

## Fast Forward to Modern Pluralism: Culture and Small Scale Societies in Canada

*Joy Cohnstaedt\**

1

Over the past century, the study of the diverse arts and material culture of Aboriginal peoples — Inuit, First Nations, and later Métis (those of mixed heritage) — has attracted the growing attention of artists and academics. The arts and material culture have provoked many questions. Who created the works? Why were they made? What meanings do they convey? Are they to be exhibited? Who is to interpret them? Present-day practice raises still more questions about, for example, assimilation, appropriation and repatriation. This paper examines the research, production and collection/exhibition customs related to indigenous cultures over the past five decades in order to place them in the context of contemporary issues and practice. It also considers the implications of those customs for cultural policy-making in the 21st century. The paper will draw on participant/observer experience in the Eastern Arctic, archeological practice in the plains culture area as well as experience with Canadian cultural policy-making and practice.

---

\* York University, first president of CCRN.

## 2

Four decades ago, beginning in the spring and lasting until just before the first snow in October, I could be found on weekends, walking on windswept prairie hills and plains in and near the Qu'Appelle Valley and elsewhere in southern Saskatchewan, looking for evidence of long past habitation. We were a small group of young and older enthusiasts, all members of the Saskatchewan Archaeological Association, led by two dedicated amateur archaeologists, John and Jean Hodges. We sought to supplement the effort of the few professionals working in the field — in particular Thomas and Alice Kehoe — archaeologists with the provincial Museum of Natural History. Together, but somewhat in competition, we planned to document early occupation before all physical and ethnological evidence disappeared (A part of the challenge of the Hodges was to prove that the First Nations peoples occupying these lands produced and used pottery; some professionals argued otherwise). Approval to search on these lands was given by farmers, who themselves had extensive collections of artefacts, which more often than not, were without documentation except for the family's own oral history. And there was a growing and disturbing marketplace for artefacts that kept important items in private hands.

The walks were lonely, as our heads always faced downward. From time to time, evidence emerged of temporary settlements, a simple cairn was found or a projectile point that had been turned up by ploughs. Tipi rings, evidence of earlier habitation, once numbered in the thousands, were by now becoming increasingly rare because of modern agricultural practices and vandalism. When boulder-outlined figures of men and animals were found, the site took on new meaning. When these mute monuments of past cultures (cairns, medicine wheels, or effigies) had been originally constructed on a site overlooking the distant horizon, the power of the place and its view must have been, and still is, breath taking. In the winter we spent weekends documenting our findings, and reconstructing the pottery shards into pots and thus began to define their common features. Finally, we joined forces to dig the Last Mountain House trading post. We were part of the heritage and museum community's lack of appreciation of the need to include indigenous peoples in our work. For example, after many years on public view (and later in storage) in the Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History, it took a very public protest by First Nations to ensure that the remains of a child were returned to his/her community and buried according to traditional practices.

In 1964, I joined the first archaeological team sent out by the Glenbow Foundation to work in Alberta. For part of the season, we camped on the Peigan reservation, digging a site that had been used repeatedly by nomadic peoples over a very long time, probably because of its proximity to water and shelter. Our contact with the First Nations community was limited, though we were curious about each other. Eventually, we developed some trust and were invited to attend both a burial on the reservation and a nearby Sundance. Our next site was in the midst of a cattle ranch, but we camped with the bulls, bullocks and cows this time. There is little question that early hunters in southern Alberta concentrated their hunting effort on bison. A major effort on our part was to dig the early test holes of the kill site, now known as the Fletcher Site. Subsequent digs at that site resulted in sufficient information to include it in the Syncrude Gallery in the Provincial Museum in Alberta. The final site was further north and near the oilfields. This time we camped near oilmen, and for the first time we felt insecure; drunken workers raided our camp in search of women. This site was the least productive of the three.

I returned to Saskatchewan and continued to spend my available weekends digging at the trading post site. The Aboriginal population in Saskatchewan was already sizeable and is now predicted to become as high as 40 per cent in the not too distant future. Regina was the home on an active amateur theatre community and an annual summer pageant, the “Trial of Louis Riel.” His execution by hanging brought to an end the dream of a Métis nation in western Canada, followed by the Northwest Rebellion of 1885 and the Battle of Batoche. I joined the Little Theatre, and met and worked with Harry Daniels; he wanted to be on stage while I stayed backstage. Later I supported his unsuccessful NDP candidacy for a federal seat in an upper middle class constituency in Winnipeg (near the historic Red River Settlement and the home of Riel).

