

## **A Shooting Star – The Chee Chee I Knew**

By Ernie Bies December, 13, 2017

Benjamin Chee Chee had it all. By January 1977 he had achieved all the goals he had set for himself. He wanted to be appreciated as an artist, one whose work was instantly recognized. He wanted respect from merchants who would supply his everyday needs and not demand immediate payment. He wanted friends and love and above all he wanted to find his mother who he had lost track of years before.

In his short career as an artist he had risen from painting movie posters to attending one man shows of his work from coast to coast in Canada. His paintings were sought after in the U.S. and in Germany. Benjamin enjoyed fine clothes, good wine and food and his drink of choice was Chivas Regal. He could walk into Chuck Delfino's Men's Wear on Bank St. in Ottawa and walk out with the best suit without asking the price. When he needed a new pair of his favorite Beatle boots, Florsheim Shoes on Sparks St. took care of him. Wallack's Art Supplies ran a tab when he needed brushes, paint or his favorite Arches paper. Jimmy's Tavern and La Gondola Restaurant in Ottawa and Café la Versailles in Hull provided him with food and drink knowing he would pay at the end of the month and he was, after all, a big tipper. He had no shortage of friends, and although some were fair weather, others truly cared about him. Tall and good looking he was never lacking for female companionship, even entering into a short-lived marriage. In the summer of 1976 he finally located his mother who was working in a tourist camp in Northern Quebec. In his typical flamboyant style, he rented a plane and flew in unannounced to surprise her. She was swimming with some children and Benjamin jumped into the water fully clothed to embrace her. He brought her back to Ottawa with him, his family now complete.

After selling out a show in Vancouver in January 1977, where he claimed the weather was always nice and there was no snow to wreck his boots, he returned to Ottawa with plans to relocate to B.C. with his mother. First, he wanted to have one last major show in Ottawa coinciding with his thirty-third birthday on March 26, 1977. The month of February was spent preparing for the show, creating new works, designing posters and newspaper ads and making a list of people to invite to his big send-off exhibition. The Prime Minister, the Governor General and the Mayor of Ottawa were to be invited. Benjamin was on top of the world until that tragic night of March 11 when he was arrested for creating a disturbance in one of

his favorite restaurants, handcuffed, taken to the Police Station, and thrown into a cell for uncooperative prisoners. It was a bare cage. What went through his mind in the next few minutes causing him to take his own life?

There is no simple answer.

His life can be described as a shooting star briefly lighting up the world around him before running out of energy and flaming out in spectacular fashion.

Chee Chee, an Ojibwa, was born on March 26, 1944, in Temagami, Ontario in the house of his mother's friend, Angele Egwuna Belaney. He was the only child of Josephine and Angus Chee Chee, who named him Kenneth Thomas. Angele added the name Benjamin. She was the first wife of Archie Belaney, an Englishman who had adopted Indian ways and had become famous as the naturalist, Grey Owl.

On March 24, 1945, Benjamin's father was gathering firewood with two other woodsmen from the village and drowned when their truck broke through the ice of Lake Temagami. He was buried on Bear Island on Benjamin's first birthday.

This early tragedy set the pattern for the difficulties that Benjamin was to encounter for the rest of his life. His mother had to take up employment, often leaving her young son in the care of others. As he grew older she noticed that he loved to draw and whittle, and, under different circumstances, this early talent might have been developed. However, she also noticed a tendency to wildness in him that, because of her own difficulties, she was unable to control.

Benjamin began drinking when he was eleven years old and a year later he and some of his friends borrowed a car for a joy ride. This first wild ride, as he called it, may have earned someone from a different background a slap on the wrist, but he was sent to St. Joseph's Training School at Alfred Ontario. With no stable home to return to, he remained there for more than four years. He said he enjoyed playing hockey at St. Joseph's but he would not talk about his time there except to refer to the Christian Brothers, who were in charge, with a two-word sexual expletive that must have described the abuse he suffered at their hands. A good looking twelve-year-old boy did not stand a chance. Hundreds of men have since come forward with stories of abuse at this school and have won significant settlements. There have also been dozens of suicides among its victims. Richard McCann, a fellow student at Alfred, remembered how Ben would be beaten when he tried to run away, but would never cry out. Ben came out of there an angry

