



FIRST PEOPLES

A CELEBRATION OF NATIVE ARTISTS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Exhibition
Catalog &
Resources
Guide

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

The goal of this publication is two-fold: to document the unique cultural exhibition FIRST PEOPLES, and to provide ways to learn more about Native peoples, and the institutions and organizations dedicated to preserving and promoting their history and supporting their communities. The Artist Statements and detailed descriptions foregrounded in the Catalog section were an essential part of this exhibition. In addition to illuminating contemporary Native arts, lives and cultures, they often reveal “ignored” and underacknowledged aspects of American history.

Walter L. Meyer, Exhibition Curator & Editor

An independent curator/exhibition producer, Meyer has a passionate interest in multi-cultural projects. In addition to FIRST PEOPLES, his recent and diverse projects include organizing a first-ever Los Angeles/Istanbul Street Artist Exchange Program, developing a series of refugee-themed murals with Syrian-American artists in cooperation with the Los Angeles City Human Relations Commission, and curating “A Kind of Alchemy,” a traveling museum exhibition of medieval Persian ceramics. Meyer has a degree in Anthropology from New York University, and continues to study global art history at UCLA.

Contact: Walter.L.Meyer@gmail.com.

The exhibition’s gala Opening Reception featured a blessing, and inter-tribal Native American drumming, singing and dancing.

Shown here:
Cheyenne Phoenix (Diné, Northern Paiute)

Photo: Mimi Weisband

Presented by
the San Fernando
Valley Arts &
Cultural Center,
April 4-22, 2017,
FIRST PEOPLES:
**A Celebration of
Native Artists in
Southern California**
showcases twenty-
nine talented
Southern California
artists with
Indigenous roots
either north or south
of the Border.



ABOUT THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY ARTS & CULTURAL CENTER (SFVACC)

The SFVACC was voted “Best Art Gallery” in the *Los Angeles Daily News* prestigious 18th Annual Readers Best Choice Awards.

Since opening in October 2014, the SFVACC has functioned as both a community and cultural space, hosting an impressive roster of art exhibitions, workshops, live performances, meetings, lectures and special events. There are also three artist studios on the premises.

Housed in a 4,595-square-foot space, the SFVACC boasts a 3,000-square-foot art gallery with expansive walls, sophisticated hanging and lighting systems, T-shaped display walls, a performance stage, and professional sound system.

A non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation, the SFVACC is located at 18312 Oxnard Street, Tarzana, CA 91356. For additional information, visit www.sfvacc.org.



At the San Fernando Valley Arts & Cultural Center, we have always made it our mission to try to educate our audience about both culture and art. FIRST PEOPLES fulfills this dream to rise above the idea that we are simply a “gallery.”

*Carolyn Uhri,
SFVACC President*

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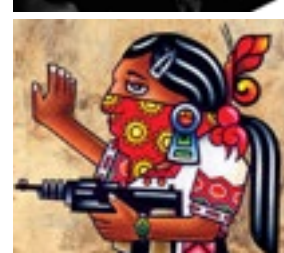
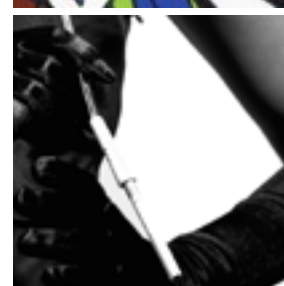
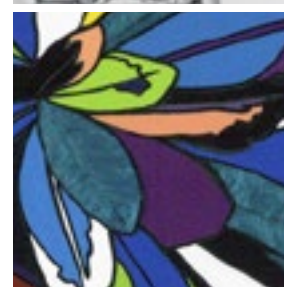
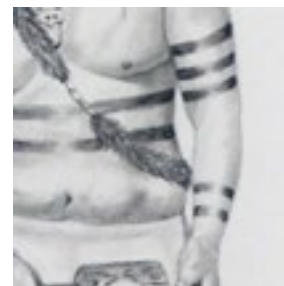
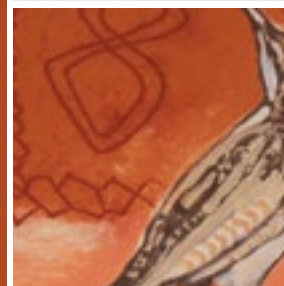
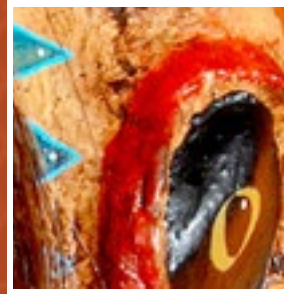
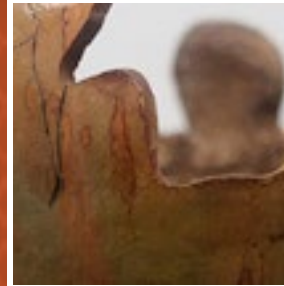


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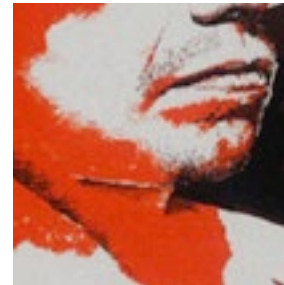
Exhibition Catalog

INTRODUCTION

FIRST PEOPLES provides a variety of answers to the question:
What does it mean to be a Native artist?

- ▶ Some artists imagine pre-contact Native existence
- ▶ Others document contemporary Native life
- ▶ Some seek to preserve traditional art forms
- ▶ Others use them as springboards to personal expression
- ▶ Art is deeply spiritual for some
- ▶ Re-defining Native identity is the goal of others

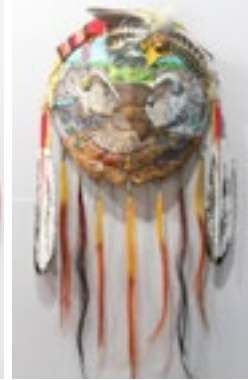
Underlying this apparent diversity is a single, powerful truth:
Far from having “vanished,” Native peoples are very much here,
and continue to be nourished by their rich traditions.



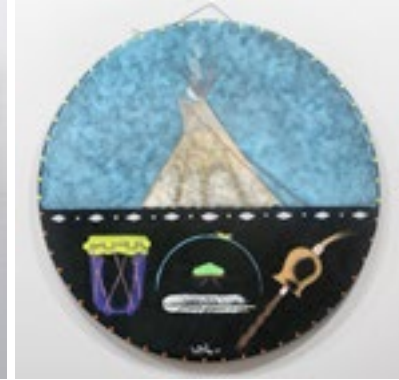
FIRST PEOPLES, described as “an interesting and important exhibition” by the University of California, Los Angeles American Indian Studies Center, offers 100+ artworks as diverse as the artists’ generational range—from university students to tribal elders.



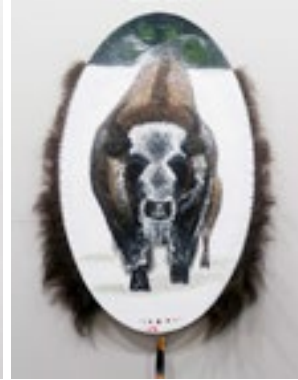
Katchinas



Flies Too Young



Native American Church



Christmas Buffalo

Ron Winterhawk Archer

Abnaki

Resides in Victorville, CA

My spirit name “Winterhawk” originated during a four-day vision quest in 1996. The predominant creature was a red-tailed hawk flying to me from a snow-covered mountainside. At a moment of peace, the name came to me. With no knowledge of my ancestors, at the age of seven I took my dad’s knife out of his Army mess kit and taught myself to cut pine boughs for a bow, and found that wild hazelnut trees provided very straight arrows.

I realized years later that with no teacher, I must have been guided by the spirits of my ancestors. I’ve been an artist now for over 50 years, working with a variety of materials.

My art has been recognized in several shows, and I’ve had a number of successful students. I hope to continue being a Native artist as long as the Creator allows me to use my gift to show the world the beauty of the Indigenous People that influences my spirit and my life.

KATCHINAS

Leather, acrylic paint, rainbow string edging

The Hopi’s religion has given them the strength to resist external forces for centuries. Katchinas are spiritual beings representing all aspects of life. They come in a wide variety of forms, including animals, insects, food, seasons, weather, and human beings. Secret and seldom seen in public, some are called upon to carry prayers to the Rain Gods to ensure a bountiful harvest. Young girls are given Katchina dolls to educate them in the Katchinas’ diversity, names and functions. Depicted here, left to right, are representations of a Katchina Mother, the Owl Katchina, and a Rain Katchina.

FLIES TOO YOUNG

Turtle shell, acrylic paint, trade cloth, deer hide, Southern California bird feathers painted to resemble young Spotted Eagle feathers, avocado seed, dyed horse hair

This depicts a Red-tailed Hawk I raised from her first flight. When she was able to catch her own food two months later, I released her in the San Gabriel Mountains. The hawk is a symbol of strength in Native nations throughout the Americas. The bear is also a symbol of strength and spiritual power. Many Native nations have Bear Clans, whose members are often seen as healers. The horned toad is a food source for a variety of birds of prey like hawks, falcons and eagles.

NATIVE AMERICAN CHURCH

Leather, acrylic paint

The Native American Church, an inter-tribal religion combining elements of Christianity and Indigenous beliefs, started in the 1880s. The inspiration for this shield painting was an actual tipi at least 25’ wide and over 20’ tall. It shows key ceremonial elements: the tipi/church at twilight; a cast iron kettle drum that’s tipped on its side to change tone; the moon, as ceremonies begin after dark; an eagle feather showing the strength of the ceremony and its leaders; a peyote button eaten to enhance connection with the Creator; and a gourd rattle adopted from one used in the Southern Plains Gourd Dance.

CHRISTMAS BUFFALO

Leather, acrylic paint, buffalo fur and bone, turtle shell, copper

A “Christmas gift” (perhaps in an ironic sense) is the inspiration for this artwork. “Gift” refers to the return of the buffalo to the Great Plains that was once Native land. The buffalo was a vital source of food, tools and clothing for Native peoples living there, but the *wasicu* (a Lakota/Dakota Sioux term for “white people”) had tried everything to eradicate them—and therefore Native culture. “Christmas” is a reference to the forced conversion to Christianity of a people whose own religious beliefs, an integral part of everyday life, were forbidden.

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Mojave Warrior



Tarohaish



Morahash



The Gatherer

Samuel S. Bañagas

Kumeyaay, Luiseño

Resides in Norwalk, CA

I've been drawing and painting since the age of six, but have no formal training. Growing up in Southern California, I learned about local tribes and Southwest tribes from family members. However, my move to Oklahoma in 1975 with my Seminole wife expanded my knowledge of the tribes living in the Central Plains, and proved to be a great asset in terms of my artistic expression. Attending powwows, stomp dances and working among Native Americans within my community also helped increase my understanding of the cultures I feature in my work. I enjoy depicting old Native American traditions, legends and myths. I've also researched historic accounts of native life, as reflected in my works on display here. They're part of a series about native tribes of Southern California. The works here depict the Diegueño and Kumeyaay, tribes of the San Diego and upper Baja California area.

MOJAVE WARRIOR

Pencil sketch

The Mojave were part of the “Colorado River tribes” of California, Arizona and northern Mexico. Fierce fighters, war parties were known to travel as far north as Chumash and Yokut territory, and as far east as Western Apache territory. They were also famous for face painting and tattooing, which was done using ink from a blue cactus plant. Protective tattoos were applied to warriors prior to battle, and full-body tattoos on both men and women were believed to bring good fortune and entry into the afterlife. The Mojave warrior's weapon of choice was a deadly war club. Owl and hawk feathers adorn his head.

TAROHAISH

Watercolor

Generally associated with the Pueblos and Navajo, sand painting was also practiced by Southern California tribes, probably through inter-tribal contact. The Luiseño called sand painting *Tarohaish*. Creating one in a *wamkish* (ceremonial dwelling) was the culmination of boys' initiation rites. A teaching tool to instruct youths to be respectful, generous and hospitable, it provided cautionary tales of spider and snake bites if they didn't. Cosmological symbols such as the sun (at the center) and the stars (Pleiades and Orion in the lower left quadrant) are also shown here, as are the San Bernardino Mountains.

