

ASM Museum Chat

Dec 6, 11 am
Session 16

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): Hi Wendy

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): We are just setting things up now

Wendy Goldstein: hi there. don't mind me. I just logged on so I wouldn't forget.

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): good idea

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): Wendy do you have speakers?

Wendy Goldstein: yep I do.

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): Good going Daniel

Ellen Carrlee: Hey Wendy, thanks so much for your beautiful letter on our behalf!

Wendy Goldstein: My pleasure, Ellen!

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): Hi Holly, welcome! We are just setting up now

Holly Cusack-McVeigh: Good Morning, Scott! Do we have sound yet?

Holly Cusack-McVeigh: I can hear you, thanks!

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): Hi LaRue, Welcome

Ellen Carrlee: I can hear it, but see no images

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): I can hear it

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): Can others?

Wendy Goldstein: i hear it

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): LaRue

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): Hi Michael, That was just a test of our audio system

Michael Hawfield: Hello Everyone. Hope you're having a great fall season

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): Hi Michael, we are just working out the audio bugs

LaRue: Hi I just stepped out for a cup of coffee

Ellen Carrlee: Did you bring me one?

Ellen Carrlee: hahaha

Wendy Goldstein: Hi Michael. Fall? It's winter; isn't it?

Wendy Goldstein: oh wait, maybe that's just here in Valdez.

Michael Hawfield: Not for a couple weeks; can't wait

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): Hi Monica

Monica: Hi!

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): We are just getting started

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): Hi Aurora

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): Did you get the computer bugs worked out?

Aurora Lang: Hi!

Aurora Lang: Nothing short of a miracle....

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): We are just waiting to see how many people log on and then we will see if we can get Steves Audio going

Holly Cusack-McVeigh: Yes, Holly !

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): Hi Christine

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): Christine is this your first chat?

Christine Smith: yes

Aurora Lang: I like your initials Ellen

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): Where are you logging on from?

Monica: She's here at Anchorage Museum

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): ah good

Michael Hawfield: Steve's talking now

Moderator (LAM): recording has started

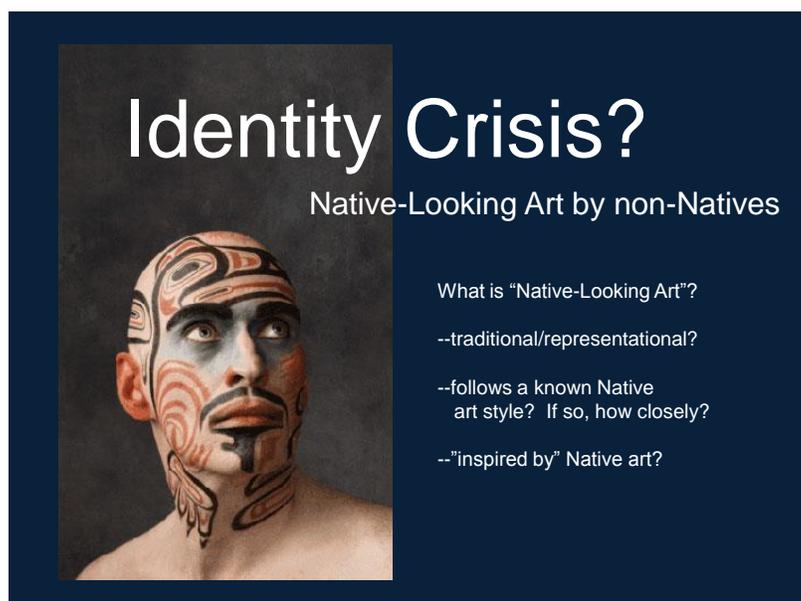
10 minute recorded introduction by ASM Curator of Collections Steve Henrikson

Moderator (Scott Carrlee) to Amy Russell: After Steve's talks there will be a power point that you should be able to see and there won't be any more audio

Michael Hawfield: Be sure to give time for us to take notes

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): Good point Michael

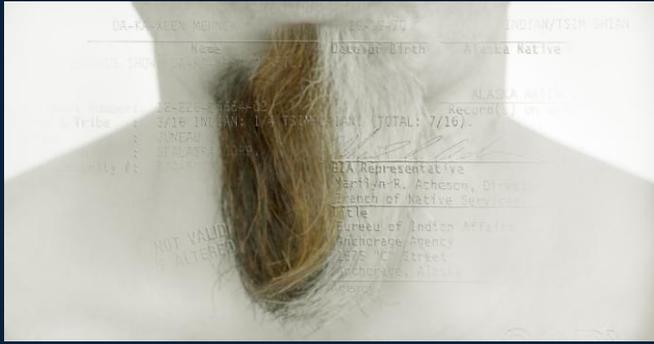
Moderator (LAM) to Scott Carrlee, LAM: I've got notepad open to take questions if they come up while you're still moving through PowerPoint.