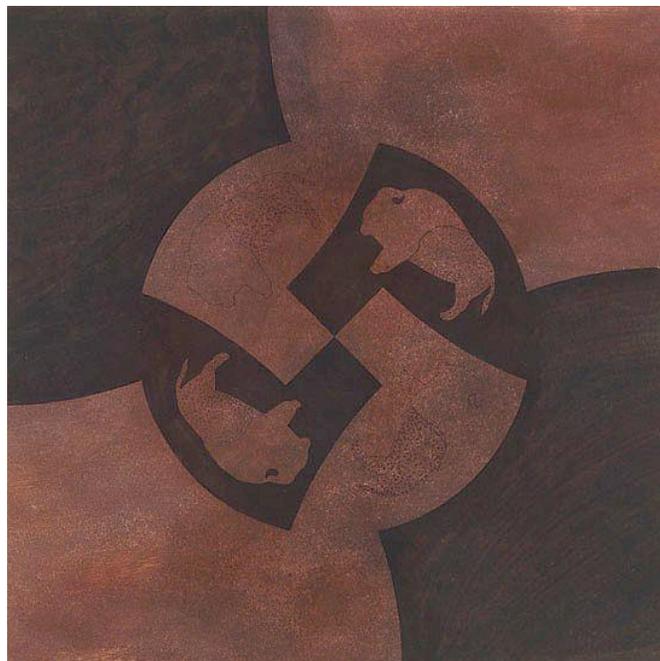
young man and quickly returned to his drinking ways, now with a quick temper and a very short fuse.

His mother married Ed Roy in 1960 and moved to North Bay, Ontario. On his release, Chee Chee came to live with them for a time, tried going to school in Sudbury, and then returned to Temagami to be near his only friend, Hugh McKenzie, whom he thought of as a brother. Over the next few years he drifted through Northern Ontario, trying his hand at a variety of jobs and constantly running afoul of the law, usually for liquor-related offenses. During this time, he lost track of his mother.

In 1965 he moved to Montreal. Throughout the previous tumultuous years, he had continued to display his artistic talents, but never found the encouragement or the courage to promote himself as an artist. Instead he became an exterior painter and could point proudly to the British Pavilion at the Montreal World's Fair, Expo '67, and say he worked on the 200-foot-high scaffolds where no one else would go. Finally, he was able to use his talent illustrating movie posters such as *The Yellow Submarine*, where his love of abstract and surrealistic work became apparent. His favorite project was a promotional display for *the Graduate* in 1968, in which the leading character's name was Benjamin Braddock. Chee Chee took great pleasure in painting the name "Benjamin" in large letters on a billboard. He was now able to develop several genuine friends who recognized his potential and realized he needed some help. Artist Dorothy Watt encouraged him to devote more time to his art and to try different techniques and media. She presented him with a set of wood carving tools that had belonged to her husband, Robin, as well as a portable easel and painting supplies. Knowing that he had no formal art training, she gave him several books on the subject, one a very basic book called *Fun with Art* that helped him develop his stenciling and spatter painting techniques.

Cathy Eberts, of the Cultural Development and Education Branch at the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) in Ottawa, was one of the first to promote his art. Having heard about Benjamin, she visited him in Montreal in 1972 and brought back several of his earliest paintings. She displayed them around her office with a note on the back that introduced him to the Ottawa market:

*"BENJAMIN CHEE CHEE Buffalo Design # 5 January 1973*



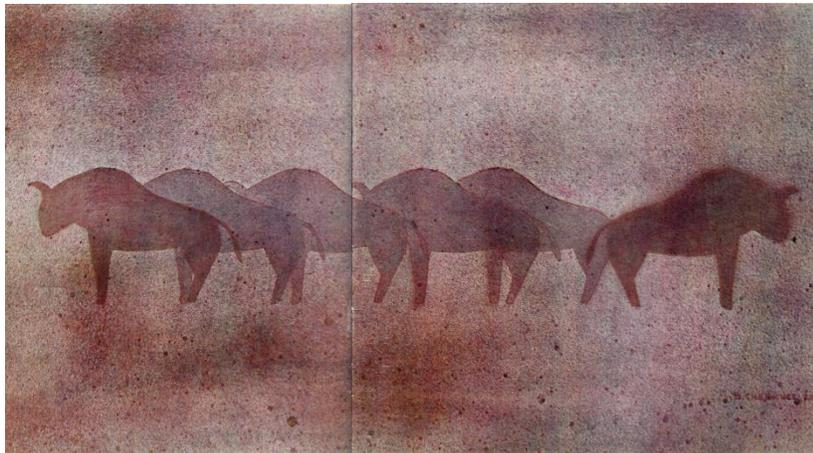
*BENJAMIN CHEE CHEE is an Ojibway from Temagami, Ontario. He has started to paint seriously quite recently but the results are obviously very good. Due to his financial circumstances Ben has had limited experience with different media and techniques but hopefully with the sale of some of his works will come a little money for art supplies. The work you see here is done with inks and oil base paints. Each one is an original and they are for sale. For any additional information contact Cathy Eberts office is #27 - Phone 992- 8264."*

