *Afterall* 43, no. 1 (2017): 113.

15. Gerald Hannon, "How Kent Monkman—a Half-Cree Illustrator from Winnipeg—Sexed Up the Exploitation of First Nations People and Conquered Toronto's Art World," *Toronto Life*, September 6, 2011, <https://torontolife.com/city/the-pink-indian/>.

16. Hannon, "How Kent Monkman."



17. David Liss, "Miss Chief's Return: Subverting the Canon through Sublime Landscapes and Saucy Performances," *Canadian Art*, September 15, 2005, <https://canadianart.ca/features/kent-monkman-3/>.
18. Although the use of "Indian" is inappropriate when referring to Indigenous peoples, in the context of Monkman's work, the term is used to emphasize his message.
19. Kent Monkman in email to the author and the Art Canada Institute, February 10, 2022.
20. Kent Monkman, in conversation with the author, September 20, 2019.
21. The drawing by George Catlin was produced while he was on the Great Plains among the Sac and Fox Nation.
22. In Catlin's *Letters and Notes*, vol. 2, no. 56, 1841 (reprint 1973), he describes the dance as "One of the most unaccountable and disgusting customs that I have ever met in the Indian country.... I should wish that it might be extinguished before it be more fully recorded."
23. Jonathan D. Katz, "Miss Chief Is Always Interested in the Latest European Fashions," *Interpellations: Three Essays on Kent Monkman*, ed. Michèle Thériault (Montreal: Leonard and Bina Ellen Art Gallery, 2012), 19.
24. David McIntosh describes Miss Chief as a "Postindian Diva Warrior" in his essay "Miss Chief Eagle Testickle, Postindian Diva Warrior, in the Shadowy Hall of Mirrors," in *Kent Monkman: Triumph of Mischief* (Hamilton: Art Gallery of Hamilton and Victoria: Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 2008), 31-46.
25. Scudeler, "Indians on Top," 22.
26. The McMichael Canadian Art Collection was one of the first art museums to include works by Indigenous artists; however, in 2000 the museum's mandate was amended, reverting its focus to the Group of Seven and their contemporaries. This decision resulted in the removal of most Indigenous works from the museum's exhibits.
27. Hannon, "How Kent Monkman."
28. The exhibition was organized in partnership with the Museum of Contemporary Art, Toronto, and travelled to the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, British Columbia; Saint Mary's University Art Gallery, Halifax, Nova Scotia; and Glenbow Museum, Calgary, Alberta.
29. Martin, "Once Inspired, Now Inspiring."
30. Kent Monkman, "Foreword," *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience. Excerpts from the Memoirs of Miss Chief Eagle Testickle*, exhibition brochure (Toronto: Art Museum at the University of Toronto, 2017), 3.



31. Monkman, "Foreword," 4.

32. Scudeler, "Indians on Top," 29.

33. For more on this movement, see Jackie Dunham, "Resistance 150: Why Canada's Birthday Celebrations Aren't for Everyone," *Warrior Publications*, June 27, 2017, <https://warriorpublications.wordpress.com/2017/06/30/resistance-150-why-canadas-birthday-celebrations-arent-for-everyone/>.

34. Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action #67 asks the federal government to provide funding to the Canadian Museums Association to undertake, in collaboration with Indigenous peoples, a national review of museum policies and best practices to determine the level of compliance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to make recommendations. ("Truth and Reconciliation Offers 94 'Calls to Action,'" CBC News, December 14, 2015, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/truth-and-reconciliation-94-calls-to-action-1.3362258>.)

35. Monkman, "Foreword," 4.

36. Miss Chief's memoirs are scheduled to be published in 2022 by McClelland & Stewart. Written with Monkman's long-time collaborator Gisèle Gordon, the book emerged from the exhibition *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience*.

37. Monkman, "Foreword," 4.

38. Randall Griffey, "Kent Monkman Reverses Art History's Colonial Gaze," *The Met*, December 17, 2019, <https://www.metmuseum.org/perspectives/articles/2019/12/kent-monkman-mistikosiwak-wooden-boat-people-colonial-gaze>.

39. "Kent Monkman with Amber Jamilla Musser," *Brooklyn Rail*, November 2020.

40. Regan de Loggans, "Mistikôsiwak: Monkman at the Met," *Canadian Art*, April 29, 2020, <https://canadianart.ca/essays/mistikosiwak-kent-monkman-at-the-met>.

41. Dorothy Woodend, "Kent Monkman's Work Must Be Seen," *The Tyee*, August 14, 2020, <https://thetyee.ca/Culture/2020/08/14/Kent-Monkman-Work-Must-Be-Seen/>.



KEY WORKS: SHALL WE GATHER AT THE RIVER

1. Debra Prince, "Introduction," *Between You and Me*, Museum London, London, ON, 2002.

2. David Liss, "Miss Chief's Return: Subverting the Canon through Sublime Landscapes and Saucy Performances," *Canadian Art*, September 15, 2005, <https://canadianart.ca/features/kent-monkman-3/>. Foucault wrote that sexuality is "endowed with the greatest instrumentality: useful for the greatest number of manoeuvres and capable of serving as a point of support, as a linchpin, for the most varied strategies." *The History of Sexuality, Volume One: The Will to Knowledge* (London: 1990), 103.

3. Artist talk, Kent Monkman, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston, January 20, 2018.

4. Today the attribution to Evans is controversial, as he likely worked with Indigenous people. (Walter Strong, "A Question of Legacy: Cree Writing and the Origin of the Syllabics," CBC News, June 2, 2020, <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform/a-question-of-legacy-cree-writing-and-the-origin-of-the-syllabics>.)

5. Artist talk, Kent Monkman, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston, January 20, 2018.

KEY WORKS: JACK PINE

1. David Liss, "Miss Chief's Return: Subverting the Canon through Sublime Landscapes and Saucy Performances," *Canadian Art*, September 15, 2005, <https://canadianart.ca/features/kent-monkman-3/>.

2. Artist talk, "Kent Monkman: Casualties of Modernity," Speaker Series, Penny Stamps School of Art and Design, University of Michigan, January 28, 2016.

3. Liss, "Miss Chief's Return."

4. Kent Monkman in email to the author and the Art Canada Institute, February 10, 2022.

KEY WORKS: THE IMPENDING STORM

1. David Liss, "Miss Chief's Return: Subverting the Canon through Sublime Landscapes and Saucy Performances," *Canadian Art*, September 15, 2005, <https://canadianart.ca/features/kent-monkman-3/>.

2. Liss, "Miss Chief's Return."

KEY WORKS: GROUP OF SEVEN INCHES

1. *Group of Seven Inches*, 2005, DVD, 7 min and 35 sec.

KEY WORKS: THE TRIUMPH OF MISCHIEF

1. Charlotte Hoelke, "Beyond Survival: 'Stories of Queer Native Survivance' in Selected Works by Kent Monkman," *Capstone Seminar Series, (Re)Negotiating Artifacts of Canadian Narratives of Identity 4*, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 12.



2. Candice Hopkins, "On Other Pictures: Imperialism, Historical Amnesia and Mimesis," in *Sakahàn: International Indigenous Art* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada: 2013), 24.

3. Hoelke, "Beyond Survival," 13.

KEY WORKS: LOT'S WIFE

1. For more on this community, see "St. Peter's," *Kiinawin Kawindomowin Story Nations*, <https://storynations.utoronto.ca/index.php/st-peters/>.

2. In conversation with the author, October 12, 2020.

KEY WORKS: MISS AMERICA

1. Crystal Mowry, "Kent Monkman // The Four Continents," Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, 2016, <https://kwag.ca/content/kent-monkman-four-continents>.

2. "Humour as Defiance," *McGill Daily*, September 17, 2012.

KEY WORKS: LE PETIT DÉJEUNER SUR L'HERBE

1. Kent Monkman, video accompanying the exhibition *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience* (Art Museum at the University of Toronto, 2017).

2. Kent Monkman, "Foreword," exhibition brochure, *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience* (Toronto: Art Museum at the University of Toronto, 2017), 7.

3. According to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, the actual number of missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada is considered to be significantly higher than the police-documented cases in the 2014 Royal Canadian Mounted Police report. Indigenous women are twelve times more likely to be missing or murdered than other women in Canada and sixteen times more likely than white women.

KEY WORKS: THE DADDIES

1. The multi-striped iconic woollen blanket produced by the Hudson's Bay Company has a long history with multiple meanings that range from being a colonial trade good to a desirable consumer item today, but it is also a signifier of colonialism and a piece associated with Indigenous epidemics and death.

2. "A lesson in Canadian history, courtesy of Kent Monkman," *Economist*, December 6, 2018, <https://www.economist.com/prospero/2018/12/06/a-lesson-in-canadian-history-courtesy-of-kent-monkman>.

3. Jackie Dunham, "Resistance 150: Why Canada's Birthday Celebrations Aren't for Everyone," *Warrior Publications*, June 27, 2017, <https://warriorpublications.wordpress.com/2017/06/30/resistance-150-why-canadas-birthday-celebrations-arent-for-everyone/>.



4. Kahnawake Mohawk Russell Diablo, who is an Indigenous Policy Analyst, maintains how the Indian Act is still in control and managing the lives of First Nations peoples. It harkens back to the Royal Proclamation of 1763 that laid down the basis for how colonial administration would interact with First Nations peoples in the centuries that followed.

5. Daniel Baird, "The Alternative Realism of Kent Monkman," *Walrus*, February 7, 2017, <https://thewalrus.ca/the-alternative-realism-of-kent-monkman/>.

KEY WORKS: THE SCREAM

1. "Chapter V: Forcible Transfer of Children," *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience*, exhibition brochure (Toronto: Art Museum at University of Toronto, 2017), 16.

2. The Sixties Scoop involved policies enacted by provincial child welfare authorities starting in the mid-1950s, which resulted in Indigenous children being taken from their families, placed in foster homes, and eventually adopted out to white families in Canada and the United States.

KEY WORKS: RESURGENCE OF THE PEOPLE

1. Kate Taylor, "At the Met, Cree Artist Kent Monkman Asks Visitors to Confront North America's Colonial Past," *Globe and Mail*, December 18, 2019, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/art-and-architecture/article-at-the-met-cree-artist-kent-monkman-asks-visitors-to-confront-north/>.

2. Regan de Loggans, "Mistikôsiwak: Monkman at the Met," *Canadian Art*, April 29, 2020, <https://canadianart.ca/essays/mistikosiwak-kent-monkman-at-the-met>.

3. Paul Wells, "Kent Monkman and the Making of a Masterpiece," *Macleans*, December 19, 2019.

4. Sasha Suda, "A Practice of Recovery," in *Revision and Resistance* (Toronto: Art Canada Institute, 2019), <https://www.aci-iac.ca/the-essay/a-practice-of-recovery-by-sasha-suda/>.

5. Holland Cotter, "A Cree Artist Redraws History," *New York Times*, December 19, 2019.

SIGNIFICANCE & CRITICAL ISSUES

1. Sue-Ellen Jacobs, Wesley Thomas, and Sabine Lang, "Introduction," in *Two-Spirit People: Native American Gender Identity, Sexuality, and Spirituality*, eds. Sue-Ellen Jacobs, Wesley Thomas, and Sabine Lang (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 4.

2. In the early 1990s, as part of an effort to reclaim traditions, Indigenous peoples sought to find a word or phrase originating from an Indigenous community to replace the term *berdache*. *Berdache* has been rejected by LGBTQ+ communities because of its anthropological history and because the term refers to a male sexual slave. It also leaves out women who carry out male roles. At the third annual Intertribal Native American, First Nations, Gay and Lesbian American Conference, held in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 1990, activist



Albert McLeod proposed the term *Two Spirit* to refer to the Indigenous LGBTQ+ community, which is used today. See Richard LaFortune Anguksuar (Yup'ik), "A Postcolonial Colonial Perspective on Western Misconceptions of the Cosmos and the Restoration of Indigenous Taxonomies," in *Two-Spirit People: Native American Gender Identity, Sexuality, and Spirituality*, eds. Sue-Ellen Jacobs, Wesley Thomas, and Sabine Lang (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 221.

3. Artist talk, "Kent Monkman: Casualties of Modernity," Speaker Series, Penny Stamps School of Art and Design, University of Michigan, January 28, 2016.

4. George Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Custom, and Conditions of the North American Indians* (London: Tosswill and Myers, 1841), 112.

5. Ben Portis, "Kent Monkman: The Treason of Images," Trépanier Baer Gallery, Calgary, 2016.

6. Charlotte Hoelke, "Beyond Survival: 'Stories of Queer Native Survivance' in Selected Works by Kent Monkman," *Capstone Seminar Series, (Re)Negotiating Artifacts of Canadian Narratives of Identity* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 11.

7. Mark Kingwell, "First Day Cover: Kent Monkman's Spectral Dandies," in *Explorers and Dandies in an Open Letter to Canada Post: Frederick Hagan and Kent Monkman* (Mississauga: Art Gallery of Mississauga, 2008), 53-60.

8. Ruth B. Phillips, *Museum Pieces: Toward the Indigenization of Canadian Museums* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013), 48-70. Phillips refers to exhibitions such as *The Spirit Sings* and responses in conjunction with events such as the Columbus Quincentennial in 1992.

