

Patterns of the Past: Indigenous Beading Through Time

Introduction: A Living Art

Indigenous beading has been a vital part of many cultures for centuries, serving as a means of communication, identity, and artistic expression. This project explores the rich history and contemporary significance of indigenous beading across various cultures.

Pre-Contact Beading (Before European Arrival)

Before European contact, indigenous beading was primarily used for practical purposes such as clothing and shelter. Beads were often made from natural materials like bone, stone, and shell, and were used to create intricate patterns and designs.

Beading After European Arrival

The arrival of Europeans brought significant changes to indigenous beading practices. New materials like glass beads and new techniques were introduced, leading to a fusion of traditional and European styles. Beading became a more prominent part of cultural identity and artistic expression.

The 19th Century: Beading to the West of Civilization

In the 19th century, beading was often used as a form of resistance and cultural preservation. Indigenous artists used beading to express their identity and traditions in the face of assimilation and oppression.



20th Century to Present: Beading as Cultural Reclamation and Social Navigation

In the 20th century, beading became a powerful tool for cultural reclamation and social navigation. Indigenous artists used beading to reclaim their identity and traditions, often incorporating modern materials and techniques. Beading also became a way to navigate contemporary social issues and build community.

Conclusion

Indigenous beading is a living art that has evolved over time, reflecting the resilience and creativity of indigenous cultures. It is a testament to the enduring power of tradition and the ability to adapt and thrive in a changing world.

Visual Overview

See how indigenous beading has evolved over time, from traditional to contemporary styles.

The image shows a collection of beaded items, including necklaces, bracelets, and earrings, arranged in a grid.

These items are examples of traditional indigenous beading, often made from natural materials like bone, stone, and shell.

Modern indigenous beading often incorporates new materials and techniques, creating a fusion of traditional and contemporary styles.

Beading is a powerful tool for cultural reclamation and social navigation, allowing indigenous artists to express their identity and traditions in a contemporary context.

Revitalization: Beading as Resistance and Healing

Beading has become a powerful tool for cultural revitalization and healing. Indigenous artists use beading to reclaim their identity and traditions, often incorporating modern materials and techniques. Beading also becomes a way to navigate contemporary social issues and build community.

"Beading is resistance. It's a way of saying 'We are still here'." - Indigenous artist

Contemporary Beading Artists Carrying the Legacy

Contemporary beading artists are carrying the legacy of their ancestors, using beading as a form of artistic expression and cultural preservation. They often incorporate modern materials and techniques, creating a fusion of traditional and contemporary styles.

Focus Question:

How has Indigenous beadwork evolved as a form of storytelling and cultural expression, and what does its ongoing importance reveal about the strength and resilience of Indigenous cultures in Canada?

"The beads we use are tiny but carry big meaning. Each bead is placed with care and intention, telling the story of our people and our survival."

- Mary Okpik, Inuit artist



Introduction: A Living Art

Indigenous peoples have been using the intricate art of beading to depict their family histories, beliefs, and sense of self long before written language existed. Beading is more than just decorative; **it is a sacred language, conveying knowledge, identity, and culture across generations.** For Indigenous Peoples across Canada, each bead can hold meaning, memory, and message. Although colonizers tried to suppress the culture, beading has persisted through thick and thin. **Today, artists make pieces that speak to identity, environmental concerns, social justice, etc., using traditional practices combined with contemporary themes.**

Pre-Contact Beading (Before European Arrival):

Before European contact, **Indigenous peoples made their beads from natural materials available to them, such as bones, shells, stone, seeds, and porcupine quills.** Most of the time, these materials were hard to work with, but they were still used to create beads for ceremonial regalia, clothing, and storytelling. Different groups used materials found in their regions. For example, the Cree and Ojibwe used bones and shells, while the Navajo used turquoise and seeds. Porcupine quills were dyed and carefully woven for decoration before glass beads were introduced.



European Arrival:



Beading After European Arrival:

The arrival of Europeans in the 17th century introduced new beading materials to Indigenous people that created a number of significant changes:

1. **Glass Beads:** When Europeans arrived, they traded colorful glass beads. These beads were smaller and easier to work with compared to natural materials like bone or shell. Glass beads quickly became popular among the Indigenous groups.
2. **New Tools and Trade Goods:** With the introduction of glass beads, Indigenous Peoples began trading them, not just with the Europeans, but also with other Indigenous groups. The Europeans exchanged the beads for furs, food, natural resources, and overall knowledge on how to survive in these new conditions, as the Europeans had never lived like the Indigenous peoples did. This created a bead trade network, which allowed the sharing of techniques, designs, and new materials across the continent.
3. **Cultural Shifts:** Beadwork, once a form of storytelling and cultural expression, eventually had become a trade item and symbol of status as goods and ideas exchanged between cultures.
4. **Loss of Traditions:** As more and more beading artists started to rely on glass beads, the use of natural materials (such as bones, porcupine quills etc.) and traditional beading practices started to either be lost or altered.

