

of the Southwest is largely unknown except to travelers on the Diné Reservation. Thus, anthropologist Ellen Moore's groundbreaking book, *Navajo Beadwork: Architectures of Light*, is a major contribution to both the ethnographic and beadwork literature. In addition to introducing Navajo beadwork and the complex of cultural beliefs it embeds, the book provides a nuanced and valuable ethnographic process model for those interested in researching indigenous art production. Based on Moore's close collaborative work with Navajo beadworkers over a period of years, this elegant interdisciplinary study integrates Navajo knowledge and approaches to life maintained through oral tradition with information from anthropology, linguistics, art, aesthetics, and written history.

In Part 1, "Entering the Beadworkers' World," Moore explains her ethnographic process, developed through a combination of academic training and learning from her Navajo collaborators. She then presents the "Underpinnings"—the themes of the book—each based in complex interrelationships of individual artistic and accepted cultural processes.

Part 2, "Beads Then and Now," traces the importance and role of beads and stitched beadwork in Navajo life to the present, via a collation of information maintained through oral tradition.

The core of the book, Part 3, "Creating Design," probes how, in Navajo beadwork, aesthetic sensibilities reflect cultural expectations. Navajo scholar Wilson Aronilth (p. vii) explains: "Our forefathers believed that our minds, thoughts and knowledge come from colors." Light and color are the sources of both inspiration and the central organizing principles that govern the Navajo beadworker's creative processes. Colors and color sequencing associated with times of the day and the traditional directions dominate patterning. Design and color are conceived together in the beadworker's mind to produce what Moore calls "Architectures of Light." During the beading process, multiple visual and verbal metaphors are both associated and interdependent with prayer. "Bringing the Design to Life" involves *Nahat'á*—prayer, thought, and dreaming until the design comes to mind, followed by *liná*, its coming to life. *liná* is when the design "just goes."

Beaded patterns tend to be banded and use traditional motifs. Zigzags, stepped patterning, and symbols of the four directions are common on Navajo textiles, as well as diamonds, feathers, and arrowheads. Colors combinations are spoken of as "rainbow," "sunset," or "fire" colors, and are graduated from dark to light, ordered by the phenomena

of color change through the daily cycle as observed in the vast sky that visually dominates the reservation. Some colors have symbolic meaning as well; for instance, purple also represents the breath of life. Bands of stacked colors in peyote stitch encircle cylindrical forms such as the handles for fans used in the Native American Church or aspirin bottles intended for either personal use or sale. Narrow bands are stacked perpendicular to the length on linear forms such as belts or bracelets. The book's 32 color illustrations depict these and many more items, as well as the inspirational color banding of the reservation hills, the sky at dawn and evening, and the rainbow, a protector.

Not as esoteric as this review at first glance may suggest, this study of Navajo beadwork is user-friendly. Moore provides the reader with a breadth of knowledge about Navajo culture and beliefs as well as about the beadwork itself. Equally important, the book invites one to think in unusual and important ways about the creative process and the awarenesses that feed it.

Kate C. Duncan
School of Art
Affiliated Faculty
American Indian Studies and Museum Studies
Arizona State University
Tempe, AZ 85287-1505
E-mail: Kate.Duncan@asu.edu

Made of Thunder, Made of Glass: American Indian Beadwork of the Northeast.

Gerry Biron. P.O. Box 250, Saxtons River, VT 05154-0250. 2006. 48 pp., 19 b&w figs., 45 color figs. ISBN 0-9785414-0-5. \$20.00 (paper).

Gerry Biron's *Made of Thunder, Made of Glass*, a catalogue accompanying an exhibit of the same name, is the first publication to feature early 19th-century beaded purses created in American Indian communities in northeastern North America. Such an exhibit and publication are well overdue. For two centuries these colorful purses have been admired by North American and European private and public collectors, but no research into their specific origins has ever been published. Where they were made and who made them are questions that have never been fully researched. Gerry Biron undertook the challenge to find the answers and to share his results in this publication. Biron is in the best position to undertake such a study because of the large collection he and JoAnne Russo have created.

There are few collections as large as theirs. Many museums and private collections contain a few of these beaded pieces but no one has attempted to survey such small collections. Biron and Russo have the interest and the available material to undertake the study.