9. As relayed by Barbara Fischer, director and curator at the Art Museum at the University of Toronto in a press release, 2017.

10. According to Statistics Canada in 2006, 54 per cent of Indigenous peoples live in urban centres, and many have not filled out census forms.

11. Katherine Brooks, "Kent Monkman, Aka Miss Chief Eagle Testickle, Confronts Native American Myths, Culture and Arts," *Huffington Post*, May 21, 2014 (updated December 6, 2017).

12. "Q&A: Artist Kent Monkman Takes a Trip Back to Winnipeg's North End," CBC News, October 12, 2019, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/kent-monkman-winnipeg-north-end-1.5307993>.

13. "Fear, Violence 'Normal' in Winnipeg's North End, Activist Says," CBC News, November 26, 2015, www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/winnipeg-north-end-fear-violence-1.3338067.

14. Marco Muller, "Death of the Female: Interpretations of Iconography through the Lens of a Winnipeg Cree," *Artspace*, April 2011.



15. A large percentage of the inmate population in prisons such as Stony Mountain Penitentiary in Manitoba, where Chiefs Poundmaker and Big Bear were incarcerated under false charges, are Indigenous.
16. June Scudeler, "'Indians on Top': Kent Monkman's Sovereign Erotics," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 39, no. 4 (2015): 19-32.
17. Kate Morris, *Shifting Grounds: Landscape in Contemporary Native American Art* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019), 140.
18. The Indian Act is a Canadian federal law that governs matters pertaining to Indian status, bands, and reserves. Throughout history it has been highly invasive and paternalistic, as it authorizes the Canadian federal government to regulate the affairs and lives of Indigenous peoples in matters ranging from political control, imposing governing structures on First Nations communities in the form of band councils, to control over the rights of Indigenous peoples to practise their culture and traditions. The Indian Act has also enabled the government to determine the land base of these groups in the form of reserves. While the Indian Act has undergone numerous amendments since it was first passed in 1876, today it largely retains some of its original form.
19. Robert Enright, "The Incredible Rightness of Mischief: An Interview with Kent Monkman," *Border Crossings* 36, no. 3 (2017): 30.
20. Nic Meloney, "Kent Monkman's 'Miss Chief's Wet Dream' Finds a Home in Halifax," CBC News, November 1, 2018, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/kent-monkman-miss-chiefs-wet-dream-halifax-1.4888186>.
21. Richard William Hill, "Taxonomy of the European Male, Séance, and Justice of the Piece," in *Two Spirit Acts: Queer Indigenous Performances*, ed. Jean O'Hara (Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2013).

STYLE & TECHNIQUE

1. Despite his departure from illustration, Monkman maintains that rendering storyboards for television commercials—a long, laborious job where he learned how to draw quickly, spontaneously, intuitively, and accurately—is a skill he really values.
2. Gerald Hannon, "How Kent Monkman—a Half-Cree Illustrator from Winnipeg—Sexed Up the Exploitation of First Nations People and Conquered Toronto's Art Scene," *Toronto Life*, September 6, 2011.
3. Hannon, "How Kent Monkman."
4. Kate Morris, "Making Miss Chief: Kent Monkman Takes on the West," *National Museum of the American Indian Magazine* (Winter 2010): 12-18.
5. Hrag Vartanian, "The Violent History of Kent Monkman," *Hyperallergic*, June 14, 2014, <https://hyperallergic.com/131828/the-violent-history-of-kent-monkman/>.



6. June Scudeler, "Indians on Top': Kent Monkman's Sovereign Erotics," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 39, no. 4 (2015): 25.
7. TVO Current Affairs, "Challenging Canada's History through Art," TVO, July 5, 2017.
8. Kerry Swanson, "The Noble Savage Was a Drag Queen: Hybridity and Transformation in Kent Monkman's Performance and Visual Art Interventions," *Sexualities and Politics in the Americas* 2, no. 2 (2005): 1-19.
9. Richard William Hill, "Spirits of Mischief and Self-Invention: Kent Monkman's Performances," in *Two-Spirit Acts: Queer Indigenous Performances*, ed. Jean O'Hara (Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2008), 37-41.
10. James Luna, "Allow Me to Introduce Myself," *Canadian Theatre Review*, Issue 68, Fall 1991.
11. "Kent Monkman's Another Feather in Her Bonnet," press release, *Montreal Museum of Fine Arts*, February 8, 2019, <https://www.mbam.qc.ca/en/news/kent-monkmans-another-a feather-in-her-bonnet/>.
12. Sarah Jay, "Jean Paul Gaultier Married Kent Monkman to Apologize for Cultural Appropriation. Here's Why It Matters," *Fashion*, November 13, 2018, <https://fashionmagazine.com/style/jean-paul-gaultier-cultural-appropriation/>.
13. "Kent Monkman's Another Feather in Her Bonnet," Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.
14. One of the most appalling was the Canadian fashion line Dsquared2's Fall 2015 collection entitled "Dsquaw," a play on the incredibly offensive racial and sexual slur. The clothing was an unthoughtful mix of styles from several Indigenous nations, paired with the same military-style jackets Indigenous children within the residential school system were forced to wear.
15. Jean-Philippe Uzel, "Bête Noire by Kent Monkman. Revenge by Diorama," *Espace* 109 (2015): 32.
16. Georgia Phillips-Amos, "Kent Monkman Takes on the 'Colonial Art Space,'" *Frieze*, April 17, 2019, <https://www.frieze.com/article/kent-monkman-takes-colonial-art-space>.
17. Artist talk, "Kent Monkman: Casualties of Modernity," Speaker Series, Penny Stamps School of Art and Design, University of Michigan, January 28, 2016.
18. Drew Anderson, "Bucking Traditions," *Alternatives Journal* 39, no. 4 (2013): 61.
19. Deena Rymhs, "Kent Monkman's The Big Four as Automobiography," *Auto/Biography Studies* 31, no. 3 (2016): 465.



20. Daniel Baird, "The Alternative Realism of Kent Monkman," *Walrus*, February 7, 2017.

21. James Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2013), 153-54, 185.

22. Robert Enright, "The Incredible Rightness of Mischief: An Interview with Kent Monkman," *Border Crossings* 36, no. 3 (2017): 30.



GLOSSARY

abstract art

Also called nonfigurative or nonrepresentational art, abstract art uses form, colour, line, and gestural marks in compositions that do not attempt to represent images of real things. It may interpret reality in an altered form, or depart from it entirely.

Abstract Expressionism

A style that flourished in New York in the 1940s and 1950s, Abstract Expressionism is defined by its combination of formal abstraction and self-conscious expression. The term describes a wide variety of work; among the most famous Abstract Expressionists are Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, and Willem de Kooning.

academic tradition

Associated with the royal academies of art established in France and England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries respectively, the academic tradition emphasized drawing, painting, and sculpture in a style highly influenced by ancient classical art. Subject matter for painting was hierarchically ranked, with history painting of religious, mythological, allegorical, and historical figures holding the position of greatest importance, followed, in order, by genre painting, portraiture, still lifes, and landscapes.

Adams, KC (Anishinaabe-Cree, b.1971)

A Winnipeg-based multidisciplinary artist, educator, and activist whose work explores the relationships between nature and technology and their impact on Indigenous identity. A graduate of Concordia University, Adams has exhibited internationally and published *Perception: A Photo Series* in 2019. From 2008 to 2009 she was director of the Urban Shaman Gallery in Winnipeg.

Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO)

Founded in 1900 as the Art Museum of Toronto, later the Art Gallery of Toronto, the Art Gallery of Ontario is a major collecting institution in Toronto, Ontario, holding close to 95,000 works by Canadian and international artists.

Barkhouse, Mary Anne (Kwakwaka'wakw, b.1961)

Born in Vancouver, Barkhouse is a sculptor and descendant of renowned Northwest Coast artists including Ellen Neel and Naka'pankam (Mungo Martin). She is currently based in Ontario. Wolves, coyotes, and owls frequently appear in her work as she grapples with the impact of colonialism and raises questions about rightful land stewardship. Barkhouse's work is represented in Canada's leading institutions and her many public art projects can be found across Ontario.



Baroque

The Baroque is a style of art popular during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries characterized by exaggerated movement, grandeur, and expression. Originating in Rome, it was the Catholic Church's response to the Protestant Reformation, which privileged an austere spiritual engagement with the divine. In the Baroque, in contrast to Classicism, disorder replaces order and the affect is one of delusional grandeur.

Beam, Carl (Ojibwe, M'Chigeeng First Nation, 1943–2005)

A mixed-media artist who experimented with the photographic medium and spearheaded the reclamation of space by contemporary Indigenous artists in Canada. Beam often worked in photographic collage that featured family photos, text, drawings, and recurring images such as bird anatomy, Christian iconography, and famed freedom fighters. His painting *The North American Iceberg*, 1985, was the first work recognized as contemporary art by an Indigenous artist purchased by the National Gallery of Canada. In 2005 he received the Governor General's Award for Visual and Media Arts.

Belcourt, Christi (Métis, b.1966)

An artist, activist, and author known for her intricately patterned paintings that are inspired by floral motifs from traditional Métis beadwork. Belcourt's paintings often feature bountiful and brightly coloured flowers, plants, and animals against a stark black ground. While celebrating the wonder and abundance of the natural world, Belcourt also directs our attention to the precarity of nature at this time of environmental crisis. She is the recipient of many prestigious honours including the Governor General's Innovation Award (2016).

Belmore, Rebecca (Anishinaabe, Lac Seul First Nation, b.1960)

Widely recognized for her contributions to Canadian art, Belmore is a prominent performance and installation artist known for her politically charged work addressing the unresolved issues of history, trauma, and identity in the colonial spaces of Canada and the Americas. Among her most recognized works is the performance video *Vigil*, 2002, which calls attention to the hundreds of Indigenous women gone missing from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. In 2005 Belmore became the first Indigenous woman to represent Canada at the Venice Biennale.

Bierstadt, Albert (German/American, 1830–1902)

One of the preeminent American landscape painters of the nineteenth century, Bierstadt is known for his large-scale paintings of the American West. When he was two his family moved from Prussia to Massachusetts. Bierstadt would return to Europe to study and train throughout his twenties. His career flourished when he began applying his technical proficiency to panoramic landscapes steeped in symbolism. Bierstadt was among the last generation of artists of the Hudson River School.



Boccioni, Umberto (Italian, 1882–1916)

A painter, sculptor, and Futurist theorist, Umberto Boccioni was one of the authors of the 1910 “Manifesto of Futurist Painting” and the 1912 “Manifesto of Futurist Sculpture,” which advocated a style built on Filippo Marinetti’s Futurist philosophy of violence, speed, and power. His paintings capture the dynamic energy of the movement in swirling, fragmented figures; his sculptures draw on Cubist principles, which he adapted to Futurist themes executed in unconventional materials including wood and cement.

Botticelli, Sandro (Italian, 1445–1510)

A highly renowned Florentine painter and draftsman. Among Botticelli’s best-known works are his frescoes that decorate Rome’s Sistine Chapel, and his mythological paintings *The Birth of Venus*, 1482–85, held at the Uffizi Gallery Museum, Florence, and *Venus and Mars*, c. 1485, held at the National Gallery, London.

Bowen, Deanna (American/Canadian, b.1969)

A Montreal-based interdisciplinary artist, educator, and writer whose practice often draws on her Black Prairie pioneer heritage. Bowen is a descendent of Black settlers of Amber Valley and Campsie, Alberta. In examining personal and public archives, Bowen addresses histories of enslavement, migration, and discrimination. She holds a Masters of Visual Studies from the University of Toronto and in 2016 received a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship.

Boyer, Bob (Métis, 1948–2004)

A nonrepresentational painter known for his use of symmetric patterns of arrows, triangles, and rectangles found in Plains First Nations beadwork and hide painting. Boyer was influenced by colour-field painting and the Abstract Expressionism of the Regina Five in the 1960s. In the 1980s he began painting on blankets to signal the fraught Indigenous histories in Canada. From 1981 to 1998 and in 2004 Boyer served as Head of Visual Arts at the First Nations University of Canada (formerly the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College).

Canadian Museum of History

Located in Gatineau, the museum was originally founded in 1856 as a geological museum associated with the Geological Survey of Canada. Its mission later expanded to include ethnography, archaeology, and natural history. In 1968 it was split into three parts, with the ethnographic section becoming the National Museum of Man. Renamed the Canadian Museum of Civilization in 1986, in 1989 it moved to its current building, designed by Douglas Cardinal to reflect the Canadian landscape. Its most recent change of name, in 2010, to the Canadian Museum of History, reflects its current focus on the history and culture of Canada’s peoples.

Catlin, George (American, 1796–1872)

A painter, writer, and traveller passionately devoted to the subject of American Indigenous culture. Hundreds of Catlin’s ethnographic paintings—some of which garnered high praise from contemporary critics, including Charles Baudelaire—are now held by the Smithsonian Institution and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.



Cole, Thomas (British/American, 1801–1848)

A leading American landscape painter of the nineteenth century and founder of the Hudson River School. Born in England, Cole emigrated with his family to the United States when he was seventeen. After training as a portrait painter, he turned his attention to the scenery around the Catskill and Adirondack mountains. Cole imbued his landscapes with drama, romanticism, and idealism.

