

# Castellani Art Museum

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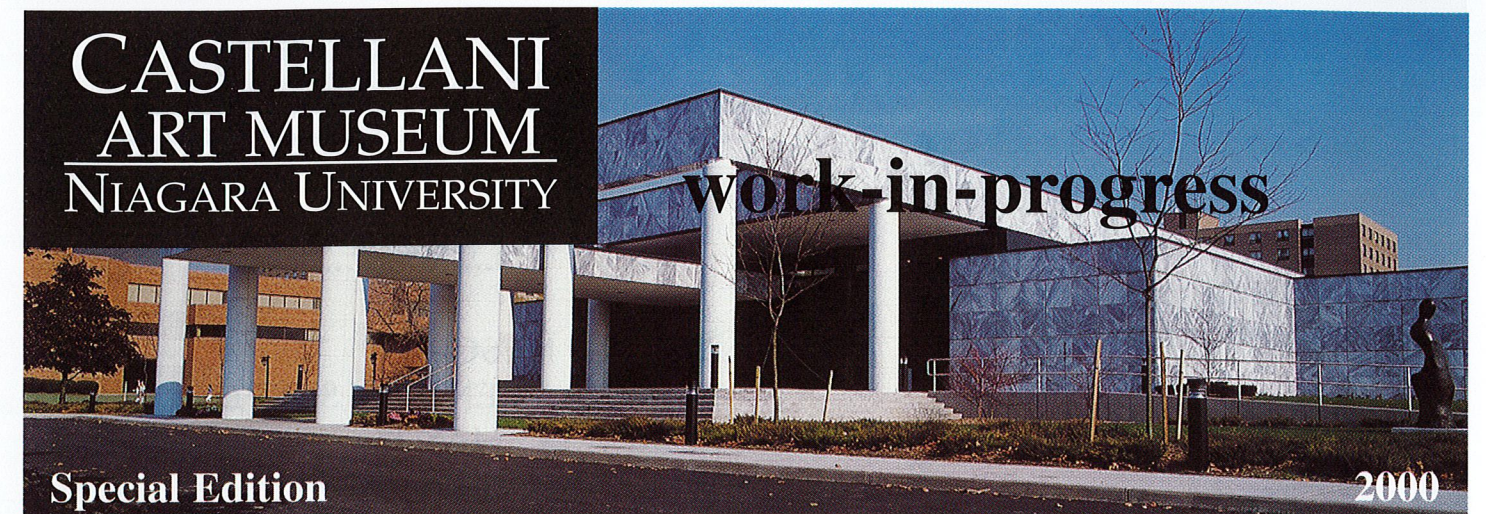
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



Niagara Falls Pincushion by Marlene Printup, 1992. Photo: Biff Henrich.

## September

Opening Reception Sunday, February 25 2 - 4p.m.

ACROSS BORDERS:  
BEADWORK IN IROQUOIS LIFE  
JULY 2-NOVEMBER 19, 2000

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

## Meet the Artists/Artist demonstrations

Sundays; through October 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.

## Beadwork sales featuring artists from the exhibition

September 24 & October 22 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.

## Holiday sale: beaded Christmas tree ornaments and gift items

Saturday and Sunday, November 18 - 19

2:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Exhibition tours are available by museum docents. Call Eric Jackson-Forsberg, Coordinator of Education(286-8286) to make reservations.

## January 2001

NIAGARA FALLS SCHOOL DISTRICT  
EXHIBITION

JANUARY 28 - FEBRUARY 18, 2001

Opening Reception Sunday, January 28 2 - 5 p.m.

## February

UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO: MFA  
STUDENT EXHIBITION 1

FEBRUARY 25 - MARCH 18

Tops Gallery

A portion of the Museum's general operating funds for this fiscal year has been provided by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, a federal agency serving the public by strengthening museums and libraries.

## March

ARNOLD MESCHES

ECHOES: A CENTURY SURVEY

MARCH 18 - MAY 27

Main Exhibit Hall, Gallery 7, 8, & Perna Gallery  
Opening Reception Sunday, March 18 2 - 5 p.m.

UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO: MFA  
STUDENT EXHIBITION 2

MARCH 25 - APRIL 22

Tops Gallery  
Opening Reception Sunday, March 25 2 - 4 p.m.

## April

NIAGARA UNIVERSITY STUDENT  
EXHIBITIONS

APRIL 29 - MAY 13

Dusel & Tops Galleries  
Opening Reception Sunday, April 29 2 - 5 p.m.

LEWISTON - PORTER SCHOOL  
DISTRICT EXHIBITION

APRIL 29 - MAY 13

Opening Reception Sunday, April 29 2 - 5 p.m.

## May

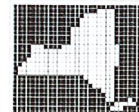
EMPIRE STATE PARTNERSHIP:  
WRITING ON THE WALL & YEAR IN  
REVIEW WITH LEWISTON-PORTER  
HIGH SCHOOL

MAY 20 - JUNE 17

Dusel, Nanula, & Tops Galleries  
Opening Reception Sunday, May 20 2 - 5  
p.m.

The Museum has received 2000-01 funding from the New York State Council on the Arts; Folk Arts, Arts-in-Education, Empire State Partnership, and Museum Programs.

