

The logo features three overlapping brushstrokes in red, yellow, and blue on the left. To the right, the text "CONTEMPORARY INDIGENEITY" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The year "2024" is enclosed in a red rectangular box to the right of the main text.

**CONTEMPORARY  
INDIGENEITY 2024**

September 6–December 21, 2024

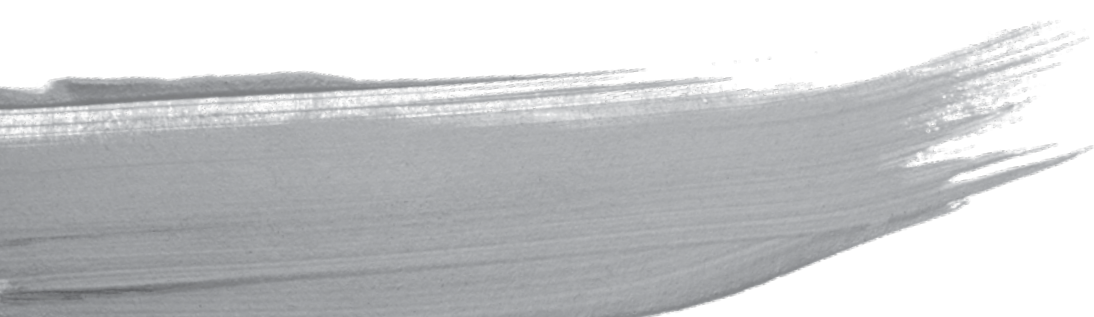


## Sponsors

We would like to thank our sponsors for generously supporting this exhibition and related programming.



This project is funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the nation's largest supporter of the arts and humanities. Since 1969, the Foundation has been guided by its core belief that the humanities and arts are essential to human understanding. The Foundation believes that the arts and humanities are where we express our complex humanity, and that everyone deserves the beauty, transcendence, and freedom that can be found there. Through our grants, we seek to build just communities enriched by meaning and empowered by critical thinking, where ideas and imagination can thrive. Learn more at [mellon.org](http://mellon.org).



The Center for Great Plains Studies and the Great Plains Art Museum acknowledge that the University of Nebraska is a land-grant institution with campuses and programs on the past, present, and future homelands of the Pawnee, Ponca, Otoe-Missouria, Omaha, Dakota, Lakota, Kaw, Cheyenne, and Arapaho Peoples, as well as those of the relocated Ho-Chunk, Sac and Fox, and Iowa Peoples. Please take a moment to consider the legacies of more than 150 years of displacement, violence, settlement, and survival that bring us together here today. This acknowledgement and the centering of Indigenous peoples is a start as we move forward together.

The Center, with its Great Plains Art Museum, is an interdisciplinary educational and cultural hub that cultivates awareness of and engagement with the diverse people, cultures, and natural environments of the Great Plains. Since its establishment in 1976 as part of all four campuses at the University of Nebraska, the Center has sought to showcase regional voices, stories, art, and research through multimedia education and outreach.

The Museum's permanent collection was founded in 1980 with a generous donation of art and literature of the American West from Dr. John and Elizabeth Christlieb of Bellevue, Nebraska. The collection has since expanded to focus on Indigenous artists and other significant Great Plains themes. Each year, the Museum organizes 6–8 engaging exhibitions that express the diverse voices of the Plains and highlight both the collection and contemporary artists.

## **Center for Great Plains Studies & Great Plains Art Museum**

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## A note from the Center and Museum

Welcome to the 2024 *Contemporary Indigeneity* exhibition at the Great Plains Art Museum and the Center for Great Plains Studies! We are proud to sponsor this unique juried exhibition for the fifth time.

Through this biennial exhibition, we honor the Indigenous visionaries on the Great Plains who show us what it means to survive against all odds, and then to revive and thrive. Many of these Indigenous artists reflect on the trauma of forced removal, the legacy of Indian boarding schools, and the ongoing crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives. Many also

celebrate the resurgence of Indigenous languages and foodways, the repatriation of ancestors, the persistence of ceremonies, and the possibility of reconnecting to homelands.

We are grateful for the gifts that these Indigenous artists on the Great Plains have shared. We invite you to approach and enjoy the 2024 *Contemporary Indigeneity* exhibition as a form of ceremony.

**Margaret Jacobs**  
**Director, Center for Great Plains Studies**

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The Museum and Center are thrilled to share the 2024 *Contemporary Indigeneity* exhibition. For this year's iteration of this biennial juried exhibition, we invited Native American artists to submit artwork that explored issues and themes relevant to the contemporary Indigenous experience on the Great Plains. Our call for artists produced a record number of submissions, which were then carefully reviewed by a panel of Native art professionals. We thank the jurors for their participation in this process, their continued support of this exhibition, and their catalog essays, which provide thoughtful commentary on this year's selected works.

*Contemporary Indigeneity 2024* presents artwork from 26 artists living across the Great Plains and beyond. In this exhibition, you will find Native artists creatively working in beadwork, painting, printmaking, photography, digital media, and much more. The subject matter of their work is as diverse as their artistic production, and the catalog text and exhibition labels convey their thoughts on the pieces you see in this exhibition and their practice as Native artists. We are incredibly grateful to these artists for sharing their work and their perspectives with us.

**Ashley Wilkinson**  
**Director & Curator, Great Plains Art Museum**



## Juror Statements



## Visual Voice

I remember the first time I heard someone use the word “Indigeneity;” they were asking me a question, something about how I show the use of it in an exhibition I curated. I was a panelist for a discussion about Native art. I was young, freshly from undergraduate, and I felt like I could change the world with Native art, and then this word I had never heard before and had no clue what it meant. This rez kid was a little lost on that stage as this academic asked me about my Indigeneity. Today, I suppose someone could say I am one of those academics, using words that are too big for even myself to understand. I do now understand that my Indigeneity is the link between me, Lakota cultural knowledge, and the land my ancestors come from. It is deeper than that, but for the sake of this statement, it is essentially that.

Reviewing artwork has always been one of my favorite things to do. I love to see what Native people create. I find the creation of art for others to view and judge one of the most courageous things to do. Artists, creatives, culture bearers, makers, whatever they want to be called, remind us of the past, present, and future—helping us to remember and to imagine. Native people have always had a strong visual voice, a unique and

powerful way of expressing their identity and cultural community through visual mediums. This visual voice showed in the ways we parted our hair, the colors we wore, and the designs used to adorn our clothing; it has been a significant part of our cultural communication even before we had a chance to speak to say who we are and where we are from. I find this to be true today in the art we have created for shows and exhibitions like this one.

The artists in this exhibition tell us who they are, where they came from, and the cultures that have shaped them. Their works reflect the land, history, themselves, their communities, and collective struggles—sharing their Indigeneity with us. I am in awe of the courage these artists exhibit by creating work to be judged, and I am excited to see the exhibition come together to reflect the visual voices of the Plains.

yuónihanyan (respectfully),

**mary v. bordeaux, Ed.D**  
**Sicangu Oglala Lakota**  
**Co-director & Co-founder, Racing Magpie,**  
**Rapid City, SD**



## Contemporary Materiality

In my practice as an historian and curator of Native art, I often struggle with how the term “contemporary” is—or is not—used to categorize the work of living artists. There are several reasons for this internal debate, including the fact that many Indigenous ways of knowing do not conceive of time in a linear fashion, and that by using the chronological insulation of words like “contemporary” or “historic,” we may inadvertently participate in a hierarchical categorization of the many creative expressions that emerge from Indigenous communities across time and space. However, there are instances in which describing Native artistic production as “contemporary” are not only appropriate, but necessary.

This year’s selection of artists for the Great Plains Art Museum’s *Contemporary Indigeneity* exhibition is a poignant example of just that. Their work reflects the current realities and opportunities that Indigenous peoples encounter. While this is apparent in the content of every artwork selected for *Contemporary Indigeneity*, I find it more compelling to focus on the *materiality* of their works and how those materials serve a dialogic purpose in tandem with their subject matter.

For many Natives in North America, including woodlands communities like the Ojibwe, cedar is both medicine and offering. Gordon Coons uses the smoke from burning cedar in a *fumage* technique to imbue the work with visual texture, but also with the properties inherent in this medicinal relative. In particular, his print *Washita 1868: Remember Our Relatives* offers cedar smoke to the memory of one of the most atrocious acts of settler violence on the Great Plains, when US General George Armstrong Custer massacred a Cheyenne camp in what is now Oklahoma.

Coons’s work is not only a visual reminder of the event but also a gift of cedar to those who were murdered and captured by the Seventh Cavalry, alluded to by the disembodied horses layering the surface of the print.

Angela Babby’s striking glass portrait, *They, Them*, is an equally powerful example of how an artist’s choice of materials contributes to the efficacy of the final artwork. Babby recreates portraits of her ancestors in multicolored glass mosaic as she carefully pieces together the past and present with the individual pieces of her material. The seemingly aqueous finish of the glass imbues a dynamic liveliness to the once monochromatic portraits Babby uses as source material. Her images seemingly come alive in the luminescent and fragile medium.