Identity Crisis?
Native-Looking Art by non-Natives

What is "Native-Looking Art"?

- traditional/representational?
- follows a known Native art style? If so, how closely?
- "inspired by" Native art?



7/16th by Da-ka-xeen Mehner

Who are Alaska Natives?

- from federally recognized tribes?
- adopted tribal members?
- Alaska Native corporation shareholders?

Who decides?

- Tribes?
- Elders?
- Museums?
- Native Clans?
- Artists?



Alaska Native art traditions are very cosmopolitan, deriving influence from Native, Asian, and European cultures.

Tlingit dancers imitating "foreigners"
1904 Potlatch, Sitka
Sitka National Historical Park

Headgear from the North Pacific



Peter the Great Museum
1709-85



"Raven Hat"
Commandor Islands,
Kamchatka Regional
Museum



Tlingit Hat
Thaw
Collection

Asian Influence?



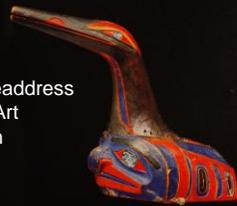
Hat, Western Unangan, Peter the Great Museum



Headdress, western Aleutians Peter the Great Museum



Tlingit "War Bonnet" Photo by Case & Draper



Loon Headdress Seattle Art Museum

Woman of Chirikof Island, Mikhail Tikhonov, 1818



Tlingit Alaska State Museum



Mrs. Berners Bay Jim (Tlingit) Courtesy Nora Dauenhauer

"Flat Hats"



Gut Hat in the Form of Russian Sailors' Cap
Unangan or Alutiq, Alaska State Museum



Russian Sailor, early 20th c



Tlingit spruce root "flat hat", Peabody Harvard

Crest Objects of Foreign Origin owned by Tlingit Clans



Asian (Tibet?)
ornament
Princeton Art Museum



"Raven Cape" from Tahiti
collected at
Angoon
UPenn Museum



Tlingit Shamans Mask
Chinese Coin Eyes
AMNH



The Tlingit at Klukwan, prodigious producers of "Chilkat Robes", learned the art by partially unweaving a beaver apron obtained from the tsimshian.

Later, the right to weave Chilkat robes was claimed by the Kwakiutl tribe of central BC, through intermarriage with a Tlingit woman from Tongass.

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^ Cheryl Samuel

In the 1980s, non-Native weaver Cheryl Samuel, with the blessings of Tlingit and Haida elders, helped restore the tradition of "ravens tail weaving" to the NW Coast.

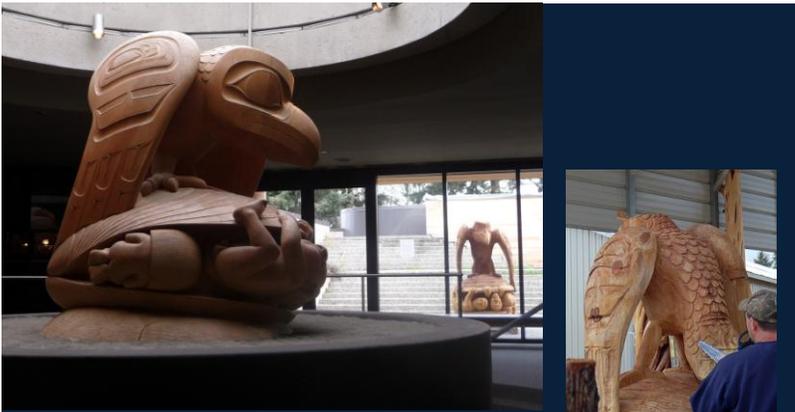


Michael Nichols –Haida Manga artist



"Copper from the Hood"

Made from modern metal source:
 car hoods found on Indian Reserves (real
 copper being unavailable there, hoods
 from the 'hood are painted copper as stand-
 ins for traditional copper shields.



