Jane Ash Poitras

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Jane Ash Poitras
New Paintings

KINSMAN ROBINSON GALLERIES

November 7–27, 2015

Weaving Dreams, 2015,
Mixed media on canvas,
36 x 24 inches
Dr. Jane Ash Poitras RCA has received numerous awards in recognition of her achievements as an internationally acclaimed visual artist and lecturer who has influenced a new generation of artists and students. A celebrated Canadian artist, she has significantly influenced the development of a new visual vocabulary for First Nations perspectives in contemporary art. Her unique style combines representational strategies of postmodern art—collage, layering, overpainting and incorporation of found objects—with a deep commitment to the politics and issues common to indigenous peoples.

Jane’s journey of discovery and creation has opened new doors to enlightenment as she combines her many diverse interests in pursuit of her distinctive artistic vision. Over the years, Jane has pursued many different routes of discovery, each reflected in the art she has produced. Those journeys of exploration have taken her not only into plumbing her Aboriginal roots (beginning by reconnecting with her birth family and her Mikisew Cree First Nation), but into such diverse topics as pharmacology, ethnobotany, Sanscrit and other linguistics, and literary creations supplementing the creation of visual works of art.

The range and diversity of the interests that inspire and inform her artistic creations have resulted in a number of distinctive series of artworks that, over time, reflect the paths she has taken on her journey of discovery. A survey of those series over the 30 years of her professional career could well serve as a map of that journey and a graphic record of her evolution as an artist.

For example, in 2009 she travelled to Japan with her son Eli, a student in Japanese language and culture, a tour that consisted primarily of visits to Buddhist monasteries and left a lasting impression on both of them. When she returned, while she continued to focus on Indigenous history, culture and spirituality that had informed and inspired her previous work, her new work subsequently began to incorporate Japanese elements and their placement according to Japanese art customs.

Edmonton Journal visual arts critic Janice Ryan previewed one of Poitras’s recent exhibitions, an ambitious collection of works layered with handwritten text, vintage photos, stamps and newspaper clippings placed over a background of thinned oil.

*Once In A Lifetime*, 2015, Mixed media on canvas, 20 x 16 inches
and acrylic paint. “The work is engaging for its beauty alone,” Ryan wrote, “but up close is where the cerebral journey begins, unravelling fragments of information, both subtle and in-your-face pronouncements, to reveal the story this imaginative artist is telling.”

One of the key aspects of her art that sets it apart from the work of other artists is her ability to combine and reconcile disparate themes and elements to create fully resolved works that convey information on different levels.

Commenting on her art, Poitras says, “Each blank canvas is an invitation to a journey of discovery. I may begin with an idea of what the final destination—the completed painting—may be, but I’m always open to the unexpected. As Carl Beam said, the art of placement is a spiritual act. Each step in the creative process may reveal unexpected choices that require decisions.

“The final decision for each piece is to know when it is resolved, when it is finished.”

Hayoka Feather, 2015, Mixed media on canvas, 30 x 20 inches
Looking For My Spirit, 2014,
Mixed media on canvas,
36 x 24 inches

I am (God), 2015,
Mixed media on canvas,
30 x 20 inches
Northern Abstraction, 2015,
Mixed media on canvas,
20 x 30 inches
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Sleeping Beauty, 2014,
Mixed media on canvas,
30 x 20 inches

Caribou, 2015,
Mixed media on canvas,
20 x 16 inches
Tibetan/Alaskan, 2014,
Mixed media on canvas,
30 x 30 inches
Sacred To The Indian Nation, 2015,
Mixed media on board,
17 x 17.5 inches

Buffalo Spirit, 2014,
Mixed media on canvas,
24 x 20 inches
Face of Genius, 2014,
Mixed media on canvas,
16 x 20 inches
Apache Dene, 2014,
Mixed media on canvas,
16 x 16 inches

Ayahuasca (The Spirit Vine), 2015,
Mixed media on canvas,
30 x 20 inches
LIST OF WORKS

