Transforming the Museum Space: Native Feminisms as Activism in “Hearts of Our People”

By

Copyright 2020

Sarah N. Hixson

Submitted to the graduate degree program in Indigenous Studies and the Graduate Faculty of the University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

____
Dr. Robert Warrior, Committee Chairman

____
Sarah Deer, Esquire

____
Dr. Peter Welsh

Date Defended: September 7, 2020

The Thesis Committee for Sarah N. Hixson certifies that this is the approved version of the following thesis:

Transforming the Museum Space: Native Feminisms as Activism in “Hearts of Our People”

____

Dr. Robert Warrior, Committee Chairman

Date Approved: September 7, 2020

Abstract

There is a growing trend within museums today to become a space geared toward social activism. Their attention to connecting with their communities and seeking avenues of implementing new ways of knowing and doing aims to steer away from museums' historic Eurocentric roots, decentering settler colonialism. This paper explores ways the exhibition "Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists" employs methods that decenter settler colonialism in museum culture and re-center Native women and kin through the use of an advisory board, a different art canon, and a number of in-gallery measures that, when combined, create a framework for social action-oriented curation because they exemplify a Native feminist ideology. I argue that by using a similar framework, museums can begin to transform their galleries into spaces for social action.

Keywords: activism, art, art history, art museums, curation, exhibitions, feminism, Indigeneity, indigenous studies, museums, museum studies, Native American, Native feminisms

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my committee, my colleagues at the Spencer Museum of Art (past and present), and my friends and family for their guidance, support, and their unwavering belief in me. This year has not been an easy one, and your kind words of encouragement and your pushing me for academic and personal development have meant so much.

I owe a huge “thank you” to Dr. Jill Ahlberg Yohe and the staff of the Minneapolis Institute of Art for their assistance and for taking the time to talk with me. I would also like to thank Katie Delmez, a curator from the Frist Art Museum in Nashville, Tennessee, for passing along photographs of the medicine baskets and for her insight into the installation process of this exhibition.

Additionally, I would like to thank the artists and the institutions who granted me permissions to use digital images of artwork for this paper.

Thank you.

Dedication

For Nina

02/21/1942—02/27/2020

Table of Contents

Acceptance Page……………………………………………………………………………..ii

Abstract…………………………………………………………………………………......iii

Acknowledgements & Dedication…………………………………………………………. iv

Table of Contents……………………………………………………………………………v

Introduction…………………………………………………………………………………..1

Decentering Settler Colonialism in Museum Culture..21

Recentering Women and Kin………...43

Conclusion…………………………………………………………………………………60

List of Figures………………………………………………………………………….....66

Bibliography…………………………………………………………………………..…72

Introduction

"To develop their social role, museums must be a microcosm of the society—but rather than just a mirror, a mirror of the future. In other words, it must incorporate in its operational mode what we want society to be."

—Milene Chiovatto, Chair of the ICOM International Committee for Education and Cultural Action and Head of the Education Department at the Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo in Brazil[1]

Imagine walking into an art museum gallery space and the first thing you see is a car. Or attempting to reading an object label but you cannot because the text is in Cherokee or Dakhóta. Are you in the right place? What is going on here? In June 2019, a traveling exhibition, "Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists", was organized by the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia). It later traveled to the Frist Art Museum in Nashville, Tennessee from September 2019 to January 2020 and was planned to be installed at the Renwick Gallery at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C., and the Philbrook Museum of Art in Tulsa, Oklahoma later in 2020.

Upon reading about the show, I discovered history in the making. The first of its kind, this show is the first to showcase the creation of works by Native women artists. Consisting of 117 objects spanning a millennium, this show seeks to celebrate the artistry, history, and culture

[1] International Council of Museums, "Seven Inspirational Quotes from Female Leaders in Museums," March 7, 2018, https://icom.museum/en/news/seven-inspirational-quotes-from-female-leaders-in-museums-2/.

of Native and Aboriginal women.[2] These objects come from all over what is now the United States and Canada, celebrating and highlighting the media, vibrancy, and resilience of Indigenous cultures. However, it is not the breadth of this show that captured my attention. I sensed it was a gamechanger, transcending an ordinary exhibition and setting a new curatorial precedent. From what I have read, the public responses have confirmed this, going as far as stating it is "an important step in decolonizing spaces that are inherently unequal and have long benefited a few through the dynamics of power that have summarily and systematically eradicated and oppressed brown and female voices."[3]

Examining closer, through its methods of curation and exhibition design, this show is rooted in Native feminisms. The word "feminisms" is plural to connote the plurality of Native America, as there are "'many, many different world views, values, and traditions represented'".[4] "Feminisms" is included for two reasons: 1.) because Native women are impacted differently than Native men in Euroamerican society and thus have different ways of combatting settler colonialism for the betterment of the whole community, and 2.) because it is in direct opposition to the colonially-rooted patriarchy existing within Euroamerican society. Native feminisms are the theoretical ideologies that are based on Native ways of being, focusing on gender and sexuality. They are distinguished from mainstream feminism because, their foundations are built upon disrupting settler colonialism[5] and the patriarchy it brought with it, rather than just the patriarchy itself.

---

[2] Not all these objects travel to every venue; depending on the available space at a museum and the agreements between the donating institutions and private collectors, there could be less placed on display.
[3] Wpengine, "Museum Exhibition Features the Work of Native American Women Artists," Art Herstory, January 20, 2020, https://artherstory.net/hearts-of-our-people-review/)
[4] Nancy Marie Mithlo, ""A Real Feminist Journey": Locating Indigenous Feminisms in the Arts," *Meridans* 9, no. 2 (2009): pp. 12-13
[5] According to Flowers, "settler colonialism is invested in gaining certainty to lands and resources and will achieve access through the dispossession of Indigenous peoples, violently or legislatively, a process that begins with the

Rather than being focused on individual rights and gender equality[6], Native feminisms look for the intersections, or common threads, found in identity constructions while acknowledging the plurality within Native America. This plurality is the recognition of the diversity of Native cultures that becomes a unifying factor, "'a commonality of difference'"[7], in the face of Euroamerican society. These intersections and unifying factors include land recognition and defending sacred water and land. They also include reclaiming language and knowledge systems, and re-centering kinships and the roles of women and Native LGBTQIATS communities in societies; this is where one can find Native feminisms at work.

The roots of white feminism can be traced back to Native feminisms.[8] In particular, the roots of white feminism can be found within the egalitarian societies found within the social structure of the Haudenosaunee Confederation. The mainstream, white feminism that exists today has its foundations within the women's suffrage movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The suffragettes who founded and led the movement, including Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Lucy Stone, Julia Ward Howe, and other such associated women, began having major, constructive conversations about the autonomy of women, starting with the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848. Many of these influential women were neighbors with the Haudenosaunee in what is now New York state. In finding "the courage to challenge all institutionalized society…they were inspired" by their "neighbors", the Native

---

body, specifically the bodies of Indigenous women." Flowers, Rachel. "Refusal to forgive: Indigenous women's love and rage". *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, & Society*. Vol. 4, No. 2, 2015. p.34

[6] Sally Roesch Wagner, "Women Voted Before the United States Was Formed" in *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, (Penguin Books, 2019), pp. 1-7.

[7] Mithlo, "A Real Feminist Journey", pp. 13

[8] I have chosen to use "white feminism" because in practice, the mainstream feminism that exists in this moment is not intersectional or aware enough of how women of other ethnicities exist in the world to be called anything else. I am talking about the mainstream feminism used within the United States. We're getting there, but we aren't there yet. And until that day comes, it will be white feminism.

women who were living in an egalitarian society.[9] However, the women did not broaden their work to the Native women from whom they were inspired. This established a precedent for using Native women as data, inserting them "into existing feminist paradigms for the political, social, and intellectual advancement of non-Natives."[10]

Due to its limited vision, white feminism is not an adequate tool of critique here, seeing as many of its practitioners "continue to see whiteness as so natural, normative, and unproblematic… making invisible race and class in their representation of gender oppression…centering the life experiences of middle-class white women"[11]. Theresa Lightfoot (Mi'kmaw), in their chapter, "So What If We Didn't Call it 'Feminism': Feminism and Indigenous Peoples", states the misalignment that occurs when trying to pair Indigeneity with white feminism:

> "I think this may be due to the fact that Feminism appears to be about individual women getting ahead or making patriarchy more tolerable, while if feminism exists in an Indigenous context it is more about making things better for a collective group of people and taking on the system that is responsible for the roots of patriarchy in the first place."[12]

Lightfoot's statement brings up crucial differences between white feminism and Native feminisms. While the common "enemy" here is the patriarchy, white feminism does not analyze

[9] Wagner, "Women Voted Before the United States Was Formed", pp. 1.
[10] Mithlo, "A Real Feminist Journey", pp. 11
[11] Aileen Moreton-Robinson, "Look Out White Woman: Representations of 'The White Woman" in Feminist Theory" in *Talkin' Up To The White Woman: Aboriginal Women and Feminism*. (University of Queensland Press, 2000), pp. 34.
[12] Theresa Lightfoot, "So What if We Didn't Call it 'Feminism'?! Feminism and Indigenous people" in *Feminism FOR REAL: Deconstructing the academic industrial complex of feminism* ed. Jessica Yee (Our Schools/Our Selves, 2011), pp. 107.

the influence of settler colonialism on social constructs. This is harder for mainstream, white feminism to do because white women were (and still are) complicit in colonization efforts. To connote the hegemonic position of white feminism within all feminist-related or -adjacent contexts, Lightfoot has capitalized feminism, expressing the impact it has on Native feminisms' approaches to their work. One such way is through the emphasis on the individual found in white feminism while Native feminisms focus on the communal. Everything is linked back to benefitting the community as a whole; the ideologies are not focused on the individual because doing so "marginalizes communal rights inherent in nationhood and fails to recognize the unique history of genocidal practices exercised in policies of colonialism".[13]

Every nation has a distinct history and though many are similar, none are identical, meaning the ways to push against colonial pasts-turned-presents are specific to each nation. Interventions to combat colonialism cannot be focused only on women and women-related social issues, but instead need to be focused on how the whole society needs women and their central role to its success. Complementarity is used to discuss gender roles, as it focuses on the balance found within Native gender roles, rather than seeing them as oppressive, restrictive, or hierarchical; they are "'where negotiation, compromise, and balance are mobilized'".[14] Knowing how one contributes to society is accompanied with senses of belonging and self-worth; gender roles are one way to accomplish this. Many Native societies have gender roles for non-binary or Two-Spirit people, as well, celebrating them and recognizing the value and worthiness of those individuals in society. Reinserting these gender roles back into Indigenous societies is one such manifestation of Native feminisms.

[13] Mithlo, "A Real Feminine Journey", pp. 8
[14] Mithlo, "A Real Feminist Journey" pp. 11

Verna St. Denis (Cree/Métis) states that the concept of equality does not mean that a woman becomes equal to a man in the eyes of society, or vice versa, because doing so would mean a woman "would have to be 'willing to accept less than the position accorded to women of [her] nation historically.'"[15] In relating this back to "Hearts of Our People", St. Denis's statement demonstrates that to push against settler colonialism, curatorial efforts must be focused on respectfully reflecting nationhood and the culture that comes with it instead of gender or racial equality. Nancy Marie Mithlo (Chiricahua Apache) states that to implement Native curatorial practice means "reclaiming cultural traditions, asserting sovereignty, and embracing land-based philosophies."[16] In doing so, the power dynamics of museum spaces shift by Indigenizing them.[17]

The use of white feminism cannot properly critique power dynamics that are at play in Euroamerican society, because "'white women… as a group [are] the material beneficiaries of the colonial exploitation [that] their society has imposed upon'" Indigenous ones.[18] White feminism investigates "gender politics, power relations, and sexuality", but does not explore the power dynamics of settler colonialism.[19] This also means that white feminism cannot properly critique the power dynamics found within colonial institutions, like museums. Examining and analyzing widely accepted methods of curation also means investigating the "white supremacy

---

[15] Verna St. Denis, "Feminism is For Everybody: Aboriginal Women, Feminism and Diversity" in *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism* ed. Joyce Green, (Black Point, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing, 2017), pp. 38.
[16] Nancy Marie Mithlo, "Guest Editor's Introduction: Curatorial Practice and Native North American Art," *Wicazo Sa Review* 27, no. 1 (2012): pp. 9
[17] Mithlo, "Guest Editor", pp. 6
[18] M. Annette Jaimes and Theresa Halsey, "American Indian Women: At the Center of Indigenous Resistance in Contemporary North America" in *The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance* ed. M. Annette Jaimes (South End Press: Boston, Massachusetts, 1992), pp. 332
[19] Moreton-Robinson, "Look Out White Woman", pp. 32-71

[that] exists within institutions”.[20] In doing so, an exhibition’s purpose can shift away from its traditionally colonial-based and academic past, introducing different modes of curation that can be incredibly powerful and meaningful. The opportunity for new kinds of curation would not only benefit museum staff and the field, but also an institution’s community, especially if that new type of curation included, and sustained a relationship with, that community. This brings in social engagement and community building, converting methods to forms of activism and transforms the museum exhibition into a space for social action.

In learning more about the function of museums, the purposes and meanings behind the work that they do, I have learned how beneficial and meaningful museum work can be. However, in looking forward, it is apparent that museums could be doing more in their institutional and day-to-day operations. If museums are really a mirror of the future, like Milene Chiovatto states in the opening quote above, then they must be willing to forgo the traditional methodologies of museum operations where they can, so that they are better able to serve. According to the International Council of Museums (ICOM), a museum is a non-profit organization that serves and encourages the development of its community. Additionally, a museum constantly acquires, conserves, researches, and exhibits objects for the education, study and enjoyment of its visitors; this definition has changed very little since its development in 1974.[21] However, in September 2019, ICOM proposed a new definition; there was not enough support for or against it to fully accept or discard, so discussion was tabled until the next ICOM meeting. This definition is as follows:

---

[20] Krysta Williams and Erin Konsmo. “Resistance to Indigenous Feminism” in *Deconstructing the academic industrial complex of feminism* ed. Jessica Yee (Our Schools/Our Selves, 2011), pp. 30.
[21] International Council of Museums, “Museum Definition” ICOM, n.d., https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/.

"Museums are democratising, inclusive and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the pasts and the futures. Acknowledging and addressing the conflicts and challenges of the present, they hold artefacts and specimens in trust for society, safeguard diverse memories for future generations and guarantee equal rights and equal access to heritage for all people.

"Museums are not for profit. They are participatory and transparent, and work in active partnership with and for diverse communities to collect, preserve, research, interpret, exhibit, and enhance understandings of the world, aiming to contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing."[22]

ICOM's new proposed definition is a tall order for museums, seeking to push them and their day-to-day operations toward more inclusive, community-oriented spaces. This definition is looking to the future of museum work, reflecting what museum visitors and their communities are expecting or hoping to find when entering a museum, gallery, and like institutions. However, it should be noted that this definition does not encompass all museums, as many of the institutions represented were large, well-funded institutions that do not operate nor have experiences similar to those of smaller museums, like house museums, small galleries, or even academic museums on university campuses. At its foundation, though, the ICOM definition promotes deep and meaningful community involvement, accessibility, and social justice in museum methods of general operation, including education, curation, programming and outreach, fundraising, and communications.

[22] International Council of Museums, "Museum Definition".

The new ICOM definition reflects the growing trend taking over museums, as more and more are being encouraged to expand their activities and responsibilities to include micro-actions that are aimed at macro-change through social activism; but this steep order can only be accomplished through intentional action plans, as lack of action is still action and speaks just as loudly. The focus of this document is on social action and social reform because of the purposeful nature of methods. Social activism is defined as the "doctrine or practice that emphasizes direct vigorous action"[23] or "intentional action… [that is employed] to bring about social… change"[24], ultimately for social reform (a community's societal ideal). So, why is this important? As mainstream culture is changing, it is becoming more apparent for institutions, like museums, that are dependent upon or were created to serve their communities, to best reflect or challenge (for the better) those communities' mindsets and culture(s). This means inclusion, different modes of interpretation, and public events and engagement and programs, and focuses on in-gallery educational curricula.