Raven and the First Immigrants by Nick Galanin (Tlingit)

A rendition of Bill Reid's famous sculpture of Raven discovering mankind in a Clam shell, a Haida tradition. Galanin "outsourced" the work down by an unemployed non-Native chainsaw carver.



Tlingit artist John Bartells in front of a Sitka window display of "Tlingit-style" arti-fakes from Indonesia



Display of Tlingit crest objects at Angoon potlatch, 2011. Killer Whale helmet is an Indonesian replica of an old hat in the Burke Museum. Hat has been adopted as a sacred at.oow by the Dakl'aweidi Clan.

Wendy Goldstein: what's at.oow?

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): Ellen?

Ellen Carrlee: Ricardo?

Rico Worl 1: I can answer that if you like?

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): yes please

Rico Worl 1: At.oow is property owned by the clan. It includes land, songs, crests, stories, names ect. It is considered sort of like sacred treasures of the clan, in a sense. Relationships between the clan and At.oow are developed through ceremony and each peice of at.oow is considered to have its on spirit.

Wendy Goldstein: ok. thanks. I understand.

Rico Worl 1: (also, fyi, I just go by Rico, sometimes I get mixed up with my uncle Ricardo who I was named after)



Clan Screen unveiled in Angoon, 2011. Screen was a collaboration between carver Joe Zuboff (Tlingit) and Steve Henrikson (non-Native adopted Tlingit). By FTC interpretation of Indian Arts and Crafts Act, a collaboration between a Native and non-Native artist may not be legally called "Native Art."



Wolf Hat by Steve Brown (non-Native) used as a totem at Tlingit potlatch in Sitka, 2011, by the Yanyeyidi clan.

In these cases, meaning transcends the ethnic origin of the artist. The clan who owns the crests exercises their right to accept a given representation as “their own” even when the original intent was to make something for the art market. The clan decides what the art means to them—not government, tribe, or museum.



“Art is a One-Eared Madman” by Jim Schoppert (Tlingit), inspired by Alutiiq mask



American Eagle motif on Haida or Tlingit silver bracelet, 19th cent.



Tlingit totem: “The First White Man”, surmounted by a representation of Abe Lincoln as an archetypal “white man.” late 19th c.

Eagle bib with American eagle Shield, Tlingit, early 20th c.



Egyptian Sphinx Monument by
by Haida artist.
British Museum

Karen: I love the sphinx!

Final Thoughts:

In the past, some Alaska Natives were punished for doing their art, and were deprived of much of the best art when it was collected for museums. As part of colonialist policy, museums were designed to house the material remnants of “vanished peoples.” In their zeal to preserve, they may have hastened the decline of some aspects of those cultures.

In more recent times, as Native cultures struggle with the legacy of assimilation, they must suffer the indignity of having non-Natives work in their art style for profit. Mass-production of work in Asia has possibly damaged the market for Native art. On the other hand, many Native artists, today and yesterday, look at a wide variety of artwork and are influenced by it.

Should Native art be legally or ethically confined to Native artists? Should museums ban Native style work from its collections? My feeling is that legal/ethical codification of these concepts would be a daunting task, and likely very unfair, or impossible to enforce. Existing laws having to do with false advertising are already next to impossible to enforce. How do you define “Native Art Style?”

Museums should not exclude it because it has become part of history (for better or worse), and having the material in the collection allows us to explore the historical issues involved. These are fascinating contemporary issues that will undoubtedly lead to future research and exhibits.
--Thanks, Steve Henrikson

Andrew Goldstein: The American eagle motif pieces are interesting, because it is an example of Native art appropriating other cultural references. It makes me wonder if there is a double standard.

Michael Hawfield: I like Steve's final thoughts re the role of museums and collecting

Michael Hawfield: I think it is important, however, that museums maintain their high standards of transparency re the origin, etc. of objects they collect

Andrew Goldstein: Also, what is the general feeling about Native art inspired by other Native sources -- e.g., an Alutiiq artist working with Tlingit motifs?

Karen: Michael, I agree. Also this is extremely helpful to me as I re-work the Sheldon museum's exhibits

Wendy Goldstein: Intriguing. It's important to remember that art does not happen in a vacuum. Art is always influenced by something. Many native-like art may be an homage, too. Are AK Natives made to pay in order to use the silver hand?

