



# Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe

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## NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release:

### **Mohawk Art Show Inspires, Grows in Its Third Year** Best of Show winner is beaded belt, “Ohenton Kariwahtékwen.”

*Photo Caption: A beaded belt created by Kelly and Tyson Back took Best of Show at the Akwesasne Art Market and Juried Show on July 6, 2024.*

**AKWESASNE** — (Seskéha/August 6, 2024) Promising a celebration of spectacular Mohawk art and a rich Indigenous cultural experience, the Akwesasne Art Market and Juried Show did not disappoint. The event, proudly presented by Akwesasne Travel, was held July 6 at Generations Park in the heart of the Mohawk community.

“By all measures, this year’s Art Market and Juried Show was an enormous success,” said Dwayne Thomas, Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe’s director of economic development. “A number of artists and vendors said this event was their best ever,” he said. “It was very well organized, and everyone seemed to be in great spirits all day.”

In only its third year, the arts and culture event attracted some 2500 attendees from the Akwesasne community, neighboring counties in Northern New York and Southern Ontario, as well as several states.

“It’s a testament to the growth of Akwesasne as a vibrant cultural tourism destination,” said Thomas. “We invited the public to experience our culture and celebrate the tremendous talent of our people, and they responded very positively. It’s a win-win for everyone.”

The crowd was treated to Haudenosaunee social dance songs performed by the Native North American Traveling College travel troupe, as well as exciting performances of smoke dancing and hoop dancing. More than 50 vendors and food trucks took part in the outdoor market.

The Juried Art Show featured nearly 70 pieces of art across 12 categories, from traditional splint basketry to contemporary clothing and accessories. A four-person jury, comprising experts of Indigenous art creation, curation and education, spent a day reviewing and critiquing

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submissions to determine the winners. Winners were announced during an awards presentation on the morning of July 6.

The Best of Show prize winner was Kelly Back, co-owner of Fire Loom Creations along with her husband, Tyson Back. Together they created a stunning loom-beaded belt depicting elements of the Ohénton Kariwahtékwén, the traditional Haudenosaunee greeting to the Natural World, popularly known as the Thanksgiving Address. The 8-ft.-long showstopper has been acquired by the Akwesasne Cultural Center Museum for its permanent collection.

“Our creation has a new home,” said Kelly Back in a social media post. “This was my dream for this piece—to have it at our local museum where our kids, grandkids, and great grandkids can always go visit!”

The Cultural Center is planning a public display for the belt.

The event featured demonstrations of traditional foods, wooden lacrosse stick netting, log pounding, and basket making. Elisha King, winner in the Cultural Diverse Art category, said she appreciated the chance to share the art of finger weaving. “I forget that not everyone is familiar with weaving or is aware that it’s a practice that needs to be revitalized in Akwesasne,” said King. “It was a really fun opportunity to share this practice in person.”

Sponsors included North Country Colocation Services, AECON, Akwesasne Mohawk Casino Resort, Boralex, Alcoa, 97.3 CKON, Bear’s Den Charitable Foundation, Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council, and Adirondack Experience–The Museum on Blue Mountain Lake. Akwesasne Travel received generous contributions from the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe, Akwesasne Convenience Store Association, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, and Seacomm Federal Credit Union.

“We extend our gratitude to the many artists, vendors, sponsors, partners, volunteers, tribal staff, and our emcee who came together for the Art Market,” said Thomas. “They all contributed to the success and growth of the event. We look forward to doing more events together.”

This year’s winners are:

**Best of Show**

Kelly Back

Loom beaded belt, “Ohenton Kariwahtékwén”

**2D Painting**

Bruce Boots, “The Little People”

**2D Mixed Media & 2D Abstract**

Victoria Ransom, “Solar Eclipse”

**New Media**

Garrison Garrow

Photography, “The River Before I Was Born”

### **Cultural Diverse Art**

Elisha King

Woven sash, “Ohonte’shòn:’a Iethirihónnien–The Plants Teach Us”

### **Beadwork & Quillwork**

Natasha Thompson

Purse, “The Embrace”

### **Contemporary Clothing & Accessories**

Kiera Pyke

Purse, “Night Out”

### **Fancy Baskets**

Debbie Cook Jacobs, “Deluxe Storage”

### **Utility Baskets**

Curtis Terrance

Golf caddy, “Golfing the Traditional Way”

### **Pottery, Sculpture, Carving & Woodwork**

Carrie Hill

Sculpture, “The Gentle Jelly”

### **2D Drawing**

Vaughn Phillips, “Out of the Darkness”

### **Traditional Wear**

Teio Elijah

Girl’s cape and bonnet, “She Makes it Beautiful”

### **Quilts & Wovens**

Iakonikonriiostha

Quilt, “Sken:nen Tsiotasawe”

### **Youth Art Show**

Jameson Bigtree

Drawing, “Everything”

### **Kaleb Two Bulls**

Basket, “Athere Ietsi’tsiararakhwa”

Visit [www.akwesasne.travel](http://www.akwesasne.travel) for the complete list of winners and event photos.

**About Akwesasne:** Akwesasne is the name of the Mohawk territory that extends into Northern New York, Southeastern Ontario, and Western Quebec. In the Mohawk language, Akwesasne means “land where the partridge drums.” The picturesque community of some 25,000 Mohawks is located along the shores of the St. Lawrence River.

**About Akwesasne Travel:** Akwesasne Travel is based within the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe’s Office of Economic Development in Akwesasne, New York. Its cultural tourism offerings include experiences with Mohawk experts in the traditional arts of wooden lacrosse stick making, splint basketry, loom beadwork, and herbal remedies. Guided museum and cultural center tours explore the past, present, and future of the Mohawk and Haudenosaunee through storytelling, art, and artifacts. Akwesasne Travel received a Tourism Excellence Award in 2023 from the New York State Tourism Industry Association for sustainable tourism stewardship. The American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association named Akwesasne its 2022 Tribal Destination of the Year.

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*The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council is the duly elected and federally recognized government of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe.*