State of the Arts



NYSCA

## A Letter from the Director

**A**CROSS BORDERS: BEADWORK IN IROQUOIS LIFE is a landmark exhibition for the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University. It is the first time, for example, that the museum has dedicated all its exhibition spaces, with the exception of the sculpture court, to a temporary exhibition. It is the first time the museum was able to meet the strict conservation requirements to install an exhibition with such fragile, historic objects; including narrow climate control variances, light levels throughout the museum at 4 foot candles, and the participation of guest conservators and curators to conduct most of the installation processes. To be honest, when two large semis pulled up behind the museum at 8:00 pm (more than 6 hours later than expected) and the drivers insisted on unloading the trucks NOW, and there were three staff members left at the museum, I thought we had been foolishly over ambitious. A few phone calls however, brought in the assistance we needed: Niagara University facility services, employees, student aid, volunteers, staff members living nearby, numerous volunteers from Tuscarora Nation, and even a football player from Lewiston-Porter High School. By midnight, when the large exhibit hall and more was filled with crates of all sizes, anything seemed possible. And this has been the story behind this exhibition for more than five years. It has been an enormous cooperative effort on the part of many people, both in the United States and Canada, from so many disciplines and skills, both Native and non Native, that made this exhibition possible. Although the exhibition was cosponsored by the McCord Museum of Canadian Art, Montreal, Quebec, it is the kind of production one would expect from a much larger museum, as evidenced by the other institutions borrowing the exhibition: Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, Quebec (May 25-October 28, 2001); National Museum of American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, New York City (December 9, 2001-May 19, 2002); Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Ontario (June 21-October 13, 2002); Pequot Museum, Mashantucket, Connecticut (November 23-February 16, 2003). I know many people have asked; "Why, then, at the Castellani Art Museum with a collection of 20th century art?"

**T**he answer is two-fold: the mission of the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University; and, the 1989 Excellence and Equity report from the American Association of Museums which identifies 10 principles for consideration and action by the museum field. The three key ideas of the Excellence and Equity report are: 1)The commitment to education as central to a museum's public service must be clearly stated in its mission and primary to all activities, including collecting, exhibiting and preserving; 2)Museums must become more inclusive places that welcome diverse audiences and should reflect the pluralism of their community in every aspect of their operations, governance, collecting, program, exhibits, and public relations; 3)Dynamic leadership from individuals, institutions, and organizations within and outside the museum community is key to fulfilling the museum potential for this public service in coming years.

**T**his exhibition is primarily about education, for all of us. Without a doubt, one of the most misunderstood communities in Western New York and throughout New York State is the Iroquois. Beyond modest news reports concerning the Iroquois struggle for sovereignty; including land claims, economic development and treaty rights, what do most citizens know about our Iroquois neighbors and their rich culture? One of the reasons this exhibition is so large is to provide our audiences with a framework for understanding the beadwork, which requires an understanding of the history and culture of the Iroquois people or Haudenosaunee (people of the Longhouse). Since much of the beadwork in this exhibition has never been shown (350 selected from over 3,000 items) and clearly identified, it was a very long process. As indicated earlier in this newsletter, it was decided very early in the planning process that a team of curators and experts was required to research, organize, design and implement the exhibition.

**T**he foundation for this exhibition is based on a desire by Ruth Phillips, Director of the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. and Jolene Rickard, Assistant Professor in the departments of Art and Art History, SUNY Buffalo and member of the Tuscarora Nation, to emphasize the role of Iroquois women historically and today. Phillips and Rickard met at a College Art Association meeting for the first time in 1992. Each was familiar with the others area of interest and research. It was at this point that the discussion began for this exhibition. Phillips was focused on northeastern beadwork in the Victorian era along with her co-collaborator, Trudy Nicks, Ethnologist at the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Ontario. Rickard was researching the role beadwork plays in maintaining cultural knowledge amongst the Iroquois. Both scholars realized that they were working on parallel ideas with Phillips' research anchored in the Kanawake Mohawk experience and Rickard's in the Tuscarora experience.

**T**he collaboration grew to include the rich anthropological collections of the McCord Museum with the help of archeologist, Moira McCaffery, the Kenien'kehaka Raotitiohkwa Cultural Center through the advise of Kanatakta, and the Folk Arts Program at the Castellani Art Museum under the direction of Curator, Kate Koperski and Director, Sandra Olsen. The collaboration resulted in a close examination of the cross-cultural aesthetic and economic exchange between the Iroquois and Euro/Americans/Canadians at Niagara Falls and Montreal from the Victorian era up to today. The beadwork is contextualized in an Iroquoian worldview. It is also seen as an important identity affirmation marker through the work and words of contemporary beadworkers. In particular, the CAM conducted oral histories in the Tuscarora community and documented contemporary traditional Iroquois artists. The importance of this collaboration can not be overstated. The cornerstone on which this exhibition is based is the fact that Native scholars, community historians and beadworkers framed their own history in collaboration with non-Native scholars and museum professionals. We believe this process is a template for productive Native and non-native museum collaborations in the future.

**O**ne of most important goals for the Castellani Art Museum was to bring this important tradition into the present time and to introduce the beadworkers to you and our diverse audience. We hope the installation in the large exhibit hall serves that pur-

pose. Portraits of and quotations from beadworkers welcome you as you enter the large room. Niagara Falls, the site of selling beadwork from the Victorian era to the present, is at your right. Enlarged photographs marching across the left wall, record the hard-fought ratification of the 1794 Jay Treaty in 1928, and illustrate the sovereign right of Iroquois people to freely cross onto their lands which transcend the modern Canadian/United States border.

Recognizing the rare opportunities provided by this exhibition, we decided to dedicate our entire newsletter, as a Special Edition, to *Across Borders*. Hopefully, it will encourage you to come and see the exhibition for the first time, or to return again for a more comprehensive examination. Several special upcoming events might attract your attention, so they have been included as well. The following questions will be posed to viewers on response cards, available in the exhibition after October 1.

- 1) Do you think this exhibition provides enough/too much information about the Iroquois culture within an historical and visual context?
- 2) Does the introduction to Iroquois cosmology provide a foundation for understanding the tradition of and symbols within Iroquois beadwork?
- 3) Are you convinced that Iroquois beadwork, although it is considered "utilitarian" art, should be recognized as fine art because of the powerful imagery, inherent beauty, and its spiritual and symbolic purposes?
- 4) Is it clear that beadwork has provided economic sustenance to Iroquois communities?
- 5) Do you leave this exhibition with a better understanding about the importance of recognizing cultural traditions as ONGOING and, therefore, an important part of the contemporary culture?
- 6) Are you convinced that it is important for museums to include the voices and opinions of people from the communities when we are examining cultural material?
- 7) If you have the opportunity, would you commission and/or purchase some Iroquois beadwork for yourself or as a present for someone else?

