

Moosehair and Caribou Hair Tufting:

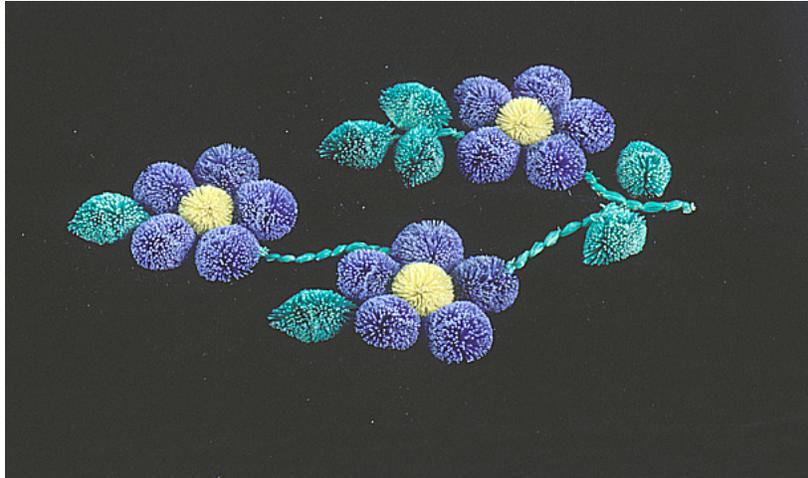
This decorative art form utilizes a technique in which three-dimensional flowers and leaves are created by tightly pulling small bunches of moosehair¹ under a loop stitch and fastening it off. The resultant hairs are then fanned out on all sides of the stitch and scissor-trimmed into smooth rounded tufts.



Tufted gloves, 1957; made by Bella Bonnetrouge, Fort Providence, Northwest Territories; smoked moosehide, moose hair, beaver fur. Canadian Museum of Civilization, CMC VI-N-33

The use of twisted caribou hair and moose hair for decoration is an old Athapascan art form, but the technique of tufting was a new art form developed in the early 1900s by Katherine Bouvier née Beaulieu and Madeleine Lafferty née Bouvier, Metis women of Fort Providence. Madeleine Lafferty taught this to her daughter-in-law Celine Lafferty née Laviolette who in turn taught the technique to Sister Beatrice Leduc at the Fort Providence Mission School. Via Sister Leduc it was spread to most of the communities in the Northwest Territories.

¹ The hair is first dyed to produce the desired colours.



Tufted moosehair floral design: made by Maria Bonnetrouge
Fort Providence, NWT

Reference:

Lafferty, Richard Jr., "On the Origins of Moose Hair Tufting." Gabriel Dumont Institute, Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture.

<http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/02315>

This video is a brief interview with Richard Lafferty Jr. in August, 2001. Richard shows a caribou hair tufting piece by Emily Lafferty and two moose hair tufting pieces by Margaret Vandal. He also discusses how his great-grandmother Katherine (Beaulieu) Bouvier developed moose hair tufting.



Compiled by Lawrence Barkwell
Coordinator of Metis Heritage and History Research
Louis Riel Institute