‘CUNK ON CINEMA’ AMUSES AUDIENCES WHILE OFFERING GLIMPSE INTO CINEMA HISTORY

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“Cunk on Cinema” was released on Netflix, on Sun, Nov. 15. This British mockumentary television series was produced for both the BBC and Netflix.

It features English actress and comedian, Diane Morgan, taking on the role of Philomena Cunk. Cunk is characterized as a slightly incompetent and amusing investigative journalist, who interviews real-world experts on various aspects of film, forcing laughs out of the audience through her unfiltered and unorthodox interrogative questions. She mispronounces names of important figures like filmmaker Martin Scorsese, and misremembers facts, such as when she mixed up the coined word, “Hitchcockian,” with “Ian Hitchcock.”

The series itself consists of only six short episodes, each around 15 minutes long, making it easy to binge-watch, especially for those interested in film who wish for a show that is very low commitment. The episodes themselves chronicle the various periods of cinema until the present.

“Cunk on Cinema” starts off examining the beginning of film, through naked photographs, shaky cameras, and silent film. Then, watchers continue through the journey, learning how film was used to spread propaganda in periods of unrest, like World War II and the Cold War, and touching upon key Hollywood figures like Marilyn Monroe. Watchers also learn about directors who have greatly impacted the industry, such as Martin Scorsese, Alfred Hitchcock and Steven Spielberg. The final episode ends on a discussion of modern movie-making, getting into computer-generated imagery and whether humans are even needed to make movies anymore with artificial intelligence rising to prominence.

Real-life figures are brought on the show to be interviewed by Cunk, all of them playing along with her obliviousness and nonsensical speech. Stars, such as actor Benedict Cumberbatch, director Michael Bay, screenwriter Steven E. de Souza, and film journalist Helen O’Hara are all interviewed. Viewers, like myself, may be impressed with the knowledge they provide, while laughing along at their struggling attempts to seriously respond to many of Cunk’s interjections and illogical commentary. Her interviewing is a fresh break from overly scripted and traditional interviews usually present in documentaries, almost sounding like a podcast.

“Cunk on Cinema” is a show that one can easily binge on the weekends, amusing everyone from film nerds to casual viewers alike. The short episodes are a breath of fresh air, offering humor along with a historical overview on film.



Diane Morgan as her character, Philomena Cunk, operating a cinema camera. Cunk on Cinema was released on November 12, 2026.

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LOOKING AT INDIGENOUS ART THIS NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

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Specific traditions and celebrations vary among different Native American tribes. But fascinating art, created historically and today, remain a through line. Different groups have produced gorgeous collections full of jewelry, clothing, paintings and so many more artifacts over thousands of years.

The subjects of Native American artwork are infinite. While some artforms and styles are exclusive to one or two tribes, others are found in several. In light of Native American Heritage Month, let’s take a closer look at some popular variations of Indigenous art.

Wampum belts

Wampum belts are a huge symbol of many Northeastern Native American cultures. Traditionally made from sinew, deerskin and acrylic beads, many tribes use and design them to represent their history and values, according to Plimoth Patuxet Museums.

One example of a wampum belt is the Hiawatha Belt, the Haudenosaunee tribe’s national belt as described on the Onondaga Nation’s website. Mainly purple, the belt has four white squares and a tree that are connected by lines of the same color. It is symbolic to the Haudenosaunee people because it represents peace between themselves and five once-warring tribes: the Mohawk, Onondaga, Seneca, Oneida and Cayuga, the Onondaga tribe’s website says.

Baskets

Like wampum belts, many tribes, such as the Apache and Papago peoples, make baskets. Baskets are typically made from willow, sumac and devils claws, according to AllTribes. While they usually have one or two colors, they can have various designs.