Many of these issues and others will be discussed in a series of lectures and panel discussions in October and November (See schedule on page 11). For more information, please call 286-8200.

## SPECIAL REPORT Across Borders: Beadwork in Iroquois Life

### Revisiting Iroquois Beadwork

This special edition of the Castellani Art Museum newsletter acknowledges the significance of *Across Borders: Beadwork in Iroquois Life*, a groundbreaking exhibition that challenges the way in which Native arts have historically been presented and interpreted in museums. Iroquois beadwork from the 19th century forward has often been dismissed by scholars and museum professionals as a women's craft or tourist art. A major goal of *Across Borders* is to initiate a fundamental re-reading of the Iroquois beadwork tradition from the point of view of community members and in light of compelling new work by leading scholars in the fields of art history, ethnology, and archaeology.

Recognizing the need for multiple perspectives and insider/outsider points of view in any meaningful analysis of Native cultural expressions, *Across Borders* was produced over the past four years by a broadly interdisciplinary team of Native and non-Native scholars including: Tuscarora artist and art historian Dr. Jolene Rickard (Assistant Professor of Art and Art History, State University of New York at Buffalo); Kanataкта, Director of the Kanien'kehaka Raotiohkwa Cultural Center; art historians Dr. Ruth Phillips (Director, Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia and Professor of Fine Art and Anthropology) and Dr. Sandra Olsen (Director, Castellani Art Museum); ethnohistorian Dr. Trudy Nicks (Curator, Department of Ethnology, Royal Ontario Museum); folk arts curator Kate Koperski (Castellani Art Museum); and archaeologist Moira McCaffrey (Director of Curatorial Services, McCord Museum of Canadian History). More than 38 traditional artists and cultural consultants made the exhibition possible by sharing their knowledge of beadwork, loaning family items and creating new commissioned works.

Much previous beadwork scholarship, most by non-Natives, has ignored or minimized beadwork's grounding in oral tradition and Iroquois cosmology, its historic use in Native social and political conventions, and its role as an artform that has come to embody

Iroquois cultural identity. In powerful contrast, Jolene Rickard, who brought the *Across Borders* project team together, insisted that the entire exhibition "be framed within Iroquois space." In the exhibition's opening section, an evocative installation of the Sky Dome recalls the setting of the Iroquois Creation story and a timeless history, an existence, that precedes European contact. Artworks with beaded sky domes and other motifs inspired by traditional narratives help to reinforce Rickard's belief that beadwork "is an artistic medium that crosses the boundaries between Iroquois cosmological space and the physical world." This idea is reiterated in the exhibition's closing section where, according to Rickard, installation works that reflect on the beadwork tradition by contemporary Iroquois artists "continue to reinvent the visual language of traditional arts."

While the *Across Borders* project team shared responsibility for the overall content of the exhibition, its members also contributed particular expertise. Ruth Phillips had devoted many years to the study of Iroquois beadwork prior to the initiation of *Across Borders*, and brought an archive of over 2000 beaded artworks to the project. Phillips' contribution to the exhibition emphasizes beadwork's role as a focal point for cultural, economic and artistic exchange between Native and non-Native peoples. Dismissing the notion that post-contact Native art is "inauthentic," Phillips sees her work as encouraging "a move beyond simplistic views of history in which contact between Native and non-Native peoples is seen as a conflict in which only one culture can survive. Such interactions can, and did, result in new strategies for survival and new kinds of creativity." In the exhibition's "Travelling to Sell" section, Trudy Nicks further questions the meaning of "authenticity" in Native art and culture by revealing "Wild West Shows" and "Indian Villages" as highly effective marketing strategies invented to sell beadwork and other items. Often Native owned and operated, these presentations for non-Native audiences created a space in which Iroquois entrepreneurs freely played with their Indian identities.

Another innovative feature of the *Across Borders* installation is the vivid presence of beadwork artists themselves. As curator of Folk Arts here at the museum, I conducted interviews with artists from the local Tuscarora community while Kanataкта coordinated documentation of artists among the Kahnawake Mohawk. The resulting first person narratives express the artists' personal understanding of the beadwork tradition, reveal their families' participation in the history of beadwork and, especially, look at beadwork at the point of artistic creation. Life-sized portraits of artists greet visitors to the exhibition, printed excerpts from interviews, video interviews and additional portraits of artists are included in the exhibition's "Creating," "Marketing" and "Continuing" sections, insuring that beadworkers are active participants, rather than subjects, in the dialog surrounding their artistic expressions. My goal in completing fieldwork for *Across Borders* was to create the fullest picture possible of the beadwork tradition as it exists today. A wide variety of artists were interviewed for this project: community experts and teachers, beginning beadworkers, beadworkers who sew mainly for sale to outsiders and beadworkers who sew exclusively for their families. Providing our audiences with the opportunity to "meet" many different artists clearly demonstrates that there is no one "right" or "authentic" way of being a beadworker and reinforces the idea that the beadwork tradition is complex, dynamic and ever-evolving.

*Across Borders* is an exhibition of many "firsts." It is the first to offer a comprehensive overview of the Iroquois beadwork tradition from the pre-contact period to the present. It is the first to document and celebrate an Iroquois tradition in which women play the central role. Because of the low status assigned to beadwork by museum professionals in the past, the exhibition includes many beautiful historic pieces that are being conserved and exhibited for the first time. These achievements, however, are largely the result of the cross-cultural, richly interdisciplinary and collaborative curatorial process from which *Across Borders* emerged. It's my hope that this process will serve as a model for the museum field to build and elaborate on for many years to come.

