

Made of Thunder, Made of Glass II

Continuing Traditions in Northeastern Indian Beadwork

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CASTELLANI
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OF NIAGARA UNIVERSITY



C O N T E N T S

Foreword by Gerry Biron	1
Foreword by Edward Millar	2
About the Artist	3
Beadwork.....	4
Murals	5
Rhonda Besaw, <i>Abenanki</i>	6
Charlene (Char) Francis, <i>Penobscot</i>	7
Naomi Smith, <i>Chippewas of Nawash</i>	8
Niio Perkins, <i>Akwesasne Mohawk, Bear Clan</i>	9
Towanna Miller, <i>Kahnawake Mohawk</i>	10
Barbara Little Bear Delisle, <i>Kahnawake Mohawk</i>	10
Yvonne Thomas, <i>Kanhontonkwaw (It Opens the Door)</i> <i>Seneca, Snipe Clan</i>	11
Karen Ann Hoffman, <i>Oneyote^a`ka</i> <i>(Oneida Nation of Wisconsin), Turtle Clan</i>	12
Jacqueline Clause-Bazinet, <i>Mohawk, Bear Clan</i>	13
Mary Annette Clause, <i>Cayuga/Tuscarora, Bear Clan</i>	14
Marlene Printup, <i>Cayuga, Bear Clan</i>	15
Dorene Rickard, <i>Tuscarora, Beaver Clan</i>	16
Bryan Printup, <i>Tuscarora, Beaver Clan</i>	17
Grant Wade Jonathan, <i>Tuscarora, Bear Clan</i>	18
Rosemary Rickard Hill, <i>Tuscarora, Beaver Clan</i>	19
Dorothy (Dolly) Printup-Winden, <i>Tuscarora, Deer Clan</i>	20

Foreword

Gerry Biron
Saxtons River, Vermont

A long neglected and misunderstood area of American Indian art has been the historic beadwork produced by the First Nations of the Northeast Woodlands. Beginning in the early 1800s, Native beadworkers created a new art form: delicate, intricately beaded hats, purses, and other fanciful objects, sometimes called “whimsies,” that were made to be sold as souvenirs. This practice was not merely a response to the exotic needs of well-to-do travelers and Victorian era patrons as it also represented a stratagem of subsistence, cultural resistance and continuance.

Historically, beadwork has been described as a kindred undertaking that was performed when family members gathered. As they worked in a communal setting, Native beadworkers thoughtfully wove stories into their designs, which told of what it meant to be Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) or Wabanaki.

In 2006, in an effort to raise public awareness about this, I produced the original *Made of Thunder, Made of Glass: American Indian Beadwork of the Northeast* exhibit which travelled to four museums. It featured a world class collection of antique beadwork that was displayed in conjunction with a series of portraits I painted from old photographs, of people from the Indian Nations who created the beadwork in the exhibit.

When the *Made of Thunder* exhibit came to an end in the summer of 2009, I began planning for a complementary exhibit – a series of portraits of present-day Native beadworkers to showcase them and their artistry. As today’s culture bearers of their respective Nations, the creators of this beadwork have the responsibility for cultural preservation and to promote and protect Native arts. They are the people best suited to tell this story. It’s a Native perspective that adds to our understanding of the material and how the beadwork affects them as artists and as a community. This latest group of portraits was designed with the intention of deepening our understanding about the continuing traditions

in Northeast Woodland beadwork. I was excited that the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University would be displaying it in 2016. One of the highlights of the exhibit is a selection of contemporary beadwork from the artists whose portraits will be on display. These artists are from the same Nations that created the antique pieces. The exhibit is a fusion of fine art and fine Native craft and the project underscores the harmony between the artists, nature, their inspiration and their artwork.

It’s important to know that many contemporary Northeast Woodland artists are not reviving or reintroducing an ancient art form; rather, several communities are part of the vital continuance of an unbroken tradition. On the surface, these pieces are the canvas upon which artists display their technical skills and artistic vision, but below the surface, the power inherent in a beautiful object is a central feature of life. Beadwork continues to be a language through which artists express their deepest beliefs about themselves, their Nations and the universe. We may never know the full extent of the meanings contained in the historic pieces, but embedded within the designs are stories of a people told in symbols and motifs that reflect a sacred relationship with the natural world. Many of the old stories are lost now, but the beadwork survives and the traditions live on, testifying to the inventiveness and sense of beauty of an exceptional and laudable people.

Foreword

Edward Millar
Curator of Folk Arts, Castellani Art Museum

When we hear the word “tradition,” we often make the assumption that we are discussing something that is singularly old: of something that happened then, and is somewhat ‘fixed’ or ‘static.’ However, this is only one part of the story: traditions also happen now, and are ‘boundless’ and ‘fluid.’ Traditions also ‘face-forward’ through the desire and intention to educate and pass on the techniques, symbols, and forms to future generations.

Traditional arts, such as Native beadwork, remain meaningful as a medium of expression in this multi-layered nature: of what it was, what it is, and what it can be. Through each stitch and creation, the contemporary beadworker engages in a present conversation with the past, mindful of the future: preserving, continuing, and influencing the tradition.

Made of Thunder, Made of Glass II: Continuing Traditions in Northeastern Indian Beadwork highlights this understanding of beadwork: as a “continuing tradition” embedded in the past, present, and future of each artist and community.

Pairing historic and contemporary works encourages viewers to engage with each work beyond the categories or organizations that are constructed to explain and label them. While each piece of beadwork may fit or be organized into certain scholarly categories and types according to different criteria, it is also important to understand and engage with each piece as meaningful art forms created by an individual. An individual with unique life experiences, motivations, meanings, and preferences that are reflected in their beadwork. Portraits by Gerry Biron of the featured artists encourage this level of understanding and engagement: to recognize and acknowledge the individuals who continue to practice, shape, and bear this tradition.

About the Artist – Gerry Biron

Gerry Biron's career as a fine artist spans almost five decades and during that time, he's exhibited his work in hundreds of shows nationwide and won numerous "First Place" and "Best of Show" awards for his portraits of Native people. His interest in the Indians of the Northeast stems in part from his ancestry. His matrilineal grandmother, Clarissa Basque, was a Mi'kmaq from Nova Scotia. Though she died before he was born, her influence on his life has been profound, and it continues to shape and direct the nature of his work.