Conceptual art

Traced to the work of Marcel Duchamp but not codified until the 1960s, “Conceptual art” is a general term for art that emphasizes ideas over form. The finished product may even be physically transient, as with land art or performance art.

Constable, John (British, 1776–1837)

Viewed today, along with J.M.W. Turner, as one of the greatest British landscape and sky painters of the nineteenth century. Constable painted mostly in his native region of Suffolk and the surrounding areas. He took a more expressive approach to his paintings than many of his predecessors and contemporaries.

Courbet, Gustave (French, 1819–1877)

A critical figure in nineteenth-century art, Courbet helped establish the Realist movement, with paintings such as *Burial at Ornans*, 1849–50, and *The Painter’s Studio*, 1855, and paved the way for later artists, including the Impressionists, to abandon classical subjects for those they encountered in their daily lives.

Cubism

A radical style of painting developed by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque in Paris between 1907 and 1914, Cubism is defined by the representation of numerous perspectives at once. Cubism is considered crucial to the history of modern art for its enormous international impact; famous practitioners also include Juan Gris and Francis Picabia.

Curtis, Edward S. (American, 1868–1952)

A commercial photographer known for his portraits of Native Americans, which he published in the twenty-volume *North American Indian* between 1907 and 1930. More Pictorialist than documentary, these images often recorded customs and costumes that had already vanished from the cultures depicted.

Dada

A multidisciplinary movement that arose in Europe in response to the horrors of the First World War, whose adherents aimed to deconstruct and demolish traditional societal values and institutions. Artworks, often collages and readymades, typically scorned fine materials and craftsmanship. Chief Dadaists include Marcel Duchamp, Tristan Tzara, Kurt Schwitters, and Hans Arp.

Daumier, Honoré (French, 1808–1879)

A prominent artist in politically tumultuous nineteenth-century Paris, known primarily as a satirist. Daumier’s published drawings and lithographs viciously mocked political figures and the bourgeoisie, for which he was jailed for six months in 1832–33. He also helped develop the genre of caricature sculpture.



David, Jacques-Louis (French, 1748–1825)

A Neoclassical painter regarded as the preeminent painter of the late eighteenth century. David is best known for his large-scale history paintings, such as *Oath of the Horatii*, 1784, although he was also a gifted portraitist. A prominent figure in the French Revolution of 1789 because of his involvement in politics, David completed only one oil painting during this period, *The Death of Marat*, 1793, a famous work from the unfinished series *The Martyrs of the Revolution*.

Davidson, Robert (Guud San Glans) (Haida, Tlingit, b.1946)

A celebrated carver of totem poles and masks, painter, printmaker, and jeweller, Davidson is recognized for reviving and perpetuating various aspects of Haida art and cultural expression. In 1969, at the age of twenty-two, he carved a totem pole in his hometown of Masset, British Columbia, which became the first to be raised there in ninety years. In 2010, he received the Governor General's Award for Visual and Media Arts.

Delacroix, Eugène (French, 1798–1863)

A leading French Romantic painter whose use of rich, sensual colours influenced the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists. Following the Romantic tradition, Delacroix portrayed exoticized Moroccan subjects and dramatic scenes from history and contemporary events. His frenzied brushwork conveyed tragedy and emotion. Among his most well-known paintings is *Liberty Leading the People*, 1830.

Devine, Bonnie (Anishinaabe/Ojibwe, Serpent River First Nation, b. 1952)

A mixed-media installation artist, videomaker, sculptor, and curator, acclaimed for her explorations of Ojibwe traditions in criticizing colonial legacies. Devine has used textiles, storytelling, and weaving to interrogate complicated issues of land, treaties, and Indigenous-settler contact. She is an associate professor at OCAD University, where she founded the Indigenous Visual Culture Program.

Doré, Gustave (French, 1832–1883)

Doré worked in various media, including painting and sculpture, but was best known as a popular caricaturist, illustrator, and printmaker. He produced large numbers of wood engravings for many publications, including literary works by authors such as Dante Alighieri, John Milton, Cervantes, Lord Byron, Edgar Allan Poe, and Alfred, Lord Tennyson. Technically brilliant, his illustrations and prints were often characterized by their exploitation of fantasy, excess, and the sublime.

Duchamp, Marcel (French/American, 1887–1968)

One of the most significant artist-thinkers of the twentieth century, Duchamp influenced Conceptual, Pop, and Minimal art. Best known for the sensational painting *Nude Descending a Staircase (No. 2)*, 1912, he is also recognized for his ready-made sculptures, among them the urinal *Fountain*, 1917, and his "desecrated" *Mona Lisa* print, *L.H.O.O.Q.*, 1919.



Eyre, Ivan (Canadian, b. 1935)

A lauded, prolific, and widely collected painter, sculptor, and draftsman. Eyre's significance lies equally in his teaching; a professor of painting and drawing at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg for more than three decades, he has worked closely with generations of Canadian artists. He is known primarily for his majestic prairie landscapes.

Géricault, Théodore (French, 1791–1824)

Géricault was a French Romantic painter best known for *The Raft of the Medusa*, 1818–19, a monumental painting depicting the aftermath of a notorious contemporary shipwreck. His lifestyle—he was a noted dandy and adventurous equestrian—and his subject matter—he favoured scenes of high drama, psychological pain, and equine athleticism—exemplified the Romantic artistic personality. Géricault's work had an enduring influence despite his short life and career and the initial public discomfort with his work's intensity. Though largely self-taught, he shared a teacher with Eugène Delacroix, the most renowned of French Romantic painters, and his style had a formative effect on the latter's work.

Giacometti, Alberto (Swiss, 1901–1966)

Primarily known as a sculptor, Alberto Giacometti was also a painter, draftsman, and printmaker. Although his early, abstract work was Surrealist with Cubist influences, Giacometti turned to sculpting the figure after the Second World War as well as to phenomenology—a way of understanding the world through perception and experience—increasing the size of his sculptures and thinning the human bodies they depicted until they seemed to almost disappear in space. Frail and isolated, they were written about by the existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre and caught the attention of Samuel Beckett, for whom Giacometti designed the first set for his play *Waiting for Godot*.

Glenbow-Alberta Institute

An art and art history museum in Calgary, Alberta, the Glenbow-Alberta Institute was formed following Eric Lafferty Harvie's donation of his collection of historical artifacts from western Canada to the province of Alberta in 1966. Now the Glenbow Museum, it is dedicated to the art and culture of western Canada, with important historical, artistic, archival, and library collections. Exhibitions at the museum focus on both art history and contemporary art.

Gordon, Gisèle (b.1964)

A UK-born, Toronto-based media artist, filmmaker, and producer. Gordon has collaborated with Cree artist Kent Monkman since 1996 when they formed the filmmaking partnership Urban Nation. The pair have co-directed experimental shorts, including *Group of Seven Inches* (2005) and *Robin's Hood* (2007). *The Tunguska Project* (2005) was Gordon's first feature-length documentary.



Goya, Francisco (Spanish, 1746–1828)

Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes was an influential painter of the Spanish Enlightenment whose expressive style would guide the Romantic, realist, and Impressionist painters of the nineteenth century, particularly French artists including Édouard Manet. Though he rose to prominence as a court painter for the Spanish monarchy, Goya's drawings and etchings of the horrors of the Napoleonic Wars and Spanish struggles for independence in the early nineteenth century, none of them published during his lifetime, would prove some of his most enduring work.

Group of Seven

A progressive and nationalistic school of landscape painting in Canada, the Group of Seven was active between 1920 (the year of the group's first exhibition, at the Art Gallery of Toronto, now the Art Gallery of Ontario) and 1933. Founding members were the artists Franklin Carmichael, Lawren Harris, A.Y. Jackson, Frank Johnston, Arthur Lismer, J.E.H. MacDonald, and Frederick Varley.

Harris, Lawren S. (Canadian, 1885–1970)

A founding member of the Group of Seven in Toronto in 1920, Harris was widely considered its unofficial leader. Unlike other members of the group, Harris moved away from painting representational landscapes, first to abstracted landscapes and then to pure abstraction. The Group of Seven broke up in 1933, and when the Canadian Group of Painters was formed in 1933, Harris was elected its first president.

Harris, Robert (Welsh/Canadian, 1849–1919)

Born in Tyn-y-Groes, Wales, Harris immigrated to Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, with his family in 1856. He studied at art schools in Boston, London, and Paris and quickly became one of the best-known portrait painters in Canada in the late 1800s, especially known for the group portrait *The Fathers of Confederation*, 1884. He was president of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts from 1893 to 1906.

Highway, Tomson (Cree, b.1951)

A renowned playwright, novelist, children's author, and musician, Tomson Highway was born in northern Manitoba. At the age of six the Canadian government removed him from his family and placed him in residential school. He later became a social worker, working on reserves and in cities throughout Ontario. With wit and sensitivity, Highway examines Indigenous experiences—both fictional and autobiographical—in his award-winning plays and other writings. He was the first Indigenous author to be named a Member of the Order of Canada (1994).



history painting

Introduced as part of the hierarchy of academic painting by the French Royal Academy in the seventeenth century, history painting was the dominant style of European painting from the Renaissance until the nineteenth century.

Monumental in scale and narrative, and often depicting a moral lesson, history painting initially drew on Greek and Roman history and mythology, as well as the Bible, for source material, later including scenes from more recent or contemporary history. In nineteenth-century Britain, history painting served as a way to present scenes showing the extent of the Empire. Today artists such as Kent Monkman have used history painting to explore the legacy of colonialism.

Houle, Robert (Saulteaux, Kaa-wii-kwe-tawang-kak, b. 1947)

Painter, curator, teacher, and writer, known for increasing the visibility of contemporary First Nations art in Canada. Houle's experience at Sandy Bay Residential School informs his colour field paintings, which gave him a conceptual language to express the opposing ideologies of Saulteaux-Ojibwa spirituality and Christianity. Houle served as the first Curator of Contemporary Indian Art at the Canadian Museum of History (1977-1980) and co-curated several landmark exhibitions of First Nations artists. He received the Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts in 2015. (See Robert Houle: Life & Work by Shirley Madill.)

Houle, Terrance (Káínai, b.1975)

A Calgary-based interdisciplinary artist and director whose works in performance, photography, and film examine Indigenous identity and representation. Sometimes humorous, Houle's work is also trenchant and often produced in collaboration with Indigenous communities and other subjects, as in his multi-year project *Ghost Days*, which involves conjuring colonial and Indigenous spirits. He has exhibited across Canada and internationally.

Hudson River School

A nationalistic and Romantic school of landscape painting that arose informally in the mid-nineteenth century when increasing industry threatened to change the natural environment of the United States. The majority of Hudson River School painters were based in New York, often depicting the Catskill and Adirondack mountains. These painters embedded a sense of drama, the sublime, and the monumental into their portrayals of nature, transforming landscape into a symbol of the intangible sense of God's creation. Thomas Cole and Asher Brown Durand were among the school's leading members.



The Indian Act of 1876

The principal statute through which Canada's federal government administers "Indian status," local First Nations governments, and reserve land and communal monies. The act consolidated previous colonial ordinances that aimed to eradicate First Nations culture in favour of assimilation into Euro-Canadian society. The Act has been amended several times, most significantly in 1951 and 1985, with changes mainly focusing on the removal of particularly discriminatory sections. The Indian Act pertains only to First Nations peoples, not to the Métis or Inuit. It is an evolving, paradoxical document that has enabled trauma, human rights violations, and social and cultural disruption for generations of First Nations peoples. The Act also outlines governmental obligations to First Nations peoples and determines "status"—a legal recognition of a person's First Nations heritage, which affords certain rights such as the right to live on reserve land.

Janvier, Alex (Dene Suline/Saulteaux, b. 1935)

Influenced by Expressionism and strongly by his First Nations heritage, Janvier was a founding member of the Professional Native Indian Artists Inc. and is a pioneering figure in Indigenous art in Canada. Often composed with bright, symbolic colours and curvilinear lines, his nonrepresentational paintings address themes of land, spirit, and the struggles and triumphs of Indigenous culture.

Judd, Donald (American, 1928–1994)

Sculptor, critic, and a leading Minimalist artist, though he renounced the term, Judd is known for creating "specific objects," on which he wrote a manifesto in 1964, and rejection of what he saw as the illusionism of two-dimensional media. Judd's objects, many of them taking the box form, embody rigorously repetitive structures enforced by industrial materials and processes. In them, the artist's emotion is completely removed to consider the object's influence on its environment.

Jungen, Brian (Dane-zaa, b.1970)

An artist internationally recognized for his repurposing of commercially produced items such as sneakers, lawn chairs, and golf bags into intricate sculptures resembling Northwest Coast Indigenous carvings. Jungen's work engages with debates around globalization, cultural appropriation, and museology. A graduate of the Emily Carr University of Art and Design, Jungen was the inaugural recipient of the Sobey Art Award (2002).

Kane, Paul (Irish/Canadian, 1810–1871)

Influenced by the American artist George Catlin, this nineteenth-century painter and explorer spent extensive time documenting Indigenous Peoples in North America and depicting, in a traditional European style, scenes of their culture and landscapes. The Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto houses one hundred paintings and several hundred sketches by Kane. (See *Paul Kane: Life & Work* by Arlene Gehmacher.)