His unfortunate interactions with police continued during his eight years in Montreal resulting in several stays at the infamous Bordeaux prison. Looking for a new start, Chee Chee decided to move to Ottawa in 1973, where he could be nearer the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and the Central Marketing Service which acted as a wholesale supplier of Indian Arts and Crafts to the Canadian market. One of his best friends was a lawyer named Fred C. Brown, who tried to help Chee Chee manage his personal and professional affairs. Brown encouraged Chee Chee to apply to government agencies for financial assistance so he could devote more time to his artistic development. When he was seeking aid from the Department of Indian Affairs, the question of his status arose. The Department's policy at that time was that non-status Indians did not qualify for grants and training programs. Being non-status, he again felt rejected.

Brown contacted Pierre and Marie Gagnery at the Nicholas Art Gallery in Ottawa and arranged for them to see Chee Chee's work. They were immediately taken by his versatility and range and gave him his first exhibition in July, 1973. The works were mostly abstracts but included some paintings of birds, flowers



and collages using beads which he jokingly was determined to: "sell back to the white man, but at a much higher price". Twenty-nine years old, he still found it hard to believe that people would actually pay for his work. Both local papers gave him excellent reviews. Artist Tom Hill bought one of his early works of a group of



buffalo sheltering in a dust storm. Later, Hill, who was coordinating the Canadian Indian Art '74 exhibition for the Royal Ontario Museum, bought a large 4' x7' painting entitled *Migration*. This painting, which sold for \$800, represented caribou

tracks wandering aimlessly. Ben's second exhibition was held at the University of Ottawa in November-December 1973 and contained works similar to his first. He tried several different styles including portraits and landscapes, but always returned to his first love, abstracts and his birds. At times he would set up his easel and sketch local scenes but he felt self-conscious with onlookers observing too closely or making comments so he resorted to taking photographs that he could work from in privacy.

My first encounter with Benjamin occurred early in 1974 when I worked at



DIAND. I had been intrigued by the images on posters for his exhibition at the University of Ottawa. One day he wandered into my office attempting to sell some paintings. I chose one and asked the price. With a mischievous gleam in his eye, he responded, "*How much money do you have?*" I counted out all the money I had with me which totaled \$40.00. He said, "\$40.00" and then reconsidered, saying he didn't want to leave me

with nothing and gave me a dollar back. We formed an instant friendship that day. Over the next few years he dropped by my office many times to visit or called me when he needed help, which was often. This help ranged from advancing him money for food and art supplies, helping him move when he wore out another landlord's patience, finding him legal representation when he crossed the line, or just listening when he needed to talk. I also introduced him to some new galleries

in Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton and Waterloo. My office was on the messy side and one day he brought me a flat rock from the river that he had



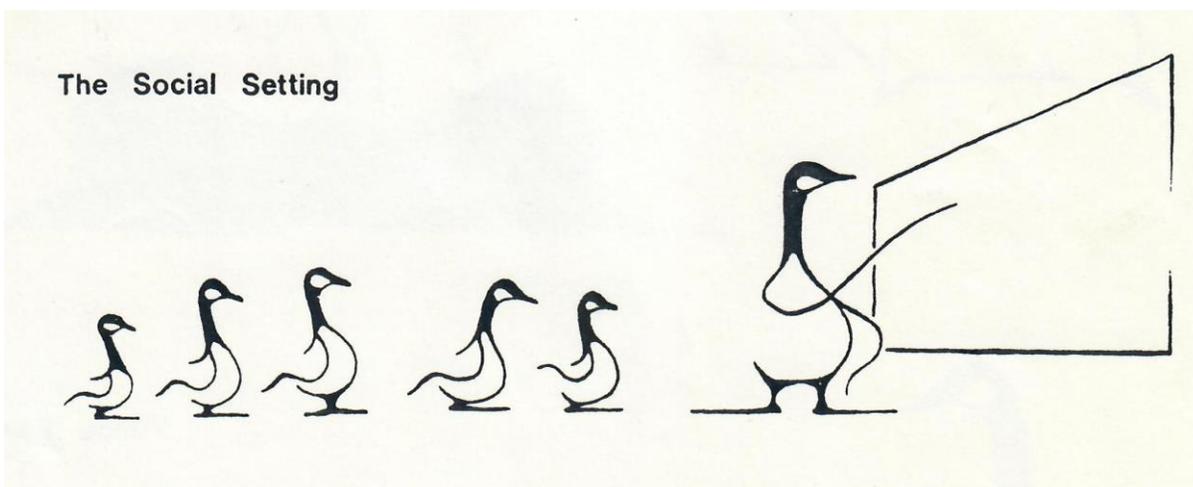
and one day he brought me a flat rock from the river that he had painted and signed and said that I now had the only Chee Chee paper-weight in the world. Another time, as we were walking down the street, he picked up a piece of metal strapping and twisted and bent it while we walked, only to discard it.

