



Smithsonian  
*National Museum of the American Indian*

## Jeff Thomas photographs, 1982-1994

2011

National Museum of the American Indian  
4220 Silver Hill Rd  
Suitland 20746-2863  
nmaiarchives@si.edu  
<http://nmai.si.edu/explore/collections/archive/>

## Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	1
Administrative Information .....	1
Biographical/Historical note.....	2
Arrangement note.....	2
Names and Subjects .....	2

## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Museum of the American Indian
<b>Title:</b>	Jeff Thomas photographs
<b>Identifier:</b>	NMAI.AC.055
<b>Date:</b>	1982-1994
<b>Extent:</b>	5 Photographic prints (silver gelatin)
<b>Creator:</b>	Thomas, Jeff, 1956-
<b>Language:</b>	No linguistic content; Not applicable .
<b>Summary:</b>	The photographs include an image of Jack Moore, a Pima dancer, with the American flag painted on his face; a portrait of the dancer Kevin Haywahe (Assiniboine) wearing a wolf-hide and feather headdress with beaded sun wheel medallion and beaded appendage, elaborate face painting, pipe bead necklace and elaborately beaded breast ornament; an outdoor view of a young boy posed beside graffiti that reads "Cultural Revolution"; a young man standing in front of a grain elevator and wearing a t-shirt with an image of Christopher Columbus and the caption "Founder of the New World"; and a triptych documenting the urban Onondaga Iroquois experience in Ottawa, Ontario.

---

## Administrative Information

### Provenance

Purchase, 2002.

### Processing Information

NMAIA Review

### Preferred Citation

Jeff Thomas photographs, 1982-1994, National Museum of the American Indian Archives, Smithsonian Institution (negative, slide or catalog number).

### Restrictions

Researchers must contact the NMAI Archives for an appointment to access the collection. Contact information below.

### Conditions Governing Use

Copyright: National Museum of the American Indian.

---

## Biographical Note

Born in 1956 in the city of Buffalo, New York, Jeff Thomas identifies himself as an urban-Iroquois. His parents and grandparents were born on the Six Nations reserve, near Brantford, Ontario, and eventually left the reserve to find work in the city. It is this experience of an urban-Iroquois that has come to define his work; Thomas seeks to re-contextualize commonly circulated historical images of First Nations people for a contemporary audience. In his words: "Ultimately, I want to dismantle long entrenched stereotypes and inappropriate caricatures of First Nations people."

Thomas was the subject of a solo exhibition, *Jeff Thomas: A Study of Indian-ness*, circulated by Gallery 44 Centre for Contemporary Photography (Toronto), which travelled to galleries across the country. In 2008, his work was also featured in a survey exhibition, *Drive By: A Road Trip with Jeff Thomas*, at the University of Toronto Art Centre, and his work can be found in the collections of the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the Indian Art Centre (Ottawa), Museum of the American Indian (Washington, D.C.), Musée de l'Elysée (Lausanne, Switzerland), Museum der Weltkulturen (Frankfurt, Germany), Princeton University (Princeton, New Jersey), The British Museum (London, U.K.) and The Ottawa Art Gallery. In 1998, he was awarded the Canada Council's prestigious Duke and Duchess of York Award in Photography and in 2008 he received the Karsh Award in photography.

---

## Arrangement

Prints: organized in folders; arranged numerically by image number

---

## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Assiniboine Indians
- Onondaga
- Pima Indians

Cultures:

- Onondaga

Types of Materials:

- Photographs
- Photographs -- Silver gelatin prints

Geographic Names:

- Ottawa (Ontario)