Kunuk, Zacharias (Kapuivik, b. 1957)

A filmmaker and producer whose film *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner* (2001) was the first Inuit-made feature film entirely in Inuktitut with an all-Indigenous cast. In 1988 Kunuk co-founded the independent production company Igloodik Isuma Productions, based in Nunavut. He has championed Inuit self-representation through broadcast media and video in order to prevent further collective memory loss due to the influence of foreign missionaries, priests, schools, and mass media. Kunuk received the Golden Camera Award at the 2001 Cannes Film Festival.

Leonardo da Vinci (Italian, 1452–1519)

The patriarch of the Italian High Renaissance and the creator of the *Mona Lisa*, 1503. Leonardo da Vinci's paintings, sculptures, and architectural and decorative designs altered ideas of what Western art could be, and his writings influenced the concepts of ideal artistic representation and expression through the modern era.

Linklater, Duane (Cree, b.1976)

Linklater is a multidisciplinary Omaskêko Ininiwak (Cree) artist based in North Bay, Ontario. He holds an MFA from Bard College. His work examines and challenges the way museums and other institutions have represented and excluded Indigenous peoples and culture. He has exhibited internationally, including in collaboration with Brian Jungen at *dOCUMENTA 13* in Kassel, Germany. He was the 2013 recipient of the Sobey Art Award.

Luna, James (Payómkawichum/Ipai/Mexican American Indian, 1950–2018)

A Native American conceptual performance and installation artist known for his modes of using his body to critique institutions. In *The Artifact Piece*, Luna lay with personal objects inside a glass vitrine in a museum and presented himself as an artifact. Luna's provocation and humour aim to confront the audience with the biases of cultural institutions and the dominant culture. In 2005 he was sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution to appear in the Venice Biennale.

Lynn, Washington Frank (British, 1827–1906)

A British-born artist and journalist who served as a reporter during the American Civil War, Lynn also promoted British emigration to Canada in his writings. In 1872 he immigrated to Manitoba and became the editor of the *Manitoban* daily newspaper. Lynn had studied at the Royal Academy of Arts in England. While in Canada he painted traditional portraits and landscapes of the prairies in watercolour and oils. Examples of his work can be found in the Winnipeg Art Gallery.

MacDonald, Mike (Mi'kmaq, 1941–2006)

A Nova Scotia-born multi-media artist whose work in video, installation, and gardening reflects his interest in Indigenous heritage, land claims, and environmentalism. MacDonald was self-taught. From 1995 to 2003 he travelled across Canada creating butterfly gardens to encourage contemplation and admiration of the natural world. In 2000 he was the first recipient of the Aboriginal Achievement Award for New Media.



Magritte, René (Belgian, 1898–1967)

A major figure in twentieth-century art, and one of the most important Surrealist painters. Magritte was introduced to Surrealism by André Derain and Paul Eluard while living in Paris in the late 1920s, and collaborated actively with the group through the 1930s. Among his many famous works are *The Treachery of Images*, 1928–29, and *The Son of Man*, 1964.

Manet, Édouard (French, 1832–1883)

Considered a forerunner of the modernist movement in painting, Manet eschewed traditional subject matter for depictions of contemporary urban life that incorporated references to classic works. Although his work was critically dismissed, his unconventional painting style influenced the Impressionists.

Manitoba Museum

Previously known as the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature, the Manitoba Museum was founded in 1965 and is the province's largest not-for-profit institution of culture and science. Located in Winnipeg, the centre features a planetarium and galleries dedicated to science and to Manitoba's heritage. The collections, including archeology, ethnology, history, and the Hudson's Bay Company collection, amount to more than 2.6 million individual holdings.

Matisse, Henri (French, 1869–1954)

A painter, sculptor, printmaker, draftsman, and designer, aligned at different times with the Impressionists, Post-Impressionists, and Fauvists. By the 1920s he was, with Pablo Picasso, one of the most famous painters of his generation, known for his remarkable use of colour and line.

McCord Museum

A Montreal museum of local and national history, opened in 1921. Included in the McCord's diverse collection is the Notman Photographic Archives: approximately 1.3 million photographs by William Notman, his studio employees, and other photographers from the 1840s to the present, as well as photographic equipment and related material.

McMaster, Gerald (Plains Cree, Siksika First Nation, b. 1953)

An artist, educator, and curator, McMaster has worked at national and international institutions, including the National Museum of Man (now the Canadian Museum of History) in Canada and the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in the United States. His artwork, which juxtaposes contemporary pop culture and traditional elements, has been exhibited at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, and SITE Santa Fe, among others.



McMaster, Meryl (Plains Cree/Euro-Canadian, b.1988)

An Ottawa-based artist whose photographic self-portraits explore aspects of her personal identity, mixed Plains Cree and Euro-Canadian heritage, and relationship to the land. McMaster transforms her appearance using costumes, makeup, and props, conjuring fantastical personae that inhabit remote natural landscapes. Her work evokes personal and ancestral narratives, examines the effects of settler colonialism on the lives of Indigenous people and the natural environment, and considers how the past informs our understanding of the present.

McMichael Canadian Art Collection

Located in Kleinburg, Ontario, the McMichael is a public institution dedicated to Canadian and Indigenous art. Founded in 1965, the museum was built around Robert and Signe McMichael's collection of works by the Group of Seven and their contemporaries. The permanent collection now holds more than 6,500 artworks. The gallery is also the custodian of the Cape Dorset archive. In addition to the museum, the grounds feature hiking trails, a sculpture garden, and Tom Thomson's shack—the artist's former home and studio.

modernism

A movement extending from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century in all the arts, modernism rejected academic traditions in favour of innovative styles developed in response to contemporary industrialized society. Modernist movements in the visual arts have included Gustave Courbet's Realism, and later Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, and Cubism and on to abstraction. By the 1960s, anti-authoritarian postmodernist styles such as Pop art, Conceptual art, and Neo-Expressionism blurred the distinction between high art and mass culture.

Montreal Museum of Fine Arts

Founded in 1860 as the Art Association of Montreal, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts has an encyclopedic collection of artworks and artifacts dating from antiquity to the present day. From its beginnings as a private museum and exhibition space to its current status as a public institution spread over four buildings on Sherbrooke Street, the museum has accumulated a collection of more than 43,000 works and hosts historical, modern, and contemporary exhibitions.

Moore, Henry (British, 1898–1986)

One of the twentieth century's most important sculptors, Henry Moore was influenced by non-European sculpture; later he also drew from natural sources, such as bones and pebbles. His technique most often involved carving directly into his material, whether wood, stone, or plaster.



Morrisseau, Norval (Anishinaabe, 1931–2007)

A painter known for depicting Anishinaabe legends and personal, hybrid spiritual themes with vibrant colours and strong lines, Morrisseau was a crucial figure in introducing contemporary Indigenous art into the wider Canadian art scene. He founded the Woodland School and inspired a generation of younger First Nations artists. In 1978 Morrisseau was appointed to the Order of Canada, and in 2006 the National Gallery mounted a major retrospective of his work. (See *Norval Morrisseau: Life & Work* by Carmen Robertson.)

Munch, Edvard (Norwegian, 1863–1944)

Prefiguring the Expressionist movement, Munch's work prominently represented the artist's own emotions—fear, loneliness, sexual longing, and dread. A revered and prolific painter, printmaker, and draftsman, Munch is best known for his painting *The Scream*.

National Gallery of Canada

Established in 1880, the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa holds the most extensive collection of Canadian art in the country as well as works by prominent international artists. Spearheaded by the governor general, the Marquis of Lorne, the gallery was created to strengthen a specifically Canadian brand of artistic culture and identity and to build a national collection of art that would match the level of other British Empire institutions. Since 1988 the gallery has been located on Sussex Drive in a building designed by Moshe Safdie.

Niro, Shelley (Kanien'kehaka [Mohawk], Turtle Clan, Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, b. 1954)

A multidisciplinary artist who uses brazen humour in beadwork, sculpture, video, and photography to challenge colonial and mainstream portrayals of Indigenous peoples. In acts of parody and reimagination, Niro has combined depictions of herself and female family members with traditional Mohawk imagery and pop cultural references. In 2017 she received the Scotiabank Photography Award and the Governor General's Award for Visual and Media Arts.

Notman, William (Scottish/Canadian, 1826–1891)

After immigrating to Canada in 1856, Notman soon became Montreal's most prominent photographer. He specialized in portraits and developed innovative techniques to portray many people in a single photograph (known as a composite photograph) and to recreate outdoor scenes inside the studio. Thanks to his exceptional technical and promotional skills, he was the first Canadian photographer to build an international reputation. (See *William Notman: Life & Work* by Sarah Parsons.)

Obomsawin, Alanis (Abenaki, b.1932)

One of the most celebrated Indigenous documentary filmmakers in the world. The National Film Board of Canada (NFB) first hired Obomsawin as a consultant in 1967. Subsequently, she directed over fifty films for the NFB. Devoting her career to examining the lives and concerns of Indigenous peoples in Canada, she has created such notable documentaries as *Incident at Restigouche* (1984) and *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance* (1993). Obomsawin was named a Companion of the Order of Canada in 2019.



Odjig, Daphne (Odawa/Potawatomi/English, Wikwemikong First Nation, 1919–2016)

A founding member of the Professional Native Indian Artists Inc. and a prominent Indigenous painter in Canada. Odjig's work blends traditional First Nations styles with Cubist and Surrealist aesthetics. Soft contours, bold colours, and black outlines are characteristic of her work, which thematically focuses on issues of Indigenous politics in art.

Ontario College of Art (now OCAD University)

The name given in 1912 to what had previously been the Ontario School of Art (founded 1876), and what would become the Ontario College of Art and Design in 1996. In 2010 the institution was renamed OCAD University, to reflect its new status. OCAD University is located in Toronto and is the oldest and largest art school in Canada.

Painters Eleven

An artists' group active from 1953 to 1960, formed by eleven Abstract Expressionist Toronto-area painters, including Harold Town, Jack Bush, and William Ronald. They joined together in an effort to increase their exposure, given the limited interest in abstract art in Ontario at the time.

performance art

A genre of art presented live and in which the medium is the artist's body in time. The performance may involve multiple participants, as well as the audience. Performance art originated in the early twentieth century with movements like Dadaism and Futurism and found wider prominence in the 1960s and 1970s after the decline of Modernism. Common themes of this genre concern the dematerialized art object, ephemerality, the artist's presence, anti-capitalism, and the integration of art with life.

Picasso, Pablo (Spanish, 1881–1973)

One of the most famous and influential artists of his time, Picasso was a prominent member of the Parisian avant-garde circle that included Henri Matisse and Georges Braque. His painting *Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J. Version O)*, 1911–12, is considered by many to be the most important of the twentieth century.

Poitras, Edward (Métis, b. 1953)

A mixed-media sculptor and installation artist known for his combination of dissimilar materials, such as eroded animal bones, beadwork, transistor boards, audiotapes, and electrical wires, to explore the interrelationships between Indigenous and European or settler cultures. From 1975 to 1976 Poitras studied with Domingo Cisneros in La Macaza, Quebec. In 1995 he became the first Indigenous artist to represent Canada at the Venice Biennale.

Poitras, Jane Ash (Cree, b.1951)

A painter, printmaker, and writer known for using postmodern techniques such as collage to confront the history and lived experience of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Poitras has a background in microbiology and holds an MFA from Columbia University. She is the recipient of many distinguished awards including the Order of Canada (2017). Her work is widely represented in public institutions across the country.



Pollock, Jackson (American, 1912–1956)

Leader of the Abstract Expressionist movement, best known for his drip paintings of the 1940s and 1950s. Pollock is also closely associated with action painting, in which the act of painting is gestural and the artist approaches the canvas with little notion of what he or she will create.

Poussin, Nicolas (French, 1594–1665)

A leading figure in Baroque-era painting, although his pictures repudiated specifically Baroque stylistics. He arrived in Rome from France in 1624, and would live and work in this capital of Renaissance art for the rest of his life. Poussin is known for his classicizing style, which would influence later artists, including the masterful neoclassicist Jacques Louis David.

Ray, Carl (Cree, 1943–1978)

A member of the Professional Native Indian Artists Inc. and the Woodland School who was mentored by Norval Morrisseau, Ray was an influential painter of wildlife, northern landscapes, and Medicine art. Held by the Winnipeg Art Gallery in Manitoba; the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Kleinburg, Ontario; and the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, his work is known for its three-dimensional quality, flowing lines, and original composition.

realism

A style of art in which subjects are depicted as factually as possible. Realism also refers to a nineteenth-century art movement, led by Gustave Courbet, concerned with the representation of daily modern life, rather than mythological, religious, or historical subjects.

Reid, Bill (Haida, 1920–1998)

A sculptor, painter, and jeweller known for his championing of Haida culture and land claims and his skills as a master carver. Reid created monumental public sculptures, found at the University of British Columbia, the Canadian Embassy in Washington, D.C., and the Vancouver International Airport. His *Lootas (Wave-Eater)*, 1986, is a 15-metre canoe carved from a single cedar log, commissioned for Expo 86 in Vancouver. (See *Iluwas Bill Reid: Life & Work* by Gerald McMaster.)