Rico Worl 1: Andrew: Well, often times, sorry, I don't have a mic, but often times appropriation comes with a story. For instance if you go to a ceremony and certain people are wearing a navy uniform, it's part of the payment taken for the Navy not paying them back for bombings or certain trades.

Karen: I agree with Wendy

Karen: Rico, are the stories shared outside the ceremonies ever?

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): Just so people know we are purposely not using the microphones for the discussion so there is a transcript

Rico Worl 1: But at the same time, yes we do appropriate. If we see something we like, we will integrate it. Yes stories are shared outside ceremonies and inside depending on the context of the situation.

LaRue: too bad we couldn't talk to Steve Re; his own part in the discussion

Moderator (LAM): Silver hand info along with other Alaska Native Arts program from state
<http://www.eed.state.ak.us/aksca/native.htm>

Moderator (LAM): Looks like \$20 fee

Monica #2: I, too, like Steve's final thoughts. But the aspect that I find interesting is that only through curatorial comments can these issues be addressed. Once an object is in the collection, that context or issue may not be attached to its documentation. 20 years from now, someone may not realize why the object was collected - exploring the issues involved.

nicoledialkay: I can think of one positive example of a contemporary artist working with Native motifs, David Medalla. His artwork touches on several different living cultures poorly represented within museums. I see no exploitation of Native cultures for capitalist gains in the way he treats the issues and aesthetics.

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): Good point Monica

LaRue: like all good museum nomenclature, we need to record as much as possible about an object

Monica #2: But is that enough?

Michael Hawfield: One of the most disturbing of Steve's images was John Bartels in front of the store displaying "artifakes" -- how do museums connect with this?

Rico Worl 1: Monica, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act has done much for this. Often times tribal people are now able to visit the museums to discuss this further, and more and more we have found museums come to us to ask for further discussion as well.

Rico Worl 1: It is a way of doing things I hope grows.

Rico Worl 1: sorry, I put "us" down without explaining. I don't know if everyone knows, but I know many do, I work for Sealaska Heritage Institute, the regional non-profit tribal entity dedicated to preservation, restoration and a resource for Tlingit Haida and Tsimishean people.

Rico Worl 1: I agree about the arti-fakes comment, it is an issue we are in discussions about with our elders and artist council at SHI.

Ellen Carrlee: I know several non-Native artists who feel that it would be somehow unethical to do formline artwork, but they are not completely sure why they have that gut feeling

LaRue: Steve ? about defining "Native Art style" speaks to the issue in that there are so many answers. with emphasis on "Art" it should be broad, with emphasis on "Native" it may be specific. There is also the matter of time frames. Should native artists be limited to look alike?

Rico Worl 1: Yes its an interesting dilemma. Traditionally clans would always hire people outside the clan to do their art. They would hire people outside their clan and sometimes from different tribal groups.

Michael Hawfield: Rico, what are some of the current thoughts about dealing with arti-fakes, especially with respect to museum collections (Monica's note about what happens 20 years from now, especially)

Rico Worl 1: At this point our movement at SHI is to inform the public and inform the market who buy these things as much as possible.

Wendy Goldstein: But as an artist, if you are influenced by that style, should you not be allowed to express that feeling?

nicoledialkay: How does this all work in correlation to the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990? If they claim the artwork to be Native American, isn't that illegal?

Monica #2: I'm sorry that I missed some of Steve's powerpoint - internet went down briefly. Regarding arti-fakes, are these the objects made in Asia/Indonesia?

Rico Worl 1: I don't think so, personally, I think it should be explored and understood. Hopefully the artist also learns the cultural meaning of the designs at the same time so THOSE aspects are respected.

nicoledialkay: Apologies, I missed the Asia/Indonesia part. Disregard the Indian Arts and Crafts Act question.

Michael Hawfield: I get the impression these were made in Indonesia for the tourist market in Alaska

Wendy Goldstein: I believe that if you think you may have created something what may be misunderstood as Native, you should ethically make it clear that you are not yourself a Native. If you have respect for the culture, you'd want to be sure to express that, too.

Monica #2: Michael, which is different than the art market.

Michael Hawfield: absolutely

Monica #2: The target audience is quite different. Museums generally wouldn't collect these items today.