As one of the most forward-facing activities a museum can do, exhibitions are big attention grabbers, are the center of programming for the period it is on view, and act as a way for museums to connect with their publics. Their significance to museum staff and their communities make exhibitions an important tool that museums can use to implement social action in their day-to-day functions. This inclusion of social action is a necessary tool to counter the colonial narrative museums have been responsible for furthering. Exhibitions are constructions, created as "a medium of and setting for representation"[25], becoming "privileged

---

[23] Merriam-Webster, "Activism," Merriam-Webster (Merriam-Webster, n.d.), https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/activism?utm_campaign=sd.
[24] Urban Dictionary, "Social Activist," Urban Dictionary, n.d., https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Social+Activist.
[25] Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine, *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display ;* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Inst. Press, 2012)., pp. 12.

arenas for presenting images of self and 'other'".[26] The way an exhibition is designed—the objects selected, the relationships that are created between objects, the lighting used, the text written and displayed with the objects—are all part of its construction within the space. This construction "can either aid or impede our appreciation and understanding of the visual, cultural, social, and political interest of the objects and stories exhibited in museums."[27] With all these different variables, it is a challenge for exhibitors to navigate all associated knowledge systems, especially in exhibitions of works by Indigenous peoples.

The effects of colonization still linger and stem from a Euroamerican patriarchal society. Assimilation tools like boarding schools, the influence of Christianity, forced relocations and (in many cases) the lack of access to ancestral lands, as well as racially-motivated policies such as craniometry, and tribal enrollment and blood quantum, to name a few, have created chasms between traditional ways of being and contemporary realities. The point of assimilation tactics is to break the spirit of the person(s) those efforts are focused upon for them to mimic and ultimately accept the imposed way of life. If they do not conform, then they will die, erasing them from history. These tools and policies have demonstrated the lengths settlers and the settler government would go to separate Indigenous peoples from their traditions to force them to become "Americans", inside and out. This has resulted in many laws and policies limiting Indigenous agency and sovereignty, including, but certainly not limited to, reservations and dependency on the United States for access to food and protective legislation.

However, the effects of colonization reach farther than the national level, they impact the individual, as well. Because settler colonialism in the case of the United States comes from

---

[26] Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine. "Culture and Representation" In *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display;* Washington, DC: Smithsonian Inst. Press, 2012. pp. 15.
[27] Ibid, pp. 13-14.

western Europe, it is patriarchal by nature. Through colonization and modes of assimilation, women were more heavily impacted by settler colonialism. The settler government of the United States, very early on, knew that the fastest and cleanest way to completely dissolve Indigenous communities was to attack the placement of Indigenous women; this was not just in the physical sense, but also in psychological and societal means. Women, traditionally in many Native and Aboriginal societies, held great social and political power, being central to the day-to-day operations of the nation or tribe; I will explore specifics about this later. This honorable position was replaced with submission, stemming from patriarchal cultural values, further resulting in the historic and present-day violence happening to Native and Aboriginal women. Because of their power and influence, Native and Aboriginal women are continually seen as threats to the colonial narrative, one of erasure and dominance.

The lingering colonial narrative manifests itself in the converging of the traditionality of museum methodologies and the "other". This breaks down into powerplays, evidence of politics in the gallery. Timothy W. Luke, in his book, *Museum Politics: Power Plays at the Exhibition*, states that "art exhibitions are performances of power, creating states out of narratives, images, practices, endorsed as authoritative in the powerplays of the artwork put out on show as a moralistic performance"[28] That creation of a narrative from colonial knowledge systems leads to the establishment of exhibitions that tell stories about people, rather than by them, perpetuating ideas and assumptions. "A powerful curatorial vision, when coupled with a well-scripted

[28] Timothy W. Luke, "Politics at the Exhibition: Aesthetics, History, and Nationality in the Cultural Wars," in *Museum Politics: Power Plays at the Exhibition* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), pp. 12.

performance of elegantly exhibited art, can act as a culture-writing force that rewrites lessons either for or against the incumbent ruling regime."[29]

One way to disrupt that colonial narrative is by implementing Native feminist lenses of looking. I intend to examine the curatorial methods of "Hearts of Our People" and the power it has to change the way museums curate objects and art from Native cultures. Its power comes not only from its subject matter, but from a number of methods that, alone, are small changes, but have big impacts when combined. It is my heart-felt hope and belief that if any museum has the desire to exhibit Native art or cultures in any way, that they will look to this exhibition as the standard for the future.

Looking Back

The reason the exhibition "Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists" sets a new curatorial precedent is because of the history of museums. The historicizing and establishing of institutions and their methodologies is just as important as looking toward the future of museums, as the investigation serves as points of critique for contemporary artists. Museums, as they are known today, come from a family-tree of sorts, from many different institutions, their practices, and wider cultural mentalities. These include the Wunderkammern, academic salons, world's fairs, and Imperialism. In today's culture, these colonially-derived methodologies are being challenged by the desires and expectations of the general public. There will be, and currently are, visitors and staff members who will push against and question change; however, considering the growing trend and the drastic change in the proposed ICOM definition show that

[29] Ibid, pp. 15.

those who are opposed to change are not in the majority of museum visitors and staff. For exhibitions, this is challenging the "colonial formation" from which current museums descend.[30]

Stemming from western European cultural tradition dating from ancient Greece and Rome, collectors gathered things that helped them understand the world around them. One of the more prominent examples of this is the Wunderkammern, or cabinets of curiosity, that were popular during the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries. They provided opportunities for predominantly western European upper-class collectors to gather things that intrigued them, dubbing objects "curios". Some of the oldest collections in Europe served as founding collections for major institutions, akin to that of the Medici family and the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. The "development of mercantilism, the rise of the affluent merchant class, and the decline of royal patronage systems together led to a greater public interest in the arts beginning early in the eighteenth century."[31] This change led to art work being accessible to citizens, albeit wealthy ones, instead of art being only available to royalty, further leading to the establishment of the art market.

The seventeen hundreds also brought the Enlightenment, or the Age of Reason, as a period of great intellectual examination of the world, in using reason and science over faith and seemingly superstitious beliefs. Many philosophers explored how the world operated and the motivations of human nature, among other things.[32] The Enlightenment also brought with it the establishment of academic disciplines and methods of categorization that became evident not only those academic disciplines, but also in the cultural mentalities that would create hierarchies

---

[30] Karp and Lavine, "Culture and Representation", pp. 15.
[31] Kiersten F. Latham and John E. Simmons, "The Origins of Museums," in *Foundations of Museum Studies Evolving Systems of Knowledge* (Santa Barbara, California: Libraries Unlimited, 2014), pp. 31.
[32] Khan Academy, "The Enlightenment Period (Article)," Khan Academy (Khan Academy, n.d.), https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/us-history/colonial-america/colonial-north-america/a/the-enlightenment.

based on racial superiority.[33] Coming out of the Enlightenment, academic disciplines, like the visual arts, created hierarchies and binaries within themselves. The creation of "fine arts" departments furthered created the dichotomy between "fine arts" and other types of artistic creation, such as craft, decorative, folk, etc. that have lasted through to today in hierarchies found within museum collections. The establishment and growing popularity of academic salons during the seventeen and eighteen hundreds also impacted modern museum collection and exhibitions. Deciding who was on view and who was admitted into the academy is perhaps the biggest impact of salons, leading to the collecting of mostly white male artists, since they were the ones being accepted and supported by the salon and academic systems.

These same Enlightenment-inspired categorizations and hierarchies also found their way into disciplines like anthropology, from which ethnology and ethnography stem.[34] Ethnology compares cultures through deep and specific cultural study from ethnography.[35] The focus with other cultures only grew as western empires sought expansion, as well. In the eighteen hundreds, during the global, Imperialist age, mainly major western European powers and the United States developed a growing fascination with civilizations they labeled "primitive cultures". When paired with Industrialization, World's Fairs that were planned for exhibition all over the world displayed not only the newest in global technological advancements and inventions, but also displayed material culture and living individuals as new discoveries. The American displays at

[33] Monika Siebert, "Introduction: Indigeneity and Multicultural Misrecognition," in *Indians Playing Indian?: Multiculturalism and Contemporary Indigenous Art in North America* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: The University Alabama Press, 2015), pp. 5.
[34] University of Toronto, "History of Anthropology," Intro to Anthropology, n.d., http://individual.utoronto.ca/boyd/anthro7.htm.Modern anthropology was established circa 1900; it was established before that in England and France, among other European nations.
[35] Fran Barone, "Ethnology and Ethnography in Anthropology," Human Relations Area Files - Cultural information for education and research, February 25, 2020, https://hraf.yale.edu/teach-ehraf/ethnology-and-ethnography-in-anthropology/.

the Venice Biennale, an international art exposition first opening in 1895, included Native peoples as a signifier of America, setting the country apart from the rest of the world because Native Americans only came from America.[36] These types of displays are called living zoos and speak to the colonial mindset behind the act of exhibiting people and their material culture as something that essentially did not exist before European presence. Europeans and Euroamericans have had the self-accredited authority to determine that they could do so, as if Indigeneity was theirs to discover. These forms of exhibition are rooted in racism, more specifically, white supremacy. Ivan Karp states in his section introductory chapter, "Culture and Representation",

> "We could argue that the museum is a uniquely Western institution, that exotic objects displayed in museums are there only because of the history of Western imperialism and colonial appropriation, and that the only story such can tell is the history of their status as trophies of imperial conquest."[37]

It was also during the eighteen hundreds that many of the first museums were being established in the United States. Termed "the Golden Age of Museums", institutions were established primarily as educational cultural centers.[38] The rise of Industrialization also formed the middle, working class who spent most of their days working in factories; museums became a place where those of the middle class could educate themselves on the wider world, learning about other cultures through their creations. Many of the institutions that rose out of the eighteen hundreds were natural history and art museums. The methods of collecting the curious and exhibiting them culminated in the establishment of early natural history museums. Early exhibitionary techniques included the use of dioramas, which allowed museums to create

---

[36] Siebert, "Introduction", pp. 12.
[37] Karp and Lavine, "Culture and Representation", pp. 15-16.
[38] Latham and Simmons, "The Origins of Museums", pp. 31.

environments behind glass, incorporating multiple specimens into one display. Much of natural history museum collections consist of natural material, such as animals, flora and fauna, and prehistoric skeletons (dinosaurs and the like). However, due to colonial mentalities, those of other races, namely Indigenous peoples, were considered part of the landscape, allowing for objects such as human remains and ceremonial objects to enter museum collections, having been gathered by social scientists. This is where many sub-collections, meaning categorically grouped objects within the larger, institutional collection, such as ethnographic collections, come from. Karp explains how this is a problem by stating that "problems arise when objects made by humans are exhibited in natural history museums and the exhibitors believe that theories of nature can substitute for accounts of cultural factors such as beliefs, values, and intentions."[39] If museum exhibitions carry on traditionally, that they are

> "organized on the basis of assumptions about the intentions of the objects' producers, the cultural skills and qualifications of the audience, the claims to authoritativeness made by the exhibition and judgements of the aesthetic merit or authenticity of the objects or settings exhibited",

which result in the establishment of methodologies, not only in academic study, but also in museums' exhibiting and collecting practices.[40] Within this train of thought, objects are collected and contextualized within an institution that focuses on the social sciences. Ethnographic collections in an art museum exist within a different context than the rest of the pieces in that museum's collection. The art of non-western cultures, usually of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas are often grouped together in that exact order, creating the acronym AOA.

---

[39] Karp and Lavine, "Culture and Representation", pp. 23.
[40] Ibid, pp. 12.

Many institutions have wings or departments that focus specifically on these objects. Institutions, like the Metropolitan Museum of Art (the Met), have had ethnographic collections exhibited in wings specific to AOA; it was not until 2019 that the Met created a curatorial position for the works from the Americas.

On a broader scale, museums were established to aid in the creation of national identity and narrative construction. Executing the mentalities of displaying "newly discovered" aspects of America, as mentioned earlier regarding international venues, the exhibiting of material culture and individuals presented to the world things that were only found in America. By doing so, America defines itself in the existence of the Native peoples living in what was become—and is now—the United States whom America would call the "First Americans". Exhibitions in the early half of the twentieth centuries brought Native works into the art museum. The Pueblo paintings show at the Museum of Fine Art, Santa Fe (1919), the "Indian Exhibit" at the Society of Independent Artists in Astoria, New York (1920), the "Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts" at the Grand Central Art Galleries, New York (1931) and "Indian Art of the United States" at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (1941) aimed showcase "American heritage" through the exhibition of Native art. As stated in the exhibition catalogue from the "Indian Exhibit", "'it must be borne in upon the consciousness of the people of this country that we have a priceless inheritance here of genuinely American culture which we have been blindly destroying instead of fostering.'"[41] World War II solidified this trope further, using patriotism to rally museum goers behind this mentality, causing it to be carried into the 1950s and 1960s.[42]

---

[41] Beinecke Digital Collections, "Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library", n.d. hhttps://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3730190.
[42] Janet C Berlo, "The Art of Indigenous Americans and American Art History: A Century of Exhibitions," Perspective. Actualité en histoire de l'art (Institut national d'histoire de l'art, December 5, 2015), https://journals.openedition.org/perspective/6004.

There is political power in including Native peoples within the American historical narrative like this; there is an exercise of authority and ownership in "forging Americanness" in this way.[43] In doing so, "indigenous peoples increasingly became subject of representational resurrection that cast them as emblems of a noble vanishing race, as ethnological case studies—at first in civilizations development and later in cultural difference—or they were reinvented as First Americans."[44] Joseph Kossuth Dixon is credited in transforming "the vanishing Indians into the First Americans", serving to reach the United States' "historical genealogy into antiquity—combining the best of the Indian noble race and the best of Western modernity" which helped turn "colonial conquest into the nationalist narrative of progressive historical evolution and political future as universal democracy."[45] Museums, as exhibitors and storehouses of national treasures, thus, became the institutions that served as preservers of national heritage. However, this comes at a cost. The display of the Indigenous peoples and their material culture in the nineteenth century as "American" was for the political amalgamation of ethnicities. The Museum of Modern Art's 1984-1985 exhibition, "'Primitivism' in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern" took the amalgamation to a whole new level, exhibiting "tribal objects" as supplementary material, examples, and inspiration for what Modernists working in the early twentieth century were trying to depict in their work.[46] If "the history of culture and society is wiped from the record as persons and things become ideal examples of certain types", then generalizations are made, cultures and societies become equated with another; this reinforces colonial thinking, as it comes from racially-informed knowledge systems that came about

[43] Luke, "Politics at the Exhibition", pp. 12.
[44] Siebert, "Introduction", pp. 12.
[45] Ibid, pp. 12.
[46] The Museum of Modern Art, "'Primitivism' in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern: MoMA," The Museum of Modern Art, 1984, https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/1907.

because of colonization.[47] This is what Monika Siebert calls "multicultural misrecognition", a term I will go into greater detail about in the following chapter.

Growing from the explosive interest in Indigenous cultures starting in the nineteenth century, museums began collecting material culture as evidence of other cultures and for white supremacist agendas enacted within colonization. However, in the twentieth century, museums and other museum-like exhibiting spaces, like world's fairs and human zoos, began putting human beings on display, establishing popular cultural notions about the exhibited cultures. The combination of public interest, artistic production, and anthropological study created and conducted by George Catlin and Franz Boas, among many others, also resulted in the creation of traveling shows; the most famous of which is "Buffalo Bill" Cody's Wild West Show. Big collectors like George Gustav Heye, and Charles and Valerie Diker (whose collection was recently displayed at the Met) have accumulated such large collections that entire museums are founded from their gifts. In the case of Heye, the collection for Smithsonian Institute National Museum of the American Indian came from "the biggest single collection" of Native American material culture in the world.[48] However, it is this kind of mass collecting that leads to mentalities of the fetish and obsessed, and the commodification of Indigenous material culture. The fetishization of material culture comes from the search for things "untouched" by European influence, seen "as shining instances of authentic aboriginal art."[49] In some instances of exhibition, it is in the display of objects from the Indigenous cultures that there is a re-

---

[47] Karp and Lavine, "Culture and Representation", pp. 23.
[48] Pickworth, Amy, ed. "Brian Jungen: Strange Comfort." *Smithsonian: National Museum of the American Indian*, 2009. https://americanindian.si.edu/exhibitions/jungen/files/strangecomfort.pdf.
[49] Baird, Daniel. "Air Jungen." The Walrus, May 1, 2017. https://thewalrus.ca/air-jungen/.

enforcement of stereotypes that Indigenous cultures are "dead, old, vanished cultures[50]"; it all depends on how the exhibition is framed, contextualized, and developed, constructed, even. The notion of construction and the building up of infrastructure or a framework in how museums execute exhibitions is reflected in the construction of each work of art; this "must be accounted for on social and political as well as aesthetic grounds."[51] These collections, exhibitions, and shows collectively tell the story about the founding of America, creating historical narratives that portray the Native peoples on a negative light. If they are not displayed as specimens, then they are forced to make a caricature of themselves for white audiences' viewing pleasure; these two sub-narratives are accepted as truths because there is authenticity to the way those on display look or act, resulting in representation grounded in falsity.