MORAHASH

Watercolor

Once performed by most Southern California tribes, the Luiseño *Morahash* is sometimes referred to as the Whirling Dance or *Tatahuila*. It was a mourning ceremony performed by a single dancer wearing a very specific, elaborate regalia: the *balat*, a skirt of wing or tail feathers of an eagle (golden or white-headed) or California condor; the *cheyat*, made from hanging owl, crow or raven feathers; the *piwish*, ropes of owl feathers wound around his head; and an *apuma*, a headdress of long eagle feathers worn upright. Someone not accustomed to the intense whirling involved would certainly become dizzy and fall down.

THE GATHERER

Pencil sketch

This woman could be a member of any one of a number of Southern California tribes. Primarily existing by hunting and gathering, she carries a seed beater and small gathering basket. She'll deposit what she has collected in the larger basket at her feet. She wears a basket cap—worn sometimes by men as well as women—and a buckskin skirt (although skirts were also made from willow tree or cottonwood bark). Her necklace would most likely have been made of beads or seashells. Like many Southern California Native Americans, her face is tattooed.



Dance Fan



White Buffalo Calf Woman/
Toypurina



Iktomi (The Trickster)



Good Hunting

Brian “Tezi Tunka” Bettelyoun

(deceased)

Lakota

Resided in Antelope Valley, CA

Brian was a noted artist who worked in a diverse range of mediums. He was born on the Oglala Lakota Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, where his parents and grandparents taught him lessons of dignity and respect for the Earth. His father, also an artist, gave him his Indian name, “Tezi Tunka,” which means “Big Belly.” His work in this exhibition is from the collection of Kat High, displayed with the blessing of his family. It honors the classes Brian taught at Haramokngna American Indian Cultural Center. Located in the Angeles National Forest near Azusa, CA, the Center tells the story of the Five Tribes of the San Gabriel Mountains: Tongva, Chumash, Tataviam, Kitanemuk and Serrano.

DANCE FAN

Turkey feathers, incised elk bone

The dance fan was originally associated with the ceremonial protocol of Plains Indian tribes. Highly revered as a sacred bird, the golden eagle’s tail feathers were traditionally used. However, since it is now illegal to sell them, or even to possess them without a Fish & Game permit/Tribal Card, Brian substituted turkey feathers. The dance fan has evolved into an important accessory at modern powwows, inter-tribal gatherings where Native Americans meet for dancing, singing, and socializing. Today, with the appropriate permit, powwow dancers can again use eagle and hawk feathers.

WHITE BUFFALO CALF WOMAN/TOYPURINA

Burned wood scavenged from the 2009 Station Fire, buffalo hair

A sacred woman of supernatural origin, White Buffalo Calf Woman (*Pte Ska Win*) is central to the Lakota religion as the primary cultural prophet. She taught the Lakota people the seven sacred ceremonies and gave them the *chanunpa*, the sacred ceremonial pipe. After bestowing these gifts, she left, promising she would one day return. Brian saw her as a kindred spirit of Toypurina, an 18th-century Tongva sacred woman who also led her people to balance and healing.

IKTOMI (THE TRICKSTER)

Vintage ledger paper, inks

This is an example of Plains Indians ledger art, a continuation of an age-old practice of using imagery to record important knowledge and events. These illustrations also served as a memory aid in oral storytelling. This new cultural expression started when the tribes were contained in American forts without access to their normal medium—buffalo hide—and turned instead to discarded papers. *Iktomi*, a trickster who can take the form of a coyote, raven, spider or man, often ends up being hurt or being laughed at himself. Stories about him teach us to behave honorably and to see the consequences of our actions.

GOOD HUNTING

Modern ledger paper, inks

The most celebrated ledger artists were prisoners of war in Fort Marion in St. Augustine, Florida, far from their plains tribal lands. With pencils, crayons, fountain pens and occasionally watercolors, they continued the traditional stylized imagery of buffalo hide painting. In this work, Brian pays homage to their legacy of overcoming adverse conditions to express their culture and experiences. This contemporary piece depicts the all-important buffalo hunt.

Gabriel Brenner

Pima, Cherokee
Resides in Los Angeles, CA

I am an LA-based artist engaging with video, photo, text, and sound. My work explores constructions of the self, histories of trauma, and the poetics of loss. Drawing heavily from personal narratives and their relation to normalized legacies of erasure, I contemplatively communicate the phenomenology of inhabiting a marked, queer(ed) body of color in the present. I am currently attending the University of California, Los Angeles and will graduate in 2017 with a BA in Art.



Opichi

OPICHI

Digital Video (05:20)

Opichi is a conversation: with my grandmother, with my family, with (lack of) history. Cloudy extensions of a constructed Native self fade into and out of focus, mirroring the function of memory, the act of searching, the palpable loss of ancestry. Legal documents of our past elucidate as little as our quieted relatives, shamed into silence by a colonial legacy that forced forgetting for survival. Her fingers trace the grain of an Edward Curtis portrait; how does one understand a Native identity when only traces remain?



Voice of Heart



Sacred Buffalo



Unity



Warrior of the Great Spirit

Claudia Brentwood

White Earth Ojibwe

Resides in Santa Monica, CA

I am Ojibwe and a member of the White Earth Indian Reservation in Minnesota. My mother and grandmother were raised on the reservation. I'm not sure when or why they subsequently moved to the West Coast, but that's where my brother and I grew up. Summers, I visited the reservation, where I learned about my heritage from relatives and friends. Many of my paintings are Indian faces. Some have abstract colors around the faces to lure people—first to the painting, then to the face, and finally into the eyes—perhaps to grasp the true spirit of the ancient Indian depicted. The memory of my first visit to a powwow on my reservation will always be with me. I particularly remember an elder, dressed in white leather with flowing fringes, slowly dancing to the drums around the fire. That magnificent sight took my breath away. I would like to think that he is watching over me now.

VOICE OF HEART

Acrylic on canvas

This painting shows an Indian with an illuminating chest and heart beating towards his vocal chords. He stays silent although multicolored abstract strokes of paint surround him. The calm, unwavering Indian knows that no amount of distortion or distraction can hinder him from the true spirit of his heart. As famed 19th-century Chief Joseph (*Hinnatoowyahtq'it*: “Thunder Rolling Down the Mountain”) of Oregon’s Nez Perce tribe once remarked, “I believe that much trouble would be saved if we opened our hearts more.”

SACRED BUFFALO

Ink on aged leather

“The buffalo is recognized as a symbol of our strength and unity, and as we bring our herds back to health, we will also bring our people back to health.” Fred Du Bray, Founding President of the Inter-Tribal Bison Cooperative, a consortium of 41 Native American tribes that hopes to restore the buffalo to reservation lands, speaking at the 2016 International Buffalo Council.

UNITY

Acrylic giclée on canvas

The White Buffalo is a highly sacred symbol defining hope and renewal for all humanity through harmony between all peoples of the world. Here the White Buffalo looks over an infant who, representing purity and wisdom, trusts the White Buffalo to ensure its safety in this world.

WARRIOR OF THE GREAT SPIRIT

Acrylic giclée on canvas

The Indian warrior’s responsibility to live according to a higher code of ethics serves to help all peoples reach an elevated standard of life. His ornaments are flashes that came from my paintbrush. His eyes are focused and powerful, yet kind and protective. I feel the assurance of his watching over me. He is always honorable and of noble power.



Comanche Women's Regalia, C. 1980



Comanche Lady Teapot



Creek Lady Teapot



Kiowa Battle Dress Lady Teapot



Hopi Lady Teapot

Maree Cheatham

Creek, Choctaw

Resides in Tujunga, CA

My mother was Creek and Daddy was Choctaw/Irish, killed in WWII. Mother thought it was safer in Texas to deny our heritage. But the more she denied it, the more I wanted it. As an adult, I took a serious interest in Indian issues. In the 80s, while working on a popular soap in New York, I began researching famed Comanche chief Quanah Parker.

An Oklahoma meeting with his descendants led to performances in rodeo "pageants" benefitting the Comanche Reservation. I portrayed Cynthia Ann Parker, Quanah's white mother, and wore the beautiful buckskin regalia his family made for me (featured in this exhibition).

Among other things, I also co-founded Nex'weetem, Southern California Basketmakers Society.

But pottery has kept me literally grounded during my long career as an actress. To balance "living in my head," I put my hands in clay.

COMANCHE WOMEN'S REGALIA, C. 1980

Deer hide, glass and plastic beads, faux bone, cowhide, metal studs

Traditional regalia are made from three deer hides: two vertical for front and back; one overlaid horizontally for the top. Beadwork, created on a separate buckskin piece and then sewn on, fringe, and ribbons embellish the dress. The leather belt symbolizes a woman's coming of age. The traditional awl, knife and bags reference items used for gathering food, curing and tanning hides, and sewing. The breastplate is beaded with the sacred water bird. Cowhide and buckskin leggings are beaded to match the dress. No regalia are complete without a beaded crown, hair ties, and a dance shawl worn on the left arm.

COMANCHE LADY TEAPOT

Stoneware, low fired, food-safe glazes

This teapot was inspired by the Comanche buckskin regalia made for me by the family of Quanah Parker, the last great Comanche chieftain on the plains, that I wore in outdoor pageants in Oklahoma and Texas in the 1980s to raise cultural awareness of this great people's history. It's embellished with a beaded breastplate, traditional belt, gathering bag and dance bag, and topped with the beaded crown ladies wear in modern powwows. It's wonderful to see the long fringe sway from side to side as they dance around the drum.

CREEK LADY TEAPOT

Stoneware, low fired, food-safe glazes

The Europeans' arrival brought changes in Creek women attire. Colorful woven fabrics soon replaced deerskin shawls and skirts. A starched white apron decorated with ribbon over their calico dresses became popular. Women

traditionally wear their hair long, sometimes reaching to their calves, adorned with beaded crowns today as they dance in competitive powwows. Descendants of the Mississippian Mound Builders, the once powerful Creek Nation was forcibly relocated to Indian Territory (Oklahoma) from their Southeastern Woodlands homelands in the early 19th century.

KIOWA BATTLE DRESS LADY TEAPOT

Stoneware, low fired, food-safe glazes

In Kiowa culture, it isn't proper for a man to brag about his war deeds; women dress and dance to honor their men. This battle dress is similar to those worn by female relatives of warrior members of the *Ton-Kon-Ga* (Kiowa Black Leggings Society). The yellow patches with horse heads indicate an Army First Calvary Vietnam War veteran. Rows of white dots represent elk teeth, believed to be powerful love magic. Since an actual elk has but two eye teeth, this many sewn onto a dress indicates a successful or wealthy warrior.

HOPI LADY TEAPOT

Stoneware, low fired, food-safe glazes

The traditional Hopi dress is a rectangle of black wool, tied on one shoulder to leave one arm free, and belted at the waist with a hand woven textile. In winter a blouse under the dress and a wool shawl were worn. White moccasins with white leather leggings complete their traditional regalia. Only unmarried girls wore their hair in two large "squash blossom" or "butterfly" whorls. (Married women wore it in two braids.) The middle of the head was left open to accommodate the cushion on which they rested their *ollas* (earthen jars) as they descended from the pueblo to fetch water.



Branded, 2006



The Problem with Color Theory, 2008



Basket Exploration: Creation, 2014

Gerald Clarke Jr.

Cahuilla Band of Indians
Resides on the Cahuilla Indian
Reservation, CA

Ever since I was a kid, I've been presented images of Native American art that I don't identify with: buffalo hunters, beautiful maidens, and the dreaded "End of the Trail." As a Native youth, this affected my self-esteem and identity, and didn't come close to capturing my experience as a contemporary Native person. I swore that I would not do this as an artist. My tribe is very important to me and I make art for them. I'm very involved in tribal life, having served, for instance, as Tribal Council Vice Chairman. I've often struggled with the use of traditional stories, images and songs in my artwork. I do not want to sell my culture, nor make visible anything that is sacred and not for all people to see. I see no need to have a chosen medium; my work is ever evolving. I've found that the more truthful and personal I can make my work, the more universal it becomes.

BRANDED, 2006

Paper with charred text

This work was "printed" with a custom branding iron I created as a sculptural work. I run my family's cattle ranch here on the Cahuilla Indian Reservation. Just as I brand calves in the springtime, I thought I'd incorporate this practice into my art. The text refers to the non-Native art collector's need for categorization of Indian art as "authentic." However, I feel these categorizations are problematic especially when determined outside of Native culture.