I picked it up and asked him why he threw it away. He said, *"It's just a piece of junk."* I said, *"No Ben, it's art"*. He had created a perfect image of one of his birds which I still have today.



Ben lived in an apartment on Gilmore Street near Bank St. and was a popular patron of nearby bars such as the Gilmore House, Alexandra Hotel and the Ritz. After a big payday he'd be known to buy a round for the house and had countless friends until his money ran out. He was a charmer, quick witted and blessed with a sense of humor that was apparent in many of his paintings. When he drank his mood darkened and he would lash out in anger, even at his best friends. I was never subject to this anger but I was aware of its potential. Ben, who stood 5 feet 10 and a half inches tall, and weighed 165 pounds, was deceptively strong and did not react to pain.

While waiting for the big breakthrough into the art market Benjamin busied himself with small commissions illustrating legends, certificates of achievement and teacher's manuals for the Education Branch of DIAND. He drew animals and birds and his iconic stylized Canada goose image began to take shape in these early efforts.



In 1974 People's Art Ltd. published his first limited edition of four lithographs, known as the *Animal Series*. These featured Running Horses, A Rearing Black

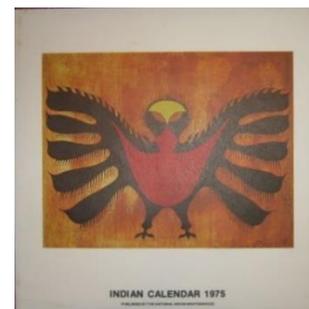


Bear, Sea Otters and Mountain Goats. His work was still carried by the Nicholas Art Gallery and also by Dorothy (Dodie) Lewis of Doma II Design in Place Bell, Ottawa. On November 12, 1974, now identifying themselves as gallery representatives for Benjamin Chee Chee, Doma II Design commissioned Charles Urquhart of People's Art to produce a limited-edition print from an original painting entitled "*Swallows*". That same year he produced the *Ottawa Series* of lithographs featuring four local

scenes. His goal of instant recognition was put to the test as these were unlike anything he had done previously or since. Perhaps he was unsure of their acceptance by the public as he hid his name within the image. An unknown number of these were signed by Benjamin.



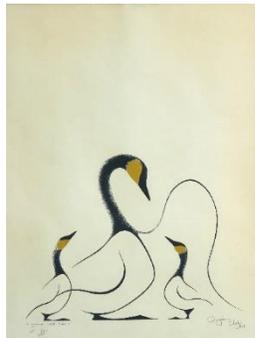
He perfected his now famous stylized birds, and closed out the year with a commission for a non-denominational greeting card which featured three wise geese marveling at a star. He also illustrated the entire 1975 National Indian Brotherhood calendar using mythological cross-cultural images that suggested a whole new direction.



He opened the year 1975 with another exhibition at the Nicholas Art Gallery with 30 new works featuring moose, geese, seals and some abstracts. One Ottawa reviewer loved his work, the other not so much.