Apache Dene, 2014, Mixed media on canvas, 16 x 16 inches

Ayahuasca (The Spirit Vine), 2015, Mixed media on canvas, 30 x 20 inches

Buffalo Spirit, 2014, Mixed media on canvas, 24 x 20 inches

Caribou, 2015, Mixed media on canvas, 20 x 16 inches

Face of Genius, 2014, Mixed media on canvas, 16 x 20 inches

Hayoka Feather, 2015, Mixed media on canvas, 20 x 30 inches

I am (God), 2015, Mixed media on canvas, 30 x 20 inches

Looking For My Spirit, 2014, Mixed media on canvas, 36 x 24 inches

Multiple Cultures, 2015, Mixed media on canvas, 20 x 16 inches

Northern Abstraction, 2015, Mixed media on canvas, 20 x 30 inches

Once In A Lifetime, 2015, Mixed media on canvas, 20 x 16 inches

Rainforest Shaman, 2014, Mixed media on canvas, 16 x 20 inches

Sacred To The Indian Nation, 2015, Mixed media on board, 17 x 17.5 inches

Sleeping Beauty, 2014, Mixed media on canvas, 30 x 20 inches

Tibetan/Alaskan, 2014, Mixed media on canvas, 30 x 30 inches

Weaving Dreams, 2015, Mixed media on canvas, 36 x 24 inches

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Government of Alberta; Alberta Foundation for the Arts; Alberta Indian Arts & Crafts Society Collection; Art Gallery of Ontario; Art Gallery of Peterborough; Justice Department, Government of Alberta; Bank of Montreal; Bank of Nova Scotia; Brooklyn Museum; Canada Council Art Bank; Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce; Canadian Museum of Civilization; Canadian Native Arts Foundation; Joan Chalmers Collection; City of Edmonton; Columbia University; Confederation Centre for the Arts; Robert Davidson; Dunlop Art Gallery; Edmonton Art Gallery; Ernst Young Collection; Agnes Etherington Gallery, Queen’s University; External Affairs Canada; Retired Madam Justice Nina Foster; Madame Justice Sheila Grechet; Hewlett Packard Ltd Collection; Indian Art Centre; Kelowna Art Gallery; Laurentian University Museum and Art Centre; MacKenzie Art Gallery; McMichael Canadian Collection; Mendel Art Gallery; Mikisew Cree Nation; Mississauga Art Gallery; National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation; National Gallery of Canada; Nestles Canada Ltd Collection; Nova Scotia Art Gallery; Peace Hills Trust Company; Pegasus First Nation; Alex Pringle; Robin Phillips Collection; Royal Bank of Canada; Royal Ontario Museum; John Ralston Saul and Adrienne Clarkson; Senate of Canada; Maurice and Hanne Strong, USA; Syncrude Canada Ltd Collection; Dr. Ronald Tasker; Thunder Bay Art Gallery; University of Alberta Hospital; University of Alberta Permanent Collection; University of Toronto; University of Waterloo; Vancouver Art Gallery; Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre; Windsor Art Gallery; Winnipeg Art Gallery; Woodland Indian Cultural Educational Centre; Yale University

EDUCATION

2015 – Honorary Doctor of Letters (DLitt), University of Alberta
2015 – Honorary Doctor of Laws (LLD), University of Calgary
2013 – Honorary Bachelor of Arts (BA), Humber College, Toronto
1983 - Bachelor of Fine Arts in Printmaking, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB

AWARDS

2013 – Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal
2009 – Lieutenant Governor of Alberta Distinguished Artist Award
2007 – Mikisew Cree First Nation Member Recognition Award
2006 – Alumnus Award of Excellence from the University of Alberta Alumni Association
2006 – National Aboriginal Achievement Award for Arts and Culture
2005 – Recipient of the Alberta Centennial Medal
2005 – Finalist for Lieutenant Governor of Alberta Arts Award
2003 – Induction into City of Edmonton Cultural Hall of Fame (Salute to Excellence Awards)
2002 – RCA Designation (Royal Canadian Academy of Artists)
Multiple Cultures, 2015, Mixed media on canvas, 20 x 16 inches

Cover: Rainforest Shaman, 2014, Mixed media on canvas, 16 x 20 inches
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