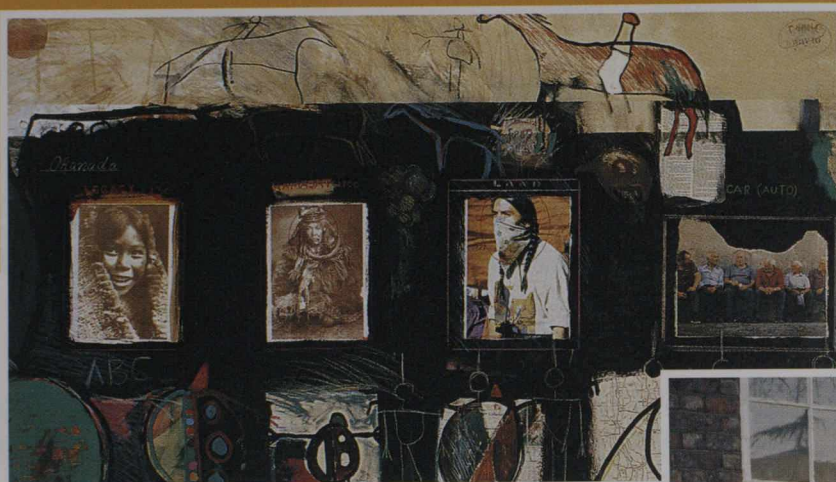


*Oka Spirit Power* (1990), by Alberta artist Jane Ash Poitras. This was one of the works in a 1997 travelling exhibition, *Transitions: Contemporary Canadian Indian and Inuit Art*, sponsored by DFAIT and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. *Transitions* was also shown at Mexico's 2002 Cervantino Festival.



exhibitions abroad, international career development, artist sponsorship for international events, preparatory tours for Canadian experts, and familiarization visits to Canada by foreign art experts, curators and museum directors.

Some individual missions themselves organize exhibitions of Canadian artists. The missions in Paris, London, Tokyo and Washington have professional art galleries that schedule programs on an annual basis, often in partnership with commercial and public art galleries or festival organizers. And although they have no art galleries, the Canadian missions in New York, Los Angeles, Berlin and Mexico City actively promote Canadian art through their cultural diplomacy programs. They work in close partnership with local institutions and leaders in the field. Recently, for instance, the Canadian Embassy in Berlin helped organize a mini-festival of Michael Snow's work (film, audio

*Prototype for a New Understanding #1* (1999) (Nike Air Jordans) by Brian Jungen (not exhibited in *Hammertown*)



photo: courtesy Catriona Jeffries Gallery, Vancouver

and books) in conjunction with local contemporary art galleries.

Under the Visual and Media Arts Program, a 2002 touring exhibition brought to Britain and the United States the work of eight young Canadian artists: Geoffrey Farmer, Brian Jungen, Myfanwy MacLeod, Euan Macdonald, Luanne Martineau, Damian Moppett, Shannon Oksanen and Kevin Schmidt. Titled *Hammertown*, the show was organized by the Contemporary Art Gallery in Vancouver, British Columbia, in collaboration with the Fruitmarket Gallery in Edinburgh, Scotland, where it opened in October. This was the first opportunity for these artists' works to be displayed in a thematically related format outside Canada.

The *Hammertown* artists transform fragments of consumer and popular culture—products, media, film and television, social history—into their own personal, socially charged art objects. For example, in *Prototype for a New Understanding* (1999), Vancouver artist Brian Jungen draws on his Aboriginal background: the work is a series of masks reminiscent of traditional Northwest Coast Indian designs but made entirely of Nike running shoes.

Geoffrey Farmer's installation *Trailer* (2002), shown in the exhibition *Hammertown* (Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool, U.K.) (courtesy Catriona Jeffries Gallery, Vancouver)



photo: Reid Shier

The video work of Euan Macdonald draws attention to the trivial occurrences of everyday life, in the process giving them a heroic character. Luanne Martineau's sculptural installation draws on an early 20th-century comic book to examine Canadian attitudes toward ethnicity and race. In *Hammertown*, Geoffrey Farmer exhibited *Trailer*—part of an ongoing project called *The Blacking Factory*, after the sweatshop where Charles Dickens laboured as a child.

The artists spotlighted in *Hammertown* represent an emerging generation of Canadians. As did the generation before them—Janet Cardiff, Jeff Wall, Geneviève Cadieux, Stan Douglas, Gathie Falk, Ken Lum, Alain Païement, Jayce Salloum and Irene Whittome—they are showing their talent to the world and building international reputations. ♣