
GET TO KNOW THE ARTIST NORVAL MORRISSEAU

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Anishinaabe artist Norval Morriseau is the Mishomis, or grandfather, of contemporary Indigenous art in Canada.

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Morriseau is best known for using bright colours and portraying traditional stories, spiritual themes, and political messages in his work.

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Morriseau spent his early childhood with his grandparents, but when he was six years old he was sent to a residential school...

This painting shows Morriseau learning from his grandfather

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...one of several that forcibly separated Indigenous children from their families and forbade them from acknowledging their cultures or speaking their traditional languages.

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As a young man Morriseau took up painting—some of his early works are painted on birchbark.

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In 1962 Morriseau had his first show in a gallery, and art critics admired his paintings—he quickly became famous.

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Drawing from Anishinaabe cultural sources, he created his own style of art and pushed the boundaries of storytelling in painting.

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Morriseau challenged people to rethink how they understood Indigenous art.

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Before Morriseau, most Indigenous artworks were considered artifacts, to be displayed in history museums instead of art galleries.

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As he raised awareness of Indigenous culture, Morriseau inspired many other First Nations artists to take up similar themes and styles in their works.

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“We can learn how to heal people with colour.... Many times people tell me that I’ve cured them of something.... It was the colour of the painting that did that.” — Norval Morriseau