THE PROBLEM WITH COLOR THEORY, 2008

Wood, plaster, steel, vinyl, acrylic

My mom was Caucasian (white) and my dad was Native (red) and so...according to the color theory I learned in art school, I should be pink!!! Obviously, this system is inadequate to grasp the complexities of race and human interaction. Yet, contemporary media uses these simplistic terms to define individuals and communities.

BASKET EXPLORATION: CREATION, 2014

Resin, wood, vinyl, found objects

I come from a family of basketmakers. Cahuilla baskets are a well-known and prized art form of my tribe. I both respect and admire contemporary basketmakers, but I am a sculptor. This is my way of paying homage and participating in that tradition. I see this work almost like a "shield" that protects the artist from the forces of academic indulgence and social apathy. The hand represents the actual physicality of making of an artwork. The heart represents the soul or subjective mind necessary to make honest art. I don't like intellectual art. I find the art I see that sticks with me appeals to my heart.



Indian Marker, C. 1978



Navajo Elder, C. 1980



Miss Navajo, C. 1980



Building a Sweat Lodge, C. 1985

Valena Broussard Dismukes

Choctaw

Resides in Los Angeles, CA

I believe photography has the power to enlighten and educate. Early on, I took a “Social Uses of Photography” class. Marion Palfi, the amazing instructor, was greatly concerned for people’s struggle for justice and dignity, and her influence is still with me. Photography brings me in contact with fascinating people and their varied histories. As a person of multiethnic background, I am particularly interested in the role that culture plays in someone’s life. I am greatly touched by the degree to which people will open up, often across language barriers, and share themselves through the lens. It is a privilege to be admitted, however briefly, into their world. As I discover more about the subjects of my camera, I learn more about myself and become more open to people and new experiences. Taking photographs is a very personal act; it makes me feel very much alive.

INDIAN MARKER, C. 1978

Black and white photograph

The Chumash have always considered the land around Point Conception, CA a sacred place: the Western Gate from where souls of the dead begin their celestial journey to paradise. In 1978 when plans were announced to build a major liquefied natural gas facility there, local Chumash and members of other tribes occupied the area in protest. In the end, the plant was not built due to environmental concerns. This traditional marker signifies their reclaiming of Point Conception.

NAVAJO ELDER, C. 1980

Color photograph

Ruth Benally, a Diné (Navajo) elder, was a central figure in the struggle against the removal of Navajo people from their land in Big Mountain, AZ. Leased by the Peabody Coal Co. since 1968 over the objections of both local Navajo and Hopi people, 300 residents refused to accept money to relocate, claiming it belonged to the region’s Indigenous inhabitants. The Department of the Interior finally withdrew Peabody’s permit in 2010. In addition to being an activist, Ms. Benally is a tribal matriarch and accomplished blanket weaver.

MISS NAVAJO, C. 1980

Color photograph

This young woman from Big Mountain, AZ proudly wears the crown proclaiming her Miss Navajo, a title she earned in either a local contest or in the Navajo Nation’s competition. To qualify for this honor, she had to have graduated from high school, and demonstrated various skills in Navajo arts and culture—such as shearing and butchering sheep, weaving, and the ability to speak Diné Bizaad, the Navajo language. Her highly prized turquoise jewelry is known as “fallen skystone,” and symbolizes success.

BUILDING A SWEAT LODGE, C. 1985

Color photograph

This young father and son in Whittier, CA sought to build a sweat lodge with friends using willow branches they gathered. Although there are many different types of sweat lodges in Native American culture, they are always a sacred place to pray, meditate, learn and heal. While ceremonial details may vary, the aim is to purify one’s mind, body, spirit and heart. A trained expert conducts the ritual protocol of alternating sessions of heat and cold. It is thought sweat lodges originated in reaction to the corrupting effects the conquering European culture was having on Native culture.



All NDN's Welcome



Chumash Tomol



Robert Banks, Cherokee Freedman



Endawnis (Navajo-Narragansett Mother & Son)



Horse Spirit

Peggy Fontenot

Patawomeck, Potawatomi
Resides in Santa Monica, CA

The prevailing late 19th-century view was that Indians should be absorbed as rapidly as possible into White society: their reservations broken up, tribal authority abolished, traditional religions and languages eradicated. Federal policy embodied this attitude: tribes were no longer independent governments; reservation lands were allotted to individual Indians in units of 40-160 acres (remaining land was to be sold to whites to pay for Indian education). Photographer Edward S. Curtis (in)famously spent 30 years documenting “vanishing” North American Indians. My photography documents the exact *opposite*. It portrays their ability to survive as individuals, as clans, and as tribes, while fighting governmental bounties, forced removals, germ warfare, and assimilation. It is a testament to the fact that assimilation, for the most part, did not and will not work.

ALL NDN'S WELCOME

Gelatin Silver Print/Limited Edition of 50/Signed; Kodak T-Max 400 Film/Ilford Multi-grade Fiber Paper

This graffiti remains from the 1969-71 Indian Occupation of Alcatraz, and reflects its multi-tribe nature, which included 80 UCLA students. Oral history says the island figured in local Indian life. An 1868 treaty stated that surplus land would return to the Native people, so when the prison closed, Indian activists seized it. While their goals of establishing an Indian university, cultural center and museum never happened, the occupation gave birth to an ongoing political movement. This photo was displayed on Alcatraz as part of a 35th anniversary retrospective.

CHUMASH TOMOL

Gelatin Silver Print/Limited Edition of 50/Signed; Kodak T-Max 400 Film/Ilford Multi-grade Fiber Paper

The Chumash traditionally lived in an area extending from San Luis Obispo to Malibu, including the four Northern Channel Islands. The *tomol* was a canoe used for hunting, fishing and trading between islands and along the coast. Fashioned from redwood trees that drifted down the coast, it is the oldest example of an ocean-going watercraft in North America. Today it links past generations of Chumash with the present-day community as pictured in this 2010 practice session crossing the Channel from Santa Barbara to Santa Cruz Island.

ROBERT BANKS, CHEROKEE FREEDMAN

Gelatin Silver Print/Limited Edition of 50/Signed; Kodak T-Max 400 Film/Ilford Multi-grade Fiber Paper

In the early 1800s, some Cherokees acquired African American

slaves who accompanied the tribe when it was forced to relocate to Indian Territory in Oklahoma. A post-Civil War treaty granted former slaves, or “Freedmen,” all the rights of Native Cherokees. However, in the early 1980s the Cherokee Nation declared that only those “Cherokee by blood” qualified for tribal citizenship. Descendants of Freedmen continue to press for recognition and their treaty rights.

ENDAWNIS (NAVAJO-NARRAGANSETT MOTHER & SON)

Gelatin Silver Print/Limited Edition of 50/Signed; Kodak T-Max 400 Film/Ilford Multi-grade Fiber Paper

This young mother rocks her son in a traditional Navajo cradleboard. Made of pine or cottonwood and tied with buckskin strips, the cradleboard is rich in symbolism. Its backboard is divided into two halves: the right signifies Mother Earth (*Nahaasdzáán*), the left Father Sky (*Yádilhil*). A piece of turquoise (*Doot'izil*) indicates a male child. The curved oak board over his head symbolizes *Nááts'íilid* (Rainbow). With the child firmly secured, a mother can rest it against the wall or set it down, and go about her chores.

HORSE SPIRIT

Gelatin Silver Print/Limited Edition of 50/Signed; Kodak T-Max 400 Film/Ilford Multi-grade Fiber Paper

A tipi is a traditional Plains Indians home. Made of buffalo hide fastened around long wooden poles with a hide flap doorway, tipis were warm in the winter and cool in the summer. A small open space at the top allowed smoke to escape. Women were in charge of its set up, break down and location. Men painted the outside, often documenting their achievements. Oral tradition states that depicting animal spirits protected the family within. This photo was taken along a highway in New Mexico.



Xochipilli



Viva La Frida



Las Muertas de Juarez (The Dead of Juarez)

Erica Friend

Chicana

Resides in San Fernando, CA

My work reflects my personal journey into finding my own identity. Growing up in two different cultures—my mom’s Mexican heritage and my dad’s Eastern European lineage—I felt like I really didn’t know or belong in either one. Being fair skinned and not speaking fluent Spanish, I wasn’t “Mexican enough.” Yet I was seen as “Mexican” by my father’s relatives. This started my soul searching. So I started reading stories about the Aztec culture, which had a profound influence on my imagination. Now I try to recreate those stories as a visual artist working in many different forms of expression—colorful, abstract, surreal, hyperrealism and others. I want people to understand my spiritual path, not only my cultural identity crisis. I take all of my life lessons as inspiration, and mold them into my art. The peace I find in creation inspires me to keep going and keep creating.

XOCHIPILLI

Oil on canvas

Xochipilli (“Flower Prince” in Nahuatl), the Aztec god of art, games, beauty, dance, song and flowers, sits at the center of this painting. A famous 16th-century stone statue unearthed on the side of the volcano Popocatepetl near Tlalmanalco in southeastern Mexico shows him covered in carved psychoactive plants used in religious ceremonies. Here, I have surrounded him with those plants, and the tools used in creating art. A sunflower spreads open with the symbol of the Aztec sun at its center. Hands reach up as if to grasp this sacred knowledge.

VIVA LA FRIDA

Acrylic on canvas

This is an homage to one of my favorite female artists, Frida Kahlo, and the body of work she created throughout her lifetime—from still life’s to some of her most iconic paintings. I selected elements from her various paintings to represent the many ideas sprouting from her mind within a kind of headdress. For instance, the third eye with a skull is from a self-portrait titled, “Thinking about Death.” The foot is from “What the Water Gave Me.” I copied her pose from a black-and-white photo of Frida lying in a hammock. It looks like she’s thinking about her life’s work.

LAS MUERTAS DE JUAREZ (THE DEAD OF JUAREZ)

Oil on canvas

I created this piece to bring attention to the violent deaths of hundreds of women and girls in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico since 1993. A woman in *Día de los Muertos* makeup holds one of the pink crosses used as invisible resistance to this femicide, and to mark places where women’s bodies have been found. Her closed eyes show she has no identity. Her braids unravel around the stone relief of Aztec Moon Goddess *Coyolxauhqui* found at the foot of Templo Mayor in Mexico City (formerly Tenochtitlán, the Aztec capital). Like most of the women found in the desert, her body has been dismembered.



Raul



LA Dreamer's Catch



Laced Up

Joel “rage.one” Garcia

Xicano

(paternal: Huichol; maternal: Northern Plains, unknown due to Repatriation Act)

Resides in East LA and Monterey Park, CA

As a youngster running in the streets and navigating gang life, I never expected to reach adulthood. At 18 years of age, and much like the song, “Eighteen with a Bullet,” seven bullets had crisscrossed my body almost killing me. My art has allowed me to transcend East LA and reshape my path, transforming myself through the work I create. Transformation and transition are concepts prevalent in my work, a process that involves exploring my path, as well as that of others, through gang life, and connecting modern rituals with traditional Indigenous ceremonies and rites of passage. One such exploration focuses on the modern “regalia”—freshly pressed Dickies pants, Pendleton shirts, sneakers such as Nike Cortez or classic Vans—donned by so-called urban “indios,” a personal intersection of the *barrio* and Indigenous roots.

RAUL

Serigraph

This work explores the urban “indio,” and how urban tribalism/gangs unlock genetic memories of warriorhood. Warrior/*cholo* aesthetics such as tattoos are decorative transformations of one’s body, used to portray cultural symbols such as eagles and Mesoamerican deities. Raul, a Sundancer, now uses his past struggles with addiction to help others at the American Indian Changing Spirits Recovery Program. In Lakota traditions, the Sundance is a ritual of self-sacrifice and renewal, represented by the North Star in the background.

LA DREAMER’S CATCH

Installation

This domestic setting relates to my personal growth, and ideas of representation and display—the ritualized process of dressing up, part of gang culture. The meticulously hand-pressed garments are treated like quasi-regalia to convey status, creating personas that both shield and intimidate. A dreamcatcher, an Indigenous ceremonial object, hovers above the scene warding off harm. “Gangs function like tribes. They create a sense of family and belonging, albeit embedded within a volatile lifestyle.” (Karen Rapp, Former Director, Vincent Price Art Museum, East LA College)

LACED UP

Cimarron horn, fat laces

Big Horn Sheep once flourished in the mountains of Southern and Baja California. For the Cucapa Nation that once flourished in pretty much the same area, this four-legged relative represented abundance. Now it represents resilience, mirroring the path of this tribe that refuses to become extinct and continues to find ways to survive on its Arizona reservation. Laces in the colors of the four sacred directions embrace this horn as a way of symbolizing the unity of many tribes, families, gangs, warrior societies and allies.