Kate Koperski,  
Curator of Folk Arts



*Across Borders* curatorial team. Back row (left to right): Trudy Nicks, Jolene Rickard, Kanataкта. Front row: Kate Koperski, Moira McCaffrey, Sandra Olsen. Missing: Ruth Phillips. Photography: Nancy Paris

To provide our audiences with a lasting record of *Across Borders: Beadwork in Iroquois Life*, we have reproduced the text labels that summarize the exhibition's main themes.

### INTRODUCTION

#### **A Collaboration**

The story of Iroquois beadwork is a rich narrative with many subtexts. Our effort to convey its multiple facets and textures has been a collaborative one. The curatorial team, which came together across many borders is comprised of scholars – Iroquois and non-Iroquois – who have conducted research in Iroquois communities throughout the Northeast and in museums around the world. From numerous discussions, debates and discoveries, *Across Borders* emerged.

The exhibition recognizes that the story of Iroquois beadwork is characterized by innovation, cultural continuity and economic necessity. The curators have used oral histories, photographic and written archives and beadwork collections to explore the significance of beadwork in Iroquois life. Moreover, beadworkers from the communities of Kahnawake and Tuscarora have joined the curators in studying historic beadwork collections in museums. Their voices and creations, together with those of contemporary fine artists, are present throughout the exhibition – vibrant evidence of how the art of beadwork resonates among the Iroquois today.

#### **Beadwork in Iroquois Life**

Dipping the needle into a gleaming bowl of tiny beads, an Iroquois woman threads glass to form a stream of light and stitches it onto velvet. Children play nearby, the TV mumbles, doors open and close. A translucent bird takes shape beneath her fingers. With this fluid gesture she reaffirms her connection to a fundamental part of Iroquois life: beadwork.

The story of Iroquois beadwork takes us across many borders, both real and conceptual. We will travel from European glass factories to the Iroquois territories of North America. We will see how beadwork, though always a feature of everyday life, is also linked to the spiritual, economic and political worlds of the Iroquois. The story of beadwork moves smoothly between past and present. It is a story marked by continuity, innovation, determination, humour and, ultimately, survival.



Two beadwork artists: Marlene Printup and daughter Mary Clause. Photography: Lauren Tent

**The Iroquois People**  
Iroquois, Six Nations

Confederacy, People of the Longhouse, Haudenosaunee... these are all terms used to identify the six Native nations who have lived in northeastern North America for countless generations. The Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca came together for mutual support during a time of great crisis. They were joined in the 18th century by the Tuscarora. Traditionally an agricultural people, the Iroquois occupied relatively permanent villages surrounded by fields of corn, beans, and squash – crops known as the Three Sisters.

Today the Iroquois continue to live under the Great Tree of Peace and to abide by the principles of the Great Law. They are recognized as a separate nation within the United States acknowledged by the 1794 Canandaigua Treaty. Present-day Iroquoia comprises some nineteen communities located primarily in the Northeast. This exhibition focuses on two communities with long histories of making and selling beadwork, and crossing borders: Kahnawake, situated southwest of Montreal, and Tuscarora, located near Niagara Falls, New York.

### THE IROQUOIS UNIVERSE

The Iroquois world-view encompasses four great events- the time of Creation, the gift of the four sacred ceremonies, the formation of the Iroquois Confederacy based on the Kaianere'ko:wa (principles of the Great Law of Peace) and, for some Iroquois, the Gaiwi:yo:h, or the message delivered by the Seneca prophet Handsome Lake. Peace, power, and righteousness, the fundamental principles of the Great Law of Peace, are at the center of Iroquois life.

At all gatherings the Iroquois recite the "words that come before all else", known as the Ohen:ton Karihwatehkwen (Thanksgiving Address). This greeting remembers and honors the earth, plants, animals, birds, trees, water, wind, four beings, Thunderers (our Grandfathers), Sun, Grandmother Moon, and the Creator.

Iroquois beadwork has profound significance within this world-view. Through beadwork and beaded motifs, Iroquois artists reaffirm the fundamental beliefs

and vital symbols of their nature.

#### **The Creation Story**

Countless generations ago there existed beings who inhabited the Sky World. One day a great tree was uprooted in this world, creating a hole through which a pregnant woman fell. As she fell, the woman's descent was broken by a flock of waterfowl, who then placed her on the back of a great sea turtle. The water animals retrieved some earth from the bottom of the sea and placed it on the turtle's back. As the woman walked about, the earth began to grow, forming Turtle Island.



A visitor looks at a wampum belt included in the exhibition's "Historical Origins" section. Photography: Nancy Parisi

In time the woman gave birth to a daughter. When the daughter reached womanhood, a spirit placed two arrows across her abdomen and she became pregnant with twins. The mother died during childbirth, and the twins argued incessantly as they grew to be young men. One twin created things of beauty, while his brother created mischief. Eventually the twins fought, and the victorious brother turned to a final task. He formed a figure from the earth and gave it life. This being was the first of our people.

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF BEADWORK

Throughout their long history the Iroquois have used beads to express important spiritual beliefs, to inscribe political values, and to preserve community and personal memories. Over time, the materials of which beads have been made, and their shapes, sizes, and colors, have varied. These shifts often mark periods of great social and political change, such as the arrival of European peoples in Iroquoia during the 16th century. Yet this influx, and the turbulent times that followed, were also characterized by remarkable cultural and artistic creativity. From shells to glass to today's digital images, the significance of beadwork in all its forms endures.

#### **Origins**

In the 15th century, the ancestors of today's Iroquois lived in villages situated mainly in present-day New York State, Ontario and Quebec. Each village contained a series of longhouses inhabited by families of the same clan, related through the female line. These early Iroquois prized certain natural materials, such as white shell, quartz crystal and copper, associating their colors and reflective qualities with the powers of life, enlightenment and wisdom.