The collecting of material culture and inclusion of people in various forms of display can be equated with the need to possess the Other. "You cannot dominate without seeking to possess the dominated" says Aileen Moreton-Robinson (Goenpul).[52] And though this is not specifically linked to collecting of material culture, it is exemplified in the earlier statement regarding the need to collect frantically, the fetishization, and the commodification of culture and cultural productions, including the material culture and artwork of Indigenous Nations. Given this laid out history and the Euroamerican cultural desire to possess, museums stand, then, as monuments to colonization. As museum professionals, we have hope that these spaces can become places that challenge our historic lineage and mentalities that are exhibited through our methodologies and practices every day. However, this cannot become a reality if we do not reflect and actively

---

[50] Lucchetta, Carla, Steve Paikin, Shelby Lisk, and Haley Lewis. "How This Indigenous Artist Turns Basketball Shoes into Commercialist Critique." TVO.org, July 5, 2019. https://www.tvo.org/article/how-this-indigenous-artist-turns-basketball-shoes-into-commercialist-critique.
[51] Karp and Lavine, "Introduction", pp. 3.
[52] Aileen Moreton-Robinson, *Critical Indigenous Studies: Engagements in First World Locations* (Tucson, Arizona: The University of Arizona Press, 2016). pp. 113-114.

and intentionally change how we do things. Though the methods on view with this exhibition may not work in every circumstance, the mentalities behind them have the potential to guide curators, educators, and administrators into the future of curation. "Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists" employs methods that decenter settler colonialism in museum culture and recenter Native women and kin through the use of an advisory board, a different art canon, and in-gallery measures that, when combined, create a framework for social action-oriented curation because they exemplify a Native feminist philosophy.

Decentering Settler Colonialism in Museum Culture

The curatorial team's emphasis on methods that decenter settler colonialism thus take on a Native feminist approach to curation. For museums, this means a transformation in museum culture. To do so, specific methods were employed in curatorial and exhibition development processes; these methods are an advisory board, a different art canon, and in-gallery measures. The inclusion of these other methods alleviates the assumption that colonially derived museum methods could be fixed by simply implementing an advisory board. In their article, Krysta Williams (Delaware) and Erin Marie Konsmo (Métis/Cree) discuss the racism that lingers in institutions "that can't be changed by just putting Indigenous bodies into chairs."[53] Including Indigenous voices is not enough; the exhibition advisory board, though, had true say in how the exhibition was constructed and contextualized.[54] Though this exhibition is still shown in

[53] Krysta Williams and Erin Konsmo. "Resistance to Indigenous Feminism" in *Deconstructing the Academic Industrial Complex of Feminism* ed. by Jessica Yee (2011), pp. 30.
[54] This includes how objects were exhibited, what in-gallery measures were taken, and the programming that accompanied the show, providing further context.

museums and colonial structures are still at play, this show challenges many of the methods ordinarily employed with exhibitions.

Curators Jill Ahlberg Yohe and Teri Greeves (Kiowa) initiated and completed exhibition planning with the advisory board in place, a process that took about four years to complete. They served as a guiding force, one that was to speak and teach, leaving room for listening and learning.[55] The advisory board was also instrumental in object selection and organizing the event programming. The advisory board's cross-cultural nature and their artwork selections emphasize the individuality of Nations and their artists, allowing pan-Indianism assumptions to be broken.

The Advisory Board

In realizing they did not "have the expertise or the authority to be talking about all of this material" as not representing of all these nations, Ahlberg Yohe and Greeves implemented an advisory board of "21 Native and non-Native scholars from across North America, as well as Native artists, some of whose work is included in the exhibition."[56] By doing so, the "authoritative voice" as a method of power control is challenged, making way for a polyphonic experience with shared authority.[57] An advisory board is tantamount to the way that many Native and Aboriginal Nations conducted social and political business: with a group of women at the forefront. This central role can be found in societies like that of the Haudenosaunee, the

[55] Jill Ahlberg Yohe and Teri Greeves. "Introduction," in *Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019. pp. 15-20.
[56] Scott, Chadd. "History Made, 'Hearts Of Our People: Native Women Artists' Prepares To Leave Minneapolis For Nashville." Forbes. Forbes Magazine, August 2, 2019. https://www.forbes.com/sites/chaddscott/2019/08/02/history-made-hearts-of-our-people-native-women-artists-prepares-to-leave-minneapolis-for-nashville/#357810335e1f.
[57] A common theme in museum curation is the power and authority curators have had in the development of exhibitions. This "authoritative voice" explains the single and all-powerful voice that comes from one curator "in an office, playing god, making the usual evaluations based on hierarchies and money", being the proclaimed expert on whatever topic they are focusing their exhibition. (Grumdahl, Dara Moskowitz. "Mia Celebrates Native Women Artists With 'Hearts of Our People' Exhibit." Mpls.St.Paul Magazine, May 31, 2019. http://mspmag.com/arts-and-culture/mia-hearts-of-our-people-native-women-artists/?fbclid=IwAR0czh8YxOZ0wFGOQeghZhyZsj63kTz_BJpW1X3ISZrHmSG4p1pubIcLvlo).

Cherokee, and the Muskogee, whose women leaders operated as a collective, holding great power in deciding leaders and policy, both foreign and domestic.[58] There is a reclamation of that power in the establishment of an advisory board much like this one, that harkens back to the power women once had and continue to have in Indigenous communities. So, taking a Native feminist approach to curation means that the conceptualization and execution of the exhibition needs to be polyphonic, collaborative, respectful, and inclusive.

As "the most studied… of all North American Indian tribes", the Haudenosaunee[59] are often the focus of scholarship about the traditional roles of women.[60] They, as similarly found in many other Indigenous nations, are an egalitarian society, meaning there is equality and balance in the social reception of individuals and in the roles people had in society.[61] This is counter to the patriarchal society that was brought over to the Americas by European settlers, ultimately corrupting and destroying the established egalitarian societies in place in many Indigenous nations. Additionally, Haudenosaunee women had veto power when it came to war and peace, land use, and the selection of diplomatic representatives, ultimately saying that "'if the women of the nation are powerful, the nation is powerful.'"[62]

These gender roles have been "distorted by the legacy of white patriarchy itself", as Judeo-Christian values collided with Indigenous ones, making assumptions that have been—and continue to be—made regarding women's roles in their communities. The result has been the

---

[58] Paula Gunn Allen. "Who Is Your Mother? Red Roots of White Feminism" in *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*. Boston: Beacon Pr., 1992. pp.220.
[59] The Haudenosaunee were a confederacy of five nations: the Kanienkehaka (Mohawk), the Seneca, the Onondaga, the Cayuga, and the Oneida; the Tuscarora joined later, making the Confederacy one of six nations. Kahente Horn-Miller, "Otiyaner: The 'Women's Path' Through Colonialism" in *Atlantis*, Vol 29.2, Spring/Summer (2005), pp. 58.
[60] Robert A. Williams, Jr. "Gendered Checks and Balances: Understanding the Legacy of White Patriarchy in an American Indian Cultural Context" in *Georgia Law Review*, Vol. 24:1019 (1990), pp. 1037.
[61] Horn-Miller, "Otiyaner", pp. 58-60.
[62] Ibid, pp. 58.

forced disassociation of women from their roles by European and Euroamerican settlers. The decentering of women's roles had been necessary for assimilation efforts to take hold; these efforts include those detriment to health, the influences of the Christian church, and the institution of administrative policies from the settler government. Women were seen as "obstacles" to colonization, making them the prime targets of missionaries, along with the decimation of societal construction (demoralization, mental and emotional and spiritual connectedness, the weakening of cultural knowledge) from settler colonialism.[63]

Like the aforementioned authoritative voice, museum methods are challenged in this exhibition, creating a social action framework in their ability to decenter settler colonialism. By implementing an advisory board within a museum setting, claiming to be an expert is disputed, returning the power of representation and interpretation to those whose culture(s) is displayed. Aileen Moreton-Robinson declares that it is the "[defense] of the Indigenous… [that] rests upon understanding the positioning effect of knowledge or claims to know, as well as the practices that order, privilege and operationalize some claims to know by excluding or silencing others."[64] This is the power that comes from groups of women, being polyphonic sources of knowledge. The combination of knowledge systems at play in an advisory board like this decenter settler colonial thought by striving to defend Indigenous ways of knowing and presenting knowledge in ways that promote the diversity of Indigenous thought.

Curatorial methods can transform galleries—and thus the museum in that time and place—into a space of social action because this behavior performed from conception to opening day is organized in such a way that pushes the group mentality and its action toward social

---

[63] Ibid, pp. 60.
[64] Moreton-Robinson, *Critical Indigenous Studies* pp. 106.

reform, or the community's ideal. In employing community engagement that advances toward social engagement through community involvement, a museum does not just gather voices and receive information from its community, but in doing so, provides an opportunity for the museum to participate in and give back to that community and actively participate in social activism.

An advisory board exhibits the qualities needed to be a form of social action. It pulls many voices together, involving the community in a way that takes sole authority (on whatever topic has been presented) away from museum staff. This sharing of responsibility and authority breaks from common museum practice stemming from white patriarchal cultural values. Through colonization, these values have gone from influence on existing cultures to systemic oppression of non-white communities, cutting any other voices out. An advisory board counters this by bringing together all kinds of people to guide the museum staff in producing something that best reflects and serves its community. The multitude of voices challenges the authoritative voice and presents visitors with multiple ways of viewing the world. The advisory board for "Hearts of Our People" sets a good example for others to follow; for a list advisory board members, see Figure 1.

The Canon & "INDIGENA"

Another way that "Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists" decenters settler colonialism within museum culture is through its use of different art canons. Not only does this bring attention to the ways the western European and Euroamerican art canon operates, but it also questions the sole legitimacy that is granted to it in the gallery space. The Native art canons do not operate along the same lines as the mainstream canon that is typically exhibited. The pieces on display in this exhibition highlight the diversity (among other things) of artistic

productions and knowledge systems from Native nations represented. When added to the insight and guidance provided from the advisory board, the use of other canons allows Native art to be interpreted differently than in previous shows. Jill Ahlberg Yohe and Teri Greeves "interpret Native women's canon more comprehensively to align with Indigenous ideologies, including the use of very specific knowledge systems with distinct rites, protocols, and standards."[65] Doing so allows for the nuances and specifics of Native protocols and artistic production to be discussed only to the extent allowed by individual artists and the nations they represent. Using different canons means that museums should not use the same rules and guidelines for interpretation and display as they would using the mainstream canon in a western institution, as many different Native knowledge systems come into play that are different than mainstream, Euroamerican ones, and should be treated equally, but also differently.

At its foundation, the mainstream canon is a database of sorts that determines what is and is not quality artwork, while collecting artworks, art movements, and artists accepted and deemed worthy of study by western Europe or European-descended (i.e. American and Canadian) academics and artists during the field's progressive development from the fifteenth to twentieth centuries (or the colonial period).[66] Art history and visual arts curricula are built around the mainstream canon, and the knowledge and styles of artists, their work, movements, etc. are taught and passed on to be taught to another generation, establishing a knowledge system centered on art production. However, those in positions of power, like those who disseminate textbooks, for example, have major influence on who is and is not talked about and included in

---

[65] Ahlberg Yohe and Greeves, "Introduction", pp. 15.
[66] Khan Academy, "What Is Art History and Where Is It Going?", Khan Academy (Khan Academy, n.d.), https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/start-here-apah/intro-art-history-apah/a/what-is-art-history.

curricula. Textbooks did not include women artists until 1987[67], let alone artists of color; until the 2000s, artists within the LGBTQIA community were never labels as such. They had "friends", but never partners, and women artists married to male artists were inspired by their husband's work, but never had the "genius" that was attributed to their spouses. Those in positions of power, positions that historically have reflected social norms and Judeo-Christian values, have made the decisions on who is included and who is not. Additionally, works are added to the mainstream canon because of their prestige from museum exhibitions or auctions. "Collectors with major holdings are then courted by museums, catalogues [are] created or articles [are] written [to feature] reproductions of pieces from the collections and additions to the mainstream canon are made."[68] Thus continues the cycle of power present in the European and Euroamerican canon.

The mainstream canon primarily deals with "fine art". Even specifying a "type" of art reiterates the influence of anthropological modes of classification evident not only on societal understandings and assumptions of the "Other", but also on art history, as discussed earlier. The hierarchies that have been established within the discipline of art history and the visual arts have further been dictated by the western European knowledge systems that determine not only how to make art, but also define what art is, and by that, what is "fine art", and therefore worthy of study. Because these classifications are reflections of western European and Euroamerican cultural values, and thus knowledge systems, what is considered art should only apply to works created by Europeans and Euroamericans. Like in the social sciences, assumptions about art and

[67] Alexxa Gotthardt, "These Women Were Missing from Your Art History Books," Artsy, April 19, 2017, https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-women-missing-art-history-books.
[68] Joyce M. Szabo. "Native American Art History: Questions of the Canon." in *Essays on Native Modernism: Complexity and Contradiction in American Indian Art*. Washington, D.C.: National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, 2006. pp. 78.

artistic productions arise when knowledge systems, like those from Native America, are overlooked or not accepted as equally legitimate ways of knowing how to do something.

Taking hundreds of cultures and putting them into categories in which they do not belong are sustained by the Euroamerican culture which seeks—once again, through assimilation—to put everything into the Euroamerican art canon. That canon is supported, sustained, and outlined by cultural values that support the erasure of Native cultures, again in the quest to construct American identity. These cultures are not a tool; they exist on the same cultural level as the rest of the world. To do so puts works by Native artists in the mainstream canon that will further situate them in the hierarchical framework of western European and Euroamerican art, as established by academia—a realm of colonial thinking—that is more interested in prestige, individualism, provenance, and value. Placing non-western works into the mainstream canon is a form of revisionism. "White revisionism is an important curatorial strategy [that] nevertheless assumes the white, masculinist, western… as its center and accepts its hierarchy as a natural given… 'such revision does not grapple with the terms that created [the] neglect'" of people of color.[69] To accept these criteria as central to the mainstream canon strengthens the parameters on which other cultural productions are evaluated. These areas of merit are not necessarily reciprocated within Native philosophies, but they are applied to works through Euroamerican museum methods. In seeing these works through this mainstream canonical lens, the things that make these works special in their societies are lost in the efforts to make them "American". This takes nationhood and sovereignty away from Indigenous Nations if they are lumped into the category of American art, placing Native societies into the American narrative and absorbing their material cultural productions into the greater American cultural narrative.

[69] Maura Reilly, "What is Curatorial Activism," in *Curatorial Activism: Towards An Ethics of Curating* (London, England: Thames & Hudson, 2018), pp. 24-25.

Joyce M. Szabo, in her essay “Native American Art History: Questions of the Canon”, discusses the need to deconstruct the mainstream canon that exists now and the need for the recognition of Native American art canons. “Works that do not fit neatly into readily recognizable categories, that are often discussed as liminal or on the borders either between time periods or culture areas, are not often included in the canon”.[70] This includes works that come from areas, like the Plateau, for example, that are not as famous in the mainstream for art production as other regions, like the Southwest. Deborah Doxtator, a Mohawk historian, argues that art, as it is defined in western perspective, is something that is “so closely identified to the notion of the autonomous” that calling something art “fragments the integrity of Native expressive systems in which material objects act”.[71] The classifying term, “art”, can be limiting, and excludes anything that is not deemed worthy of the definition, at least historically. Doxtor goes on to say that “‘the relatively recent categorization of art forms…as art objects within an hierarchical Euro-North American art aesthetic side-steps the recognition of Native aesthetics and conceptual systems as viable ways of understanding art’.”[72] Doxtor’s sentiment, along with Szabo’s essay on the mainstream canon, provide ample reason to re-examine art historical classifications and impositional renaming or lack of understanding. The recognition of different, simultaneously occurring canons, is what is needed here. Attempting to force works into the western European and Euroamerican canon will only categorize pieces along the preestablished hierarchy that prioritizes European and Euroamerican pieces over all others.

