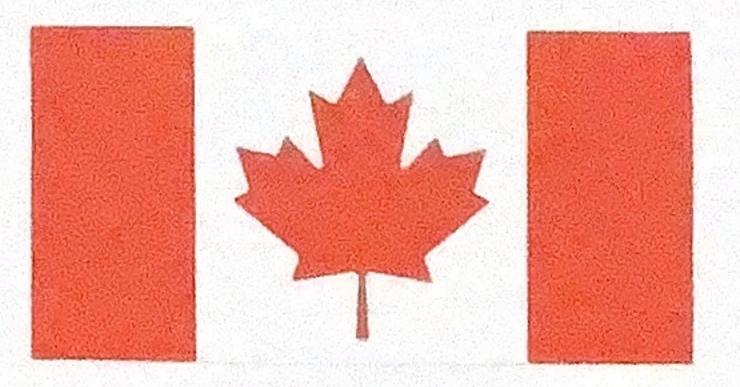
## Creative Project

Zine

# Reclaiming your Culture First Nations in Canada Today

Rengin Agin
Sascha Aspelmeier
Nina Fuhrmann
Joy Koch



LIT 501

Stories from Turtle Island: Indigenous (Canadian) Narratives

Dr. Britta Colligs

Winter Term 2023/2024

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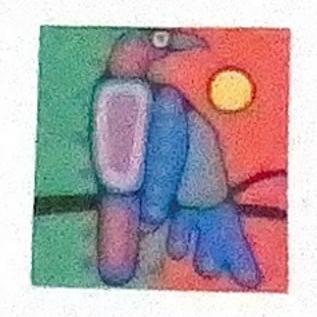
# Einst Watt forns in



→ Describing a distinct group of Indigenous Peoples who are neither Métis nor Inuit (included in the 'Indian Act' from 1985)



Standing Buffalo First Nations Powwow in Saskatchewan



→ Can be used as an umbrella term for larger groups within or can be used 'synonymous[ly] with the term band' – then First Nation ("First Nations in Canada" The Canadian Encyclopedia)

→ Largest of the three groupings of Indigenous Peoples in Canada with more than 1 million people identifying as First Nations; split into numerous different bands, for example, Cree Nation or Anishinaabe (IWGIA)

Cree warriors participating in a celebatory

Sun

Sun









Poundmaker Plains Cree Chief 1885

→ Heavily affected by first contact with European settlers; many falling ill or killed: horrendous living conditions up until the 20th century





Cree Encampment 1857

From the 18th century onwards, First Nations were forced to assimilate, and later on, children were separated from their families and put in residential schools to 'kill the Indian' – Mistreatment, sexual and physical abuse, high suicide rates and death rates were common in these residential schools

→ First Nations hold reserve land and 'may live on or off reserve' ("First Nations in Canada"

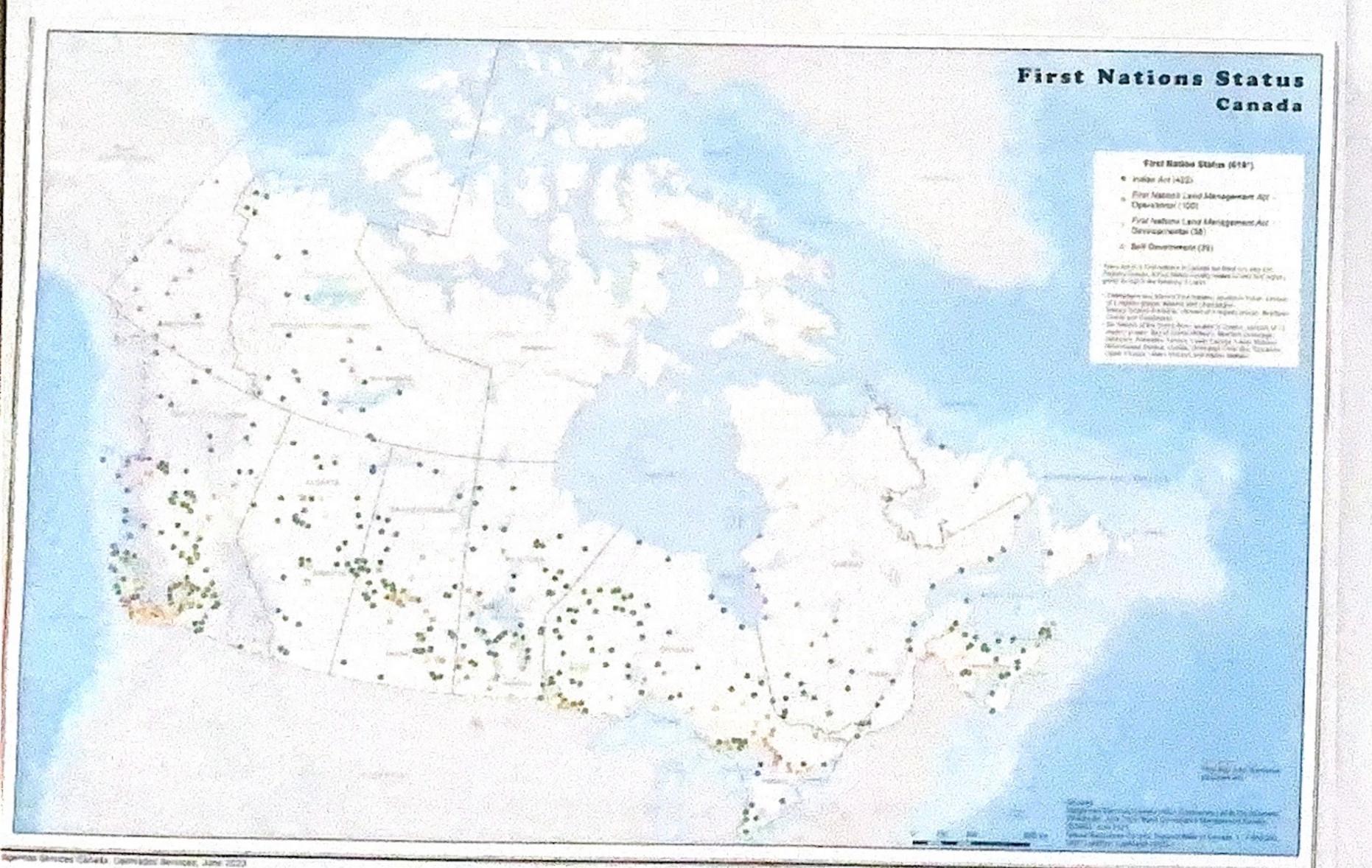
The Canadian Encyclopedia)



