

2010 Retrospective

October 16 - November 20, 2010

# Norval Morrisseau

Kinsman Robinson Galleries

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*The Legendary Omish-shoos, 1971*



*The Indian Sorcerer, 1971*

## FOREWORD

Dr. Trudy Nicks, ROM

Almost three years have now passed since Ojibwa artist Norval Morrisseau—Copper Thunderbird—left this world. In his lifetime Morrisseau earned international acclaim for his innovative, vibrant, sometimes provocative art style. Based in traditional Ojibwa visual imagery, Morrisseau’s style has inspired many other artists, but remains in a class by itself. In the past five decades private collectors and public institutions alike have come to treasure his works of art. A gift from the artist in 1960 was the founding piece in the Royal Ontario Museum’s own collection of works by contemporary First Nations artists. The many honours bestowed on the artist during his career included membership in the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts (1973) and the Order of Canada (1978). A number of Morrisseau works in public collections are certified as being of significance to Canada’s national heritage.

As a young man just starting on what would be a famous career, Norval Morrisseau wrote of the need to “record the legends, art, songs and beliefs, not for ourselves alone but for all future Ojibway”. Claiming the protection of the Great Manitou he set about to pass on the traditional knowledge and values that he had learned from his grandfather, not only to future generations of Ojibwa people, but to the world at large. His writings and paintings reveal an Ojibwa universe peopled with manitous, or

'demigods' to use his term, sacred animals, powerful shamans, and everyday humans. And, open to the world outside of his own heritage, he also recorded the influence of the 'other' as seen in the paintings "Adam & Eve" and "Lily of the Mohawks", in the present exhibition.

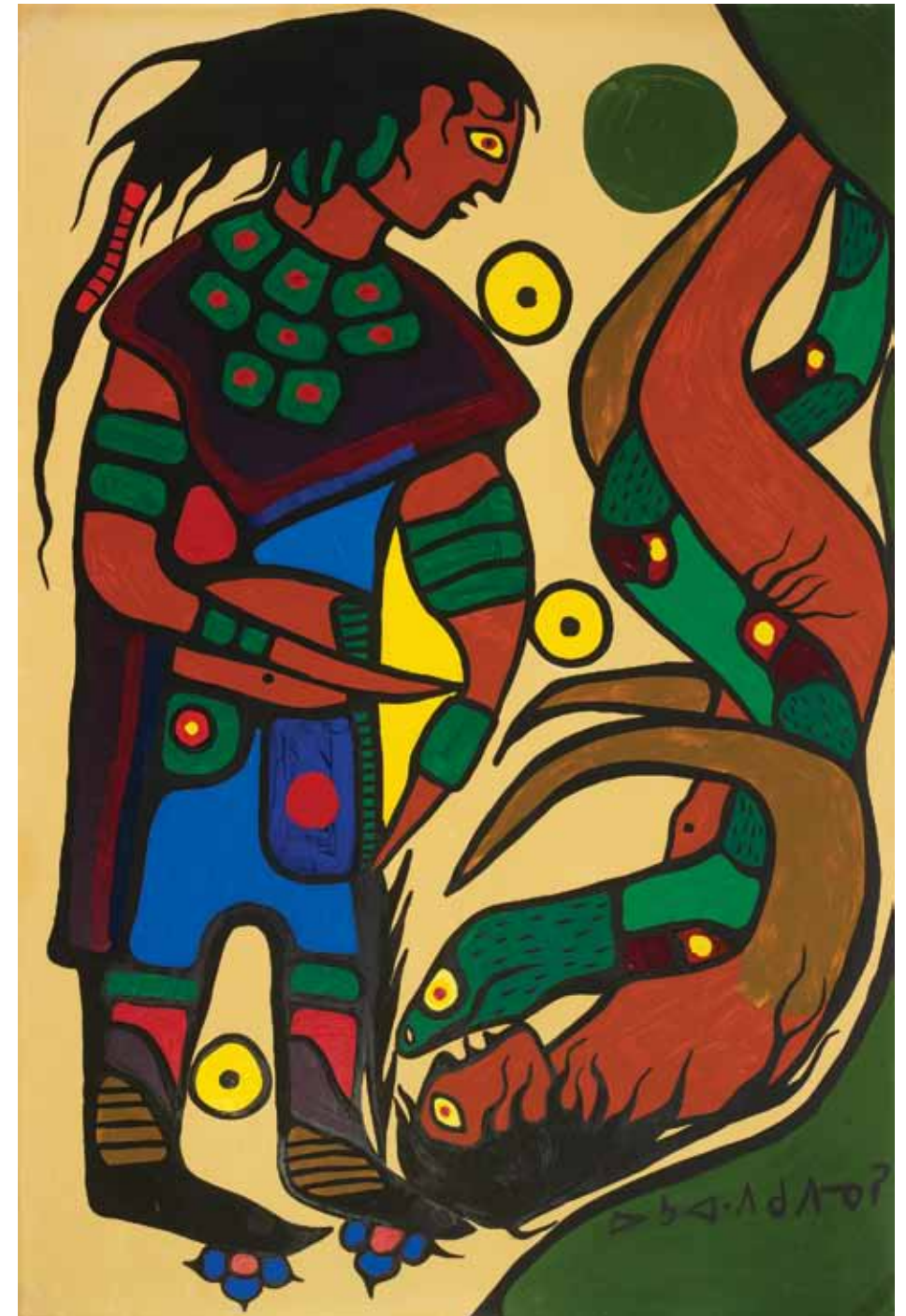
In 1986 Norval Morrisseau was appointed Grand Shaman of the Ojibwa at Thunder Bay, Ontario. It would seem to be a particularly apt honour for the man who gave his intellect and energy over to the task of reassembling and preserving the proud culture of the Ojibwa people.