The range of media, from digital tools seen in works by Kimberly Hager, Jessica Moore Harjo, and Benjamin West, to ancestral practices rendered in commercial materials like the work of Dennis Fox and Tony Tiger, prompts us to consider how Indigenous artists—and arguably communities at large—might employ the strictures of contemporary life in a settler state to simultaneously resist and persist, but also to thrive. This is a tactic we have embraced for generations, to adapt given an environment of rapidly changing circumstances. The artists and artworks featured in this year’s exhibition exemplify the significance of both *Indigeneity* and *contemporaneity* in myriad ways.

**Chelsea M. Herr, PhD**  
**Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma**  
**Curator for Indigenous Art & Culture,**  
**Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK**

## Traveling the Great Plains

In April 2023, I undertook a month-long research road trip through the Great Plains from Saskatchewan to Texas and back. I met dozens of artists and curators and visited numerous cultural sites, galleries, and museums, including the Great Plains Art Museum. While I put 4,965 miles on a rental car, I barely scratched the surface in terms of understanding this vast and complex region. As a Métis woman from the Canadian prairies, I was thrilled to be invited as a juror to the 2024 *Contemporary Indigeneity* exhibition and to consider its focus on “the contemporary Indigenous experience on the Great Plains.”

It is always enriching to be introduced to new artistic practices, and even more so given my own recent experience of traveling through the region, which was both eye-opening and humbling—a feeling akin to finding oneself beneath the expansive skies of my home north of the Medicine Line.

How does being on the Great Plains shape Indigenous experience or *Indigeneity* as a state of being? While the term “Indigenous” risks flattening the complexity of lived experience and the specificity of our distinct histories, languages, and cultures as First Peoples, it persists as a useful concept to articulate what is shared across territories. This includes shared pre-contact histories, philosophical tenets, colonial oppression, resistance, and global solidarity. Fellow Métis scholar David Garneau defines Indigeneity as a space in which we actively create ourselves alongside others. He writes, “being Indigenous is an activity rather than a state; it is a being in motion rather than a being fixed in a place; it is an exercise of domain rather than a claiming of dominion. ... Indigenous territory is inscribed by these gentle passages.”<sup>1</sup>

In traveling across the Great Plains, I came to understand how it too is a space inscribed by many kinds of movement over time. Many artworks in the exhibition highlight the importance of physical

movement as a dimension of Indigeneity. Savannah Berlyn Ricehill’s *Elegance in Motion* (2023) is a closely cropped photograph of the twin feather bustles of a fancy dancer on the pow wow trail. Marwin Begaye’s *Inner Strength* (2022) is a woodblock print depicting the migratory red-winged blackbird against a Navajo textile pattern. Henry Payer’s collage *Seventh Generation* (2023) features a column of stacked Winnebago RVs, a surreal pop art rendering of the interconnected forces of dislocation and appropriation Indigenous communities have been subjected to.

Other forms of movement are also present in the exhibition, from artistic lineages to movements for social justice. Many artworks, such as Dennis Fox’s painted buffalo robe, *Woman Goes Out* (2023), draw upon traditions of orality and aesthetics in order to ensure the continuance of culture in the present and into the future. Others, such as Crystal Wabnum’s beaded cuff, *Nijii Like Yemen* (2024), call us to action, to stand against injustice by standing in our strengths and in solidarity with others.

The artworks in *Contemporary Indigeneity* embody the individual artists’ perspectives, cultural teachings, community histories, and the continuum of artistic forms and practices they draw upon, which are both Native and Western. Collectively, they also form a narrative about Indigenous relationships to time and place on the Great Plains. They activate the transformative capacities of art, beauty, and skilled production to make themselves legible in the present and to move toward anti-/de-/non-colonial futures.

**Tarah Hogue**

**Métis**

**Adjunct Curator (Indigenous Art), Remail Modern, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada**

<sup>1</sup>David Garneau, “Performing Domain with a Non-colonial Aesthetic Attitude,” *voz-à-voz* (Toronto: e-fagia, 2015), <https://web.archive.org/web/20170123154138/http://www.vozavoz.ca/feature/david-garneau>, accessed August 7, 2024.







# Artists

Angela Babby .....	12
Marwin Begaye .....	13
Rachel Berg .....	14
Awanigiizhik Bruce .....	15
Mona Cliff .....	16
Gordon Coons .....	17
Dennis Fox .....	19
Dustina Gill .....	20
Kimberly Hager .....	21
Hotvlkuce Harjo .....	22
Jessica Moore Harjo .....	23
Sun Rose Iron Shell .....	24
Kelsey Jacobson .....	25
Valentina LaPier .....	26
Steve C. LaRance .....	27
Chris Pappan .....	28
Henry Payer .....	30
Daniel Pewewardy .....	32
Meredith Radke-Gannon .....	33
Savannah Berlyn Ricehill .....	34
Nathaniel Ruleaux .....	35
Nelda Schrupp .....	36
Tony A. Tiger .....	37
Crystal Wabnum .....	38
Benjamin West .....	39
Paula Whatley .....	40

# Angela Babby

Oglala Sioux Tribe

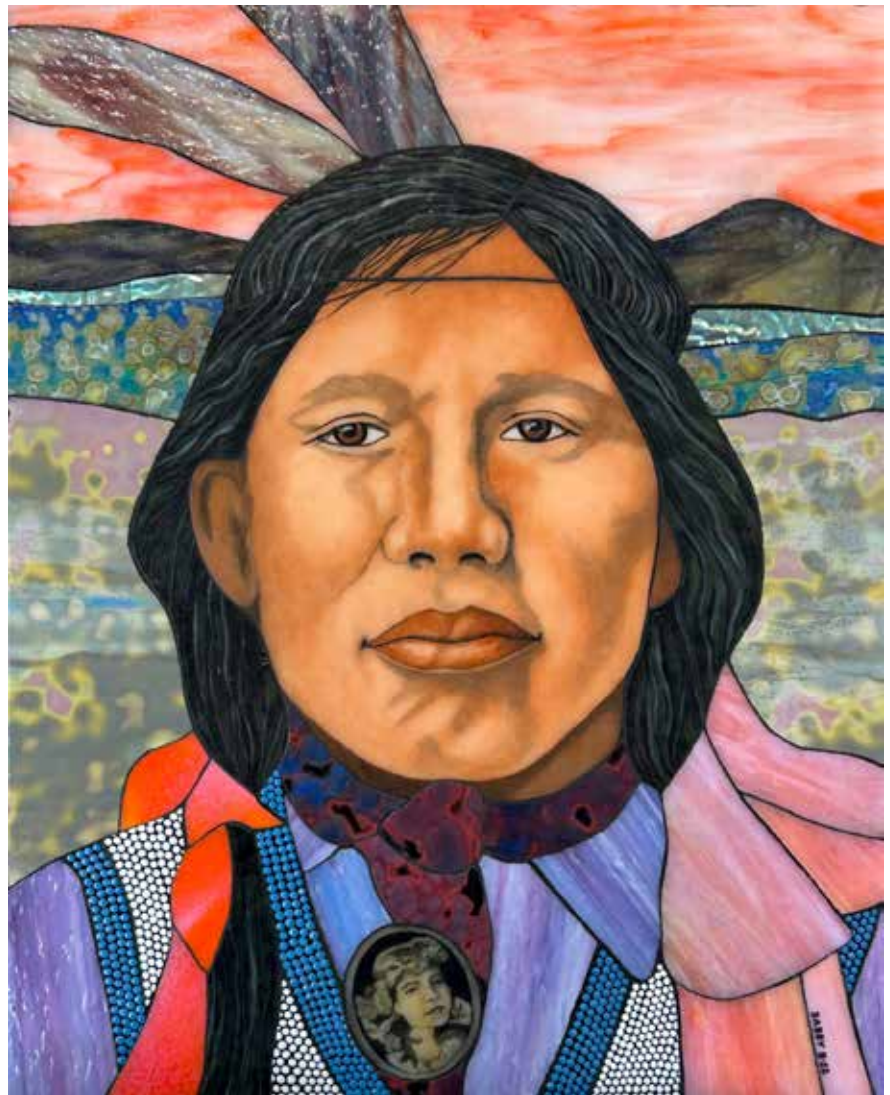
Angela Babby, born in Everett, Washington, is an enrolled member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe in Pine Ridge, South Dakota. She received her BFA in Fine Art (Painting) from Montana State University–Billings. Babby's artwork has been featured in professional publications including *Glass Art Magazine* and *First American Art Magazine* and is housed in permanent museum collections in South Dakota. Her kiln-fired enameled glass mosaics have won numerous awards at Santa Fe Indian Market, the Red Cloud Art Show in Pine Ridge, Best of Show at the Native Pop Art Show in Rapid City and at the Northern Plains Indian Art Market in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. She's won best of class at the Heard Indian Art Market in Phoenix, Arizona. She is currently part of *Clearly Indigenous: Native Visions Reimagined in Glass*, the first museum group show of Native Americans working in the medium. The show started at the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and will travel to other museums through 2027. Babby lives and works in Billings, Montana.