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During his adolescent years, Gerry's interest in art was spurred by his uncle, Lorenzo deNevers, a successful portrait and landscape painter who studied at L'Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, at the turn of the twentieth century. Gerry apprenticed with him for several years and it was from him that he developed his love for portraiture. "He instilled in me the importance of striving for technical excellence in the execution of my work, the awareness that it be inspired by spirit and 'if you were lucky,' he said, it would move the viewer to respond emotionally."

Following a four-year tour of duty in the military, Gerry earned a degree in fine arts and continued

his studies in portraiture in the studio of Robert Ducharme. After working for a year as a commercial artist, Gerry returned to school and attained a degree in electronics which led to a successful 10-year career designing information systems in the emerging field of fiber optic communications.

He left the corporate world in the early 1980s and moved to Vermont, where he could devote himself full time to his artwork and a critical examination of the exquisite beadwork that was created by the Indian Nations from the Northeast.

Gerry has been researching Northeast Woodland beaded bags since the mid-1980s, and has collected this work for over twenty-five years and spent ten years developing a series of portraits of people from the tribes who created it. From the spring of 2006 until the summer of 2009, his work and collection of beadwork was on tour as the *Made of Thunder, Made of Glass: American Indian Beadwork of the Northeast* exhibit, including authoring and producing the exhibit catalog.

Gerry is a frequent lecturer on the topic of Northeast Woodland beadwork through the New Hampshire Humanities Council.

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Beadwork

Abenaki Beadwork

The Abenaki are a Northeastern Algonquian people who are a member of the Wabanaki Confederacy (which includes the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Maliseet, Mi'kmaq and Abenaki).

The Abenaki are composed of two main branches, the eastern Abenaki and the western Abenaki. The Eastern Abenaki reside in Maine and the Western Abenaki reside in New Hampshire, Vermont, and Southern Quebec. The Abenaki spoke related dialects of the Algonquian language, and they call themselves Wobanakiak, which means "Dawnland people, Easterners."

The Eastern and Western Abenaki shared many cultural similarities, including beadwork designs. The most common design of all was the double curve pattern, which could range from the simple to the ornate. Embellishments on the basic double curve pattern represented the spiritual, such as medicine plants, and the political; the relationships between the people and their leaders, and unity between bands. Many beadwork artists of today blend traditional and contemporary designs. By incorporating new symbolism in their work, Abenaki beadwork continues as a meaningful and relevant form of cultural expression in today's world.

- Rhonda Besaw, *Canadian Métis/Abenaki beadwork artist, 2015*

Tuscarora Beadwork

The Tuscarora are one of the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy or Haudenosaunee (People of the Long House). Tuscarora beadwork was made by beadworkers who lived on the Tuscarora Nation near Lewiston, NY, and who sold their beadwork to non-Indian tourists who visited Niagara Falls. Victorian tourists called the art form "whimsies" because of their whimsical appearance. Today, it is known as "souvenir art." Many historic pieces of Tuscarora beadwork have beaded words, dates, and sentiments such as "From Niagara Falls," "Niagara Falls," "Remember Me," "Think of Me," "Forget me Not," etc. The style and techniques used in this art form are known as Tuscarora Raised Beadwork. It is inappropriate to characterize these beaded treasures as Niagara beadwork, Niagara style, or beadwork made in the Niagara tradition. These terms are misleading, promote inaccurate attribution, and disregard the Tuscarora uniqueness of each crafted piece.

- Grant Wade Jonathan, *Tuscarora beadwork artist, 2014*

Raised Beadwork and 19th Century Beadwork

Raised beadwork is a type of stitch that has more beads on the thread than necessary to cover a given distance. This results in a string of beads, when sewn down onto a base fabric, forming an arch above the surface of the fabric that gives it a three-dimensional effect. Some beadworkers also achieve this by beading stitches over another string of beads that was first sewn down onto a fabric: overlaying rows of beads over one another. Raised beadwork is a technique of beading generally associated with the Tuscarora and the Mohawk, with the earliest examples appearing in pieces from the mid-19th century.

Interactions between 19th-century Wabanaki and Iroquois artisans with Euro-Americans prompted artistic changes in their designs, including innovations in the Native arts that appealed to Victorian sensibilities. Native imaginations were stimulated by the emerging tourist economy that developed around Niagara Falls and other tourist destinations in the Northeast. Natives living nearest the Falls, such as the Tuscarora and the Seneca, developed a wide range of items, referred to by the Victorian populace as "whimsies," to sell to the tourists—from beaded picture frames and watch pockets to pincushions and boots.

- Gerry Biron

Murals

The mural installations designed and installed by Erwin Printup welcome and invite visitors to immerse themselves in the traditional motifs, designs, and beliefs of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) and Wabanaki. This welcome mural combines two traditional Haudenosaunee stories, the Creation Story and the Grapevine Legend (Tuscarora).

Creation Story

Three semi-circles form a sky-dome design, each depicting the sky-world that encompasses all of creation and its inhabitants. Sky woman, whose fall through a hole in the sky-world led to the peopling and creation of Turtle Island (North America), is represented as a flower in full bloom. The flower roots emerge and bridge the sky-world with creation, speaking to the roots of tradition in past, present, and future peoples. The seven circles which unite and support the earth holding the flower draw from the Great Law of the

Haudenosaunee, encouraging visitors to reflect and be mindful of the interest of the seven generations to follow.

Grapevine Legend

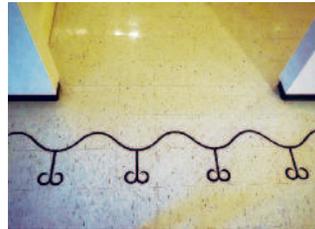
The grapevine legend, depicted by the two figures united by the yet-unbroken vine over a raging river current, evokes the traditional story of the separation of the Tuscarora from the other Five Nations of the Iroquois. Geometric designs underneath the scene draw on early patterns on Iroquois pottery to represent a shared foundation in Mother Earth.