River Tikwi Garza

Tongva

Resides in Gardena, CA

I want my art to tell a story, whether it's a story unheard or one that reaffirms what one already knows.

I find a great sense of purpose in the process of creating things.

I create art because it's what I love. Growing up within the Ti'at Society, being around *Mo'omat Ahiko* and becoming a paddler on this traditional canoe exposed me to an important aspect of Tongva culture. Our tribe's maritime heritage and deep roots in Los Angeles and the Channel Islands inspire my art.

It's an extension of myself, and a way to articulate my thoughts and ideas through a different means of communication/expression. Art for me serves as a bridge to be able to manifest and create tangible works that reflect important aspects of my life. I just hope my art can evoke thought, and bring to light a different narrative of Native folks that people aren't typically exposed to.



Visions



Lone Woman of the Island



Mo'omat (Ocean)

VISIONS

Mixed media (acrylic, house paint, photographic prints)

This piece documents three key events in Native American history: the massacre at Wounded Knee, occupation of Wounded Knee, and today's Standing Rock protests. Two of these occurred at South Dakota's Pine Ridge Reservation: the 1890 massacre of some 150 Native Americans in the final clash between Federal troops and the Sioux; and the 1973 occupation to protest reservation living conditions. South Dakota's Standing Rock aims to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline that threatens drinking water and sacred burial places. The central figure is Leonard Peltier, an imprisoned American Indian Movement occupation leader.

LONE WOMAN OF THE ISLAND

Mixed media (acrylic, sea glass, abalone, Olivella shells and currency beads, dentalium, mother of pearl)

This piece depicts the imagined face of Juana Maria, the last member of the Nicoleño tribe to live on San Nicolas, the most remote Channel Island. When the *padres* of the Mission Santa Barbara removed the island's last Native inhabitants in 1835, she stayed behind to search for her child. Eighteen years later she was discovered by Captain

George Nidever, an American sailor, and taken to Santa Barbara where she died of dysentery just seven weeks later. (She never found her child.) Her tale inspired Scott O'Dell's *Island of the Blue Dolphin* children's story. I included shells as they were used as native currency.

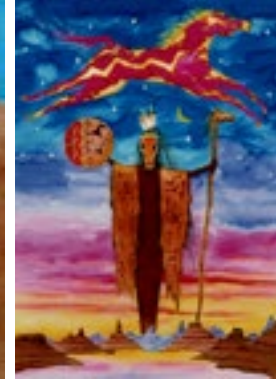
MO'OMAT (OCEAN)

Mixed media (oil paint, acrylic, abalone, Olivella shells and beads, dentalium, mother of pearl)

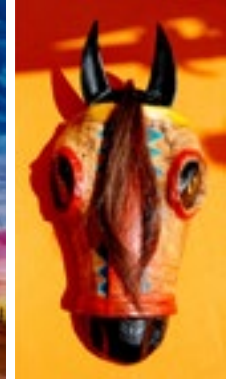
About 30 years ago, the California Indigenous Maritime Association partnered with the American Indian Studies Program at Cal State Long Beach to create the Ti'at Society. Their goal: to build the first and only modern *ti'at* (Tongva plank canoe) in Southern California. Named *Mo'omat Ahiko* (Tongva for "Breath of the Ocean") and continually restored, it continues to sail today and link modern Tongva with their maritime culture. This piece documents the Society's lineage and uses shells to convey the community's ties to the water.



Buffalo Spirit Caller



The Horse Shaman



Horsemask



Bear Spirit Shaman

Bernie Granados Jr.

Apache, Zacatec
Resides in Glendale, CA

Working as an artist for over 50 years, I've tried many different mediums, styles and genres. I've worked as an illustrator, designer, fine artist, technical advisor, photographer, and most-cherished, as a fine art teacher and mentor.

Of all the artistic challenges I've faced, the creation of "spirit art" has been the most daunting. This is art straight from the heart of the inner man. It is part of the path of Native American history—a spiritual history as told by the living descendants of America's oldest families, generation after generation. I've seen ancestral spirit guardians in a "sparkling sky," and they looked like some of the figures in ancient Native American petroglyphs. Like that art form, Native American Spirit Art holds today's artists to a higher level than other disciplines might. Maybe it's because the creations themselves possess a spiritual power.

BUFFALO SPIRIT CALLER

Embossed 3-D acrylic on canvas

Buffalo Spirit Caller is a respected tribal leader who lived in the spirit world: the medicine man. He could summon the buffalo herds, thus helping his people survive. The American Bison once covered most of America, plus parts of Canada and Mexico. It was used for shelter, food, clothing, tools, and spiritual power. The medicine man is dancing and singing a buffalo-calling song, while rising up into the spirit realm. His buckskin pants, beaded buffalo hide moccasins, and loincloth are decorated with powerful spirit symbols. A bison-spirit mask and necklace made of sacred materials complete his ritual attire.

THE HORSE SHAMAN

Ink and watercolor

The re-introduction of the horse into America was one of the greatest empowerments utilized by the Native American peoples. I say re-introduced because of an art exhibit I proudly co-curated at Los Angeles's Southwest Museum, where a prehistoric horse skull was part of that exhibit. The skull was pulled from the La Brea Tar Pits and was estimated to be 10,000 years old. (It's time to revise history, I guess.) This painting depicts a spiritual leader who could call the horse herds, thus providing a means for increased mobility in hunting, warfare, and relocation to fresh areas of habitation.

HORSEMASK

Mixed media

This mask symbolizes the power, respect and spirituality of the horse. The designs represent spirituality (the sacred Four Directions and stars), superior vision (light rays), speed and power (thunderbolts). Constructed of tarlatan cloth impregnated with plaster of Paris, it was built over a sculptured jig to create the horsehead shape. The mask is decorated with acrylic paints, leather, sinew, padre and crow beads, brass tacks, tin cones, feathers and horsehair, with a wood and copper-wire mount.

BEAR SPIRIT SHAMAN

Bronze, patina and polychrome (edition of 30)

This sculpture suggests the power derived from the shaman's neighbor and co-inhabitant: the Bear, the magnificent king of the wild (Order, Carnivora; Family, Ursidae). The bear was revered for its ferocity, power and strength, as well as its role as protector. The medicine man is shown at the moment of transformation from human to spirit being. He holds a talking staff, decorated with a carved bear head and eagle feathers, and wears a bearskin cape and bear mask. The talking staff is a Native American tradition that entitles the holder to speak his Sacred Point of View while others respectfully listen.



Reservation Plates



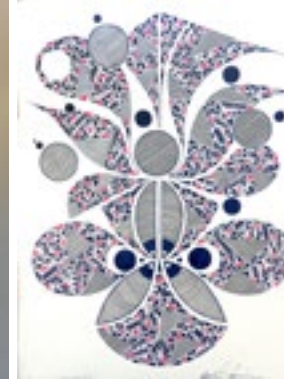
Flowers



Untitled I



Untitled II



Life Unbalanced



Blue Tribal Worlds

Rowan D. Harrison

Pueblo of Isleta, Navajo
Resides in Fullerton, CA

For hundreds of years Indigenous people of North America have been experimenting with clay, utilizing its substance for beauty and function.

Coming from such a background, I have been combining the ideals of passion, apprenticeship and patience in creating hand built, hand painted decorative pottery and original hand drawn pen designs on paper. Being of Native American descent, from New Mexico, Pueblo of Isleta and Navajo, I have been creating works of art that incorporate traditional methods, patterns and designs from previous generations while maintaining a contemporary vision. As an award winning ceramic artist and ceramic instructor, I have been actively promoting and exhibiting works of art within the Southern California area and abroad. Working in various mediums has allowed me to stretch the boundaries well outside the ceramics field.

RESERVATION PLATES

White lowfire earthenware clay, blue and black underglazes, wood panel, nails

Reservation Plates represents beauty that is confined within borders or reservations. The piece is an attempt to implement other materials with an otherwise established process of working with clay and the execution of hand painted surface designs.

FLOWERS

White lowfire earthenware clay, black and terra cotta underglazes, painted wood panel

This piece represents the constant flow and patterning in life that is symbolic of our every day-to-day functions. The flowers are my interpretation of desert flowers that bloom with beauty in an otherwise forbidding natural environment. Twenty-five hand built plates that are individually hand painted and mounted onto a painted wood panel is the main execution.

UNTITLED I

White lowfire earthenware clay, black and terra cotta underglazes

This piece is an example of the time honored tradition of hand built, hand coiled pottery as practiced by Indigenous people of the Southwest for hundreds of years. The bands of designs on its body are inspired by Hopi elements and composition. The use of dots as a decorative and bordering element is symbolic of the stars. For me, they represent our past ancestors shining brightly in the nighttime pueblo skies. The vortex patterning is a constant reminder of our opportunity for growth and wisdom.

UNTITLED II

White lowfire earthenware clay, black and terra cotta underglazes

The construction of this piece is all traditionally hand built and hand coiled—a timeless process within traditional Native American pottery. The hand painted designs are a representation of traditional and contemporary patterns, designs and motifs that are Pueblo in origin. The overall piece is a symbol that connects me to my Native American culture, and to the natural world of our ancestors.

LIFE UNBALANCED

Black and red pen and ink on tone paper

This design represents a contrast of symmetrical and non-symmetrical elements—balance and unbalance. The fine lines represent rain, while the bigger round elements represent the planets, the sun and the moon. The narrative behind the piece is that we all have different walks in life, different paths that take us to moments in our lives that intersect with others, which are represented by the lines that break up the bigger shapes.

BLUE TRIBAL WORLDS

Black and blue pen and ink on paper

This hand drawn pen design on paper depicts the significance of circular motifs floating in space. The circular elements represent the celestial elements in the heavens, such as the planets, the moon and the sun. These worlds are all floating against a backdrop of dots and spiral motifs that represent the stars and sundials. Within the circular motifs is a variety of southwestern Pueblo designs, patterns and motifs. With black as the predominate color in this polychrome design, blue represents the blue of the earth, the sky, the rivers and the oceans.



Amoxtli Tzotzil



#NODAPL



N.W.A. (National Warpath Association)

Votan Ik

Maya, Nahua

Resides in Los Angeles, CA

When I was a kid growing up in LA, I was influenced by graffiti and hip hop music making its way into LA from NYC. I joined a graffiti crew, and began bombin' walls (spray painting graffiti art) in graff yards throughout LA. As I got older, I realized like all artists do, that I needed to forge my own identity. "Tradition" became my inspiration. As Indigenous people, we have so many different styles, techniques, and patterns! Our ancestors have suffered the worst kind of hardship, and some continue to be affected by its aftereffects. It's time for us to rewrite our own story. Although we've never really been given the opportunity to share it across the world, graffiti has become our outlet. Its resources are endless and accessible to us all. I don't believe we can make things change. We are the ones making the change! We are the ones we've been waiting for.

AMOXTLI TZOTZIL

Canvas print of an image drawn on amaté tree bark with prisma color wax pencils

This was inspired by Mixtec-style codex illustrations found in ancient screenfold books painted on deerhide, leather or cloth. While this art form continued through the 17th century, only two dozen pre-Columbian Mesoamerican codices survived the Spanish conquerors' book-burning policies. It depicts a modern story of struggle: that of the EZLN, the Zapatista army for national liberation fighting for Mexico's disenfranchised Indigenous peoples. *Amoxtli* means "book" in Nahuatl; *Tzotzil* means "bat people" in Maya.

#NODAPL

Black and white photograph of a wheatpaste street art piece on a bus bench in Downtown LA

This commemorates the protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline by the Standing Rock Sioux of North Dakota, who believe it is a threat to the reservation's clean water and ancient burial grounds. Delayed by the Obama administration, it is now moving ahead under the Trump administration. We don't have corporate America's millions of dollars for advertising, so we freely reclaim the streets with words of truth. The art of resistance is the most expressive form of dissent. This is our resistance; this is our way of art!

N.W.A. (NATIONAL WARPATH ASSOCIATION)

Graphic art canvas print of a wheatpaste street art piece in LA's "Indian Alley"

Growing up, I was influenced by hip hop's crude assault on the American status quo. This piece is a take on N.W.A., the 90's LA-based gangsta rap group who gave an angry voice to the overlooked suffering of inner-city people. I appropriated images made by famous late 19th century and early 20th century photographers of visionary Native American leaders: Plenty Coups, Quannah Parker, Sitting Bull, Garfield Velarde, and Chief Joseph (l to r). The original is in Skid Row's "Indian Alley," an antidote to the human disaster caused by the Indian Relocation Act of 1956.