Although the Native Council of Canada was a strong voice for Métis nationalism, tensions between western Métis and eastern non-Status Indians led to the formation of the western-based Métis National Council in 1983 (Harry Daniels became one of the Métis community’s outspoken leaders). Similar divisions occurred at the provincial level. For example, the Association of Métis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan split into two organizations in 1988. The Saskatchewan Federation of Indians continued to represent Status Indians (those identified by the terms of the Indian Act). Elsewhere in Canada the indigenous population is represented by a range of organizations in support of a variety of concerns, confirming the cultural and regional diversity of the people. Separate Native postsecondary institutions were

created. The Saskatchewan Indian Cultural College, which became the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College and now the First Nations University of Canada, was established in Regina approximately thirty years ago. Originally it was linked to the University of Regina, governed by elders, and jointly funded by the provincial and federal governments. The Gabriel Dumont Institute, an Aboriginal and cultural center with locations throughout Saskatchewan, is active in maintaining and encouraging Métis heritage. Other Canadian universities have established Native Studies Programmes. Aboriginal organizations have established community facilities such as the Woodland Cultural Centre Museum on the Six Nations reservation near Brantford, Ontario, and Métis Friendship Centres throughout Canada.

Though I wasn't conscious of it at the time, these contacts with Aboriginal peoples were my first experiences of "fourth world peoples," the still colonized indigenous minorities living in complex modern nations. They lived not only on the streets of cities and towns as I had first known indigenous peoples, but also on reservations, and like their urban relatives, as subjugated peoples. Until now, my knowledge of the peoples of the Great Plains was based on changes in projectile points, their location, and other artefacts such as end scrapers, random flake scrapers, and bifacial knives, as well as some bone tools. Unfortunately, the objects manufactured from skin and sinew and wood and plant fibres have not survived in the archaeological record. And precontact anthropological evidence was based on indigenous oral records and later, after early contacts, on the written observations of others. The stereotypical image of an Indian held by the dominant society was of a Plains Indian walking, or riding a horse in the Calgary Stampede or playing the villain in movies, or being portrayed in advertising for GM's Pontiac car as a warrior brave. Even though Plains cultures were constantly changing, the Pan-Indian stereotype was dressed in Plains-style feathered headdresses and skin costumes, thus promoting an identity well beyond their time and place in the history of the First Nations.

### 3

My interest in the Eskimo, as they were then called, had begun in high school when I first read about stone cut prints. In 1962, as a visual arts student, I bought #1/50 of "Sea Monsters Devouring Whale" a stone block print series by the Cape Dorset artist, Kiakjhuk. I was unaware at the time that the Inuit were still known in the Arctic by numbers and not by names, nor that the names would be spelt differently by

officials who could not speak their language or dialect. Providing a name rather than a number for the artist became part of the arts marketing strategy, but numbers can still be found on the carvings and their documentation.

In the spring of 1967, I flipped a coin — heads, Expo 67, tails, Rankin Inlet, Northwest Territories. By June I was one of a few archaeology and cultural anthropology university students on a train that stopped on request to let Indian and Métis off with the supplies they had traded for skins and fish. As they disappeared on foot into the bush, the train continued to the town of Churchill on the southwest edge of Hudson's Bay. I stayed overnight in a hotel and the next morning flew north by bush plane to the west coast of the Bay and Rankin Inlet. The plane landed inland — had it been winter we would have settled down on the ice — and the Inuit, who met the plane, unloaded it. I spent the summer months learning the Inuktitut language from a local teacher, reading about the Arctic peoples, working as an artist in the Arts and Crafts Workshop with Inuit craftspeople, documenting the settlement and observing the interactions among the Inuit themselves and with their non-Inuit neighbours.

On the edge of the town stood the shell of a copper mine. It was part of an earlier government and the private sector effort to create an economic foundation for the settlement and had been abandoned as uneconomic. The then current ill-fated industrial effort was to create a niche market in the south for canned seal meat, sometimes curried or with other sauces, and other “county foods” such as whale and caribou. Earlier, Inuit arts and crafts workshops had been set up in the larger communities of the Eastern Arctic as part of the same effort to establish viable northern industries. The Rankin Inlet artists were experimenting with clay, firing hand built pottery head shapes in electric kilns. When the kilns failed, green ware production continued and salaries were paid to the Inuit craftspeople. Regardless of the result, art and craft making had become a rationale for the delivery of social assistance. Stone carving was still practiced in the community and both the pottery and carvings were marketed as “Eskimo Art” especially in the larger cities in Canada and the USA.

