



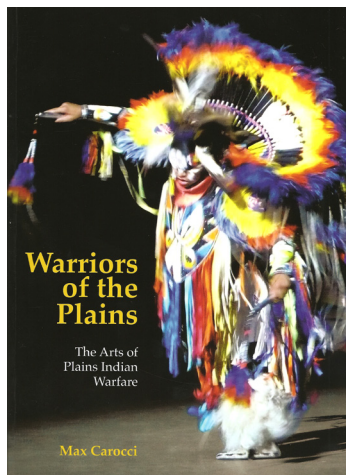
# Homage to tribal culture, past and present



Max Carocci, left, sheds light on Native traditions in his book, "Warriors of the Plains."

In colorful robes bearing military insignia showing their veteran status to the brightly dyed feathers of the ceremonial powwow regalia, the North American Indians of today continue to honor the legacy of their tribal forefathers.

In his new book, "Warriors of the Plains: The Arts of Plains Indian Warfare," author Max Carocci hopes that readers will see beyond the beauty of the illustrated pages to interpret how contemporary Native American culture continues to thrive by repurposing its warrior tribal culture in a way that honors its past, present and future. The publication of the book by McGill-Queens University Press in Canada and the British



Museum Press in London coincides with a traveling exhibition by the same name that Carocci curated.

For non-Native Americans, the objects in the collection might be seen as merely decorative, but through his narrative, Carocci illuminates how the objects point to a much more politically charged truth. "Through the book and exhibition, I want to highlight the art as a political legacy which includes their cultural politics. Each of the objects tells a story and comes from a very long legacy. In a way, anyone who is a North American-engaged artist cannot divorce what they do from the historic and political history," he says.



Gourd Dancers, whose ranks generally consist of men and veterans, are an essential part of the Kiowa people.

For example, in Native American cultures, warriors who are veterans of the U.S. military hold special status in their tribal nations, marked by intricate and beautiful robes. This legacy continues from the Native American nations in which veteran warriors who had fought in intertribal warfare were highly revered.

"In celebrating the veterans that come back from the battlefield, the soldier societies have become almost the focus of traditional culture of the warriors," Carocci explains. "Indeed, these warrior societies are the catalyst of the revival of the Plains cultures, the warrior ethos that some Plains societies base their culture on. The importance for Native American soldiers is that when they go to fight for the American or Canadian armies, the indigenous peoples are traditionally concerned with the protection of the land, which is one of the most important values in their culture. Today, effectively, going to war is almost reestablishing or reconnecting to the tradition that war

means to them."

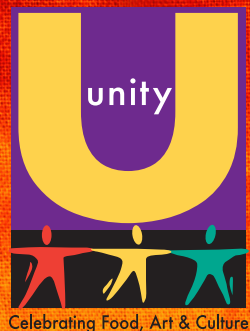
Since 1989, Carocci has extensively researched Plains Indian culture, having traveled throughout the Midwestern United States and Canada and interviewing hundreds of Native Americans. Carocci currently serves as honorary research fellow at the Department of Art History and Screen Media at Birkbeck College, University of London.

While not a direct effect, the

recognition of Native American tribes by the United Nations in the Forum for Indigenous Peoples in the 1980s, which was affirmed in 2007 with the declaration of World Indigenous Rights, helped to codify the nations' culture and significance. Carocci asserts that that recognition helped propel contemporary Plains Indian culture to a much stronger status today than just 20 years ago.

"Although I don't think that the people that work within the U.N. may have directly influenced many of these cultural practices, I think it is fair to say that some U.N. discussions have indeed trickled down to the indigenous North American perspectives.

"Cultures are never static. People get stuck in the past, but it is how they have adapted to change, much as they have done moving from warrior societies to military societies, that is my focus," Carocci says. "In contextualizing Native American art, I want to highlight the very strong political message that is behind that. If you wish, warrior societies are the lens from which to look at all these issues."



Architect finds direction that inspires decades of designs

Country music vocalist makes a joyful noise

A celebration of legacies and legends

Giving thanks for sacred sustenance



## At the intersection of 4 worlds, architect finds direction that inspires decades of designs



*A fellow in the American Institute of Architects, Johnpaul Jones has won many local and national awards.*

Renowned architect Johnpaul Jones credits much of his professional and personal success to the wisdom imparted by his mother and grandmother, and the faith of another architect who took him under his wing in high school.