→ "Reserves today continue to be important land bases for First Nations across Canada, often contained with their ancestral and spiritual homelands. Yet, on average, reserves present some of the most alarming conditions in Canada":

- "isolated communities with high instances of poverty, substance abuse, suicide, unemployment, and mortality"
- Poor water and electricity supply, inadequate housing
- "Reserves are typically located in areas where economic opportunities are limited, and the reserves themselves provide few resources."

Source: Hanson, Erin. "Reserves." Indigenous foundations, The University of British Columbia, 2009, https://mei.genousfoundations.aris.ubc.ca/reserves/.



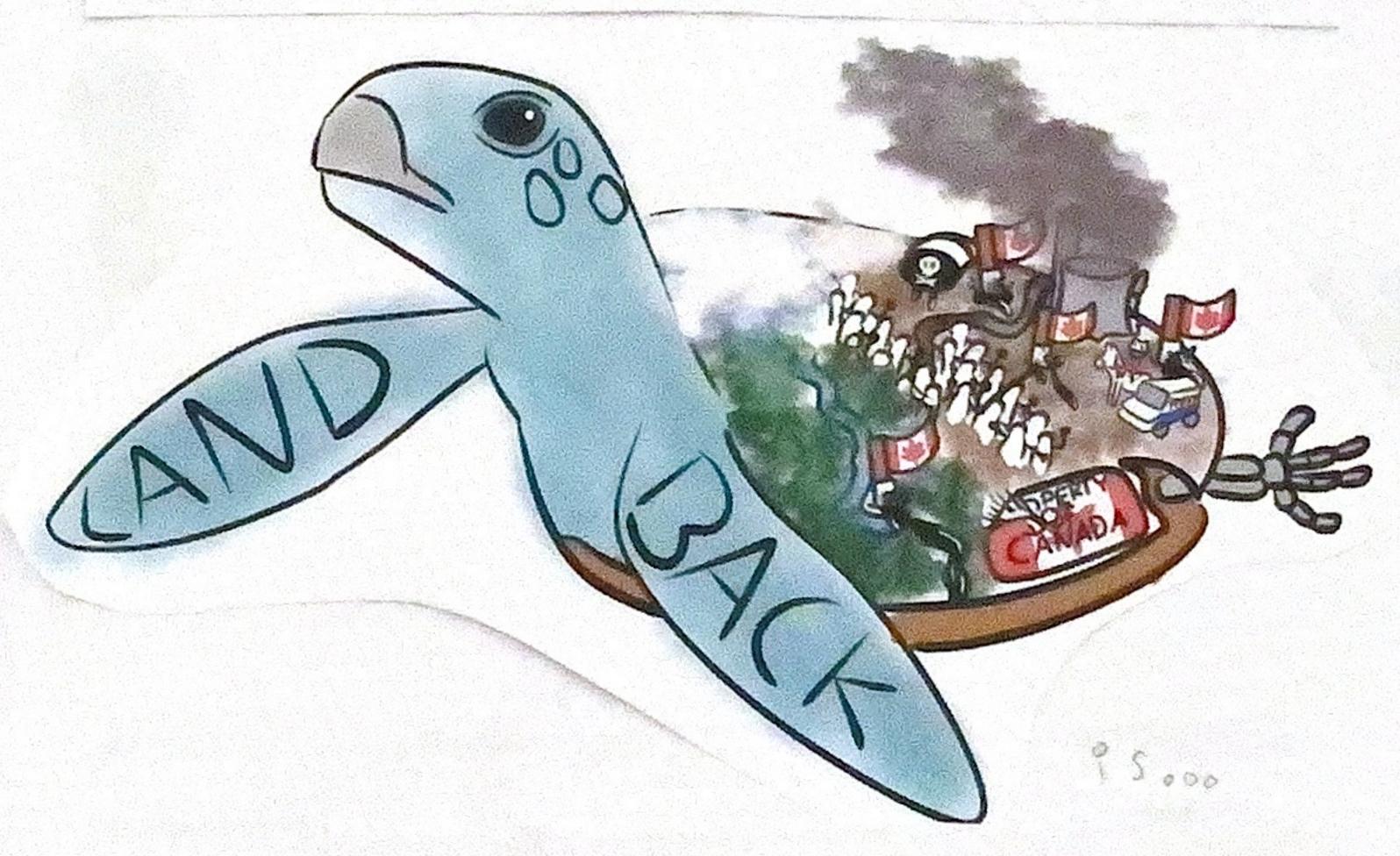
# AND BACK



(Schneider, Lindsey, "Whose Land Are You

On?" Youtube, uploaded by TED, 3 January 2023)

"Once you admit something's stolen... aren't you supposed to give it back?"



"A movement that has existed for generations with a long legacy of organizing and sacrifice to get Indigenous Lands back into Indigenous hands."

-LANDBACK

"about reclaiming Indigenous jurisdiction"
-Yellowhead Institute

It's not just about simply returning the physical land to its original stewards, but

"[...] a deep reflection on previous injustice. Land Back is a philosophy."
-Cedar Rose (Numata 2021)

Research for this project has included looking at only a fraction of the discussions various indigenous people of various peoples of Turtle Island are having about Land Back. Even among this comparatively small sample, it is evident that its importance gives it nuance. No two people say the same thing when asked what Land Back means for them, each having their own relationship with it. There are, however, common themes and sentiments stressed. Prominent among them,

Respect Justice Solidarity Healing with other for the land ove From the tues on mind Everylman inflicted my construction for Indiagnatis by colonialism people and for is in (NDN Collective 2020) (10 unuta 2024) Yellowhead Institute 2021) and an understanding that Land Back is something that is not only