Additionally, by using works that are outside the western art canon, this exhibition decenters the preconceived notions of what has been defined as “Native art”. Not all Native

[70] Szabo, “Native American Art History”, pp. 76.
[71] Janet C. Berlo and Ruth B. Phillips. “Postmodernism, installation, and other post-studio art.” in *Native North American Art.* Oxford University Press. 1998. pp. 238.
[72] Ibid, pp. 238-9.

cultures create the same things, nor are all their symbolisms and motifs the same. These canons counter "hegemonic representations of indigeneity, which marginalize or altogether ignore our density."[73] Though she is not talking about art, Aileen Moreton-Robinson comments on the frequent assumption that all Native cultures are the same. She continues by saying that the "complexity of the relationship between racialized knowledge and the production of cultural density" leads to those assumptions about artistic production.[74] The idea that one form of artistry from one Nation is synonymous with another from a different Nation fails to acknowledge the density of artistic styles, mediums, and symbolic significance throughout Native and Aboriginal cultures. The use of other canons, when paired with the advisory board for the exhibition, reworks the representation of Native cultures from the perspective of Native peoples and those who actively listen to them. Moreton-Robinson states that "we [Native peoples] know ourselves differently from how we have been represented and measured through knowledges that we have not produced. Our ideas of culture and tradition are informed by our knowledges".[75] The creation of these objects is the physical embodiment of these knowledges, passed down from generation to generation. The assumptions made about these works—that they are craft or folk art and synonymous with each other—come from EuroAmerican knowledge systems. These systems of knowing and understanding are based off the racialized study of indigeneity stemming from the Enlightenment, branching out into anthropology and art history, informing how these fields and the institutions that support them, like museums, interpret and display these objects.[76]

"INDIGENA"

[73] Moreton-Robinson, *Critical Indigenous Studies*, pp. 103.
[74] Ibid, pp. 103.
[75] Ibid, pp. 13.
[76] Ibid, pp. 112-113.

"Hearts of Our People" builds upon the curatorial work of Native exhibitors from the past; examining one of these exhibitions, "INDIGENA: Contemporary Aboriginal Perspectives", can aid in understanding how Native art and Native curation have been used as tools to decenter settler colonialism in museums. "INDIGENA" was co-curated by Gerald McMaster (Plains Cree) and Lee-Ann Martin (Mohawk) for the Canadian Museum of Civilization in 1992. In his article about the exhibition, McMaster establishes a framework that is necessary to understand Native perspective. There are seven parts to this framework:

1. Acknowledging that "the Indian and Inuit (Eskimo)" are "two founding nations";
2. Indigenous peoples and Europeans have "mutually exclusive…histories";
3. There are a "variety of social, cultural, and historical perspectives within an indigenous North America";
4. The variety of Indigenous languages, written or oral, "must be seen as keys to understanding differing aesthetic perspectives";
5. There must be an acknowledgement that the 500 years of criss-crossing history between Indigenous and European have influenced each other;
6. "Notions of 'quality must be widened to include Native sensibilities and points of view"; and lastly,
7. "Native art history to date is as distinct as mainstream Western art history".[77]

The Quincentennial of "Columbus's discovery of the Americas" in 1992 created an opportunity for which Native American communities were able to come together to push against harmful modes of representation, which result in Othering; a distancing of oneself from another.

[77] Gerald McMaster, "INDIGENA: A Native Curator's Perspective." *Art Journal* 51, no. 3 (Autumn 1992), pp. 68.

Native artists and curators worked to create exhibitions, programming, publications, and activities that were centered around "the construction of idealized narratives". [78] Idealized narratives are created through the production of truths versus a well-rounded factual account of histories or historical events, in the sense that these narratives became the ideal account for the colonial powers to superimpose their own over others', that have resulted in stereotypes, homogenization, and erasure.

Native communities came together by working within a similar mindset. Native "artists and curators identified and valorized what has been termed the Native perspective—a shared worldview that, despite its expression through a vast range of experiential and aesthetic tendencies, is rooted in a common colonial history and ethnic background"[79], though it is infrequently and often uneasily understood, accepted, and acknowledged.[80] Their actions were aimed toward Remembering, directly combating the "historical amnesia" that has occurred in the fabrication of these national narratives.[81] The result of their efforts come in a changed perception regarding an increase in recognition and the symbolic nature of Columbus, making the Quincentennial "a 'battleground for our entire view of Western culture'."[82] Another result from the Quincentennial came in a kind of unification, "a sense of common cause among Indigenous cultural producers as well as an understanding of how contemporary art and installation could be used as effective rhetorical strategies for political contestation and historical revisionism."[83] In

[78] Lisa Roberts Seppi, "Chapter Nine: Indigenous Activism: Art, Identity, and the Politics of the Quincentenary." in *Counterpoints*, vol. 403, 2011. pp. 131.
[79] Ibid, pp. 113-114.
[80] McMaster, "INDIGENA", pp. 68.
[81] Seppi, "Indigenous Activism" 115.
[82] Ibid, pp. 115.
[83] Ruth B. Phillips, "Inside Out and Outside In: Re-presenting Native North America at the Canadian Museum of Civilization and the National Museum of the American Indian.", in *The National Museum of the American Indian: Critical Conversations*, ed. Amy Lonetree and Amanda J. Cobb. University of Nebraska Press, 2008. pp. 409.

bringing attention to the histories that have been hidden by the mainstream narratives, as well as noting the separate but intertwined histories that physically manifest in artwork by living artists, "INDIGENA" not only challenges and builds upon the past, but prepares for the future, as seen in the framework. McMaster states that "the more committed we are to change, rather than token gestures, the greater our chances of a positive future."[84]

The acknowledgement of the diversity existing within Indigenous identity by Native curators like McMaster and Martin and the living artists in "INDIGENA" shows that one person cannot be an expert on the entire Native world; in fact, many artists, like Teri Greeves, as stated above, that even being a member of a Native nation does not equate someone with being an expert in their own culture. The multicultural lens applied to exhibitions after the 1970s supports the distinction and uniqueness of individual cultures, but if multiculturalism does not also take nationality into account, exhibitions would be missing crucial information in exhibition creation and the interpretation of the objects on display. Indigeneity is political and cultural, with identity being national, resulting in culture being defined by nationality; if "the replacement of the concept of *indigenous nations* with that of *indigenous cultures*" occurs, multiculturalism could erase "the multidimensional political history of indigeneity in favor of an essentialized cultural difference".[85] This "reduction to culture constitutes a fundamental misunderstanding of historical and contemporary indigeneity."[86] By exhibiting works with pluralism in mind, exhibitors (referencing Karp and Levine from earlier) create a foundation to interpret and display objects with both cultural and national distinction. But the use of pluralism is not an end-all-be-all for the ongoing challenge in exhibiting works from across nations and, thus, cultures; however, if

[84] McMaster, "INIGENA" pp. 72.
[85] Siebert, "Introduction", pp. 3.
[86] Ibid, pp. 4.

exhibitors understand and interpret objects with those signifiers in mind, the risk of exhibiting objects as examples of cultural difference is lessened.

Building off the framework from McMaster and Martin, "Hearts of Our People" uses artwork selected to highlight the diversity of Native cultures, the crisscrossing of Indigenous and Euroamerican histories, and proves that Native art history is just as significant and "distinct" as its western European or Euroamerican counterpart. By using works that are centuries old alongside those completed within the past twenty or thirty years, the dichotomy between "historic" and "contemporary" is broken, along with pre-established categorizations and hierarchies found in another dichotomy, "fine art" versus "craft" or "folk art". The recognition that art from Native North America has been created using different knowledge systems makes established methods of curation essentially falsehoods and unworthy of replication. This creates the need for new guidelines for interpretation that celebrate the continuum of art production and that reflect a Native perspective on the art world, producing an exhibition whose works tell the story of Native history and current realities by Native artists, scholars, and curators for Native audiences.

The spotlighting of Native art canons decenters the mainstream one and the presumed ways of curating that go along with it, because culturally, Native ways of understanding the world do not align with European or Euroamerican ones. "If these philosophies or traditions are not understood, the artwork is typically narrowly confined to thin interpretation based on old-fashioned identity politics."[87] This is what happens if Native art is contextualized within the mainstream canon. By challenging non-Native viewers to see the world through Native women's

[87] Jolene Rickard, "Diversifying Sovereignty and the Reception of Indigenous Art." *Art Journal* 76, no. 2 (2017): pp. 83.

eyes, the works, and thus the show, become forms of activism. Nancy Marie Mithlo has this to say about cultural productions: "Our arts are significant because they offer a platform to creatively express the rage, passion, and strength of our human condition. The physicality of arts offers a tangible way into our psyche and a way out for our survival and prosperity."[88] However, the human condition is not singular, nor is there a single way to create. The diversity of knowledge systems also seeks to educate visitors about the variety of Native arts, which in turn breaks stereotypes about the "type" of art Native peoples create. Yes, Native artists make pots and baskets and objects with buckskin and with beads, but they also paint, sculpt, photograph, and record. The combination of the advisory board and the different canons present a space in which visitors can really connect; however, objects are not the only things that make up an exhibition.

In-Gallery Measures

As I have discussed, museums have not been particularly accessible places for Native individuals overall. The history between museum personnel and Indigenous peoples has resulted in a relationship that lacks trust for either party. Because of the frenzied collecting practices aforementioned, new generations of Native artists have had to rely on museum collections to learn about their cultural heritage in order to create; however, museum staff have been resistant to granting access to collections, being protective of the things they preserve. Exhibitions that have not cast Indigenous peoples in a positive light or do not display cultural productions in a respectful manner also do not do anything to improve the relationship.

[88] Mithlo, "Guest Editor's Introduction, pp. 7.

The organization of an exhibition also includes the work done in the gallery; these aspects shape visitor experiences. The in-gallery measures in “Hearts of Our People” further the use of Native feminism toward social action by challenging traditional methods of installation. The accompaniment of these measures with the art and other cultural productions presses into the curatorial team’s intentions to make the gallery spaces more inclusive and accessible, especially for the Native visitors. These include free admission for Native visitors, limited use of photography in the space, medicine baskets present in the space, and wall and object labels in Indigenous languages. The work that was done for the galleries was difficult and frustrating, as time and resources worked against the curatorial teams at each of the exhibition’s stops. However, in speaking with Katie Delmez at the Frist Art Museum in Nashville, and in reading numerous articles, the work was “worth it”.

Admission & Photography

Upon entering the museum, one would need to pay for admission; the cost of admission has often been included in discussions about accessibility regarding museums and their publics. However, Mia established free admission for Native visitors, granting open access to them. This is their heritage, objects from their pasts and presents, so why should they need to pay to see objects that have been kept from them? By providing free admission to Native peoples, museum staff are breaking down financial barriers; as an organized action that seeks to remove previously constructed obstacles of accessibility, the inclusion of free admission can be considered a form of social action. In addition to free admission, the limited allowance for photography of the artwork deals with the same matter of accessibility, just the other side of the same proverbial coin. Instead keeping resources and access from Indigenous communities, allowing photography reproduces those works in a way that provides access to all. Open photography of objects that

Native communities do not wish to share with non-Native peoples outside of the agreed-upon setting within museums spaces or catalogue could be disseminated without community input.

To limit photography is one way of instituting "one of the most dominant expressions of self-determination…visual sovereignty".[89] Self-determination, as it is most general, "is the right to participate in the democratic process of governance and to influence one's future—politically, socially and culturally" or, "as the need to pay regard to the freely expressed will of peoples."[90] By applying that to the visual, Native peoples have complete authority (sovereignty) over what is and is not freely shared with the public; it is a part of protocol for many Native societies. In the gallery setting, this can be morphed into gallery protocols of what things can and cannot be photographed, as dictated by the artist or by proxy through the community from which an object came. Of course, there is always the risk of someone not following gallery roles, but by instructing visitors that photography is not allowed lessens the chances of that occurring.

Issues of accessibility in museums have been hot-button topics of discussion in recent years.[91] As museums "develop their social role" they also encounter metaphoric bumps in the road toward inclusivity.[92] Matters of accessibility come in multiple forms, manifesting in opportunity to use resources, representation in staff and in collections, types of programming, and physical maneuvering of an area. Making a space more accessible physically restricts how museum professionals understand those who are differently abled.[93] In these ways, the

---

[89] Rickard, "Diversifying Sovereignty", pp. 82.
[90] International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, "Self-Determination of Indigenous Peoples," IWGIA, April 9, 2011, https://www.iwgia.org/en/focus/land-rights/330-self-determination-of-indigenous-peoples.
[91] Richard Sandell et al., "Introduction," in *Museums, Equality and Social Justice* (Abingdon, England: Routledge, 2012), pp. 1.
[92] ICOM, "Seven Inspirational Quotes".
[93] Eithne Nightingale and Chandan Mahal, "The Heart of the Matter: Integrating Equality and Diversity into the Policy and Practice of Museums and Galleries." in *Museums, Equality and Social Justice* (Abingdon, England: Routledge, 2012), pp. 36.

"Otherness" that impacts differently abled people impacts other marginalized communities in many of the same ways. The inclusion of other cultures in museums creates a more inclusive space; however, it could also result in the multicultural misrecognition discussed above. If the diversity of Native perspectives is the motivation of curatorial decisions, as is the case here, then the creation of a positive Native visitor experience is the goal. The curatorial decisions to provide free admission and limited photography exemplify the wishes of Native communities.

Baskets

Upon walking into the gallery, visitors are met with a small display of baskets (see Figures 2 and 3). The wall text above the baskets informs visitors that they hold medicinal offerings available for Native audiences only: "Out of respect for Native visitors who may wish to practice traditional honoring rituals, we have made these medicines available." The text goes on to thank non-Native visitors for "respecting the protocols of Native people."[94]. The baskets were included to acknowledge the painful history and intergenerational trauma, "set up throughout the exhibit to allow Native visitors to hold medicine or offer prayers with tobacco as a way to work through and continue healing from trauma."[95] In addition to the baskets at the entrance, there are three other baskets placed around the gallery used as receptacles for those offerings. These medicines are specific to each region the museums the exhibition visit, as are the baskets. When the exhibition traveled to the Nashville, the Frist gathered cedar, sassafras, echinacea, and tobacco; Mia's herbs and plants included sweetgrass and sage, both of which

[94] Photograph of wall text from Katie Delmez.
[95] Alicia Eler, "In Minneapolis, Native Women's Art Shines in a Revolutionary Exhibition," Star Tribune, June 6, 2019, https://m.startribune.com/in-minneapolis-native-women-s-art-shines-in-a-revolutionary-exhibition/510918412/?fbclid=IwAR1rf1kMIQ4YdrfvAY2N5dkbwNpzxcofvKoTSAy2gNcY2NxX74JawM7qxu4.

were not used in Tennessee. In addition to these offerings, curators also found money and personal items, like sobriety buttons, more widely defining “offerings” that honor ancestors.

Locality also played a part in the construction and use of these baskets. The baskets were made by Indigenous artists within each region the show traveled. At Mia, there was a large Native population from which the museum could obtain handmade baskets for its installation.; the Frist had a more difficult time. Due to Tennessee history—being a starting place for the Trail of Tears—the state is no longer home to large populations of Native people. The Frist contacted the closest regional community in North Carolina and drove there to pick up baskets for their installation. In talking with Katie Delmez, the staff person in charge of the installation in Nashville, she stated that it was difficult and often frustrating to do much of the community engagement work, but in the end it was worth it. The inclusion of herbs and plants and baskets sourced from regions specific to the museums provided opportunities for the curatorial teams to add elements to their installation plans that enforces the diversity of Indigenous cultures, demonstrating that Indigeneity is not monolithic.