#### **Newcomers**

In the early 17th century, Europeans established colonies near Iroquois villages – the French in eastern Canada, and the Dutch and English in present-day New York State. The Iroquois, through their crucial role in the early fur trade, gained access to iron axes, copper kettles, cloth, glass beads and steel needles. They were very selective when trading for these new European goods. Glass beads, brilliant and translucent, were quickly integrated into Iroquois belief systems

and became a staple in gift exchanges linked to alliances and treaties.

#### **"The Dark Time"**

During the 17th and 18th centuries, epidemic diseases introduced by Europeans ravaged Iroquois communities, drastically reducing populations and creating great social and political instability. These terrible losses were aggravated by constant warfare with other Native nations and with European powers. Whole communities were forced to relocate, as was the case with the Tuscarora, an Iroquois group who had been living in North Carolina. They fled to the north and were welcomed into the League of the Iroquois in about 1723.

#### **New Strategies for Survival**

By the close of the 18th century the Iroquois had lost control over most of their lands, and the continual encroachment of European settlers threatened even their small-scale farming and hunting activities. During these desperate years the Iroquois began to reorder the fragments of their world: from these efforts emerged new strategies to ensure their survival. One of the most important was the sale of beadwork and baskets as a means to earn cash income.

### CREATING

Many Iroquois describe beadwork as a positive force that "keeps people going" during hard times. Traditionally, women family members and friends gathered in each other's homes to make beadwork. Iroquois artists working today explain that, as children, they learned much more than how to sew as they watched and listened to elder beadworkers. Even if too young to join the sewing circle, children were assigned other tasks, such as sorting beads, picking stray beads off the floor, and preparing snacks and tea. Beadworkers recall their grandmothers talking about how families lived long ago. The process of making beadwork, and beadwork itself, evoke memories and

stories that connect the Iroquois to their ancestors and to a better understanding of their shared way of life.

### Beadwork Styles of Today

One of the most satisfying challenges for today's beadwork artists is to develop a distinctive individual style while still working within the historic Iroquois beadwork tradition. They do this in part by drawing on knowledge inherited from their

boarding schools. Though missionaries assumed they were conveying completely new concepts, the ease with which Iroquois women made the transition to beads, velvet and paper patterns suggests otherwise.

In the course of researching museum collections to prepare this exhibition, the curatorial team identified five distinctive early styles of Iroquois beadwork. Museum records suggest that



George Barker, *Tuscarora women selling beadwork at Luna Island, Niagara Falls, 1865*. Albumen print stereograph. Photograph courtesy of the George Eastman House

families. Active artists are also constantly looking at the work of community members and other Native peoples at festivals, pow-wows and art shows. They are inspired too by beadwork displayed in books and museums.

Color choice, and the ability to combine colors in visually pleasing ways, are key expressions of personal style, as are technical skills and design. An artist's mastery of various techniques, and tendency to use one technique rather than another will give the finished work a specific look: smoother or bumpier, flat or more three-dimensional. The most successful artists are those with the ability to create "flow" between all design elements.

### Early Beadwork Styles

Iroquois women were experts in the production of hide garments long before the arrival of Europeans, and they quickly mastered the techniques used in Euro-North American needlework. No doubt they first derived patterns and methods by taking apart objects that were traded or given to them. Many Iroquois women were also taught needlework in mission and

some of these were made in particular communities, though it is likely that through intermarriage and the sharing of ideas, several styles were being produced simultaneously in all Iroquois communities. More research is needed to date these styles firmly, and to establish if they are linked to specific families, communities or regional traditions.

### Exchanging and Inventing

During the early 1800s, as Iroquois peoples were facing the relentless expropriation of their lands and the effects of government assimilation policies, they developed the sale of beaded souvenirs into a veritable cottage industry. They sold standard items of Native apparel such as moccasins and pouches, but also invented a host of remarkable new objects that exploited Victorian taste for novelty and the exotic. The term "Victorian" refers to people, things and events that date to the reign of Britain's Queen Victoria (1837-1901).

To market beadwork successfully, Iroquois women had to understand Victorian consumers, and particularly the new needs and demands that arose during the industrial revolution with the

great increase in affordable mass-produced items. Beaded watch pockets, whisk-broom holders, parlour ornaments and pouches satisfied the Victorian woman's desire to create order and beauty in her home, while the sale of these items helped Iroquois women support their families.

### MARKETING

The Iroquois had been giving away and trading beautifully crafted items to curious European visitors since the late-16th century. In the mid-19th century, however, as their economic condition worsened, they turned to the large-scale production and sale of beaded souvenirs.

By the 1840s, scheduled rail and steamship services, tourist hotels and resorts, guidebooks and organized tours had emerged at picturesque sites throughout the Northeast. The growth of tourism brought with it a regular seasonal clientele eager to acquire mementos of their travels. With great entrepreneurial energy, Iroquois beadworkers and their families went door to door, sold at train stations and markets, set up booths in their communities and traveled to tourist resorts, especially Niagara Falls.

### Travelling and Performing

Iroquois peoples have a long history of travelling and performing. Archaeological evidence shows that before the arrival of Europeans they maintained far-reaching trade networks throughout the Northeast, and during the fur-trade years they traversed the continent. The Iroquois continued these practices in the mid-19th century as vendors of beadwork and other products. At the same time Iroquois actors traveled overseas to stage performances before royalty and at public exhibitions. They took beadwork along as richly ornamented show costumes and as souvenirs for sale.

Victorian tourists were enthusiastic consumers of Iroquois performances and beadwork. Eager to escape the conditions of urban industrial life, they sought out experiences that romanticized the natural world and the place of Native people in it. Capitalizing on these expectations, astute

Iroquois performers invented fictitious characters- Indian warriors, chiefs and princesses- playing to the desire of their audiences to view "authentic Indians".