Trudy Nicks  
Senior Curator  
Royal Ontario Museum

September 2010

"Ojibwa oral history—any man who is attached to the senses (sic) and pleasures of the world (sic) is like a man who is being devoured by serpents which represents his passion and desires."

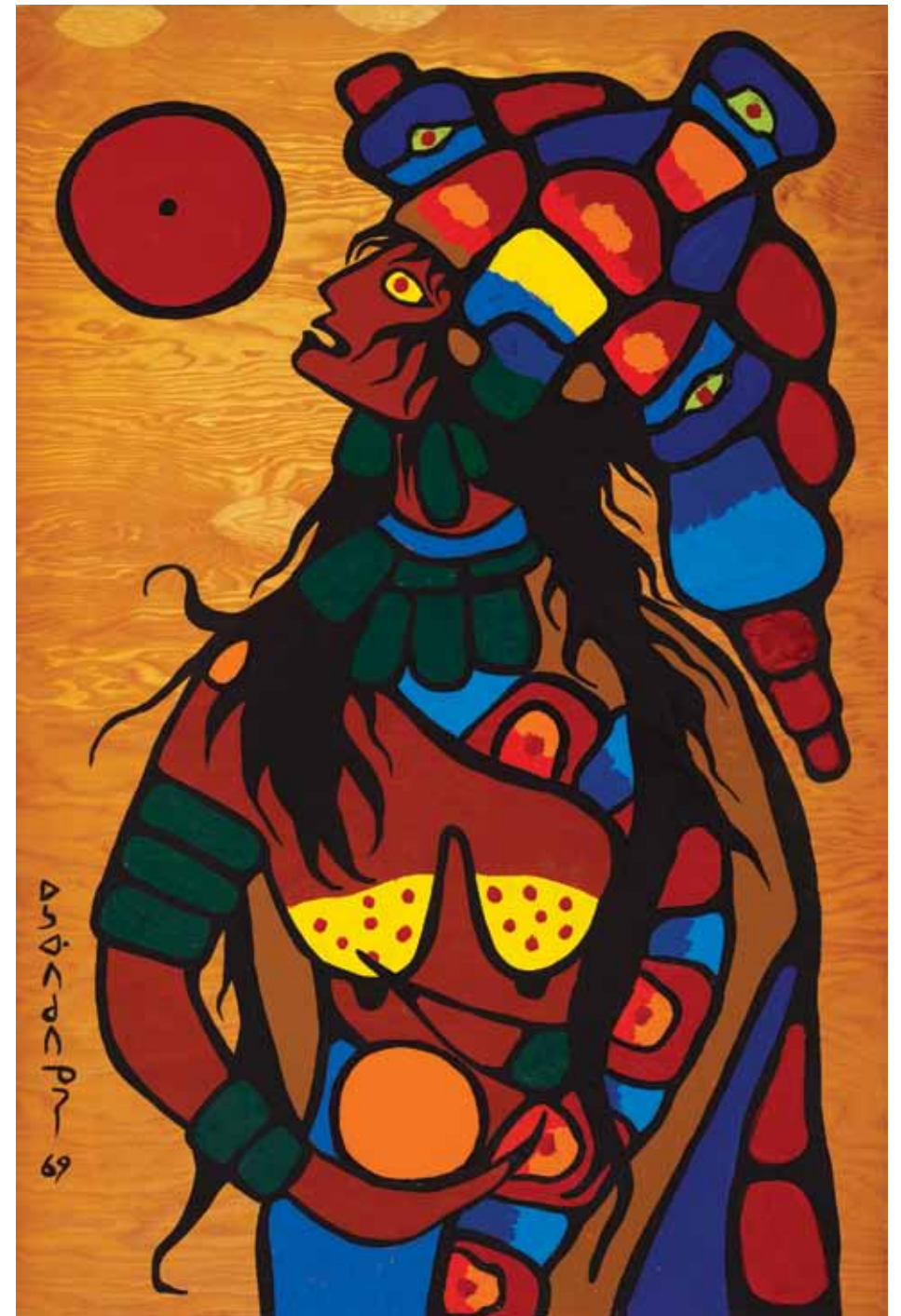
- Norval Morrisseau



Adam & Eve, c. 1966-70



*Ancestral Fish, Taking the Spirit Beyond, 1965*



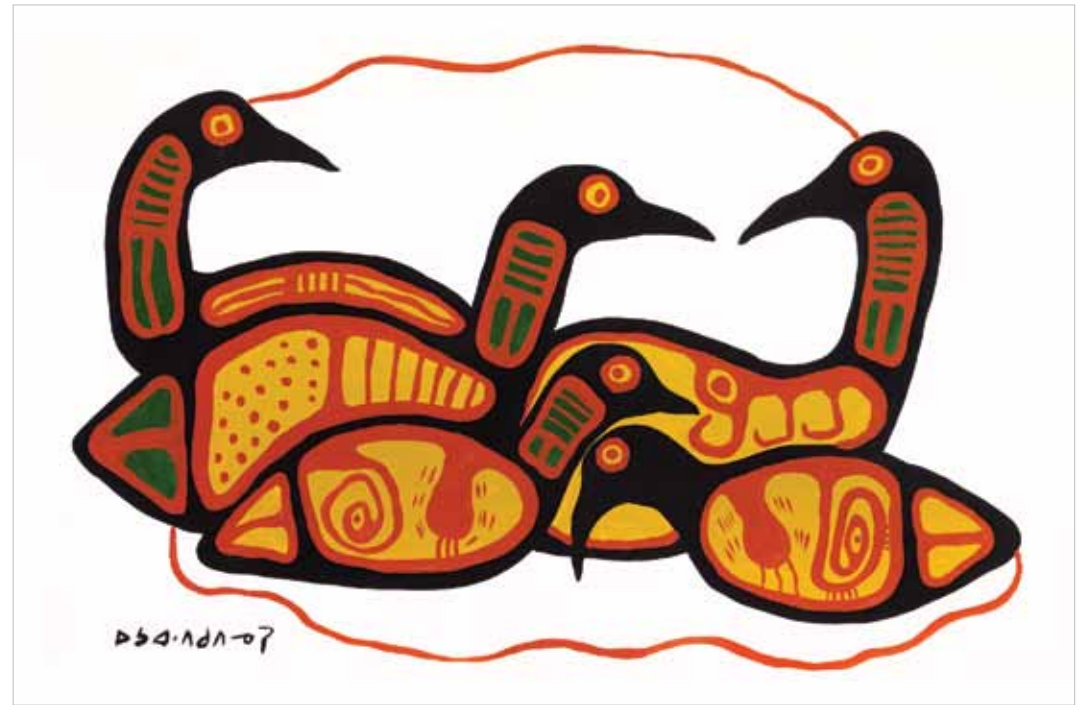
*Kateri, Lily of the Mohawks, 1969*