The Woodland Tulips



The Turtle Bustle



Mandan Headdress



The Blessing



Joyful Turtles

Dawn Jackson

Saginaw Chippewa Tribe of Michigan
Resides in Burbank, CA

As a Native person, I enjoy creating imagery from my own culture. While working at Twentieth Century Fox, I had the unique opportunity to be trained to ink and paint animation cels using the same techniques and materials that were used in classic animation. The bold, vibrant colors of the paint allow me to capture all of the colors I see in Indian Country. The fact that each painting is painted in reverse, on several layers of clear acetate, then aligned together to create the dimensional finished image is challenging but rewarding. Starting from the basic techniques of classic animation, I like to experiment with what the cel vinyl paint can do to create the look of feathers, beadwork, shells and ribbons. A painting can take as long as 70 hours. I currently work for The Walt Disney Company, and serve as an elected LA City/County Native American Indian Commissioner.

THE WOODLAND TULIPS

Animation cel vinyl paint, India ink, 3 layers of 12-field animation cels (clear acetate)

As a Woodlands Indian from Michigan, I am inspired by the floral designs of our traditional regalia. Our floral designs have been used for hundreds of years and tulips are a favorite flower of mine. With my original design pattern, I wanted to create the look of actual bead work and experimented with paint to create that look.

THE TURTLE BUSTLE

Animation cel vinyl paint, India ink, 3 layers of 12-field animation cels (clear acetate)

While watching a men's Fancy War Dance competition at a pow wow, I was looking at the big bustles the men wear. I noticed interesting angles in the way the feathers are joined together in the middle with a circle. Since I am Turtle clan, I designed the turtle to be represented in the circle—at the center of everything.

MANDAN HEADDRESS

Animation cel vinyl paint, India ink, 4 layers of architectural film acetate (clear)

This image of a warrior wearing a Mandan-style headdress was inspired by a pow wow dancer at the UCLA Pow Wow, an annual public event organized by the UCLA American Indian Student Association. The feathers in the headdress were black but iridescent—reflecting the colors from all of the dance regalia in the arena. I loved seeing all of the colors and wanted to capture the brilliance of those colors and the spirit of a warrior. (The Mandan are a Native American tribe enrolled in the Three Affiliated Tribes of the Fort Berthold Reservation in North Dakota.)

THE BLESSING

Animation cel vinyl paint, India ink, 4 layers of architectural film acetate (clear)

The Blessing represents the spirit in which we, as Native people, pray and receive blessings from the Creator. Giving thanks for everyday blessings keeps us connected to the Creator and keeps us in touch with our spiritual selves.

JOYFUL TURTLES

Animation cel vinyl paint, India ink, 3 layers of 12-field double pan animation cels (clear acetate)

As a member of a Turtle clan, I have a personal connection to turtles. I created this painting thinking about the joy one feels when you are around your family, clan and loved ones. All of us are individuals and have our own paths to follow, but when we are together there is the bond of community.



Brilliant Bustle



First Princess



Grandmother's Hands



Granddaughter's Hands

Evelyn Lozano

Kitanemuk-Tejon Indian Tribe, Yaqui
Resides in Orange County, CA

As a Native American, I am colonized. I'm on an amazing journey learning about my culture—some of which I was familiar with before but now understand more fully, and more that is new to me. I'm very proud that in 2012, after a years-long struggle, the Tejon Indian Tribe of California (which currently consists of the Kitanemuk Indigenous people) became one of the 567 federally recognized tribes. This entitles the tribe to receive federal funding for much needed social services. I seek out other Indigenous people, like some of the Elders in my family and other knowledgeable people that happen to come my way, to listen to their stories about traditional foods, arts and anything else they would like to share. I work in many mediums, including textiles, paint and photography. My process for photography is simply to be ready. You never know what you will see, and what you never want to forget!

BRILLIANT BUSTLE

Color photograph on metallic photo paper

This “Fancy Dancer” stopped and danced right in front of me during the first Tejon Indian Tribe Powwow held in 2015 in Bakersfield, CA to celebrate the tribe’s finally receiving federal recognition. Men’s fancy dance is flashy, colorful and highly energetic. It requires strength and stamina and is usually performed by younger men and boys. Twin feather bustles are one of the hallmarks of modern fancy dance regalia. It’s expected that a fancy dancer should strike a pose at the end of each series of drumbeats.

FIRST PRINCESS

Color photograph on metallic photo paper

This young lady is Zoe Gonzales, the first Tejon Indian princess ever. She was the face of the inaugural 2015 Tejon Indian Tribe Powwow held at Cal State Bakersfield. While the

powwow attracted dancers from many different tribes around the country, Zoe was a local Stockdale High School junior at the time. Part of her duties included teaching dance to young girls who performed for the first time at the powwow. Open to the public, this powwow was an opportunity for people to enjoy American Indian traditions, and to sample food like Native American fry bread.

GRANDMOTHER'S HANDS

Color photograph on metallic photo paper

Last year I took a Miwok-Paiute two-day basketry workshop in Yosemite with Master Storyteller Julia Parker, her daughter Lucy, and granddaughter Ursula. My motivation was two-fold: to learn how to weave a basket (a lost art in my nation), and to hear Julia’s fascinating stories. Julia is shown here working with tule, a large bulrush found in marshy areas of California. She told us, “If you can master tule,

you can master anything!” Watching her hands work reminded me of how my grandmother Carmen’s looked when she taught me to crochet; hence the title.

GRANDDAUGHTER'S HANDS

Color photograph on metallic photo paper

Master Storyteller Julia Parker at last year’s Miwok-Paiute basketry workshop in Yosemite shared her basket-weaving teaching responsibilities with her lovely daughter Lucy and granddaughter Ursula. Ursula is shown here demonstrating the technique for manipulating tule. Although working with it was quite challenging (I found it to be very slippery), I did manage to weave a small utility basket to keep little trinkets in.



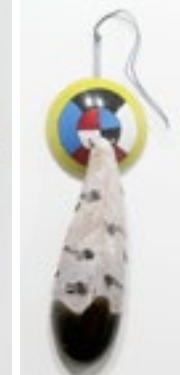
Ready for Battle



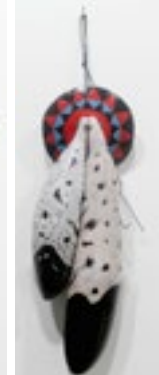
Wolf Medicine



The Monument People



Four Directions Rosette with Feather



Two Feather Sun Rosette

Matthew WhiteBear McMasters

Cherokee, Creek
Resides in Lancaster, CA

I work in multiple mediums, but gourds are my passion. My creativity comes from my deep spirituality. I never start to create a piece of art without first saying a prayer. I was raised that all things have a spirit, and that you should honor them and show respect in that way. My enthusiasm for creating the art that I do is my way of honoring and paying tribute to the spirit of my people. It also shows the beauty of my heritage. I know that art can open doors into conversation, and create a dialogue among the different tribes and their traditional arts. Art also creates an opportunity into dissolving the stereotypes and misconceptions that exist, and how many believe an "Indian" should look and how we should live.

READY FOR BATTLE

Body and ornament gourds, buffalo hair, metal hoops, watercolor and acrylic paints, leather

I wanted this piece to depict the fierce emotion on the warrior's face as he let's out his war cry and charges into battle. His face paint and adornments are typical of Eastern Woodland tribes, including Huron, Cayuga, Mohawk and Seneca.

WOLF MEDICINE

Body and ornament gourds, buffalo hair, watercolor and acrylic paints, leather

Warriors of the Eastern Woodland tribes often wore face paint representing a vision they had received, or honoring the medicine they had obtained from an animal spirit. This warrior wears the Wolf, his clan symbol, to show his devotion to his tribe as a protector and teacher. By doing so, he also hopes to obtain the stealth and swiftness of his four-legged brother.

THE MONUMENT PEOPLE

Canteen gourd, watercolor and acrylic paints

This is part of a series of gourd bowls I created that depicts a Council of Elders or Spirits gathered to discuss important matters at hand. This particular council represents the spirits that live within the stone. The colors I used are reminiscent of the water-stained sandstone found in the Southwest desert.

FOUR DIRECTIONS ROSETTE WITH FEATHER

Round, body and people gourds, beads, black cord, watercolor and acrylic paints

This is my interpretation of a hair tie with a single eagle feather worn by both men and women at special ceremonies, celebrations and gatherings. The Cherokee traditionally recognize a fully dimensional world of seven directions. I've depicted the sacred colors of the four cardinal directions: East/red/triumph, West/black/death, North/blue/defeat and South/white/happiness.

TWO FEATHER SUN ROSETTE

Round, body and people gourds, beads, black cord, watercolor and acrylic paints

This is my interpretation of an inter-tribal hair tie worn by both men and women at special ceremonies, celebrations and gatherings. The sun was a powerful object of worship among many Native peoples, who prayed to it to ensure abundant crops and good health.

Ernesto Yerena Montejano

Xicanx, Yaqui

Resides in Boyle Heights, Los Angeles, CA

I was born in El Centro, CA, a mid-sized farming town bordering Mexicali, BC, MX. Fueled by my cross-national upbringing, my art practice reflects my observations of the views and interactions between the Mexican communities living on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border.

As an artist, I share narratives of my conflicts of identity that I feel are kindred to what many Chicanos of these communities experience. Although I identify as Chicano, I also strongly identify as Native/Indigenous to this continent, which is often seen in my work. My work depicts my frustrations with the oppression in my community and also creates work in solidarity with the community in the defense of dignity and rights. Through my brazen imagery, I bring political concerns to light with subject matter that depicts cultural icons, rebels and everyday people voicing their stance against oppression.



We the Resilient

WE THE RESILIENT

Spray paint stencil/collage mixed media on canvas

This painting is a portrait based on a photo of Granny Helen Red Feather that photographer Ayşe Gürsöz took at Standing Rock during the MNI WICONI (“Water is life” in Lakota) resistance camp. I wanted to depict an image of an elder in full resistance as a true example of resilience. Granny Helen Red Feather, a Lakota Sioux Elder, is a long-time activist and veteran of Wounded Knee as well as the Dakota Access Pipeline protest. This image is a celebration of Indigenous cultural survival and resilience. I originally created this image for the *We The People* campaign that was a project of the Amplifier Foundation.

Timothy Ryan Ornelas

Fernandeño Tataviam
Resides in Granada Hills, CA

I am a proud member of the Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians. Throughout my life, I struggled with finding a way to contribute to my tribe. Once I began documenting tribal events, I realized I could use film to preserve the history and culture for our future generations and provide tribal visibility to a wider audience. Documentation has been the driving force to furthering my education in cinematic storytelling. What I've learned from filming at cultural gatherings—exposure to the kindred experiences of the Indigenous peoples of the Americas, understanding the differentiating realities of the Native American community, the ever-present significance of community—are wisdoms that I hope to one day pass on to the youth of my tribe.

▶ PLAY VIDEO



Native American Heritage Month 2016

NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH 2016

Digital Video (06:32)

LA City Hall, 11/4/16: At the kick-off ceremony of Native American Heritage Month, members of the Indigenous community and their allies showed up to the City Council Chambers and made their voices heard to abolish Columbus Day and enact Indigenous Peoples Day. Although the vote was postponed, the hearing demonstrated that the Indigenous community is continuing to fight for change and reparations. This video is guided by the eloquent voice of Los Angeles City Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell of the Wyandotte Nation. My intention was to marry the power of voice with images to educate and present underlying truths that unite us.

▶ PLAY VIDEO



Pow Wow Dance & Regalia Workshop

POW WOW DANCE & REGALIA WORKSHOP

Digital Video (03:25)

The Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians and the Los Angeles United School District (LAUSD) Indian Education Program conducted this 4-week workshop at Rudy Ortega Sr. Park in the San Fernando Valley (made possible by Title VII of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001). Native youth came from around the San Fernando Valley to learn more about their peoples' cultures. Going through the LAUSD system, I felt a disconnect from my Native background. A full month was dedicated to Mission projects, but I knew they once enslaved my people. Seeing today's options for Indigenous and children of color makes me hopeful for the perseverance of all cultural backgrounds.