Erwin Printup, Welcome Mural: *Creation Story and Grapevine Legend*, 2016

“Double Scroll” (Fiddlehead)

This entryway design merges the flowing river currents of the Grapevine mural, with the double curve or double scroll design of the fiddlehead fern, found throughout the beadwork of the Northeastern Woodland nations. It reminds us of the common experiences and connection to nature we all share, and the diverse meanings drawn from them.



Erwin Printup, Welcome Mural: *Fiddleheads*, 2016

The Great Turtle

The Great Turtle mural concludes the Sky woman creation story in the welcome mural, providing the final rest and respite from her descent through the sky domes. On its back, the Aienwatha design represents a global message of unity and peace, in the model of the Haudenosaunee, throughout Turtle Island (North America) and Mother Earth.



Erwin Printup, *The Great Turtle*, 2016

Erwin Printup is a Cayuga, Bear Clan artist from Tuscarora Nation. His works interpret traditional legends, stories, and symbols through Haudenosaunee fine arts and are currently displayed in the Tuscarora exhibit at the New York Power Authority Niagara Power Project Power Vista and throughout the Tuscarora Nation House. Erwin Printup was also the illustrator for Chief Jake Swamp’s book, Giving Thanks: A Native American Good Morning Message.

“When I sit down to bead, I invite my grandmothers to join me; those who crossed over long ago. Just as my ancestors were inspired, many of my colors and designs come from dreams and reflection.”

– Rhonda Besaw

Rhonda Besaw

Abenanki



Rhonda Besaw is an Abenaki beadwork artist, active in the preservation and continuation of the Wabanaki beadwork tradition. Rhonda began to bead in 1996 after encouragement from a Mi'kmaq woman who taught her classic stitches and techniques, but remains largely self-taught, through trial-and-error. After viewing historic pieces in exhibitions and with encouragement from Gerry Biron and Richard Greene, her recent work often incorporates and involves traditional motifs, forms, and patterns found on historic Wabanaki pieces. Inspiration for her pieces, draw on nature and a deep spirituality, intent on preserving and bearing the beadwork legacy of her ancestors for future generations.

Rhonda Besaw, Métis/Abenaki, Gerry Biron, 2010, 29x39, colored and graphite pencils, acrylic, watercolor and ink



Rhonda Besaw, Canadian Métis/Abenaki, *Rebirth*, 2011, Wool, silk ribbon, glass seed beads, sequins, cotton Whitefield, New Hampshire

“The design for this purse came to me in a dream during a time of mourning for the passing of a loved one. This purse symbolizes the Milky Way, a place where our ancestors travel to be reborn. On the right side of the purse, you can see a line of beads representing the ancestors traveling to the center of purple white light.” -Rhonda Besaw



Rhonda Besaw, Canadian Métis/Abenaki, *Peaked Cap*, 2015, wool, silk, ribbon, glass seed beads, antique steel beads, cotton Whitefield, New Hampshire

Rhonda was inspired in this cap by a portrait Gerry did of his great grandmother, Clarissa Basque Tellier, a Mi'kmaq woman. The design is based off a historic Mi'kmaq peaked cap at the British Museum, and a contemporary medicinal plant, juniper, flanked by small white birds which carry the spirit of Clarissa and all our ancestors.



Rhonda Besaw, Canadian Métis/Abenaki, *Spider Peaked Cap*, 2015, wool, silk, ribbon, glass seed beads, antique steel beads, cotton Whitefield, New Hampshire

The garden spider on this peaked cap is modeled after the spider Rhonda encountered on the day she set aside for beading it onto the cap: the spider was found suspended above her patio chair and weaving its way down from the ceiling. After offering tobacco in thanks, Rhonda surveyed and explored the coloring and patterns of the spider, whose web now spreads and is preserved through beadwork.

“The process of doing beadwork is a method of communicating with those around you and the whole process becomes sacred in itself.”

– Char Francis

Charlene (Char) Francis

Penobscot



Charlene (Char) Francis is a Penobscot Nation beadwork artist from the Bear and Fisher clans, who pursues contemporary styles when applying traditional motifs and symbols that enable and facilitate her freedom of expression. Char’s early teachers in beadwork were Christine Reed (Ojibwe) and Mary Gibson (Odawa), and received encouragement from Sally Thielen to participate in National Indian Art Shows, where she won many first place and best of show awards for her beadwork. Her preference for beading using curving motions, rather than straight-line techniques, conveys a sense of movement and texture through her works. Inspirations for her contemporary works often feature traditional motifs, including a family design referred to by her father as “wheat” and herself, as “ash.”

*Char Francis, Penobscot,
Gerry Biron, 2010, 29x39
Colored and graphite pencils,
acrylic, watercolor and ink*

“If beadwork could talk, what would it (the old pieces) tell you? That is the catalyst for me—to think about how these pieces can travel down through time, and what we can learn from them.”

– Naomi Smith

Naomi Smith

Chippewas of Nawash



Naomi Smith, Chippewas of Nawash, Gerry Biron, 2011, 27x38, Colored and graphite pencils, acrylic, watercolor and ink

Naomi Smith is a First Nations artist from the Chippewas of Nawash Reserve in Neyaashiinigmiing, Ontario. Traditional and fine art have been constant mediums of creative expression in Naomi’s life. Awareness and dedication to engaging with her First Nations heritage forged a strong interest in Native American beadwork and historical textiles, spurred on by her mother, Alvera. Although predominantly self-taught, Naomi also studied traditional beadworking techniques from master artists, and has been actively beading for over twenty years. A background in graphic design influences the planning and design of her pieces, contemplating relationships between color and form in each work. Over the last decade, much of her free time has been spent cataloging, restoring, and preserving a wide variety of nineteenth-century Northeastern Woodland beadwork.

Naomi’s work has been displayed at numerous venues across Canada, and was recently commissioned by the Juno Awards to make a beaded medallion, presented to the winner of the 2015 Aboriginal Album of the Year. She also teaches classes and seminars in traditional beadwork and traditional arts at the Jake Thomas Learning Centre and through the Niagara School boards.

