

Native art show, sale planned

OHSWEKEN — There's going to be a big native art show and sale in Toronto with indigenous nations from all over the hemisphere participating. Mayan, Inca, Aztec and others from Central and South America plus Inuit, Lakota (Sioux), Dene (Navajo), Cree, and Anishnabe (Ojibway) to name only several of the North American tribes.

"I got a call the other day from a South American," said Duffy Wilson, executive director of the Native American Centre For the Living Arts and co-ordinator of the show. "He wants 100 booths."

Beginning Saturday, June 3, the nine-day first annual International Festival of Native Arts will be held at the Better Living Centre, Exhibition Place. Most shows, such as the giant Western Traders Show in Los Angeles, are regional events.

A two-day powwow will begin the cultural extravaganza and offer \$25,000 in cash prizes. An expected 500 or more arts and crafts booths will display art work valued at more than \$50 million. Plans include an Indian village, tipi village and museum display plus a wide variety of native foods and daily prize giveaways.

Eighty Indian entertainers are scheduled to provide continuous entertainment and 25 native artists will be in residence. Miss Indian Canada

Our Town

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Green



in June

and Miss Indian U.S.A. will each make an appearance. There will be a fashion show and free movies.

Naturally, there's a reason for this event. Better known as the Turtle Building, the Native American Centre For The Living Arts in Niagara Falls, N.Y., has fallen on hard times.

Since paying off its mortgage a year ago, the non-profit organization has found its funding sources have mysteriously dried up. As an emergency measure, volunteers have been enlisted to keep the doors open to serve the public. Building maintenance and staffing monies are badly needed.

A few years ago, when city voters considered a gambling initiative, investors ogled the building as a potential casino. Turtles are symbolic in Iroquois culture and the building, fashioned after one, is one of the most distinc-

tive in North America. It could slip from native hands into an uncertain future.

"It would be a shame if the Turtle was lost one way or another," said Duffy Wilson. "If we lose the Turtle, we all suffer."

Besides his business duties, Segwoidoukwe, or Duffy Wilson, is a renowned sculptor. He can also work in wood and cornhusk. In 1973, he won the first annual Indian Sculpture Show held at the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Ariz. A world-wide audience scrutinizes his work.

He maintains that he just happened to be in the right place at the right time to become the Turtle's patriarch. Over the years he has demonstrated an unflinching commitment to the project at the expense of his own art production. He sees this show developing into a source of revenue to make the Turtle self-sufficient.

Arts and crafts people will be eligible for a best booth cash award. Deadline for a 10-by-10 foot draped booth with table and chairs is March 30. Pegboards are available.