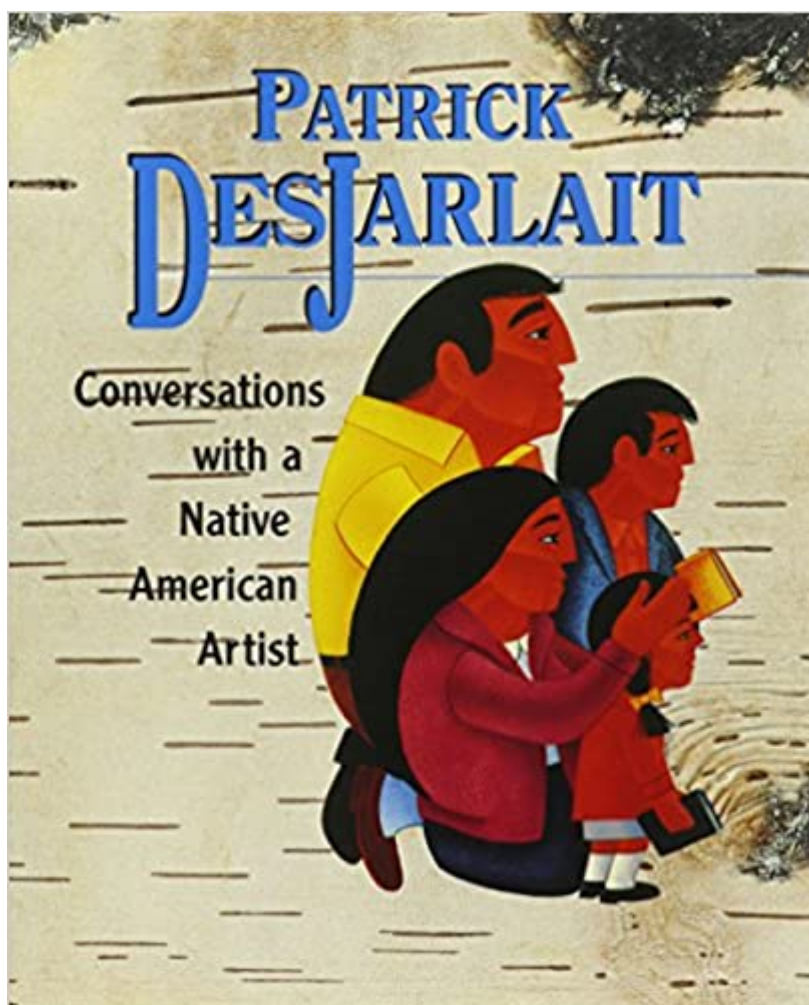


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# Patrick Desjarlait: Conversations With A Native American Artist



## Synopsis

These informative and inspiring biographies will give young readers a look at the lives of some of the world's most influential people in history. Each over 100 pages, the books are also ideal for reports.

## Book Information

Library Binding: 56 pages

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## Customer Reviews

Grade 6 Up-A combination of autobiographical commentary and background information. Facts about the Chippewas' northern Minnesota lake-country home and occupations are explained and illustrated with photographs and DesJarlait's paintings, but most of the text is devoted to the artist's own words. He tells his story from his birth on the Red Lake Indian Reservation in 1921 through his education and career as a commercial artist. He makes clear his need to develop a personal style with which to record and interpret the customs and crafts of his people, a style that seems influenced by Diego Rivera and the Cubists. This book is useful in its respectful delivery of information about the Chippewas in mainstream America and in demonstrating that individuals of any ethnic group need not develop stereotypes in order to honor that group or to make a successful career in art. The layout incorporates full-color reproductions of DesJarlait's paintings with black-and-white historical photographs and an easy-to-read typeface. However, the historical material is printed on a birchbark background that partially obscures the text. Kenneth Marantz, Art Education Department, Ohio State University, Columbus Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Gr. 5-7. This biography, based on taped interviews, relates the story of Patrick DesJarlait, an artist noted for his paintings of his people, the Chippewa of Red Lake Indian Reservation in Minnesota. The revised edition of a book first published in 1975, this volume features many more illustrations than the original, including photographs of people and places as well as more full-color reproductions of DesJarlait's art. Carolyn Phelan

Fantastic book to use as reference for Middle Grades about Ojibwe life, history, and culture. Gifted artist who developed his talents to record and express the amazing culture of the Ojibwe, and focused on educating others. Colorful, modern and moving.