In Gerry Biron’s portrait, Naomi is standing before a design of her clan symbol, the sturgeon. Naomi says the *giigonh* (fish) clan settles arguments between the crane and loon clans: they are the wise people who settle problems within the nation.



Naomi Smith, Chippewas of Nawash
Journey of the Strawberry, 2015, Glass beads, paper, velvet, cotton
Erin, Ontario

This four panel strawberry cap represents the ‘life cycle’ of the strawberry and the four seasons, beginning with the first panel featuring the pale, un-ripened strawberries, through to the final panel depicting the fading of the strawberry, as it prepares to return to Mother Earth.



Naomi Smith, Chippewas of Nawash
Ode to Lelia and the Ancestors, 2014
Glass seed beads, cotton velveteen, deer hide, raw silk
Erin, Ontario

“I think it (beadwork) has become more second nature than anything. It has become so natural, and the reaction I get from people is so pleasing, uplifting, and (full) of gratefulness. It’s so positive, so I keep doing it. There is obviously something valuable in there for me; I know it sounds crazy, but sometimes I can’t believe people wear this (my work).”

– Nio Perkins

Nio Perkins

Akwesasne Mohawk, Bear Clan



Nio Perkins, Akwesasne Mohawk, Bear Clan, Gerry Biron, 2011, 29x39, Colored and graphite pencils, acrylic, watercolor and ink

Nioieren or “Nio” is a Mohawk, Bear Clan beadwork artist from Akwesasne, New York. Nio’s earliest memories of beading involved sitting on her mother’s lap, who was a seamstress, and being given pony beads to string and occupy her while she would sew. She learned her first beadwork stitches from her mother, father, and sister-in-law: her father, an ironworker, often brought and gifted beadwork to her mother. Nio draws inspiration for the colors, forms, and motifs from the particular mood, feelings, and sensitivity she feels as she makes each piece. Her work seamlessly blends and reflects a distinct creative style, through the traditional medium of beadwork.

In Gerry Biron’s portrait, Nio is wearing an exquisitely crafted beaded collar that she had made, standing in the silhouette of a bear.



*Nio Perkins, Akwesasne Mohawk, Bear Clan, Baby Bonnet, 2014, Glass beads, cotton, ribbon
Hogansburg, New York*

This four panel strawberry cap represents the ‘life cycle’ of the strawberry and the four seasons, beginning with the first panel featuring the pale, un-ripened strawberries, through to the final panel depicting the fading of the strawberry, as it prepares to return to Mother Earth.



*Nio Perkins, Akwesasne Mohawk, Bear Clan, Hummingbird Purse, 2013, Glass beads, cotton, ultrasuede
Hogansburg, New York*

The light and playful colors of the beads on this purse reflect the hummingbird as “always bringing good news...a small, but powerful and positive bird.”

“Now I combine my love of painting and beadwork together. My paintings are inspired from the stories I heard since childhood of our creation, prophecy, culture and history...If you ask what I have learned on my journey it's that if you're determined enough, focused and have the desire, you can do anything.”

– Towanna Miller

Towanna Miller

Kahnawake Mohawk



Towanna Miller, Kahnawake Mohawk, Gerry Biron, 2011, 29x38, Colored and graphite pencils, acrylic, watercolor and ink

Towanna Miller is a Mohawk traditional and fine artist from Kahnawake Reserve, practicing both beadwork and mixed-media paintings. Towanna refers to her paintings as “Mohawk Whispers”: the content and stylings emerge from her “thoughts, feelings, memories, music, and words...I keep asking myself what it means to be Mohawk—and my next painting whispers it to me.” Her mother, Barbara Little Bear Delisle, began to teach her beadwork around the age of ten, and received encouragement from Joe Geshick, a prominent Ojibwe artist, to also pursue her passion for drawing and painting.

Towanna’s paintings incorporate bright colors with a textured style that combines light and shadow, recently embellishing them with beadwork. Continuing her family tradition, Towanna has been teaching her eldest daughter loom work, ensuring that the skills and tradition carries on for future generations. Her paintings have been exhibited throughout numerous festivals and museums, and along with her mother, represented the Kahnawake Mohawk at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics.

Barbara Little Bear Delisle

Kahnawake Mohawk



Barbara Little Bear Delisle, Kahnawake Mohawk, Gerry Biron, 2010, 29x38, Colored and graphite pencils, acrylic, watercolor and ink

Barbara Little Bear Delisle is a Mohawk beadwork artist from Kahnawake Reserve. Barbara began beading in the 1905s, under the tutelage of her elders, beginning with skills in threading needles for master-beadworkers. She uses patterns and floral designs passed down from her great-great-grandmother Kwaktetiase that are often rendered in luminous, contemporary colors on materials such as satin and dyed leather. Barbara’s work is rooted in the intersection of contemporary style and traditional techniques and spiritual meanings, and enjoys flat beadwork techniques. Her work has been exhibited at the Mitchell Museum of the American Indian, and along with her daughter Towanna Miller, represented the Kahnawake Mohawk at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics.

In Gerry Biron’s portrait, Barbara is standing on the shores of the St. Lawrence River, on the Kahnawake Reserve near her home where six generations of her family have lived.

“I remember my husband saying “Instead of having a written document that can deteriorate and fall apart or vanish, but with our belts, they are there forever and the shells will never deteriorate.” It is important to have these wampum belts because it is our history, and talk about who we are as a people, our customs, and (our) traditions.”