Renaissance

The term used since the nineteenth century to refer to the Western art historical period from approximately 1400 to 1600. The Renaissance is associated with the return to classical style in art and architecture, following the medieval period.

Rindisbacher, Peter (Swiss, 1806–1834)

A Swiss-born artist known for his paintings of Indigenous peoples, settler life, and Hudson's Bay Company officials around the Red River Colony in what is now Manitoba. Rindisbacher emigrated from Switzerland to Canada with his family when he was fifteen. Following a flood in 1826, he relocated to the Midwestern United States. His works are held in many Canadian institutions, including Library and Archives Canada, the National Gallery of Canada, and the Glenbow Museum.



Romantic tradition

A multi-faceted movement that affected most areas of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Western culture, including art, literature, and philosophy. Romanticism privileged the emotional and the subjective; it arose in opposition to Enlightenment-era rationalism.

Royal Ontario Museum

Created in 1912, the Royal Ontario Museum is a Toronto institution that opened to the public in 1914. Originally it housed collections in archeology, zoology, paleontology, mineralogy, and geology; the museum's current holdings include important collections of artefacts from China and from Canada's Indigenous peoples, as well as an important textile collection. The building has undergone three major expansions since its founding: in 1933, 1982, and 2007.

Rubens, Peter Paul (Flemish, 1577–1640)

The Baroque painter Peter Paul Rubens was known for his religious and mythological compositions. Influenced in his early career by the painters of the Venetian Renaissance, Rubens's style evolved to typify the sensuousness and movement of Baroque painting, with a looser painting technique evident in his later works. He supervised a large studio for the production of his work, even as he served as an important diplomat for the Netherlands in Europe.

Sapp, Allen (Cree, 1928–2015)

A Plains Cree painter known for his depictions of life on the Red Pheasant reserve in Saskatchewan where he grew up. His work has been exhibited across Canada, the United States, and in England. Sapp was named an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1987 and in 2003 received a Governor General's Award for the illustrations in *The Song Within My Heart*, a book based on his memories of childhood.

Seurat, Georges (French, 1859–1891)

An influential painter, Seurat was a pioneer of the Neo-Impressionist movement, departing from Impressionism's relative spontaneity and practising more formal structure and symbolic content. Along with Paul Signac, he developed Pointillism, a technique adopted by other painters such as Camille Pissarro, Piet Mondrian, and Wassily Kandinsky.

Stanley, John Mix (American, 1814–1872)

An itinerant artist and photographer known for his landscape paintings. Stanley began to paint Native Americans while working in Wisconsin and Illinois; he later joined numerous expeditions to the American West, making sketches and daguerreotypes of Indigenous peoples and scenery for the country's military.

Suzor-Coté, Marc-Aurèle de Foy (Canadian, 1869–1937)

A remarkably versatile artist, Suzor-Coté was a successful sculptor, painter, illustrator, and church decorator. In 1890 he left rural Quebec to study art in Paris and remained there for eighteen years, painting rural landscapes in an Impressionist style.



Thomson, Tom (Canadian, 1877–1917)

A seminal figure in the creation of a national school of painting, Thomson is known for a bold vision of Algonquin Park—aligned stylistically with Post-Impressionism and Art Nouveau—that has come to symbolize both the Canadian landscape and Canadian landscape painting. Thomson and the members of what would in 1920 become the Group of Seven profoundly influenced one another's work. (See *Tom Thomson: Life & Work* by David P. Silcox.)

Tiepolo, Giovanni Battista (Italian, 1696–1770)

An eighteenth-century Venetian painter and printmaker renowned for his decorative frescoes. Tiepolo's monumental and dramatic ceiling frescoes, such as those depicting the four continents in the Würzburg palace in Germany, utilize perspective techniques derived from theatre design. In addition to allegorical subjects, Tiepolo painted mythological, historical, literary, and religious scenes in his distinctive Rococo style.

Titian (Italian, c.1488–1576)

Tiziano Vecellio, known as Titian in English, was one of the greatest painters of the Venetian Renaissance, whose formal innovations in brushwork and colour signalled the rise of a new aesthetic in Western art. Patronized by royalty, Titian enjoyed a formidable reputation throughout much of Europe. His work influenced later painters, including Diego Velázquez and Peter Paul Rubens.

trompe l'œil

French for "deceives the eye," *trompe l'œil* refers to visual illusion in art, especially images and painted objects that appear to exist in three dimensions and even aim to trick the viewer into thinking that they are real. Common examples are the painted insects that appear to sit on the surface of Renaissance paintings, and murals that make flat walls appear to open into spaces beyond.

Vellekoop, Maurice (Canadian, b.1964)

A Toronto-born illustrator and graduate of the Ontario College of Art and Design, Vellekoop has frequently published work in major fashion magazines such as *Vogue*, *GQ*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Glamour*. In 1997 he published Maurice Vellekoop's *ABC Book: A Homoerotic Primer* and has since released two graphic novels through the Montreal-based publisher Drawn & Quarterly.

wampum belt

A belt created from purple and white wampum beads made from clamshells. Traditional to Eastern Woodlands Indigenous peoples, wampum belts have various purposes, generally ceremonial and diplomatic in nature. The belts' coded and symbolic bead arrangements may be used to invite other nations to a meeting, serve as a record of an agreement or treaty, or represent leadership positions or a person's certificate of office. For the Haudenosaunee, for instance, wampum belts are also used to raise a new chief and as a way to bind peace between nations.



West, Benjamin (American/British, 1738–1820)

Influential painter of historical, mythological, and religious subjects, as well as commissioned portraits. West co-founded the Royal Academy of Arts in London and served as its president in 1792. One of his most recognized paintings, *The Death of General Wolfe*, 1770, is a fictionalized portrayal of the death of British general James Wolfe at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham (1759) during the Seven Years' War.

Willard, Tania (Secwepemc, b. 1977)

An artist and curator, and an increasingly important figure in Canadian arts and culture. A member of Secwepemc Nation, Willard's community-engaged practice often explores the common ground between Aboriginal and other cultures. Her exhibition *Beat Nation: Art, Hip Hop and Aboriginal Culture* toured nationally after opening at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 2011.

Winnipeg Art Gallery

Established in 1912, the Winnipeg Art Gallery has the world's largest public collection of Inuit art; it displayed Inuit sculpture for the first time in December 1953, and began systematic purchases for its permanent collection in 1957. In 1960 the gallery made a serious commitment when it purchased 139 major pieces from George Swinton. Over the years, the gallery's Inuit art collection has grown to its present size of close to 13,200 works largely through the donation or purchase of large collections, including the enormous 4,000-piece Jerry Twomey Collection received in 1971. The gallery's other primary collections are dedicated to Canadian historical and contemporary art, decorative art, and contemporary Canadian photography. It has moved several times in its history but has been in its current location since 1971.

Yuxweluptun, Lawrence Paul (Coast Salish/Okanagan, b.1957)

Vancouver-based artist and activist Yuxweluptun merges Northwest Coast motifs with Surrealist visual language to address issues of Indigenous and global concern. Colonial encounters, scenes of environmental destruction, and struggles over sovereignty unfold across his vibrant and imaginative canvases. A graduate of the Emily Carr University of Art and Design, Yuxweluptun's work has been exhibited internationally.



SOURCES & RESOURCES

Kent Monkman has been participating in solo and group exhibitions in Canada, the United States, and abroad for over two decades. Since his first major solo exhibition, *The Triumph of Mischief*, that premiered at the Art Gallery of Hamilton in 2007, Monkman has gained an international profile. His art practice has informed critical articles and publications by leading curators and writers in the field.



LEFT: Kent Monkman, *Théâtre de Cristal*, 2006, Crystal, projector, chandelier, *Group of Seven Inches* video (2005, 7 min 31 s), 3/3, variable dimensions, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. RIGHT: Kent Monkman, *Boudoir de Berdashe*, 2007, mixed-media installation, installation dimensions variable, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

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- 2001** *The Prayer Language*, Indian Art Centre at Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, Ottawa.
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- 2005** *Share Eagle Testickle: Artist and Model*, The Drake Hotel, Toronto.
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- 2006** *Kent Monkman*, Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff.
Kent Monkman: Salon Indien, an installation including *Boudoir de Berdashe* tipi, *Group of Seven Inches* film, and *The Emergence of a Legend* series of photographs, co-presented by the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto, and the Art Gallery of Hamilton at the Toronto International Art Fair.
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- 2007–10** *Kent Monkman: The Triumph of Mischief*, co-organized by the Art Gallery of Hamilton, and the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto. Toured to the Winnipeg Art Gallery; Art Gallery of Greater Victoria; Saint Mary's University Art Gallery, Halifax; and Glenbow Museum, Calgary.
-
- 2008** *Kent Monkman: Dance to the Berdashe*, Bailey Fine Arts, Toronto; Urban Shaman Contemporary Aboriginal Art Gallery, Winnipeg.
-
- 2009** *Kent Monkman: Dance to the Berdashe*, Montreal Museum of Fine Art.
-
- 2010** *Kent Monkman: My Treaty is with the Crown*, Leonard and Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Montreal.
-
- 2011** *Kent Monkman: The Atelier*, Pierre-François Ouellette art contemporain, Montreal.
Kent Monkman: The Art Game, Toronto International Art Fair.
-
- 2013** *Kent Monkman: The Big Four*, Glenbow Museum, Calgary.



2014 *Kent Monkman: The Artist as Hunter*, Musée départemental d'art contemporain de Rochechouart, France.
Kent Monkman: Welcome to the Studio, McCord Museum, Montreal.

2015 *Kent Monkman: The Rise and Fall of Civilization*, Gardiner Museum, Toronto.
Kent Monkman: Casualties of Modernity, BMO Project Room, Toronto.

2016 *The Four Continents*, Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery.

2017–21 *Shame & Prejudice: A Story of Resilience*, Art Museum at the University of Toronto. Toured to the Glenbow Museum, Calgary; Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston; Confederation Centre Art Gallery, Charlottetown; Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax; McCord Museum, Montreal; Museum London; Winnipeg Art Gallery; and the Museum of Anthropology at UBC, Vancouver.

2018 *Kent Monkman: Beauty and the Beasts*, Canadian Cultural Centre, Paris.

2019 *Kent Monkman: mistikôsiwak (Wooden Boat People)*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City.

2022–23 *Kent Monkman: Being Legendary*, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2002 *Between You and Me*, Museum London, London, Ontario.

2004 *First Nations Art*, Woodland Cultural Centre, Brantford, Ontario.
We Come in Peace: Histories of the Americas, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal.

2005 *Hot Mush and the Cold North*, Ottawa Art Gallery.

2006 *Unholy Alliance: Art and Fashion Meet Again*, Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto.
Re-thinking Nordic Colonialism, Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art, Helsinki.

2007 *Shapeshifters, Time Travellers and Storytellers*, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.
Remix: New Modernities in a Post-Indian World, Heard Museum, Phoenix, and the National Museum of the American Indian, New York City.
Crack the Sky, Montreal Biennale, Centre internationale d'art contemporain de Montréal.

2008 *Caught in the Act: The Viewer as Performer*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.
Face the Nation, Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton.



-
- 2010** *Vantage Point: The Contemporary Native Art Collection*, National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, D.C.
The Beauty of Distance, Sydney Biennale.
Remember Humanity, Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam.
-
- 2011** *Barroco Nova: Neo Baroque Moves in Contemporary Art*, McIntosh Gallery, London, Ontario.
Close Encounters, Plug In Institute for Contemporary Art, Winnipeg.
-
- 2012** *Oh, Canada*, Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, North Adams, Massachusetts.
Fashionality: Dress and Identity in Contemporary Canadian Art, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario.
Shapeshifting: Transformations in Native American Art, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts.
SKIN: The Seduction of Surface, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax.
-
- 2013** *Fiction/Non-Fiction*, Esker Foundation, Calgary.
Sakahan: International Indigenous Art, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.
The Painting Project, Galerie de l'UQUAM, Montreal.
Beat Nation, The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Toronto.
Sovereign: Independent Voices, Denver Art Museum.
-
- 2014** *Unsettled Landscapes*, SITE Santa Fe.
This is Me, This is Also Me, McMaster Museum of Art, Hamilton.
-
- 2016** *Form Follows Fiction: Art and Artists in Toronto*, Art Museum at the University of Toronto.
-
- 2017** *Dioramas*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris.
Neo Native: Toward New Mythologies, Sam and Alfreda Maloof Foundation for Arts and Crafts, Alta Loma, California.
The Western: An Epic in Art and Film, Denver Art Museum.
Native Fashion Now, National Museum of the American Indian, New York City.
Two Spirit Sur-Thriving and the Art of Interrupting Narratives, Never Apart, Montreal.
Tous, des sang-mêlés, Musée d'art contemporain du Val-de-Marne, Vitry-sur-Seine, France.
-
- 2018** *Art for a New Understanding: Native Voices, 1950s to Now*, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas.
-
- 2019** *Kiss My Genders*, Southbank Centre, London, United Kingdom.
Embodying the Self, Smart Museum of Art, Chicago.
Of Our Time, Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines.
RE:DEFINE - Reconsidering Native Art, Heard Museum, Phoenix.



