



**NEIL JUSSILA:
JOSEPH IN MONTANA—THE NEZ PERCE EPIC**

The
Square

Five Gibson Square
MUSEUM OF ART

NEIL JUSSILA: JOSEPH IN MONTANA—THE NEZ PERCE EPIC

Organized and Presented By:



Paris Gibson Square
MUSEUM OF ART

February 17 - June 4, 2011

Reception 5:30 - 7:30pm February 17th

ArtShare Presentation by Neil Jussila at 6:00pm

Sponsored By:

Payne Financial Group



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This project is supported by the Montana Arts Council, a state agency funded by the State of Montana and the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional funding is provided by museum members and the Citizens of Cascade County.



Black X.

“Place has always been important to me, and so Montana with its flowing spaciousness is always in my work, which makes real my love for this place of my birth.”—Neil Jussila

Neil Jussila was raised in Butte, Montana. He served as a Vietnam combat veteran before earning his Bachelor of Science degree (1966) and a Master of Arts Administration degree (1969) from Montana State University in Bozeman. He has taught art at Montana State University, Billings since 1969 where he is Professor of Art.

Joseph in Montana—The Nez Perce Epic is comprised of paintings that capture the range of emotion and physical exertion that might have been felt by the Niimiipu (Nez Perce) as they fled the 7th Calgary in 1877 along a perilous and battle-filled 1,170 mile long journey through Idaho and Montana. Their hope was to maintain independence from the U.S. Government through an exodus to Canada that was eventually ended short of the US/Canadian border near Chinook, Montana, when Chief Joseph surrendered, stating:

“Hear me, my chiefs! I am tired. My heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever.”



Heavy runner;
Black river;
Ice.



Growing up and serving the country during an especially divisive time, Neil Jussila eventually found solace in painting. His work is among the most poetic and sensitive non-objective work done in the region and reflects his ability to transcend the literal implications of sociopolitical culture. The subject of this exhibition may indeed serve as a remembrance of the artist's own combat experience in Vietnam.

The paintings in this exhibition should not be viewed as literal depictions of places or subjects but rather as visual metaphors for what the artist imagined as he considered the emotional drama that played out along what is now referred to as the Nez Perce National Historic Trail.

Sweet water;
Prairie;
Blue.

"I do what matters to me. It begins with a feeling that becomes a painting. What next happens is like finding something that evokes a vivid memory sensation - or leads one to new adventures, as when reading a story.

Without the generous support of grants and sabbaticals from Montana State University, in Billings, where I have had the privilege to teach, as a painter I would not have developed. A grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, to study the history of drawing and prints, at Columbia University in the City of New York, under Dr. David Rosand, brought me into contact with a classical tradition, which is deeply embedded in my paintings and drawings. Atlantic Center for the Arts and a seminar in the aesthetics of contemporary drawing, under Robert Morris, made me realize that without the support of the National Endowment for the Arts, American culture would not be as vibrant and interesting as it is. Finally, a generous grant from the Montana Arts Council greatly contributed to my sense of innovation in drawing and painting. Change creates beauty."—Neil Jussila



The sounding;
Heavy;
Black;
Wind.



*The black;
Passion;
Red.*



Comforting black;
In the morning;
Serene.

“To Ben Steele, a contemporary Montana artist who recreated his Japanese prisoner of war experiences in drawings and paintings—my deepest appreciation for one who truly understands the big issues surrounding life, death and morality.”—Neil Jussila

Exhibition Checklist



| | | | |
|---|---|----|--|
| 1 | Dying Mother (Prelude). | 8 | Black X. |
| 2 | The black; Passion; Red. | 9 | Blue; Edge; Red. |
| 3 | Two raven; A river; Ice and snow. | 10 | Sweet water; Prairie; Blue. |
| 4 | The wind; And the red; And the black. | | Beside the still water. |
| 5 | Swift Red. | 11 | White line. |
| 6 | Comforting black; In the morning; Serene. | 12 | The sounding; Heavy; Black; Wind. |
| 7 | Heavy runner; Black river; Ice. | 13 | Grief. |
| | | 14 | Redemption (Epilogue). |

Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art is dedicated to fulfilling the artistic needs of the general public. This is accomplished through:

- * Fostering accessibility and understanding of modern, contemporary and self-taught art;
- * Collecting, preserving, exhibiting and interpreting art that actively engages a diverse and growing audience;
- * Providing educational programming that inspires artistic expression and understanding;
- * Expanding public knowledge of, interest in and support for the arts and artists of the region; and
- * Serving as a cultural center, and continuing the preservation of the historically significant Paris Gibson Square building.

- Approved April 29, 2008 by the Board of Trustees

Admission to the museum is free to the public courtesy of



Each work is dated 1996, oil glazes on un-stretched canvas, approximately 5 x 4' or 4 x 5' with the exception of *Redemption* which is dated 1997 on stretched canvas, 24 x 20".

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Hours of operation:
Monday – Friday 10am to 5pm
Tuesday Evenings 7 – 9pm
Saturdays 12 – 5pm
Closed Sundays

