

4—Karen Duffek, *Beyond History*. Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1989, p.38.

5—Lippard, p. 108.

thunderbird of traditional native religion? Logan places the responsibility squarely with his audience to decipher the cross-purposes of these messages and determine which values are of real worth.

The pictures that comprise the *Classical Aboriginal* series are highly allegorical; their instructive nature leads the viewer through a diverse strata of meanings. Like many contemporary native artists, Logan acknowledges the contradictions that define Native cultures today and those differences form the basis of his conceptual and aesthetic approach to art.⁴ His challenge to the traditional boundaries imposed by a history of another's making moves his art beyond a definition of cultural identity that is couched only in traditional terms.

Logan's art critiques the dislocation of native society. When understood in the dual contexts of transformation and oppression, art about place and displacement includes, as Logan's does, overt and covert religious and spiritual aspects. Modern belief systems often omit the relationship between religion and the land.⁵

The work in the exhibition, *A Question of Ideals*, addresses implicitly and explicitly how white culture perceives, and is perceived by "Indians." Logan's criticism of the demeaning western traditions of concurrent appropriation from and marginalization of the visual imagery of Aboriginal peoples offers a subtle and complex model of subversion. As we look at Logan's paintings, we might be just a little uncomfortable that our gaze is being turned back on us.

Anna-Marie Larsen
Kamloops Art Gallery
March, 1992

Duffek, Karen. *Beyond History*. Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1989.

Lippard, Lucy. *Mixed Blessings: New Art in a Multicultural America*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1990.

Raven, Arlene, Cassandra Langer and Joanna Freuh, eds. *Feminist Art Criticism*. New York: Icon Editions, 1991.

Young Man, Alfred, ed. *Networking: Proceedings From National Native Indian Artists' Symposium IV*. Lethbridge: University of Lethbridge, 1988.

The Diners Club
(No Reservation Required),
1991



Jim Logan

Born: New Westminster, British Columbia, 1955

1983 Certificate in Graphic Design, David Thompson University Center

Group Shows

- 1992 *Meeting the New World*, Various Galleries, Montreal, P.Q.
1992 *INDIGENA*, Museum of Civilization, Ottawa-Hull,
1990 *EXPLORATIONS*, St. Jerome, Quebec, and Kamloops, B.C.
1988 *Peace Hills Trust Art Collection Show*, Edmonton, Alta.
Spirit of the Lubicon, Bearclaw Gallery, Edmonton, Alta.
1987 *Yukon Indian Art Show*, (juried) Territorial Art Gallery, Whitehorse, Yukon
1986 *Yukon Light*, St. John Public Library, St. John, N.B.
Yukon Pavilion, EXPO 86, Vancouver, B.C.
1985 *Points of View*, Yukon Territorial Government Buildings, Whitehorse, Yukon
South East Alaska State Fair, Haines, Alaska
1984 *Points of View*, Yukon Territorial Government Buildings, Whitehorse, Yukon
1983 *West Kootenay Regional Juried Exposition*, Nelson, B.C.
The Graphics Show, Views Gallery, Nelson, B.C.
1982 *McBride 50th Anniversary Jubilee*, McBride, B.C.
1981 *Caribou Regional Juried Exhibition*, Studio 2880, Prince George, B.C.

Solo Shows

- 1991 *Recent Works of Jim Logan*, Peters Gallery, Kamloops, B.C.
Heart Beats and Drum Beats, Northern Passage Gallery, Victoria, B.C.
Recent Works of Jim Logan, Leona Lattimer Gallery, Vancouver, B.C.
Various Views, Canada House, Banff, Alta.
Coming in From the Cold, Bearclaw Gallery, Edmonton, Alta.
1990 *Requiem For Our Children*, Territorial Gallery, Whitehorse, Yukon.
Northern Mosaic, Yukon Gallery, Whitehorse, Yukon
The Quiet Condition, Northern Passage Gallery, Victoria, B.C.
Recent Works of Jim Logan, Leona Lattimer Gallery, Vancouver, B.C.
1989 *After The Goldrush*, Bearclaw Gallery, Edmonton, Alta.
1988 *Recent Works of Jim Logan*, Bearclaw Gallery, Edmonton, Alta.
Sunny Side of Life, Yukon Gallery, Whitehorse, Yukon
1987 *The Weight*, Territorial Gallery, Whitehorse, Yukon
1986 *Tutchone Images*, Town Square Gallery, Anchorage, Alaska, USA
1985 *Images of a People*, Yukon Gallery, Whitehorse, Yukon