important, but Necessary. (Sueed et al 2020)

Why is that?

A major economic threat to not only Indigenous communities is (wang & Sorman 2022) government-sanctioned capitalist Exploitation of the Land. Land Back activists frequently highlight the necessity of a change in how Land itself is governed, arguing for a symbiotic relationship between the Land and the people living upon it. (ASC News This means fighting for unpolluted water, and resisting attempts by corporations to 2022) run gas pipelines through Indigenous lands. (Sace) et al 2020)

settles governments mark

\* (NDN Podcasts 2023)

Settler governments, through affirming their own authority, attempt to claim for themselves the right to the final say in every discourse. As such, when people demand accountability for injustice they have inflicted upon the indigenous population of "their" country, they attempt to control what consequences they will face (as seen in the battle for the Black Hills (so-called "mount rushmore")) (MDV CO (lective 2020). Land Back challenges this in highlighting the need for and fighting for the involvement of Indigenous peoples in those decision-making processes (Spectrum of Consul.).

## Land Stewardship vs Land Ownership

Humans are part of Nature and equal to all other life ( Bess 2022

Nature as something to be dominated ( Bess 2022)

The Land is a living system (ABC News 2022)

Land as inanimate resource to be assigned monetary worth

(Want & Surman 2022)

Care for the land (Pashagumakum 2018)
Conservation (Bess 2022)





The **Treaties** for instance, are "Fundamentally, [...] an expression of relationship and are the basis for legitimate settler presence." (Treaty Promises2o23), Settler governments on Turtle Island have historically and frequently abused their power to violate these treations, breaking their own laws to do so (Morin 2020).

Land Back demands a Return of what has been taken without Consent and challenges both settler narratives of authority and Right to Decide.