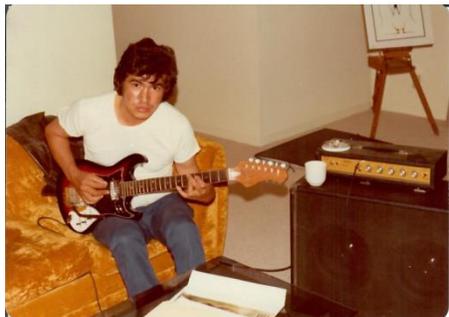
His friends cautioned him to exercise strong control of the marketing of his work and to continue to experiment and develop as an artist. The Central Marketing Service (CMS), later Canadian Indian Marketing Service (CIMS), provided him studio space and started collecting his works for future exhibitions and began promoting his work. His work was included in group shows at the Bay in Toronto, the Gallery of Fine Canadian Crafts in Kingston and at the McMichael Gallery in Kleinburg, Ontario. He was now in the company of well-known native artists such as Morrisseau, Ray, Cobiness, Odjig and Beardy.

Benjamin was impatient for quicker sales and easily influenced by offers of quicker sales. The Gaignery's of the Nicholas Gallery were his first and most loyal agents, welcoming him back every time he sought new representation. He was with Doma II for a short while. In the summer of 1975, he was wooed by a Mr. Klaver and Joe Karim of the Quebec Land Holding Company in Montreal to create a new



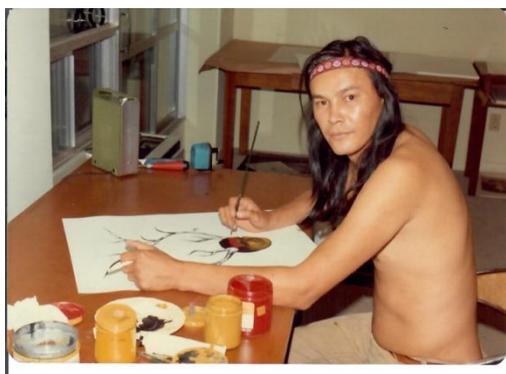
set of limited edition prints. Ben created five new original paintings of a family of geese, and they produced a set of lithographic prints, known as the *Montreal Series*. Ben travelled to Montreal for several weeks to sign this new series debuting his newly styled signature in the process. In the past he had signed all his originals in straight line block letters. The new signature was in script descending in three lines.

After a visit to Bear Island near his home in summer of 1975, Benjamin and his old



friend Hugh McKenzie moved into a bright apartment in Hull, Quebec, at 285 Laurier, across from Jacques Cartier Park. The apartment was furnished with basic government surplus furniture and a few other possessions including one pot. Ben modified one of these pieces, a wooden table, by drilling several holes to hold his brushes.

Chee Chee was often on an emotional roller coaster. He would subject himself to



marathon painting sessions, sometimes lasting for two days without a break, relying on aptly named "Bennies" to stay awake. Occasionally he would make a mistake or run out of ideas which would spark an instant of rage. In frustration, he would throw his jar of paint against the wall. He knew he would have to pay for the cleanup and repainting and I jokingly suggested he just sign it and leave the

new tenants with a built-in original Chee Chee painting. That apartment was the base for many misadventures that demonstrated Ben's careless disregard for his own well-being. The Café Versailles was just down the street and he had a good relationship with the management. One day he had an argument with his girlfriend and stormed out of the restaurant, kicking the door open and, in the process, breaking the glass. He immediately went back to the manager and took

responsibility, putting the cost of the door, some \$400, on his tab. He then said to the manager, *“That’s my door now, right?”*

The manager agreed, so Ben went to his apartment and came back with his hatchet and proceeded to chop the rest of the glass out of the door without thinking that if a Hull policeman had happened across the scene he would probably have shot first and asked questions later. Another time, he decided to swim home from Gatineau in the Ottawa



River forgetting about the current. He eventually came ashore miles downstream minus his shirt and boots, later saying that he had floated on his back and enjoyed looking at the stars. That Christmas, Ben and Hugh realized they didn’t have a tree. They simply took the fully-decorated tree from the lobby and dragged it up to the 15<sup>th</sup> floor, leaving a trail of needles and broken ornaments right to their door. It wasn’t long before the angry superintendent was knocking on their door. In a panic they threw the tree off the balcony where it landed on a parked car 15 floors below. Ben paid for all the damages and I helped him move shortly after. As reflected by his art, with its minimalist lines, Ben seemed to operate with little need for possessions. When he moved he just took his art supplies and his clothes and left all his furniture behind saying he can just go to Johnson’s Used Furniture and get more. He gave me his paint spattered table which I made great use of over the last 40 years. Perhaps this nomadic city life had roots in his native heritage when his ancestors traveled the lands with no baggage. Another example I witnessed was in the coffee shop in the Journal Building. Ben had bought a birthday card for his friend Fred Brown as well as a pen. He addressed the card from memory. As we were leaving I reminded him to take his pen and he said: *“I don’t need it anymore”* and left it on the table. He had no use for address books, ledgers and records as he was blessed with a phenomenal memory and honored his debts. On Friday afternoon he would visit CIMS, sell his week’s production then make the rounds to pay off his accounts before hitting the bars. By Sunday, flat broke and hungry, he’d call friends for help. The cycle would begin again. I tried to advise him to put some money aside for a rainy day but he just scoffed saying: *“Money is just paper, I can draw something on this napkin and sell it, that’s my money.”* He lived for the day and did not worry about tomorrow although he did once ask me how he could be straight like me. Ben was true to his friends and respectful of the law when he was thinking clearly, although his police record dated back to 1961, mostly for alcohol