Bibliography

- The Dispossessed, The War Against the Indians*, NFB/CBC, produced by Harry Rasky, to be aired fall, 1992.
Drums, CBC Television, 1991
A Requiem for Our Children, Focus North, CBC Television Whitehorse, 1990
Jim Logan — The Painter Prophet, Canadian Lutheran, Dec., 1991
Lower Than the Angels: The Weights of Jim Logan's Art, the Canadian Journal of Native Studies, Vol. 10, No. 1, 1990
Painting the Quiet Condition, Up Here Magazine, Oct./Nov., 1985

Cover : *Searching for our Savior* (detail), 1991

Art and its Practices
An Investigation of Contemporary Art

Kamloops Art Gallery
Jim Logan
A Question of Ideals
ISBN 1-895497-05-1

Curatorial Essay by
Anna-Marie Larsen

Board of Trustees:
Katherine LeReverend
Dave Harper
Jill Juusola
Marlene Jensen
Laurie Blawatt
Alan Brandoli
John Cowell
John Dumbrell
Kathy Jones
Linda Jules
Jacqueline McCullough
Al McNair

Director/Curator:
Jann L. M. Bailey
Exhibition/Education
Coordinator:
Anna-Marie Larsen

Design: Tak Yamaguchi
Photos: Jim Logan
Noran Printing Ltd.

© 1992 Kamloops Art Gallery

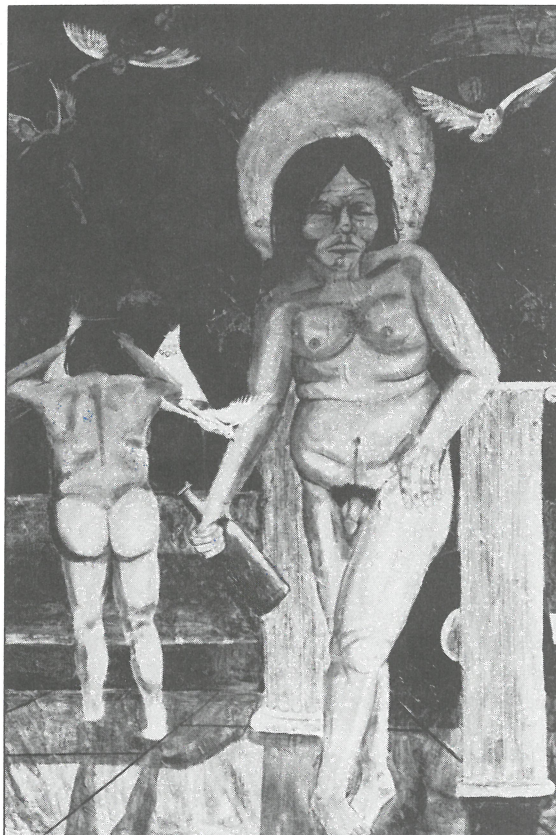
Kamloops Art Gallery
207 Seymour Street
Kamloops
British Columbia
Canada
V2C 2E7

Printed in Canada

KAMLOOPS
ART
GALLERY

Art and its Practices

An Investigation of Contemporary Art



Jim Logan

A Question of Ideals

005946
Kamloops Art Gallery
c.1 6934310

4 of 5

Kamloops Art Gallery
March 5 to April 12, 1992

Burnaby Art Gallery
September 25 to October 25, 1992

Foreword

It has only been in the last few decades that Canada's First Nations have gained an important position in the social and political consciousness of our nation. Land claims, fishing rights, residential schools and treaty grievances have made headlines in every media in the country.

The exhibition of work by Jim Logan, A Question of Ideals, is one of many native art exhibitions organized by the Kamloops Art Gallery in recognition of important Canadian artists.

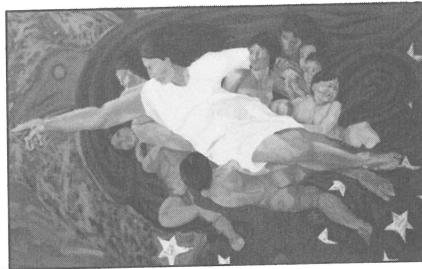
In his work Jim Logan deals with multi-layered issues. Using images appropriated from historic European art, he addresses issues of Eurocentric privilege, male domination, and native abuses through family breakdown and alcoholism.

