



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Beauty, Identity, Pride: Native North American Footwear

*- Exquisite Examples of Footwear created by North America's Indigenous Peoples,
- up Close and in Context -*

Toronto, ON, October 15, 2007 - The extraordinary beauty and fascinating diversity of the footwear of Indigenous peoples throughout North America are the focus of the Bata Shoe Museum's upcoming exhibition, *Beauty, Identity, Pride: Native North American Footwear*. The exhibition will open on Friday November 2, 2007.

More than ninety pairs of shoes, boots and moccasins will showcase the designs, meticulous methods of creation, culturally distinctive patterns and beautiful decoration of Aboriginal peoples of the Subarctic, Northeast, Southeast, the Plains, the Great Basin, and the Southwest regions of North America. The exhibition will feature a vast array of 19th-century moccasins, with several items from the 18th century as well as some 20th-century examples.

The exquisite craftsmanship and intricacy of these functional works of art are manifest in sophisticated beading and quillwork, the use of decorative metals, different hides, ribbons and other materials, and regional variations in structural design. Visitors will see up close the techniques and artistry which exemplify the outstanding quality and detail of Native footwear.

Beauty, Identity, Pride will feature many remarkable pieces, including the following highlights:

- A rare 18th-century Woodlands moccasin embellished with fine porcupine quillwork
- The Northern Cheyenne favoured hard-soled shoes with elaborately beaded uppers, and visitors will see Northern Cheyenne shoes with a background of white beads, an angled cut to the cuff, and decorative symbols of thunderbirds and horses.
- An early Cherokee moccasin with exceptionally fine beading
- Traditionally, a Zuni bridegroom was responsible for making the wedding boots to be worn by his bride, and the exhibition includes a pair of these boots created of white deerskin, with pre-formed soles that had to be sewn to the one-piece uppers using stitches not visible to the eye without turning the boots inside out: a true test of skill and devotion.
- In addition to fine beadwork, 19th-century Sioux women created exceptional quillwork in strong geometric designs and vibrant colours, which will be seen on Sioux footwear in the exhibition.

| [more](#) |

Beauty, Identity, Pride: Native North American Footwear will allow visitors to discover more about the culture, region, and methods of creation of each pair of footwear. The exhibition and accompanying interpretive material are designed to inform and educate visitors about the beauty and craftsmanship of native footwear, as a significant form of cultural expression.

The Bata Shoe Museum's moccasin collection has been built up over thirty years and is now one of the largest in the world. *Beauty, Identity, Pride* will allow visitors to view these rarely seen treasures from the Museum's extensive collection.

About the Bata Shoe Museum

The Bata Shoe Museum is a centre of knowledge about the role of footwear in the social and cultural life of humanity. The Museum's outstanding international collection touches on 4,500 years of history. A varied program of events and exhibitions lets visitors discover the stories behind footwear from many lands and cultures. As at October 15, 2007, current exhibitions are: *The Charm of Rococo: Femininity and Footwear in the 18th Century*; *Chronicles of Riches: Treasures from the Bata Shoe Museum*, and *All About Shoes: Footwear Through the Ages* (semi-permanent). Online exhibitions are *All About Shoes* and *On Canadian Ground: Stories of Footwear in Early Canada*. The Bata Shoe Museum is located in downtown Toronto at the southwest corner of Bloor and St. George Streets. Further information is available at www.batashoemuseum.ca.

Media Contact

Rosmarie Gadzovski, Marketing & Public Relations, Bata Shoe Museum
telephone: 416.979.7799 x225
e-mail: rosmarie.gadzovski@batashoemuseum.ca