### Selling from Home

The Iroquois sold beadwork directly in their communities and at nearby tourist resorts, the most notable being Niagara Falls. In Kahnawake, beadwork vendors were well established by the mid-19th century. Both rail and ferry service to the island of Montreal channeled travelers through the community. Moreover, no visit to Montreal was considered complete without a thrilling river boat trip over the nearby Lachine rapids featuring a Mohawk pilot. Beadwork souvenirs of the adventure were a must.

In recognition of their loyalty during the American Revolution, the Tuscarora secured the right to sell beadwork at the major tourist resort of Niagara Falls. This right continues to be honored today. Tuscarora beadworkers compete in a lottery to have access to prime selling locations. Because of this favored status, the Tuscarora have also acted as middlemen in the sale of beadwork made by other Iroquois nations from the early 1800s to the present day.

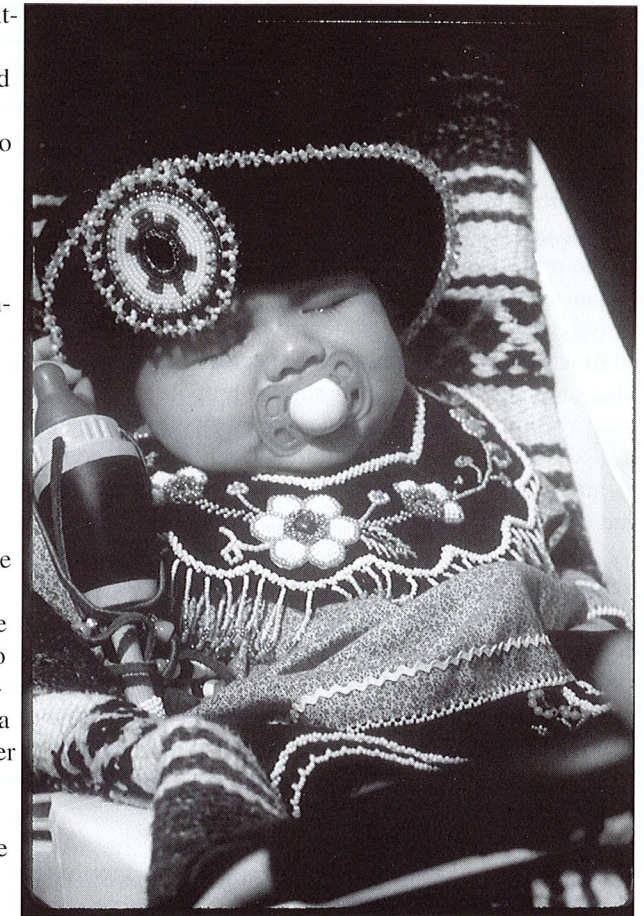
### Travelling to Sell

Months of advance work went into producing enough beaded items to supply the tourist market. Beadworkers today recall times when the entire household was kept busy cutting fabric, stuffing pincushions with sawdust and beading fringes. Some individuals became middlemen, travelling throughout North America and abroad with baskets and trunks brimming with beaded souvenirs. Regional, national, and international fairs were particularly good marketing ventures.

Since 1794, The Jay Treaty has guaranteed free passage of Native peoples and their personal goods between Canada and the United States. However, it was not until 1873, in response to a petition from Iroquois in Canada to the U.S. government, that the beadwork they produced for sale was allowed to cross the international border free of duty. Through their travels, both local and international, Iroquois vendors gained considerable experience of the world.

### Changing Beadwork Markets

By the early 20th century, the heyday of selling beadwork was over. New tourism



Margaret Brayley wearing a beaded outfit made by her mother, Jenelle. Photography: Denise Woods

patterns, an influx of imported mass-produced souvenirs and changes in styles of dress and interior decoration led to a rapid decline in the market. Moreover, consumers were swayed by the now-outdated view that Native arts influenced by western styles were somehow less "authentic".

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, governments in Canada and the United States funded special cultural and economic projects to encourage the survival of Native arts. Organizers in the U.S. instructed participants to emulate an early beadwork style documented by Louis H. Morgan in about 1850 with the collaboration of Seneca consultant Ely S. Parker. Morgan, a lawyer and pioneering anthropologist in Rochester, New York, published the first detailed studies of Iroquois political systems and material culture. The beadwork style he documented is still used today for Iroquois clothing worn on social and ceremonial occasions.

#### Selling Beadwork Today

Iroquois beadworkers are currently enjoying an increased demand for their work. Today beadwork is sold to museums and collectors, at art festivals and pow-wows, in gift shops, through catalogues, on the internet and by special commission. The recent growth in tourism in some Iroquois communities has brought new guests who often leave carrying beautifully beaded souvenirs.

The expansion of the pow-wow circuit is an important recent development in marketing. Pow-wows are Native-organized festivals featuring colorful dance and drumming competitions, and the display and sale of beadwork, baskets, jewelry and other artwork. At the most elaborate pow-wows, prizes for top dancers, musicians and artisans encourage strong artist participation and can draw huge audiences of Native and non-Native people. Beadwork customers range from Native dancers who commission pieces for their regalia to visitors who are at the pow-wow to enjoy the atmosphere.

#### CONTINUING

Through their art, Iroquois beadworkers pass on to the next generation insights about how the world works. The Iroquois worldview- expressed through the medium of quillwork in the 1600s, wampum belts in the 1700s, raised beadwork in the 1800s, and even pixellated computer images in the 1990s- has retained its integrity in the face of many challenges and remains strong today.

The value placed on beadwork is especially evident in the use of beadwork clothing as a way of expressing Iroquois identity. At the turn of the century Iroquois who wore traditional clothing were accused of "returning to the blanket", reverting to an outdated way of life. In contrast, wearing beaded garments today is understood as a sign of strength and confidence.