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My Lakota ancestry and the mysterious nature of glass inspire my fascination with making art. Glass contains light. When I depict a person from the past in glass it has a three-dimensional depth that I could never achieve with paint.

*They, Them* is an artwork that was part of a series of three that were inspired by a black-and-white photo of Little Bear. He was believed to be part of the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis that celebrated the centennial of the Louisiana Purchase. This event was also referred to as a "human zoo." It brought together Native peoples from all over the world to exhibit them to their conquerors.

I love this picture of him. I try to capture the personality of my subject. I have respect for two-spirit people and have created several artworks to revere them. I feel that if we erased the contributions of LGBTQ people throughout history we would be drastically less intelligent with regard to science, art,



## *They, Them*

2022

Kiln-fired vitreous enamel on glass mosaic on tile board and mortared  
20 x 16 inches

Image courtesy of the artist

© Angela Babby

and philosophy. The attack on our hard-won rights as Americans caused me to choose this title.

The glass that I used for this series was chosen to study how different colors affect the mood and perception of the piece. I changed the color of the sky and the clothing but let the landscape remain the same. Each one was an individual original artwork, but each one expressed a different feeling.

# Marwin Begaye

Navajo Nation

As Indian people, we strive to make our world beautiful. The need to make things beautiful comes to me from a long line of artists in our family who live to achieve *hozhó*, the Navajo concept of being centered in beauty and balance. This aesthetic inheritance dominates my work as it has developed from purely objective images of dancers and portraits to abstract, subjective work referencing my community and our ceremonial lifeways.

My practice is informed by traditional Navajo knowledge, learned through stories, songs, and prayers. Central to my work is my identity, a Navajo man seeking *hozhó* in my life and work. *Hozhó* is a term that expresses complete balance, beauty, and centeredness in all manners. Through the course of my artistic development, birds have become a central subject, both as Navajo cosmological figures that teach *hozhó* and as delicate beings within our world that are highly sensitive to the impacts of the Anthropocene. Within my artistic research, I explore the prevalence of birds within Navajo cultural practices and beliefs, studying their roles within our creation stories. I also empirically observe birds: those that visit my home and for whom I provide care by feeding them and giving them my attention—I am told they miss me when I travel. These nonhuman kin have become guides on my journey and, consequently, emerge as central figures in my artwork. Working to honor my grandmother as a weaver and to learn more about the birds, my images have evolved to include textile designs as part of the symbolic texture of the background. With highly detailed patterns executed as linocut and woodblock carvings, my artwork often exhibits figurative elements related to the stories of the bird's cultural identity. The images are developed through a complex system of digital constructions, hand-rendered mark making, and hand-drawn birds. By bringing these elements together, my pieces drift toward abstractions and generate a freedom for experimentation in the relief process. In defying static design, my work represents the natural flux that is part of the dynamic natures of the birds and our cultures.

Listening to and reading Navajo stories, one learns about the significance of birds to the landscape, ecosystems, and cultural identities. I find the mixed media process aligns with my thought process, expressing visually what I learn from listening or reading the associated stories. I believe the complex layers on the surface become representative of the richness of these stories, using printed patterns and culturally significant symbols, the transparency and



opacity of the colors, the color combinations, and linear movement of lines.

Birds are migratory creatures, and their energy generates similar movement in my art.

Many of the works from the *Bird Series* have migrated across the globe through exhibitions and collections, allowing me to share my artistry with many communities. It is an honor to join them in their travels down to South America, across Russia and Asia, and visiting our relatives in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

*Inner Strength*

2022

Multiple colored woodblocks,  
oil-based inks  
24 x 18 inches

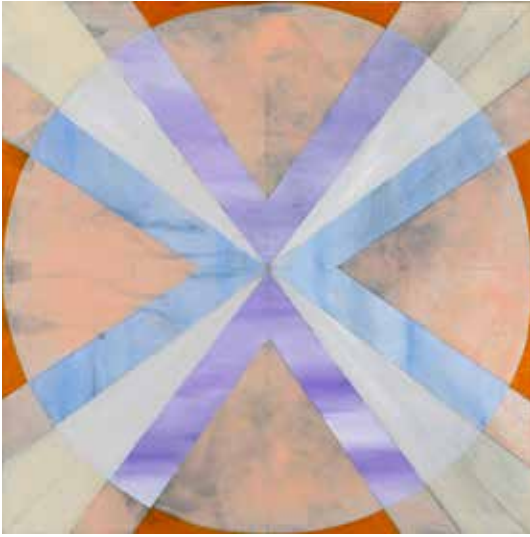
Photo by Konrad Eek  
© Marwin Begaye

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I created this piece because I live in the Southern Plains and noticed the migration of the red-winged blackbird.

# Rachel Olivia Berg

*Mnicoujou Lakota (Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe)/Indigenous Mexican-American/German*



## *Seven Directions*

2023

Acrylic on canvas

20 x 20 inches

Photo by Bill Ganzel, Ganzel Group Communications

© Rachel Olivia Berg

My artistic practice is rooted in observation of the natural world and Indigenous values. I explore materials to create artworks in diverse artistic media that express Lakota ontologies, histories of living beings, human connections to environments, and investigation of natural cycles.

Using paint, wood, plaster, clay, metal, fabric, cyanotype, ink, and found objects in my artwork, I create installations, paintings, and photographs with variations of imagery including Lakota symbols, mirrored and repeated forms, landscapes, skyscapes, constellations, plants, stones, and water. These elements embody the most ancient teachings of humanity and carry with them knowledge, truths, and realities that weave together stories both within and outside of traditional, contemporary, Indigenous, and western ways of being and methodologies.

I work as an artist, teacher, and the founder of LivArtfully Design Studio. I hold a BA from Princeton University and an MA in Art Education from Columbia University Teachers College. Since 2004 I have designed, developed, and created custom large-scale commissions in commercial projects across



## *Spirit Dance*

2022

Acrylic on canvas

28 x 20 inches

Photo by Bill Ganzel, Ganzel

Group Communications

© Rachel Olivia Berg

Turtle Island, working with top art consultant and interior design firms. I was recipient of the 2023 Emerging Artist Fellowship with the Ann Street Gallery in Newburgh, New York. In 2024 I worked with Jackson Public Arts in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, as part of their Landsignals project to create *Listening to Inyan*, a sculpture that centers the Snake River and Indigenous understandings of land stewardship that confronts the human effect on the environment and climate change in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem.

My work is held in corporate art collections including Virgin Hotels, Mountain Shadows Resorts, Spotify, Kimpton Hotels, and Jane Street, as well as in notable health care spaces Cohen's Children's Hospital in Queens, New York, and Oyate Health Center for Indian Health Services in Rapid City, South Dakota.

# Awanigiizhik Bruce

*Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa*

Awanigiizhik Bruce's art is continuously shaped by Indigenous worldviews, modes, people, and languages, specifically of the Ojibwe, Cree, Métis, Dakota, and Assiniboine. Their dream is to revitalize ancient art and make it relevant to today, but not in the way that their

art only exists as an anachronism. Awanigiizhik's vision includes creating Indigenous Futurisms as a modern contemporary, utilizing what technology is around them. They envision new fusions and constructions of Indigenous art in a modern era.

*Aanikoobijigan* is thought of as an infinite string that connects and ties us all together. The word "Aanikoobijiganag" represents the encompassing idea of both our ancestors and descendants. This microelectronics jewelry piece offers a real sense of *Aanikoobijiganag*. It's based on medicine necklaces and loop necklaces found all around the Northern Plains. The necklace elements represent the past (antique trade beads, dentalium, coral, turquoise, and silverberry seeds) and future (LEDs and gold beaded wrapped red wires).

In Anishinaabek culture, we say our people come from the stars; the LEDs are reminiscent of those luminary beings akin to our star relatives coming into and leaving their human lives via *Bagone-Giizhig* (Hole in the Sky). The LEDs figuratively represent individuals in an interconnected timeline of *Aanikoobijigan*. Similar to the individuality of our relatives, the LEDs are sound-reactive from speech and music while animating, glowing, dimming, and changing colors. There are brass bells that are beaded onto the necklace to help create sound for a dynamic-sound-listening-reacting potential action for the microphone of the computer chip and the animations of the LEDs.

The high-resolution screen display slideshows pictures of our ancestors and our living relatives with a specific focus to Awanigiizhik's relatives. Each slide represents Indigenous leadership, resistance, resilience, history, and excellence within the stories of the Nehiyaw-Pwat kinship/confederacy. The 3D-printed thunderbird computer chip case references a powerful spirit helper and the National icon for the Anishinaabek. The thunderbird represents power, electricity, and changes, which is fitting for an Indigenous Futuristic art piece. There are thunderbolt buttons on the wings of the thunderbird case that power off the device, while the other single click skips through each picture slide.