# Spirituality of

"complex social and cultural customs for addressing the sacred and the supernatural" (Smith)

- Spiritual, cultural and religious practices of the First Nations cannot be defined generally but there are similarities between the different bands
  - → F.e. creation stories, the function of tricksters, "supernatural beings in folklore", significance of holy/sacred organizations
- Religious and spiritual practices were partially influenced by Christianity (settlers, government)
  - → The Christian influence is the reason for mixed practices but also replaced it in some places
- Traditional spirituality is becoming important again, especially after the times of oppression
  - Traditional ways of living are influenced by spirituality & religion
    - -- Hunting and building clans can be perceived as practicing spirituality

Have a look

atspiritual

dance

- "Kwakwaka'wakw Winter Dance"
- Another dance which is part of Indigenous culture in the Northwest



He Einst Wations

creatian

Ixanies





Muskrat drawings made by Sascha

"the origins of the cosmos and the interrelations of its elements"
 (Smith)

· can be encountered as tales

- · f.e. the "Earth Diver Myth" which has different versions
  - The Great Creator commanded animals to dive, into the primordial water to bring back mud, from which the Earth was formed
  - Other versions claim the earth was created on the back of a turtle ("Turtle Island"! popular term used by Indigenous people to refer to North America)
  - · Talking about how the celestial bodies were created
- Functions: documenting history, educational purposes, "guide humanity", lessons about spirituality

Tricksters



glooscap

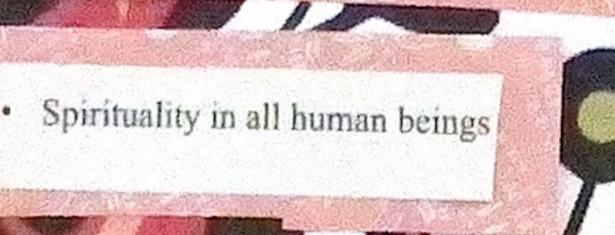
- · Different depictions of tricksters
  - -- can be male/female, foolish/helpful, hero/troublemaker

 Transformers/shape-shifters can transform from humans or animals into inanimate objects, f.e. Glooscap

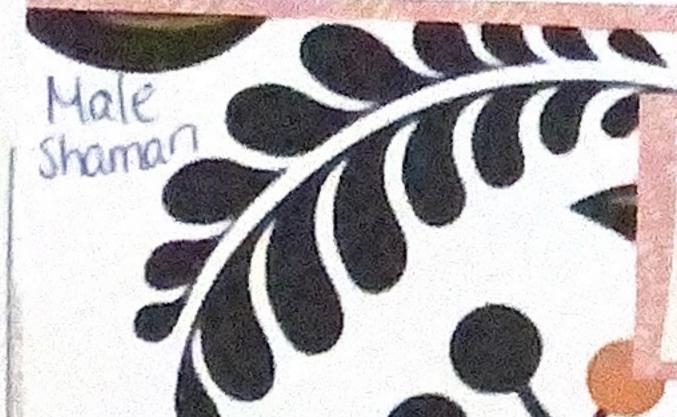
· "idea of a Creator, Great Spirit or Great Mystery — a power or being that has created the world and everything in it" (Smith)



· Good creatures but can be dangerous if they are disrespected

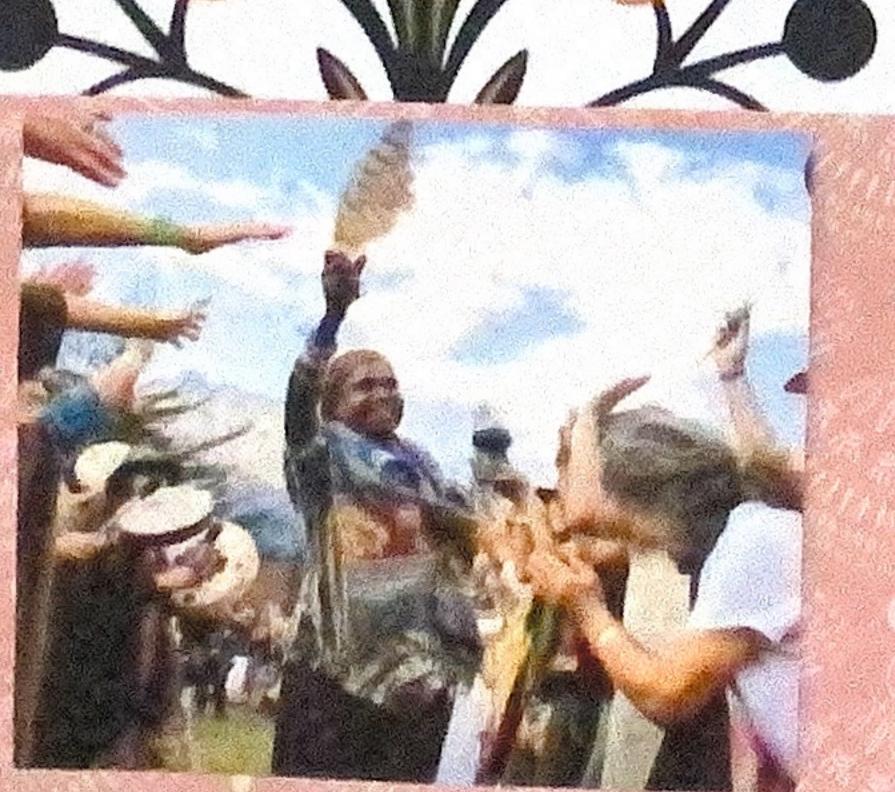


· Shamans as "The most prominent of the numerous religious figures found in traditional Indigenous religion"