By including these baskets around the gallery, exhibitors claimed space for Native peoples, by putting them, their cultural protocols, and their stories, first. This allowed for new methods to be employed. In replacing traditional installation methods—by which I mean ways that gallery spaces are prepared for public viewing—with those that decenter settler colonial mentalities evident in typical and traditional installation methods, the exhibitors produced engaging experiences for Native visitors. Similar to how the curatorial team employed an advisory board as a form of community engagement, the inclusion of medicinal offering baskets invites Native visitors to engage with the space in a way that promotes the acknowledgment of the painful histories that plague many Native peoples and their communities. By including

community engagement, the curatorial teams provided a space for social action through social engagement. Social engagement is simply a way of engaging a community; however, when that engagement is done purposefully and with strict organization, it can become social action because it involves interaction with others. Community engagement is a process that "facilitates communication, interaction, involvement, and exchange between an organization and a community" that can result in social action if done correctly.[96] By focusing on native communities, the use of these baskets put an emphasis on the connections that individuals have with the world around them. Because the objects on display are living—in their material composition as well as the connection that artists and users of these objects have had in the past—the baskets provide an outlet for reconnection; this recenters these connections and becomes tools for a reclamation of these objects as for and by Native communities.

Labels

Another in-gallery measure taken by the curatorial team works to reclaim and celebrate Indigenous languages. Typically, labels are used as tools to explain and interpret. They are often placed on walls next to displayed objects or at the entrance to galleries (see Figure 4). The labels that were used in the "Hearts of Our People" exhibition were very different, though. "The artists in this exhibition represent more than fifty communities and cultures from all over North America. Not only was it important for Mia to recognize the artistic achievement of these Native women, we felt it was essential to experience their voices in their Native languages."[97] Over one hundred labels were translated into more than thirty Indigenous languages, each spoken by an artist in the

[96] Kim A. Johnston and Maureen Taylor, "Toward a Theory of Social Engagement," in *The Handbook of Communication Engagement* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2018), pp. 19-32.
[97]Minneapolis Institute of Art, "Hearts of Our People" Frequently Asked Questions," Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists – Minneapolis Institute of Art, 2019, https://new.artsmia.org/hearts-of-our-people-native-women-artists/.

show; however, not every artist has a language still spoken today or one that has a written component, or an orthography.[98] The boarding school era caused the erasure, or the near erasure, in some cases, of many Indigenous languages. "Students were not allowed to speak their native languages", and in many cases had the language beaten out of them, as the language and the Native students were deemed inferior to the English language and Euroamerican people.[99] The pain and intergenerational trauma that have further resulted from colonization through boarding schools makes language revitalization a crucial way for Indigenous peoples to reconnect with stolen cultural pieces from their nations' pasts. "The movement among Aboriginal and First Nations people towards cultural and language revitalization is another example of a strategy to counter the detrimental effects of colonization and racialization."[100]

The inclusion of Indigenous languages proved difficult, though. In addition to many languages becoming dormant over the past century, most did not have an orthography. Because of the resurgence in language learners in recent years, especially with the rise in technological advancements and the expansion of the internet, languages that historically did not have a written component have gained one in the creation of language learning materials. However, there are inflections and tonalities that do not exist in Latin-based languages, like English, French, Italian, Portuguese, or Spanish. The textual production of the languages proved difficult because of this; there are very limited ways to type letter modifiers on a keyboard designed to type in English, for

[98] Minneapolis Institute of Art, "Why We Translated".
[99] Devon Abbott Mihesuah, "Colonization and Disempowerment, in *Indigenous American Women: Decolonization, Empowerment, Activism*, University of Nebraska Press, 2003, pp. 55.
[100] Verna St. Denis, "Feminism is For Everybody: Aboriginal Women, Feminism, and Diversity." in *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, ed. Joyce A. Green. Black Point, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing, 2017. pp. 36.

example. The Mia team "discovered that a Hungarian font had almost all the accents needed. In some cases [they] relied on fonts created for free use on the internet."[101]

In cases where the language is no longer spoken, the label would indicate that after the interpretation in English; a pairing of labels with one in an Indigenous language and the other in English was common, though in some cases there was no English label. This was dictated by the artist or the community if the artist is no longer living. However, the lack of speakers was not the only reason a label was not translated. "Some Native communities don't share their language with outsiders."[102] Recounting the history about the boarding schools, this decision makes sense; again, the relationship that has formed between Indigenous peoples and museums (as well as mainstream institutions in general) is not one that includes much trust. In creating labels that reflect the respect and "honors the wishes of sovereign Native nations", Mia created a space that became more welcoming for Native visitors, while working to respect the wishes of the Native communities.

Mia's team's labor to translate and write labels into Indigenous languages is Native feminisms at work. By including Indigenous languages, Mia not only displayed another aspect of diversity within Indigenous cultures, but also celebrated the resilience of the languages that have been experiencing a resurgence in language learners. Including Indigenous languages also provides another layer in the telling of history from a Native perspective. Curator Jill Ahlberg Yohe, in discussing the use of labels in Indigenous languages, states that she is "not aware of any

[101] Minneapolis Institute of Art, "Why We Translated an Exhibition's Labels into Dozens of Native Languages," Minneapolis Institute of Art, 2019, https://new.artsmia.org/stories/why-we-translated-an-exhibitions-labels-into-dozens-of-native-languages/.
[102] Minneapolis Institute of Art, "Why We Translated".

other museum that has done this”, making this curatorial decision groundbreaking and setting a new precedent for interpretation.

Additionally, the information provided on the labels broke another tradition museum method—attribution. Historically, the works by Native artists were referred to as “unknown”, establishing an anonymity that stripped identity from the maker. Though not identifying a maker by name is frequently found in many Native communities—as the community knew who the maker was—the labels for objects collected and displayed in museums did not provide identity outside of nationality, if the notes from collectors recounted the nation from whom they collected an object or objects. These notes rarely included the gender of the makers; in frenzied collecting (as mentioned before), notations about works were centered on collecting objects from a “vanishing” race instead of provenance. The simple—yet majorly impactful—action of removing “unknown” from an object label reminds visitors that these artists are not unknown, attributing all to Indigenous women whose identities, though not known individually, have not been lost to time. “Native culture is not a monolith”.[103] “Language matters. Representation matters. It’s worth it.”[104]

Recentering Women & Kin

Much of this paper has been focused on breaking down traditional museum methods. The organization of the exhibition was discussed in the last chapter with the implementation of the advisory board, the underlying structural use of Native art canons, and the steps that the

[103] Minneapolis Institute of Art, “Frequently Asked Questions”.
[104] Minneapolis Institute of Art, “Why We Translated”.

exhibitors took to opening up the gallery space for Native visitors. Instead of focusing on how to counteract those structures in place, this chapter is geared toward the show itself: the things that people see, including the layout of the gallery which serves as evidence of the Native feminist approach to curation. This is accomplished through the recentering of the importance of women and kinships in societies, stressed through relationships. The actions taken, as discussed in the previous chapter, did half of the work by decentering settler colonialism. The recentering of women and kin gears the mentality of the show away from the power structures that arise due to the patriarchal nature of a settler colonialist society. This recentering means that the importance of women and kin has always existed but was taken out of their central roles because of colonization. The relationship that everything in the natural world is connected, what is called kincentricity, ultimately informs a culture and how it respects and interacts with women of their society as well as how they interact with their environment.[105]

The Relational Approach

The curatorial team for "Hearts of Our People" organized the museum gallery into themes. Maura Reilly, in her book, *Curatorial Activism*, discusses the use of themes as one of three methods of exhibitionary resistance: revisionism, area studies exhibitions, and a relational approach. A revisionist approach is not used in this exhibition, as it would attempt to fit excluded narratives and communities into the mainstream. As discussed earlier, this has the ability to tokenize non-western artists. Instead, the curatorial team chose to focus on a group of artists based on gender and ethnicity, creating an area studies exhibition.[106] By focusing on a group of

[105] Ahlberg Yohe and Greeves, "Introduction", pp. 22-23.
[106] Reilly, "What is Curatorial Activism?", pp. 16-33.

people who have historically been tokenized and excluded from the art world and thus the gallery space, this exhibition brings national and cultural identities, as well as different canons, to light in a big way.

The relational approach to the area studies exhibition uses themes to organize and arrange works of art. Hierarchical boundaries used within art museums categorize and group their objects on display; this is disrupted by using a relational approach. This focuses the organization and development of an exhibition on materials, location, artist information, subject matter or other specific criteria that push past mainstream canonical principles. Doing so creates room for discussion about systemic hierarches, but also dismantles the separation of historical or traditional and contemporary Native works. It also allows for visitors to make connections through mediums and generations of makers and nations, but also through political and social climates Native peoples have endured. This is what "Hearts of Our People" accomplished by using themes, pulling attention toward the parameters established through the thematic groupings and away from the aforementioned preestablished categories developed within anthropological (and later art historical) categorization-informed museum operations.

The themes used in this exhibition exemplify parts of the framework built in "INDIGENA", using the works on display to discuss the individual yet intertwining histories between Native Nations and Euroamericans, and the varieties of perspectives and traditions "within indigenous North America".[107] There are three themes used in this show: Legacy, Relationships, and Power. The curators posed this question to their advisory board: *Why, in your opinion, do Native women artists create?*[108] The themes that are used to organize the gallery

---

[107] McMaster, "INDIGENA", pp. 68.
[108] Ahlberg Yohe and Greeves, "Introduction", pp. 16.

space aim to answer that question and the accompanied nuances. The section of the gallery that is focusing on Legacy dives into intergenerational creation and the passing of tradition onto the next generation; Relationships looks at the connectivity and dependency humans have to the world around them; Power examines the central roles that Native women hold in their communities. Focusing on Legacy, Relationships, and Power place women at the epicenters of their communities, especially in the production of material culture and art.

Legacy

The first part of the exhibition focuses on the legacy provided by the ancestors of makers and artists today. The first artists established iconography, techniques, and materials used for creation, passing tradition on to their children, who passed it onto their children after that. “This process of generational transmission of knowledge is intrinsic to the artistic process of Native women’s art.”[109] This continuum of creation makes art a way to learn and to tell stories and keep them alive.[110] This means that Legacy examines what artistic production means looking forward, as much as it does looking back, continuing centuries—if not millennia—of cultural tradition that manifests in the physical. The ability to create is a “generational gift that needs to be passed on”, a lens that provides “insight into the future”; doing so honors “your ancestors by doing the best job you can do”.[111]

The works of art that are exhibited in the Legacy section build upon the continuum, focusing on the resilience of Native women and craftsmanship that has survived through colonization and its lingering effects. Women have been the sources of change, adaptability and

---

[109] Ahlberg Yohe and Greeves, “Introduction”, pp. 20.
[110] *Legacy, Minneapolis Institute of Art,* 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABFDNxJbXvA. Quote from Dyani White Hawk (Sicangu Lakota).
[111] *Legacy, Minneapolis Institute of Art*. These quotes are from Cherish Parrish (Match-e-be-nash-she-wish Band of Potawatomi), Jolene Rickard (Tuscarora), and Juanita Growing Thunder Fogarty (Assiniboine/Sioux) (in that order).

strength for their communities, "another marker of legacy."[112] Co-curators Teri Greeves and Jill Ahlberg Yohe had this to say about the introductory section, Legacy:

> "Native women artists working in their time periods bring their arts into their century through acts of resiliency. Our advisors spoke about older works of art from generations before with awe and reverence, as these pieces reflected Native women who worked through immense pain and loss, healed through the beauty of making, and dedicated themselves to creating even in the most horrible times."[113]

It is this same resiliency through the immensely difficult times that has made art production so crucial for Native communities, shedding light on "the ways in which Native beliefs and cultural practices have survived into the present, resisting and operating in tension with settler colonialism."[114]

Rose B. Simpson (Santa Clara Pueblo) & *Maria*

The works that were selected for this section of the exhibition are all extraordinary. One such work examines new ways of viewing everyday objects while looking back and paying homage to the creators that have come before. The first work of the exhibition has become one of my favorite pieces from the show because of its scale and connection to the present and the past. Rose B. Simpson's piece, *Maria*, is a 1985 Chevy El Camino painted matte black and detailed with a gloss black paint, creating a design meant to honor the great potter, Maria Martinez (San Ildefonso Pueblo) (see Figure 5). Martinez's work is iconic. If one is familiar with her work,

---

[112] Ahlberg Yohe and Greeves, "Introduction", pp. 22.
[113] Ahlberg Yohe and Greeves, "Introduction", pp. 22.
[114] Jennifer McLerran, "A Native Feminist Ethics in Contemporary Indigenous Art", in *Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019. pp. 235.

seeing *Maria* instantly creates a connection between this unique vessel and those created by her namesake.

Simpson saw the correlation between clay vessels and a vehicle during a day of harvesting, when the bed of the El Camino was used to carry crops while serving as a space accessible for all family members. The utilitarian use of vehicles in contemporary times mirrors that of the utilitarian use of clay pots used by past generations, since vessels were used to provide nourishment for families. She says that "vessels such as the ones that Maria Martinez created are no longer in daily functional use for many Pueblo people, but vehicles are.'"[115] There is great power in utilitarianism, especially within the context of an exhibition that spotlights artistic production, regardless of medium. "'I think that's what I'm trying to do, is kind of enter into those spaces that still, you know, put high art as the hierarchy, and try and wake people up their humanity.'"[116] Simpson challenges the mainstream canonical organization by altering a traditionally viewed non-art object into something that reflects the work of a past artist. This transforms utilitarian tools into "'power objects'"[117] since "'colonization was the very thing that separated art from our life and everyday life.'"[118] Simpson's ability to learn how to build this car from the ground up, inside and out, certainly transforms it into a power object and *Maria* commands attention as such in that space, "because she's a queen.'"[119]

Simpson grew up on the Santa Clara Pueblo reservation near Española, New Mexico, the lowrider capitol of the world. Lowriders are a type of vehicle that are supped up and tricked out,

---

[115] Sarah Archer, "Power Object: Rose B. Simpson's Maria," American Craft Council, June 19, 2018, https://www.craftcouncil.org/post/power-object-rose-b-simpsons-maria.
[116] Kira Wakeam, "How Rose Simpson's Lowrider Is an Homage to Pueblo Potters," PBS (Public Broadcasting Service, December 23, 2019), https://www.pbs.org/newshour/arts/how-rose-simpsons-lowrider-is-an-homage-to-pueblo-potters.
[117] Archer, "Power Object".
[118] Wakeam, "How Rose Simpson's lowrider is an homage to Pueblo Potters".
[119] Wakeam, "How Rose Simpson's lowrider is an homage to Pueblo Potters".

built for pure pleasure rather than profit. "In addition to being roving canvases, lowriders offer a sly rebuke to the frenzied pace of performative aspects of American capitalism."[120] The creation of a lowrider is a relational experience, as everything about one is customized.[121] Each lowrider is specific to its owner, customized to their preference of engine, body modifications, and paint job, making each its own work of art. *Maria* not only looks beautiful and has equally beautiful connections to the past and present, the car is a beast under the hood. Her 350 small-block engine produces 410 horsepower, exerting "so much power that a racing-style vacuum is required to operate the brakes safely."[122]

A piece that large is meant to bring attention to itself, bringing honor to the women that kept traditional practices and protocols alive so that new generations of artists could build upon that legacy of innovation, creativity, and fearlessness and bring it into their own practice. "And I think the reason that it makes sense that [*Maria* is] in a museum exhibition, is because I was trying to stay very true to applying my aesthetic integrity to my personal, psychological investigation….She is one of a kind, and very, very specific, she has so much heart in it. That car is dripping with my heart."[123]

The connection Simpson made between vehicle use today and clay vessels used in the past is something she refers to as a "glitch".[124] Glitches are breaks in reality that expose layers and connections through time and space. These breaks in reality allowed for her to see the El Camino as a vessel because of the ability *Maria* has to be used by whole families; its

---

[120] Archer, "Power Object".
[121] Frist Art Museum, *Artist Perspective: Rose B. Simpson*, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=34FZuxEsd10.
[122] Casey Sanchez, "Auto-Body Experience: Rose B. Simpson and Her El Camino," Santa Fe New Mexican, May 20, 2016, https://www.santafewnewmexican.com/pasatiempo/art/auto-body-experience-rose-b-simpson-and-her-elcamino/%20article_8707be00-c56d-57e4-9e09-8a96df4a81c4.htm.
[123] Wakeam, "How Rose Simpson's lowrider is an homage to Pueblo Potters".
[124] Frist Art Museum, *Artist Perspective*.

