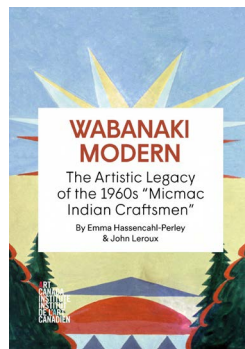
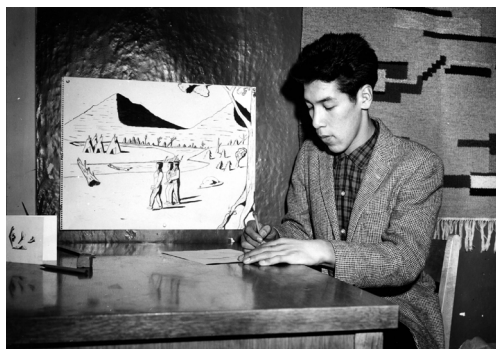


***Wabanaki Modern* celebrates the lasting accomplishments of New Brunswick's "Micmac Indian Craftsmen" in three languages**

Decades ago, a collective of Indigenous artists melded traditional narratives with a contemporary approach. This is their story.

Wabanaki Modern: The Artistic Legacy of the 1960s "Micmac Indian Craftsmen"
The new open-access online art book by Emma Hassencahl-Perley and John Leroux
Publishing on June 3, 2026

A selection of press images is available through the link at the end of this release.



LEFT: MIC artist Vincent Barlow with one of his ink on paper works, 1962. CENTRE: Cover of *Wabanaki Modern*. RIGHT: Stephen Dedam and Michael Francis, *A Legend of the Partridge and the Loon*, 1964.

June 3, 2026, FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—*Wabanaki Modern: The Artistic Legacy of the 1960s "Micmac Indian Craftsmen"*, a free, open-access online art book recalls a time when, for a few exciting years in the 1960s, a group of Indigenous artists based in New Brunswick garnered national attention for their innovative work.

Birth of the Collective

Known as the Micmac Indian Craftsmen and located on Elsipogtog, the province's largest First Nations reserve, the artists drew their inspiration from the stories of the Wabanaki, the ancestors of many of the Indigenous Peoples of the Maritimes. In an innovative twist, however, they illustrated them in a graphically sophisticated and contemporary style. As curator Gerald McMaster writes in his foreword, "Influenced by Western art and drawing upon the memories of an Indigenous past, the generation of the 'Micmac Indian Craftsmen' succeeded in rewriting the possibilities of modernity."

Led by artists Michael Francis and Stephen Dedam, the collective, whose members often had little or no formal training, began creating silkscreened note cards, woven textiles, tapestries, and even ceramics, retelling the stories of Glooscap, the Little People, and the Wild Loon. Almost immediately, their work found an appreciative audiences across Canada. It was featured in newspaper articles, shown at Expo 67, and even appeared in textbooks.

Then Obscurity

While still finding their feet, the artists lost their funding in 1966 because an indifferent and impatient federal government wanted the group to be financially self-sustaining as quickly as possible. Although their work was still in demand, they couldn't make ends meet. By 1970, the collective was no more.

A Triumphant Rediscovery

For decades, the story of the Micmac Indian Craftsmen was largely forgotten. Then, in 2022, the Beaverbrook Art Gallery in Fredericton mounted *Wabanaki Modern*, a show featuring the art of the cooperative—work that influenced many subsequent Indigenous artists and helped to preserve the stories of the Wabanaki for future generations.

A Book of Firsts

To mark this significant exhibition, the Beaverbrook Art Gallery, together with Goose Lane Editions, co-published *Wabanakai Modern: The Artistic Legacy of the 1960s “Micmac Indian Craftsmen”* in English, French, and Mi'kmaq. The new online edition of *Wabanaki Modern* has the distinction of being both the first reprint ever published by the Art Canada Institute, and the first ACI title to be published in an Indigenous language. Says Sara Angel, Founder and Executive Director of the Art Canada Institute, “ACI’s reissue of *Wabanaki Modern* ensures that the work of this innovative artistic cooperative will reach the wide audience it so richly deserves. These important accounts of all-too-often neglected artists deserve to be more widely known, and we are doing our part. Publishing it in Mi'kmaq is a bonus.”

Wabanaki Modern: The Artistic Legacy of the 1960s “Micmac Indian Craftsmen” advances ACI’s mission to create a central digital resource to share Canada’s most important artists, and works of art, with the world. To date, ACI has published more than ninety expert-authored digital books that are available free of charge. As well, the Art Canada Institute develops Canada’s only comprehensive art education guides for teachers and students from kindergarten to grade 12—content that is also free and available online and serves over 700,000 educators.

To explore the Art Canada Institute’s open-access digital book *Wabanaki Modern: The Artistic Legacy of the 1960s “Micmac Indian Craftsmen”* by Emma Hassencahl-Perley and John Leroux, please visit: <https://www.aci-iac.ca/art-books/wabanaki-modern/>.

For **media requests** or for **interviews** with:

- **Emma Hassencahl-Perley and John Leroux**, authors of *Wabanaki Modern: The Artistic Legacy of the 1960s “Micmac Indian Craftsmen”*
- **Sara Angel**, Executive Director, **Art Canada Institute**

please contact: media@aci-iac.ca

For images cleared for copyright and image credits, please see the gallery at the end of the release.