Even with all these changes, **beading** still remained an important cultural practice for many Indigenous communities. There is no doubt that it was evolving but still was deeply connected to their identity and family history.

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The 19th Century: Beading in the Face of Colonization

"When I bead, I think of my kohkom (grandmother). She taught me with patience, and every stitch is a memory."

— Darlene M., Métis bead artist, as quoted in the Canadian Museum of History exhibit.

In the 19th century, **beading became a form of resistance against the government's attempts to get rid of Indigenous cultures.** As Indigenous languages and traditions were suppressed, beading helped maintain those practices as well as keeping history alive. Some families continued beading in secret, while elders passed down techniques to children. Beading became a way to share knowledge, tell stories, and express pride in Indigenous identity. **Beading didn't die during colonization, it changed and became resilient, a remarkable symbol of strength.**

20th Century to Present: Beadwork as Cultural Reclamation and Global Recognition

In the 20th century, Indigenous beading experienced a revival as both a tool for cultural reclamation and a global art form. As Indigenous peoples were able to reclaim cultural practices and identity as their own, beading became a marker of cultural expression and empowerment.

- **Cultural Reclamation:** Beadwork became a form of activism that challenged stereotypes, as well as promoting cultural pride, and setting Indigenous rights in stone. Artists have started to blend traditional materials with modern techniques, connecting to their heritage while creating new forms of expression.
- **Indigenous Beadwork in Global Art Circles:** In recent decades, Indigenous beadwork has gained recognition on the global stage. Beadwork has been featured in international art exhibits, fashion shows, and galleries, showcasing the artistry and cultural significance of the craft. Artists like **Tanya Tagaq**, (whose musical performances incorporate beading) and **Emily Kame Kngwarreye** (whose work includes beaded designs), have all deeply contributed to bringing Indigenous beadwork to a broader audience, showing all of its beauty, resilience, and cultural importance.
- **The Impact of Social Media and the Digital Age:** The advent of social media has also increased the reach of Indigenous beadwork. Through apps like Instagram or TikTok, Indigenous beaders can share their creations and creativity with a global audience, connect with other people in the Indigenous art community, as well as sell



Storytelling Through Beadwork

What Do Beads Say?

Directions — Colors can represent the **four sacred directions** in the medicine wheel: North (white), East (yellow), South (red), and West (black). These directions are tied to **teachings about life, balance, and spiritual growth**.

Animals — A **beaded eagle** might stand for **strength or guidance**. A **bear** might symbolize **protection**, while a **wolf** represents **loyalty and community**.

Plants and Flowers — Flowers often represent **family lineage or a connection** to a particular place. In some communities, specific floral patterns are passed down through generations and become a kind of family signature.

Tears and Stars — Beaded teardrops might **honor a lost loved one**. Stars or celestial symbols can reflect origin stories, dreams, or connections to the spirit world.

The Meaning of Colours:

Red: represents *life, love & bloodline*

White: represents *truth, spirit & purity*

Yellow: represents *the sun & growth*

Black : represents *strength or struggle*

Green: represents *Earth, nature, healing or growth*

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"The language spoken through beadwork is the same to me as the language spoken by nature. I hear stories in both. Stories of pain, darkness, survival, resilience, hope, community and celebration. They are all part of our journey as Indigenous people and are woven together to create a rich tapestry."

— Raechel Wastesicoot

Different Beading Style:

1. Métis (Prairie Provinces):

The Métis are known as "**The Flower Beadwork People**" because they are known for their **detailed and intricate floral designs** that include both First Nations and European embroidery styles. Beadwork is used to decorate clothing, moccasins, bags, and sashes, each piece holding personal meaning. These flowers often symbolize survival, growth, and resilience. The designs often feature curved stems or S-shapes, tiny bead lines called "**mouse tracks**," and a "**Spirit Bead**", a small mistake added on purpose to show that only the Creator can make something perfect.

2. Inuit (Arctic Regions of Canada):

Inuit beadwork **features geometric shapes, snowflakes, and animal symbols that reflect nature and Inuit beliefs**. The beads are sewn onto caribou skin (mainly the most unpleasant ones), seal fur, and moose hide to decorate parkas, mittens, and boots. This beadwork shows beauty, status, and personal stories. Today, beadwork continues to uphold and present Inuit culture, teach younger generations, and connect the artist with an expression of pride.