"Thinking Caps," an installation by Shelley Niro, 1999. Photography: Nancy Parisi

#### Beadwork at Home

Beadwork remains a prominent feature of the traditional clothing style worn by Iroquois at social and ceremonial gatherings in longhouses. This style of dress is also seen more and more at other functions, such as school ceremonies, weddings and various community gatherings. Moreover, the raised beadwork style popular in Victorian times is currently making a comeback. Some people sew their own clothes, but beadwork specialists are often commissioned to produce items of exceptional quality and unique appearance.

Many Iroquois families continue to maintain the values of a child-centered society. Nowhere is this more evident than at a gathering like the 150-year old Tuscarora Nation Picnic. It provides an opportunity for parents to show off the most important persons in their communities, the children. The adornment of newborns and toddlers with elaborate beadwork garments honors their arrival and place in the world.

#### Beadwork Lecture and Panel Discussion Series

All events will take place at the Center for the Arts, State University of New York at Buffalo unless otherwise noted.

##### Sunday, October 22 2-4 p.m.

Panel Discussion--*Seeing the Iroquois Past and Present Through Beads*

Presenters: Dr. Jolene Rickard, Asst. Professor of Art and Art History SUNY Buffalo; Kate Koperski and local Iroquois beadwork artists  
Castellani Art Museum

##### Monday, October 23 4-6 p.m.

Lecture--*Creating and Exchanging: Iroquois Beadwork During the Victorian Era*

Dr. Ruth Phillips, Director Museum of Anthropology, British Columbia

##### Friday, November 17 (Times to be announced)

Lecture--*Reimagining Iroquoia: Negotiating Peace, Power and Righteousness in the 21st Century*

Dr. Taiiike Alfred, Director Indigenous Governance Program, University of Victoria, British Columbia

##### Saturday, November 18 (Times to be announced)

Panel Discussion--*Indigenous Representation and the Museum*

Presenters: Dr. Sandra Olsen, Castellani Art Museum; Dr. Gerald McMaster, National Museum of the American Indian, New York City; Dr. Trudy Nicks, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto; Moira McCaffrey, McCord Museum, Montreal

#### Beadwork and Diplomacy

Since the time of first contact with Europeans, Iroquois beadwork has played a significant role in the defense of cultural, spiritual and treaty rights. During the 19th century, when most Euro-North Americans were convinced that Native people were a rapidly "vanishing" race, wearing beadwork was a strategy that made the Iroquois politically visible. In Washington D.C., Ottawa and worldwide, beadwork is worn as a proud assertion of cultural difference based on the distinct Iroquois worldview.

The importance of beads, particularly wampum, was established in the teachings of the Great Law of Peace. Wampum is used to console the grieving, raise new leaders and confirm agreements. Beadworkers today continue the ancient tradition of making designs to symbolically mark the transfer of knowledge, power and respect. As in past centuries, they wear beaded clothing and present gifts of beadwork at official meetings and diplomatic negotiations with representatives of other nations.

#### Reflecting on Beadwork

Using media such as painting, photography, installation and computer technology, contemporary artists extend the visual tradition embodied in beadwork, while at the same time exploring the history and significance of beadwork within their communities. The work of these artists, though expressed in new formats and materials, is a fundamental part of ongoing Iroquois beadwork traditions.

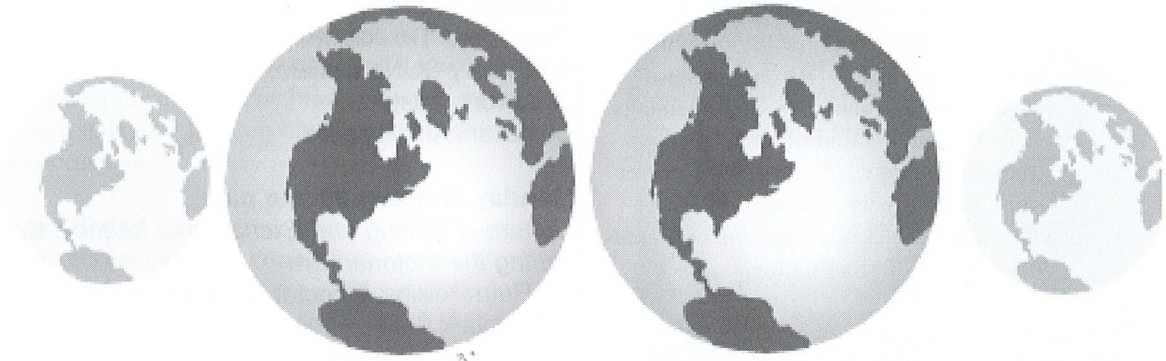
Three such contemporary artists are Shelley Niro (Mohawk), Jolene Rickard (Tuscarora) and Jeffery M. Thomas (Onondaga). They draw on oral history, community traditions, written documents, historical photographs, museum collections and their own experiences to examine the legacy of beadwork. Their art also helps build bridges between different cultural and artistic perspectives.

One version of the creation story states that "this world began from a dream". In the Iroquois universe all modes of expression- a wampum belt, glass beads on a velvet pincushion, an entertainer's vibrant garments, a photographic installation- continue to fulfill and enhance that first dream.

*Across Borders: Beadwork in Iroquois Life* is organized and circulated by the McCord Museum of Canadian History, Montreal, Quebec and the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, NY in collaboration with the Kanien'kehaka Raotitiohkwa Cultural Center, Kahnawake, Tuscarora Nation community beadworkers within New York State, and the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

The exhibition is made possible through generous support from Heritage Canada, Canada Council for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Rockefeller Foundation, John Bead Corp. Ltd. and Le Chateau.

## A Wide Selection of Unique Handmade Items Gathered from Around the Globe: Carved Mexican Wood Figures Russian Folkarts



Original Art Jewelry Textiles Books Boxes  
Toys and more!

