

Tecumseh, A Portrait

Dismantling the Myth, as an Agent of Change

By

Philip Cote
(Noodgmowiin – “The Healer”)

A thesis exhibition presented to OCAD University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

In

Interdisciplinary Art, Media and Design

205 Richmond Street 4th Floor. Room 7418, April 15th to 20th

Toronto Ontario, Canada 2015

© Philip Cote (Noodgmowiin – “The Healer”)

Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I authorize OCAD University to lend this thesis to other institutions, individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

I further authorize OCAD University to reproduce this thesis by photocopying or by other means, in total or in part, at the request of other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

Abstract

Tecumseh, A Portrait
Dismantling the Myth, as an Agent of Change
By Philip Cote, Master of Fine Arts In
Interdisciplinary Art, Media and Design 2015
OCAD University

This research project offers insights into the history of European visual representations of Indigenous peoples, Tecumseh in particular, and the larger issues of colonialism and bias with its cross generational and damaging consequences. The investigation examines how visual representations of Tecumseh came into being and remained in circulation across time and to what degree were recorded archival depictions of the leader still raise questions of veracity and intent. Indigenous theorists, Vine Deloria, Jr., Marie Baptiste, James (Sake) Youngblood Henderson provided insights into Indigenous identity, sovereignty and decolonization theories; Stephanie Pratt's examinations offered analysis of the representation of Indigenous leaders through British portraiture; Elders Edward Benton Benai and Floyd Looks For Buffalo Hand, are drawn on for their cultural knowledge.

Acknowledgements

Professor Michael Prokopow, thank you for your generous spirit, continued support and belief that I have something important to contribute. Professor Paula Gardner for open mindedness and kindness in your diligent effort to help me understand critical theory. Assistant Professor Sarah Mclean Knapp for your guidance and insight into the history of graphic design and special thanks for Professor Barbara Rauch for stepping in as a committee member in the final stage of thesis work. Buffalo Chief Floyd Looks For Buffalo Hand for his continued commitment to maintain Lakota traditions and keep alive the stories for the next generation, Mitakuya Oyasin. Thank you to the Jones family in Cape Croker. Roger Lewis, Assistant Curator, Ethnology, at Nova Scotia Museum for your knowledge of the Mi'kmaq People. Much gratitude and appreciation is extended to Assistant Curator, Guislaine Lemay for her extensive tour of the McCord Museum and its collections. Nancy Baines and Heather Cirulis for your invaluable assistance sourcing publications and papers on British military uniforms during the War of 1812 at Fort York Research Centre. Rebecca Baird for your unconditional support, endless patience, understanding and belief in me, my work and also for taking this journey with me. Many thanks must be extended to Donna Lypchuk for exceptional editing assistance and wisdom. Cynthia Grant for our many conversations, your superb editing skills and belief in kinship and my work's connection to our community. Nelly Torossian for your constant support and generosity on many levels, which included outstanding technical and artistic assistance during this project's process and of course your faith in this project. A special thank you to Linda Abrahams for your wisdom in editing and pulling the thesis together on its final push towards completion. Finally, I must express my appreciation to OCADU, and the financial support of both the INDSPIRE and Norman Jewison Scholarship.

Dedication

To my Grandmother

Ethel Jones Williams

Parents Beverley & Gerald Cote

Brother Gary Cote

Daughter Jacqueline Cote

Grandsons Keelan & Kurtis

Sisters

Jerrilynn Harper, Elaine Cote, Carolyn Cote

&

Brother-in-law Vern Harper

Nieces Carly, Cotee and Raimy

Table of Contents

List of Figures and Illustrations: vii

Definitions of Terms: ix

Introduction: 1-3

Chapter One: Representations of Indigenous Peoples and Tecumseh in Particular and the Damaging Cross Generational Consequences of Colonialism and Bias. 4-19