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Haudenosaunee beadwork is famous for its **dimensional 3D designs**. Common motifs include wampum patterns, floral designs, and clan animals. Beadwork is closely tied to storytelling, treaties, and ceremonial garments.

4. Lakota (Sioux) (North and South Dakota, Montana (USA), Southern Saskatchewan and Manitoba, Canada):

The Lakota are recognized for their **bold geometric beadwork, using shapes**. These shapes include: triangles, diamonds, and crosses. The Lakota's beadwork also incorporates **traditional colors like: red, white, blue, and yellow, all carrying deep spiritual meaning**. Beadwork is often done on buckskin and used in regalia, moccasins, pipe bags, and cradleboards. Passed down through families or mentors, it plays an important role in cultural events like the Sun Dance and powwows.

5. Ojibwe (Great Lakes Region):

Ojibwe beadwork is **floral in design** and known for being a very **intricate style using loom and appliqué techniques**. All of their designs often tell a story and represent their beliefs of nature and spirituality.

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"We say the beads have a spirit to them. We say each bead is alive."

— Randi Candline, Woodland Cree instructor

6. Woodland Cree (Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta):

Woodland Cree beadwork **features symmetrical floral designs that reflect nature's balance**. It is made with moose hide, sinew thread, and glass seed beads and is a spiritual tradition passed down through generations.

Revitalization: Beadwork as Resistance and Healing

Indigenous beadwork is currently having a significant revival. **Artists are reclaiming and expressing their own traditional knowledge, asserting their identity, asserting their resistance, and healing from trauma.** Beadworkers are now able to utilize social media, art exhibitions, and education programs to share their personal stories and teach others. The beadwork of today often includes aspects of present-day context but is influenced by their traditional practices, and is becoming more widely recognized. With the resurgence of Indigenous art, contemporary beadwork may include political messages, portraits, disturbing accounts of missing and murdered Indigenous women, and highlighted environmental concerns.

"Beadwork is resistance. It's reclamation. It's our way of telling the world: We are still here."

— Christl Belcourt, Métis artist (CBC Indigenous Interview)

Contemporary Beading Artists Carrying the Legacy

Christl Belcourt (@fitt)

Contemporary Beading Artists Carrying the Legacy

Christi Belcourt (Métis)

- Christi Belcourt is a **visual artist, environmentalist, and social justice advocate**. She paints intricate floral designs and patterns inspired by Métis beadwork, and is an avid land-based arts and language learner.
- Her work celebrates: the land, her ancestors, and Indigenous knowledge.
- As the **lead artist behind *Walking With Our Sisters***, a commemorative installation of over 1,800 moccasin tops (vamps), Christi Belcourt honors Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG).



Lisa Shepherd (Métis)

- Lisa Shepherd is a BC based Métis artist who uses traditional Métis practices and materials to create contemporary artwork and garments. She specializes in traditional Métis floral beadwork with a modern twist.
- Uses her work to speak about **language loss, culture, and reconnection**.
- Creates regalia and teaches workshops to youth, helping pass traditions on.



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Judy Anderson (Nêhiyaw Cree)

- Judy Anderson is Nêhiyaw Cree, and from Saskatchewan! Anderson's work often involves beading on untypical materials, such as moose hide. She also incorporates elements like graffiti in her work.
- She collaborates with her son, Cruz Anderson, to create pieces that **honor their family and address issues like colonialism and Indigenous identity**.
- Like Christi Belcourt, Her art has been featured in exhibitions like "Walking With Our Sisters"



Patterns of the Past:

Indigenous Beading Through Time

Introduction: A Living Art

Indigenous beading is a living art, one that has evolved over time and across cultures. It is a form of expression that is both traditional and contemporary, reflecting the values, beliefs, and experiences of the people who create it. From ancient times to the present, beading has been a vital part of Indigenous life, used for adornment, storytelling, and as a means of connecting to one's heritage.

Pre-Contact Beading (Before European Arrival)

Before European contact, Indigenous peoples used natural materials like bone, wood, and stone to create beaded jewelry. These items were often used for ceremonial purposes or as status symbols. The designs were typically geometric, reflecting the natural world and the spiritual beliefs of the time.



Beading After European Arrival

The arrival of Europeans brought new materials and techniques to Indigenous beading. Glass beads, introduced by traders, became a popular material due to their vibrant colors and ease of use. This led to the development of new styles, such as the "shell and glass" beaded jewelry, which combined traditional Indigenous designs with European influences.

The 19th Century: Beading as a Sign of Civilization

In the 19th century, beading was often used by missionaries and government officials as a way to "civilize" Indigenous people. They encouraged the use of European-style beaded jewelry, which was seen as a sign of progress and adoption of Western culture.