This is a powerful and thought-provoking exhibition that involved many people. I would like to sincerely thank Jim Logan for his help in organizing this exhibition, Anna-Marie Larsen for her conscientious curatorial work, JoAnn Atkinson, Trish Keegan, Tiona Lee, Terry Roberts and Shelley Whittaker for their administrative and preparatory work, and Tak Yamaguchi for his creative design. I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Gallery volunteers and the Board of Trustees who continually support the vision and direction of this institution.

The Kamloops Art Gallery will tour this exhibition to the Burnaby Art Gallery, and I would like to thank Karen Henry, Director, for her spirit of cooperation and interest in the work of Jim Logan.

Exhibitions organized by the Kamloops Art Gallery are supported through the City of Kamloops, the Government of British Columbia through the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry responsible for Culture, The Canada Council, and corporate sponsorships. Our sincere and continued appreciation is extended for this funding assistance, especially to our Local Perspectives sponsors, Earl's Restaurants, Ezzard-Eberts Insurance, Kamloops This Week, Morelli Chertkow, and the Royal Bank of Canada.

*Jann L.M. Bailey
Director/Curator*



A Rethinking on the Western Front (detail)
1991

1—H.W. Jansson, *History of Art*.
New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1977,
p. 41.

2—Lucy Lippard, *Mixed Blessings: New Art in a Multicultural America*. Toronto: Random House, 1990, p. 25.

3—*Ibid.*, p. 106.

Native culture is only marginally understood in Canada. It is offered too frequently from Eurocentric vistas in art history textbooks, or carefully dusted and arranged on museum shelves — interesting to behold, untouchable and, thus, inconvenient for scrutiny. It passes largely unrecorded except for instances when it conflicts with civil authority as it did at Oka in the summer of 1990, at the 1988 Calgary Olympics, or at any of a score of barricades raised when natives are in dispute with big business or government.

Contemporary native culture has a great deal to do with recognition of applied stereotypes and with overturning negative preconceptions of native peoples. Native artists are demanding a voice. As an art student, Jim Logan was disturbed to read descriptions of Aboriginal peoples' art as the product of static and isolationist societies, ones with little awareness their own history. Logan, a Métis, found the work of his people marginally located in his art history survey text alongside illustrations of cave art and the artifacts of civilizations such as ancient Egypt — and lumped wholesale under the banner of "primitive."¹ This disturbing label serves not only to separate the artwork of Native artists by class, as in "minor," "low," "folk," or "amateur," but to distinguish it from what is "fine," "high," or "professional" art, and infers that such work is the product of outsiders.²

Modernist Aboriginal artists are often caught between cultures: attacked by their own traditionalists for not being "Indian" enough and attacked by the white mainstream for being derivative. It is as if white artists had not helped themselves to things of the First Peoples for centuries and as though the First Peoples had not lived (though perhaps not thrived) in the dominant culture. At issue is the right to speak in one's own voice rather than being defined by the dominant culture or even one's tribal traditions.

The West has historically turned to the Third and Fourth Worlds for transfusions of energy and belief. (Fourth World artists are those without a country of their own, they are usually a minority, and they lack the power to direct the course of their collective lives: they are the Aboriginal peoples whose lands fall within the national boundaries of the First, Second, and Third Worlds.)³ For example, Cubist appropriation of the forms of traditional cultures matches Surrealist adoption of the fantastic imagery of unfamiliar religions and cultures, and amounts to image cannibalism. Yet these are only two examples of a wholesale diet of appropriated imagery, made difficult to swallow by the post-modernist rampage that condones appropriation as a "critical" strategy. The problem with appropriation is that it flirts with intellectual imposture when it reaches out to other cultures without pairing the appropriated image with a frame of reference — and draws dangerously close to cultural voyeurism.

