



Evolution of Native couture

INSIDE:

In praise of the
prickly pear cactus

Predilection for the past



Evolution of Native couture

Two years after the first Native American contestant appeared on "Project Runway," a reality-TV show broadcast nationwide, a traveling exhibition of contemporary Native fashion will make its debut.

"Native Fashion Now" opens Nov. 21 at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Mass. Lead organizer of the exhibit, the Peabody Essex Museum houses one of the oldest collections of Native art and culture.

Once the exhibit in Salem closes in early March 2016, it travels to the Portland Art Museum in Portland, Oregon; the Philbrook Museum of Art in Tulsa, Oklahoma; and the National Museum of the American Indian in New York City.

By the end of its run in 2017, "Native Fashion Now" will expose thousands of viewers to nearly 100 works by Native pioneers and mavericks from throughout the U.S. and Canada. Pieces by non-Natives such as Isaac Mizrahi and Ralph Lauren will also be included.

What's the impetus for the exhibition that spans a 60-year period? It's largely due to Native fashion designers determined to share their contemporary vision of Native culture and design with a global audience. These days, their work (some featured in photos on this page) is on display at fashion shows, in stores and online, adorning apparel and accessories worn by Natives and non-Natives alike.



Glass beads on boots designed by Christian Louboutin. Photo by Walter Silver



Tahitian Bondage necklace, 2008. Photo by Walter Silver



Cape, dress and headdress from "Desert Heat" Collection, 2012. Photo by by Thosh Collins



Native Americans Discovered Columbus T-shirt, 2012. Photo by Thosh Collins

Take our cultural quiz

The first American Indian Day to be celebrated in a state was declared on the second Saturday in May 1916 by the governor of New York. In 1990 President George H.W. Bush approved a joint resolution designating November 1990 as National American Indian Heritage Month. During what's now known as Native American Heritage Month, the public can learn about the heritage, history, art and traditions of the American Indian and Alaska Native people.

Test your knowledge of a few cultural facts, past and present.

1. One of the earliest uses of cranberries by Native Americans was as a:

- a. Coloring for hair
- b. Bronzer for skin
- c. Dye for clothing
- d. Poultice for dressing wounds

2. The first Major League Baseball player of Navajo descent is:

- a. Jacoby Ellsbury
- b. Steven Wright
- c. Dustin Pedoris
- d. Wade Miley

3. Which of the following plants are not Native American in origin?

- a. Chocolate and zucchini
- b. Bananas, coffee and sugarcane
- c. Avocados, blueberries and papayas
- d. Potatoes and tomatoes

4. In 2014, a member of the Hopi tribe became the first Native American woman confirmed as a federal judge. Who is she?

- a. Betty Louise Bell
- b. Wilma Mankiller
- c. Lois Ellen Frank
- d. Diane Humetewa



Diane Humetewa



5. A sacred symbol in Native American culture, fry bread is often served with:

- a. Honey
- b. Milk
- c. Peanut butter
- d. Garlic

6. This acclaimed novelist, from the Leech Lake Reservation in northern Minnesota, studied and worked with Toni Morrison at Princeton University. Who is he?

- a. Ward Churchill
- b. David Treuer
- c. Ned Blackhawk
- d. Joseph Bruchac

7. The Iroquois are credited with creating the earliest version of Crackerjacks by covering popcorn with:

- a. Brown sugar
- b. Cinnamon
- c. Maple syrup
- d. Corn syrup

Continued on page 8

Predilection for the past



For more information on our cultural fine art services, visit www.picturethatart.com.

The three artists featured in this Native American Heritage issue of *Unity* portray glimpses of yesteryear with positive images of power and pride.



"In Far Thoughts" by Yellowman

YELLOWMAN

As a young child, Yellowman and his family moved closer to a Navajo reservation in Shiprock, New Mexico. There he grew up herding his grandmother's sheep in solitude and observing nature.

"My imagination and creativity was nurtured by the land, the people and nature," says Yellowman. He notes that his mother, who comes from a well-known family of weavers and beadworkers, was most influential in his decisions to pursue his creative side.

Yellowman states that being a self-taught, indigenous artist allows him to see the world through the lens of a free spirit and he is inspired by the past. "In Far Thoughts" – which depicts a warrior who has seen many battles and longs for peace – is inspired by that past. The warrior looks out toward a wall of fond, past memories and yearns for them again.



"He Watches the Pony Soldiers" by Yellowman

"He Watches the Pony Soldiers" captures a "Dog Soldier," one who is committed to the survival of his people. His intense gaze and grip of his spear indicates that he will stand his ground without concern about his own safety.

