

Red Deer Museum + Art Gallery Interpretive Guide

POWWOW!

Ohcîwin The Origins

September 19, 2020 -
February 28, 2021

An exhibition
featuring
7 powwow
dance styles,
with full regalia
and craft work.

Curated and
Created by Patrick +
Marrisa Mitsuing.



Marmar Photography



MUSEUM HOURS:
TUES. - SAT. 10 AM - 4:30 PM
4525-47 A AVE.
RED DEER, AB T4N 6Z6
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www.reddeermuseum.com



Oh-cî-win:

Ooo-chi-win, Cree

1. *"The Origin" or telling of a story of where something originated.*

What is a Powwow?

A Powwow is an Indigenous celebration of life. Traditional powwows have teachings, a ceremony and a feast. Contemporary, competitive powwows include prizes for dancers and are filled with spectators, dancers, singers, drummers, food stands and artisans. They are usually a three day celebration that happens on weekends during the summer. The drummers play a key role, as the dancers follow the beat of the drum. While the exact origin of powwows are unknown, these celebrations were adopted and adapted by various Indigenous communities across North America.



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Patrick and Marrisa Mitsuing

Curators & Creators

Patrick Mitsuing is a world Champion Powwow Dancer, Artist and Motivational Speaker. **Marrisa Mitsuing** is a Champion Powwow Dancer and Artist. Together they have gathered and recorded the stories, the artisans and carefully crafted the Regalia for this exhibit

Styles of Dance

Each dance style has an origin story. The distinctive dress and ornamentation is called **Regalia**. There are 11 artists who have created the **Regalia** for this exhibition.

Men's Grass Dance: This dance originated from the Dakota and Lakota peoples. This dance is a sway dance, where dancers move like the grass. They represent the scouts that hid in the grass to check out where the enemy was or to track buffalo. They blend in with nature to hide from the enemy. It's for the most limber warriors as the movements are low and use all the body's joints.

Men's Chicken Dance: This Blackfoot dance originated from a warrior killing the Prairie Chicken during their mating dance. The Chicken spirit came to the warrior in a dream asking why he killed him during their mating ceremony. The warrior didn't know it was a ceremony, now they need to finish the ceremony by doing their dance or the spirit will seek revenge.



Men's Grass Dance
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Men's Chicken Dance
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Nehiyawak = Cree

Nimîhto = Cree for Dance

Pwâtisimowin = Sioux grass dance

Kitokipaaskaan = Blackfoot for Prairie Chicken Dance

Styles of Dance

Men's Fancy Dance: This is the men's fancy war dance, originated in Oklahoma and with Wild West Shows. The two tribes Ponca and Choctaw were battling for years and decided to have a truce by trading songs for horses. The horses started to dance to the songs, so they mimicked the movement of the horses with speed and agility. The dancers wear 2 bustles on their back and have a rocker on top of their roach that rocks back and forth to the drum beat. They carry a dance whip as well that they dance with. They move fast and hop on the ground.



Men's Fancy Dance
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Men's Traditional Dance: These are the warriors that go into battle. When they dance they tell their story of successful hunts or battles. You can see them charging the enemy or sneak up on their foes as they re-enact it in the dance. Their face will be painted as if they are ready for battle and they have bustles on their backs made of Eagle feathers and they carry weapons.



Men's Traditional Dance
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**Round Dance = Held at the beginning of a powwow
with all dancers forming a circle.**

Drum = represents the heartbeat of mother earth.

Wapesha = Dakota for headdress

Styles of Dance

Ladies Traditional Dance: The women would stand on the outside of the ceremony circle dancing to support the men. Traditionally they were not allowed to dance within the circle like the men. They had long fringe down the sides of their dresses to keep them connected to Mother Earth. They are the protectors of the circles and they would keep an eye out for danger while they watched to make sure everything is in order in the community.