The Crowning of the Poet King Chantico



A Night with Xochiquetzal

Rick Ortega

Chicano, Mexica
Resides in Sylmar, CA

It was in college that I took a course on Chicano studies, which opened up my mind to the ancient history of Mexico and the origins of my people. As I was reading the history and studying the artwork of ancient Mexica (Aztec) artists, I began to have visions, which came to me in compositions of works of art. My paintings became my connection to my roots and the art opened up a pathway into an ancient paradise filled with history, culture, myths and legends. I feel that I am following a tradition held by ancient Indigenous artists who honored their deities with splendid works of art, created with spiritual connotations. These paintings are visions of my people, the first peoples, the founders of Mexico, The Mexica Nation.

THE CROWNING OF THE POET KING

Oil on canvas

The young Acolhua prince, *Nezahualcoyotl* (“The Fasting Coyote,” whose animal representation is also depicted), witnessed his father’s death at the hands of the people that took over Texcoco, seen burning in the background. Reaching adulthood, with the help of his Mexica allies, he reclaimed his homeland. Crowned king, he forsook war and made Texcoco a center of culture and learning. His renown as a poet is symbolized by a quill and inkpot. Texcoco, together with Tenochtitlán and Tlacopan, formed the Triple Alliance, the foundation of what became the Aztec Empire.

CHANTICO

Oil on canvas

Chantico is the classical Aztec goddess of fire, volcanoes and the hearth. Meaning “in the house,” she personifies and safeguards the home and the hearth fires, where families gather. In the background, *Chantico* is depicted as a goddess, along with a symbol of the sun (fire), on top of which sits a house (hearth). Before setting off to battle, Mexica men prayed to her that they would return to find their hearth fires burning, and their families safe and warm. The reflection of one such warrior can be seen in the vase.

A NIGHT WITH XOCHIQUETZAL

Oil on canvas

This poetic vision transports you into another place in time: the warm temple of *Xochiquetzal*, Aztec goddess of beauty, flowers and fertility, shown here situated in Tenochtitlán, the capital city of the Mexica. Her name combines two Nahuatl words: *quetzal*, a bird of splendid feathers, and *xochitl*, meaning “flower.” The mural in the background shows how she was depicted in centuries-old Mesoamerican codices. Wife of the water god *Tlaloc*, and consort to the creator deity *Tezcatlipoca*, *Xochiquetzal* lived in the Aztec paradise of Tamoanchan.



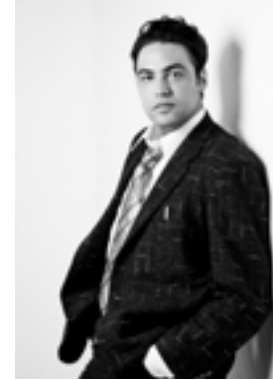
Welcome to Los Angeles, Union Station



Heading into the City of Los Angeles



Shayna Jackson (Dakota/Cree) as Audrey Hepburn



Noah Watts (Crow/Blackfeet) as Elvis Presley

Pamela J. Peters

Diné (Navajo)

Resides in Los Angeles, CA

As an Indigenous multimedia documentarian photographer, my work explores the contemporary narratives of American Indians within the environments and communities that they live in—an “Indigenous Realism,” not ethnographical ephemera. I want viewers to critically analyze the psychological and historical structures of Native Americans in mass media. The photography narratives of my work stem from what I have witnessed and can identify as a Navajo living in the city; the social impact of the negative, inaccurate, insulting images of stereotypical portrayal of American Indians still seen in film and television, and the portraits seen through a non-Indigenous lens. This is what impels me to change how we see American Indians today.

WELCOME TO LOS ANGELES, UNION STATION

Black and white photograph

Legacy of Exiled NDNZ © 2014 series discusses the historical U.S. policy of the relocation of Indians to urban environments in the 1950s through the 1960s, and the legacy it has created through today. It provides a narrative of seven native adults currently living in Los Angeles, shot in a neorealist visual aesthetic reminiscent of Kent Mackenzie’s 1961 film, *The Exiles*. This photo was taken at Los Angeles Union Station.

HEADING INTO THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES

Black and white photograph

Legacy of Exiled NDNZ © 2014 series discusses the historical U.S. policy of the relocation of Indians to urban environments in the 1950s through the 1960s, and the legacy it has created through today. It provides a narrative of seven native adults currently living

in Los Angeles, shot in a neorealist visual aesthetic reminiscent of Kent Mackenzie’s 1961 film, *The Exiles*. This photo was taken at the iconic Indian Alley off Main Street within the historical core of downtown Los Angeles.

SHAYNA JACKSON (DAKOTA/CREE) AS AUDREY HEPBURN

Black and white photograph

Real NDNZ re-take Hollywood © 2016 series “re-takes” and creates classic, iconic portraits of Hollywood movie stars of yesteryear by replacing those past film icons with contemporary Native American actors in Los Angeles. Shayna Jackson, from the Dakota and Cree nations, shares a striking resemblance to the spirit of a classic Audrey Hepburn. The project shows real Indian actors in the elegant clothes and iconic poses of classic Hollywood actors rather than in the buckskin, feathers, and painted faces featured in most Hollywood films of Indians.

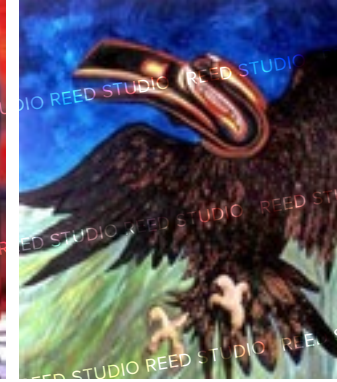
NOAH WATTS (CROW/BLACKFEET) AS ELVIS PRESLEY

Black and white photograph

Real NDNZ re-take Hollywood © 2016 series “re-takes” and creates classic, iconic portraits of Hollywood movie stars of yesteryear by replacing those past film icons with contemporary Native American actors in Los Angeles. Noah Watts, from the Crow/Blackfeet Nations in Montana, is a talented actor and musician whose charming good looks can be compared with James Dean, or even Elvis Presley. The project shows real Indian actors in the elegant clothes and iconic poses of classic Hollywood actors rather than in the buckskin, feathers, and painted faces featured in most Hollywood films of Indians.



Wedding Boat



Raven



Sing

Nadia Reed

Chinook/Chehalis

Resides in Los Angeles, CA

I am a painter of mixed heritage—European, as well as Chinook/Chehalis. I rely on my Native background and roots to inspire images about land, culture, movement and ancestry. A colorful mix of symbolic, realistic and abstract imagery, my art employs painterly splashes and careening light and shadows to create otherworldly dreams, often with shamanistic views of human and animal life. I also seek to connect the two worlds that many Natives live in: modern and traditional, city and rural, ancestral and contemporary. Much of my work focuses on Pacific Northwest tribes. While nearly stripped of their language and myths, they remain largely vital today. By evoking a metaphoric “Ghost Dance” of living, breathing ancestor spirits, I seek to present First Nations as a very living, breathing people. Like everyone, they evolve both economically and artistically.

WEDDING BOAT

Acrylic on canvas

Among pre-contact Pacific Northwest tribes, marriage was an important social and cultural event. Boats such as these carried families along the coast to join the celebration. However, “family” was a concept that referred to “clan,” a type of large, extended family. This notion lives today among tribal people, even in my own family. Cousins, second and third cousins, great aunts, distant relatives and even dear friends are often welcomed and considered “family.” I also depicted ancestor guides among the travelers, painted as somewhat ghostly figures.

RAVEN

Acrylic on canvas, gold and copper leaf

The raven has many meanings among Native cultures. A wonderful creation myth describes him casting the moon and stars above the heavens. According to oral history, my family descends from a Raven Clan, and Raven is my spirit animal. This work is a collaboration with my deceased father, a tribal elder whose given name was *Kaw-Kaw Tawanamas*, meaning Ghost Raven or Spirit Guardian Raven. He originally designed it as a small maquette, but I painted it much more loosely on this large canvas. When I was nearly done, he added the gold and copper leaf feather details.

SING

Acrylic on canvas

This painting was inspired by a photograph by Edward S. Curtis, who attempted to document the “vanishing” Great Plains tribes in the late 19th/early 20th centuries. Far in the background, it vaguely showed people dancing wildly. Looking at it, I could imagine drumming and singing. I love to paint movement, so this flurry of activity stayed in my mind for years. Finally I decided to paint them in this highly abstracted way. Instead of being depicted as stiff and static as in Curtis’s old photographs (due in part to his technology), I wanted to make the ancestors feel very alive.

Corina Roberts

Osage, Cherokee

Resides in the Angeles National Forest, CA

I was born in Wurtzberg, Germany to a German/Russian mother and an American Army father of Scottish, Welsh, Osage, and Cherokee descent. In 1990, I founded Redbird, a non-profit Native American and environmental association. Redbird works to bridge the gap of cultural misunderstanding between the Western Hemisphere's original inhabitants and the many cultures that now live here. The Children of Many Colors Intertribal Powwow is Redbird's signature event. Bringing together many tribes from throughout the Americas, the powwow mingles ceremony and social gathering, meeting place and marketplace. Elders share their wisdom, songs, dances and cultural values with younger generations. In the aftermath of the Station Fire of 2009, I began the Forest Recovery Project, photographing the Angeles National Forest's rebirth. I hope we will prioritize caring for our Mother Earth.

LAUGHTER IS THEIR MEDICINE, NAVAJO SISTERS KATIANNA WARREN, KAELENE ASHMORE, CAITLIN ASHMORE

Black and white photograph

In 2013, Katianna was the first-ever powwow princess for the Redbird Children of Many Colors Powwow, based on her being respected in her community, an exemplary student, engaged with her Navajo heritage and language, knowledgeable of powwow protocol and etiquette, and a skilled dancer. She has since been crowned Wildhorse Powwow Princess and is now Syquan Powwow Princess. Her younger sister Caitlin was the next Wildhorse Powwow Princess (2016-17). Kaelene, holding Katianna's first crown, will soon be old enough for consideration as a future princess as well.



Laughter Is Their Medicine, Navajo Sisters Katianna Warren, Kaelene Ashmore, Caitlin Ashmore



Dancing with the Ancestors, Annalisa Cortez

DANCING WITH THE ANCESTORS, ANNALISA CORTEZ

Color photograph

Eleven-year-old Annalisa, a member of the Yokut Nation, assumed the title of Redbird Children of Many Colors Powwow Princess in mid-2015 when the former princess was unable to fulfill her commitment; she now carries the 2016-17 crown. Although young, she is "one with the ancestors," and dances with amazing grace and dignity. Representing the Powwow across both California and cultural lines, she also helped Redbird's annual blanket, toy and school supplies drive gather the most goods in its 21-year history. Though a vivacious youth, an old soul stirs inside of her.

Abe Sanchez

Mexico

Resides in Laguna Beach, CA

My interests in art are many but in the last 18 years I have been involved in the revitalization of Indigenous arts—specifically Southern California Native American basketry. I have taken the time in my life to relearn from the few remaining basketweavers, and my own research, the skills and techniques needed to weave a basket in its traditional manner. It means learning when and where to gather the plants from the wild (complicated today by issues of land ownership), processing them, using natural dyes, and weaving a coiled basket in the ancient way that was done in this part of California. An eye-opener for me was the realization how these shapes and designs are actually based in mathematical formulas. I have been proudly involved in the reintroduction of this craft among interested tribal members who are now reclaiming this endangered local art back from extinction.



Seed Storage Olla

SEED STORAGE OLLA

Deer grass, white/sumac, black/juncos dyed with acorns, brown/basket rush red root base

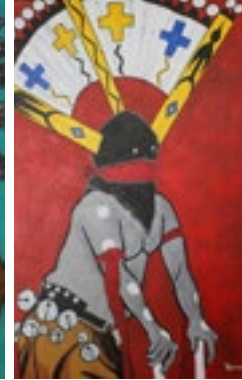
Made from traditional Southern California materials and techniques, this basket reflects the hybrid style popular during the heyday of the early 19th-century crafts “craze.” Tribal basketmakers mixed and matched styles then to create new pieces to attract collectors. Its shape is similar to an Apache *olla* (jar). A Tohono O’odham basket I saw inspired the black fret designs on the sides. The people holding hands across the top are common in Central California basketry. The flower pattern is Southern California, while the black water pattern on the ending neck is similar to a Chumash one.