20th Century to Present: Beading as Cultural Reclamation and Global Recognition

In the 20th century, Indigenous peoples began to reclaim their cultural identity through beading. They incorporated traditional designs into modern jewelry, using new materials and techniques. This movement was part of a larger effort to preserve and celebrate Indigenous heritage.

Today, Indigenous beading is recognized globally as a unique and valuable art form. It is featured in museums, galleries, and on the fashion runway, showcasing the creativity and skill of Indigenous artists.



Storytelling Through Beadwork

Beading is a powerful form of storytelling. Each bead, color, and pattern can represent a specific story, event, or belief. Indigenous peoples have used beading to pass down their history and traditions from one generation to the next.

For example, a beaded necklace might represent a journey, a battle, or a significant event in a person's life. The colors used in the beads can also have meaning, such as red for courage or blue for wisdom.

By creating beaded jewelry, Indigenous artists tell their stories and share their culture with the world.

Beading is a living art, one that continues to evolve and grow. It is a testament to the resilience and creativity of Indigenous peoples.

Through beading, Indigenous peoples have found a way to connect to their past and look towards the future.

Beading is a gift, one that has been passed down for generations. It is a gift of knowledge, of skill, and of love.

Beading is a way of life, one that is deeply rooted in the traditions and values of Indigenous peoples.

Focus Question

How has Indigenous beading evolved over time, and what role does it play in contemporary Indigenous life?

This question explores the historical and cultural significance of Indigenous beading, as well as its role in the present day.



Different Beading Styles

1. Shell and Glass Beading

This style of beading uses natural shell and glass beads. It is often used to create necklaces, pendants, and earrings. The designs are typically geometric, reflecting the natural world and the spiritual beliefs of the time.

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Revitalization: Beading as Resistance and Healing

Indigenous beading is a powerful form of resistance and healing. It is a way for Indigenous peoples to reclaim their cultural identity and share their stories with the world. Beading is a living art, one that continues to evolve and grow.

Beading as a Sign of Civilization

In the 19th century, beading was often used by missionaries and government officials as a way to "civilize" Indigenous people. They encouraged the use of European-style beaded jewelry, which was seen as a sign of progress and adoption of Western culture.

Contemporary Beading Artists Carrying the Legacy

Today, many Indigenous artists are carrying the legacy of beading into the future. They are creating new styles of beaded jewelry, using traditional techniques and modern materials. Their work is a testament to the resilience and creativity of Indigenous peoples.

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Patterns of the Past:

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World Bank The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA) are the two main institutions of the World Bank Group.

World Bank Group The World Bank Group is a group of five institutions that work together to provide financial and technical assistance to developing countries. The institutions are the IBRD, IDA, International Finance Corporation (IFC), Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), and the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID).

World Bank's Role The World Bank's role is to provide financial and technical assistance to developing countries to help them achieve sustainable economic growth and development. The Bank's assistance is provided in the form of loans, grants, and technical assistance.

World Bank's Impact The World Bank has played a significant role in the development of many developing countries. It has provided financial and technical assistance to over 100 countries and has helped to improve the lives of millions of people. The Bank's assistance has helped to build infrastructure, improve health and education, and promote economic growth.

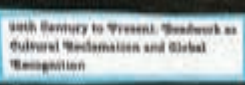
World Bank's Future The World Bank is committed to continuing its work to help developing countries achieve sustainable economic growth and development. The Bank is currently working on a number of new initiatives, including a focus on climate change and digital technology.

The 19th-century
state of Delaware

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For the indigenous peoples, nature is a form of spirituality and culture expression, and they call the living organisms 'ance' about the strength and existence of indigenous culture in society.

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and the fact that the company is a public company, the board of directors is required to disclose any material information that may affect the company's financial position or performance. The board of directors is also required to disclose any material information that may affect the company's reputation or the interests of its shareholders.

• *Shasta*—A perennial herbaceous plant, 1 to 2 feet tall, with a single stem and a basal rosette of leaves. The leaves are lanceolate, 2 to 4 inches long, and have serrated margins. The flowers are small, white, and tubular, and are borne in a terminal raceme. The fruit is a small, round, brown seed.

Students taking classes at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) are encouraged to take the following courses to help them prepare for the GRE. The GRE is a computer-based test that measures your ability to understand and analyze written material, and your ability to write clearly and effectively. The GRE is used by many graduate schools to evaluate applicants. The GRE is a computer-based test that measures your ability to understand and analyze written material, and your ability to write clearly and effectively. The GRE is used by many graduate schools to evaluate applicants. The GRE is a computer-based test that measures your ability to understand and analyze written material, and your ability to write clearly and effectively. The GRE is used by many graduate schools to evaluate applicants.

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