

# Donald Ellis Gallery

## Comfort in Troubled Times



ABOVE: Ellis Gallery's exhibition at the 2000 Winter Antiques Fair in New York City.

BELOW: Forehead Mask, Tsimshian, 19th century.

Donald Ellis Gallery Ltd.—a preeminent venue for historic North American Indian art—has been working with private collectors, corporations, and museums since 1976. Ellis—an acclaimed collector, dealer, appraiser and curator who co-owns the Dundas, Ontario gallery of Canada with his wife, Mary Ann Bastien—specializes in 18th and 19th century Native art. His emphasis is on Northwest Coast, Eastern Woodlands and Eskimo art, as well as select major works from other indigenous cultures worldwide.

Among the other choice selections in his gallery are works by Charles

Edenshaw (1839-1924), the renowned Haida artist from Queen Charlotte Islands, British Columbia. A powerful 16-inch cedar bark hat that Edenshaw painted during the 19th century was woven by the artist's wife, Isabella. The hat is one of 19 or so still in existence.

In addition to his gallery, Ellis is always a major presence at the annual January Winter Antiques Fair in New York City. At this year's fair, he will unveil some of his most important recent acquisitions. These include a life-size Haida portrait mask (circa 1840) he acquired last March in Amsterdam that features polychrome paint and human hair; an Assiniboine quilled shirt (circa 1830) that boasts a large quilled hourglass rosette in red, natural brown and white centered on both the front and back of the fringed shirt; and a very rare Navajo Chief's blanket dating to as early as 1800.

As the central appraiser of Native art for the celebrated PBS program "Antiques Roadshow," Ellis is often offered extraordinary opportunities to view treasures held by private individuals. Ellis provides expert insights into the works while on camera for a television audience numbering more than 14 million worldwide. It was during "Roadshow's" visit last summer to Tucson, Arizona that Ellis discovered the first-phase Navajo Chief's blanket. According to Ellis, the mint condition blanket (measuring 57 by 73 inches) is believed to have belonged to Kit Carson. The blanket's design is composed of alternating natural white, brown, and indigo-dyed blue bands and lines. "Less than 50 of these blankets survive today," Ellis says.

The Winter Antiques Fair will be held at the Hilton Hotel in Manhattan, January 20-27. As for attendance to this year's event, Ellis says that art can still fare well during economic strife. "In times like these, art can be comforting," he says. Also look for Ellis' new gallery in New York City, expected to open in spring of 2002. —

## Selected Exhibits

**Black Tusk Gallery.** Ongoing displays of fine artwork created by more than 50 Northwest Coast Native artists, including monumental sculpture, totem poles, masks, panels, bowls, drums and pipes in wood, glass, bronze, basketry, argillite and precious metals. Also, a large selection of limited-edition silkscreen prints and select historic works. Whistler, BC. 877/905-5540 or [www.blacktusk.ca](http://www.blacktusk.ca).

**Galerie Kokopelli.** Ongoing. If you are in Europe, drop in to view outstanding artwork by Douglas Miles, Virgil Nez, Ed Yava, Neil David Sr., Jacob N. Warner, Jolene Eustace-Hanelt, Frank and Alvin Yellowhorse, Phillip Sekaquaptewa, David K. John and many other Native artists at this unusual gallery. Moenchengladbach, Germany. 1-49-2161-590457 or [www.galerie-kokopelli.com](http://www.galerie-kokopelli.com).

**Gray Dog Trading Company.** Upcoming special exhibitions: *Ricky Lahty (Zuni) fetishes*, Jan. 25-26; *Blackfoot Beadwork Group Show*, Feb. 22-23; and *Inuit Group Show* featuring "inukshuks" (stone monumental cairns made by Canada's Inuit people), Mar. 15-23. Also ongoing are displays of Hopi katsina dolls by noted artists, Navajo and Pueblo jewelry, Pueblo pottery, a large selection of Zuni fetishes, Plains beadwork and Inuit stone sculpture. Tucson. 520/881-6888.

**Hozhoni Gallery.** The gallery, entering its sixth year, carries a notable array of paintings, Pueblo pottery, jewelry and home furnishings. Naperville (near Chicago), IL. 630/717-8080 or [www.hozhoni.com](http://www.hozhoni.com).

**Kiva Fine Art.** Ongoing display of works by a variety of Native artists, including Ben Nelson, Yellowman, David K. John, Michael Horse and Chris Tarpley. Other gallery artists include Brent Greenwood and Sherwood Begaye. Santa Fe, NM. 505/820-7413 or [www.kivaindianart.com](http://www.kivaindianart.com).

**Kokopelli.** Ongoing. Outstanding traditional and contemporary jewelry, fine art and hand-carved Zuni fetishes. Jewelers include Charlene Reano, Al Joe, Ray Tracey, Watson Honanie and members of the Kirk family. Locations in Ossipee, NH, and Soho (New York City). 212/925-4411.

**Orca Art Gallery.** This gallery specializes in the art of the Inuit, Eskimo and Northwest Coast Indians. Collections include works in stone, wood, bone, antler and old ivory, as well as limited-edition Canadian Inuit and Northwest Coast prints, totems, tapestries and artifacts, Northwest Coast Indian silver jewelry and Haida argillite. Chicago, IL. 312/672-2278.

**Tribal Expressions.** Home year-round to a wide assortment of work from the Pacific Northwest and the Southwest. Arlington Heights, IL. 847/590-5390 or [www.tribalexpressions.com](http://www.tribalexpressions.com).



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