## *Aanikoobijiganag*

2022

Microcontroller computer chip, fairy LEDs, 3D-printed thunderbird case, antique trade beads, glass beads, dentalium shells, coral, turquoise, leather, vinyl electrical tape, nylon string, and brass bells  
28 x 10 x 3 inches

Photo by Bill Ganzel, Ganzel Group Communications

© Awanigiizhik Bruce





## Mona Cliff

*Gros Ventre (Aaniiih), Fort Belknap Indian Community of the Fort Belknap Reservation, Montana*



My practice traverses traditional Indigenous knowledge systems. In learning the teachings of my past, I apply these teachings to my practice. I aim to explore how traditional arts, culture, and knowledge connect me to ancestral practices. I pose questions of how we can understand our connections to the world that surround us. Continuous cultural evolution is of particular interest to me, especially in the realm of generational knowledge. As I create art through these traditional art practices, I feel a connection to my ancestors.

Interweaving various crafts materials, I want to create visual language, a language that preserves tradition and creates a discourse that has people question their own preconceptions of Indigenous arts.

I work with natural materials that have been changed by human hands, processes that have ultimately rendered these natural materials from their original states, which then allows us a vehicle for self-expression. For example, seed beads—sand that is molded by fire and reshaped, then re-applied to create traditional items. Process and application of these materials is the foundation of my work.

### *Sediment/Sentiments*

2023

Seed beads, beeswax, wood, fabric, conch shell, resin  
19 7/8 (diameter) inches each

Photo by Bill Ganzel, Ganzel Group Communications

© Mona Cliff

This work, *Sediment/Sentiments*, explores material memory and how memories are tied to materials we use in daily life, in ceremony, and in social settings. These materials can layer in memories like sediment.



# Gordon Coons

*Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin*



Gordon Coons is a painter, printmaker, and fumage artist. Largely self-taught, he paints in the Ojibwa Woodland style and creates fumage, and smoke art, by burning cedar. He embellishes his fumage pieces with 24-karat gold leaf. He also prints with linoleum blocks. Coons draws inspiration from his Anishinaabe heritage, and his bright color palette comes from his natural surroundings in the Great Lakes region. "I also enjoy incorporating playfulness in my images, telling stories of relationships between Western and Native cultures and the connection we have to our shared historical events," he says in his artist statement. Coons exhibits nationally, and his work is in permanent collections across the country. He regularly shows and wins awards at annual art markets such as SWAIA Santa Fe Indian Market; the Native POP Festival in Rapid City, South Dakota; and the Eiteljorg Festival in Indianapolis, Indiana. The Hopkins Center for the Arts and American Indian Community Housing Organization in Minnesota hosted a solo exhibition of his work. More of his artwork can be seen online at [gordoncoons.com](http://gordoncoons.com).

The idea of this image came from a trip to Santa Fe Art Market. In Oklahoma, on the western side of the state near the city of Cheyenne, is the historical site of Washita. In history stories, it is called the Battle of Washita. On November 27, 1868, Lt. Colonel George Armstrong Custer of the Seventh US Cavalry, with the help of other soldiers, followed raiding party tracks that passed by the encampment of peaceful Chief Black Kettle. Lt. Colonel Custer decided to attack—not a battle, but a massacre of old men, women, and children. The younger men were out hunting game for the winter. Lt. Colonel Custer gathered their 875 horses and mules. Lt. Colonel Custer kept 225 animals and shot the rest, all 650, and left them in a pile at the site. Years later, the rotted animals were turned into fertilizer.

## *Washita 1868: Remember Our Relatives*

2022

Cedar smoke, relief print

32 x 26 inches

Photo by Bam Bam Grafix LLC

© Gordon Coons

*Continued on next page*



### **Why I use cedar smoke to create my images:**

Cedar is one of the most important American Indian/ Native American ceremonial plants. It is used by many tribes as incense and a purifying herb. Cedar is especially associated with prayer, healing, dreams, and protection against disease.

I create my smoke images by transferring only the smoke from a piece of burning cedar to the paper. One of the uses of cedar smoke in the Native community is to send prayers to the spiritual realm. In my cedar smoke images, I'm using the smoke to send prayers to ask for guidance from the Sun, known in the Ojibwa community as Grandfather, or prayers to ask for guidance from the Moon, known in the Ojibwa community as Grandmother.

### ***Native Landscape Under the New Moon*** 2022

Cedar smoke, relief print

32 x 26 inches

Photo by Bam Bam Grafix LLC

© Gordon Coons

In this image, I represent Mother Earth, the nourishment and life-giver to all of us. The image of all my *Native Landscape* images is of women, the giver of life. The new moon is not visible and is dark in this image, and I used cedar smoke, an element used for ceremonies in Native communities.

# Dennis R. Fox, Jr.

*Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation/Oglala Lakota*



My name is Dennis R. Fox, Jr. I am a member of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation of the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in North Dakota. My Indian name is Mashuga Nuxbitsi—Dog Bear.

My artwork is rich in history and oral traditions of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara of the Northern Plains and the Upper Missouri River. I strive for a contemporary style but seek to reflect the ancient traditions of my ancestors.

I create work that directly relates to Upper Missouri and the Northern Plains to maintain accuracy of the culture. I have listened to many stories told by my elders and studied the styles and techniques that have passed from generation to generation. My artwork, which ranges from traditional Native American styles to avant-garde abstract, is in many museums, galleries, and public and private collections.

Today's Native American artists have the responsibility to make sure that their culture continues for their children. Therefore, the Native artist must participate in the current movements of artistic styles, yet they are responsible for maintaining traditional values and mores of their respective tribal culture.

## *Woman Goes Out*

2023

Acrylic on buffalo hide

84 x 96 inches

Photo by Bill Ganzel, Ganzel Group Communications

© Dennis R. Fox, Jr.

*Woman Goes Out* was a commission for former Councilwoman V. Judy Brugh of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation. Her Indian name is “Woman Goes Out,” which is a Mandan name. The meaning or story of the name is unknown. I did some research, and it is speculated that the name is associated with the duties of a midwife. Because it is speculative, the name may have many meanings. V. Judy Brugh is very involved in the culture on the Fort Berthold Reservation. She is a leader of our people, a fashionista, and she comes from the Little Swallow family that is instilled in horse culture. The robe is a testament to her dedication to her culture and family.

# Sitomni S'a Yapi Win, Paints Red Around Her Dustina Gill

*Wah'pekute Band, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate*



I am a Dakota storyteller that uses multimedia art to tell my stories. My motivation to create comes as a healing process or when I need to organize my thoughts.

## *Tusweca Bundles*

2023

Ledger paper, watercolor, trade cloth, horsehair, silver cones, antique bells, butterfly trinkets, mirrors