### FEATURING Beadwork by Local Iroquois Artists in Museum Shop

A variety of beaded items—including jewelry, change purses, picture frames and boxes—are now available in a wide price range. Artists will also take orders for specially commissioned works.



Four Seasons Box, Sam Thomas

## Across Borders: Beadwork in Iroquois Life

Nearly 500 people attended the opening reception for *Across Borders: Beadwork in Iroquois Life*. The event included performances by the Winds of Change, a Native women's drumming group, and the Tuscarora School Singers and Dancers. Guests were treated to traditional Iroquois foods including corn soup, fry bread, strawberry juice and sassafras tea. Photography: Nancy Parisi



Crowd enjoys Winds of Change singers.



Museum volunteer Shirley Winters helps to serve traditional foods.



Jay Clause and his wife Teresa prepared sassafras tea for reception guests.



Tuscarora School Singers and Dancers.

**The Lewiston-Porter High School  
&  
Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University  
Empire State Partnership Program (ESP)**

**Public Events Schedule  
for 2000 – 2001**

**A Conversation with Thomas Jefferson  
Thursday, Sept. 28, 2000, 6 PM**

A public presentation by Bill Barker, professional re-enactor of Thomas Jefferson from the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

**The Mock Trial of Abigail Williams  
Thursday, Nov. 16, 2000, 7 PM**

A public presentation of the Mock Trial of Abigail Williams, chief accuser of the Salem Witch Trials – a theatrical and educational event based on Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*.

**An Evening with Harriet Tubman  
Thursday, Nov. 30, 2000, 6 PM**

A public presentation by Almeta Whitis, who portrays Harriet Tubman through Young Audiences of Rochester. Event will include other aspects of African-American culture and history.

**Shakespeare Tonight!  
Thursday, Feb. 15, 2001, 7 PM**

The presentation of selected scenes from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *Romeo & Juliet* by Lewiston-Porter students and professional actors.

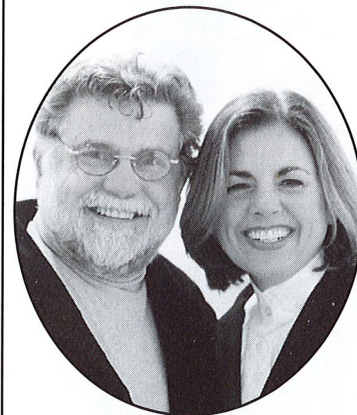
**The Writing on the Wall and ESP  
Year-in-Review Exhibition opening  
Sunday, May 20, 2001, 2 PM**

The exhibition of student writing and artwork from the ESP Writing on the Wall project, and "Year-in-Review" exhibits on other ESP activities. At the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University.

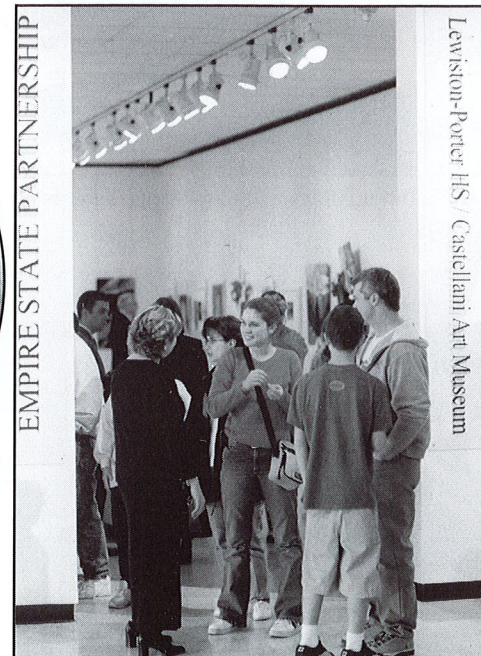
**Highlights and Happenings from 99-00**



Lewiston-Porter High School Students in the Mock Trial: November 9, 1999. Photography: Nancy Parisi



Visiting artist, Terri Katz Kasimov and ESP School Coordinator Stan Panetski at the ESP opening on May 12, 2000



Lewiston-Porter teachers, students and community members at the ESP opening on May 12, 2000

All events take place in the Lewiston-Porter High School auditorium unless otherwise noted. For more information on any of these ESP events, please contact Eric Jackson-Forsberg, Education Coordinator, Castellani Art Museum, at 286-8286. Our ESP program was one of four such partnerships selected (out of nearly 60 statewide) for the PBS documentary PARTnership.

**BECOME A MUSEUM MEMBER!**

**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP**

Membership is valid for one year. All contributions are tax deductible according to the law. Please make checks payable and send to: Castellani Art Museum, Niagara University, N.Y. 14109

Name and address as you wish membership listed for the record: Mr. Mrs. Ms. Miss

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ St. \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Student I.D. # \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to support the Museum in the category checked below:

- Sr. Citizen/Student/ Artist (circle one) \$ 12.00
- Sr. Citizen Couple 20.00
- Individual 25.00
- Family 35.00
- Contributor 100.00
- Patron 300.00
- Benefactor 500.00

- Life Member 1,000.00
  - Life Fellow 5,000.00
- (one time per individual)

- New Member  Renew
  - I am interested in the volunteer/docent program
  - I/we prefer not to be listed in Museum publications
  - I am interested in Corporate Membership
- Niagara University faculty/staff/alumni/student (please circle one)



Visiting artist Lillian Mendez with her work at the ESP opening on May 21, 2000.

**VOLUNTEERS**

We are seeking volunteers for the museum and gift shop. For more information, please call Anne LaBarbera, Coordinator of Volunteers, at 286-8291.

**Become a member of the Castellani Art Museum**

- You will receive:**
- a free subscription to newsletter**
- a special discount at the Museum shop(15%OFF)**
- personal invitations to special events, opening receptions**
- discounts for educational programs**
- and more!**

**Please fill out this application form and mail it in today!**