The scene depicted in "First Day" reflects a calm location at dawn, when everything is moving slowly

"I want to portray the Native spirit as strong, resilient and full of hope, especially for young Native teens," says Yellowman, "and reconnect positive images of family, home, nature and freedom through the tips of my art brushes."



"First Day" by Yellowman

JERRY VASCONCELLOS

Born and raised in the lush Kalihi Valley on Oahu in Hawaii, Jerry Vasconcellos says working with the indigenous and endemic materials of Hawaii allows him to understand and appreciate aspects of the Maoli culture in a personal way. He is most at peace when he is in the ocean or carving the natural elements of Hawaii.

Vasconcellos is locally known for his extensive experience in carving basalt, Hawaii's native stone. "The land and ocean are the arenas of Hawaiian culture," says Vasconcellos, "and should be utilized in such a way to keep harmony and humility to those elements."

"Female Form" is made out of Hawaii's basalt. When working with basalt, a stone of deep black when it is dense and polished, Vasconcellos strives to keep its original surface. The piko (belly button) alludes to the ancestors and nakedness.

The facial figure (duality of head and body) is a recurring theme in Vasconcellos' work. In "Mango Facial Figure," one should note the sensual abstract blending the two in this piece of mango wood on basalt.



"Female Form" by Jerry Vasconcellos



"Mango Facial Figure" by Jerry Vasconcellos

"We Decided to Go Natural" is appropriately named for its basalt base accommodating the carved pieces from a koa tree and lashing (tying) of sennit (flat, braided cord) from the inner bark of the hau tree.

Vasconcellos considers it an honor to work with native basalt stone and wood like his ancestors. His work is displayed in local museums and private and corporate collections worldwide.



"We Decided to Go Natural" by Jerry Vasconcellos



"Moon" by Calvin Hunt

CALVIN HUNT

Calvin Hunt is the youngest son of a Kwagu'l hereditary chief, an accomplished dancer and a respected member of the Kwakwaka'wakw (Kwak wala) community. He is also the grandson of renowned carver Mungo Martin, designer and principal carver of the famed Totem Pole in Windsor Great Park in the United Kingdom. Hunt relates that when he works within the traditional Kwagu'l style, he is reminded of the diversity, spirituality and meaning of his aboriginal culture.

Known for his distinct range of carving, Hunt enjoys working with western red cedar, a soft red-brown timber that has a high natural resistance to decay. "Moon," carved in western red cedar, represents the story of the Raven releasing the moon. As the story goes, Raven's grandfather had a box that contained the moon. Raven cried for the box so hard until his grandfather finally relented. Raven eventually opened the box and released the moon to the sky.

"Portrait Mask," carved from alder wood, represents masks of the same name that were used in mourning ceremonies. When someone in the family died, women ran to the river and scratched the sides of their face to represent tears.



"Portrait Mask" by Calvin Hunt

"Yagis Sea Monster" is a rendition of the monster's legend. The Yagis was said to have eaten the Koskimo people as they went to gather



"Yagis Sea Monster" by Calvin Hunt

food at the beach. They were brought back to life by a mother who equipped her son with a Sisiutl belt that protected him from being swallowed by the Yagis. Before the monster died, he spewed the bones of all the humans he consumed. Mother and son assembled them, sprinkled them with water from the sea and brought the Koskimo people back to life.

"I enjoy sharing our culture with the world through my artwork," says Hunt. "Most importantly, it enables me to teach our children the knowledge of their crests, legends, songs and dance."



The name chiltepin means “flea chile” in the Aztec language.



Chiltepins are harvested from wild plants by hand.

Chiltepin pepper: Tiny but far from tame

Miniscule in terms of size, the chiltepin pepper still manages to tip a certain scale when it comes to heat. On the Scoville scale – which measures the heat generated by chilis and other spicy foods – this pea-size chili ranges from 50,000 to 100,000. By comparison, the standard jalapeno is 23 times *milder* than the chiltepin. When chiltepin meets the tongue, the blistering heat materializes immediately but diminishes quickly.

Chiltepin, North America’s only native chili, flourishes in the American Southwest (it’s been the official native pepper in Texas since 1997) and Mexico. It’s protected in at least three U.S. national parks.

Often considered to be the wild mother of most cultivated chilis, its importance to Native American culture dates back centuries. Native rituals accompanying the September-October harvesting of chiltepin abounded. These days, the pepper remains a staple in the Native diet.

Chiltepin is also revered for its medicinal qualities. When eaten, chiltepin triggers the brain to release endorphins, otherwise known as nature’s painkillers. It’s also used to treat stomach ailments.

In spite of (or perhaps due to) its incendiary nature, many chiltepin fanatics devour it in sundried form. That’s the surest way to get the full flavor rush. Cheese and ice cream, and sauces like the Salsa Casera featured in the accompanying recipe are other sources of chiltepin.

