

MACAULAY & CO. FINE ART

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Judy Chartrand: Métis Soup

Macaulay & Co. Fine Art is pleased to present a series of sculptures Metis Soup, by Judy Chartrand in our gallery from February 17 – March 26, 2016.

I have made a series of hand-built ceramic Metis soup cans fashioned after the Campbell's soup logo and design. Initially I had wanted to create a series of soup cans incorporating traditional native fare. I decided to study the graphic design on an actual soup can so I went to my cupboard and all I had were cans of Campbell's soup. As I examined a can, I noticed the red and white division of the graphics and was inspired to create a Metis version utilizing the same graphics as the Campbell's soup brand. Although the soup is a mass marketed consumer item that is a recognizable symbol of the American way of life, First Nation's people on or off the reserve appear to be erased from the overall picture as active participants in this consumer society. This points back to the issues of visibility and invisibility. By including a native identity into the Campbell's soup can series, I have done a couple of things. First, I have made a proactive gesture—indicating the fact that Native people also have an invested interest in the urban, consumer, and modern experience. Secondly, I have inserted a cultural identity into pop art, by referencing Andy Warhol's Campbell's soup series and giving them a Metis/Cree identity. This is in reference to Coast Salish artist, Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun who created a large painting of an "Indian" hotdog using Northwest coast design elements in the form of ovoids. He states: "Pop art had been internationalized. I culturalized it." Furthermore, I have acknowledged Metis heritage since the Campbell name is a Metis name in many Native communities. The half-red and half-white soup cans are symbolic representations of the Metis culture. I have incorporated Metis Cree and English text to describe the contents of the cans, which consist mainly of traditional Native fare. Even though the Campbell's soup company advertises on their web site that they make "regional varieties that respond to cultural differences," I doubt that I will ever see a soup made that is geared specifically to satisfy the palate of a First Nations cultural group— and in reality, I don't think I really want to!

- Judy Chartrand