utilitarianism makes it like pots created by historic women potters. Maria Martinez was one of these historic potters, but her pots were not created only for utilitarian purposes. She was one of the first Native artists known by name for her creations, making pots for commercial sale. But these pots were incredibly special, as Martinez revived an almost-lost-technique from Santa Clara Pueblo tradition: black on blackware. It requires a different firing process, polishing, and a painting process with water and clay mixture done by her husband, Julian, and later by her sons. For the world, “Martinez became a symbol of Southwestern craft and Pueblo aesthetics.”[125] In reviving the technique, she was able to provide financially for her community through the profit of her pottery; Martinez inspired generations of potters. Simpson says that she and other Pueblo women artists come from a long line of strong women like Maria Martinez.[126] The black on blackware style and aesthetic is part of her heritage, created with every coil and every brushstroke; it exemplifies the relationship one has to place through materiality and imagery.[127]

Relationships

The next section of the exhibition focuses on the relationships humans have with all things in the world around them, those “in the natural world, time, and space over all.”[128] It is not only the connectivity, but also the “recognition of reciprocity at all levels of being” that is the focus in this section. The relationships that are formed between people and the things they own or make place great significance upon objects, turning them from productions that represent a culture and/or time period into objects that represent resilience, courage, trauma, identity, and more. These “relationships become all the more important” in the face of colonialism, especially

[125] Archer, “Power Object”.
[126] Frist Art Museum, *Artist Perspective.*
[127] Frist Art Museum, *Artist Perspective.*
[128] Frist Art Museum, *Arts Break*, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OyQdv6jRGnM.

for older objects, who are “witnesses to [the] trauma” that occurred because of it.[129] Native women artists create to connect to, and in response to, their art histories—which are their histories.[130] This thus provides an outlet that connects through time, making artists feel connected to “something bigger than yourself.”[131] Within this intentionally broad topic of relationships, to best align “with the Indigenous concept of connectivity”, there are a three emphases: place, kincentricity, and collaboration and community.[132]

Mohawk multimedia artist Shelley Niro mentions that by connecting to place, a Native person is “always aware of where we come from”.[133] Place is vital to and for Native arts. Not only do artists find their supplies and their materials in nature around their communities’ locations, but the land gives life and grounds people to their identity, as being people of a specific place. This is an incredibly painful topic within contemporary Native life, as many Indigenous communities were forcibly relocated onto reservations, primarily during the eighteenth to twentieth centuries. Painful pasts and current realities make for art subjects that unify Native North America. Match-e-be-nash-she-wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians of Michigan/ Grand Traverse Ottawa/Chippewa artist Kelly Church talks about the importance in connecting to the earth.[134] As a weaver, Church’s work not only continues the weaving tradition of the past five generations, but also focuses on the importance of the natural materials that are provided by the earth, especially since the introduction of the Emerald Ash borer, a beetle from Asia, that has been attacking the white ash trees Church and her community use to weave their

---

[129] Minneapolis Institute of Art, *Relationships*, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eIxzvn_rTJ0. quotes are by Ruth B. Phillips and Jolene Rickard (in that order).
[130] Minneapolis Institute of Art, *Relationships,* 2019. Quote by America Meredith (Cherokee).
[131] Minneapolis Institute of Art, *Relationships*, 2019. Quote by Cara Romero (Chemehuevi).
[132] Ahlberg Yohe and Greeves, “Introduction”, pp. 22.
[133] Minneapolis Institute of Art, *Relationships*, 2019. Quote by Shelley Niro (Mohawk).
[134] Minneapolis Institute of Art, *Relationships*, 2019. Quote by Kelly Church (Match-e-be-nash-she-wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians of Michigan/Ottawa/Chippewa).

baskets. Without access to these trees, she and her children and their children would not be able to weave as their ancestors did, creating a potential chasm within not only art production, but in the passing of cultural knowledge systems onto the next generation.

Creating work that reflects on the efforts of Native environmental activists and the personification of the land as a mode of protecting it. Doing so instills that the earth, everything it produces, and thus, things that are made from natural materials (clay, grasses, bark, etc.), in many cases, are still living, embodied with spirit. It would be a great disservice to Native peoples, however, to assume that "all Native North American communities agree to which 'objects' are animate", as each has their own protocols.[135]Ahlberg Yohe and Greeves went through more than thirty museum collections in preparing an exhibition checklist. As they went through storage drawers, Ahlberg Yohe recalls the meaning for Greeves in examining Kiowa materials. "These drawers weren't crowded with 'objects' but with Teri's flesh and blood, alive with family and Kiowa histories, brimming with pride, grief, joy, ambivalence, horror, grace. The objects were not dusty and dead. She was among living, breathing objects. Her family, her community, and her ancestors were present."[136]

Kincentricity is a term coined by advisory board member, heather ahtone (Choctaw/ Chickasaw). ahtone explains kincentricity as

> "the interconnections among people, animals, plants, places, fungi, microbes, and other elements in Native people's lives. Vast webs connect Native people between the physical

[135] Jill Ahlberg Yohe, "Animate Matters: Thoughts on Native American Art Theory, Curation, and Practice" in *Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019. pp. 176.
[136] Ahlberg Yohe, "Animate Matters", pp. 177.

and metaphysical worlds, between time and space… [It] requires reciprocity and responsibility for others."[137]

Place, and community, collaboration are also major aspects of Relationships. Works like the Kiowa cradleboard, the *Hummingbird Cooper* dress by Dorothy Grant (Haida) and Robert Davidson (Haida/ Tlingit), the pot by Maria and Julian Martinez, and the hat by Isabella (Haida) and Charles Edenshaw (Haida) exemplify collaboration. These works were made by two artists working together to create something for a particular reason (as a gift, a piece of ceremonial regalia, a mode of providing for the community, etc.) while using their respective societal roles and forms of making to complement the creation process.

This responsibility place on humans is involved in kincentricity, as it greatly challenges settler colonial relations with and understandings of the natural world. Since a number of aims of Native feminisms surround protecting and nurturing the land, having a section of this exhibition focusing on those connections adds to the Native feminist approach to this show. This is exemplified through the works on display in this exhibition, like *The Wisdom of the Universe* by Christi Belcourt (Michif).

<u>Christi Belcourt (Michif) & *The Wisdom of the Universe*</u>

Completed in 2014, this large-scale painting looks at the impact of human beings on nature, specifically on the plant and animal life in Ontario, Canada.[138] *The Wisdom of the Universe* looks like it was created with beads; however, the flora and fauna were created with tiny little dots of paint (see Figure 6). The bead-like design made from acrylic paint on canvas is

[137] Ahlberg Yohe and Greeves, "Introduction", pp. 22
[138] Christi Belcourt, "Bio," Christi Belcourt, n.d. http://christibelcourt.com/bio.

drawn from customary Métis beadwork designs.[139] Belcourt's style combines the visual of beadwork, harkening back to that tradition, with a painterly style similar to that of pointillism. The layers and combinations of bright colors add to the message behind the work: the beauty that exists in the world can only continue to exist if humanity understands that everything and everyone is interconnected. The land, waterways, plants, animals, and insects are not resources, but rather parts of an extended family in which humanity is a part. Every featured plant and animal are listed as a threatened, endangered, or extinct species; in Ontario, there are over 200 species listed as such. Those shown here include "the Dwarf Lake Iris, the Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid, the Karner Blue butterfly, the West Virginia White butterfly, the Spring Blue-eyed Mary, the Cerulean Warbler and Acadian Flycatcher."[140] Hummingbirds, oak trees, strawberries, and robins are also visible within the painting.

As an environmentalist and activist, Belcourt created this piece "to glorify the natural world."[141] Her focus on our relatives, including plants, animals, land, and water, is meant to express how deep the interconnectivity of all living things runs. She says that "[w]hen we see ourselves as separate from each other,… [and] the waters and the planet itself as objects that can be owned, dominated or subjugated, we lose connection with our humanity and we create imbalance on the earth."[142] Belcourt's focus on the responsibility that humans have for Mother Earth, because of the interconnectedness of every living thing, perfectly illustrates kincentricity. This disconnect has resulted in the situation humanity finds itself in currently. With climate

[139] Tarah Hogue, "Walking Softly with Christi Belcourt." Canadian Art, June 21, 2017. https://canadianart.ca/features/walking-softly-with-christi-belcourt/.
[140] Art Gallery of Ontario, "Artist's statement: Christi Belcourt on the Wisdom of the Universe", Art Gallery of Ontario, August 7, 2014. http://ago.ca/agoinsider/artists-statement-christi-belcourt-wisdom-universe.
[141] Dakota Hoska, "Christi Belcourt: *The Wisdom of the Universe*", *Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists*, 2019. pp. 108-109.
[142] Art Gallery of Ontario, "Artist's statement".

change stemming from industrialization and capitalism, the earth is seen as a resource rather than a life source. “The planet already contains all the wisdom of the universe… It has the ability to recover built into its DNA and we have the ability to change what we are doing so this can happen…Perhaps it’s time to place the rights of Mother Earth ahead of the rights to Mother Earth.”[143]

Power

The last section of the exhibition focuses on the power of women within their societies. This power centers around that in which “Native women have in their own home communities, powers of diplomacy, and powers as religious leaders, power of economics.”[144] In order to make this happen for the exhibition as a whole, the curatorial team needed to employ many voices from many nations represented, focusing on a diversity of artistic mediums to have a complete “understanding of what this was because it had never been dealt with before in this manner.”[145] Many of the artists have recalled the strength of the women who have come before them, calling them “very strong women”, noting that “women are the strength of our nations”, maintaining their creativity and innovation during “the harshest of times through their hands”.[146] The resiliency that originated within this power is evident through the times in history when most other cultural connections were being taken. America Meredith (Cherokee) talks briefly about how artistic production survived atrocities like boarding schools, noting that “art was the one

[143] Art Gallery of Ontario, “Artist’s statement”.
[144] Minneapolis Institute of Art, *Power*, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kawp8Ka7I1Y. Quote from Teri Greeves.
[145] Minneapolis Institute of Art, *Power*, Quote from Teri Greeves.
[146] Minneapolis Institute of Art, *Power* , Quotes from Rose B. Simpson, Jolene Rickard, and Carla Hemlock (Kahnawake Mohawk) (in that order).

tool that was ok", that was acceptable to do and thus able to be passed on to the next generation.[147]

In culminating a multitude of stories and examples of the power of Native women, as expressed through art, viewers gained insight into "what our resilience means and how [art forms have] survived."[148] That resiliency creates a shift in power in the museum space, by questioning "who is the 'great'? who are the 'masters'?" By displaying the diversity of works, the labels often used by the mainstream canon are challenged, as the women on display are the "masters" and the "great" craftswomen and artists of their nations. But where there is power, there is great responsibility. Roxanne Swentzell (Santa Clara Pueblo), in an in-gallery video that played in the Power section, builds off that statement by saying, "women are the first mothers, [the] beginning step for all life… what a responsibility, but what an honor to be born a woman."[149] The pride in being a Native woman is visible in every work that is on display. Works like these are embedded with cultural history and tradition, memories, and hope for the future with every fiber, stitch, coil, bead, camera flash, and brushstroke. It is in this pride to be born a woman that there is a reclamation of power for Native women. Through the examination of Legacy and Relationships, there is an alignment with many Native cultures' values, placing women at the center of Native societies, artistic production, and national identity expressed within materials, techniques, and iconography, reminding them of the power that they have always had.

Jamie Okuma (Luiseño/ Shoshone-Bannock), Keri Ataumbi (Kiowa) & *Adornment: Iconic Perceptions*

[147] Minneapolis Institute of Art, *Power*, Quote by American Meredith (Cherokee)
[148] Minneapolis Institute of Art, *Power*, Quote by Cara Romero.
[149] Minneapolis Institute of Art, *Power*, 2019. Quote by Roxanne Swentzell (Santa Clara Pueblo).

There is something special that occurs when women create things together that celebrate the roles women hold in their societies; Keri Ataumbi and Jamie Okuma created a piece that does just that. Ataumbi is a metalsmith who created beautifully crafted structures that are made of precious metals like gold and sterling silver, and showcase precious gems and jewels, like diamonds, and wampum shell beads. Okuma's beadwork adds more beauty to the jewelry set, creating intricate portraiture from seed beads, which measure around 1-2mm in diameter; they are the smallest bead a beadworker can use.[150] By using them, Okuma was able to recreate famous portraiture inside of a space smaller than the 1 11/16 inch X 1 1/2 inch face of the ring, as well as a 2 3/8 inch X 1 5/16 inch space within the pendant. And she was able to do it with incredible detail.

Their three-piece jewelry set, *Adornment: Iconic Perceptions* (see Figure 7), challenges the mainstream historical understanding and reclaims "the legacy" of Pocahontas, an incredibly "important diplomat between Europe and North America at a complex time in American history."[151] She was the daughter of Chief Wahunsenacawh (Powhatan), and as such spoke on behalf of her people to the European colonizers. She traveled to England to speak to heads of state about colonization, where she married and gave birth to a son before she died at age twenty-three. Her presence in Europe fueled the fascination with Native cultures, making her the image of indigeneity in the Americas. Her depictions in art created the reoccurring narrative of the Indian maiden/ queen/ princess, being a "nonthreatening symbol of White Americans' right to be here because she was always willing to sacrifice her happiness, cultural identity, and even her

[150] Lillian Ackerman, *A Song to the Creator: Traditional Arts of Native American Women of the Plateau*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996.
[151] Ahlberg Yohe and Greeves, "Introduction", pp. 25.

life for the good of the new nation."[152] This has only been solidified for a new generation through the 1995 Disney film. Disney is known for its princesses, so their depiction of Pocahontas (as a signifier for Native women) as a princess fits typical Disney fashion.

There are two depictions of Pocahontas in this piece. One, on the ring, is after a 1616 engraving by Simon van de Passe (see Figure 8), making this "the only known portrait of Pocahontas rendered from life."[153] This particular image of Pocahontas shows her in English finery consisting of a tall hat, a wide lace collar, an intricately designed gown, and feathered fan. She is dressed in the latest English garb which "presented Pocahontas from an English perspective and flaunted the fact that she chose the superior race", legitimizing the English conquest.[154] The second, on the pendant, is the 1852 portrait by Thomas Sully (see Figure 9). Like the engraving by van de Passe, this painting legitimized English conquest, as her and Thomas Rolfe's descendants settled in the southern United States, where they "claimed Pocahontas as a progenitor", extending their claim to the land as a biological right; its popularity made it "the best known and most copied" image of her.[155] Ataumbi and Okuma wanted to "reclaim Pocahontas from her vapid, Disneyfied portrayal and show her instead as the young woman" who held great political power.[156] By using beads, these portraits are blurred, but not enough that Pocahontas is not recognizable. In blurring them, though, the artists are able to recontextualize the imagery, with sterling silver, gold, wampum shell, freshwater pearls, and diamonds to honor her life and contributions for her people. The beautiful and opulent materials

---

152 Elizabeth S. Bird, "Gendered Construction of the American Indian in Popular Media," in *Journal of Communication* 49, no. 3 (January 1999), pp. 72.
153 NOVA, "Pocahontas Revealed: Images of a Legend," PBS (Public Broadcasting Service, 2007), https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/pocahontas/legend.html.
154 Rebecca K. Jager, "Intimate Frontiers," in *Malinche, Pocahontas, and Sacagawea: Indian Women as Cultural Intermediaries and National Symbols*. Univ Of Oklahoma Press (2016), pp. 148.
155 NOVA, "Pocahontas Revealed".
156 Ahlberg Yohe and Greeves, "Introduction", pp. 25

signify the importance and prestige of the person for whom it was made; in this case, that is not the wearer, but the woman that is depicted within the jewelry.

