

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/18984> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

Author: Kampen, Ukjese van

Title: History of Yukon first nations art

Date: 2012-05-23

Propositions

[Stellingen, behorend bij het proefschrift *History of Yukon First Nations Art* van Ukjese van Kampen]

1. *The Yukon First Nations people were able to survive in the coldest location in North America since time immemorial...that in itself says something about their strength!*
2. *The environment and semi-nomadic lifestyle had a major effect on the Yukon First Nations art style and its perception by the people.*
3. *Yukon First Nations art was part of life as was the spirituality: these were not separate to daily lives; they were integrated into day to day living, integrated into the very being of the people.*
4. *Yukon First Nations oral tradition expresses the appreciation of its art in terms such as “Yukon people are hunting, and they’ve got nice skin clothes--Oh, gee, porcupine quills, moose skins, moccasins! Everything nice.” (Annie Ned)*
5. *So far no evidence has been found of any missionaries teaching beadwork to Yukon First Nations. This leads to the question where the beaded floral designs came from.*
6. *The idea that “Yukon First Nations do not have a tradition of creating figurative art” is still widely spread among archaeologists, museum curators, students and the general public.*
7. *Yukon First Nations people did not know about spiritualism as being something outside their lives to strive for, since spiritualism was an integral part of them...they lived it every day. The rituals were the markers to important events of their lives.*
8. *Athapaskan warfare generally implied that when an attack was finally decided, all enemies - men, women and children - had to be killed in order to prevent any possible retaliation.*
9. *Yukon First Nations oral tradition holds: “That time all the people come. First came the Aishihik people. Then Dalton Post people. These ones don’t come quick-Little Salmon, Big Salmon. Then comes Carcross. That time I saw it, “old fashioned”. They dance with it. Clothes, blankets, button blankets, moose hoof blankets - akéganthät they call it.” (Annie Ned 1984).*
10. *In order to survive in such a harsh environment Yukon First Nations people had to be highly adaptable. When new trade items began appearing in the Yukon in the mid-1800s these articles were quickly adopted. Accompanying this change was the forced assimilation by the Canadian Government. This combination effectively eliminated Yukon First Nations visual culture. They have since used the closest surviving visual culture in the region, the Northwest Coast Indian art style.*

Curriculum Vitae

Ukjese van Kampen was born Neil Eugene Smith on the 11th June 1959 in Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada. His father was first Generation Canadian from Scotland but Ukjese had almost no contact with his father's side of the family. Ukjese's mother, Hazel Smith, was born in Fort Selkirk, Yukon. She is Northern Tutchone and of the Wolf Clan. Ukjese comes from a prominent First Nations family. His great-grandmother, Annie Ned, who gave Ukjese his Indian name, is a member of the Order of Canada as is her son, Elijah Smith. Both the mother and father's sides of Hazel Smith's family came from a long line of chiefs.

Ukjese himself has lived an exciting life. He served 4 years in the Canadian Army serving first in the Royal Canadian Regiment as a Mechanized Infantryman and later as an Airborne Commando in the Canadian Airborne Regiment and finally a year in the reserves. His military career carried on with spending 6 years as a Combat Engineer in the United States Marine Corps, 3 active and 3 reserves. Later Ukjese was a 2nd Lt. and Commanding Officer of the Royal Canadian Air Cadet Squadron in Whitehorse from 1994 to 1995. During this whole time Ukjese created art and earned various commercial pilot licences and ratings. In 1988 Ukjese earned a Fine Arts Diploma and the next year started a 20 year career working as a flight instructor and bush pilot. This career was highlighted by starting the first 100 percent First Nations owned aviation company in the Yukon in 1994. During this time he earned an Airline Transport Pilot Licence and the highest airplane rating that can be obtained such as Class One Instructor Rating, Class One Aerobatic Instructor Rating & Class One IFR Rating. He also was a Designated Flight Test Examiner for Transport Canada.

Ukjese married his girlfriend of seven years in the Lausanne Cathedral in Switzerland in 1996. He took his wife's family name and changed his first name for his Indian name, becoming Ukjese van Kampen. Ukjese did this to maintain his culture's tradition of tracing the children through the mother. In 1998 Ukjese sold his business after the birth of his first daughter and became a house husband. During this time Ukjese continued to fly as a part time bush pilot and began a series of studies. In 2002 he earned his Bachelor of Fine Art degree with the British Columbia Open University and a Master of Art in Cultural Studies with Athabasca University in 2006. In 2008 Ukjese left flying to focus on his PhD in Indian American Studies at Leiden University in the Netherlands.

During the whole time Ukjese was active in the arts. He worked in a number of cultural related positions starting in 2003 as an Intern Curator for a year at the Yukon Arts Centre Gallery and in 2005 completed a six month training position at the Arts Branch of the Yukon Government. After that he was the curator of the Society of Yukon Artist of Native Ancestry until 2007. Ukjese had been creating art since he was a boy and over the years has been part of over 80 art exhibitions world-wide. This includes exhibitions in Japan, Australia, Germany, and across Canada and the United States. His art is in such collections as the Indian Arts Centre in Ottawa, the Bavarian State Anthropology Museum, Ushiku City Museum in Japan and Yukon Archives. Ukjese has also done a bit of acting and storytelling and is a published writer of his brand of First Nation stories. Ukjese was featured in a number of magazines and books such as the Winter 2008 issue of American Indian Art magazine and the book *About Face* published by the Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Ukjese travels a great deal and has been around the world and to about 45 countries. Ukjese lives in Whitehorse with his wife and two daughters and carries on researching art, First Nations and military history as a hobby as well as creating art.