Fine intro to fine artist, his upbringing, culture and creative style.. Simply written and yet effectively informative.

DesJarlait told of his life to Red Lake tribal co-member Neva Williams, to pass on his experiences and heritage -- which he'd set himself to record in paintings -- before his untimely death in 1972. This book is a revision of one Lerner Publications (of Minneapolis, MN) brought out in the mid-70's, now using a great variety of paintings, family photos and other material brought together by the Minnesota Art Institute for a 1989 retrospective of this Ojibwe artist's work and life. The current book contains many beautiful full-color pictures in DesJarlait's unique style, influenced by many European artists he studied (informally, in books and museum visits) but shaped by his own unique vision. There is also a history and recollections of life on Minnesota's remote, northern Ojibwe reservation, as well as DesJarlait's Navy experiences with the US Japanese POW internment camps, set up during World War II. This reminded him of Indian reservations, which began, under US Army supervision, as POW internment camps. In addition to being a successful Native fine-arts artist, with paintings in many museums and private collections, DesJarlait was the first tribal artist to "make it" as a commercial artist, employed for many years in studio work for ad agencies. He was very proud of his commercial masterpiece the "Hamms beer bear" TV commercial (Fra-HUM tha LAND of sky-blue Wa-HA-HA-HA-ters... drumdrumdrum") though today in the Indian community such an artist's involvement with promoting alcohol would be criticized. The picture he is proudest of, however, shows Red Lake fishermen braving the waves. (The family owns it now.) Red Lake Ojibwe tribe was the first to start a major industrial (fishery) co-op, in 1929. It was a big business until acid rain killed off most of the fish. Even today, there are few tribal co-ops, mostly small arts-crafts marketing enterprises. As well as one of the strongest in maintaining traditions, (and the only tribe in

MN to keep most of its land) Red Lake has also been one of the most forward-looking Native Nations in economic enterprises to help its citizens. You can see a better review, and pix, and a memorial essay by Patrick's son Robert Desjarlait -- also an Ojibwe artist, who documents lifeways, but with his own vision and a style very different from his father's -- on my website, at [...] part of my ArtPages about Native American and First Nations artists. I think it is a shame that .com is so careless with the book's price, but I think although Lerner pegs it as "grade 5 and up" this book will be liked by anyone with an interest in Native art. It is a model of how to learn about culture and history through art.

This book is written about my father and the love he had for his people and how he captured it with the stroke of his brush. His paintings tell the story of the Ojibwe people and how they once lived. It also tells of his personal journey through life as an artist. I still have the tapes of that interview and every so often will listen to them so I can hear his voice again. We were all very sad when cancer took his life at the age of 51, he had so much to offer the world with his creativity and uniqueness. We considered him a "Picasso" among Ojibwe artists. He produced many paintings during his lifetime and was honored with his own show "Patrick Desjarlait - A retrospective" back in September of 1994 at the Minnesota Museum of Art in St. Paul, Minnesota. They purchased the famous Red Lake Fisherman painting from the Patrick Desjarlait Estate. The family has one original painting left for purchase called "The Chippewa Dancer" which is shown in the book. The family also has several prints available for purchase. I recommend this book to persons wanting to learn more about the Ojibwe culture and also those who want to look through the eyes of an artist and join his adventure that he took during his lifetime. It is a beautiful book filled with pictures and paintings. The 2nd edition is much, much better than the 1st edition in terms of beauty.

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