The works discussed here provide only a snapshot of the whole exhibition, which includes many other beautiful, impactful, and potent pieces. Keri Ataumbi, in reference to the power that Native women artists have, says that they are "changing the world, one bead, one stitch, one earring, one brushstroke, one written word at a time."[157] The interconnectedness of the three themes, as there is much overlap between them evident in the objects, shows just how intertwined everything is to each other. Legacy connects to the Power of Native women, in the sense that positions of power are handed down to other women. Relationships that humans share with the natural world also connects with Legacy and Power, as the use of natural materials ties into the generational passing of knowledge regarding artistic production and the resiliency of that artistic production that has survived through times of trauma. Mithlo's statement here corresponds with this: "the act of creating, reproducing and circulating one's own stories becomes a form of cultural survival."[158] This interconnectedness is important to understanding the motivations behind creation for Native women. The thematic organization of the exhibition breaks down the barriers found within traditional museum curation, between art and craft or the high and low classifications of objects, and creates space for discussion and to allow for viewers to make connections themselves, in a way that is not directly structured by curators, through relationships. This exhibition is one way of recapturing, displaying, and celebrating knowledge production, storytelling, and a joyfulness that comes from honoring the women that have come before these artists.

---

[157] Keri Ataumbi, personal email, August 26, 2020.
[158] Mithlo, "Guest Editor's Introduction", pp. 7.

Conclusion

As stated throughout the previous two chapters, the curatorial methods evident in this exhibition are forms of social activism because they are rooted in Native feminisms. This is true because “Hearts of Our People”, like Native feminisms, focuses on land, climate change and protecting water and natural resources, reclaiming language and knowledge systems, and the recentering of the roles of women and the Native LGBTQIATS communities. This is evident through the methods of curation and the works of art on view. Intentional micro-actions, like those employed in this show, have major impact toward social activism, a movement that seeks to create social change. “The expanded role of exhibition-makers involves, at some level, an engagement with activism”, making a “curator as a cultural agent of social change”.[159] As more institutions, like museums (that are dependent upon or were created to serve their communities), move to best reflect or challenge those communities’ mindsets and culture(s), social action becomes a way to do so for the better, and to connect and support excluded and marginalized communities.

This shift in operational focus from academic tradition to social engagement and community building converts methods to forms of social action and serves as opportunities of healing. As stated earlier, in employing community engagement that advances toward social engagement through community involvement, a museum does not just gather voices and receive information from its community, but in doing so provides an opportunity for the museum to participate in and give back to that community, to actively participate in social activism. Museums “help strengthen communities by supporting the work of recovering traditions of

[159] Marie Fraser and Alice Ming Wai Jim, “Introduction: What is Critical Curating?/ Qu’est-ce que le commissariat engage?,” *RACAR: revue d’art canadienne / Canadian Art Review*, 43, no. 2 (2018), pp.7.

expressive culture that have been silenced by official policies of assimilationism and marginalization."[160] The education through Native art canons, objects on display, and the labels in Indigenous languages challenge visitors, non-Native in particular, to learn about the histories, abundance of cultures, cultural productions, and stereotypes that still surround Native communities. The reclamation of languages draws attention to the historic and contemporary presence of those languages in Native communities, reminding visitors that English was not always the main language spoken in what is now the United States or Canada. The other in-gallery measures in "Hearts of Our People" further the use of Native feminisms toward social action by challenging traditional methods of visitor engagement. By providing free admission to Native peoples, museum staff are breaking down financial barriers; as an organized action that seeks to remove previously constructed obstacles of accessibility, the inclusion of free admission can be considered a form of social action.

Museums can be places for rebuilding "where chaos and discrimination have overwhelmed democracy… They also tread where governments cannot go."[161] But the methods used here can serve as a framework for others to use in building community relationships and ending the chaos. According to Jill Alhberg Yohe, this way of curation is just "the right way to do things"[162] and is very telling of the chasm that exists between the standard in museum work and the standard of doing things in many Native communities—by listening to elders or more experienced people (in this case those whose work is on view, including artists and communities) and then acting accordingly; these actions can be replicated and could become standard! The overwhelmingly positive feedback from this exhibition prove that this type of curation has set a

[160] Ruth B. Phillips, "Indigenizing Exhibitions: Experiments and Practices," in *Museum Pieces: Toward the Indigenization of Canadian Museums* (Montréal, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014) .pp. 157.
[161] Elena Gonzales, "Introduction", in *Exhibition for Social Justice* (London, England: Routledge, 2019)., pp. 2.
[162] Jill Ahlberg Yohe, telephone call, June 30, 2020.

precedent to guide curators, educators, and administrators into the future of curation. "Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists" employs methods that decenter settler colonialism in museum culture and recenter Native women and kin through the use of an advisory board, different art canons, and in-gallery measures that, when combined, create a framework for social action-oriented curation because they exemplify a Native feminist philosophy:

1. polyphony provides space for community involvement,
2. educationally motivated interpretation shines light on hidden and difficult histories,
3. recognition of land locates discussion on sovereignty
4. Indigeneity—in its great plurality—exists firstly on a political level, then on a cultural one, with each bring different knowledge systems (reconstituting the need for polyphony)

Not going into specifics here allows for expansion and customization based on situational and institutional needs. For example, Ahlberg Yohe said that if it was not for administrative support, she and Greeves would not have been able to implement such a large advisory board for the exhibition and they could have said no at any time, but they believed enough in the process that it was allowed to proceed as planned.[163] There are many factors that go into curation and administrative support is just one of those factors.

Recognizing the limitations of and the biases that can arise with monophonic curation is the first step in the framework museum staff can take to transform their institution and gallery spaces into ones that promotes social action. In fully understanding and then moving away from these limitations and biases, curation becomes polyphonic, providing space for community

[163] Ahlberg Yohe, telephone call.

involvement. “Hearts of Our People” used their advisory board and baskets in the galleries to do this. By starting their process with multiple perspectives, the exhibition reflected lived experiences and cultures from many people. The plurality also makes sure that the space becomes one that is inclusive of all peoples, especially those who have historically excluded from museum spaces. The baskets provide an intimate moment for Native visitors and serve to involve them in the space, as well.

Educating the public about, and bringing attention to, the multiple perspectives evident in the world, particularly those within Native America, is another part of the framework. This is evident in the objects that were selected for the show. There are many difficult events in North American history and contemporary life discussed in this exhibition. These include colonization, forced relocations and boarding schools, and forced dependency upon the United States and Canadian governments to the higher statistical rates of violence toward Native peoples, especially Native women and girls. These topics are rarely talked about within mainstream history and current events. Providing room to discuss extremely delicate and painful topics, also provides space for healing and a celebration of the strength and resiliency of Native peoples. In addition to the works displayed, the use of themes educates visitors on the interconnectedness of the Legacy, Relationships, and Power within Native societies.

Sovereignty is most commonly understood as supreme authority. By connecting back to the land, curators provide space for that sovereignty to take hold. Jolene Rickard, in her article, “Diversifying Sovereignty and the Reception of Indigenous Art”, links the work of Elizabeth Cook-Lynn and Monika Siebert with “the assertion of sovereignty to place-based action.”[164]

[164] Rickard, “Diversifying Sovereignty”, pp. 82.

Having supreme authority over land, over a particular space is typically reserved for nation building and the like.[165] However, one could argue that, to some extent, this exhibition was created and organized by Native peoples for Native peoples. As such, the activism-motivated methods establish what I call spatial sovereignty through a modified form of self-determination. It is a way to Indigenize a space in reclaiming "a location through performance, ceremony, song, dance or installation that convey the existence and presence of Native peoples and cultures."[166] The sovereignty of a space is temporary, as exhibitions have an end date, but while on view, exhibitions that are designed so thoroughly by Native peoples take over the part of the museum they are in, creating a space that is then worked in conjunction with museum professionals. By implementing free admission for Native peoples, medicine baskets for their sole use, having labels only in Native languages or not at all, and by limiting photography to ensure visual sovereignty has been protected, the curatorial team (led by the guidance provided by the advisory board) created a space that was dominated by Native perspective.

Indigeneity is political and cultural, with identity being firstly national, resulting in culture being defined by nationality. As in the mainstream canon section discussed in Chapter 1, Indigeneity, in its diversity, also brings with it a diversity of knowledge systems. In the museum space, the power dynamics and systems that regulate methodologies need to be dismantled and decentered in order for these knowledge systems to take over. Creating a space for Indigenous knowledge systems is crucial in social action work; without conscious decision making, there can be no change.

[165] Siebert, "Introduction", pp.5.
[166] Nancy Marie Mithlo, "Guest Editor's Introduction", pp. 6.

If activism stands as "an act capable of exceeding the limits of representative politics and transposing conflicts into the public sphere", then "curators become the mediators… [who] try and make visible the problems of minorities and marginalized communities, aligning their work with the agendas of different social movements."[167] Exhibitions, thus, have the ability to be spaces where that activism is put in place. By implementing these pieces of the framework implemented in the "Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists" exhibition, and inspired by the curatorial methods of previous exhibitions, like "INDIGENA: Contemporary Aboriginal Perspectives", curators can begin social activist work in their institutions.

[167] Juan Albarrán Diego, "On Curatorial Activism: Art, Politics and Exhibitions (Inside, Around and Beyond Institutions)." *Critique d'art* [Online], 51 (Autumn/Winter 2019), pp.16-30. https://journals.openedition.org/critiquedart/36598.

List of Figures

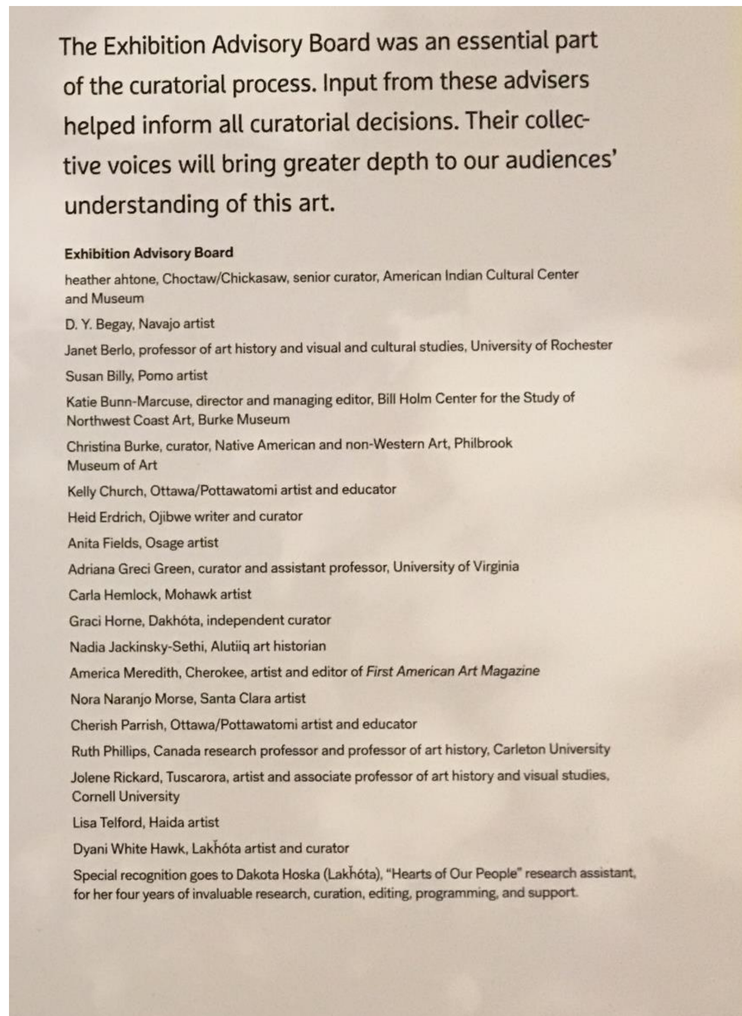

Figure 1: This is a photograph of the list of advisory board members from the exhibition introductory wall text, courtesy of Dr. Celka Straughn, 2019.The list is as follows: "heather ahtone, Choctaw/Chickasaw, senior curator, American Indian Cultural Center and Museum; D.Y. Begay, Navajo artist; Janet Berlo, professor of art history and visual and cultural studies, University of Rochester; Susan Billy, Pomo artist; Katie Bunn-Marcuse, director and managing editor, Bill Holm Center for the Study of Northwest Coast Art, Burke Museum; Christina Burke, curator, Native American and non-Western Art, Philbrook Museum of Art; Kelly Church, Ottawa/Pottawatomi artist and educator; Hied Erdrich, Ojibwe writer and curator; Anita Fields, Osage artist; Adriana Greci Green, curator and assistant professor, University of Virginia; Carla Hemlock, Mohawk artist; Graci Horne, Dakhóta, independent curator; Nadia Jackinsky-Sethi, Alutiiq art historian; America Meredith, Cherokee, artist and editor of *First American Art* magazine; Nora Naranjo Morse, Santa Clara artist; Cherish Parrish, Ottawa/ Pottawatomi artist and educator; Ruth B. Phillips, Canada research professor and professor of art history, Carleton University; Jolene Rickard, Tuscarora, artist and associate professor of art history and visual studies, Cornell University; Lisa Telford, Haida artist; Dyani White Hawk, Lakȟóta artist and curator; Special recognition goes to Dakota Hoska (Lakȟóta), "Hearts of Our People" research assistant, for her four years of invaluable research, curation, editing, programming, and support."

Figure 2: A photograph of the baskets at the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) and wall text. Courtesy of Katie Delmez, curator at the Frist Art Museum, 2019.

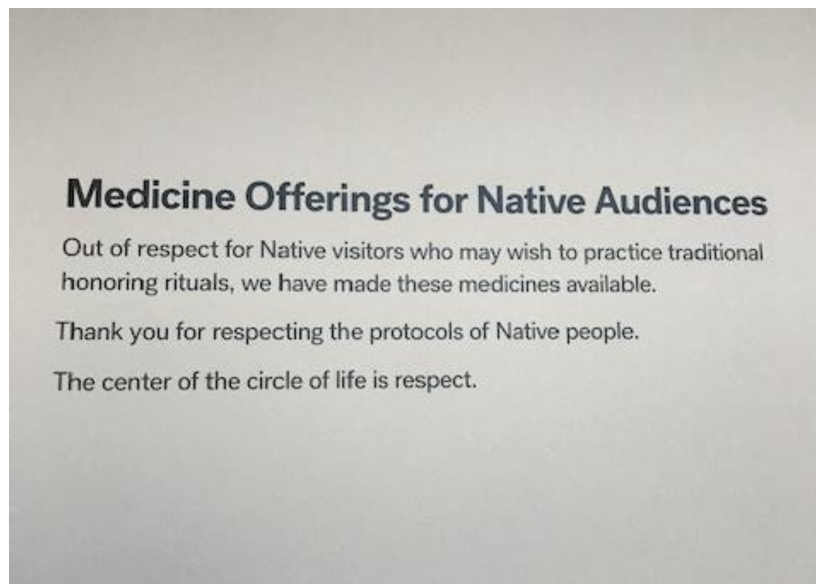

Figure 3: A photograph of the wall text from Mia. Courtesy of Katie Delmez, curator at the Frist Art Museum. It reads: "Medicine Offerings for Native Audiences. / Out of respect for Native visitors who may wish to practice traditional honoring rituals, we have made these medicines available. / Thank you for respecting the protocols of Native people. / The center of the circle of life is respect."

The Dakhóta Homeland

The state name Minnesota comes from the Dakhóta word Mnísota, "land where the water reflects the sky." The Minneapolis Institute of Art is located in Dakhóta Makhóčhe, the Dakhóta homeland. The Dakhóta were here long before European explorers arrived in the 1600s. In the 1820s the United States military built Fort Snelling directly above Bdóte, the birthplace of the Dakhóta and the center of their universe. Bdóte, "where two waters come together," is where the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers merge—a place of confluence and regeneration.

In this gallery you will find both historical and contemporary artworks. All are grounded in the rich Dakhóta culture, which continues through the generations despite war, famine, disease, and the forced removal of the Dakhóta people from their homeland following their rebellion in 1862.

Dakhóta Thamákhočhe kiŋ

Mnísota hé Dakhóta wičhóie héčha. Mnísota hé wičhóie kiŋ wašíču iá, "land where the water reflects the sky," eyápi. Minneapolis Institute of Arts - Minneapolis Wókağe Omnáye Thípi kiŋ Dakhóta Thamákhočhe éd yaŋké. Ómakha 1600 wahéhaŋyáŋ Wašíčupi kiŋ hípi. Wašíčupi kiŋ hípi šni ečhéd Dakhóta Oyáte kiŋ makhóčhe kiŋ déčhiya thípi. Ómakha 1820 k'eháŋ Isáŋ Tháŋka Akíčhita kiŋ Čhuŋkáške thípi kiŋ káğapi. Čhuŋkáške thípi kiŋ Wašíču iá Fort Snelling eyápi. Čhuŋkáške thípi kiŋ Bdóte ikhíyedaŋ káğapi. Dakhóta Oyáte kiŋ Bdóte hé wakháŋdapi k'a makhóčhe kiŋ hé etáŋhaŋpi wičádapi. Bdóte wašíču iá, "where the waters come together," eyápi. Mnísota wakpá k'a Wakpá Tháŋka okhížata kiŋ hé éd makhóčhe hé Bdóte ečíyapi.