PERFORMANCES

-
- 2004** *Group of Seven Inches*, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario.
-
- 2005** *Share Eagle Testickle: Artist and Model*, The Drake Hotel, Toronto.
The Taxonomy of the European Male, Compton Verney, Warwickshire, England.
-
- 2006** *Gone With the Wind*, Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto.
-
- 2007** *Séance*, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.
-
- 2010** *Iskootāo*, Nuit Blanche, Toronto.
-
- 2012** *Miss Chief: Justice of the Piece*, National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, D.C.
-
- 2013** *Casualties of Modernity*, Denver Art Museum.
-
- 2019** *Another Feather in Her Bonnet*, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

MEDIA INTERVIEWS AND PODCASTS

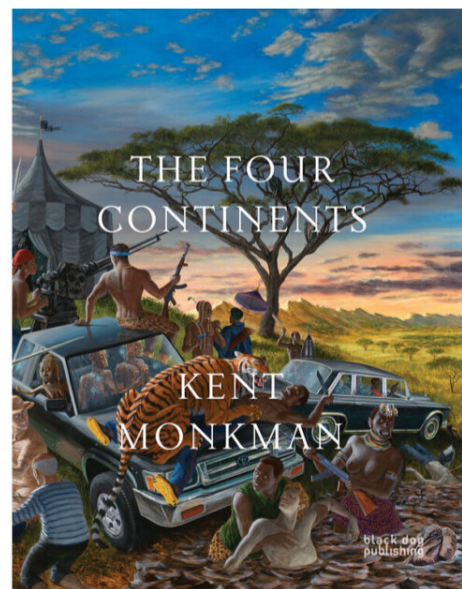
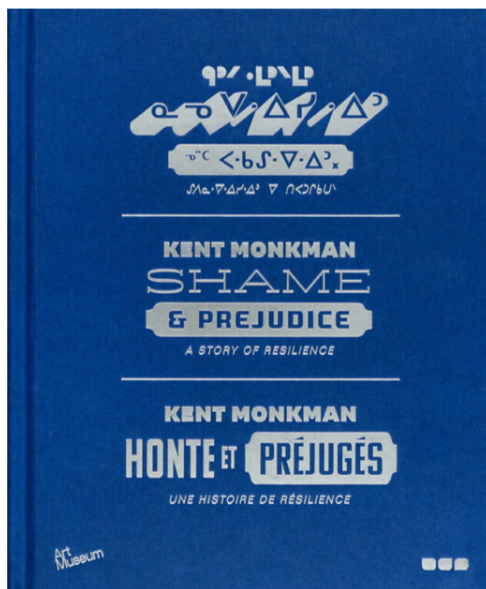
“Kent Monkman, Changing Hands: Art without Reservation 3”
McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario
April 4, 2013

“Kent Monkman: Stealing Landscapes”
Denver Art Museum
October 18, 2013

“Kent Monkman: Casualties of Modernity”
Speaker Series, Penny Stamps School of Art and Design
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
January 28, 2016

“Artist Kent Monkman Escapes the Busy City”
CBC Arts
November 26, 2016

“Dennis Ward Sits down with Artist, Kent Monkman”
APTN FaceToFace
May 10, 2017



LEFT: Cover of *Shame & Prejudice: A Story of Resilience* (London, UK: Black Dog Press, 2020). RIGHT: Cover of *The Four Continents: Kent Monkman* (London, UK: Black Dog Press, 2017).



KENT MONKMAN

Life & Work by Shirley Madill

"Toronto, Love and Living: Kent Monkman"

Creative Time Summit

October 18, 2017

"Canadian Painter Kent Monkman's Process, from Inspiration to Final Painting"

Globe and Mail, Toronto

December 4, 2017

"Kent Monkman—Beauty and the Beasts"

Canadian Cultural Centre, Paris

August 13, 2018

"Kent Monkman: Decolonizing Art History"

CBC Radio

February 12, 2019

Kent Monkman Goes Back to the Urban Rez

CBC Indigenous

October 12, 2019

"Artist Interview—Kent Monkman: mistikôsiwak (Wooden Boat People)"

Metropolitan Museum of Art website

December 20, 2019

"Kent Monkman 'Reverses the Colonial Gaze' with New Paintings at the Met"

CBC

December 22, 2019

"Miss Chief in the Museum"

Alex Fountain Memorial Lecture

University of King's College, Halifax

February 27, 2020

"On Art and Resilience: Artist Talk with Kent Monkman"

Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, D.C.

May 10, 2020

SELECTED WRITINGS ON KENT MONKMAN

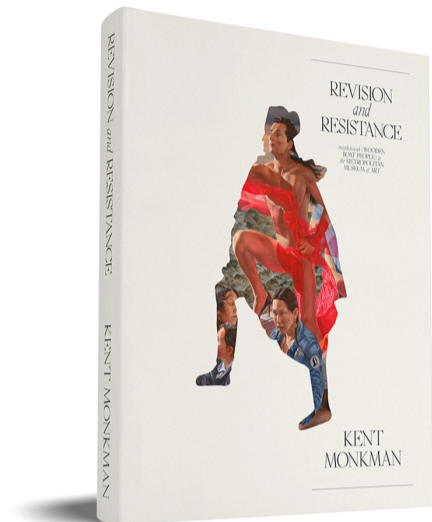
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Bedard, Catherine. *Beauty and the Beasts / La Belle et la Bête*. Paris: Canadian Cultural Centre, 2018.

Liss, David, and Shirley Madill. *Kent Monkman: The Triumph of Mischief*.

Hamilton: Art Gallery of Hamilton; Toronto: Museum of Contemporary Art;

Victoria: Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 2008.



Cover of *Revision and Resistance: mistikôsiwak (Wooden Boat People)* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Toronto: Art Canada Institute, 2020).



KENT MONKMAN

Life & Work by Shirley Madill

Morton, Erin. *Kent Monkman's Frontier: The Wanderings of an Artist within the Postcolonial Landscape*. Edited by Jocelyn Purdie. Kingston: Queen's University and Union Gallery, 2007.

Revision and Resistance: mistikôsiwak (Wooden Boat People) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Toronto: Art Canada Institute, 2020.

Saul, John Ralston, Keith Goulet, and Dr. E.R. Atleo (Umeek). *Kent Monkman: The Four Continents*. London: Black Dog Press, 2017.

Shapeshifting: Transformations in Native American Art. New Haven and London: Peabody Essex Museum with Yale University Press, 2012.

Thériault, Michèle, ed. *Interpellations: Three Essays on Kent Monkman*. Montreal: Leonard and Ellen Art Gallery, 2012.

Periodicals and Press

Baird, Daniel. "The Alternative Realism of Kent Monkman." *Walrus*, February 2017.

Barringer, Tim. "The Big Review: Kent Monkman at the Met." *Art Newspaper*, February 26, 2020.

Bascaramurty, Dakshana. "The Modern Touch of an Old Master." *Globe and Mail*, December 2017.

Brooks, Katherine. "Kent Monkman, Aka Miss Chief Eagle Testickle, Confronts Native American Myths." *Huffington Post*, May 2014.

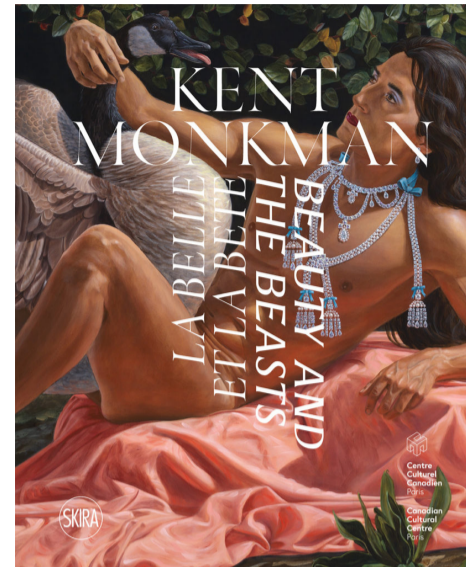
Cascone, Sarah. "Cree Artist Kent Monkman Takes Us on a Tour of the Met to Show How Not to Depict Indigenous People." *Artnet*, January 2, 2020.

Cotter, Holland. "A Cree Artist Redraws History." *New York Times*, December 19, 2019.

Enright, Robert. "The Incredible Rightness of Mischief: An Interview with Kent Monkman." *Border Crossings*, Issue 143, September 2017.

Everett-Green, Robert. "Kent Monkman: A Trickster with a Cause Crashes Canada's 150th Birthday Party." *Globe and Mail*, January 2017.

Gleeson, Bridget. "Kent Monkman Paints Clashing Cultures in 'Failure of Modernity.'" *Artsy*, January 2016.



Cover of *Kent Monkman: Beauty and the Beasts* (Paris: Canadian Cultural Centre, 2018).



Interior spread of pamphlet accompanying the travelling exhibition *Shame & Prejudice: A Story of Resilience*, 2017.



Hill, Richard William. "The Unreadable Present: Nadia Myre and Kent Monkman." *C Magazine*, September 2002.

Johnson, Ashley. "Kent Monkman." *Canadian Art*, Spring 2008.

Liss, David. "Kent Monkman: Miss Chief's Return." *Canadian Art*, Fall 2005.

McIntosh, David. "Kent Monkman's Postindian Diva Warrior." *FUSE*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (2008).

Milroy, Sarah. "Kent Monkman: Honouring the Dispossessed." *Globe and Mail*, October 2012.

Taylor, Kate. "At the Met, Cree Artist Kent Monkman Asks Visitors to Confront North America's Colonial Past." *Globe and Mail*, December 18, 2019.

Timm, Jordan. "Landscape with Sexy Transvestite." *Maclean's*, December 2007.

Vartanian, Hrag. "The Violent History of Kent Monkman." *Hyperallergic*, June 2014.

Wells, Paul. "Kent Monkman's Big Entrance." *Maclean's*, December 19, 2019.

Whyte, Murray. "Truth, Resilience and Indigenous Art Find Their Place in 2016." *Toronto Star*, December 2016.

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O'Hara, Jean. *Two-Spirit Acts: Queer Indigenous Performances*. Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2013.

Morris, Kate. *Shifting Grounds: Landscape in Contemporary Native American Art*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019.

Phillips, Ruth B. *Museum Pieces: Toward the Indigenization of Canadian Museums*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

SHIRLEY MADILL

Shirley Madill has curated two exhibitions of work by Kent Monkman, *Kent Monkman: The Triumph of Mischief* at the Art Gallery of Hamilton in 2007 and *Kent Monkman: The Four Continents* at the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery in 2016. Madill was chief curator and director of programming at the Art Gallery of Hamilton between 1999 and 2006 and later accepted the position of director and CEO at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. She returned to Ontario as director of the Rodman Hall Art Centre, Brock University, in 2008 and is currently executive director at the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery. In 1993 Madill spent a residency in Valenciennes, France, at the École supérieure des beaux-arts de Valenciennes as part of the Canada-France agreement with Canadian Heritage. She was the Canadian commissioner for the Bienal de São Paulo in 2004 featuring the work of David Rokeby. Her curatorial projects include *Future Cities*, Art Gallery of Hamilton, 2004; *Sublime Embrace: Experiencing Consciousness in Contemporary Art*, Art Gallery of Hamilton, 2006; *David Hoffos: Scenes from the House Dream*, Southern Alberta Art Gallery, Lethbridge, 2009, and Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto, 2010; *The Future of the Present*, Scotiabank Nuit Blanche Toronto, 2011; and *Milutin Gubash*, Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, 2012.



“During my curatorial tenure at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, a young Kent Monkman visited me on a Saturday morning to show me slides of his work. From the outset, I noticed how his work exuded the same assuredness in execution as did his confidence and determination as an artist. Since then, I have followed Kent’s work and his relentless journey of rewriting art history through an Indigenous lens. This book was an incredible opportunity to hearken back to that beginning and examine the depth, breadth, and multi-layered approaches in his work that are highly impactful and critical today.”



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From the Author

It has been an honour and pleasure to write this book on the life and art of Kent Monkman. My deepest gratitude is expressed to Sara Angel for providing this opportunity and huge thank you to Jocelyn Anderson for her guidance and editorial leadership. I am also grateful to Rachel Giese for her editorial eye. To the entire team at ACI, thank you for making this book the accomplishment that it is. On a final note, my warmest gratitude goes to Kent Monkman for his openness and generosity of time. I would also like to express appreciation to Kent's studio team who were outstanding in their assistance.