Box: 9 x 12 x 9 1/2 inches

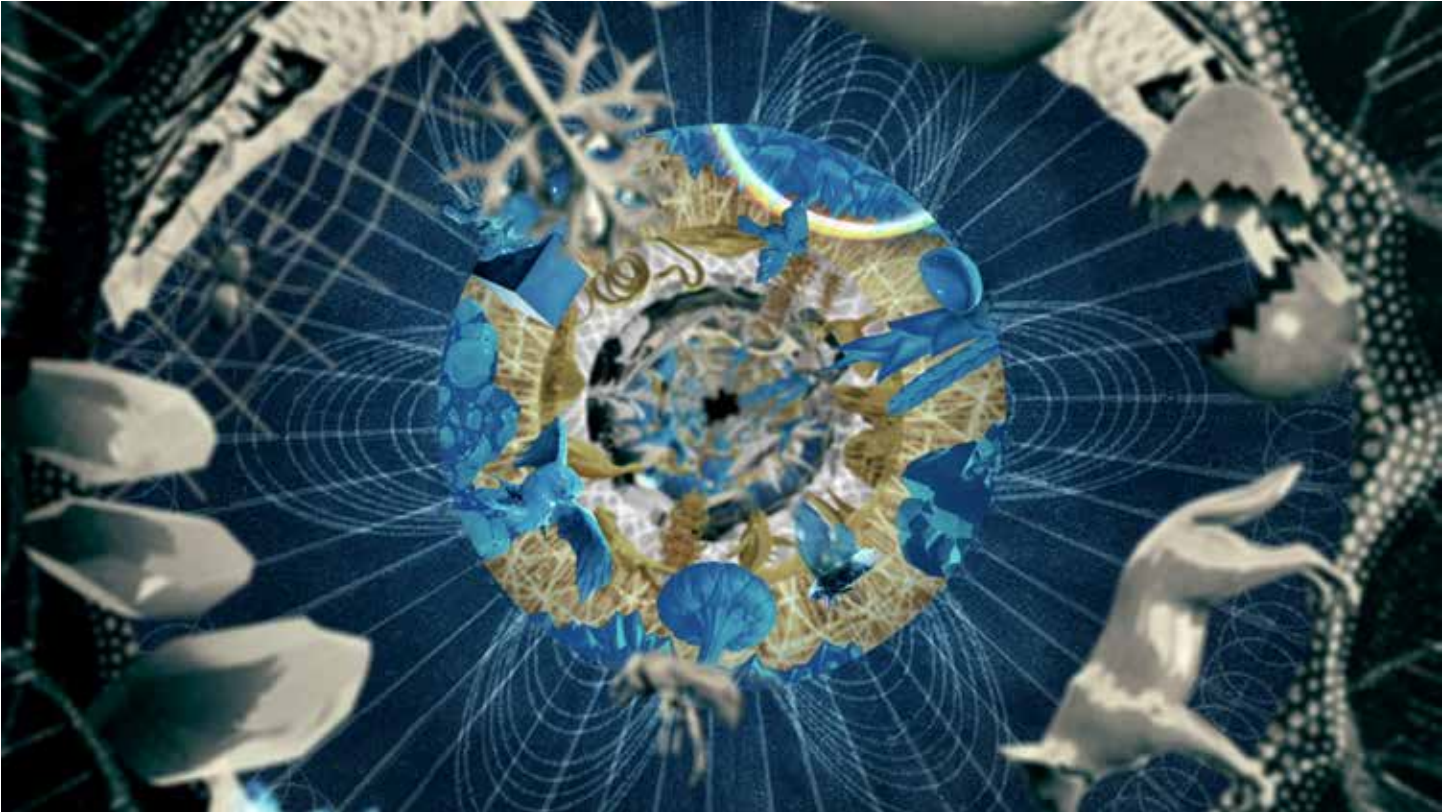
Cylinder: 14 1/8 x 5 1/4 x 4 3/4 inches

Photo by Bill Ganzel, Ganzel Group Communications

© Sitomni S'a Yapi Win, Paints Red Around Her | Dustina Gill

# Kimberly Hager

*Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah & Ouray Reservation/Navajo Nation*



I have always loved tales and the way plant and animal life play a role in explaining the unexplainable. As a continuous lover of video as an artistic medium, I've been able to experiment with it in both personal and professional fields. In my video art work, such as in *Four Worlds*, I've been inspired by nature and mythology. I like to investigate the human relationship with the natural world through narrative devices like tableau, collage, and animation.

## *Four Worlds*

2024

Video

Image courtesy of the artist

© Kimberly Hager

*Four Worlds* is inspired by a Navajo/Diné creation story and highlights the first four planes of existence, focusing on the plant, land, and animal elements.

# Hotvlkuce Harjo

*Muscogee (Creek) Nation*

My name is Hotvlkuce Harjo; I am a queer Mvskoke-Creek (Muscogee-Creek) interdisciplinary artist currently based in the state of Oklahoma, where I grew up. My artistic practice is guided by the following themes: Indigenous and Southeastern Tattoo Revitalization, the resurgence of ancestral Southeastern patterns and motifs, and contemporary portrayals of Mvskoke-Creek identity within the context of Oklahoma. The undercurrent of my work

is driven by the frameworks of Women + Gender Studies, Queer Theory, Indigenous Feminisms, and Disability Studies. Most recently, I have begun a revival in my artwork through the study and articulation of Flatstyle, particularly the style birthed out of Bacone College in Muskogee, Oklahoma. This genre of art is one I associate most with Southeastern artists in Oklahoma, such as Ruthe Blalock Jones, Joan Hill, Dana Tiger, Jerome Tiger, and Acee Blue Eagle, to name a few of my inspirations.

Within my revitalization work, I utilize similar themes across mediums to make our ancestral visual language accessible to everyone in our community. The mediums I move throughout are film photography, photo collage, digital manipulations, digital art, and pen/ink illustration with copper and gold embellishments to create illustrations and depictions of the contemporary Mvskoke-Creek experience. This thematic approach gives community members a visual representation of what a Creek person would look like, adorned with our tattoos. By employing this method, I create a world where colonization didn't disrupt that knowledge. By extension, I create a future reality we can visualize in a concrete sense.

The pieces I submitted portray contemporary Mvskoke identity, life, culture, and experience by taking inspiration from Southeastern Tattoo Revitalization, stomp dance, bandolier bags, Native interpretations of flora & fauna, and the exploration of Flatstyle. The artists who inspired my Flatstyle pieces are Joan Hill (Creek) and Acee Blue Eagle (Pawnee, Creek).



*Purification*

2023

Digital art

11 x 8 1/2 inches

Image courtesy of the artist

© Hotvlkuce Harjo

# Dr. Jessica Moore Harjo

Otoe-Missouria Tribe/Osage Nation/Pawnee Nation/Sac & Fox Nation



My work explores new relationships between the digital and traditional art worlds. Although my primary medium is digital art, I am also a studio artist and fashion and jewelry designer. Over the past few years, my digital artwork has shifted to include intersections of textiles, wearable art, sculpture, and architecture. I have found that my passion is exploring the challenges and complexities of meshing these worlds together. My process includes exploring different approaches—intersections of traditional ribbonwork, florals, appliqué mixed with harmonious colors, explorations of shape—to produce a contemporary statement of art through my cultural lens.

In this *Dino* series, I've utilized three different dinosaurs (in selection with my son) to illustrate and provide a post-traditional approach to the idea of preservation and detail. The edge design is handsewn with bead details onto canvas.



*Ptero Dino (Dino Series 1)*

*Rex Dino (Dino Series 1)*

*Brachiosaurus Dino (Dino Series 1)*

2023

Digital art on giclée canvas print, bead detail

10 x 10 x 1 1/2 inches each

Photo by Bill Ganzel, Ganzel Group Communications

© Jessica Moore Harjo

# Sun Rose Iron Shell

*Oceti Sakowin, from the Titowan Band of Lakota, Sicangu, and Oglala*

Sun Rose Iron Shell is a contemporary artist and designer. She breaks the stereotypes of what America wants Native art to be. She is an independent curator, poet, and fashion entrepreneur. In 2012, she earned two bachelor's degrees from the Institute of American Indian Arts (Santa Fe, New Mexico) for Studio Arts and Museum Studies. She also received awards from the SWAIA Santa Fe Indian Market and for He Sapa Designer of the Year (Black Hills, South Dakota).

She is Sicangu and Oglala Lakota of the Titowan Band of the Oceti Sakowin, the Seven Council Fires known to the world as the Sioux Nation of Indians.

As a ledger artist, she takes the traditional form of documentation and reflects a narrative of how Indigenous people are living. Her art gives life back into the old techniques by documenting Oceti Sakowin supernatural icons and stylized portraits. She is passionate about collecting contemporary narratives of the icon Deer Woman and sharing its cautionary tale with the youth. She combines intense color and sunset ombres to push the Great Plains aesthetic forward.

Sun Rose has been an advocate of Indigeneity and an ambassador for the repatriation of her people as citizens of the earth throughout her life. She is a co-host on KPFF 90.7 FM Los Angeles's *Eagle and Condor: Be a Better Relative*, airing weekly on Tuesdays from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Sun Rose has been featured in the documentary film *Woman of The White Buffalo*, now available for streaming on VUDU, iTunes, Google Play, and Amazon.



## *Spiola Wi*

2024

Colored pencil, ink, brush-tip water soluble marker

17 x 16 1/2 inches

Image courtesy of the artist

© Sun Rose Iron Shell

I am honored to create art to memorialize our Matriarch. I started with a sketch from a photo, then transferred my sketch onto page 91 of an antique ledger book. She was 91 snows.

The night of her passing (01/14/24) there was a meteor shower. This Star map is from the midnight hour of her passing. Using a computer program, I was able to capture the star date. The view is from the Black Hills looking up toward the North Star with the meteor shower to the right of the Big Dipper.

The geometric designs come from beadwork my father designed for me, the same designs I see our family using.

The ledger paper is from 1908, printed and bound in Sioux City, Iowa, where I now reside and created this art piece.



# Kelsey Jacobson

*Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation*

As a painter, my subjects vary from capturing everyday landscape and wildlife scenery to conveying complex themes that are influenced by my Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara culture and history. Using different mediums has helped me navigate my ability to give my perspective and vision of the world around me. I frequently gravitate towards using horses as connective tissue throughout my work to transfer different themes and emotions. Lively,

sad, thought-provoking, or informative, they are the best tool in voicing my opinion due to a deep fondness I have always had for them. Growing up in the country has also influenced my work with its beautiful landscape and rich history. When it comes to creating a piece, these two subjects have always been the best providers for transferring different emotions into my art.