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): Unless of course they were trying to make a point of collecting just that

Wendy Goldstein: haha

Michael Hawfield: But to follow Steve's argument a museum might collect these objects precisely because they represent an aspect of economic life/cultural struggle, etc. in contemporary Alaska

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): I know the Peabody at Harvard collected a huge number of artifacts from the tourist art market in New Mexico

Monica #2: That's true, is that what Steve was alluding to at the end of his powerpoint?

Michael Hawfield: I believe so

Andrew Goldstein: Sure...I can see doing a display of totem-pole kitsch, for example.

Michael Hawfield: "Kitchi-Kan" stuff

Michael Hawfield: in Ketchikan

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): Does anyone have a question or comment?

Michael Hawfield: any one from Ketchikan?

Ellen Carrlee: Ethically, is there some right NWC Native people have to imagery that was group property in the past? Something similar to our copyright, for example?

Michael Hawfield: Did not Steve allude to this in his notes about Clan-accepted images?

Rico Worl 1: Yes, this is At.oow. At.oow is technically "Tlingit Property Law" and is recognized in federal law in NAGPRA. But in western copyright it is not.

Michael Hawfield: I get it

nicoledialkay: Would those of you working at museums ever allow a non-Native artist to be exhibited in a contemporary American Indian art exhibition hosted at your institution?

nicoledialkay: To clarify: a non-Native artist working with themes of contemporary Native American culture

Rico Worl 1: But different tribes own rights each within those tribes to similar or same imagery, so it's a tough question to address nationally/internationally

Monica #2: Not at the Anchorage Museum.

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): If it was appropriate, if it was making a point, but probably not without commentary

Monica #2: Only if the exhibit was about art in general, not specific to Native American art.

Michael Hawfield: Commentary, I think, would be all important

Amy Russell: I always wonder how would you describe a piece like one of Dale de Armond's woodcuts if you showed it in your museum. She did such beautiful work inspired by legends from different Alaska Native cultures. But I think my own answer is that I would describe it as Inupiaq-inspired or Tlingit-inspired, whichever the case may be. But a lot of children's books with Alaska Native legends are illustrated by non Alaska Natives, and I think their artwork would be wonderful to show at our museum, especially for engaging kids!

Holly Cusack-McVeigh: Museums are just beginning to address Intellectual Property Rights and moving beyond copyright laws.

Ellen Carrlee: The Egan Library at UAS has lots of Native-looking art, some of it by famous Native artists, others by fairly respected non-Native artists.

Monica #2: I clarified, because we have pieces right now on exhibit chosen by a guest juror in Earth, Fire and Fiber that fall into this category.

Andrew Goldstein: Probably not -- I might allow an exhibit of a non-Native artist working in a Native art style if there was a point to it and it was clear that the artist was not Native. But I would not include this art in, or advertise it as, "Native art".

LaRue: In the native community there is also the issue of people with a small quantity of native blood producing native art. So it is probably up to the tribe and/or museum

Andrew Goldstein: good point

Ellen Carrlee: In the ASM' summer show on hats, there were maybe 50% Native hats, old ones from the collection, but also one from Jim Heaton of Haines, carved in NWC style.

Rico Worl 1: I agree with Michael H, commentary and provoking discussion on the topic, with education. Because its not always clear and there are benefits to Non-native artists doing native art. Personally I think Steve Brown is a master of formline and have taken numerous classes from him.

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): We still have a few minutes if there are more comments

Michael Hawfield: So, museums would be well advised to have as a matter of policy some sort of connectivity to Native organizations/communities whenever objects or performances touching on Native culture are undertaken

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): The session will probably cut off after 12 noon

Monica #2: Thanks Scott!

Michael Hawfield: THANKS EVERYONE -- GOOD DISCUSSION

Wendy Goldstein: thanks for the thought-provoking topic.

Amy Russell: We have a non-Inupiaq drum maker in Wales making more drums than other folks, so we think about this too

LaRue: Great discussion Scott-I'll look forward to tomorrow's script or whatever's produced. Bye all good to "hear" you

nicoledialkay: Thank you for the great discussion!

Michael Hawfield: LET'S KEEP IT UP

Amy Russell: Thanks for a good starting point for this discussion!

Andrew Goldstein: Thanks everyone

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): Please come to the next chat and we can follow up

Next Chat Session

January 18, 11 am

Moderator (Scott Carrlee): Thanks for coming everyone