Ladies Traditional Dance
Marmar photography

Ladies Fancy Dance: One of the modern dances is the Fancy Shawl. It was one of the first women's rights movements in North America. The ladies wanted to dance in the center of the ceremony just like the men. They defied the men's laws and started to come into the center to dance and prove they could dance as good as the men. They wore traditional outfits but danced to a faster beat; they opened their arms and used their beautiful shawls like the wings of a butterfly or Eagle.



Ladies Fancy Shawl Dance
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Quote from Patrick Mitsuing on competitive dancing:
*" I dance against other dancers, but mostly
I dance against the drum".*

Styles of Dance

Ladies Jingle Dance: This is a healing dance originated from the Ojibwe people. This dance came to a man in a dream. His granddaughter was ill and he prayed to find a way to heal her.

In his dream, there were many ladies dancing in dresses and the sound from the dresses was like rain. He noticed the jingles on the dresses. In the dream it was said that if he helped create these dresses and had the ladies dance, his daughter would be healed. He created these dresses and had the ladies from his family dance and over time his granddaughter began to heal.



Ladies Jingle Dance

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Healing



Medicine Wheel: The medicine wheel is a sacred symbol of healing used for generations for the North American Indigenous people. The circle represents the life journey of people, the Four Directions, as well as Mother Earth, Father Sky and Spirit Tree which symbolize the cycles of life and health. It can take the form of an artifact, a painting, or a land formation.

Colour meanings of the Medicine Wheel:
Each colour represents a direction and a season:
Yellow = East/Spring, Red= South/Summer,
Black = West/Fall, White = North/ Winter

Powwow Protocols

Protocols are rooted in Indigenous knowledge and they are a cultural framework which acknowledge that we are on the land of Indigenous people. It is a sign of respect and recognition.

- Establish dialogue between an Elder or knowledge keeper as a sign of respect to obtain cultural knowledge.
- Bring something to receive something. Offer tobacco - a sacred resource, used in peace pipes - the strongest form of prayer to the creator. Offer cloth or prints to represent the 4 colours of the medicine wheel. Small gifts and gestures are also welcome.
- Be sincere - protocols are an inclusive and ethical practice.
- Acknowledgement - be guided by Indigenous principles: **Respect, Responsibility and Reciprocity.**
- Protocols are about presence and reverence; the meaning behind traditions.
- Each tribe has different protocols, but you cannot ask an Elder for help without using protocol.



Round dance at MAG 2011



First Nations Dance near Banff, Alberta,
c. 1920 RedDeer Archives_P7776

Intertribal: Cultures were once independent from each other and over time have exchanged customs and traditions creating intertribal powwows.

Knowledge Keepers: Elders or Indigenous who carry knowledge and teachings to share.

Find these examples in the exhibit
Which regalia are they part of?



***Symmetry in design symbolizes the importance of
'keeping life in balance'.***

Search for symmetry in the regalia. Hint: find two horse symbols.

Braids symbolize: 3 parts have 3 meanings

*First strand symbolizes all things female; Second strand symbolizes
all things male; Third strand symbolizes love for all things.*

When the 3 strands are woven or braided together it creates balance.

Regalia Accessories

Match the photo to the name



Roach



Fan



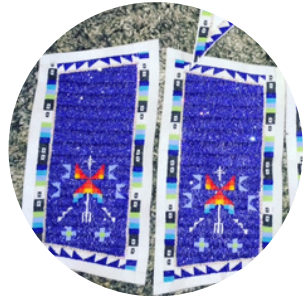
Cuffs



Head band



Face paint



Moccasins



Bustle



Breast Plate

Long Hair + Braids

Long hair is considered sacred as it's an extension of the nervous system which heightens sensory and intuition. This helps men with hunting, going into battle and detecting danger.

Quote from Shelda Thom on the Jingle Dance:

"If you want to dance jingle, go dance.

If it's in your heart; go dance."