– Yvonne Thomas

Yvonne Thomas

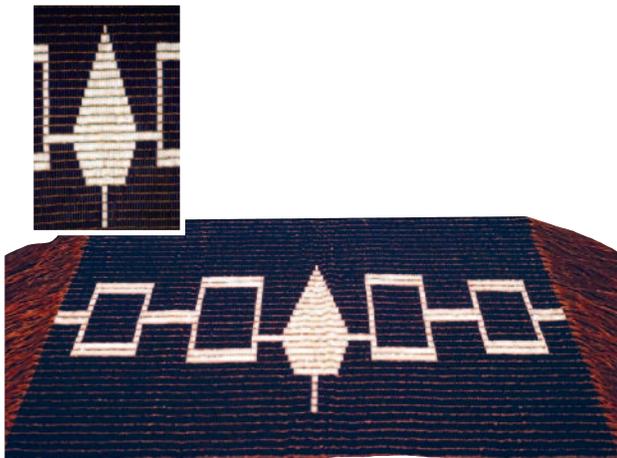
Kanhontonkwaw (It Opens the Door), Seneca, Snipe Clan



Yvonne Thomas, Seneca, Snipe Clan, Gerry Biron, 2011
29x39, Colored and graphite pencils, acrylic, watercolor and ink

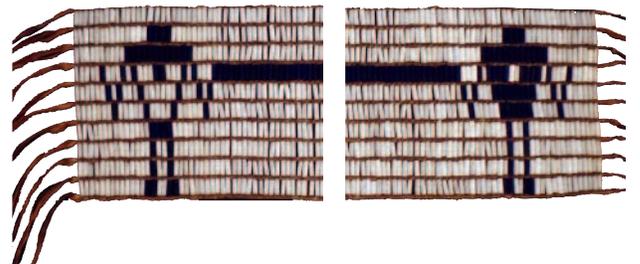
Yvonne Thomas (Kanhontonkwaw) was the closest collaborator to her late husband, celebrated Cayuga Hereditary Chief and culture-bearing elder Jacob Thomas. As the cofounder and executive director of the Jake Thomas Learning Centre, she provides leadership and creative direction in the preservation and education of traditional Rotinonshón:ni customs, knowledge, and arts. Yvonne is an accomplished Native artisan, skilled in making traditional cornhusk dolls, horn rattles, water drums, beadwork, wampum bead making and wampum belts. She is also a traditional counselor and healer, whose passion and knowledge of the Mohawk, Cayuga, Onondaga, and Oneida languages is reflected in the language resources available at the Centre.

In Gerry Biron’s portrait, Yvonne holds one of several Friendship Belts that recorded treaties between the French, Dutch, and English colonists. In the background is a stylistic portrayal of the Evergrowing or Everlasting Tree Belt, also known as the Tree of the Great Peace.



Yvonne Thomas, Kanhontonkwaw (It opens the door), Seneca, Snipe Clan, Aienwatha Belt (Five Nations Territorial Belt), 2015
Glass beads, waxed linen thread
Wilsonville, Ontario

The Aienwatha (or Haienwatha’) Belt, also known as the Five Nations Territorial Belt, is a broad, dark belt which represents the unity of the Five Nations in their laws and loyalty to the Great Peace. Each square and the central white tree of peace represents one of the five nations: from left to right are represented the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga (white tree of peace), Cayuga, and Seneca Nations.



Yvonne Thomas, Kanhontonkwaw (It opens the door), Seneca, Snipe Clan, Friendship Treaty Wampum Belt, 2015, Glass beads, waxed linen thread
Wilsonville, Ontario

This Friendship Treaty Belt records a sequence of treaties made with the Dutch, French, English, and Thirteen Colonies dating to as early as the 1630s. This treaty belt preserves and refers to the legacy and promise of goodwill and peace between the Haudenosaunee and the European settlers.

“...it’s (an) unbreakable link to our past and its suggestion of our future as Iroquois people. Sometimes, when I’m beading, I swear I can hear the old beaders whispering in my ear. Encouraging me to ‘do it right, do it well, and honor our past and future.’”

– Karen Ann Hoffman

Karen Ann Hoffman

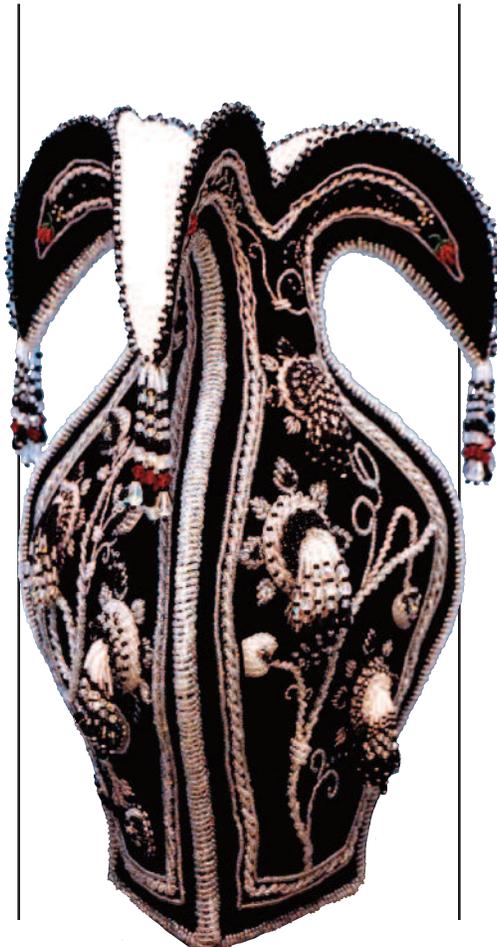
Oneyote^a^ka (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin), Turtle Clan



Karen Ann Hoffman,
Oneida of Wisconsin, Turtle Clan,
Gerry Biron, 2012, 29x36,
Colored and graphite pencils,
acrylic, watercolor and ink

Karen Ann Hoffman is an Oneida, Turtle Clan beadwork artist from the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin (Oneyote^a^ka). Karen notes that raised beadwork was “left behind” by the Oneidas when they were removed from their homeland to Wisconsin, and was not a widespread tradition in the community. Karen’s beadwork sparked after attending a raised beadwork workshop led by Samuel Thomas and Lorna Hill of Niagara Falls, who taught at the Oneida Nation in Wisconsin in the late 1990s. Karen’s beadwork draws on her passion for traditional stories; both in the content and “writing them in beads.”

In Gerry Biron’s portrait, Karen is standing under the Great Bear, the three brothers, and the dog Four Eyes, in the Big Dipper constellation, drawing from the traditional Haudenosaunee story of the Great Bear Hunt. This story, and other seasonal stories, were beaded into a mat, by Karen Ann; preserving and speaking to the interwoven, storytelling traditions.