related offences. One summer day in 1975 he “borrowed” a car on Bank St., unconcerned that he had no license or insurance and sideswiped another car near Billings Bridge. I found him a lawyer and he made good all the damages and fines, receiving a suspended sentence for his crime. He insisted on hand-delivering payment to the people for the damages to their cars, along with an apology. Later when I was visiting the lawyer I saw a very nice Chee Chee painting in his office. Ben would give his paintings away to people who had helped him whether they were officers of the court, policemen, taxi drivers or waitresses. Everyone was equal in his eyes and the common denominator, for him, was his art.

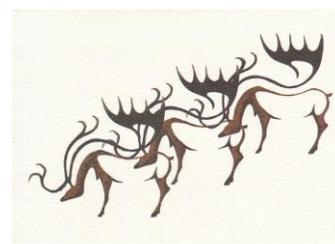
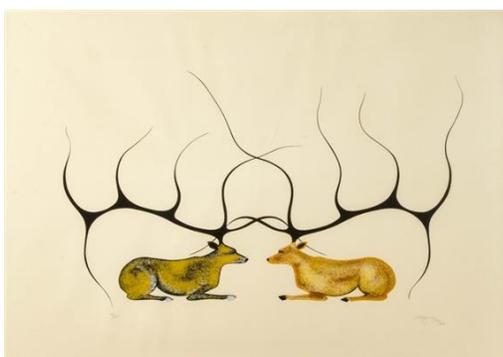
Benjamin attended a solo exhibition of his work at the Evans Gallery in Toronto in January 1976. Although proud of his Ojibwa heritage, Chee Chee did not want to be labeled an “Indian” Artist. He sought recognition simply as an artist. Toronto Globe and Mail art critic, James Purdie lauded this independence stating that this breakaway into modern forms came at the right time. It was important to the whole art movement among the Ojibwa which was now flourishing but lacked diversity. Benjamin did not subscribe to the traditional Woodland School of art founded by Norval Morrisseau but, like Daphne Odjig, Alex Janvier and Jackson Beardy, he belonged to the next generation of artists who developed their own unique styles.

The Inukshuk Galleries in Waterloo opened their 1976 season with a group exhibition of major native artists that now included Chee Chee. He then broke into Atlantic Canada in April with a solo exhibition of forty new works at the Sea Chest Gallery in Halifax. The Central Indian Marketing Service released a new edition of

six silk screened prints produced by Benoit

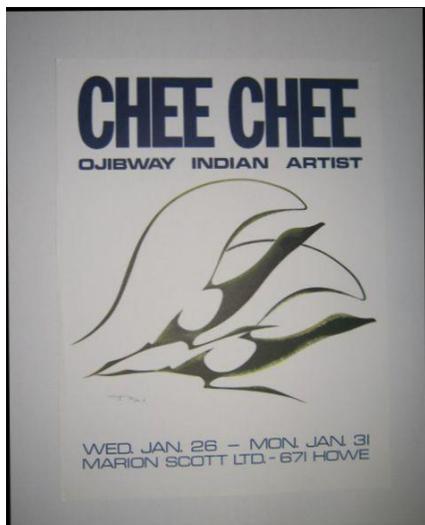
Pronovost. They also released boxed sets of Christmas cards featuring his stylized caribou.

Then, the Inukshuk Galleries closed out the year with another solo exhibition of prints and originals.