Powwow History

Historically, powwows were adapted by various Indigenous groups across North America over the 20th century. Modern powwows can be traditional or competitive; both have ceremonial aspects. An Elder has a Pipe Ceremony, then an opening prayer. The drum song is next, then the Grand Entry for all the dancers to parade in their regalia. The Honour song celebrates that powwows are still celebrated then there is the Honouring of Leaders and hosts. Powwows have dance categories for men, women and children. Competitive dancers are judged by their footwork and regalia; cash prizes are awarded. Today, powwows have drummers, traditional food, and artisan vendors. Indigenous and non-Indigenous people come together in peace and celebrate an enduring culture.

Treaty 6 & 7: "We are all treaty people".

A treaty is a binding agreement between two sovereign states which outlines each party's rights, benefits and obligations. Treaty 6 boundaries extend from central Alberta and Saskatchewan and it was signed in 1876 by Cree, Nakota, Dene, Assiniboine, Saulteaux and Ojibwe and European settlers, the Dominion of Canada on behalf of the Queen. Treaty 7 was signed in 1877 in Blackfoot territory in Southern Alberta between the Blackfoot confederacy and the Dominion of Canada on behalf of the Queen. National reconciliation involves building respectful relationships at the community level.



1915 Stoney Nakota First Nation, Morley area.
Red Deer Archives_P3269

Time Immemorial: time so long past as to be indefinite in history.

First Contact: first meeting between Indigenous and Europeans.

Ceded Territory: yield or formally surrender territory to another.

Indian Act (1876): A principle statute by the government to administer Indian status and management of reserve land and communal monies. Powwows, potlatches and other ceremonies were banned under the Indian Act.

Resurgence of Powwows (1951): The government lifted the ban for powwow ceremonies. The 1960's saw a resurgence of powwows as Indigenous groups came together to celebrate in a cultural exchange and created the modern powwow.

In 1914 an amendment was passed to the Indian Act "*barring western Indians under penalty of law from participating without official permission in "Aboriginal costume" in any "dance, exhibition, stampede or pageant."* This meant that to participate in a powwow and wear regalia you needed the Indian Agent's permission. It is documented that as early as 1884, there were Indian Agents who disagreed with this ban and overlooked this clause. By the 1920's official enforcement of this prohibition to wear regalia and attend powwows became more intense.



Aboriginal men with horses.
Red Deer Archives_P3268

Powwow show dances were special attractions in 1922!



RD Advocate August 16, 1922 page 8



RD Advocate August 16, 1922 page 7

Quote from Michael Roberts on Men's Fancy dance:
"When we look our best, people feel good."

Powwow roles

What happens during a Powwow? Who does what?

Master of Ceremonies: The voice of the powwow keeps everyone informed. They keep the schedule of events and the drum rotation. They do interviews, contests or tell jokes to engage the audience.

Drum Boss: The host drum or drum boss is responsible for singing the songs at the start and end of the powwow, the grand entry and the victory song, plus any other special songs during the ceremony.

Head Dancers: They consist of Head man, Head woman, Head teen, Head little boy/little girl, Head Golden Age dancers. The head dancers lead the Grand Entry parade that opens the powwow.

Head Dance Judges: They find people to judge each dance contest.

Arena Director: Also referred to as the 'whip man', they are in charge during the powwow. They are responsible for the dancers, what the drummer sing, recruiting judges, organizing the ceremony and making sure visitors respect the arena.

Powwow Committee: A group of individuals that do all the planning leading up to the event including sponsorship, promotions, recruiting head staff and vendors, and securing a location.

Royal Court: Powwow princess and Little Warrior. The Princess pageant is a special event that takes place during a pow wow. A dancer has to earn his/ her way to be crowned as a princess or Little Warrior. These dancers represent that powwow celebration for the whole year.



Respected Emcee -Howard Walker,
Marmar photography

Origin Stories: Also known as creation stories they are teaching stories and spiritual in nature. They remain unchanged over time.

Personal Stories: These are observations, accounts of places and experiences. They evolve over time and are influenced by the relevancy of the population.