Sixty-four color and black and white images illustrate the wide variety of 19th-century purse and hat forms. About 100 beaded purses are pictured in this publication—an impressive collection. Although fewer than a dozen examples of the rare caps and hats are included, each one is a unique piece of art just like the purses. The excellent photographs show pristine purses that show little wear and bead loss though they are nearly two centuries old. It is assumed that many have been patiently restored. We hope that a record has been made with before and after photographs so future researchers can identify the original and the restoration beadwork.

The beaded purses, also referred to as pouches or bags, are decorated on both sides with colorful seed beads (three of those pictured are four-sided). The beadwork on almost all of them is very elaborate and exhibits obvious differences in patterns and beads. The makers did not duplicate their patterns. No one has observed two identical purses although both sides on the most common type are very similar.

The catalogue illustrates the four major types or styles of 19th-century northeastern beaded purses: 1) bags whose decoration is dominated by zigzag motifs; 2) bags that often exhibit paired elements, often circles or coils in a double-curve motif; 3) vase-shaped purses from New England; and 4) flat bags that feature floral designs in two shades of red, blue, green, yellow, and white. Biron discusses them all. In the first three styles the beaded designs on each side of the purse are different while the two sides on purses of the fourth type are almost always nearly identical. It is frustrating that space considerations limited the number of illustrations in the catalogue so there are few instances where both sides are shown. Nevertheless, the photographs included do provide images of an extensive selection of these forms of beadwork.

Equally valuable in this publication is the inclusion of 19th-century portraits of women and little girls posed with their favored beaded purses. It is remarkable that there are so many photos of the purses in use. In one instance a man wears a beaded Glengarry-type hat, today considered to be women's wear. This is the first time such scarce pictures have been published. There is probably not another collection of similar photographs. Researchers are indebted to Biron for collecting and sharing these images. It is interesting to note that the majority of the people pictured with their Indian purses are apparently not of native descent. It would be a valuable addition to our understanding of the purses

to pursue further research on the location of the studios where the pictures were taken because the cities might give a clue as to where the purses were made. Of the many historic photographs we have of sales booths piled high with Iroquois beadwork, none show any flat purses. Where were the purses in these old portraits purchased? It would be good to know.

A unique section in the book is a series of paintings rendered by Biron, a fine artist. Many of the paintings are based on historic photographic images of Native Americans. In each case Biron has added a piece of beadwork to the original scene. These large paintings lined the walls of the Made of Thunder exhibit and illustrated some of the people who might have been associated with the beadwork when it was new. Noting that observation, the paintings are more of a showcase of Biron's amazing artistic talent than a contribution to the understanding of the history of the beadwork. They do, however, reveal the deep admiration that Biron has for the beadwork and the people who created it.

The highlight of the publication is an essay on the early 20th-century beadworkers who lived in lower Manhattan. These families, originally from the Saint Regis (Akwasasne) reservation on the Saint Lawrence River, created pin-cushions in the style well known from Mohawk settlements along the river especially Kahnawake south of Montreal. The residents of the Mohawk colony on West Broadway sold their beadwork on the streets and wharfs of New York City. One interesting note is that they wholesaled to a Hebrew peddler who was able to get more money for the beadwork than the Mohawks could themselves. One wonders how the beadwork was identified to buyers. However interesting, this footnote to the story of Iroquois beadwork is not really relevant to the subject of the book as this fascinating article provides no evidence that beaded purses were made at the colony.

This brings up the question of where these beaded purses were actually made and when. Of the four types, there is considerable agreement that two of the types were made in western New York on Seneca reservations. Biron's suggestion that some were made in Ohio is highly speculative. The first type featuring zigzag motifs was probably made in the Seneca communities in the southwestern part of New York state. The second type with the "beehives" and double-curve motifs was probably made at Tonawanda or maybe Tuscarora in the northwestern part of New York. The vase-shaped purses that were made in New England are attributed to several different native communities. Much research has yet to be undertaken to write their history.