*The Taking*  
2024  
Image transfer and  
oil on canvas  
24 x 36 inches  
Image courtesy of the  
artist  
© Kelsey Jacobson

In 1944, Congress approved the Pick-Sloan Plan as a part of the Flood Control Act. By 1954, the Garrison Dam project was completed, creating the 178-mile-long Lake Sakakawea on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation of North Dakota. The reservoir inundated nine communities along fertile river bottom land, forcing about 85 percent of MHA members to move to higher ground. As one of the largest reservoirs on the Missouri River, it flooded 152,000 acres, equating to about a quarter of the reservation. Just compensation was to be provided for the monumental loss; however, in the end, the Three Tribes only received a \$12.5 million-dollar settlement, falling \$9 million short of the appraised cost of land and relocation. In this historical commentary titled *The Taking*, the layered painting of JTAC testimony from MHA members conveys the trauma the flooding caused and propaganda for the dam that was meant to tame the Missouri. Depicted in the horse markings is Lake Sakakawea, along with tribal representatives and the weeping Tribal Chairman, who witnessed the moment the Secretary of Interior signed the contract transferring the tribe's land to the government for the project, as seen to the right.



Photo courtesy of the National Archives

# Valentina LaPier

*Blackfeet/Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians*



Okii (Hello I'm Blackfeet)

My main focus of late has been about MMIP (Missing and Murdered Indigenous People). I like to draw attention to this terrible dilemma. I also use the bird as a metaphor to describe peace and hopefulness about our MMIP. I can't speak to people, so I paint to communicate my ideas and unaddressed issues.

*The Protectors*

2022

Acrylic on canvas

37 x 27 inches

Photo by Bill Ganzel, Ganzel Group Communications

© Valentina LaPier

# Steve C. LaRance

*Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians*



My paintings primarily reflect the life and culture of the modern American West. I grew up during the mid-twentieth century in a small rural town where the Plains meets Montana's Rocky Mountain Front. This setting and lifestyle is broadly represented in my imagery. My artwork explores contemporary subjects drawn from personal experiences and observations. These are distilled and represented to convey a moment recognizable and shared by many people. I often include cars and trucks as part of the landscape because they carry rich associations and play huge roles in many ways throughout one's life.

## *Drive-In Church*

2022

Oil on canvas

22 x 30 inches

Image courtesy of the artist

© Steve C. LaRance

# Chris Pappan

*Kaw (Kanza)/Osage/Lakota*

My practice is centered within the Native American (Plains) tradition of Ledger Art. The nineteenth century was a tumultuous time for the Indigenous peoples of America. The doctrine of Manifest Destiny brought deep pain and suffering, but it also introduced new modes of expression. Narrative art forms depicting the lifeways of our people had, up until then, been created with the available natural materials (hides, paints, etc.). The ledger books, introduced by soldiers and merchants, provided ample and easy access to paper, which then began to serve as artistic substrates. The drawings done on this paper became known as Ledger Art: pictographic, narrative works that usually depicted battles, hunting excursions, or the ceremonies of a community. That tradition continues today with contemporary artists who mostly reinterpret historical narratives. In my work, I strive to create narratives that are reflections of my own experiences as a contemporary Native American and attempt to push the viewer toward futurist associations.

Characterizing images from the past through historical photographs, I transcribe visages of our ancestors onto historical substrates in graphite. Various interpretations or distortions of the figures begin the contemporary narrative and require the viewer to think of us in human terms rather than objectifying us, as we have been taught to do since birth. I will not deny that Native people are historically culpable in perpetuating such objectification; however, I feel this complexity reinforces our humanity. Utilizing other customary materials such as colored pencils, ink, and water-based media, I create work to suit my influences or to convey sociopolitical ideas. Figures or portraits are often mirrored in my work, at times self-reflecting, intentionally creating a new identity which is then open to interpretation. Other figures in my work are intentionally distorted to mirror the deliberately manipulated and homogenized histories of our people or the carving up of land and culture for colonial consumption. In other works, allegorical hybrid figures represent the understanding of deep time and the lessons to be learned from such wisdom. Map remnants are sometimes collaged as a symbol of our connection to the land while concurrently acting as the ledger of land theft and abuse. Abstract design elements from trade goods or clothing adornment act as backdrops in other pieces, mimicking processes of historical portrait photography.

I am always probing the boundaries that one may associate with the genre and working towards keeping a tradition relevant and fluid for its survival.



*Of White Bread and Miracles (Ghost Dance 1)*

2022

Pencil/graphite, gouache, ink, string, inkjet, map collage on Evanston municipal ledger\*

35 1/2 x 17 1/2 inches

Photo from Blue Rain Gallery, Santa Fe NM

© Chris Pappan

\*Evanston is a northern Chicago suburb that was named after John Evans, former Governor of Colorado territory from 1862–1865.



The works in this series are a direct response to a 1966 “instructional manual” titled “HERE IS YOUR HOBBY: Indian Dancing and Costumes” by William Powers. In this “manual” young boy scouts are supposed to learn mostly powwow dance steps through static black-and-white photographs of young “hobbyists.” A male or female body modeling a dance pose from the manual, with physical features of animals sacred in Native American culture, reflects the homogenization—and consumption—of Indigenous cultures by non-Native peoples. Colorful, textured embellishments typically found on traditional dance regalia work to situate the spiritual aspect of performance back into the authentic ritual movement. The Ghost Dance is also referenced to honor the thousands of Lakota and many other Indigenous peoples who were slaughtered for merely dancing.

*Of White Bread and Miracles (Ghost Dance 2)*

2022

Pencil/graphite, gouache, ink, string, gold leaf, ink-jet, map collage on Evanston municipal ledger\*

35 1/2 x 17 1/2 inches

Photo from Blue Rain Gallery, Santa Fe NM

© Chris Pappan

# Henry Payer

*Ho-Chunk (Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska)*

My interest is the reclamation of Ho-Chunk history and the preservation of our visual culture. As an Indigenous artist, it is important I bring about useful ways of talking about our experiences and sharing our story. My focus is an accurate representation that challenges our pervasive American identity to interpret the modern Ho-Chunk experience. I create works that address our cultural survivance and visual continuum.

I make collage paintings with the intent to create a contemporary aesthetic that reflects, revitalizes, and reintegrates Ho-Chunk visual art forms and stories. I have developed a multimedia artistic practice that expands the visual language through reincorporating traditional objects, forms, and motifs using contemporary methods and techniques. My process involved traveling to these places of our historical removal, where I sought out access to documents, maps, photographs, and cultural objects acquired by museums to research the visual forms and language of our material arts. This influenced my work by connecting to both our relationship to the land by relocation and our acquired traditional art forms. This exploration allows the artwork to speak on issues of land, identity, and our visual culture by combining historical accounts, maps, and photographs with literary concepts, art history, and personal experiences.

By utilizing extensive research in combination with inherent perspective, I am able to recover, document, and expand contemporary Ho-Chunk artistic expression. I aim to contribute to the revision and inclusion of our history through the active depiction of the Ho-Chunk narrative. My perception and relationship to land is based on a shared experience found within the power of these places of inspiration. This initial reaction is a physical intervention with sites of historical relevance where the act of removal/relocation shares the connection between collage and my cultural background. The multidisciplinary works then inform one another, contributing through the use of materials and shared content. While I have been fortunate to interact with traditional culture properties, I am committed to this lifelong accession of knowledge in an effort to develop artworks grounded in concepts specific to Ho-Chunk aesthetics, stories, and lifeways. My works are contemporary expressions that reflect my growth as a Ho-Chunk artist and upholding the tradition of my culture.



## *Seventh Generation*

2023

Collage on canvas

28 x 17 1/4 inches

Photo by Bill Ganzel, Ganzel Group Communications

© Henry Payer

Seven Winnebagos stacked in a totem pole order with a reflective sky on the top windows with four sets of lights descending towards the bottom.



A Ho-Chunk woman stands shielding the sun from her eyes with arm outstretched over a single moccasin; she wears one ruby red slipper and another moccasin with the yellow brick road veering off into the distance. A car air freshener pine tree painted black is split against the red poppy background while blue, yellow, and white colors make up the sky.