"healers, prophets, diviners and custodians of religious mythology, and are often the officiants at religious ceremonies" ("Religion and Spirituality")

Convergence of Infernational Women





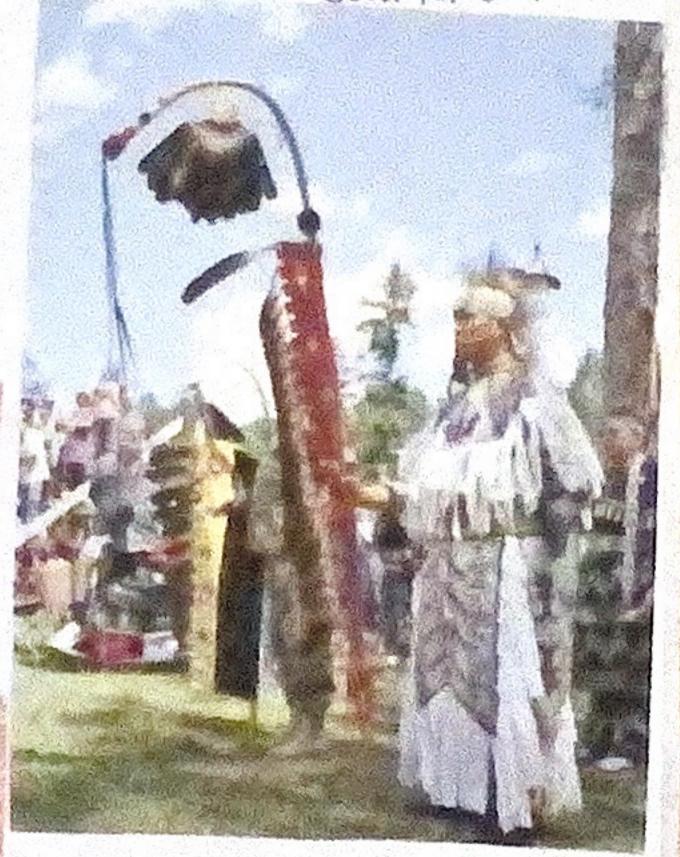
- · Belong to the larger group of the Anishinaabeg
- · Similar cultural practices in comparison with the Cree → Oji-Cree communities
- · "traditional homelands in the Eastern Woodlands" (Hall)
- · Are still active in reclaiming their culture today
- · Spiritual traditions that also aim to entertain
- Believe in good and evil spirits in the world
  - f.e. Nanabozo, a shapeshifter of various genders, is a creator, earth organizer, and trickster
- · "The spirits that filled all life are known as the Manitou" (Hall)
  - -- meaning "mysterious being," or simply "mystery,"



- A unique cylindrical lodge or tent
- · Ill people treated by the shamans - shaking tents to contact the spirits



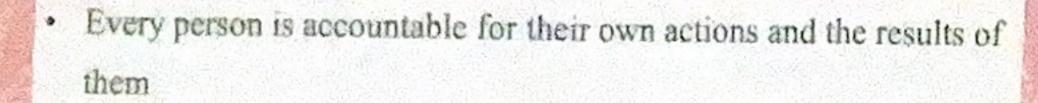
Grand Entry at the Lac du Flambeau Bear River Powww



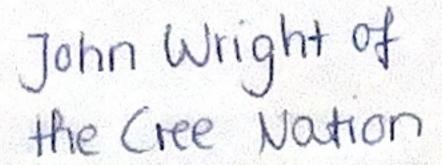


## coel

- · Believe in the interconnection of people and nature
- Living in harmony with nature brings health and happiness
- Religion also considers the connection of humans with animals and spirits
  - -- Can often be encountered in dreams



. Their stories revolve around the past but also their beliefs

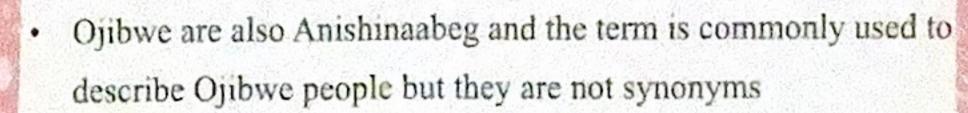




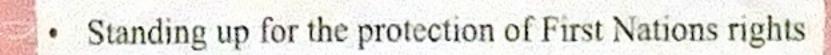


# Anishinabeg

- Diverse culture
  - Porcupine quills were originally used to create designs on birchbark and ash baskets and boxes, which are examples of Anishinaabe art traditions
  - Music plays a significant role (flute, drumming for healing and entertainment, singing in ceremonies, for religious purposes)