Birds, Fish, Unity, 1969



Sacred Moose, 1969



Loon Family, 1970



Fish-Woman of Two Seasons, 1970



*Moose Harmony, 1972*



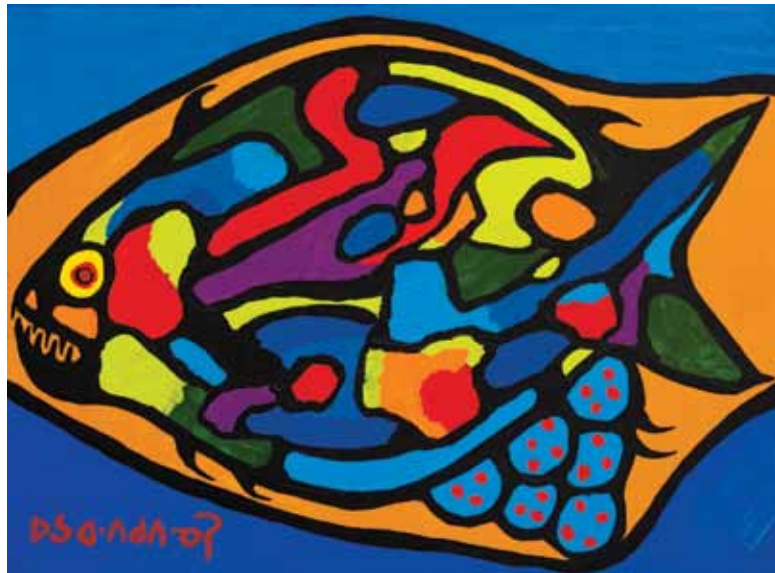
*The Sacred Lake Fish, 1973*

“To the Indian a fish represents the human soul, one turns into a fish as the asterol (sic) body journeys into the land of his supernatural totemic existence; if it appears that he has pleased his ancestral (sic) abode his place there will be forever...”