As a Choctaw-Cherokee descendant (his mother was Native while his father was from Wales), Jones credits his Native heritage for teaching him to appreciate the world around him and his place in it. These lessons provide inspiration for his groundbreaking designs, which combine a sense of place, respect for the land and indigenous design.

Those projects include serving as lead design consultant for the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, a mammoth project taking some 12 years. Other noted projects include habitats at the San Diego Zoo, Detroit Zoo, the Many Nations Longhouse at the University of Oregon and the Sleeping Lady Mountain Retreat.

"In Native cultures, there is a concept of four worlds: the natural

world, the animal world, the spirit world and the human world," Jones reflects. "In those four areas, there are lots of things to consider before beginning a project. In the natural world, it's the equinox and solstice, as well as the rivers, rocks and environment. In the animal world, you keep in mind that we share this world with other creatures. In the spirit world, it's more about considering the spirit of the place and the objects around you. In the human world, it's the transfer of knowledge, allowing a place where elders and teachers can transfer knowledge."

Having learned about the four worlds as a young boy, the concept's true meaning didn't become evident until Jones was grown. Today, that concept guides each project Jones undertakes.

"Before even beginning a project, I try to do as much learning about the land, the environment and the cultures in terms of heritage, crafts and art. Out of that exercise, you create a starting point that's pretty close to what you're trying to achieve."

From the largest concept (Jones' firm was the first to develop natural spaces for animals in zoos) to the smallest detail, every piece of the final design is important and makes a difference in how it reaches the public.

As a young boy, Jones struggled with reading and writing, later learning he was dyslexic. In middle school, at the

urging of his teacher, he took drafting and art classes; in high school, he took a class in architectural drawing.

"I got a job in school working in the office of a local architecture firm," Jones recalls. "Somebody recommended the University of Oregon and the architect I was working for said, 'We'll fly you up there to see if you can get in.' And I did."

The firm and the architect he worked for sponsored Jones for a couple of years, helping him with books and tuition, with one caveat – that he do the same for another architect in the future. "It was nice having that support in the early days. In turn, I've sponsored an American Indian architect at the University of Oregon and mentored here in Seattle at the University of Washington."

Jones is also committed to preserving and teaching about indigenous architecture and is part of American Indian Architects and Engineers, a group of about 30 to 40 professionals dedicated to advancing Native Americans and their architectural heritage.

"I love the work that we do because of the diversity of designs we do, and the opportunities to expose the public to the rich history of indigenous architecture. There is so much yet to learn about our indigenous architectural heritage and how you can use that in a modern design."



*Johnpaul Jones, pictured far right (seated), reviews plans with staff at Jones and Jones Architects + Landscape Architects + Planners.*



*In each of the designs that Jones undertakes, much thought is given to ensuring the preservation and recognition of the natural setting. Here, at Sleeping Lady Mountain Retreat set against the Cascade Mountains in Washington, care was taken to ensure maintaining the spirit of place, including the dramatic backdrop of Icicle Canyon.*

## Country music vocalist makes a joyful noise



*Victoria Blackie*

To make it in the music industry, it appears to be imperative for artists to have something that sets them apart from the competition. Shock value seems to be the tactic that many use in their bid for stardom. Artists are willing to dress in eccentric outfits, shoot racy music videos and push the limits with taboo lyrics to generate the buzz necessary to promote themselves.

However, country music singer Victoria Blackie, 24, doesn't employ any of these gimmicks to gain exposure as a country music artist. In a market that has been historically dominated by white artists, Blackie represents a demographic that is virtually nonexistent in the mainstream country music arena. With the unwavering support of her family members and a Navajo culture rich with a history of perseverance, Blackie hopes to break through the traditional barriers in country music and make her presence felt.

A Salt Lake City, Utah native, Blackie has been performing in front of audiences since the age of 3. YouTube videos of her early performances showcase poise and stage presence that belie her age. Standing at just 5 foot 1, Blackie possesses a powerful voice for her size (You can hear a sampling at [www.victoriablackie.com](http://www.victoriablackie.com)). Her passion for country music and performing are rooted in a family history of entertainers and country music enthusiasts.

