

## Lillian Pitt



Lillian Pitt is an accomplished artist who has been exhibiting her contemporary sculpture, carvings, masks, wearable art, and works on paper for over twenty years. One of the indigenous people of the Columbia River Gorge, she is called by her Indian name, Wak'amu (Strongly Rooted), by elders of the Warm Springs/Wasco and Yakama tribes. The term might also describe her art for, although her approach to form and materials is eclectic and contemporary, her intriguing metaphors are always rooted in her Native American tradition.

Lillian Pitt was the recipient of the Governor's Award of the Oregon Arts Commission in 1990, which declared that she had made, "significant contributions to the growth and development of the cultural life of Oregon. She is known nationally and internationally for her Raku and Anagama fired ceramic and bronze masks and

"Shadow Spirit" totem images based on traditional symbols and spirits of her Columbia River ancestors. Her repertoire has expanded to include monumental bronze sculpture, sometimes reflecting the theme of Salmon migration. One recurring image, "She Who Watches," is based on a Columbia River petroglyph which represents the last of the Woman Chiefs.

Her art has been exhibited and reviewed in the U.S., Europe, New Zealand, and Japan. Her work has been commissioned by numerous museums and organizations and is in several collections nationwide.

With the turn of the millennium, Lillian's art took on an even larger dimension, as she and a team of Native American artists were commissioned by the city of Portland, OR, the Oregon Convention Center, Portland State University, and a variety of other municipalities, cultural institutions, and corporations to create public art projects. She welcomes these opportunities to share her Native American heritage and her ecological commitment with an expanded audience.

*I use the ancient stories of my ancestors as a basis for the imagery I create. By doing this I maintain the memory of an ancient culture and keep the beliefs of my people alive. We have forgotten how to live in harmony with nature. Accessing this vast reservoir of traditional information and translating it into contemporary terms jogs our memories and provides points of reference to achieving balance within ourselves, our community and the world. My ancestors have a 10,000-year history in the Columbia River Gorge. Much of my work has to do with the preservation and care of the environment along this ancient waterway.*

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