Carving for the tourist trade was already well established in the 1940s but a commercial and artistic venture on a large scale was the result of an initiative by Alma and James Houston and the government. This industrial effort began with carving and printmaking in Cape Dorset and other isolated communities. It later expanded to other media. At the community level, art making was a division of labour based both on race and gender. The work was celebrated for its originality in *Arts Canada* and other magazines that

were targeted to help promote sales. Under the sponsorship of the federal government, the aesthetic and cultural values of the dominant society prevailed. “Eskimo Art” had become an ethnic indicator of the Inuit and was promoted in commercial and public galleries and specialty stores throughout North America and Europe.

As I wandered through the empty copper mine, I read the notices posted on the walls. One advised the non-Inuit workers that if they were caught on the road to the “Eskimo village,” they would be sent south immediately. Rankin Inlet was a segregated town. The utilidor, an above ground system of pipes, delivered some of the utility services to the residents and businesses, but it stopped at the road to the Eskimo village. In the “government” part of the town, the houses were a standard southern bungalow style, built above the permafrost, though sometimes wired together to keep the walls from separating. The standard government-issue furniture, like the houses, was provided for the teachers and other professionals in the community, at a highly subsidized cost. Only one resident, a British immigrant and academic, Bob Williamson, whose knowledge of the Inuit and their language was considerable, had battled to buy a house as a demonstration of his commitment to the north. He flew the territorial government flag on his pole as symbol of NWT’s wish for independent status, similar to that of a province. No one else, neither Inuit nor non-Inuit owned their home, and the federal government controlled everything through their non-Inuit employees while the Inuit provided the labour.

The Inuit themselves lived in prefabricated housing heated by oil stoves. No matter the size of the family, their homes were rarely bigger than three small rooms. The surrounding area was an open-air workshop where the men would work on their skidoos, fish and meat hung on lines, and women stretched skins to be cured. Sleds and other supplies could be found on the roof, or against the walls. Children played until all hours of the bright night. Few dogs remained and those that did were tied up; the government and Hudson Bay Company had convinced the Inuit to give them up for safety reasons and because of the need to feed them. The hunters and their families had entered into a cycle of dependency on the Company’s supplies, such as gasoline and foodstuffs, which were shipped in once or twice a summer by boat, at a cost well above southern prices. When the price of seal and fox skins dropped, as it did, the dependency was even greater.

I returned to the Canadian Arctic regularly in the 1970s and early 80s. By now I had experienced at first hand internal colonization. Not only did the community administrators control the towns and villages,

but they could also control who came into the community (Rankin Inlet was one of the few communities to have a public bunk building called the “Rankin Inlet Outlet Inn” where transients could stay). Once when I was traveling overland by skidoo and sled to a village some considerable distance away, I was denied access to the community by the administrator because he didn’t want any anthropologists in town. They might unsettle the residents. As I knew I would otherwise need to camp on the snow and ice, I used the radiophone to call ahead to the government administration office, only to be told that there was no place to stay. In defiance, a local schoolteacher said I could stay with his family, and I did.

Throughout my travels in the north, the teachers and nurses provided shelter for me. In the days before regular telephone service, radio, and later TV, their offer of hospitality was the way they kept in touch with events in the south. It didn’t matter that we were strangers. When the DC 3 I hitch-hiked on to fly to Repulse Bay crashed near the settlement, the Inuit arrived quickly to bring us to safety, and when it came time to leave, I hitch-hiked on another plane to the next community. This was all an adventure for me, but for the Inuit, life in the Arctic was no longer independent. Many young Inuit were sent away against their will for the upper grades of school or to schools run by missionaries. Most non-Inuit women were sent south for childbirth, and other medical needs that could not be met by the nursing station and required a medical evacuation. But the time when there was mutual gain had long passed.