"My mom only got country music radio stations back on the reservation she grew up on," says Blackie. "My aunt, who's a big influence in my life, won the Miss Patsy Cline Contest (a sing-along competition dedicated to the memory of the deceased icon) so I've always taken a liking to country music." Blackie's grandmother and father were also talented singers, and the family is involved in many aspects of managing her career; Blackie's parents are her photographers and her aunt is her manager and voice coach.

Blackie's turning point in performing came at the age of 13 when she was invited to join a 30-day

Blackie derives her greatest joy in life from performing. "Whenever I'm performing and I see people singing my song, it gives me a big kick," says Blackie. "Parents come up to me and say, 'My daughter wants to be just like you,' and it makes me feel really good."

Her debut country album, "Wanted Man," has received critical acclaim within the Native American community. Her most prestigious accomplishment to date: eight nominations and a debut-artist-of-the-year award at the 2010 Native American Music Awards.

Blackie's latest album was scheduled for release in spring 2012.



*"I've always taken a liking to country music," says Victoria Blackie.*

concert tour in Japan with a pop group of youth performers. The experience gave her confidence that she could excel in the music industry. Blackie's next milestone came when she was invited to perform at the 2002 Winter Olympics Ethnic Village in Salt Lake City.

The album is filled with a more traditional style of country music that Blackie believes is sorely missing in contemporary productions. "I think country music has drifted away from its roots and now turning to more pop and even rock," says Blackie. "With this album I'm doing a tribute to songs from the '50s and '60s."



# A celebration of legacies and legends

The three artists featured in this *Unity* publication celebrating Native American Heritage Month amplify the admiration and respect for Native American customs and traditions. They all speak fondly of nature and the history that inspired them, and they articulate a commitment to portraying the rich legacies and legends of Native Americans through their art.



"Forming of Apocalypse" by JoAnne Bird

## JOANNE BIRD

Born in Oakland, Calif., JoAnne Bird was raised by her grandmother, whom she credits for playing a major role in her creative education, in Northeastern South Dakota. Bird attended the Institute of American Indian Arts at Santa Fe, and after working as a commercial artist, pursued her career full time. She states that her paintings reflect traditional Native American life in a contemporary style.

The piece "Northern Sun" was inspired by a sunset near Brookings, S.D. The red sky is the backdrop for the warriors outlined in an electrifying blue who appear to be emerging thunderously out of the sky and headed straight toward the viewer. Another piece, "Forming of Apocalypse," shows a stunning use of color portraying passion, wildness, strength and fluid motion of horses.

Dog Soldier warriors were elite warriors from the Cheyenne, Dakotas and Hidatsa tribes, just to name a few. Bird's interpretation of these warriors in "Transformation" is derived from the Hidatsas. Lime green softly washes the background and hovering orange circles with streaks on both sides represent the universe. The headdress is magnificently detailed with a strong presence of black accented by delicate wisps of rust and light blue. Bird remarks that the Hidatsa headdress is one of the finest she has ever seen. The white "coup stick" held by the first warrior was used in battle. It is said that in days of old, instead of killing the enemy, the dog



"Northern Sun" by JoAnne Bird



"Transformation" by JoAnne Bird

soldiers would touch them with the stick to let them know that they could have been killed.

Bird is an enrolled member of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota Nation. She is also an accomplished sculptor working in bronze. Bird has won numerous awards and honors for her work and has been inducted into the South Dakota Hall of Fame as Artist of the Year.

## NATHALIE PARENTEAU

Born in Montreal, Nathalie Parenteau has traveled the world and states that her love of nature provided the fertile ground for her painting career. After high school, she spent time in Canada's Yukon Territory. In her piece, "Twilight Wolf Pack," three wolves seem to be stalking in the fading light, but on closer examination, their eyes show no signs of menace. "The wolf is a very socialized animal with organized communities and hierarchies," says Parenteau, "and I wanted to illustrate that kinship in this painting."

Two salmon, outlined in crisp, bright red, are playing in waters of deep to light blues in "Silence and Salmon," which is pictured on *Unity's* cover. Parenteau says, "In the North, the salmon is life and legend, and lends itself perfectly to my love of lines and hues." A polar bear standing in a meditative pose, with fluid, wide ribbon legs and symbol-like swirls within its body makes "Polar Bear Reverie" almost a mystical

creature. The cool image of the sun denotes the polar bear's frigid environment.