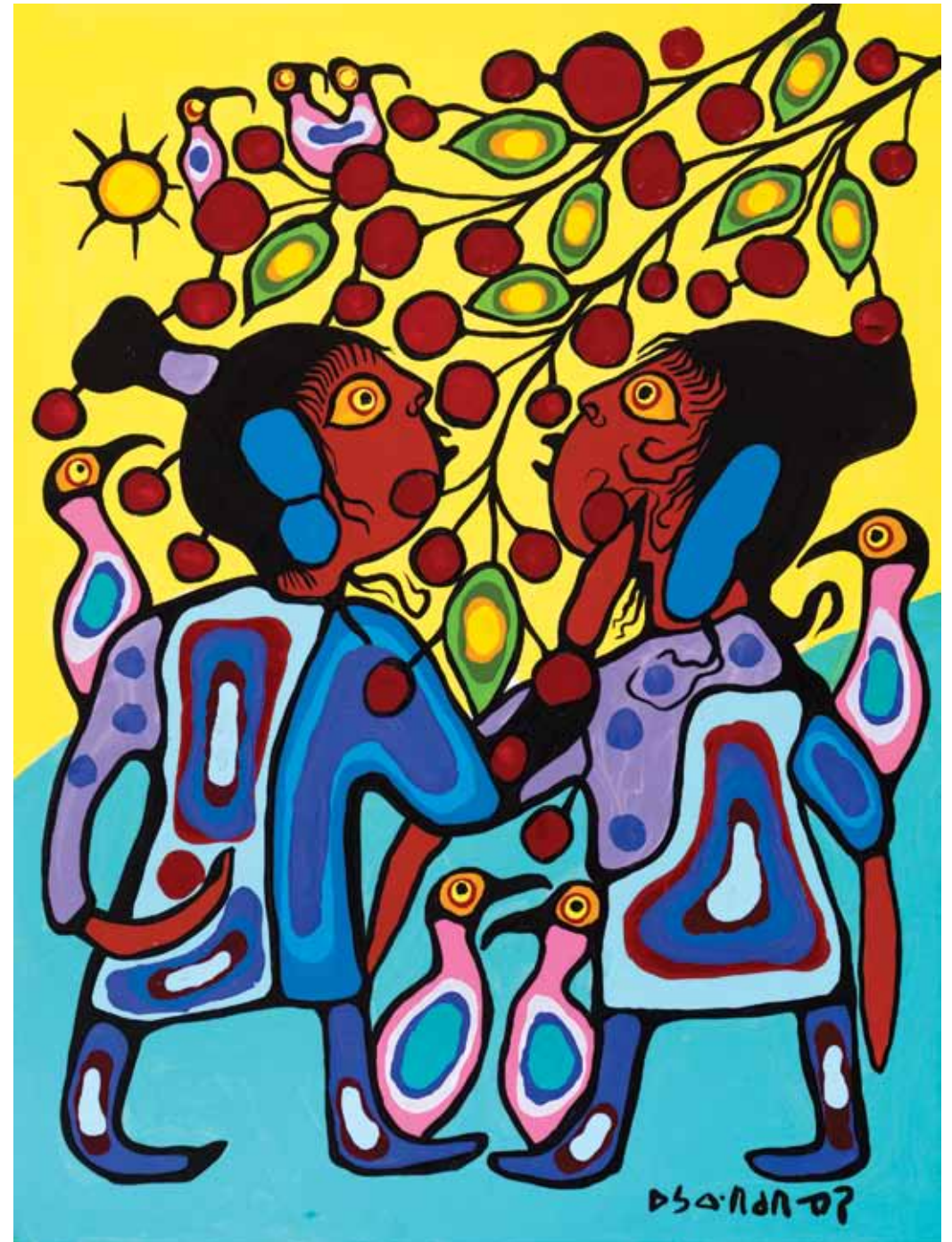
- Norval Morrisseau



Untitled (Sacred Trout), 1977



Sacred Trout Through The Portal of Time, 1978

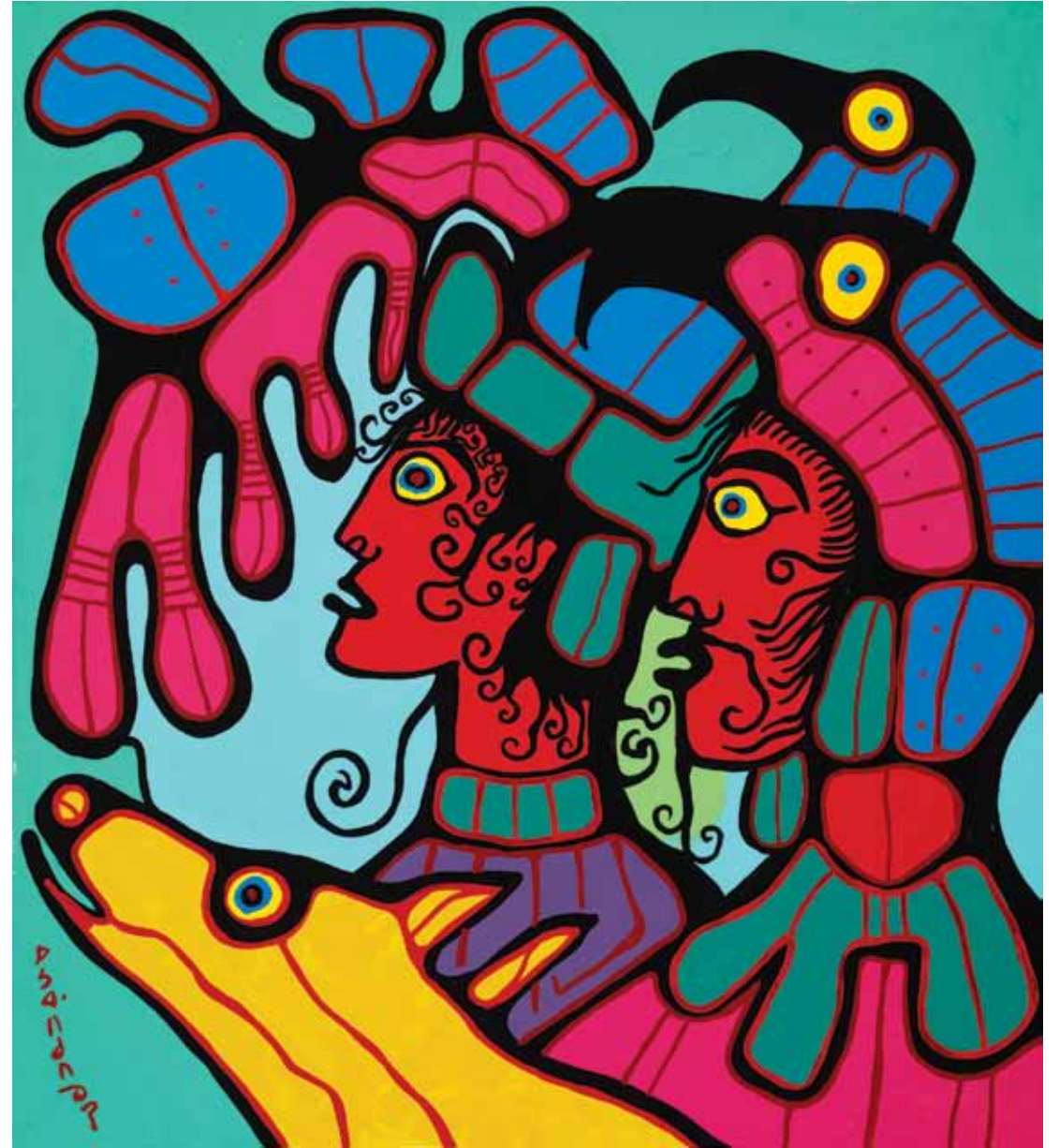


The Children, 1982



See the painting: *Grand Shaman And His Apprentice The Blond Person Tala, Sunshine For The Group, 1980* for an additional work depicting this apprentice who associated with the artist during the first half of the 1980s.

*Sunshine, 1985*



*Norval, My Son & The Dog, 1986*





Shaman Transforming With Bears, 1986



Thunderbird, 1987

“The Thunderbird was the protector of all Indian people of North America; the Great Manitou god gave the Indian a supernatural guardian to protect all Indians against the serpent who sow[s] evil upon Indians (mankind).”

- Norval Morrisseau



*The Sacred Bear Giving Children And Animals A Ride: In The Dreamworld of Children And Pets, 1989*



*Sacred Trout, 1989*



Children Under The Ojibwa Story Tree, 1987

“Merman the ancient (sic) half man and supernatural being who is the ruler of all the waters of the world in his protection and power to the individual, both by water and land, was a sought-after protector of the Ojibwa Indian shaman; for it is said that the merman own[s] the element of water in itself very powerfull (sic) to be channell (sic) to that power etc...”