Ben spent Christmas at Bear Island and came back to Ottawa on January 4, 1977. He called me from his room at the Alexandra Hotel wanting to show me his newest project. With great excitement he unwrapped his latest prototype drawings for a new edition of silk screened prints which he called *the Family Series*. Completing

them at Bear Island he carried them as he rode on the back of a ski-doo to Temagami. His prospects for 1977 were promising that it would be the best year of his life. Clarke, Irwin Publishers featured Benjamin's soon to be famous Dancing Goose in January of their annual Indian Art calendar. He was scheduled to attend a solo exhibition of his work at the Wildlife Gallery in Toronto on January 8. He was most excited about another solo exhibition at the Marion Scott Gallery in Vancouver at the end of January. His good friend Fred Brown, who lived in



Victoria, would be there and he could boast of having one man shows from coast to coast in Canada. Ben even attended an A.A. meeting with his mother, but was not ready to commit.

He spent three weeks in Victoria where he had many heart to heart talks about his life with Fred Brown, talking about moving West but continued his partying ways and did spend a night in a Police cell.

Ben sent me a postcard from Vancouver cheerily reporting: " *Hi Ernie Exhibition is a Roaring success. No snow out here. Say Hi to your family.*

*Benjie.*" The exhibition sold out and he was called on to make new paintings while he was there.

All through February and early March, Benjamin could not contain his excitement for the upcoming show. It promised to be a memorable event. Then, on the night of March 11, 1977, after celebrating to excess at his favorite restaurant, he created a disturbance and the police were called to intervene. It was over. He was booked at 6:45 p.m. for drunkenness and left standing alone in a bare cell, void of any furniture. In the few minutes it took for him to make the decision to end it all, what went through his mind? The degradation of being thrown in a cage when he was flying so high just an hour earlier? The fact that he had humiliated himself at the restaurant where he had gained so much respect and had now disappointed his friends? The fact that he had once again let his people down? These may have been the final straws when added to the burdens he was carrying on his shoulders. The incredible demand for his work by galleries and collectors, his attempts to maintain his artistic integrity, his desire to achieve stability in his lifestyle and his apparent failure to cope with his personal problems probably all combined to cause him to

take that last tragic step. Did his time at St. Joseph's Training School set him on this destructive path?

Within fifteen minutes he put an end to his dreams. Taken to the hospital he was kept on life support until March 14 when he died. The Odawa Native Friendship Centre arranged for a traditional Ojibwa funeral with a wake at their premises at 180 Waller on March 16, mere blocks from the Police Station. A service was held at St. Theresa Church on March 18 with burial following at Notre Dame Cemetery in Ottawa. All costs were covered by donations. His friend John Dockstader, a fellow artist, designed a tombstone featuring *Bennie* birds but there were insufficient funds to complete that task.

As with any artist's death the demand for his work escalated along with the prices. *The Family* series of prints was put on hold and the CIMS also halted sales of their inventory as they developed future plans which now involved the estate of Benjamin Chee Chee. His estate was to be shared with his mother Josephine Roy and with his estranged wife, Joan Beauchamp Chee Chee.

An inquest was held on June 9, 1977, with about a dozen members of the public in attendance. They heard testimony from all of the Police Officers who were involved with the incident, the ambulance attendant, doctors, the coroner and from Pierre Gagnery. The younger police officers conveyed a sense of sympathy for Chee Chee, stating that he was not violent and was being charged with drunkenness. The older officers were much more aggressive emphasizing Chee Chee's history of violence involving police. His two-page rap sheet, which dated back to 1961 with five charges of assault on a police officer and one of resisting arrest was introduced. The assault on Police charges were probably related to one incident where he fought with four officers but it did convey an impression that he had a pattern of dislike for the police. I knew that Ben had a love-hate relationship with the police. During the day he could exchange pleasantries with the beat cops as they walked down the street and call them by name. One day he arrived at my office with two black eyes and a bent nose. I asked him what happened and he said it was the cops. I asked if he wanted to do anything about it and he said, with pride: *"No, I deserved it, but it took four of them."* He fully understood that there was a price to pay for misbehaving.

The coroner's jury made three recommendations: *"that cell block officers be qualified to administer artificial respiration with appropriate equipment; that mandatory and frequent rounds of the cell block be carried out; and that a better*

*system of monitoring the cell block from the officer's desk be installed.*” Perhaps, in death, Benjamin has saved other lives. It troubled me that his personal effects were brought into the courtroom in a green garbage bag. One would think more respect could be shown by having a proper “evidence” bag for this purpose.