→ Also Ojibwe spelling



Securing their culture and identities

 The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) Act in 2021 passed by the Canadian Parliament

→ "Reconciliation, healing and cooperative relations"
(Hele)







# History of the Anishinaabek

In the beginning, Gizhemanidoo created the universe as we know it today. He created Grandfather Sun and Grandmother Moon, Mother Earth, and Father Sky. And on the earth, he created all things, living and nonliving. He created life in the earth, on the earth, in the sky, and in the water. He created the plants, rivers, four-legged and winged creatures, and the swimmers. After this was done, he created one of the greatest mysteries of all – the four seasons – to bring harmony and balance to all.

After all creation was complete, he created man. After he created the first Anishinaabe, he came to him in a dream and instructed him that he was to name all things in the language that he gave him, Anishinaabemowin. So the first man went about on his journey and named all things he saw – all the animals, insects, birds, and fish – however long this took. Afterward, he spoke to the Creator Gizhemanidoo in his dream and said, "I have finished what you have told me to do." Then the Creator Gizhemanidoo spoke back to him and said, "Yes, you have indeed done so, and now it is time for me to give you your name. Your name shall be Nanabozho, and whenever your people meet and greet one another, they will say a part of your name. That is why whenever the Anishinaabe people greet one another, they say the word Bozhoo."

Our creation story tells us that we originally migrated to the Great Lakes region from the East Coast. There are many settlements of our original homes that still exist to this day, like Manitoulin Island, the Island of the Great Spirit.

We have always been a nation, and we knew one another as the Anishinaabek. It was not until the French and European settlers arrived on this part of the continent that we became known as the tribes now called Ojibwe, Odawa and Bodwe'aadamiinh. I heard an elder speak about this in his teachings. He said that the Mackinaw-St. Ignace area was a huge community at one time. One day, the young hunters brought news that they had met a people who were not of our culture and language and that they were moving in this direction. Sure enough, the day arrived when a ship brought people. These people knew very little of our culture and language. They asked if they could meet with the elders, and so the meeting began. Shortly after the meeting began, a group of men got up and left. The settlers asked, "What are they doing?" although they thought they were asking, "Who are they?" So we told them what they were doing. They were going to build lodges: the Ojibwek. The meeting went on and another group of men got up and left, and again the same question was asked. We told them they were going to trade: the Odawak. Now remember, they could not speak our language very well, nor did we understand their language very well. After the meeting ended, the settlers saw young men picking up firewood and putting wood in the fire. The same question was asked, and we answered that they were the firekeepers: the Bodwe'aadamiinhk. History moves on a few hundred years, and now we find out in the history books that the native people of the Great Lakes area are known as the Chippewa, the Ottawa, and the Pottawattamii.





"Calling the Night" Cree

## Cree Creation Story



At the beginning of time, the Creator made the animals and the people. The Creator told Wisakedjak (a trickster figure) to teach the people how to live good, peaceful lives, and to take care of them. Wisakedjak did not listen to the Creator, and soon, the people were fighting and hurting one another. The Creator was disappointed and threatened Wisakedjak with a life of misery if he did not obey. Still Wisakedjak did not listen, and still the people continued to be violent with one another. The Creator decided to flood the lands, washing out everyone and everything. Only Wisakedjak, Otter, Beaver and Muskrat survived. Stranded on open water, Wisakedjak had an idea - if the animals could help him dive down and collect some of the old earth, he could expand it and start a new land. This was not an easy task; Otter and Beaver tried many times to get to the earth below, but both failed, almost dying in the process. Muskrat was the last to try. He stayed underwater for a long time, but when he resurfaced, he had wet earth in his paw. From this mud is where the earth as we know it today came.

Source: Preston, Richard J. "Cree." The Canadian Encyclopedia, Sep 9 2012, last edited Dec 7 2023, https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/cree.