Karen Ann Hoffman made this in honor of her father, Robert Messner, a flutist and Oneida elder. Throughout the piece Karen interpreted elements of the music scale, and had first seen the image of the piece she would come to make, in a dream.

The title of the piece, “To the Stars”, references the journey the spirit makes on passing into the spirit world.

*Cedar lays still
No life giving breath
The gold and the silver
Both silenced by death
A path made of stars
A walk in the sky
The juice of sweet strawberries
Where we go when we die
Travel well Daddy
Now that you’ve gone
The lessons you taught us
Are beaded up in a song
To the stars...*

- Karen Ann Hoffman

Karen Ann Hoffman, *Oneyote^a^ka* (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin), Turtle Clan
To the Stars, 2015, Jardinière made of velvet, glass beads, gold beads
Stevens Point, Wisconsin

“The Creator has given each of us a purpose in life. Mine is to be here for my children and to express my life and the beauty in it through beadwork and to keep those traditions alive by teaching beadwork to others.”

—Jacqueline Clause-Bazinnet

Jacqueline Clause-Bazinnet

Mohawk, Bear Clan



Jacqueline Clause-Bazinnet, Mohawk, Bear Clan, Gerry Biron, 2014 39 x 29, Colored and graphite pencils, acrylic, watercolor and ink

Jacqueline Clause-Bazinnet is a Mohawk, Bear Clan beadwork artist from the Tuscarora Reservation. Jacqueline has been actively beading for a decade, guided by her mother Mary Annette Clause, and her grandmother “Nan” Marlene Printup: both talented and experienced beadworkers. The family beading tradition continues through Jacqueline, who has also been passing the skill on to her daughters. Jacqueline draws inspiration for her pieces from walks in the woods or floral images found in magazines, or from traditional family patterns.

In the background of Jacqueline’s portrait, Gerry Biron included a large group of red-tailed hawks and bald eagles coming together to form the basic outline of the Aienhwatha belt. The red-tailed hawk in color represents her late brother, whose spirit remains ever present in her life.



Jacqueline Clause-Bazinnet, Mohawk, Bear Clan, *Strawberry Purse*, 2013, Velvet, glass beads

“I feel like I’m painting when I do my work. I like to use the actual colors of nature and blend a variety of them to bring out the true beauty of the flower.”

– Mary Annette Clause

Mary Annette Clause

Cayuga/Tuscarora, Bear Clan



Mary Annette Clause, Cayuga/Tuscarora, Bear Clan, Gerry Biron, 2014, 29 x 36 Colored and graphite pencils, acrylic, watercolor and ink

Annette Clause is a Cayuga/Tuscarora, Bear Clan beadwork artist from the Tuscarora Reservation. Annette comes from a family of beadworkers, including her mother Marlene Printup, grandmother Doris Hudson, and great grandmother Harriet Pembleton. As a child, Annette learned to make daisy chains, rings, and jitterburgs strung with beading wire, accompanying her mother to state and regional fairs with their work. Annette’s earliest teacher was her mother, Marlene, and she further developed her skills through classes at the Tuscarora Indian School. Annette often draws inspiration for her beadwork from nature, particularly those found in the emerging spring: strawberries, trillium, and other flora and fauna.

Beadwork for Annette is also a form of therapy, necessitating precision, concentration and meditation in the act of beading.

In Gerry Biron’s portrait of Annette, she is merging with the essence of the hawk, representing the spirit of her late son. During a memorial service for his funeral, a lone hawk broke from the circle or ‘kettle’ flying overhead and flew upwards out of sight, seen by Annette as the departure of her son’s spirit.



Mary Annette Clause, Cayuga/Tuscarora, Bear Clan, *Purse with Cardinal*, 2015, Glass and metallic beads, velvet, silk Sanborn, New York



Mary Annette Clause, Cayuga/Tuscarora, Bear Clan, *Strawberry Glengarry Hat*, 2014, Velvet, glass seed beads (Charlotte Cut and Toho), Swarovski crystal, silk Sanborn, New York



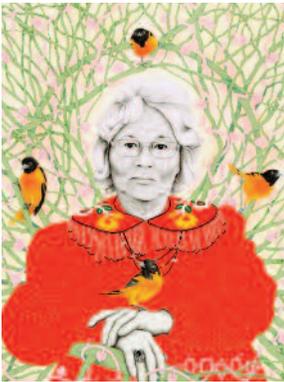
Mary Annette Clause, Cayuga/Tuscarora, Bear Clan, *Hat with Bluebirds*, 2015, Glass and metallic beads, velvet, silk Sanborn, New York

“We put to work our love of flowers and plants that grow from the earth, and birds in our own way on velvet. The domes on the beadwork represent the skies, and the swirls, the water; the roundness and circles are for the sun and the moon. The leaves, trees, beautiful flowers and colorful birds are things that our eyes and sewing behold.”

– Marlene Printup

Marlene Printup

Cayuga, Bear Clan



Marlene Printup, Cayuga, Bear Clan, Gerry Biron, 2014, 29 x 39, Colored and graphite pencils, acrylic, watercolor and ink

Marlene Printup is a Cayuga, Bear Clan beadwork artist from the Tuscarora Reservation. Marlene began to learn beadwork shortly after her marriage to Erwin Printup: from his mother, Doris Hudson, Dolly Printup-Winden’s grandmother Matilda Hill, and other beadworkers in the community. Marlene draws inspiration for her work through her walks in the woods and passion for nature; a passion shared with her children and grandchildren.

The family beadwork traditions continue through her daughter, Mary Annette Clause, Annette’s daughter Jacqueline Beth, and her sons, Barry, Joel, and Erwin. Her work was featured in the Across Borders: Beadwork in Iroquois Life travelling exhibit, and is in numerous museum collections throughout the Northeast and Midwest.

In Gerry Biron’s portrait, Marlene’s connection and passion for nature is reflected in the orioles which surround her, one of her favorite birds along with blue birds, cardinals, and hummingbirds.