Chapter Two: Research, Analysis and the Interpretive Process 20-55

Chapter Three: The Goals of a New Indigenous Visual Language 56-58

Conclusion: 59-61

Thesis Exhibition: 62-63

Bibliography: 64-67

List of Figures and Illustrations

- Figure 1. Benson J. Lossing's etching 1848 adapted from Pierre Le Dru drawing of 1808. 9
- Figure 2. Benson J. Lossing's 1858 etchings of Tenskwatawa.12
- Figure 3. The Prophet, Tenskwatawa by George Catlin 1832.12
- Figure 4. Model of Prophet's Town.13
- Figure 5. *Tecumseh Equestrian* digital image on canvas, 86.5cm x 60cm, 2011. 22
- Figure 6. *Crossing the Alps*, a painting of Napoleon by Jacques Louis David, 289 cm x 181 cm, 1808. 25
- Figure 7. Tee Yee Ho Ga Row, Emperor of the Six Nations, a painting by John Verelst,1710. Library Archives Canada. C-092415. 28
- Figure 8. Sa Ga Yeath Qua Pieth Tow, King of the Maquas, a painting by John Verelst, Library Archives Canada. C-092419. 29
- Figure 9. *White Horse* acrylic on canvas 153cm x 228cm 2011. 32
- Figure 10. Painting Two: *Tecumseh Foresees His Ominous Future* acrylic on canvas 91cm x 122cm, 2012. 33
- Figure 11. Three point perspective of Tecumseh, 21.5cm x 61cm, 2011. 35
- Figure 12. *Tecumseh Sees His Ominous Future*, acrylic on canvas, 91 x 122 cm, 2011. 36
- Figure 13. *Empowerment*, digital print poster, 28 x 43 cm, 2011. 36
- Figure 14. Tecumseh digital drawing. 37
- Figure 15. Original etching by Lossing. 38
- Figure 16. *Tecumseh Unifying The Nations*, digital poster (61cm x 91.5cm, 2012). 39
- Figure 17. Cedar slab, (35.5cm x 2.5cm, 1810, collected by Milford G. Chandler. 41
- Figure 18. Original LeDru pencil sketch, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa; C-319. 44
- Figure 19. Tecumseh's Headdress, deer head with antlers, eagle feathers, owl

feathers, hide, porcupine quillwork. 68 cm x 38 cm. circa 1810. Collection of the McCord Museum. 47

Figure 20. Detail image of serrated edges of the eagle feathers. 48

Figure 21. Detail of the cap structure of the headdress. The whole hide from a deer's head including ears and antlers are visible. The lower section shows how the eagle feathers are tied to the overall structure. There are additional rows above the rim in which owl feathers are hung. 49

Figure 22. Detail showing the missing hair on the deer hide cap the main observation I want to make here is the hemp woven rings at the base of the antlers and the points at which decorated eagle feather may have been hung. 50

Figure 23. Detail of front section of headdress. 51

Figure 24. King George 111 Medal, silver, wampum beads, 7.8 cm in circumference, circa 1776. 52

Figure 25. Nose rings made from silver 1.5 cm 1780-1810 item M1900.2. 53

Figure 26. *Resistance, Alliance of Fifty Nations* 61cm x 91.5cm, 2013. 54

Figure 27. A candlelight march proceeds along College Street on Friday, Jan. 11, 2013, as part of the *Idle No More* movement in Toronto. Photo credit (CP24/Cristina Tenaglia). 61

Figure 28. Thesis Exhibition Tecumseh White Horse with mirror and eagle staff Photo 2015. 62

Figure 29. Thesis Exhibition series of Tecumseh posters Photo 2015. 62

Figure 30. Thesis Exhibition series of Joseph Brant, Blackhawk, Pontiac, Maquinna, Jean Baptiste Cope, Sahgimah and Russell Means posters 2015. 63

Figure 31. Thesis Exhibition Drawings and Tecumseh Headdress Photo along with King George the third medal photo 2014. Idle No More Photo 2013. 63

Definitions of Terms

Aboriginal

Existing in a place since earliest times. It is a word that is used interchangeably with Indigenous, Natives, Indians, First Nations and First Peoples in this essay

First Nations

Indian peoples or their communities not including Inuit or Metis peoples

First Peoples

The Aboriginal peoples of a country, in Canada including First Nations, Inuit and the Metis peoples

Indian

Original inhabitants of the continent of America, used interchangeably with indigenous, native, First Peoples, First Nations and aboriginal in this essay

Indigenous

Existing naturally in a particular country region or environment, a word that is used in this essay interchangeably with native, Indian, aboriginal, First Nations and First Peoples