Jonnie, Brianna, and Nahanni Shingoose. If I Go Missing. Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 2019. (Ojibwe and Saulteaux authors)

TW: Sexual abuse, death, violence

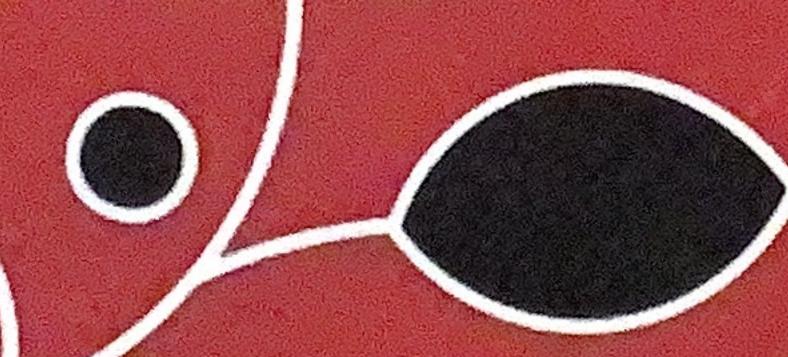
A graphic novel based on a letter written by 14-year-old Brianna Jonnie to the Winnipeg Police Service. The letter criticised authorities for investigating missing person cases of Indigenous people, and especially Indigenous women, insufficiently.

The book is accessible online: https://airc.ucsc.edu/resources/if-i-go-missing.pdf

(University of California)





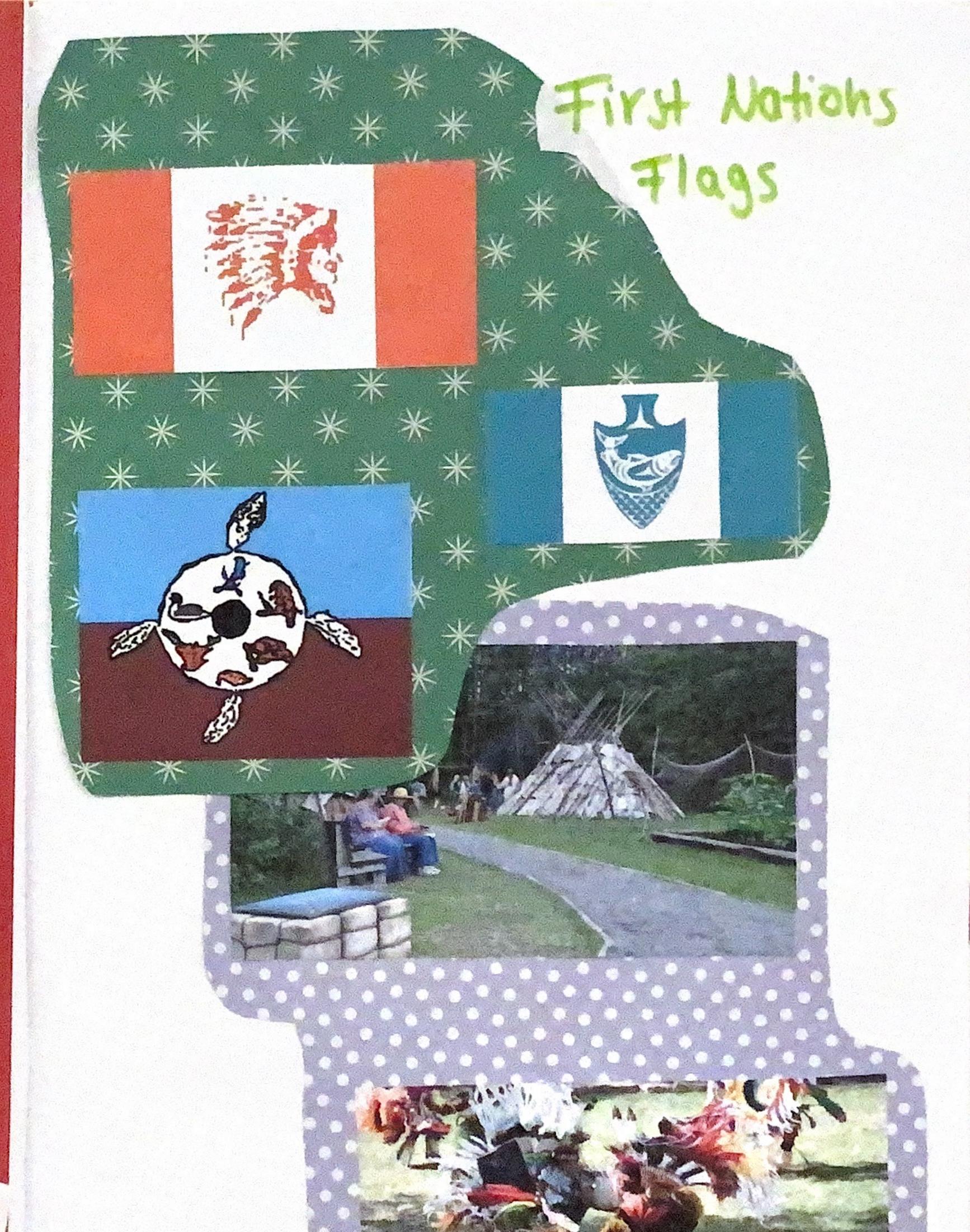








Artist recommendation





# First Nations Representation on Social Media

@the language is a content creator named Brando. Some of his most viewed videos are about him sharing an Ojibwe word of the day and telling the significance for that word, like in this example:

"Aanii Kina Wiya, Mino Giizhep! Tus is Brandos Ojibwe language word of the day and the word of the day is: Debwediman. Now before I give the translation. just wanna say that one a week every single week I work with a very fluent language speakers beautiful elder and she teaches me a lot of these amazing words and recently I told her what I was up to making a word of the day on Tiktok and she insisted that I share the word Debwediman 'cause she said "that's what you're gonna need, if you have this desire to learn a language" Debwediman she said to me. So I said "what does that mean?" and she said "that's commitment through the heart, its carrying something out with sour mind and sour heart, following it through, persevering and completing it""

Michelle Chubb also known under the name @indigenous baddie on tiktok is a content creator, model, activist and public speaker who posts videos about her culture as a Nehinaw Cree from Manitoba. She shows traditional clothing, accessories and dances and shares videos about powwows she attends.



Ojibwe Language

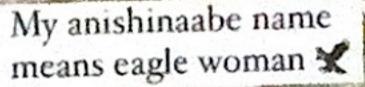
Word of the Day

Caller March 1-74 15 parts

@notoriouscree is a Cree tiktok creator named James Jones, who shares his culture to his 4 million followers and more. He posts videos about traditional clothing and dance performances of traditional hoop dances, his davonritte clothin and accessories and his everyday live as a Cree.

Traditional Indigenous fashion in Canada is important for a few reasons. Firstly, it reflects the culture and heritage of Indigenous peoples, showcasing their traditions and history, and playing a crucial role in their identity.







Dancing connects me to my highest energy

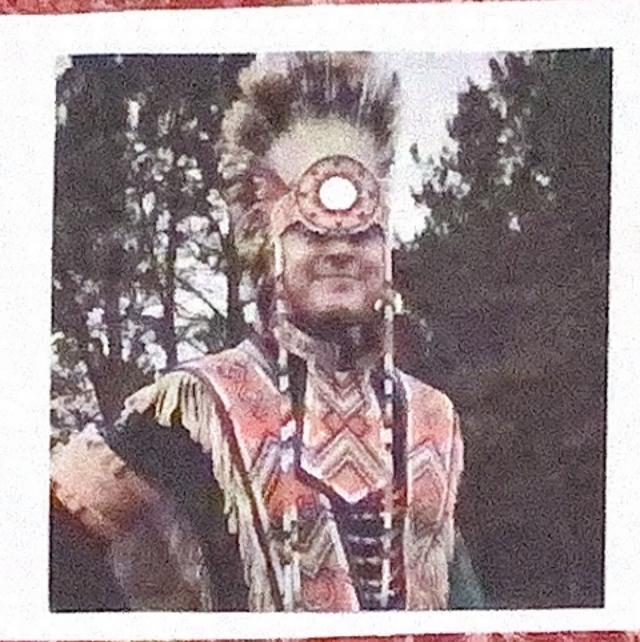






lastly, it empowers Indigenous designers and artists to reclaim their cultural heritage, asserting sovereignty and self-determination through self-expression (Maves Apparel).

peoples.



Secondly, it helps preserve Indigenous knowledge and skills, passed

down through generations in creating traditional clothing, ensuring these



skills continue for future generations. Thirdly, it serves as a form of resistance against colonization and cultural assimilation, symbolizing the resilience and resistance of Indigenous





# Indigenous Clothing in Everyday Looks

The relationship between dress and identity is profound for members of Indigenous communities. Beyond its practical use, clothing conveys information about the identity of the individual wearing it and sometimes pays tribute to a person's significant achievements or highlights the intimate connection between human beings and nature. Today, clothing eloquently shows the vitality and creativity of contemporary Indigenous cultures, which have found a balance between ancestral knowledge and lived reality, between tradition and innovation. (McCord Stewart Museu)



Ribbon Skirt

"Native American Ribbon Shirts are Regalia items that are worn by Native American people of many tribes and traditions. The shirts developed from European Trade Shirts that were usually made of cotton or linen fabric. Silk ribbons were another of the trade goods brought to North America by the Europeans. The bright colors of the ribbons made them very popular among Native Americans. In the 1800s calico fabric became available and Native Americans also made clothing from that colorful patterned cloth" (The Wandering Bull).

Ribbon Shirt

The ribbon skirt represents a symbol of womanhood. It is an identifying piece that connects you to the earth and Grandmother moon. More recently, the ribbon skirt has been used as a form of expression of womanhood and strength. Many Indigenous groups have a strong tradition in this iconic piece of clothing, and all have adapted or created their own stories and protocol surrounding them. Let us look back at the core history at how the ribbon skirt began to be. This teaching is provided to us by our SGEI knowledge keeper (Seven Generations).



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