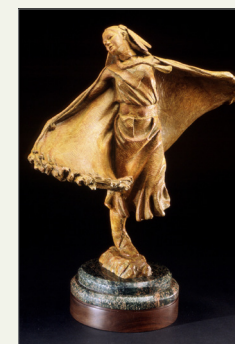
Parenteau fondly speaks about living in Canada and how, right outside the city limits, one is always close to the wilderness. "We have a strong influence by our natural surroundings," she says. "Living in the North saturates my mind with its beauty." These images find their place in Parenteau's artistic continuum. She remains active in the Native community and participates in artistic festivals and events that are focused on their cultural traditions.



"Polar Bear Reverie" by Nathalie Parenteau



"Twilight Wolf Pack" by Nathalie Parenteau



"Fancy Shawl Dancer" by Barry Eisenach



"Bowfisher" by Barry Eisenach

## BARRY EISENACH

Painter and sculptor Barry Eisenach was born in Scottsbluff, Neb., and educated at Colorado State University and the Colorado Institute of Art. After 25 years as a graphic designer and illustrator, Eisenach pursued sculpting more seriously. Each of his pieces is created with a "lost wax cast bronze," an intricate process by which the bronze is cast from an artist's sculpture.

"I strive to honestly and accurately depict the plains tribes of the mid-1800s and hopefully help to keep their history alive," Eisenach remarks. However, "Fancy Shawl Dancer" is a piece depicting a modern Native American. His inspiration came from the movement and grace of a beautiful shawl dancer he saw at the Council Tree Pow Wow in Delta, Colo. "I couldn't resist," says Eisenach. "She was so full of pride and joy."

Each of Eisenach's sculptures are the result of hours of research from books, journals and museums, as well as his working on historic lands with Blackfoot and Crow models. "Bowfisher" depicts the everyday skill needed for a man to feed his family. Eisenach shows the fortitude of the Bowfisher through sculpted muscles in his calves and back. "Thunder Pipe Blessing" represents a pipe that was passed down through generations as a gift from the Thunder Spirit. According to legend, the Thunder Pipe protected the people from lightning and was also used when taking an oath or



"Thunder Pipe Blessing" by Barry Eisenach

making a vow. The markings and detail from the fringe on the pants to the pipe markings and feathers brings this legendary practice to life.

It is Eisenach's hope that when Native Americans view his work they will feel a connection to their ancestors and see the humanity in his subjects "that is inherent to all people."

## At Native eatery, dining is an evolutionary experience



At Tocabe in Denver, the restaurant's contemporary decor incorporates the elements of earth, water, wind and fire.

Denver's only Native American eatery isn't just about food, says co-owner Ben Jacobs. It's about helping people see that Native American people and their traditions are changing with all of today's culture. Jacobs says that he is a typical example – in his jeans and athletic shoes, he's an ordinary-looking guy who also is a Southern Straight Dancer at powwows.

That goal probably lies at the heart of Tocabe's success since it opened in 2008. At Tocabe, Jacobs and partner Matt Chandra put food at the center of a total experience. "We want to make Native food part of the revolution that is happening in food around the world," Jacobs says. "People are enjoying more variety, including international food, than ever before. People want to enjoy the process of going out and gathering to try different foods. They talk about what they are eating and analyze the dishes they eat."

And while Jacobs is effusive in his enthusiasm about Tocabe's role in the "food revolution," he is quick to say, "We're not trained chefs. We're just two guys who love to cook." Jacobs and Chandra begin with traditional foods and recipes that have

been handed down for generations, then create new twists using today's emphasis on healthy eating and fresh ingredients. "Other cuisines change daily," Jacobs explains. "I wanted to be part of the evolution of the Native cuisine and wanted the public's perception of Native culture to evolve in tandem with it."

Jacobs calls Tocabe a "Kitchen by Committee," where other family members and staff equally contribute in developing new recipes and ensuring that every day's offerings are the best quality they can make. He is well aware that the restaurant's success builds on the experience of his parents, Tom and Jan Jacobs, who ran Denver's first Native American restaurant, Grayhorse, in the 1980s. Jan is descended from Oklahoma's Osage lineage.