- Norval Morrisseau

Opposite: *Merman Is The Lord And Ruler of The Water of The World*, 1992



## LIST OF WORKS IN EXHIBITION

**\*Ojibwa Bear In Fish Spawn**, 1962

Acrylic on paper  
29 x 22 in, 73.66 x 55.88 cm  
Titled verso by the artist's hand; Reproduced  
"The Globe & Mail", Aug 25, 1962, Pearl  
McCarthy's art review; Exhibited The Pollock  
Gallery, Toronto, Sept 12, 1962 (First sell-out show)

**\*Ancestral Fish, Taking The Spirit Beyond**,  
1965

Acrylic on artist board  
24 x 36 in, 60.96 x 91.44 cm  
Collection of Kenneth Meader, Ontario;  
The Pollock Gallery, Toronto

**\*Adam & Eve**, 1966-70

Acrylic on kraft paper  
56 x 37 in, 142.24 x 93.98 cm  
Private collection, Ontario; Collection of Paul &  
Mary Okanski, Red Lake; Acquired from the artist

**\*Kateri, Lily of The Mohawks**, 1969

Acrylic on wood panel  
48 x 32 in, 121.92 x 81.28 cm  
Valuation by Evan Quan, Gallery Quan (former  
assistant to Jack Pollock) dated 1983.  
By descent - Private collection, Barrie; Collection  
of Albert & Jesse Kay, McKenzie Island;  
Acquired from the artist

**\*Birds, Fish, Unity**, 1969

Acrylic on paper, unsigned  
22 x 30 in, 55.88 x 76.2 cm  
Private Collection, Thunder Bay; The Treasure  
House Gift Shop, Thunder Bay; Robert Lavack,  
Thunder Bay; Acquired from the artist

**\*Sacred Moose**, 1969

Acrylic on kraft paper  
24 x 28.5 in, 60.96 x 72.39 cm  
Private collection, Thunder Bay; The Treasure  
House Gift Shop, Thunder Bay; Acquired from  
the artist

**Thunderbird**, 1969

Acrylic on paper  
30 x 17 in, 76.2 x 43.18 cm  
Private collection, Thunder Bay;  
The Treasure House Gift Shop, Thunder Bay;  
Acquired from the artist

**\*Loon Family**, 1970

Acrylic on artist board  
28 x 44 in, 71.12 x 111.76 cm  
Private collection, Thunder Bay; Purchased  
from Mr. Hennefent; Acquired from the artist

**\*Fish-Woman of Two Seasons**, 1970

Acrylic on kraft paper  
19.5 x 32 in, 49.53 x 81.28 cm  
Private collection, Toronto; Acquired from the  
artist while living in Red Lake

**\*The Legendary Omish-shoos**, 1971

Ink and acrylic on paper  
15 x 20 in, 38.1 x 50.8 cm  
Private collection, Calgary; Acquired from the artist

**\*The Indian Sorcerer**, 1971

Ink and acrylic on paper  
15 x 20 in, 38.1 x 50.8 cm  
Private collection, Calgary; Acquired from the artist

**\*Moose Harmony**, 1972

Acrylic on artist board  
19.5 x 30 in, 49.53 x 76.2 cm  
Private collection, Thunder Bay;  
Pert's Framing Gallery, Thunder Bay; Acquired  
from the artist

**\*The Sacred Lake Fish**, 1973

Acrylic on kraft paper  
23.5 x 36 in, 59.69 x 91.44 cm  
The Pollock Gallery, Toronto; Acquired from  
the artist

**Sacred Fish With Power Cycles**, 1973

Acrylic on kraft paper  
27.5 x 40.5 in, 69.85 x 102.87 cm  
Collection of Kenneth Meader, Ontario;  
The Pollock Gallery, Toronto

**\*Untitled (Sacred Trout)**, 1977

Acrylic on paper  
22 x 31 in, 55.88 x 78.74 cm  
Collection of Kenneth Meader, Ontario;  
The Pollock Gallery, Toronto

**\*Sacred Trout Through The Portal of Time**, 1978

Acrylic on masonite  
23 x 31.5 in, 58.42 x 80 cm  
Private collection, Ontario; Collection of Susan  
A. Ross, C.M.; The Pollock Gallery, Toronto