About the Authors

Emma Hassencahl-Perley is the curator of Indigenous Art at the Beaverbrook Art Gallery and a Wolastoqey visual artist, arts writer, and educator from Neqotkuk (Tobique First Nation) in New Brunswick. She has curated and co-curated numerous exhibitions, including *ehpituwikuwam* (2022), *BACA: Creation Stories* (2023), and *Epekwithk Quill Sisters: Etleoogoeiog* (Talking Together) (2024).

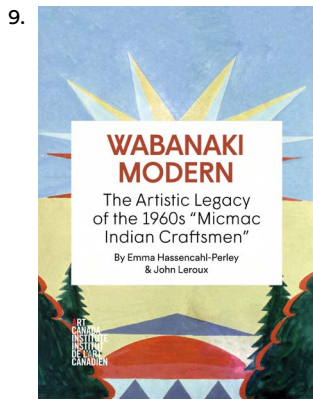
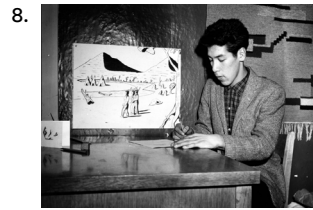
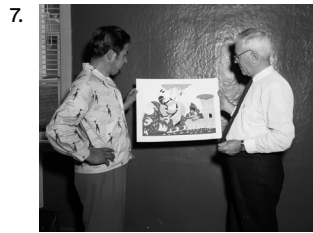
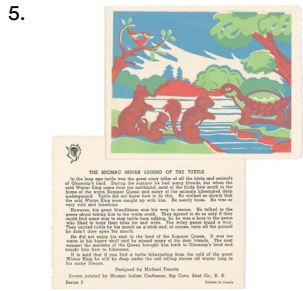
Dr. John Leroux is an art and architectural historian, heritage specialist, educator, emeritus architect, and former curator at the Beaverbrook Art Gallery. He has worked at award-winning architecture firms in Toronto, Atlanta, Saint John, and Fredericton, and has taught at the New Brunswick College of Craft and Design, the University of New Brunswick, and St. Thomas University. Leroux has authored or contributed to twenty-six books on Canadian architecture and visual culture. He was awarded the Order of New Brunswick in 2024.

About the Art Canada Institute

The Art Canada Institute is the only national institution whose mandate is to promote the study of an inclusive, multi-vocal Canadian art history to as broad an audience as possible, on a digital platform, and free of charge in both English and French, across Canada and internationally. To accomplish this, ACI works with Canada's leading cultural institutions, art historians, curators, and visual culture experts, and is dedicated to the creation of authoritative original content on the people, themes, and topics that have defined Canadian art history.

To learn more about ACI and to access our free digital library, please visit us!

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1. Michael Francis, *The Micmac Indian Legend of Our Seasons—Glooscap, Tatler the Loon, and the Summer Queen*, 1963, gouache on paper, 52 × 73 cm. Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, Fredericton (PANB, P261-45). Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick. © Elsipogtog First Nation.
2. Michael Francis, *How Glooscap Formed the Birds—New Brunswick*, 1963, original artwork for the IODE calendar, gouache on paper, 35 × 53 cm. New Brunswick Museum, Saint John (NBM 1980.62.10.2). Courtesy of the New Brunswick Museum. © Elsipogtog First Nation.
3. Stephen Dedam, *The Legend of Kingfisher*, 1965, gouache on paper, 38 × 53 cm. New Brunswick Museum, Saint John (1966.85). Courtesy of the New Brunswick Museum. © Elsipogtog First Nation.
4. Stephen Dedam and Michael Francis, *A Legend of the Partridge and the Loon*, 1964, silkscreened Hasti-Note card, 10 × 13 cm. New Brunswick Museum, Saint John (1995.27.90.6). Courtesy of the New Brunswick Museum. © Elsipogtog First Nation.
5. Michael Francis, *The Micmac Indian Legend of the Turtle*, Series 2A, 1963, silkscreened Hasti-Note card, 10 × 13 cm. Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton (2020.24). Courtesy of the Beaverbrook Art Gallery. © Elsipogtog First Nation.
6. Michael Francis (designer), *Lightning Legend*, 1963, handwoven by Ivan H. Crowell, wool on linen, 142 × 112 cm. New Brunswick Museum, Saint John, New Brunswick Craft Collection (1995.27.57.13). Courtesy of the New Brunswick Museum. © Elsipogtog First Nation.
7. Michael Francis (*left*) and Ivan H. Crowell (*right*) holding an artwork from Francis's *Micmac Legends of the Little People* series, 1963. Photographer unknown. Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, Fredericton (PANB P14-2-6918). Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick.
8. MIC artist Vincent Barlow with one of his ink on paper works, 1962. Photographer unknown. Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, Fredericton (PANB P340-59). Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick.
9. Cover of *Wabanaki Modern: The Artistic Legacy of the 1960s “Micmac Indian Craftsmen”* by Emma Hassencahl-Perley and John Leroux.
10. Emma Hassencahl-Perley, co-author of *Wabanaki Modern: The Artistic Legacy of the 1960s “Micmac Indian Craftsmen.”*
11. John Leroux, co-author of *Wabanaki Modern: The Artistic Legacy of the 1960s “Micmac Indian Craftsmen.”*