From the ACI

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Collection (David Butler); Collection of the National Bank of Canada (Jo-Ann Kane); Denver Art Museum (Meghan Shaw); Estate of James Luna; Estate of Lawren Harris (Stew Sheppard); Fondation Antoine de Galbert (Elise Dubuis); Fyfe Shader (Christina Bucci); Gardiner Museum (Christina MacDonald); Garth Greenan Gallery (Julian Corbett, Rachel Garbade); Gilcrease Museum (Garrett W. Gibson); Glenbow Museum (Daryl Betenia); Heffel Fine Art Auction House (Melina Rymberg); House of Commons (Johanna K. Mizgala, Rheian Shannon); Indigenous Art Centre (Danielle Shrestha, Kevin Sakolinsky); The Kalaman Group (Megan Kalaman); Layton Art Collection, Inc.; Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery at Concordia University (Julia Eilers Smith, Yasmine Tremblay); Library and Archives Canada; Library of Congress; Manitoba Museum (Nancy Anderson); McCord Museum (Anne-Frédérique Beaulieu); The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Milwaukee Art Museum (Rebekah Morin); Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (Linda-Anne D'Anjou, Marie-Claude Saia); Museum London (Janette Cousins Ewan, Krista Hamlin); National Film Board of Canada (Barry Ahmad, Alexandra Hubert, Michael Shu); National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; National Gallery of Canada (Raven Amiro); Northwestern University Library (Erin Gilchrist); Philadelphia Museum of Art (Jonathan Hoppe); Reuters (Aaron Dorvinen); Royal Collection Trust (Karen Lawson); Royal Ontario Museum (Laura Fox); Smithsonian American Art Museum; Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian (Katherine Fogden, Nathan Sowry); Sobey Art Foundation (Bernard Doucet); Stephen Bulger Gallery; Tia Collection (Laura Finlay Smith); Waddington's Auctioneers and Appraisers (Kendra Popelas); Winnipeg Art Gallery (Nicole Fletcher, Olenka Skrypnyk); Winnipeg Free Press (Nadya Pankiw); and Daniel L. Bain, Bruce Bailey, Martin Demers, Paul Desmarais III, MaryLou Driedger, Samuel Engelking, Aaron Glass, Jany and David Godard, Toni Hafkenscheid, Raja Hanna and Marylène Debay, Michel Hardy-Vallée, Joseph Hartman, Shaney Komulainen, John Latour and Pierre-François Ouellette, Shelley Niro, Irfhan Rawji, Marie-Claude Rochon and Paolo Notarnicola, Bryan Scott, Rob and Monique Sobey, Paula Wilson, and Aaron Wynia.

The ACI recognizes the additional private collectors who have given permission for their works to be published in this edition.



IMAGE SOURCES

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Kent Monkman, *The Daddies*, 2016. (See below for details.)

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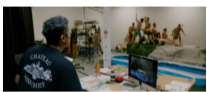
Biography: Kent Monkman in his studio, 2018. Photo credit: Samuel Engelking.



Key Works: Kent Monkman, *Miss America*, 2012. (See below for details.)



Significance & Critical Issues: Kent Monkman, *Sunday in the Park*, 2010. (See below for details.)



Style & Technique: Kent Monkman in the studio working with some of the models for *Welcoming the Newcomers*, 2019. Photo credit: Aaron Wynia.



Sources & Resources: Printouts of artworks from The Metropolitan Museum of Art collection used as reference material for *mistikôsiwak (Wooden Boat People)*, 2019. Photo credit: Aaron Wynia.



Where to See: Kent Monkman, *The Rise and Fall of Civilization*, 2015. (See below for details.)



Credits: Kent Monkman, *Woe to Those Who Remember From Whence They Came*, 2008. (See below for details.)



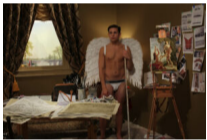
Credits for Works by Kent Monkman



The Academy, 2008. Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, purchased with the assistance of the David Yuile and Mary Elizabeth Hodgson Fund, 2008 (2008/114). Courtesy of the AGO. © Kent Monkman. Photo © Kent Monkman.



Another Feather in Her Bonnet, September 8, 2017. Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Courtesy of the MMFA. © Kent Monkman. Photo credit: Frédéric Faddoul.



The Atelier, 2011. Collection of Kent Monkman. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Bad Medicine, 2014. Collection of Paul Desmarais III. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Beaded Moccasins, 2007. Collection of Kent Monkman. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Being Legendary, 2018. Private Collection. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



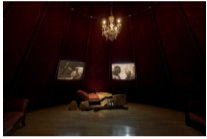
Bête Noire, 2014. Collection of the Winnipeg Art Gallery, Gift of an anonymous donor (2020-128.1 to 34). Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



The Big Four, 2012. Collection of the Glenbow Museum, Calgary, purchased with funds from the Historic Resource Fund, 2013. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Blood River, 2000. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Boudoir de Berdashe, 2007. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (42448). Courtesy of the NGC. © Kent Monkman. Photo credit: NGC.



Cash for Souls, 2016. Collection of Jany and David Godard. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Casualties of Modernity, 2015. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, purchased 2016 through the donation of Marnie Schreiber and Karen Schreiber (47019). © Kent Monkman.



Casualties of Modernity (film still), 2015. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, purchased 2016 through the donation of Marnie Schreiber and Karen Schreiber (47019). © Kent Monkman.



Ceci n'est pas une pipe, 2001. Private collection. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Clouds in the Canyon, 2008. Private collection. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



The Collapsing of Time and Space in an Ever Expanding Universe, 2011. Collection Antoine de Galbert, Paris. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



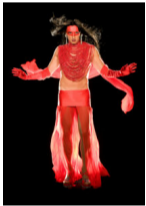
A Country Wife, 2016. Collection of Marie-Claude Rochon & Paolo Notarnicola. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Cree Master 1, 2002. Private collection. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



The Daddies, 2016. Collection of Irfhan Rawji. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Dance to Miss Chief, 2010. Collection of the artist. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Dance to Miss Chief, 2010. Collection of the artist. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Daniel Boone's First View of the Kentucky Valley, 2001. Collection of John Latour and Pierre-François Ouellette. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Death of the Female, 2014. Tia Collection, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.

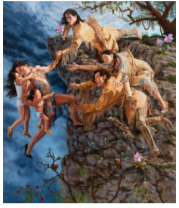


Death of the Virgin (after Caravaggio), 2016. Collection of Rob and Monique Sobey. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



KENT MONKMAN

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The Deluge, 2019. Private collection. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



The Deposition, 2014. Collection of the Winnipeg Art Gallery, Gift of an anonymous donor (2019-159). © Kent Monkman. Photo credit: Winnipeg Art Gallery, Serge Gumenyuk.



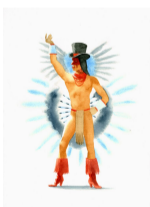
Dreamcatcher Bra, 2007. Collection of Kent Monkman. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman. Photo credit: Brian Boyle.



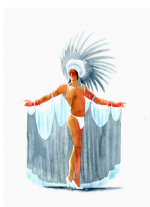
Duel after the Masquerade, 2007. Private collection. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Eagle's Ribs with Tinselled Buck No. 6,932, 2008. Collection of Martin Demers. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Faint Heart 7,558, 2008. Private collection. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Faint Heart 27,148, 2008. Collection of Raja Hanna and Marylène Debay, Montreal. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



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Fort Edmonton, 2003. Private collection. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



The Fourth of March, from *The Trilogy of Saint Thomas*, 2004. Collection of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of W. Bruce C. Bailey in honour of Nathalie Bondil (2014.186.2). Courtesy of the MMFA. © Kent Monkman. Photo credit: MMFA, Christine Guest.



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Group of Seven Inches, 2005. Collection of Kent Monkman. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



The Impending Storm, from *The Trilogy of Saint Thomas*, 2004. Collection of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of W. Bruce C. Bailey in honour of Nathalie Bondil (2014.186.1). Courtesy of the MMFA. © Kent Monkman. Photo credit: MMFA, Christine Guest.

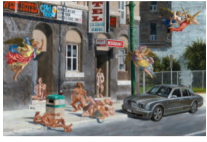


Jack Pine, 2001. Private collection. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



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Le Petit déjeuner sur l'herbe, 2014. Collection of the National Bank of Canada. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Lot's Wife, 2012. Collection of the Denver Art Museum: Gift from Vicki and Kent Logan to the Collection of the Denver Art Museum (2013.71A-J). © Kent Monkman. Photo credit: Denver Art Museum.



Louis Vuitton Quiver, 2007. Collection of Kent Monkman. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman. Photo credit: Brian Boyle.



Mary, 2011. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



The Massacre of the Innocents, 2015. Private collection. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Minimalism, 2017. Collection of Kent Monkman. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Miss Africa, 2013. Private collection. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Miss America, 2012. Collection of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Jacques and Céline Lamarre. Courtesy of the MMFA. © Kent Monkman. Photo credit: Kent Monkman.



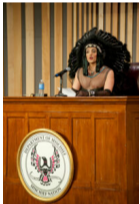
Miss Asia, 2015. Claridge Collection. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Miss Chief as Cindy Silverscreen in The Emergence of a Legend, 2006. CMCP Collection, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (2008.6.1-5). Courtesy of the NGC. © Kent Monkman.



Miss Chief as Vaudeville Performer in The Emergence of a Legend, 2006. CMCP Collection, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (2008.6.1-5). Courtesy of the NGC. © Kent Monkman.



Miss Chief: Justice of the Piece, Friday, February 4, 2012, Smithsonian National Museum of The American Indian, Washington, D.C. Photo credit: Katherine Fogden, NMAI. © Kent Monkman.



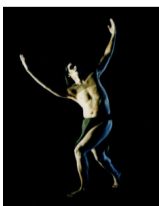
Miss Chief's Wet Dream, 2018. Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, Gift of Donald R. Sobey, Stellarton, Nova Scotia, 2019. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Miss Europe, 2016. Collection of Daniel L. Bain. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



My Treaty is With the Crown, 2011. The Bailey Collection. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.

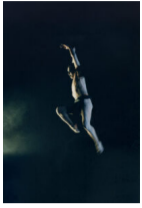


A Nation is Coming, 1996. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



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A Nation is Coming, 1996. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Nativity Scene, 2017. Collection of Museum London, Ontario, purchased with funds from the Volunteer Committee Acquisition Fund (1956-2017) in memory of Shelagh Martin-McLaren, 2017 (017.A.008). Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Not the End of the Trail, from *The Trilogy of Saint Thomas*, 2004. Collection of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of W. Bruce C. Bailey in honour of Nathalie Bondil (2014.186.3). Courtesy of the MMFA. © Kent Monkman. Photo credit: MMFA, Christine Guest.



Old Bear with Tinselled Buck No. 10,601, 2008. Collection of Martin Demers. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Portrait of the Artist as Hunter, 2002. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (41301). Courtesy of the NGC. © Kent Monkman. Photo credit: NGC.



Poundmaker Intercedes, 2018. Collection of the Chief Poundmaker Museum and Historic Site. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Raccoon Jockstrap, 2007. Collection of Kent Monkman. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman. Photo credit: Brian Boyle.



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The Rape of Daniel Boone Junior, 2002. Private collection. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Resurgence of the People, 2019. Collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, purchase, Donald R. Sobey Foundation CAF Canada Project Gift, 2020 (2020.216b). Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman. Photo credit: Joseph Hartman.



The Rise and Fall of Civilization, 2015. Collection of the Glenbow Museum, Calgary. Installation view from Gardiner Museum. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman. Photo credit: Jimmy Limit.



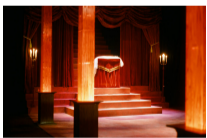
Scent of a Beaver, 2016, installation view of *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience* at the Art Museum at the University of Toronto, 2017. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman. Photo credit: Toni Hafkenscheid.



The Scoop, 2018. Collection of Rob and Monique Sobey. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



The Scream, 2017. Collection of the Denver Art Museum, Native Arts acquisition funds and funds from Loren G. Lipson, M.D. (2017.93). © Kent Monkman. Photo credit: Denver Art Museum.



Set for Floyd Favel's *Lady of Silences* at Native Earth Performing Arts, Toronto, 1993. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Sets and costumes for *Night Traveller*, Tipiskaki Goroh, Canada Dance Festival, Ottawa, 1994. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



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Sets and costumes for *Night Traveller*, Tipiskaki Goroh, Canada Dance Festival, Ottawa, 1994. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



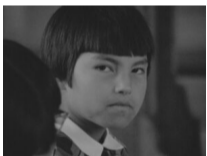
Shall We Gather at the River, 2001. Collection of Kent Monkman. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Shooting Geronimo, 2007. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Sisters & Brothers, 2015. Courtesy of the National Film Board of Canada. © National Film Board of Canada.



Sisters & Brothers, 2015. Courtesy of the National Film Board of Canada. © National Film Board of Canada.



Softly and Tenderly, 2001. Collection of Museum London, purchased with the support of the Canada Council for the Arts Acquisitions Assistance Program and Funds from the Volunteer Committee, 2003 (003.A.03). Courtesy of Museum London. © Kent Monkman.



Struggle for Balance, 2013. Private collection, Hamilton, Ontario. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Study for Artist and Model, 2003. Collection of Kent Monkman. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



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The Subjugation of Truth, 2016. Collection of Rob and Monique Sobey. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Sunday in the Park, 2010. Private collection. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Superior, 2001. Collection of Kent Monkman. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Taxonomy of the European Male, 2005. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman. Photo credit: Compton Verney © John Batten Photography.



Théâtre de Cristal, 2006. Collection of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, anonymous gift (2018.287). Courtesy of the MMFA. © Kent Monkman. Photo credit: MMFA, Denis Farley.



