

# Norval Morriseau



Copper Thunderbird

# Who was he?

- Born 1931, Thunder Bay, Ontario
- Died 2007
- First Nations Affiliation: Ojibway
- self-taught painter
- World famous Canadian painter



# Biography

- Lived in a residential school from ages 6-8
- At age 19 he was renamed Copper Thunderbird when he became ill
- His paintings were initially criticized in the Native community for its disclosure of traditional spiritual knowledge, previously passed down orally

# Biography Continued

- founder of the *Woodland Indian School of Art (today called the Anishnaabe art)*
- A member of The Royal Canadian Academy of Arts
- He revitalized *Anishnaabe* petroglyphs, traditionally painted on rocks and birchbark scrolls
- In 1962 Morrisseau was the first Aboriginal artist to have work shown in a contemporary art gallery (*the Pollock Gallery in Toronto*)

# *Anishinaabe petroglyphs*





# *Anishinaabe petroglyphs*



# Honours

- *Order of Canada (C.M.)* in 1978
- honorary doctorates from *McGill and McMaster Universities* in 1980
- Only Canadian painter asked to display in at the Pompidou in Paris in 1989
- Only Aboriginal artist to have a show at the National Gallery of Canada in 2006

# Characteristics of his paintings

- images of shamen, spirit guides, and animals
- Colourful
- figurative images lined with heavy black contour lines
- bright, stylized
- Bands of colour around each shape
- 2- dimensional



# Signature

- **Jean-Baptiste Norman Henry Morrisseau**
- signs his work in Cree –

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- And his** his Anishnaabe name

Γ<sup>α</sup>β·Λ<sup>μν</sup> Δσ Γ<sup>μ</sup>ρ

# Early work

- The subjects of his art in the early period were myths and traditions of the Anishnaabe people
- Often created on birch bark and moose hide
- images similar to the petroglyphs



# Spirit Bear







# Bear Medicine Healing



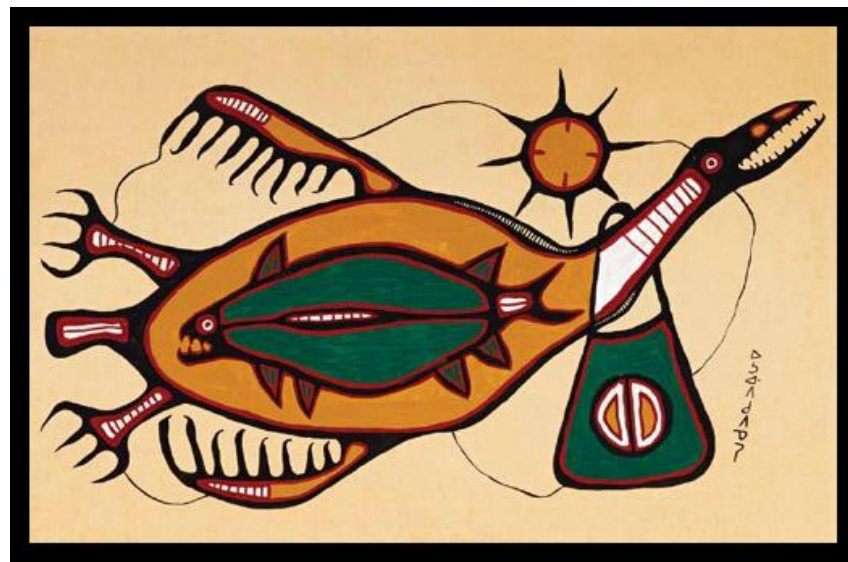


*Vincent van Gogh*



# Beliefs

- *“My paintings are icons, that is to say, they are images which help focus on spiritual powers, generated by traditional belief and wisdom.”*



# Later style

- His style changed:
- he used more standard material and the colors became progressively brighter, eventually obtaining a neon-like brilliance













- The themes also moved from traditional myth to depicting his own personal struggles



# Shaman and Disciples, 1979



# Androgyny, 1983





# Psychic Space, 1996





# Observations of the Astral World (1994)



# Fakes and Forgeries

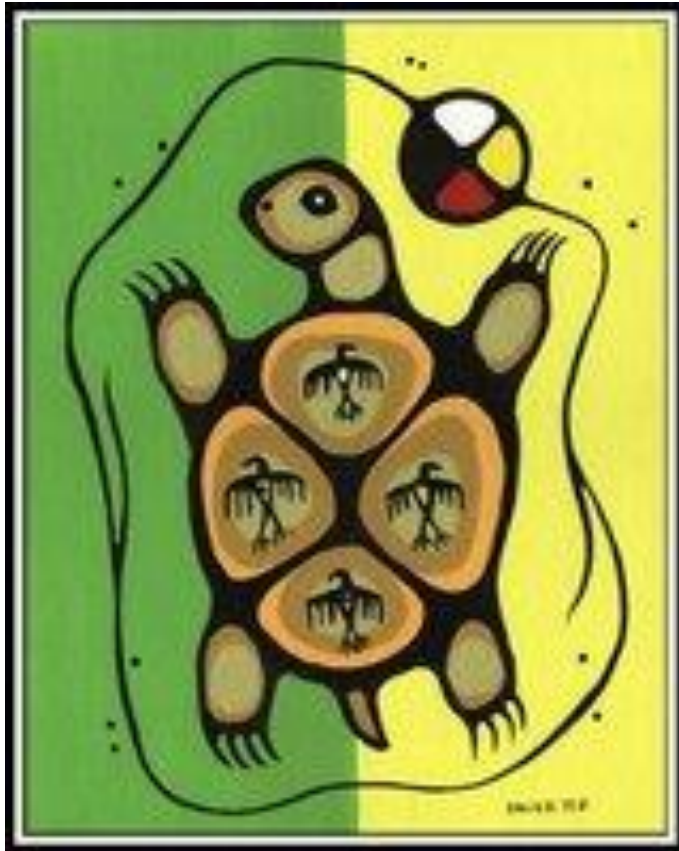
- Norval Morrisseau Heritage Society (NMHS) is currently compiling a database of his paintings to discredit many prevalent Morrisseau forgeries

- <http://www.canada.com/ottawacitizen/news/story.html?id=cd2fa8b4-6a94-4294-9a49-2c3f9ee059f6&p=1>

- More than ten sworn declarations were directed to at least seven dealers and galleries during 1993-2007, requesting that fake and forged works be removed or destroyed



# What is the difference?



# Thoughts?

- How does the fact that there are so many forgeries of Morrisseau's work, affect your research of his paintings?

- What are some clues as to when his paintings were created?



# Painting Order

- #1. Paint the background
- #2. Draw in the outline of your animal (lightly!!)
- #3. Paint the entire animal black

# Painting Order

- #4. Paint the larger circles/shapes
  - If you select yellow you will need at least 2 coats
- #5. Paint the inside colour in the large shapes, leaving a space around the edge for a border
- #6. Complete any touch ups and sign your name





# Things to Consider

- How will you sign your name?
- What colours will you choose?
- Where would complimentary colours look the best?
- Will you add a border?
- How many animals will you choose?
- How will the animals be connected?