Owáŋka kiŋ dé éd Dakhóta thawókağe kiŋ waŋdákapi kte. Wókağe kiŋ hená owás Dakhóta wičhóȟ'aŋ etáŋhaŋ. Dakhóta wičhóȟ'aŋ kiŋ nína waš'áke eštá eháŋna Wašíčupi kiŋ Dakhóta Oyáte kiŋ kinín wičhákasotapi. Dakhóta Oyáte kiŋ okíčhize k'a akíȟ'aŋ k'a wóyazaŋ šíča kiŋ hená kaptá hiyúpi. K'a nakúŋ 1862 okíčhize iyóhakab Wašíčupi kiŋ Dakhóta Oyáte kiŋ Mnísota etáŋhaŋ yuthókhaŋ iyéwičhayapi.

Figure 4: Wall text from the Minneapolis Institute of Art installation of the exhibition demonstrating the combined labels in both English and Dakhóta, courtesy of Dr. Celka Straughn, 2019.

Figure 5: Rose B. Simpson (Santa Clara Pueblo), *Maria*, 2014, 1985 Chevy El Camino with bodywork and customization by artist, courtesy of the artist. Photograph by Kate Russell. © 2014 Rose B. Simpson.

Figure 6: Christi Belcourt (Michif) *Wisdom of the Universe*, 2014. Acrylic on canvas. Purchased with funds donated by Greg Latremoille, 2014. In the collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario. © 2014 Christi Belcourt

Figure 7: *Adornment: Iconic Perspective*, 2014. Consisting of ring, earrings, and necklace. Metalwork by Keri Ataumbi (Kiowa) and beadwork by Jamie Okuma (Luiseño/ Shoshone-Bannock). Antique glass beads, 24 karat electroplated beads, buckskin, 18 karat yellow gold, sterling silver, wampum shell, freshwater pearls, rose and brilliant cut diamonds and diamond beads, diamond briollites. Gift of funds from the Duncan and Nivin MacMillian Foundation. Courtesy of the Minneapolis Institute of Art. © 2014 Keri Ataumbi and Jamie Okuma.

Figure 8: *Poca Hontas, Daughter of the Emperor of Virginia*, by Simon van de Passe. Engraving on paper, 1616. Currently in the collection of the United States' National Gallery of Art. Image not available from NGA; this image is from the Public Broadcasting Service[168]

Figure 9: *Pocahontas*, the 1852 portrait by Thomas Sully. © The Virginia Historical Museum.[169]

---

[168] NOVA, "Pocahontas Revealed".
[169] Virginia History Explorer, "Pocahontas," Virginia Museum of History & Culture, March 7, 2019, https://www.virginiahistory.org/collections-and-resources/virginia-history-explorer/pocahontas.

Bibliography

Ackerman, Lillian A. *A Song to the Creator: Traditional Arts of Native American Women of the Plateau.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996.
Allen, Paula Gunn. "Who Is Your Mother? Red Roots of White Feminism." in *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*. Boston: Beacon Pr., 1992.
Archer, Sarah. "Power Object: Rose B. Simpson's Maria." American Craft Council, June 19, 2018. https://www.craftcouncil.org/post/power-object-rose-b-simpsons-maria.
Art Gallery of Ontario. "Artist's Statement: Christi Belcourt on the Wisdom of the Universe." Art Gallery of Ontario, August 7, 2014. http://ago.ca/agoinsider/artists-statement-christi-belcourt-wisdom-universe.
Ataumbi, Keri. Personal Email, August 26, 2020.
Baird, Daniel. "Air Jungen." The Walrus, May 1, 2017. https://thewalrus.ca/air-jungen/.
Barone, Fran. "Ethnology and Ethnography in Anthropology." Human Relations Area Files – Cultural information for education and research, February 25, 2020. http://hraf.yale.edu/teach-ehraf/ethnology-and-ethnography-in-anthropology/.
Beinecke Digital Collections. "Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library." n.d. https://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3730190.
Belcourt, Christi. "Bio." Christi Belcourt, n.d. http://christibelcourt.com/bio/.
Berlo, Janet C. "The Art of Indigenous Americans and American Art History: A Century of Exhibitions." Perspective. Actualité en histoire de l'arte. Institute national d'histoire de l'arte. December 5, 2015. http://journals.openedition.org/perspective/6044.
Berlo, Janet C. and Ruth B. Phillips. "Postmodernism, installation, and other post-studio art." In *Native North American Art.* 234-239. Oxford University Press. 1998.
Bird, Elizabeth S. "Gendered Construction of the American Indian in Popular Media." In *Journal of Communication* 49, no. 3 (January 1999). pp. 61-83.
Diego, Juan Albarrán. "On Curatorial Activism: Art, Politics and Exhibitions (Inside, Around and Beyond Institutions)." *Critique d'art* [Online], 51 (Autumn/Winter 2019). pp. 16-30. https://journals.openedition.org/critiquedart/36598.
Eler, Alicia. "In Minneapolis, Native Women's Art Shines in a Revolutionary Exhibition." Star Tribune, June 6, 2019. https://m.startribune.com/in-minneapolis-native-women-s-art-shines-in-a-revolutionary-exhibition/510918412/?fbclid=IwAR1rf1kMIQ4YdrfvAY2N5dkbwNpzxcofvKoTSAy2gNcY2NxX74JawM7qxu4.
Flowers, Rachel. "Refusal to forgive: Indigenous women's love and rage." in *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, & Society*. Vol. 4, No. 2, 2015. p.32-49.
Fraser, Marie and Alice Ming Wai Jim. "Introduction: What is Critical Curating? / Qu'est-ce que le commissariat engage?." *RACAR: revue d'art canadienne / Canadian Art Review*, 43, no. 2 (2018), pp. 5-10.
Frist Art Museum. *Arts Break*, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OyQdv6jRGnM.
Frist Art Museum. *Artist Perspective: Rose B. Simpson*, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=34FZuxEsd10
Gonzales, Elena. "Introduction." In *Exhibitions for Social Justice*, 1—14. London, England: Routledge, 2019.
Gotthardt, Alexxa. "These Women Were Missing from Your Art History Books." Artsy, April 19, 2017. https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-women-missing-art-history-books.

Grumdahl, Dara Moskowitz. "Mia Celebrates Native Women Artists With 'Hearts of Our People' Exhibit." Mpls.St.Paul Magazine, May 31, 2019. http://mspmag.com/arts-and-culture/mia-hearts-of-our-people-native-women-artists/?fbclid=IwAR0czh8YxOZ0wFGOQeghZhyZsj63kTz_BJpW1X3ISZrHmSG4p1pubIcLvlo.

Hogue, Tarah. "Walking Softly with Christi Belcourt." Canadian Art, June 21, 2017. https://canadianart.ca/features/walking-softly-with-christi-belcourt/.

Horn-Miller, Kahente. "Otiyaner: The 'Women's Path' Through Colonialism." in *Atlantis*, Vol 29.2, Spring/Summer (2005), pp. 57-68.

International Council of Museums. "Museum Definition." ICOM, n.d. http://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/.

International Council of Museums. "Seven Inspirational Quotes from Female Leaders in Museums." March 7, 2018. https://icom.museum/en/news/seven-inspirational-quotes-from-female-leaders-in-museums-2/.

International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs. "Self-Determination for Indigenous Peoples." IWGIA, April 9, 2011. https://www.iwgia.org/en/focus/land-rights/330-self-determination-of-indigenous-peoples.

Jager, Rebecca K. "Intimate Frontiers." in *Malinche, Pocahontas, and Sacagawea: Indian Women as Cultural Intermediaries and National Symbols.* Univ. of Oklahoma Press (2016). pp. 121-156.

Jaimes, M. Annette and Theresa Halsey, "American Indian Women: At the Center of Indigenous Resistance in Contemporary North America." In *The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance* edited by M. Annette Jaimes (South End Press: Boston, Massachusetts, 1992), pp. 332.

Johnston, Kim A., and Maureen Taylor. "Toward a Theory of Social Engagement." In *The Handbook of Communication Engagement*, 19-32. Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2018.

Karp, Ivan and Steven D. Lavine. *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*. Washington DC: Smithsonian Inst. Press, 2012.

Khan Academy. "The Enlightenment Period." Khan Academy, n.d. https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/us-history/colonial-america/colonial-north-america/a/the-enlightenment.

Khan Academy. "What Is Art History and Where Is It Going?" Khan Academy, n.d. https://khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/start-here-apah/intro-art-history-apah/a/what-is-art-history.

Latham, Kiersten F. and John Simmons. "The Origins of Museums." In *Foundations of Museum Studies Evolving Systems of Knowledge*, 23-39. Santa Barbara, California: Libraries Unlimited, 2014.

Lightfoot, Theresa. "So What if We Didn't Call it 'Feminism'?! Feminism and Indigenous people" in *Feminism FOR REAL: Deconstructing the academic industrial complex of feminism* edited by Jessica Yee (Our Schools/Our Selves, 2011), pp. 105-109.

Lucchetta, Carla, Steve Paikin, Shelby Lisk, and Haley Lewis. "How This Indigenous Artist Turns Basketball Shoes into Commercialist Critique." TVO.org, July 5, 2019. https://www.tvo.org/article/how-this-indigenous-artist-turns-basketball-shoes-into-commercialist-critique.

Luke, Timothy W., “Politics at the Exhibition: Aesthetics, History, and Nationality in the Cultural Wars.” in *Museum Politics: Power Plays at the Exhibition,* 1-18. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.
McMaster, Gerald. “INDIGENA: A Native Curator’s Perspective.” *Art Journal* 51, no. 3 (Autumn 1992). Pp. 66-73.
Merriam-Webster. “Activism.” Merriam-Webster, n.d. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/activism?utm_campaign=sd.
Minneapolis Institute of Art. “Hearts of Our People: Frequently Asked Questions.” Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists – Minneapolis Institute of Art, 2019. https://new.artsmia.org/hearts-of-our-people-native-women-artists/.
Minneapolis Institute of Art. *Legacy*, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABFDBxJbXvA.
Minneapolis Institute of Art. *Power*, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kawp8Ka7I1Y.
Minneapolis Institute of Art. “Why We Translated an Exhibition’s Labels into Dozens of Native Languages.” Minneapolis Institute of Art, 2019. https://new.artsmia.org/stories/why-we-translated-an-exhibitions-labels-into-dozens-of-native-languages/.
Mitho, Nancy Marie. “Guest Editor’s Introduction: Curatorial Practice and Native North American Art.” *Wicazo Sa Review* 27, no. 1 (2012):5—12.
Mitho, Nancy Marie. ““A Real Feminist Journey”: Locating Indigenous Feminisms in the Arts.” *Meridans* 9, no. 2 (2009): 1-30.
Moreton-Robinson, Aileen. *Critical Indigenous Studies: Engagements in First World Locations.* Tucson, Arizona: The University of Arizona Press, 2016.
Moreton-Robinson, Aileen. “Look Out White Woman: Representations of ‘The White Woman’ in Feminist Theory." in *Talkin’ Up To The White Woman: Aboriginal Women and Feminism*. University of Queensland Press, 2000. pp. 32-71.
The Museum of Modern Art. “‘Primitivism’ in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern: MoMA.” The Museum of Modern Art, 1984. https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/1907.
NOVA. “Pocahontas Revealed: Images of a Legend.” PBS. Public Broadcasting Service, 2007. https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/pochontas/legend.html.
Phillips, Ruth B. “Indigenizing Exhibitions: Experiments and Practices.” In *Museum Pieces: Toward the Indigenization of Canadian Museums,* 156—60. Montréal, Canada: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2014.
Phillips, Ruth B. “Inside Out and Outside In: Re-presenting Native North America at the Canadian Museum of Civilization and the National Museum of the American Indian.” in *The National Museum of the American Indian: Critical Conversations*, edited by Amy Lonetree and Amanda J. Cobb. University of Nebraska Press, 2008. pp. 405-430.
Pickworth, Amy, ed. “Brian Jungen: Strange Comfort.” *Smithsonian: National Museum of the American Indian*, 2009. https://americanindian.si.edu/exhibitions/jingen/files/strangecomfort.pdf
Reilly, Maura. “What is Curatorial Activism.” In *Curatorial Activism: Towards An Ethics of Curating*, 16-33. London, England: Thames & Hudson, 2018.
Rickard, Jolene. “Diversifying Sovereignty and the Reception of Indigenous Art.” *Art Journal* 76, no. 2. (2017): pp. 81-84.
Sanchez, Casey. “Auto-Body Experience: Rose B. Simpson and Her El Camino.” Santa Fe New Mexican, May 20, 2016. https://www.santafenewmexican.com/pasatiempo/art/auto-body-experience-rose-b-simpson-and-her-elcamino/article_8707be00-c56d-57w4-9e09-8a96df4a81c4.htm.

Sandell, Richard, and Eithne Nightingale. *Museums, Equality and Social Justice*. Abingdon, England: Routledge, 2012.
Scott, Chadd. “History Made, 'Hearts Of Our People: Native Women Artists' Prepares To Leave Minneapolis For Nashville.” Forbes. Forbes Magazine, August 2, 2019. https://www.forbes.com/sites/chaddscott/2019/08/02/history-made-hearts-of-our-people-native-women-artists-prepares-to-leave-minneapolis-for-nashville/#357810335e1f.
Seppi, Lisa Roberts. “Chapter Nine: Indigenous Activism: Art, Identity, and the Politics of the Quincentenary.” in *Counterpoints*, vol. 403, 2011. pp. 113-133.
Siebert, Monkia. “Introduction: Indigeneity and Multicultural Misrecognition.” In *Indians Playing Indian?: Multiculturalsim and Contemporary Indigenous Art in North America*, 1-21. Tuscaloosa, Alabama: The University Alabama Press, 2015.
St. Denis, Verna. “Feminism is For Everybody: Aboriginal Women, Feminism and Diversity.” in *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, edited by Joyce A. Green, pp. 33-52. Black Point, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing, 2017.
Szabo, Joyce M. “Native American Art History: Questions of the Canon.” in *Essays on Native Modernism: Complexity and Contradiction in American Indian Art*. Washington, D.C.: National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, 2006. pp. 69-83.
Urban Dictionary. “Social Activist.” Urban Dictionary, n.d. https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=SocialActivist.
University of Toronto. “History of Anthropology.” Intro to Anthropology. N.d. http://individual.utoronto.ca/boyd/anthro7.htm.
Virginia History Explorer. “Pocahontas.” Virginia Museum of History & Culture, March 7, 2019. https://www.virginiahistory.org/collections-and-resources/virginia-history-explorer/pocahontas.
Wakeam, Kira. “How Rose Simpson’s Lowrider Is an Homage to Pueblo Potters.” PBS. Public Broadcasting Service. December 23, 2019. https://www.pbs.org/newshour/art/how-rose-simpsons-lowrider-is-an-home-to-pueblo-potters.
Wagner, Sally Roesch. “Women Voted Before the United States Was Formed” in *The Women’s Suffrage Movement*. Penguin Books, 2019. pp. 1-7.
Williams, Krysta and Erin Konsmo. “Resistance to Indigenous Feminism” in *Deconstructing the academic industrial complex of feminism* edited by Jessica Yee (Our Schools/Our Selves, 2011), pp. 21-34.
Williams, Jr., Robert A. “Gendered Checks and Balances: Understanding the Legacy of White Patriarchy in an American Indian Cultural Context” in *Georgia Law Review*, Vol. 24:1019 (1990), pp. 1019-1044.
Wpengine. “Museum Exhibition Features the Work of Native American Women Artists.” Art Herstory, January 20, 2020. https://artherstory.net/hearts-of-our-people-review/.
Yohe, Jill Ahlberg. Telephone call, June 30, 2020.
Yohe, Jill Ahlberg, and Teri Greeves. *Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019.