At first, the land and culture of the Inuit had been exploited by business and overrun by missionaries and government — the latter, albeit, in an effort to keep the Inuit from starving and to provide security, health and education. Before and following World War II and during the Cold War, the benevolence of the dominant society resulted not only in the loss of their independence but also the traditional skills necessary for their survival. They were moved and reorganized throughout the Arctic to meet political and resource needs. Their labour was exploited and through social reorientation — especially the education system — their culture was assimilated to that of the south.

In 1969 I was studying cultural anthropology with D’Arcy McNickle, the first indigenous academic to be hired as a university professor in Canada. I found myself in meetings among First Nations leaders who were discussing the federal government’s White Paper. The Paper was promoted as bringing equality to First Nations but it had been developed without the participation of Aboriginal peoples and met a wall of resistance. The old Indian Act remained in force. But the effect of the White Paper was enormous, research about Aboriginal peoples and their rights increased, as did the politicization of the Aboriginal peoples themselves.

Each summer in the early 1970s my husband, our young family and I camped on the Stoney reservation at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, participated in sweat lodges and attended pow-wows — until the American Indian Movement (AIM) joined the informal gatherings. AIM helped to foster Aboriginal politics in Canada. Camping here became uncomfortable for us, but not for our children, two of whom are Métis, of Woodland Cree and French heritages. Though the reservation began by welcoming non-Aboriginals it soon became a contested site and we no longer visited. (Recent allegations of fraud and misappropriation have focused on the management of the Stoney reservation that held such promise as a model community 30 years before.)

#### 4

My career in cultural policy-making and practice began in 1972. The newly created Saskatchewan Department of Culture and Youth employed me as a consultant. One of the programs the department began was “Towards a New Past,” a first effort to be inclusive. It was controversial, as was our effort to place the arts in a larger community setting and to resist the ascendancy of professional practitioners demanding preferred treatment. Our goal was to encourage participation in arts, heritage and cultural activities and to provide leadership, thereby improving standards. But industrial and economic objectives, and the arts and heritage community’s goal of professionalization, weighed down our efforts. Our dependence on national resources steered our activities to meet the objectives of federal programmes. This was also the decade that introduced lottery financing to western Canada. In response to the demands of the few, the model chosen by the province was based on amateur sport — it was organized into provincial associations and was highly participatory. The effect was immediate: the promise of lottery dollars led to the building of an extensive network of community organizations and a hierarchy and bureaucracy parallel to that of government. Rural communities, with a strong infrastructure of sport and recreation activities, benefited particularly from this model but not the First Nations organizations that also participated in these activities. Thereafter the rift between the haves and have-nots was cemented.

One of the cultural initiatives of federal and provincial governments at this time was to support the policy of multiculturalism, first announced by the government of Canada in 1971. The focus of government was to accommodate immigrant populations through, among other programmes, the sponsorship of “her-

itage languages,” and multicultural and community-based arts and crafts. Both the Francophone and Aboriginal populations excluded themselves from this policy and its implementation. They demanded parallel but superior structures to meet their objectives. A decade later community tensions increased as the racial and cultural pluralism of Canada, especially in larger urban centers, grew. The government sponsored heritage language programme was displaced by anti-racism initiatives in an effort to deal with predominantly urban-based conflicts, but not with the institutional and systemic racism that have for so long confronted Aboriginal peoples.

Those promoting First Nations and Inuit artists and craftspeople at this time were well aware of the potential of external tourist markets and the economic benefits of arts patronage, especially for collectors and those who planned to resell or donate their collections to the state. Promoters, including the government, and in particular the federal department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, were able to support the creation of material culture of their own liking, constructing the context in which it would be viewed, and suppressing that which did not reflect and support its conception of the marketplace. Eskimo soapstone sculptures and the argillite model poles of the Haida on the west coast had become novel. Inuit prints became a national genre of assimilated fine art. Even stone models of Inukshuks (“like men” cairns) became part of the tourist trade and are now marketed in the south, and like gnomes, are garden monuments.

In the Qu’Appelle Valley, under the guidance of Lorna Ferguson, women on the Standing Buffalo reservation hooked rugs that told traditional myths. This effort to follow the success of the Inuit arts and crafts by promoting the rugs in eastern galleries and in New York City was unsuccessful. The history of arts and cultural policy and practice as it relates to Aboriginal Peoples is to a great extent a history of the commodification of their art and material culture. Modern Aboriginal artists were denied access as long as predetermined and largely ethnographic criteria were applied to their work by museums, galleries and granting agencies, such as the Canada Council.

