Collection Count + Care

Count + Care seeks relationships within and conversations across the collection. What stories does the collection tell?

2022

SPEAKER
Carleigh Candice Mignonne Milburn

FEATURED WORKS

Norval Morrisseau, Untitled, before 1980, acrylic on canvas. Gift of Nicholas and Barbara Diamant, 2018


KEYWORDS
Norval Morrisseau, Indigenous Art, Art Collection

TRANSCRIPT
Carleigh Candice Mignonne Milburn: Norval Morrisseau, Copper Thunderbird (1932-2007), is an influential Indigenous woodland style artist from the Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinabek First Nation and is considered the Mishomis [grandfather] for Indigenous contemporary art in Canada.

Morrisseau's work is often about the interrelatedness and connectedness of varying worlds; his work walks between the known and unknown. Morrisseau's work conceptualizes vision quests, spirit-beings (such as Thunderbird) and traditional teachings.

Morrisseau's visions come not just from a material world but a holistic approach to art; their work comes from a physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual realm of what art can represent. Morrisseau spent some time depicting images that create a broader theme of duality and sacred teachings. An example of this can be seen in Sacred Medicine Bear, as the circles have lines through each, referencing night/day, sun/moon, or good and evil.

In the 1970s, Morrisseau creates more illuminating creations with intense colours and shapes due to their spirituality; with his connections to Eckankar and his Anishinaabe roots.

Morrisseau's works reflect methods of re-learning and re-imagining spaces that hold Indigenous ways of being and knowing; his work did not reflect typical trajectories but challenged identity, gender, sexuality, spirit, and contemporary art. In many ways, I believe these pieces in this current collection
are having conversations amongst each other before collaborating and interacting with the rest of the world.