

Art of the North Woods and Beyond

MASLAK McLEOD GALLERY

Maslak McLeod Gallery in Toronto, Ontario is a family affair, in both its proprietorship and in its distinguished list of artists. For more than 30 years, the gallery's owner, Joseph McLeod, has been specializing in Aboriginal art from Nova Scotia to the Northwest Coast. But the gallery is perhaps best known for its impressive collection of paintings by the celebrated "Father" of the Woodland school of art, the late Ojibwe artist Norval Morrisseau (1931–2007).



Alfred Villeneuve (Ojibwe), "Sunset Crotch Lake," 24"x30," oil on canvas.

The offspring of the Woodland style of art in the gallery includes a handful of renowned Ojibwe painters: Goyce and Josh Kagegamic, Carl Ray, Cobiness, Saul Williams, Roy Thomas and Benjamin Chee Chee. Building on Morrisseau's legacy that expressively interprets the convergence of corporeal and ethereal Ojibwe cultural iconography, these artists have developed a distinct fine-art aesthetic that expresses Woodland Aboriginal culture and cosmology with a bold and vibrant visual impact. In addition to leaving his legacy in art, Morrisseau left seven children who are now emerging among the newest generation of Woodland artists. Just as the gallery's staff now includes McLeod's daughter, Kers, and his son, Christian, the gallery also currently features paintings by Morrisseau's son, also named Christian, whose artistic lineage pays respectful homage to his father's bold petroglyphic style.

Maslak McLeod also specializes in Inuit sculpture, from Classic Period pieces (1950–1960) to new works by Morris Alorut, Lucassie Echalook, Johnny Inukpuk, Floyd Kuptana, Ruben Piqtouken and many more master Inuit sculptors. Equally innovative Six Nations Iroquois sculptors represented in the gallery include Tom Hill, Joseph Jacobs, Cleveland Sandy, Jacob Thomas and Duffy Wilson.

Over the years, Maslak McLeod Gallery has also been instrumental in bringing Canadian Native art to Germany, Italy, Brazil, Japan, China, France and Puerto Rico.

A newcomer to the gallery, **Alfred Villeneuve** (Ojibwe), paints his animated Canadian landscape *en plein air* during daily expeditions into the Ottawa Valley and Algonquin Park. "Villeneuve paints one painting each day and then writes about the piece in his journal," McLeod says. Villeneuve's most recent body of work combining his art and writings is titled *In His Own Words—Thirty Days in July: A Journalistic Account of an Algonquin Odyssey*. In two of Villeneuve's oil works, "Sunset Crotch Lake" and "Sunset Crow Lake" (both 24 inches by 30 inches), the clouds appear to swim as vividly and vibrantly in their reflection in the water as in the sky. If Van Gogh were Ojibwe, Villeneuve's expressionistic approach to landscape painting might appear as a faithful aesthetic offspring. Villeneuve's exhibition is on view from May 14 through July 14. 🍃

Maslak McLeod Gallery

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