Today few contemporary Canadian galleries focus on the arts of First Peoples, though the Winnipeg Art Gallery, McMichael Canadian Art Collection and the McCord Museum are notable exceptions. Even fewer have aggressively sought to include their arts and material culture in their collections, though both the National Gallery of Canada and the Art Gallery of Ontario have recently accepted donations from collectors. In the case of the NGC the collection of DIAND has been transferred to its facilities in Ot-

tawa. The National Museum of Man, now the Canadian Museum of Civilization and located in Hull, led the way by creating a position as Curator of Contemporary Art, once held by the Plains Cree artist, Gerald McMaster. But here and elsewhere, the historic curatorial practice of collecting and exhibiting the art and material culture of Aboriginal peoples in an ethnographic (or anthropological) context has endured. (Recently Robert McMichael, founder of the McMichael Gallery, has indicated his intent to deaccession a significant portion of its collection, including the more contemporary work of artists of Aboriginal heritage such as Métis painters Bob Boyer and Gerald McMaster.)

It should not be surprising that Aboriginal artists chose to take control of the representation of their own culture, whether through the short-lived group of seven Aboriginal artists associated with “Woodland School,” artists such as Norval Morrisseau and Daphne Odjig, who have recently been credited with being the first truly modern indigenous Canadian artists, or by studying at the non-Native art schools and in university degree programmes. The new visual languages in which the artists were trained formed the basis for anti-colonial rhetorical strategies in art making by contemporary Aboriginal artists such as Joane Cardinal Schubert, a Blackfoot. The Indian Federated College was among a few post-secondary institutions welcoming students of Aboriginal heritage in the 1980s, and was important in helping develop a number of prairie artists. Later, some of these young artists became teachers at the College. Bob Boyer, for example, developed a specialized Aboriginal studio art curriculum.

## 5

In 1980 I was appointed to the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee. It was the first comprehensive review of arts and culture since the Royal Commission on Arts and Letters, which reported in 1951. We reported to the Minister of Communications in November 1982. Although no specific recommendations addressed First Peoples issues, we did call for the elimination of discriminatory barriers as part of Canada’s social policy. We said we were “convinced that Native Artists must be recognized first and foremost as contemporary artists, whatever their field, and that federal policy should give special priority to promoting both traditional and contemporary creative work by artists of Indian and Inuit ancestry.”

In 1982 I left the position of Executive Director of Saskatchewan Arts Board to become Deputy Minister

of Culture, Heritage and Recreation in Manitoba. It had frustrated me that the Arts Board in response to the maturing arts community had narrowed its support for arts and culture to complement the goals of the Canada Council. By doing so, the activities of culturally and ethnically diverse community organizations promoting Ukrainian dance or Scottish bagpipe music were not supported. The paintings of reservation life by self-trained First Nations artists such as Allan Sapp and Michael Lonechild were excluded from the Board's collection, although folk artists of European descent were included. Support for artists of Aboriginal heritage remained the responsibility of the DIAND and the Indian Art Centre in Ottawa — the division between federal and provincial responsibilities was maintained. Elsewhere the Saskatchewan government accepted a role in the support of First Nations peoples living off the reservation and in urban areas. Alberta's Glenbow Museum sponsored the exhibition "The Spirit Sings" for the 1988 Winter Olympics with financial support from among others, Shell Canada. That became a flashpoint for demonstrations by the Lubicon Indians and drew attention to the massive First Nations collections held in foreign countries.

As deputy minister, I was able to begin to address systemic discrimination against minorities and those with minority characteristics, including those of Aboriginal heritage. New legislation established the Intercultural Council that sought to improve relations among culturally diverse communities. The Council advised government on all matters under its jurisdiction, such as education and the recognition of foreign credentials. When the heritage legislation was revised, consultations included the Aboriginal community. The range of designated heritage sites and events to be honoured by the province expanded to include among others, Métis communities and labour. Sacred indigenous and other camping sites located outside federal lands were protected. When our support for the film and publishing industries expanded, Aboriginal themes were encouraged and supported. The Aboriginal broadcaster, Native Communications Inc., located in northern Manitoba, was in regular consultation with our offices. Radio and later TV, had become important elements in a northern strategy to maintain and develop Aboriginal languages and cultures. These first steps supported the initiatives that followed on the recognition of the existing Aboriginal and treaty rights of Canada's indigenous peoples in the Constitution Act of 1982 and the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Affairs that reported in 1996. The Royal Commission was established in 1991 as a consequence of the Oka crisis to report on the situation of Aboriginal peoples.