**\*The Children**, 1982

Acrylic on board  
40 x 30 in, 101.6 x 76.2 cm  
Private collection, Brantford; James P. Richards,  
agent for Norval Morrisseau; Acquired from the artist

**\*Sunshine**, 1985

Acrylic on canvas, unsigned  
72 x 24 in, 182.88 x 60.96 cm  
Private collection, Maple Ridge, BC; Acquired  
from the artist

**\*Norval, My Son & The Dog**, 1986

Acrylic on canvas  
40 x 36 in, 101.6 x 99.06 cm  
Private collection, Calgary; EA Studios (Galal  
Helmy), Jasper; Acquired from the artist

**Self-Portrait**, 1986

Acrylic on canvas  
40 x 30 in, 101.6 x 76.2 cm  
Private collection, Calgary,  
EA Studios (Galal Helmy), Jasper; Acquired from  
the artist

**\*Shaman Transforming With Bears**, 1986

Acrylic on canvas  
47.5 x 29.5 in, 120.65 x 74.93 cm  
Private collection, Maple Ridge, BC; Acquired  
from the artist

**\*Thunderbird**, 1987

Acrylic on canvas  
36 x 36 in, 99.06 x 99.06 cm  
Private collection, Calgary; Leona Lattimer Gallery,  
Vancouver; Acquired from the artist

**\*Children Under The Ojibwa Story Tree**, 1987

Acrylic on canvas  
36 x 48 in, 99.06 x 121.92 cm  
Private collection, Maple Ridge, BC; Acquired  
from the artist

**Sacred Beaver With Power Lines**, 1987

Acrylic on paper  
15 x 22 in, 38.1 x 55.88 cm  
Private collection, Victoria, BC; Acquired from the  
artist

**Fish-Bird Transformation**, 1988

Graphite & colored pencil on illustration board  
14 x 20 in, 35.56 x 50.8 cm  
Private collection, Victoria, BC; Acquired from  
the artist

**\*Sacred Trout**, 1989

Acrylic on canvas  
36 x 48 in, 91.44 x 121.92 cm  
Private collection, Whistler, BC; Acquired from  
the artist

**\*The Sacred Bear Giving Children And Animals  
A Ride: In The Dreamworld of Children And  
Pets**, 1989

Acrylic on canvas  
40 x 48 in, 101.6 x 121.92 cm  
Titled verso by the artist's hand  
Private collection, Ontario; Kinsman Robinson  
Galleries, Toronto; Acquired from the artist

**Ojibwa Family Motif With Tree of Knowledge**,  
1991

Acrylic on canvas  
87 x 54 in, 220.98 x 137.16 cm  
Reproduced pg. 136 "Return To The House of  
Invention" (Key Porter Books, 2005); Acquired  
from the artist

**\*Merman Is The Lord And Ruler of The Water  
of The World**, 1992

Acrylic on canvas  
90 x 48 in, 228.6 x 121.92 cm  
Titled verso by the artist's hand; Exhibited at the  
G8 retreat, Huntsville/G20 summit, Toronto, June  
2010; Acquired from the artist

**All Creatures**, 1995

Acrylic on canvas  
24 x 48 in, 60.96 x 121.92 cm  
Private collection, Pickering; Kinsman Robinson  
Galleries, Toronto; Acquired from the artist

**\*Apprentice Transforming And Observing**, 1996

Acrylic on paper  
30 x 22 in, 76.2 x 55.88 cm  
Exhibited at the G8 retreat, Huntsville/G20  
summit, Toronto, June 2010; Private collection,  
Mississauga; Kinsman Robinson Galleries,  
Toronto; Acquired from the artist

**\*Spiritual Oneness**, 1997

Acrylic on canvas  
24 x 36 in, 60.96 x 91.44 cm  
Private collection, Michigan; Kinsman Robinson  
Galleries, Toronto; Acquired from the artist



*Apprentice Transforming and Observing, 1996*

Cover: *Kateri, Lily of The Mohawks*, detail, 1969

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A special thank you to Dr. Trudy Nicks for sharing her insight into Norval Morrisseau and his lasting influences.

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