They Are Warriors, 2017. Collection of Rob and Monique Sobey. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Trappers of Men, 2006. Collection of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, purchase, Horsley and Annie Townsend Bequest, anonymous gift and gift of Dr. Ian Hutchison (2006.87). Courtesy of the MMFA. © Kent Monkman. Photo credit: MMFA, Christine Guest.



The Triumph of Mischief, 2007. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (42217). Courtesy of the NGC. © Kent Monkman. Photo credit: NGC.



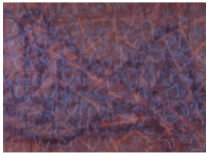
Two Kindred Spirits, 2012. Collection of the Woodland Cultural Centre. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman. Photo credit: Galerie Florent Tosin.



Welcoming the Newcomers, 2019. Collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, purchase, Donald R. Sobey Foundation CAF Canada Project Gift, 2020 (2020.216a). Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman. Photo credit: Joseph Hartman.



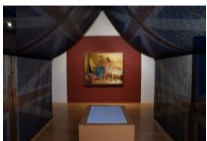
Welcome to the Studio: An Allegory for Artistic Reflection and Transformation, 2014. Collection of the McCord Museum, Montreal. Courtesy of the McCord Museum. © Kent Monkman.



When He Cometh, 2001. Collection of Kent Monkman. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Woe to Those Who Remember From Whence They Came, 2008. Balsillie Collection. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman.



Wolfe's Haircut, 2011, acrylic on canvas, installation view from the exhibition *My Treaty is With The Crown*, Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, 2011. Courtesy of Kent Monkman. © Kent Monkman. Photo credit: Paul Litherland.

Credits for Photographs and Works by Other Artists



Among the Sierra Nevada, California, 1868, by Albert Bierstadt. Collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C. Courtesy of the SAAM.



Apollo and the Four Continents, 1750-53, by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo. Residence of the Prince-Bishop, Würzburg.



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Artifact Piece, 1987, by James Luna. Courtesy the Estate of James Luna and Garth Greenan Gallery, New York. © Estate of James Luna.



Bison Diorama, Orientation Gallery, Manitoba Museum, Winnipeg, n.d., by Clarence Tillenius. Photo © 2010 Robert David Linsdell.



Blackfoot tipi ceremony to god of thunder, Hall of Plains Indians, American Museum of Natural History, New York, 1978. Courtesy of the AMNH. Photo © American Museum of Natural History.



Boone's First View of the Kentucky Valley, 1849, by William Tylee Ranney. Collection of the Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa. Courtesy of the Gilcrease Museum.



Brandon Indian Residential School, Brandon, Manitoba, c.1900-10, photographer unknown. Collection of Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa (1969-124 NPC). Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada / The Brechin Group Inc.



Capt. Huyshe, Montreal, QC, 1870, 1870, by William Notman. Collection of the McCord Museum, Montreal (I-43856.1). Courtesy of the McCord Museum.



Catlin Painting the Portrait of Mah-to-toh-pa-Mandan, 1861/1869, by George Catlin. Collection of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Paul Mellon Collection (1965.16.184). Courtesy of the NGA.



Charles I (1600-49) on Horseback, c.1635-36, by Anthony Van Dyck. Royal Collection Trust (RCIN 400571). Courtesy of the Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2022.



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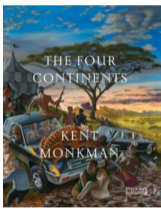
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Cher, 2000, by Carl Beam. © Estate of Carl Beam.



Convergence, 1952, by Jackson Pollock. Collection of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York, Gift of Seymour H. Knox, Jr., 1956 (K1956:7). Courtesy of the Albright-Knox.



Cover of *The Four Continents: Kent Monkman* (London, UK: Black Dog Press, 2017). © Black Dog Press.



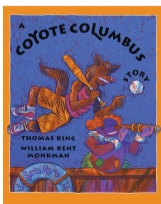
Cover of *Kent Monkman: Beauty and the Beasts* (Paris: Canadian Cultural Centre, 2018). © Canadian Cultural Centre, Paris.



Cover of *Revision and Resistance: mistikôsiwak (Wooden Boat People) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (Toronto: Art Canada Institute, 2020).



Cover of *Shame & Prejudice: A Story of Resilience* (London, UK: Black Dog Press, 2020). © Black Dog Press.



Cover of Thomas King's children's book *A Coyote Columbus Story* (1992), featuring illustrations by Kent Monkman.



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The Dakota Boat, c.1875, by Washington Frank Lynn. Collection of the Winnipeg Art Gallery, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Cohen (G-71-94). Photo credit: Winnipeg Art Gallery, Ernest Mayer.



Dance to the Berdash, 1835-37, by George Catlin. Collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C. Courtesy of the SAAM.



Death of the Virgin, c.1601-6, by Michelangelo Merisi (known as Caravaggio). Collection of the Musée du Louvre, Paris. Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons.



Dress from the 2016 Resort collection of Valentino, featuring design by Métis artist Christi Belcourt.



Execution of Torrijos and His Companions on the Beach at Málaga, 1888, by Antonio Gisbert Pérez. Collection of the Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid. Courtesy of Bridgeman Images.



The Fathers of Confederation, 1968, by Rex Woods. House of Commons Collection, Ottawa. Courtesy of the House of Commons. © House of Commons Collection, Ottawa.



Femmes de Caughnawaga, 1924, by Marc-Aurèle de Foy Suzor-Coté. Collection of the Winnipeg Art Gallery, Gift of F.N. Southam to the Winnipeg Gallery and School of Art Collection (L-92). Photo credit: Winnipeg Art Gallery, Ernest Mayer.



The Garden of Eden, 1828, by Thomas Cole. Collection of the Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth (1990.1). Photo credit: ACMAA.



Guernica, 1937, by Pablo Picasso. Collection of the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid.



Indigenous rights activists march after the “Unsettle Canada Day 150 Picnic” in Toronto, July 1, 2017. Courtesy of Reuters. Photo credit: Mark Blinch/Reuters.



Installation view of “Chapter III: Wards of the State/The Indian Problem” in *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience* at the Art Museum at the University of Toronto, 2017. Courtesy of the AMUT. Photo credit: Toni Hafkenscheid.



Installation view of “Chapter IV: Starvation” in *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience* at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2019-20. Courtesy of MaryLou Driedger. Photo credit: MaryLou Driedger.



Installation view of “Chapter VI: Incarceration” in *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience* at the Art Museum at the University of Toronto, 2017. Courtesy of the AMUT. Photo credit: Toni Hafkenscheid.



Installation view of *mistikôsiwak (Wooden Boat People)* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2019. Courtesy of Art Resource. Photo credit: Anna-Marie Kellen.



Interior spread of pamphlet accompanying the travelling exhibition *Shame & Prejudice: A Story of Resilience*, 2017.



The Jack Pine, 1916-17, by Tom Thomson. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (1519). Courtesy of the NGC. Photo credit: NGC.



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June 19, 1990: NDP MLA Elijah Harper sits in the Manitoba Legislature holding an eagle feather for spiritual strength as he continues to delay the house debate on the Meech Lake Accord. Courtesy of Winnipeg Free Press. Photo credit: Wayne Glowacki / Winnipeg Free Press.



Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance (film still), 1993, by Alanis Obomsawin. National Film Board of Canada, Montreal. Photo credit: Shaney Komulainen.



Kent Monkman, 2014 (printed 2017), by Joseph Hartman. Courtesy of Joseph Hartman and Stephen Bulger Gallery. Photo © Joseph Hartman.



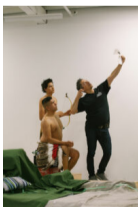
Kent Monkman and studio assistants working on *Welcoming the Newcomers*, 2019. Courtesy of the Artist.



Kent Monkman as Miss Chief, *Xtra Magazine*, no. 547, October 13, 2005. Courtesy of Paula Wilson and AH HA Represents. Photo credit: Paula Wilson.



Kent Monkman at age four, with his parents and siblings. Courtesy of Kent Monkman.

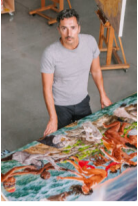


Kent Monkman demonstrating a pose for models during the preparation of *Welcoming the Newcomers*, 2019. Courtesy of Aaron Wynia. Photo credit: Aaron Wynia.

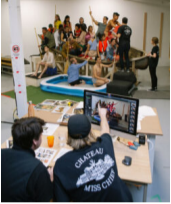


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Kent Monkman with the study for *Welcoming the Newcomers*, 2019. Courtesy of Aaron Wynia. Photo credit: Aaron Wynia.



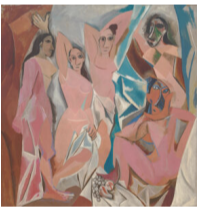
Kent Monkman working with models during the preparation of *Resurgence of the People*, 2019. Courtesy of Aaron Wynia. Photo credit: Aaron Wynia.



The Last of the Buffalo, 1888, by Albert Bierstadt. Collection of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Corcoran Collection (Gift of Mary Stewart Bierstadt [Mrs. Albert Bierstadt]) (2014.79.5). Courtesy of the NGA.



Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe (Luncheon on the Grass), 1863, by Édouard Manet. Collection of the Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons.



Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J. No. 1462V), June–July 1907, by Pablo Picasso. Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest (by exchange) (333.1939). © Picasso Estate / SOCAN (2022).



Le roi Louis-Philippe assiste à une danse d'indiens lowas (King Louis-Philippe Watches a Dance by Iowa Indians in a Salon of the Tuileries), 1845, by Karl Girardet. Collection of RMN-Grand Palais (Château de Versailles). Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons.



Le triomphe de Christianisme sur le paganisme (The Triumph of Christianity Over Paganism), 1868, by Gustave Doré. Collection of the Art Gallery of Hamilton, The Joey and Toby Tanenbaum Collection, 2002. Courtesy of the AGH.



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The Little Courier, c.1496, by Albrecht Dürer. Collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Fletcher Fund, 1919 (19.73.92). Courtesy of The Met.



Marcel Duchamp as Rose Sélavy, c.1920-21, by Man Ray. Collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Samuel S. White 3rd and Vera White Collection, 1957 (1957-49-1). Courtesy of the PMA.



Masked Dancers in Canoes—Qágyuhl, 1914, in Edward S. Curtis, *The North American Indian, Volume 10* (Boston: John Andrew & Son, 1915). Collection of Northwestern University Library, Evanston, Illinois. Courtesy of Northwestern University Library.



The Massacre of the Innocents, c.1610, by Peter Paul Rubens. Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, The Thomson Collection at the Art Gallery of Ontario, 2014 (2014/1581). Courtesy of the AGO. Photo © Art Gallery of Ontario.



Medicine Mask Dance, Northwest Coast Peoples, 1849-56, by Paul Kane. Collection of the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. Courtesy of the ROM.



Meltdown, 1984, by Carl Beam. Collection of the Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau (III-GG-1481, IMG2010-0034-0007). Courtesy of the CMH. © Estate of Carl Beam.



Mohawks in Beehives, 1991, by Shelley Niro. Courtesy of the artist. © Shelley Niro.



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North Shore, Lake Superior, 1926, by Lawren S. Harris. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (3708). Courtesy of the NGC. © Estate of Lawren S. Harris. Photo credit: NGC.



Northern Hotel, Main Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 2009. Courtesy of Bryan Scott. Photo credit: Bryan Scott.



Pages from Thomas King's children's book *A Coyote Columbus Story* (1992), featuring illustrations by Kent Monkman.



The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory Summing Up Seven Years of My Artistic and Moral Life, 1854-55, by Gustave Courbet. Collection of the Musée d'Orsay, Paris, acquired 1920. Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons.



Percival Molson, Montreal, QC, 1898, 1898, by Wm. Notman & Son. Collection of the McCord Museum, Montreal, purchase from Associated Screen News Ltd. (II-126388). Courtesy of the McCord Museum.



Plate No. 10 in *Catlin's Notes of Eight Years' Travels and Residence in Europe with His North American Indian Collection with Anecdotes and Incidents of the Travels and Adventures of Three Different Parties of American Indians Whom He Introduced to the Courts of England, France, and Belgium*. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.



Prime Minister Stephen Harper (bottom left) and other members of Parliament listen as National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Phil Fontaine speaks in the House of Commons on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, June 11, 2008. Photo credit: Chris Wattie/Reuters.



Shaman Never Die V; Indigena, 1989, by Jane Ash Poitras. Collection of the Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau (III-DD-109, IMG2009-0139-0001-Dm / IMG2009-0139-002-Dm / IMG2009-0139-0003-Dm). Courtesy of the CMH. © Jane Ash Poitras.



A Sunday on La Grande Jatte—1884, 1884/86, by Georges Seurat. Collection of the Art Institute of Chicago, Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection (1926.224). Courtesy of the AIC.



The 3rd of May 1808 in Madrid, or "The Executions," 1814, by Francisco de Goya. Collection of the Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid. Courtesy of Bridgeman Images.



Washington Crossing the Delaware, 1851, by Emanuel Leutze. Collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of John Stewart Kennedy, 1897 (97.34). Courtesy of The Met.



Wind River Mountains, Nebraska Territory, 1862, by Albert Bierstadt. Layton Art Collection, Inc., Purchase, at the Milwaukee Art Museum (L1897.3). Courtesy of the MAM. Photo credit: Larry Sanders.

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