

The Triple K Co-operative

The Triple K Co-operative and its important contributions to the art scene in Ontario and beyond, will be celebrated this summer during the Woodland Arts Festival. But you might find yourself asking "what was the Triple K, and why is it important"?

The Kakegamic family from Sandy Lake started the Triple K silk screening co-operative in downtown Red Lake in 1973. Influenced by their brother-in-law Norval Morrisseau,



The Kakegamic brothers (l to r) Josh, Henry, Goyce and Robert at the Native Artists Show held at the Red Lake High School gym in Red Lake in 1978.
Red Lake District News

Goyce and Joshim Kakegamic had begun to paint in their teens. When the Co-operative was formed, they were in their twenties and had both achieved recognition as professional artists in their own right. Today, their works can be found in the collections of the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, and the Thunder Bay Art Gallery, to name a few.

The Triple K was unusual in several ways. First, it was established in the belief that Aboriginal artists should control all phases of their art production, from the design

conception through to the marketing of the final product. This was revolutionary. Another unusual aspect of the Co-operative was that it was established close to the origins of the Woodland style of art in northwestern Ontario and close to the homes of the artists. But this location was far away from southern Ontario, specifically Toronto, which was viewed as the centre of the province's art scene. This was a radical innovation. Despite all of the odds stacked against them, by the late 1970s the Triple K Co-operative's high quality silk screen prints were being distributed to over 50 galleries across Canada, the United States, and Europe. In 1977, the Royal Ontario Museum recognized the importance of the Triple K by holding an exhibit of its silk screens. As the ROM catalogue says, "For a fine arts co-operative to survive at all is unusual. For a Native-run arts enterprise to operate successfully out of an isolated northwestern Ontario town sounds at the best improbable. But the Triple K is a reality."

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Guest Artist and presenter at the Woodland Arts Festival, Goyce Kakegamic, gives us a sneak peak at one of his latest pieces!

We invite you to join us in the celebration of this important part of our community's history, and take part in the Woodland Arts Festival on July 4 - 6.