Jacobs says, "We take pride in what we do, not just in the food. In Denver, if people have a bad experience with our restaurant, they don't have another chance to experience the Native American culture in another restaurant. We really care about representing our community in our environment and our food. We take this very seriously."

### Green Chili Stew

4 cups water  
 ½ pound fresh ground beef  
 1 large potato  
 ¾ cup mild green chilies (preferably fresh but can substitute frozen or canned)  
 ½ cup hot green chilies (preferably fresh but can substitute frozen or canned)  
 2 teaspoon green chili powder  
 1 ½ cup corn (preferably cut off cob but can substitute frozen or canned)  
 2 teaspoons kosher salt  
 2 teaspoons black pepper

Peel and cube potato into ½-inch diameter pieces and set aside. In sauté pan, cook ground beef on medium heat; lightly season with kosher salt and black pepper. While beef is cooking, place water in stockpot with potatoes and bring to a boil. Cook potatoes until fork tender; do not cook until potatoes mash. When all rawness is cooked out of beef, turn off heat. Slowly add flour while mixing into beef in order to make a roux. Mix flour into beef completely until no dry flour remains. Depending on fat ratio in beef you may need to add more or less flour; it depends on how thick you want your stew.

Once roux is complete, add to cooked potatoes in stockpot. Roux may be in large pieces, so break up into desired size with a large spoon. Once roux is fully broken down, add green chilies, green chili powder, corn, kosher salt and black pepper. Fully mix all ingredients and place stockpot back on stovetop. Bring up to temperature on medium heat. Once stew is at proper serving temperature, serve in medium-size bowl. Add cheese or sour cream if desired.

## Sacred sustenance

For many Native Americans, the distinctive cuisine known as fry bread is pleasing to not only the palate but also to the soul. Constructed of some of the same ingredients you might find in a funnel cake, fry bread definitely tantalizes the taste buds, but it's also a sacred symbol in Native American culture, one that links communities and generations.

Though the ingredients are simple, fry bread can be a complicated undertaking – if one is striving for the perfect result. Indeed, it takes a true artisan to fashion perfectly shaped fry bread, and many Native Americans are experts at the task. The process at its most basic involves kneading the dough, puffing it into a pancake-like shape and deep frying it in shortening until bubbles appear and the bread is golden brown.

Many cooks have their own recipes for this simple dish, customizing with such variants as pumpkin, squash or fruit. Some smother the bread with beans, chili, cheese and other accompaniments to create an Indian taco, while others roll the bread in sugar and cinnamon for a sweet treat. More often than not, fry bread is served with honey or butter and jam.

The potent power of the bread's symbolism comes from its history. In the mid- to late-19th century, the U.S. government began relocating American Indians onto land that couldn't easily support their traditional foodstuffs such as vegetables and beans. The government provided the people with canned goods along with white wheat flour, sugar and lard – and the fry bread tradition was born.

Before long fry bread became a revered treat at restaurants, powwows, fairs and festivals, a practice that continues today. At many of today's powwows, fry bread occupies pride of place, with long lines at fry bread concession stands and various fry

bread competitions. There are national fry bread contests as well, providing high-level opportunities for cooks to showcase their fry bread talents.

The foodstuff has spawned followers beyond those who merely like the taste. It has been called today's most relevant Native American symbol. Indian rocker Keith Secola celebrates the food in his popular song "Frybread." The lyrics speak to the popularity and deeper meaning of frybread: "He doesn't seem to mind / a mile long Frybread line / 'cause we're all the same inside / we need fry bread all the time."

### Fry Bread

4 cups all-purpose flour  
 1/2 teaspoon salt  
 1 tablespoon baking powder  
 1 1/2 cups warm water (110 degrees)  
 4 cups shortening for frying

Combine flour, salt and baking powder. Stir in 1 1/2 cups lukewarm water. Knead until soft but not sticky. Shape dough into balls about 3 inches in diameter. Flatten into patties 1/2 inch thick, and make a small hole in the center of each patty. Fry 1 at a time in 1 inch of hot shortening, turning to brown on both sides. Drain on paper towels.