The fourth purse type, the kind with floral motifs in two shades of five colors, raises the most questions. This

is the most common of all the purse types and is the one pictured in the early portrait photographs. It is estimated that some 12,000 were made in less than a 100-year period. *Haudenosaunee* and non-Indians alike recognize these purses as being Iroquois; it is the most recognizable form of Iroquois beadwork, but no one is sure of where the purses were made. As some are lined with French-language newspapers, they most likely were made in Quebec but no one has identified the community. They are most likely Mohawk because they share the five-color motif with the Mohawk pincushions framed with leaves in five colors. These purses are, however, sometimes identified in the literature as “probably Tuscarora.” Because of their similarity and if some are definitely Mohawk, the likelihood of these purses all being made by the Mohawk is high. Biron may tend to agree but he speculates that they evolved in western New York, which is unlikely.

Biron is a professional artist, not a professional researcher, historian, or anthropologist, so he may be excused the few factual errors included in his essay, such as the name of Fulton’s steamboat, the shape of the National Badge of the Iroquois, and the identification of a piece in the Iroquois Indian Museum. The most serious error is his assertion that the Iroquois Confederacy no longer exists. Most contemporary *Haudenosaunee* would refute this statement. The Grand Council of the Confederacy still meets, treaty cloth from the U.S. Federal government still upholds the ancient relations between sovereigns, and people travel on *Haudenosaunee* passports. They may not agree on whether they should call themselves Iroquois, *Haudenosaunee*, or Six Nations, but they all agree that the Iroquois Confederacy is still in existence.

The *Haudenosaunee* are proud of their beadworkers. They appreciate the historic pieces illustrated in this catalogue and they admire the beadwork created by contemporary beadworkers. They should be grateful that Biron has brought this extensive collection of fantastic pieces together and has published this catalogue so that others may admire and appreciate the wonderful purses made by their ancestors.

Dolores N. Elliott
28 Zevan Road
Johnson City, NY 13790
E-mail: Dolores@stny.rr.com

Lubāna ezera mitrāja Neolīta dzintars un tā apstrādes darbnīcas (Neolithic Amber of Lake Lubāns Wetlands and Amber-Working Workshops).

Ilze Loze. Institute of the History of Latvia, Academy Square 1-1202, Riga LV-1050, Latvia. 2008. 188 pp., 80 color figs., 81 B&W figs. ISBN 978-9984-9924-8-8; UDK 902/904(474.3). \$25.00 (hard cover).

The complicated and permanently incomplete biography of an artifact can never be fully comprehended in all its stages. When amber beads and pendants are in question, archaeologists often find them used and finished, more or less processed, as artifacts that have temporarily broken their “life cycle” and are now static finds in a grave, hoard, or settlement debris. Yet this static archaeological record is but one of the many phases of the biography of an amber ornament: before that moment, it was a piece of resin, lingering for millions of years in clay layers, then rolled by sea waves and washed onto the shore where it was found, carved, exchanged, worn, to return—only temporarily—into the ground, and then dug out as an “archaeological find.” Archaeologists rarely have an opportunity to perceive more than this last “passive” phase of an amber bead but in her most recent book, *Lubāna Ezera Mitrāja Neolīta Dzintars (Neolithic Amber of Lake Lubāns Wetlands and Amber-Working Workshops)*, Dr. Ilze Loze, doyenne of Latvian archaeology and amber studies at the Institute of the History of Latvia in Riga, succeeds in convincingly demonstrating several stages in the life of Latvian Neolithic amber beads and pendants. Moreover, through a detailed analysis of Neolithic amber workshops, she raises some important issues regarding the functioning of prehistoric communities, social organization, craftsmanship, and exchange.

Dr. Loze concentrates on a number of archaeological sites dating to the middle and late Neolithic (from the middle of 4th to the end of the 3rd millennium B.C.E.) in the region of the Lake Lubāns Depression in eastern Latvia. The Depression is a wetland that receives water from many tributaries of the Daugava, the largest river in the eastern Baltic region. This wet and naturally diverse region was not only suitable for life in the Neolithic, but the specific peat-bog conditions enabled the perfect preservation of the archaeological material, amber above all. Archaeological investigations in the region began in 1938 and have continued until the present. Twenty-seven Neolithic sites were registered in the process. Ilze Loze has studied the amber from this region for decades, publishing a number of studies on the subject, and this book crowns her research into prehistoric amber of the Eastern Baltic region.

Contrary to expectations, natural deposits of amber do not exist in the Lake Lubāns region but are found further to the west and southwest, by the shores of the Baltic. The first