Marlene Printup, Cayuga, Bear Clan, *Trillium Picture Frame*, 1996 Glass beads, pearl beads, velvet, board
Lewiston, New York

“The trilliums are the first flowers that come out in the spring...we used to go walk through the woods and they (the woods) would be just white with them, and we’d always put the kids and set them in the trillium and take their picture...they’re just beautiful.” – Marlene Printup

“When I was probably 3 or 4, I used to always be after her (my grandmother’s) beads, which she kept in a big trunk: my grandmother would poke me to stop me!

One day I got real sick, I don’t know what I had, something serious (and) they didn’t think I would live: the doctor said there was nothing more they could do.

My grandmother didn’t know what to do so she got the beads out, and she said I was just barely awake, and I kind of got better when I realized I was in the beads... she thinks that is what got me better, was (finally) playing in those beads.”

– Dorene Rickard

Dorene Rickard

Tuscarora, Beaver Clan



Dorene Rickard, Tuscarora, Beaver Clan, Gerry Biron, 2013, 29 x 39, Colored and graphite pencils, acrylic, watercolor and ink

Dorene Rickard is a Tuscarora, Beaver Clan artist from Tuscarora Reservation. Although largely self-taught, her grandmother was a talented beadworker and her mother a seamstress who actively participated in the cottage industry of Tuscarora souvenir art, sewing sentiments such as “From Niagara Falls” on pieces that would be beaded by others in the community. Through observing her mother and grandmother in those early years Dorene learned some basic stitches, but didn’t actively pursue beadwork until after marrying and her daughters began to become involved in competitions that included traditional dress. She worked with her mother and other women in the community to design and make the beaded motifs and regalia, leading to her being commissioned by other community members as her skill and technique improved.

Dorene attended and learned further techniques through the flat-work and raised beadwork classes at the Tuscarora school in her early 30s, where she would later teach adult beadwork classes. Her work was included in the Across Borders: Beadwork in Iroquois Life traveling exhibition, and has won awards and participated in numerous Native arts competitions including the New York State Fair.



Dorene Rickard, Tuscarora, Beaver Clan, *Glengarry Hat*, 2000 Velvet, cotton, seed beads, glass beads, tag board, ribbon
Lewiston, New York

This glengarry hat was inspired by a historic pattern sent to Dorene Rickard and Rosie Hill by Rick Hill of Six Nations.

“Tuscarora beadwork has always been part of our community. Beadwork is a great storyteller that expresses our people’s relationship to each other; it also speaks to our relationship with nature, other communities, and to our traditions.”

– Bryan Printup

Bryan Printup Tuscarora, Beaver Clan



Bryan Printup, Tuscarora, Beaver Clan, Gerry Biron, 2014, 29 x 39, Colored and graphite pencils, acrylic, watercolor and ink

Bryan Printup is a Tuscarora, Beaver Clan beadwork artist from the Tuscarora Reservation. Bryan began doing beadwork when he was twelve years old, accompanying his mother on the powwow circuit, and selling pieces that he created for ‘pocket cash.’ Bryan’s training in architecture at the University of Notre Dame influences his approach to beadwork, envisioning each piece in regards to proportions, structure, classical design, color, and shapes. Bryan remains dedicated to engaging with the medium and meanings of Tuscarora beadwork, as an expression of Tuscarora identity.

In Gerry Biron’s portrait, Bryan is holding a crown made for his niece, based off an “exaggerated Victorian shape”, and showing both contemporary and historic design features; a contemporary deer design based off Bambi’s profile, and a traditional sky dome design around the base of the crown.



Bryan Printup, Tuscarora, Beaver Clan, *Picture Frames*, 2015, Velvet, calico, seed beads, glass beads, chipboard
Lewiston, New York

The triptych of frames represents the three people responsible for the clans—the clan mother, chief, and sub-chief. Bryan captured this relationship with birds and nature as birds are the carriers of song, and cardinals and blue jays have roles and responsibilities similar to clans. Cardinals use songs to defend their territory, just like a chief defending the Tuscarora territory from encroachment. Blue jays guard their nests and harvest acorns to feed their family, just like what a clan mother does—always keeping an eye out for her clan and tending to their nourishment.

“I learned as I was learning beadwork, on the paternal side of our family, that it was ingrained in our roots. I had some grandparents, aunts, and people who made beadwork; and so I wanted to keep this tradition in the family and learn the skills... that really sparked my interest in continuing the tradition and keeping it alive.”

– Grant Wade Jonathan

Grant Wade Jonathan

Tuscarora, Bear Clan



Grant Wade Jonathan, Tuscarora, Bear Clan, Gerry Biron, 2012, 36 x 29 Colored and graphite pencils, acrylic, watercolor and ink

Grant Wade Jonathan is a Tuscarora, Bear Clan beadwork artist and attorney, currently working for the Indian Program at the United States Environmental Protection Agency. Grant’s mother, Lorraine, taught Grant some basic techniques in beadwork at the age of 18, after attending adult classes led by Dorene Rickard. Following his enrollment in college and subsequent employment, Grant took a break from beading. Following his mother’s passing in 2006, Grant returned home to Tuscarora and further developed his beadwork skills under the guidance of Rosie Hill; both in her advanced beadwork classes and sewing with her in her home. Encouraged by Rosie, Grant has become intensely passionate in collecting, educating, and properly attributing historical Tuscarora beadwork, based upon the oral and documented traditions of the community.

Grant’s passion in collecting historical Tuscarora “souvenir art” or “whimsies” extend to his passion for interpreting and beading new works: all of which bear connection to that legacy and tradition. Through his collecting, creating, and lecturing, Grant aims to preserve and revive old patterns, techniques, and concepts that he may share with his community.