*Still No Place Like Home*

2024

Collage on ledger paper

19 x 16 inches

Photo by Bill Ganzel, Ganzel Group Communications

© Henry Payer

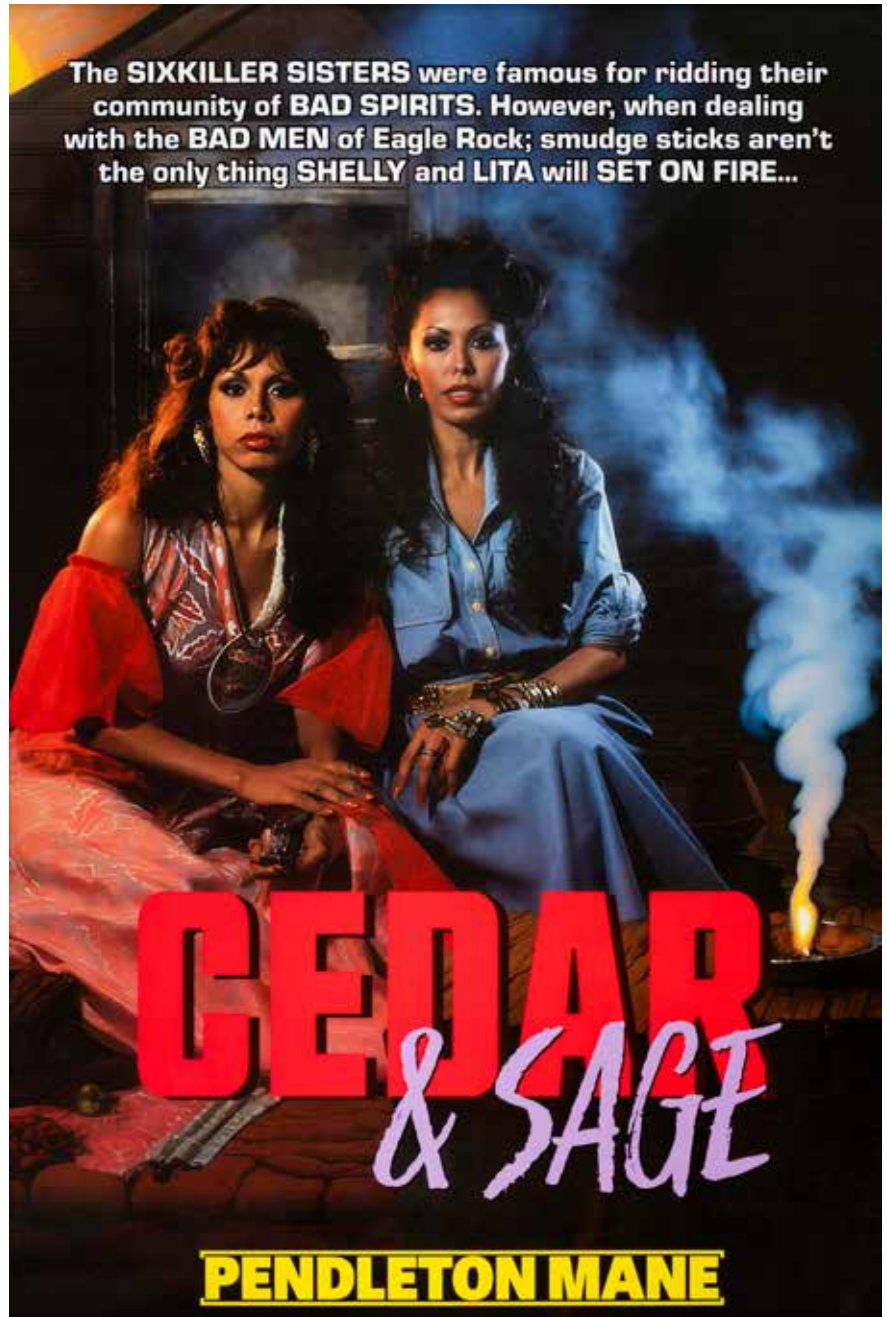
# Daniel Pewewardy

*Comanche*

Daniel Pewewardy (Numunu) was born in Lawton, Oklahoma. He is an enrolled member of the Comanche Nation of Oklahoma and is a member of the Urban Indigenous community of Wichita, Kansas. He works as an Adult Literacy Librarian at the Wichita Public Library and serves on the board of the Mid-America All-Indian Museum. He is also a filmmaker and was a 2022 Screenwriting Fellow for the Sundance Institute Native Lab. In 2023, he produced and exhibited works in the exhibition *Twice Removed: Native American Life After Relocation* at the Wichita Art Museum. Since 2016, he has been a digital content creator on Instagram under the name @Pendletonmane, an Indigenous meme account.

I work in twentieth-century aesthetics and styles (mainly '60s-'90s) that were common for commercial and ephemeral art at the time. While there is currently a lot of great Native representation in popular culture, there were almost a hundred years of third-person, inaccurate, and antiquated depictions. What I'm trying to do with my Pendletonmane works is fill in the gaps.

I know AI is looked down on a lot, especially in the art community, but for me, AI is a technology and tool just like horses and guns were for my ancestors. Being an Indigenous person in a colonized landscape requires us to adapt to things that are alien to us at first and find ways to make them our own, and that's what I try to do with Pendletonmane.



*Cedar and Sage*  
2023

Digital collage using photo editing, AI rendering  
18 x 12 inches

Photo by Bill Ganzel, Ganzel Group Communications  
© Daniel Pewewardy



# Meredith Radke-Gannon

*Cherokee Nation*



My name is Meredith Radke-Gannon, and I am a Cherokee Tribal member. I was born and raised in McPherson, Kansas, and currently live in Bel Aire, Kansas. After graduating from Kansas State University with a Bachelor of Science in K-12 Art Education, I continued my love of art studies at the Kansas City Art Institute in Kansas City, Missouri. After graduating with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Fiber Arts, I became an art teacher in the Wichita Public Schools. As a working artist and instructor, I enjoy creating art that fuses colors, textures, and stories about the land my grandparents lived on in Chelsea, Oklahoma. My favorite mediums are oil, collage, printmaking, and making sculptures out of wood and handwoven fibers. Since I've lived outside the Cherokee land my entire life, my art is an ongoing search for the meanings, stories, and traditions that weren't discussed until later in my adult years. I focus on abstract representations and interpretations with color, texture, and symbols in my artwork. I continue to share the rich traditional and contemporary Indigenous artists with my students and my children with the hope they will value their heritage and our land.

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Mapping connections of two different family origins are stitched together in my art. Two sets of grandparents living in the same small town of Oklahoma; one from Germany and the other Cherokee. This piece began as an homage to the history unveiled in my adult years about the pain, suffering, and loss my Cherokee ancestors endured over 5,000 miles on the Trail of Tears. Their history was not buried, just not discussed. Within the piece are fragments of ledger art, map pins, and embellishments with hand-drawn symbols. The red-fringed shawl, stitched onto handwoven fabric, has printed arrows and a feather. It is quilted in patterns representing the German farm crop rows and the handiwork I was taught as a young girl. The walking stick bears the colors and patterning of Cherokee textiles and beadwork. In its hanging position, it takes on an abstract representation of an ox plowing through the land.

## *Walking the Trail Shawl*

2024

Ink, silk, ledger art, thread, cotton, ribbon/bead, wood, acrylic, paint, metal

75 x 35 x 4 inches

Photo by Bill Ganzel, Ganzel Group Communications

© Meredith Radke-Gannon

# Savannah Berlyn Ricehill

*Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska (enrolled)*  
*Hōcǫk Nj̄šoc Hacı / Umó"ho"*

My artistic journey began at the age of 17 when I discovered the transformative power of photography. What started as a humble gift from my father—an old camera—soon became my medium of choice for capturing the world around me. From the moment I started creating fine art prints, I knew I had found my calling.

I have my AAS in Professional Photography and my BA in Graphic Design. My artistic practice encompasses a range of mediums, including art photography, portrait photography, and even oil painting. While photography remains my primary focus, I occasionally revisit the tactile experience of oil painting when inspiration strikes.

Drawing inspiration from my travels, I have been fortunate enough to explore breathtaking landscapes, from the majestic Yellowstone National Park and the awe-inspiring Grand Canyon to the enchanting Bryce Canyon and Antelope Canyon. These natural wonders have become the subjects of many of my fine art pieces, each one a visual narrative that transports viewers to these captivating locations. Additionally, I find inspiration in the everyday scenes of the Midwest, where I call home.

My work can be characterized as either rustic or bright and vibrant, depending on the subject and the emotions I seek to evoke. Whether it's the warm, earthy tones of a rugged landscape or the energetic bursts of color in a floral arrangement, I aim to create imagery that resonates with viewers on an emotional level.

Recently, I have been focusing on my portrait photography, using my camera to capture the essence of individuals and their unique stories. It is through these intimate portrayals that I strive to reveal the beauty and depth of the human spirit.

However, my creative journey doesn't end there. I am currently revisiting my archive of travel photographs, revitalizing them with fresh perspectives and injecting new life into these cherished memories. This process allows me to combine my passion for storytelling with my technical prowess, resulting in art that bridges the gap between reality and imagination.

In my work, I seek to strike a balance between pursuing my artistic passions and creating a sustainable livelihood. I believe that art should not only be a means of self-expression but also a way to connect with others and make a lasting impact. By sharing my unique vision of the world, I hope to inspire others to appreciate the beauty that surrounds us and encourage them to embark on their own artistic journeys.



## *Elegance in Motion*

2023

Photograph on canvas

36 x 24 inches

Image courtesy of the artist

© Savannah Berlyn Ricehill

Through a combination of technical expertise, an eye for composition, and a genuine love for storytelling, I invite viewers to join me on a visual exploration, capturing fleeting moments and eternalizing them in art.