Ironically, on the day after the inquest, special sales that had been previously organized by the CIMS opened in four galleries across Canada. These were: Nicholas in Ottawa, Inukshuk in Waterloo, Wah-Sa in Winnipeg and Marion Scott in Vancouver. Dr. A.L. Evans, of Wilfred Laurier University gave the opening remarks at the Inukshuk Galleries in Waterloo, Ontario. He suggested that Chee Chee's reasons for suicide, besides the obvious degradation of his arrest and his alcoholism, were probably deeply rooted cultural problems. *“The loss of identity, language, traditions, and religion no doubt contributed to Chee Chee's death as well as to the suicides of increasing numbers of young native people in North America.”*

In November 1978 the CIMS released *the Family* series of limited edition silk screen prints from the originals that that Ben had completed at Bear Island over the Christmas of 1976. Produced again by Benoit Pronovost in Ottawa, they were well received by the public. The Chee Chee estate benefitted from the sale of these prints as well as from several commercial ventures that promoted and sold images created by Benjamin. Daniel Gaignery, appointed as the official marketing manager for the estate, commissioned several “After Benjamin Chee Chee” limited edition silkscreen prints. Exclusive rights to publish and distribute several paintings were negotiated with Canadian Native Prints of Vancouver who offered unlimited edition prints in various sizes as well art cards. Oscardo of Scarborough has rights to several images that appear on porcelain coffee mugs and an assortment of giftware. *Dancing Goose* and *Friends* are probably the best-known and instantly recognizable images in Canadian art today.



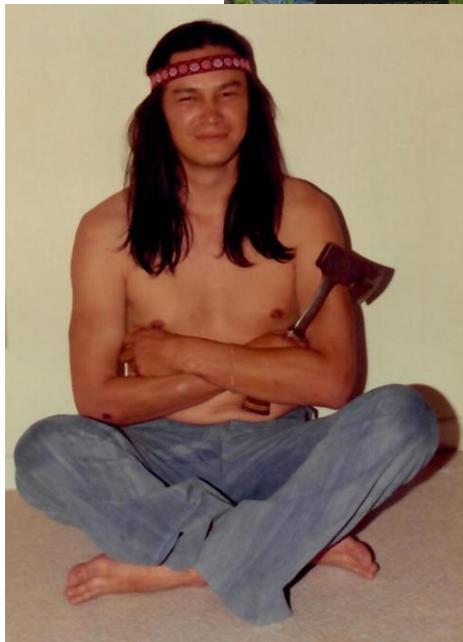
In 1979 I contacted Ottawa Mayor Marion Dewar and suggested that the city consider buying a Chee Chee original painting of Rideau Falls with the city hall in the background. She responded favorably and a reception was held on May 24, 1979 where the Mayor and Ben's mother, Josephine Roy, unveiled the painting which would then hang on the main floor of city hall. The reception was organized by the National Indian Brotherhood and the Native Council of Canada and

attended by more than 300 people. The painting was dated 1974, when Ben had produced his Ottawa scenes series of prints.

Benjamin lay in an unmarked grave for twenty years until Carl Crozier brought it to the attention of the Ottawa Native Concerns Committee. The Benjamin Chee Chee Memorial Fund was created and, with the support of DIAND and the local media, sufficient funds were raised through donations to finally erect a fitting tombstone on June 27, 1997. Ceremonies were held from dawn until dusk to bring belated honor to Benjamin, His mother, Hugh McKenzie and many of his friends from Bear Island participated. Mayor Jacquelin Holzman of Ottawa and Mayor Guy Cousineau of Vanier both declared June 27, 1997, “Benjamin Chee Chee Day” in their respective cities.

“*Respect at last*” blared the headline in the local paper, *Respect at last*, - long overdue but well deserved, lasting respect.

Photo: Ernie Bies and Hugh McKenzie, October 27, 2017



Keep smiling, my friend.

**Acknowledgements:** Benjamin Chee Chee, Josephine Roy, Hugh McKenzie, Marie, Pierre and Daniel Gaignery, Guy Mattar, Fred Brown, Tom Hill, Simon Brascoupe, Peter Allard, Ella Page, Cathy Eberts, Charles Urquhart, Joseph Karim, Neil Sneyd, J.D. Smith, Norm and Erla Socha, Marion Scott, Beth Southcott, Janice Burke, Al Evans, Mayor Marion Dewar: conversations and correspondence.

Sandy Bies: editing

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