Numu Khutsu



American Idol



Real Crowns Aren't Made of Rhinestones



Do You Fancy Me?

Eric Tippeconnic

Comanche

Resides in Fontana, CA

Born of a Comanche father who worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and a Danish mother, my family background afforded me a unique perspective. I grew up on diverse reservations—Hoopa in California, San Carlos Apache in Arizona, and Cochiti, Santo Domingo and Santa Clara Pueblos in New Mexico—and spent alternate summers in Oklahoma and Denmark. So from my earliest days, I was exposed to three worlds on a regular basis: mainstream America, Indigenous America and Europe. My art is inspired greatly by the feelings I remember when I witnessed tribal dances, and my love of history, specifically Comanche. I am also inspired by the tenacity of Indigenous people in this country, who numbered less than 250,000 in 1900, and today stand proud at 3 million. As an artist, I want to show that Indigenous people here are very much alive, and not a remnant of some “romantic past.”

NUMU KHUTSU

Acrylic on canvas

For well over a century, the Numunu (Comanche) controlled Comancheria, a vast 240,000-square-mile area encompassing parts of Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. The tribe quickly capitalized on the horse, introduced by their kinsmen the Utes. To feed their massive herds acquired through raids and breeding, the Comanche migrated into the southern plains. The horse provided increased mobility, allowing them to exploit this land’s huge buffalo herds. *Numu Khutsu* means “buffalo,” and the Comanche greatly respected them as a gift from the Creator. They provided food, clothing and shelter.

AMERICAN IDOL

Acrylic on canvas

Contemporary Indigenous Americans, while firmly rooted in their tribal traditions, are active in virtually every modern professional field. The majority work and live within mainstream America. Comanches always freely adopted outside resources, practices and fashion, while maintaining their distinct Numunu identity. When this contemporary Comanche man dons modern business attire, he actually engages in a very traditional Comanche act. Eagle feathers were emblematic of significant accomplishments. *American Idol* has been given enough feathers to construct an entire bonnet. Perhaps he earned a doctorate degree.

REAL CROWNS AREN'T MADE OF RHINESTONES

Acrylic on canvas

While living on the San Carlos Apache Reservation in Arizona, I witnessed Apache Crown Dancers countless times. One dancer of the group of five was always the clown. My Apache friends told me that if you were a bad kid, he would chase you. However, I never worried, because I was mesmerized by the first dancer’s towering crown. Visiting my mother’s homeland of Denmark, I had seen the Danish Crown Jewels. While the Apache crowns are constructed from very different materials, they were just as majestic, and in fact even more striking: they were on a living, breathing soul moving right in front of me.

DO YOU FANCY ME?

Acrylic on canvas

The modern powwow is a very contemporary aspect of Indigenous cultures. Men and women of all ages participate in a variety of gender-based categories, ranging from dances that go back centuries to 21st-century innovations. Many of these powwows are contests in which contestants can earn money for placing. The fancy shawl dance is the most athletic and fast paced dance in the female categories. It’s also one of the most anticipated dances at intertribal gatherings due to the colorful regalia worn by the dancers, and the way in which the women float like butterflies across the arena to the delight of the crowd.



Toroovetammay 'Edweenax Tovaangara
(The Dolphins Are Caring for the Earth)



Moomat 'Ahiiko: 'Eyoohiiken (Breath of the Ocean: Our Spirit)



'Ahiiken Marii'm Horuura'
(Its Spirit, the Same as Always)

Craig Torres

Tongva (Traditional Council of Pimuu)
Resides in Santa Ana, CA

On my mother's side, I am descended from the ancestral village communities of Yaanga (Los Angeles) and Komiikranga (Santa Monica Canyon), collectively known today as the Tongva or Gabrielino Indians of San Gabriel Mission. I also descend from three of the 1781 founding families of the Los Angeles Pueblo. My father's maternal side is indigenous Purépecha or Tarascans of Michoacán, Mexico; his Torres/de Torres lineages inhabited Northern Jalisco at least back to the 17th century. My contemporary cultural identity as Tongva originates with my mother's early bestowing on me a "Gravelino" (as she voiced it) identity. All my adult life I've been a Tongva cultural educator and consultant to schools, culture and nature centers, museums and government agencies. My artwork continues to evolve and draw inspiration from life and my ancestral legacy.

TOROOVETAMMAY 'EDWEENAX TOVAANGARA (THE DOLPHINS ARE CARING FOR THE EARTH)

Digital art

The *Toroovem* (Dolphins) are the sacred sea spirits, caretakers that encircle the Earth Mother. In a recent dreamtime they appeared, becoming earthbound and transforming into humyns. Impossible to tell apart from us, they appear as Elders, teaching us human beings, in a world so environmentally degraded, socially devolved and spiritually corrupt. We must reconnect with the NATURE, the land, the ocean, the water, the plants, the animals, ourselves. If we are to survive on the Earth Mother, we need to fulfill our obligations and responsibilities as caretakers and experience what it is to be a HUMYN BE-ING.

MOOMAT 'AHIKO: 'EYOOHIKEN (BREATH OF THE OCEAN: OUR SPIRIT)

Digital art

She appeared first in a dream, a vision that eventually birthed her into reality. *Moomat 'Ahiiko* is the name she was given. She has become a vessel of hope, to a people downtrodden with decades of colonization and genocide. We lift her up and she does us, bringing together diverse communities on a path to healing our spirits and our Mother Earth and our sacred *moomat* (ocean).

'AHIKEN MARII'M HORUURA' (ITS SPIRIT, THE SAME AS ALWAYS)

Digital Art

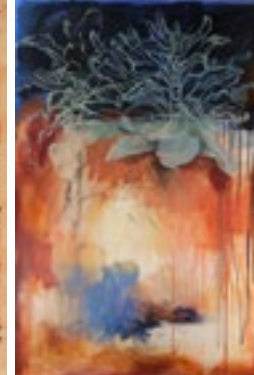
Colonization annihilated the Indigenous of this land, and continues to do so. Spirit...was never defeated, it never will be. It continues to exist in and on the land and feeds the "indigenous" that lingers amidst a place that embodies exploitation and degradation of THE NATURE. In an ancient creation narrative, it is *'ashaawt*, Golden Eagle, who represents immortality of the indestructible soul. *Toovet*, Eagle Dancer, his human embodiment, conveys through sacred dance, there is no escape from death here on our Mother Earth. City of the Angels, a place that forever changes but always remains the same. A place whose narrative predates 1781. We have been here forever...IN THIS LAND.



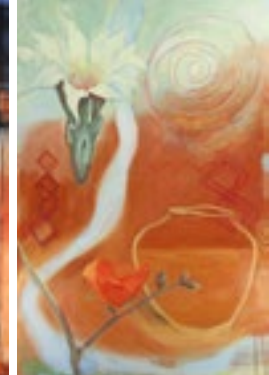
Bird Dreams XIX



Bird Dreams XXI



Sage III



River

Gail Werner

Cupeño, Luiseño, Kumeyaay
Resides in Long Beach, CA

My work reflects the landscape and cultural imagery related to my Native American background. Our traditional songs, called “bird songs,” and creation stories have played an important role in how I see the natural world. These stories and songs, in which plants and animals are the characters, tell about how the world came to be and how the people came to be where they are. The “bird songs” tell about the journey of the people, which is said to parallel the migration of the birds. The songs tell about what the birds/people see on their journey: the mountains, deserts, night sky, and other landmarks. Through color, light, cultural imagery, and plant and animal life, my work evokes a sense of place and journey.

BIRD DREAMS XIX

Monotype

My Cupeño great grandmother, Salvadora Valenzuela, was a noted basket maker. Southern California Indians are known for their intricate, tightly coiled baskets made from deer grass and juncus. Geometric motifs, plant motifs, and creatures such as the rattlesnake are common design elements used to decorate them. Here, a geometric basket design becomes the stars in the night sky. The bird sits on the seed pods of an Australian Bottle Tree. While not native to California, it’s quite common here since it is drought tolerant. I frequently use seed pods to refer to the life cycle.

BIRD DREAMS XXI

Monotype

A Rock Wren, a small desert songbird, perches atop agave pods. (Agave was used for food by Southern California Indians.) The pattern across the top of the work is reminiscent of a painted rock art panel (pictograph) located in Idyllwild, CA believed to have been created centuries ago by the Cahuilla Indians. Common designs like dot patterns, chevrons, diamond patterns, spirals and helixes were generally painted in red, though yellow ochre, black or white were sometimes used. The exact meaning of this rock art remains a mystery.

SAGE III

Oil and pencil on wood panel

For me, our Cupeño stories evoke a sense of an evolving world or a world coming into being. In much of my work I seek to express this world, so I depicted the white sage plant as only partially drawn or painted. In many Native American cultures, white sage is burned as a blessing and for other ceremonial purposes. It’s also commonly used to brew a healing tea.

RIVER

Oil and pencil on wood panel

I was thinking about the San Luis Rey River that once flowed freely through North San Diego County’s tribal lands. Though protected by treaty rights, the river water was diverted to surrounding cities. Litigation for water and damages dragged on for over 50 years, and was only recently settled. I’ve been fortunate to see it run during heavy rainfall. *Ollas*, unglazed ceramic jars, were made by Southern California Indians to store precious water and food. The cactus flower and desert mallow are common to the area, while the spiral is a frequent symbol seen in ancient pictographs.



Elderberry Flute



Journeys Flute



Bison Horn Flute

Marvin Yazzie

Navajo (Diné)

Resides in Moreno Valley, CA

I grew up in Lukachukai, AZ, a small town on the Navajo reservation near the Four Corners. My flute-making journey began when I was about 8 or 9 years old, and first heard one being played. I wanted to cut it open to see how a piece of wood could make such a beautiful sound! Instead, I went to a relative who knew how to make flutes. I never dreamed the awesome path this would create in my life. Following the traditional way, I make my flutes by hand. I love to “talk” a piece of wood into becoming a beautiful sounding instrument that can speak to both animals and humans. Native education is very important to me, too, and I’ve been teaching at the Idyllwild Arts School for the past 17 years. One of my greatest joys is to put a flute I’ve made into someone’s hands, and then sit back and listen to the gorgeous music that comes from that piece of “wood!”

ELDERBERRY FLUTE

Elderberry branch, wood burned design

This is a replica of a pre-1910 Diegueño flute in the Riverside Metropolitan Museum. A good friend of ours, Ernest Siva (Cahuilla/Serrano), told us his great grandfather, Juan Ramon, played traditional Bird Songs on a flute. (Ernest continues to do so to keep this part of their culture alive.) Ernest asked us to learn how to make this flute so that we could re-teach his people. This type of flute is rim blown and very difficult to play. Most people can’t even make a sound on them. Elderberry is cherished as a source of food and wood by Southern California Natives. Music is used to transmit many Native stories.

JOURNEYS FLUTE

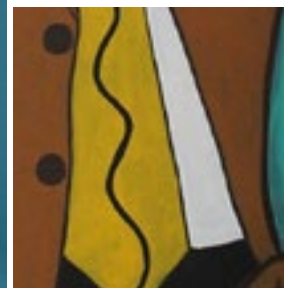
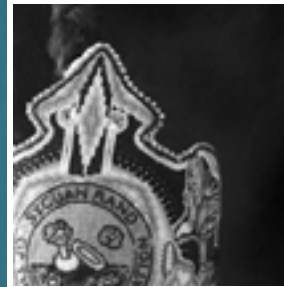
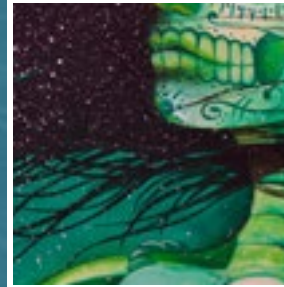
White cedar, padauk, deer hide, wood burned design

The Great Plains courting flute inspired the style of this piece. The reclaimed wood used to make this flute made quite a journey from Michigan to Southern California to build a carport. Its travels are reflected in the design patterned after cliff wall drawings seen in places like Canyon de Chelly, AZ. When our friend Ernest Siva found some old Big Horn Sheep songs thought to be lost, we designed the flute’s totem to celebrate this—a second journey. Big Horn Sheep symbolize “self worth” for many tribes, especially Southern California Natives. The flute is tuned to E, a low sound.