In painting the *Classical Aboriginal* series which comprises the exhibition, *A Question of Ideals*, Logan has returned to the paintings illustrated in his art history survey text and has mined imagery that is commonly referred to as "masterworks." The pictures that constitute this exhibition are clever puns of work confiscated from artists such as Manet, El Greco, Warhol, and Michaelangelo. Logan frequently changes the subjects' gender, substitutes Indian faces for white ones, and manipulates iconography to reflect contemporary Aboriginal culture. On one level, this amounts to an optical shell game where the viewer is asked to decipher visual slight of hand and decode the alterations to the original images. This succeeds because the artist has chosen pieces that have become so commodified and overexposed that they are readily recognized, if not easily named: Leonardo's *Mona Lisa*, Michaelangelo's *The Creation of Adam*, or *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* by Edouard Manet have all been expropriated by the advertisers of chocolate bars, tooth whitening products, and soft drinks to flog their products.

That the viewer locates the appropriated images through comfortable overexposure to them is in part key to the success of these Logan paintings. Like puns, significance is established when they are sifted for deeper meaning. Logan's work probes not only the marginalization of native culture but ruminates on the behaviors these stereotypes are based on. Logan asks tough questions about what we accept as ideal representations of beauty, and leads the viewer to question the equity of gender representation. He poses questions about the validity of Christian religion when adopted wholesale by Native constituents, and about the place alcohol has assumed in Native society.

In the spring of 1991, Logan painted *Questioning Intellect*, the first picture of the *Classical Aboriginal* series. It exemplifies the artist's queries about the validity of using western art history as a barometer by which all art must be measured, and juxtaposes those questions with ones arising from his readings of texts by philosopher Henri Bergson. Bergson's exploration of creationist and mechanist theories of the creation of the universe caused Logan to delve into his own religious beliefs. For Logan, a Christian, the creative impulse so integral to his being is proof that the world was not the product of chemical reaction but created through the divine touch of God. The complex relationship between the elements he includes in this painting, such as a representation of Einstein juxtaposed with that of Big Bear, actively illustrates the creationist/mechanist dialogue: Big Bear lived in the world and saw his existence as intrinsically tied to the land, whereas Einstein was involved in the intellectual process of defining the universe while maintaining spiritual separateness from it. Two Indian figures sit forlornly to one side, their marginalized, despairing poses offer a sombre reflection of the current cultural displacement of

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF THE CARIBOO LIBRARY
BOX 3010, KAMLOOPS, B.C.
V2C 5N3

While he apes the composition of Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, Logan has changed the location of this pastoral to a recognizably Canadian landscape and the image is contemporized by the clothing the women wear. Cans of Diet Coke and baskets of berries replace the luscious feast in Manet's original picture. The two nude males lounging on the picnic blanket have substituted the dandified attire of their counterparts in the original picture for tatoos of the thunderbird; their chests are scarred, evidence of participation in the rituals of the Sundance Ceremony. Again, this image functions on several levels, contrasting the passage of time, respect for the land with exploitation of the land, the matriarchal/patriarchal orientation of the respective Indian and Eurocentric cultures, and the stereotypical Indian with the reality of the contemporary Indian.

Searching For Our Savior also effectively blends conterminous symbols of white and aboriginal cultures to create non-linear narrative. The central figure is a male nude who assumes a pose reminiscent of the classical statuary of the Greeks. His facial expression is ambiguous — alternately readable as despairing or surly — and, coupled with the wine bottle he dangles at his side, he simultaneously negates the notion of the "noble savage" that is romantically applied to native peoples and exploits the cliché of the "drunken Indian." Logan notes that the gold halo around his head is "the halo of innocence." The other elements in this picture offer a pastiche of meaning and an instructive look at the wholesale appropriation of native culture. Double meaning and black humor make deciphering these puns rewarding. For instance, three doves, a symbol of the Christian Trinity, are counterpoint to the importance of buffalo to Native tradition. Logan seems to be saying that native society, like humanity, has fallen from what it was, a point emphasized by the inclusion of falling angels. A large turtle represents Turtle Island, a geographic area that Natives use to describe North America. An old man hunches under the weight of a cross he shoulders, perhaps offering a counterpoint view of a young Christ who also shouldered a cross. Eagle feathers hang from the cross, referring to the melding of Christian and Native religious values. Stone arches refer to the "civilizing" of the world yet graffitied on them are symbols that represent the disease and pestilence, both real and metaphoric, that whites have bequeathed natives. The thunderbird, a powerful symbol to natives, is represented as a dingy, unglorified Thunderbird car, as if the artist is incensed that so powerful a symbol to his people has been appropriated and assigned market value by the white world. The multi-layered meanings found in this work create a sophisticated dialogue about the state of native culture and religion and the uneasy coexistence it has with the dominant white-Anglo one. The symbols presented offer dialogue about this in a straight-ahead way, yet add up to a state of confusion. In a consumer-oriented society, one that native culture has emulated, is the Thunderbird car more worthy of honor than the