# Nathaniel Ruleaux

*Oglala Lakota*

Nathaniel Ruleaux is an artist currently located on unceded land of the Očhéthi Šakówiŋ in the Great Plains. A member of the Oglala Lakota Nation, his work combines modern art with traditional indigenous imagery. Honoring the past, questioning the present, and fighting for the future.



## ***Mní Heyókħa***

2023

Photograph

36 x 24 inches

Photo by Bill Ganzel, Ganzel Group Communications

© Nathaniel Ruleaux

Made while in residence at The Union for Contemporary Art. A reflection on climate change and the pressures of contemporary society. A self-portrait.



## ***Ptěččaka No.86***

2023

Spray paint and pastel on canvas

20 x 16 inches

Photo by Bill Ganzel, Ganzel Group Communications

© Nathaniel Ruleaux

A haunting reflection of contemporary nightmares, otherworldly powers in the dark.

# Nelda Schrupp

*Pheasant Rump Nakota First Nation*

Nelda Schrupp was born in 1952 and lived on the White Bear First Nations Indian Reservation in southern Saskatchewan, Canada. The youngest of 12 children, she moved to the United States at age 17 after her father died. She met her husband in Kansas and eventually moved to North Dakota, where she decided to go to college.

When she registered for classes at the University of North Dakota (UND), Nelda selected biology but later changed her major to art after discovering that she worked better with metal than with numbers. In 1990, she graduated from UND with a bachelor of fine arts (BFA) in Visual Arts, minoring in Anthropology. She went on to get a master of fine arts (MFA) in 1993 with an emphasis in metalsmithing and sculpture-making.

In graduate school, she decided to create her own contemporary style of rattles, also known as noisemakers, to pay homage to her Native culture. Traditional rattles, which were unique to each tribe, were used by the Medicine Men to pray to the four directions (north, east, south and west), and the sound would help to carry their prayers to The Great Spirit or Grandfather. But since rattle-making was traditionally a man's birthright, she wanted to create something different from the sacred rattles used for ceremonial purposes. Therefore, she developed her own process, including soldering, acid washes and polishing, which resulted in her own artistic interpretation of the art form.

Unlike most jewelry makers, the focal point for Nelda's pieces is the metal, not the jewels or stones. She cuts out matching shapes, often geometric, and solders them together to create a hollow. But before closing the space, she places little beads inside that consist of melted down scrap metal. The bead size and quantity have a significant effect on the sound emitted from each rattle.

Nelda has been letting her artwork lead the way since she discovered her talent during her college years. During an interview with Nelda in season 13 of Prairie Public's *Prairie Pulse* in 2015, she explained that she begins each project with a thumbnail sketch, but it often does not match the end result. She said, "the piece takes on a life of its own and I just follow it." All the elements in her art pieces have meaning and special significance as they relate to Native culture. Nelda said she loves to educate admirers of her work as a way to pass down culture. For instance, she often incorporates the colors red and yellow because they represent physical and spiritual power.



## *Cape*

2022

Sterling silver, copper, amazonite, horsehair

34 x 12 1/2 inches

Photo by Bill Ganzel, Ganzel Group Communications

© Nelda Schrupp

# Tony A. Tiger

*Sac and Fox, Seminole and Mvskoke*

My art is fueled by the belief that human beings are more than mere reflections in a mirror—we are soul and spirit. I am thankful for the opportunity to visually document my time with paint, print, and sculpture of natural materials. By sharing my narrative through my art as a Sac and Fox, Muscogee, and Seminole man, the viewer is witness to America's history and its relationship with the first peoples of North America. I incorporate photography in my art, which gives evidence of each individual soul, family member, and tribe's existence before America became a

nation. Tribal text and designs are also used in the body to memorialize the efforts of all who walk the land before me. I enjoy the opportunities I have in nature; I draw inspiration and hope from the created natural forms and cycles that give their abundance to all living creatures. I give thanks to *Hesaketyvmese* (the Muscogee word for God), the One who gives breath, for my provisions and life.

Mvto/Aho

Tony A. Tiger



## *Woven Memory*

2023

Etchings, serigraph, ink, paper, hand-painted drawings

30 1/4 x 24 1/4 inches

Photo by Bill Ganzel, Ganzel Group Communications

© Tony A. Tiger

The photo etchings in this series are of my ancestors who were removed from their homeland, where the Mississippi and Rock Rivers converge.



## *Community Arbor: Mississippi Contemplation*

2023

Elm branches, etching, paper, wax, LED light, serigraph, acrylic paint, poplar wood base

21 3/4 x 24 x 18 inches

Photo by Bill Ganzel, Ganzel Group Communications

© Tony A. Tiger

The arbor is a place of shelter, teaching, preparation, worship, and remembrance. The *Community Arbor* series begins with a mock-up like *Community Arbor: Mississippi Contemplation* that leads to a room-sized installation.

# Crystal Wabnum

*Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas/Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation*



My creative practice is a conduit to heal from PTSD. Beading is medicinal.

Bearing witness to the ongoing genocide of Indigenous Palestinians triggered many Native people's lived and inherited experiences with settler colonial violence, including my own. My household has taken seriously our moral responsibility to speak up as genocide survivors who have dual citizenship in our tribal nation(s) as well as the United States. We engage in direct actions locally; amplify Palestinian voices on our platforms; use our art to fundraise for Palestinian-led organizing and direct action; engage our electeds at the local, state, and federal levels; and do the somatic bodywork that enables us to continue bearing witness to and fighting to stop US-funded genocide against our Palestinian relatives. Beading is a medium for storytelling that is also medicine for anxiety and depression.

*Nijii* means friend in Potawatomi. *Friend like Yemen* is a three-fold statement: 1) The Yemeni have warriored up and effectively bankrupted Port Eilat, the second-largest port in the Occupied Palestinian Territories; 2) As a Kickapoo person, I am committed to the liberation of Palestine and

## *Nijii Like Yemen*

2024

Beadwork, leather, cotton, and velvet

8 1/4 x 8 1/4 x 1/4 inches

Photo by Bill Ganzel, Ganzel Group Communications

© Crystal Wabnum

the cultural continuity of the Palestinian people; and 3) Like the Yemeni in relation to their Palestinian relatives, I am deeply loyal to my loved ones and will do everything in my power to ensure they are safe and protected from settler colonial violence.

I beaded portions of the cuff as the 2024 "Super Bowl siege" was unfolding in Rafah. I used red, white, and blue materials to symbolize my responsibility as a US citizen to disrupt colonial violence here and abroad. The beads range in size from 11 to 15 and include Czech, Charlotte cuts, and matte bead types. The calico cotton lining inside the cuff is a nod to ceremony regalia because I created this cuff in prayer for Palestinian survival, endurance, and spiritual strength.

# Benjamin West

Otoe-Missouria Tribe/Muscogee (Creek) Nation/Southern Cheyenne



I aim to document and highlight the enduring Indian wars that persist in today's digital landscape. As an urban Indigenous individual, I navigate the duality of two worlds, traditional and nontraditional, striving to raise awareness about ongoing Indigenous rights and issues that continue to impact our communities. My creative approach combines photography, video, 3D art, and animation, allowing me to convey my vision across multiple platforms.

Faw Faw Chief Coat by Miha Xege (Faded Woman) (Tamara Faw Faw), Otoe-Missouria Tribe/Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma

Photo depicts Isaiah Arkeketa (Hestóxehne = Walks Behind), Buffalo Clan, wearing American Indian Peace Medal issued by President Ulysses S. Grant to James Arkeketa, Otoe Delegation, 1881

## *Abothda Manyi = Walks Above (Otoe)*

2023

Digital photograph, digital mixed media, augmented reality  
37 x 49 inches

Image courtesy of the artist

© Benjamin West



Scan the QR code to download the Artive app to activate the augmented reality for this photograph.

# Paula Whatley

*Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma*



I am a Native American photographer based in Texas. I was lucky enough to be born to a family that valued travel, adventure, and photography. By the age of seven, I was developing film in a makeshift darkroom with my photographer father. He instilled in me a love of documenting the wonderful world we are privileged to inhabit. As an adult I kept my love of travel alive, documenting with photographs along the way. While completing a bachelor's degree in accounting and spending many years in a corporate job, I continued to explore my lifelong passions: photography and travel. After many years in the corporate world, I began to turn my love of photography into a second career by displaying and selling my photographs in museums, galleries, online, and at local art shows. I am interested in adventurous travel and photographing the beauty in everyday life. My favorite subject matter is nature, whether it is a beautiful landscape, animal, or flower. I believe getting outside is good for the soul. Through my artwork, I try to bring the outside in as much as possible. I am currently blessed to live in the horse country of North Texas, providing me many opportunities to explore nature and capture its beauty.

*Wild Horse, Theodore Roosevelt National Park*

2022

Digital photograph printed on aluminum

36 x 24 inches

Image courtesy of the artist

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