BISON HORN FLUTE

Horn from Fort Hall Reservation, ID

Years ago, Gordon Johnson, a friend, took flute making classes from us, and went on to teach the same to junior high school music students in Utah. He was recently asked to teach flute making to students of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes who help tend the bison herd on their Fort Hall Reservation. In return, they blessed Gordon with some horns, which he thought we might be able to use. Rather than being discarded as inedible, we love the idea of transforming them into a flute with a rich, deep tone. We used traditional Grandfather tuning based on human anatomy to space the holes.



Resources Guide

NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES

Learn more about many of the Native cultures represented in this exhibition. (Websites were provided by the exhibition artists.)

Abnaki/Penobscot Nation
www.penobscotnation.org

Cahuilla Band of Indians
<https://cahuilla.net>

Cherokee Nation
www.cherokee.org

Chinook Nation
www.chinooknation.org

Chippewa/Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe
www.sagchip.org

Choctaw Nation
www.choctawnation.com

Choctaw/Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians
www.choctaw.org

Comanche Nation of Oklahoma
www.comanchenation.com

Creek/Muscogee Nation
www.mcn-nsn.gov

Diegueño/Mesa Grande Band of Diegueño Mission Indians
www.mesagrandeband-nsn.gov

Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians
www.tataviam-nsn.us

Kitanemuk-Tejon
<http://mojavedesert.net/kitanemuk-indians>
www.avim.parks.ca.gov/people/ph_kitanemuk.shtml

Kumeyaay
www.kumeyaay.com

Lakota
<http://lakotadakotanakotatanation.org>

Luiseño/La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians
www.lajollaindians.com

Luiseño/Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians
www.pechanga-nsn.gov

Maya/Nahua
www.enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx

Navajo Nation
www.navajo-nsn.gov

Ojibwe (Chippewa/Anishinaabe)/White Earth Nation
www.whiteearth.com

The Osage Nation
www.osagenation-nsn.gov

Pala Band of Mission Indians
www.palatribe.com

Patawomeck Indian Tribe of Virginia
<http://Patawomeckindiantribeofvirginia.org>

Pima/Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community
www.srpmic-nsn.gov

Potawatomi/Citizen Potawatomi Nation
www.potawatomi.org

Pueblo of Isleta
www.isletapueblo.com

Tongva/Mapping Indigenous LA
<https://mila.ss.ucla.edu>

Yaqui
<http://www.encyclopedia.com/history/latin-america-and-caribbean/mesoamerican-indigenous-peoples/yaqui>

ORGANIZATIONS PRESERVING NATIVE CULTURES

Learn more about some of the organizations in Southern California and beyond that promote, preserve and educate about the many aspects of Native culture and history.

Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival

Assists California Indian communities and individuals in keeping their languages alive through existing documentation, family programs, and "Language Is Life" and "Breath of Life" gatherings

www.aicls.org

Agua Caliente Cultural Museum (Palm Springs, CA)

Inspires people to learn about the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians and other Native cultures through exhibitions, collections, research, and educational programs

www.accmuseum.org

Alliance for California Traditional Arts (Fresno, CA)

Provides advocacy, resources and connections for folk and traditional artists through grants and contracts, convenings, research and technical assistance

www.actaonline.org

Antelope Valley Indian Museum (Lancaster, CA)

Provides education in the material culture and lifeways of prehistoric, historic, and contemporary American Indian cultures

www.avim.parks.ca.gov

Autry Museum of the American West (Los Angeles, CA)

Brings together the stories of all peoples of the American West, connecting the past with the present to inspire a shared future

<https://theautry.org>

California Center for Native Nations, UC Riverside (Riverside, CA)

Dedicated to preserving the history, culture, languages and sovereignty of California's First Nations with research and service benefiting California's Indians

www.ccnr.ucr.edu

California Indian Basketweavers Association (Woodland, CA)

Preserves, promotes and perpetuates California Indian basketweaving traditions

www.ciba.org

Deborah Small's Ethnobotany Blog

Provides a wealth of information related to Native cultural revitalization projects

<https://deborahsmall.wordpress.com>

Dorothy Ramon Learning Center (Banning, CA)

Saves and shares all Southern California American Indian cultures, languages, history, music, and other traditional arts

www.dorothyramon.org

The Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art (Indianapolis, IN)

Fosters an appreciation and understanding of the art, history, and cultures of the American West and the indigenous peoples of North America

www.eiteljorg.org

Gabrielino/Tongva Springs Foundation/Kuruvugna Springs Cultural Center & Museum (Los Angeles, CA)

Foundation conducts outreach programs for high school and college students and the public about the environment and California Indian history. The Cultural Center houses artifacts and historical resources about the Tongva people

<http://gabrielinosprings.com>

Idyllwild Arts Native American Arts Program (Idyllwild, CA)

Organizes hands-on workshops and a festival with performances, exhibits, and lectures with artists, cultural specialists, and scholars from across the Americas (scholarships available for Native American youth and adults)

www.idyllwildarts.org/summer/nativearts

Lompoc Museum (Lompoc, CA)

Tells the story of the Lompoc residents of yesterday: the Chumash Indians before the Spanish Missions of the 18th century

www.lompocmuseum.org

Malki Museum (Banning, CA)

Promotes scholarship and cultural awareness, and encourages preservation of Southern California Indian cultures

www.malkimuseum.org

Mashantucket Pequot Museum & Research Center (Mashantucket, CT)

Furtheres the understanding of the richness and diversity of the indigenous cultures and societies of the United States and Canada

www.pequotmuseum.org

Neshkinukat (Los Angeles, CA)

Provides an opportunity for Native American Elder artists to share their work with a wider audience

www.neshkinukat.com

Facebook: Neshkinukat

Red Earth Art Center (Oklahoma City, OK)

Promotes the rich traditions of American Indian art and cultures through education, a premier festival and fine art markets

www.redearth.org

Redbird (Los Angeles County, CA)

A Native American and environmental non-profit association celebrating indigenous cultures and people and creating a sustainable future with a land base at Chilao School in the heart of the Angeles National Forest

www.redbirdsvision.org

Riverside Metropolitan Museum (Riverside, CA)

The museum's Anthropology Collection holds one of the largest collections of Native American basketry in California

www.riversideca.gov/museum

Self Help Graphics & Art (Los Angeles, CA)

Provides access to space, tools, training and capital for the production, interpretation and distribution of prints and other art media by Chicana/o and Latina/o artists.

www.selfhelpgraphics.com

Sherman Indian School and Museum (Riverside, CA)

A progressive boarding school with classes taught by American Indians for American Indians emphasizing tradition, cultural education, and the arts (unlike Indian boarding schools of the past)

www.shermanindian.org

Tataviam Education & Cultural Learning Department (San Fernando, CA)

Provides educational, leadership and cultural programs to prepare American Indian and Alaska Native students for success through its American Indian Education Center (formally known as the Teaching and Mentoring Indian Tarahat project)

<https://www.facebook.com/TataviamEducationDepart>

<http://tamit.education>

UCLA American Indian Studies Center (Los Angeles, CA)

Fosters innovative academic research and publishing, and supports events and programming focused on indigenous issues

www.aisc.ucla.edu

Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeways (Mt. Pleasant, MI)

Promotes the culture, diversity and spirit of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan and other Great Lakes Anishinabek

www.sagchip.org/ziibiwing

ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING NATIVE COMMUNITIES

Learn more about some of the organizations in Southern California and beyond that provide diverse services, including educational, healthcare, legal, tribal rights, housing and financial assistance.

American Indian Changing Spirits Recovery Program (Los Angeles, CA)

Provides culturally relevant community-based outreach and education, with evidence-based recovery programming focused on American Indians who suffer from drug and alcohol addiction and/or dependency

www.americanindianchangingspirits.org

American Indian Community Council (Los Angeles, CA)

Promotes the overall wellness of Los Angeles American Indian children, families, and community through leadership development, community organizing, self-determination and cultural values

www.aiccla.org

American Indian Recruitment (UCLA, Los Angeles, CA)

Helps American Indian and Alaska Native students get into college while strengthening cultural ties to their communities

www.cpo.ucla.edu/sioc/american-indian-recruitment

American Indian Students Association (UCLA, Los Angeles, CA)

Dedicated to the preservation of the American Indian culture and community through education

<https://www.facebook.com/uclaaisa>

Americans for Indian Opportunity (Albuquerque, NM)

Advances, from an Indigenous worldview, the cultural, political and economic rights of Indigenous peoples in the US and around the world; its Ambassadors Program is a leadership development initiative for early to mid-career Native American professionals

www.aio.org

Barcid Foundation/LA Skins Fest (Los Angeles, CA)

Foundation provides annual film festival that offers new opportunities to Native American filmmakers, and monthly writers group, monthly directors workshop, and youth multimedia workshops

<http://laskinsfest.com>

First Peoples Fund (Rapid City, SD)

Provides support and voice to creative Indigenous artists who share their inspiration, wisdom, knowledge and gifts with their communities

www.firstpeoplesfund.org

Inter-Tribal Council of California (Sacramento, CA)

Association of 47 California tribes that promotes recognition of tribal governments as sovereign nations capable of self-governance and economic sustainability supporting healthy individual tribal communities

www.itccinc.org

Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission (Los Angeles, CA)

Dedicated to increasing the acquisition and application of funding resources to the socioeconomic problems of American Indians in Los Angeles City and County, including emergency food and housing, employment, education, and youth services

www.lanaic.org

Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Indian Education Program (Los Angeles, CA)

Provides direct services to American Indian and Alaska Native students, and consultation services, professional development and lesson demonstrations to the LAUSD

<https://www.facebook.com/IndianEducationLAUSD>

<http://indianedla.net>

Maya Visión (Los Angeles, CA)

Provides the displaced Mayan community in Los Angeles with cultural and practical support in the areas of health, law, education, and employment (Spanish, Chuj and Mam Mayan spoken)

Polcarpo.chaj@gmail.com

National Congress of American Indians (Washington, DC)

Protects and advances tribal governance and treaty rights, and promotes economic development, health and welfare in Indian and Alaska Native communities

www.ncai.org

Native American Rights Fund (Boulder, CO)

Since 1971, has provided legal assistance to Indian tribes, organizations and individuals to defend tribal sovereignty, treaty rights, natural resources protection, and Indian education

www.narf.org

Red Circle Project at AIDS Project Los Angeles (Los Angeles, CA)

The only HIV Prevention Program in Los Angeles County that specifically provides services to the Native American/Alaska Native community

<http://redcircleproject.org>

Retention of American Indians Now! (UCLA, Los Angeles, CA)

Provides comprehensive support services to students: academic, personal, social, cultural, and spiritual

www.cpo.ucla.edu/srs/retention-of-american-indians-now

Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples (McKinleyville, CA)

Assists grassroots Native community organizations in North/Central/South America and Hawai'i dedicated to creating healthy and sustainable environments with grants, administration, technical training, program oversight and organization development

www.7genfund.org

Southern California Indian Center (Fountain Valley, CA)

Promotes social and economic self-sufficiency for American Indian, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiian people, and broadens the American public's knowledge through education, cultural, economic, and recreation programs

www.indiancenter.org

The Southern California Tribal Chairmen's Association (San Diego, CA)

Serves the health, welfare, safety, education, cultural, economic and employment needs of members of 19 federally-recognized Southern California tribes in urban San Diego County

www.sctca.net

Stronghold Society (Thornton, CO)

Provides empowerment, arts programs, skateboarding and athletic activities to Native and non-Native youth

www.strongholdsociety.org

Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians (Thermal, CA)

Preserves cultural traditions and protects tribal sovereignty to ensure equitable provision of services and entitlements to all tribal members

www.torresmartinez.org

Tribal Alliance of Sovereign Indian Nations (Patton, CA)

Protects and promotes the tribal government rights, cultural identity and interests of federally-recognized tribes throughout Southern California

www.tasin.org

Tribal Law and Policy Institute (Santa Monica, CA)

Provides free publication resources, comprehensive training, and technical assistance for Native nations and tribal justice systems to empower Native communities to create and control their own institutions

<http://www.home.tlpi.org>

United American Indian Involvement (Los Angeles, CA)

Provides comprehensive integrated services to American Indian/Alaska Natives in urban Los Angeles, including health, substance abuse, mental health, violence prevention, and youth programs

www.uaii.org

Walking Shield (Lake Forest, CA)

Coordinates programs that provide shelter, healthcare, community development support, educational assistance, and humanitarian aid for American Indian families

<http://walkingshield.org>

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Lynne Sims



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