The retention and maintenance of Aboriginal languages has been an on-going concern because there is

no other country in which they are home languages. Federal programmes available to all other Canadians did little to encourage their use. The 1982 and 1983 public list of titles supported by Canada Council block grants programme for publishers made no reference to languages other than French and English. Publishers eligible for department of Communications support were assessed according minimum sales in an official language market. And the government's translation grants encouraged a greater exchange between English and French language texts by Canadian writers or their translation into languages other than French or English for distribution to audiences abroad. But these criteria excluded the Aboriginal languages of Canada.

At the same time, the Northern Native Broadcast Program was limited, although there was a substantial indigenous population speaking Aboriginal languages in the south. Furthermore, the accepted practice of multilingual interpretation and publications had not been widely adopted by Canadian galleries and museums, although there are occasional examples of Aboriginal voices on tapes related to specific exhibits. However, among the more recent firsts, is the creation of an Aboriginal Television station based in Winnipeg and broadcast throughout Canada in English, French and Aboriginal languages as part of the required cable offerings, and the adoption of a strategy for artists of Aboriginal heritage by the Canada Council for the Arts.

The period between the White Paper in 1969 and the patriation of the British North America Act in 1982 was marked by policy uncertainty, protest and confrontation, for example, by the James Bay Cree in northern Quebec. It should not be surprising that later in the Manitoba Legislature Elijah Harper, an Oj-Cree Chief of the Red Sucker Lake and the only Aboriginal MLA (NDP, Ruppertsland) held up an eagle feather, and delayed the passage of the Meech Lake Accord. Phil Fontaine was then head of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. A former civil servant in DIAND, he tried to establish better relations between Ottawa and Aboriginal communities when he was later elected Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. He observed that it was not the Indians who opposed distinct society status for Quebec, but rather that the Aboriginal peoples with their 55 distinct original languages, 52 of which are distinct to Canada, are on the brink of extinction and therefore even more distinct.

Volume 3, "Gathering Strength" of *The Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Affairs* provided specific recommendations related to language, arts and heritage. They relate to the need: a) to identify and protect historical and sacred sites and to safeguard Aboriginal heritage from misappropriation and

misrepresentation; b) to conserve and revitalize Aboriginal languages; c) to enhance the presence of Aboriginal people and cultures in the media; d) and to support the literary and artistic expression of Aboriginal people. One would like to think that the force of this Report, the self-government negotiations, land claims and the establishment of a new Arctic territory governed by Inuit, Nunavut, on April 1, 1999 might begin to transform the lives of Aboriginal peoples living in Canada. As a whole the Commission has been described as the first time in modern history that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples have reviewed their collective past and charted their future course. It is fast forward to modern pluralism.

Recent developments in the arts and cultural community such as increased repatriation of arts and material culture from museums in Canada and elsewhere to their Aboriginal homes, the recognition of indigenous theatre and other performers as measured by the growth of music videos and CDs, and sponsorship of *Aboriginal Voices* and other publications of Canadian Aboriginal writers, suggest that some non-Aboriginal cultural institutions are beginning to understand contemporary work by Aboriginal peoples to be a genuine indigenous expression and to acknowledge the collective ownership of the material culture by indigenous peoples. Earlier this year in conversation with representatives of First Nations organizations in Saskatchewan about cultural policy, I was told explicitly that discussions must take place on a nation-to-nation basis by the appropriate government representatives, and an unconditional transfer of resources was expected. This month the first film produced in the Inuktitut language, *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner*, has been included in the Cannes film festival.

While scholars debate the classification of indigenous arts and culture within a linear and art historical typology, reproductions of the material culture of Aboriginal peoples are being manufactured by Third World peoples around the globe for sale in North America and elsewhere. Computer programmers are creating programs that allow each of us to design our own Northwest Coast compositions based on the U-form, ovoid and form lines of the Haida and other First Nations. If fraudulent reproductions are a form of compliment, then Canada's Aboriginal peoples are widely admired. But it is the work of contemporary Aboriginal artists, work that fits no preconceived mould or theory that will show the way in the twenty-first century.