Largely absent from stores outside the Southwest, chiltepin is available online. Just type “where to buy chiltepin online” into your Web browser and pick the seller of your choice. Online retailers sell the whole chilis and seeds for those interested in cultivating their own crops.

Salsa Casera

(Homemade Chiltepin Sauce)

Recipe courtesy of <http://cooksrecipes.info>

- 2 cups chiltepins
- 8 cloves garlic, peeled
- (or other small, hot chilis)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon Mexican oregano
- 1 cup water
- 1 teaspoon coriander seed
- 1 cup apple cider vinegar

Combine all ingredients in a blender and puree on high for 3 to 4 minutes. Refrigerate for 1 day to blend flavors. This sauce keeps indefinitely in the refrigerator.

Caution: *Sauce is hot.*

Yield: 2 cups



In praise of the prickly pear cactus

How versatile is the prickly pear cactus? Let us count the ways Native Americans have long consumed this hearty food:

1. Fresh off the vine
2. Fried
3. Boiled
4. Grilled

If the thought of eating cactus worries you, fear not. Wild-food expert and cookbook author Carolyn J. Niethammer says, "All prickly pears are edible and nontoxic." However, cholla cactuses are unpalatable.

The prickly pear plant, abundant throughout the West but found as far east as Massachusetts, has three edible sections: the pad (nopal) of the cactus, which can be treated like a vegetable; the petals of the flowers, which can be added to salads; and the pear (tuna), which can be treated like a fruit.

For centuries, Native Americans made candy and chewing gum from the fruit or mashed the tunas into a dish akin to applesauce. They also turned it into jelly, juice and syrup. These and other variations of the food are still consumed today by Natives and non-Natives alike.

It's no wonder that a food high in fiber, antioxidants and carotenoids gets a favorable nod from the Mayo Clinic. According to the famed medical institution, preliminary evidence shows prickly pear cactus can lessen blood sugar levels among type 2 diabetics. Its extract might also ease the side effects of a hangover. In the past, Natives would split the cactus open and apply it directly to wounds as a salve. In other instances, it was used to treat rheumatism and mumps.



Grilled Chicken With Nopalito And Pineapple Salsa

Recipe from "The Prickly Pear Cookbook"

- 1 raw, cleaned prickly-pear pad (nopal)
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 cup canned crushed pineapple packed in its own juice
- 1/4 cup red bell pepper, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup green onions, including some tops, thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon canned green chiles, chopped
- 1 serrano chile, finely minced (optional)
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic, finely minced
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon cilantro, finely minced (optional)
- 4 large boneless chicken breasts
- 8 medium-size flour tortillas
- 4 cups leaf lettuce, finely shredded

Cut prickly-pear pad in 1 1/2 -inch squares. Film heavy frying pan with oil. Add pad pieces (nopalitos) and cook over low heat, turning occasionally, until pieces have given up much of their juice and are slightly brown. Remove from pan, cool and chop into pieces as wide as a matchstick and about 1/4-inch long.

Transfer to a medium-size bowl. Add remaining ingredients (except for chicken, tortillas and lettuce), stir to combine and set aside for flavors to mingle.

Grill the chicken breasts until done. Warm the tortillas while you slice each chicken breast crosswise into 8 pieces. Divide the chicken and lettuce evenly among tortillas and top with salsa. Fold tortillas to enclose the stuffing.

Yield: 4 servings

Take our cultural quiz

Continued from page 3

8. What fruit did early Native Americans use to treat persistent coughs and other illnesses?

- a. Strawberries
- b. Oranges
- c. Blueberries
- d. Lemons

9. A member of the Prairie Band Potawatomie Nation and a legend in the surfing community, Johnny Rice was inducted into the:

- a. International Surfboard Builders Hall of Fame
- b. East Coast Surfing Hall of Fame
- c. Surfers' Hall of Fame
- d. Hawaii Sports Hall of Fame

Answers

- 1d – Poultice for dressing wounds
- 2a – Jacoby Ellsbury
- 3b – Bananas, coffee and sugarcane
- 4d – Diane Humetewa
- 5a – Honey
- 6b – David Treuer
- 7c – Maple syrup
- 8c – Blueberries
- 9a – International Surfboard Builders Hall of Fame



On the cover: Cape and dress by Native fashion designer Orlando Dugi. Photo by Thosh Collins. *Unity* is a celebration of food, art and culture. Published six times per year, *Unity* is exclusively distributed to clients of Thompson Hospitality and Compass Group, both world leaders in foodservice. To contact us, send an email to marketing@thompsonhospitalityjv.com. ©2015 Thompson Hospitality and Compass Group. Produced by Final Edit, www.finaledit.net