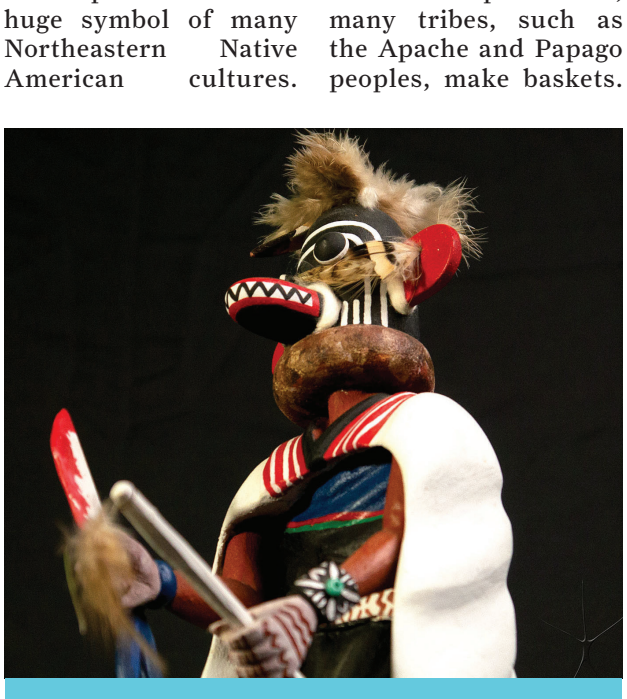
One Papago basket that can be found on AllTribes has four arrows, which is open to interpretation, according to the basket’s description.

Another from the same website showcases the Akimel O’odham tribe’s talent and landscape, according to its description. Also plain, the basket has lines that curve, bend and intersect to depict valleys and other landscapes.

Navajo rugs and blankets

As one of the Navajo tribe’s most unique symbols, Navajo rugs and blankets serve many purposes, including home decor, clothing and warmth, according to Garland’s. They’re made from many wool types, such as commercial wool yarn, Native handspan wool and processed wool.

The number of designs and color schemes for these items is vast. Some Navajo rugs and blankets are simple; one blanket from the Medicine Man Gallery has a light-yellow background with orange, red and black stripes. Others are complex, an example being a Navajo rug from the Nizhoni Ranch Gallery that has a light brown background with many symbols, such as arrowheads, trees and triangles.



Fourteen-inch Hopi Kachina doll representing the Amatovi Ogre Woman, a Soyoko variant. This piece is believed to have originated from the destroyed pueblo of Awatovi, and was carved by Henry Shelton in the 1970s.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ELMOREINDIANART.COM

Hopi and Zuni kachina dolls



Eighteen-inch Hopi Katsina doll representing Aholi, the Kachina Chief’s Lieutenant and companion to Eototo. This doll was hand carved by Third Mesa artist, Henry Shelton in the 1960s.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ELMOREINDIANART.COM

Like wampum belts, Hopi and Zuni kachina dolls can also symbolize a tribe’s history and culture, according to the Kachina House. Made from wood, they tell the story of the kachina spirit to children of the Pueblo people, according to Britannica.

There these dolls vary greatly in appearance. One from the Steve Elmore Indian Art website has a turquoise-colored mask and a multi-colored cloak. Another has many accessories such as a black mask, fur headdress, black dress and white boots.

Rock carvings

If you’ve been to a national park or the American Southwest canyons, you’ve probably seen writing or art designs on boulders or rock walls. These are another example of Native American art.

Rock carvings are fascinating charms; they are not only commonplace, but they hold meaning as methods of communication for Native American tribes, according to the National Park Service.

Native Americans have used rocks to etch their stories creating permanent carvings that people can see thousands of years later.

One of the most eminent rock carvings is Newspaper Rock. Located in Utah, it has a colossal drawing collection that represents the different tribes that inhabited the area. The rock’s older drawings symbolize the Ancestral Puebloan and Basketmaker peoples who lived in the area between 500 B.C. and 1350 A.D., according to the Bureau of Land Management. Meanwhile, the newer drawings represent the Ute people who inhabit the area today.

Native American art is fascinating to examine. Besides these six art forms, there are many other collections out there. Native American art can be found in places like museums and the internet. It can be even bought from online stores, such as AllTribes, the Sorrel Sky Gallery, the Prairie Edge and the Medicine Man Gallery.