he *Classical Aboriginal* series which is the exhibition, *A Question of Ideals*, Logan has the paintings illustrated in his art history and has mined imagery that is commonly known as "masterworks." The pictures that constitute the series are clever puns of work confiscated from artists such as Manet, El Greco, Warhol, and Picasso. Logan frequently changes the subjects' features, substitutes Indian faces for white ones, and uses iconography to reflect contemporary culture. On one level, this amounts to an art game where the viewer is asked to decipher the references of hand and decode the alterations to the originals. This succeeds because the artist has used subjects that have become so commodified and iconic that they are readily recognized, if not easily identified. Logan's *Mona Lisa*, Michaelangelo's *The Creation of Adam*, or *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* by Edouard Manet have all been expropriated by the advertisers of products, tooth whitening products, and soft drinks.

Logan locates the appropriated images through overexposure to them is in part key to the success of these Logan paintings. Like puns, significance is realized when they are sifted for deeper meaning. Logan's work probes not only the marginalization of Native Americans but also ruminates on the behaviors these people are based on. Logan asks tough questions about the values we accept as ideal representations of beauty, and asks the viewer to question the equity of gender relations. He poses questions about the validity of religion when adopted wholesale by Native Americans and about the place alcohol has assumed in Native culture.

In 1991, Logan painted *Questioning Intellect*, the first picture of the *Classical Aboriginal* series. It amplifies the artist's queries about the value of using western art history as a barometer by which art must be measured, and juxtaposes those values with ones arising from his readings of texts by Henri Bergson. Bergson's exploration of the limits of mechanist theories of the creation of the world led Logan to delve into his own religious beliefs. Logan, a Christian, the creative impulse so often associated with being is proof that the world was not the mechanical reaction but created through the intervention of God. The complex relationship between the secular and the sacred is included in this painting, such as a juxtaposition of Einstein juxtaposed with that of Big Bear. Big Bear illustrates the creationist/mechanist tension; Big Bear lived in the world and saw his relationship intrinsically tied to the land, whereas Einstein was involved in the intellectual process of understanding the universe while maintaining spiritual distance from it. Two Indian figures sit forlornly to the left, marginalized, despairing poses offer a commentary on the current cultural displacement of

Questioning Intellect (detail),
1991



these peoples. The picture also includes replicas of classical Greek statuary and a rendering of Henri Matisse's *Dance of Life*; the downcast figure of Christ departs through the arches of a Roman aqueduct, symbolically and literally turning his back on the so-called civilized world. A baboon with electrodes grafted to its cranium sharply contrasts with the horses that seem to float above it, offering sharp rebuke to the practice of merchandising the various attributes of animals for human gain. The symbolic, instructive nature of *Questioning Intellect* anticipates the development of more aggressive and overt use of allegory and appropriation in this series, causing this picture to function as a thesis statement in paint. Logan has drawn contradictory elements together in strong condemnation of the values they signify.

In many of the canvases, Logan switches the gender of his appropriated subject and substitutes Indian faces for white ones. This he does to good effect in *The Diners Club* (*No Reservations Required*) and the *Olympian*, with images lifted wholesale respectively from Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* and *Olympia*. By changing the subjects' gender, Logan has engaged a device that is currently used by feminist artists to question the objectification of women's bodies not only within the art world but as spoon-fed to the public through advertising. The shock of nudity is not caused by depictions of unclothed bodies; as constituents of the status quo and as an audience we are desensitized to full-frontal female nudity in medias such as advertising and film, as well as in paintings and sculpture. As an audience we can pinpoint our collective shock with images of nude males not only in art but in advertising and entertainment. The artist also symbolically turns toward his own cultural home: by clothing the female figures in *The Diners Club* (*No Reservations Required*) he honors the power of women and the matriarchal orientation of some Native societies. Logan's substitution of Indian faces for white ones is a tactic that, like the nudes, succeeds because it is a simple reversal of an art historical bias.

At the same time, Logan poses sophisticated questions about the value of white-Anglo-Christian ethic as the one that Aboriginals must strive to assimilate. This is patently evident in *The Diners Club* (*No Reservations Required*).