Grant Wade Jonathan, Tuscarora, Bear Clan, *Skarure Uhnahkwehewe* (Tuscarora Moccasins), 2015 Unsmoked commercial deer hide, silk velvet, silk satin, satin bias, poster board (vamps and collars), pellon interfacing, sinew, nylon thread, glass beads Brooklyn, New York (Photograph by Kitty Leaken)



Grant Wade Jonathan, Tuscarora, Bear Clan, *Remember Me*, 2014, Silk velvet, silk, cotton, satin ribbon, glass beads, antique whimsy beads Brooklyn, New York (Photograph by Kitty Leaken)



Grant Wade Jonathan, Tuscarora, Bear Clan, *Emery Strawberry Pincushion*, 2015, Silk velvet, silk satin, pellon interfacing, nylon thread, glass beads, antique whimsy beads, emery sand Brooklyn, New York (Photograph by Kitty Leaken)

The shape and form of this frame is based off a historic Mohawk frame. Grant’s inclusion of owls reflects his interest and belief in owls as messengers and beings of wisdom. The bird pattern which flanks the “Remember Me” sentiment, referring to similar sentiments found on historic Tuscarora beadwork, originates in an old stereoview he had seen.

“The memories of the family time make me feel good to do it...I just love doing it. There are so many parts to it, like a construction of something you are making: putting the beads together, the colors, the flat-work, the raised work, the different sizes, and incorporating it all together to make something is really fascinating to me.”

– Rosie Hill

Rosemary Rickard Hill

Tuscarora, Beaver Clan



Rosemary Rickard Hill, Tuscarora, Beaver Clan, Gerry Biron, 2011, 29 x 36, Colored and graphite pencils, acrylic, watercolor and ink

Rosemary (Rosie) Rickard Hill is a Tuscarora beadwork artist from the Tuscarora Reservation. Rosie learned to do beadwork from her mother, Margaret Rickard and great aunt, Gertrude Chew: by the age of seven, she began to learn flat beadwork, and around the age of ten, raised beadwork. Some of her earliest memories of selling beadwork at Prospect Park with her mother, grandmother and great-aunt involve traversing the then-newly installed Robert Moses Parkway (and its medians) with all of their tables and materials.

Rosie is passionate in preserving, collecting, and interpreting historic Tuscarora patterns and motifs and ensuring knowledge of them remains or re-enters the community. Her beadwork is based on her family’s beading techniques and traditions, and has been exhibited in numerous museums and at the Santa Fe Indian Market.



Rosemary Rickard Hill, Yetikstahwihe (She who knows all about beadwork), Tuscarora, Beaver Clan, *Doily and Pincushion*, 2015
Embossed silk velvet, glass beads, Iroquois trade cloth, satin ribbon
Sanborn, New York

This doily and pincushion are based off a set from the 1800s made for holding elaborate, Victorian hatpins. On the cushion, hummingbirds circle the central ‘Tuscarora/Skarure 2015’ sentiment, which references similar sentiment-styles on historic Tuscarora beadwork. The tulips on the doily refer to the tulips that used to grow at Niagara Falls, where she used to accompany her mother, grandmother, and great-aunt to sell beadwork.



Rosemary Rickard Hill, Yetikstahwihe (She who knows all about beadwork), Tuscarora, Beaver Clan, *Quahog Shell*, 2015
Quahog shell, glass beads, velvet, satin ribbon, Iroquois trade cloth
Sanborn, New York

“The Quahog Shell is a gift from the Creator. The meat feeds us, the shell becomes a tool to eat with and help in daily life. The shells also are made into beads used for decorative appeal, and to make Treaty Belts, which represents laws between the U.S.A. and Iroquois Nations.” – Rosie Hill

“I always start my stitches from the bottom up because you are bringing praise to the Creator and with the down stitch bringing the Creator’s blessing back into the cloth.”

– Dolly Printup-Winden

Dorothy (Dolly) Printup-Winden

Tuscarora, Deer Clan



Dorothy (Dolly) Printup-Winden, Tuscarora, Deer Clan, Gerry Biron, 2012, 36 x 29, Colored and graphite pencils, acrylic, watercolor and ink

Dorothy (Dolly) Printup-Winden (1948-2013) was a fourth generation Tuscarora, Deer Clan beadworker whose work is rooted in traditional spiritual beliefs. Dolly learned beadwork from her grandmother, Matilda Chew Hill, and her mother, Dorothy Hill Printup at a very early age: “as soon as I knew my colors and could count.” She often accompanied her grandmother and mother to sell beadwork at Prospect Point in Niagara Falls, and on the annual one-hundred and ninety mile trip to the State Fair in Syracuse, New York, where they would sell their beadwork in the Indian Village.

After a temporary pause in her beadwork to raise her family and pursue a professional degree, Dolly began beading again while living at Akwesasne as a reminder and remedy for homesickness for her family at Tuscarora.

Dolly continued her family’s traditional patterns of beaded velvet birds, lavishly decorating her pieces with thickly layered floral motifs and bright jewel tone beads.



Dorothy (Dolly) Printup Winden (1943-2013), Tuscarora, Deer Clan, *Beaded Birds*, 2000-2005
Glass beads, velvet

“The Creator made birds for us to see, hear, and enjoy, but in the spring, the birds are to sing a song to wake up the beautiful flowers in nature. Everything has been underground and asleep for our long winter season. The flowers and plants can’t see the daylight from there, but their hearing never leaves. So the spring birds’ song wakes them up and everything comes popping through the ground.” – Dolly Printup-Winden



Credits

The historic beadwork in the *Made of Thunder, Made of Glass II* exhibit is drawn from the collections of Gerry Biron (GB) and Grant Wade Jonathan (GJ).

Artist biographies are compiled through interviews with each artist by Gerry Biron and Edward Millar.

Images of the portraits and the Beaded Glengarry Hat cover image are provided courtesy of Gerry Biron.

Photographs of the contemporary works are by Edward Millar, unless otherwise indicated.

Acknowledgments

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Thanks are also due to my tirelessly supportive colleagues at the Castellani, the volunteers, and the work studies who have assisted me in this exhibit. I would also like to thank Suzanne Flynt at the Deerfield Memorial Hall Museum for mounting advice and for assisting in the coordinating of the exhibit as it transitioned from their venue to the Castellani. Finally, I would also like to thank my wife and daughter for providing relief, support, and endless patience.



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Cover image: *Beaded Glengarry Hat*, Iroquois Type, c. 1825-1850, GB 175



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