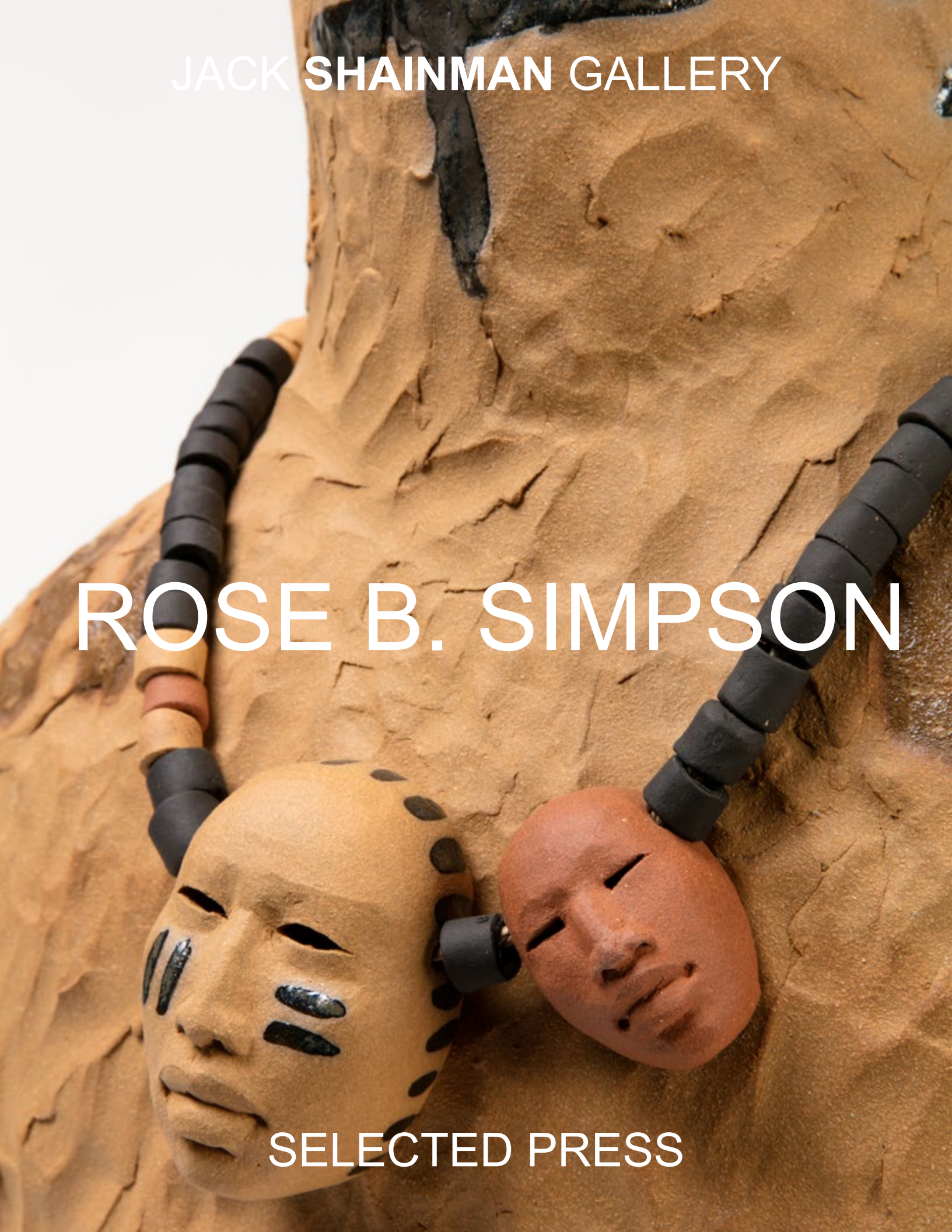
JACK **SHAINMAN** GALLERY



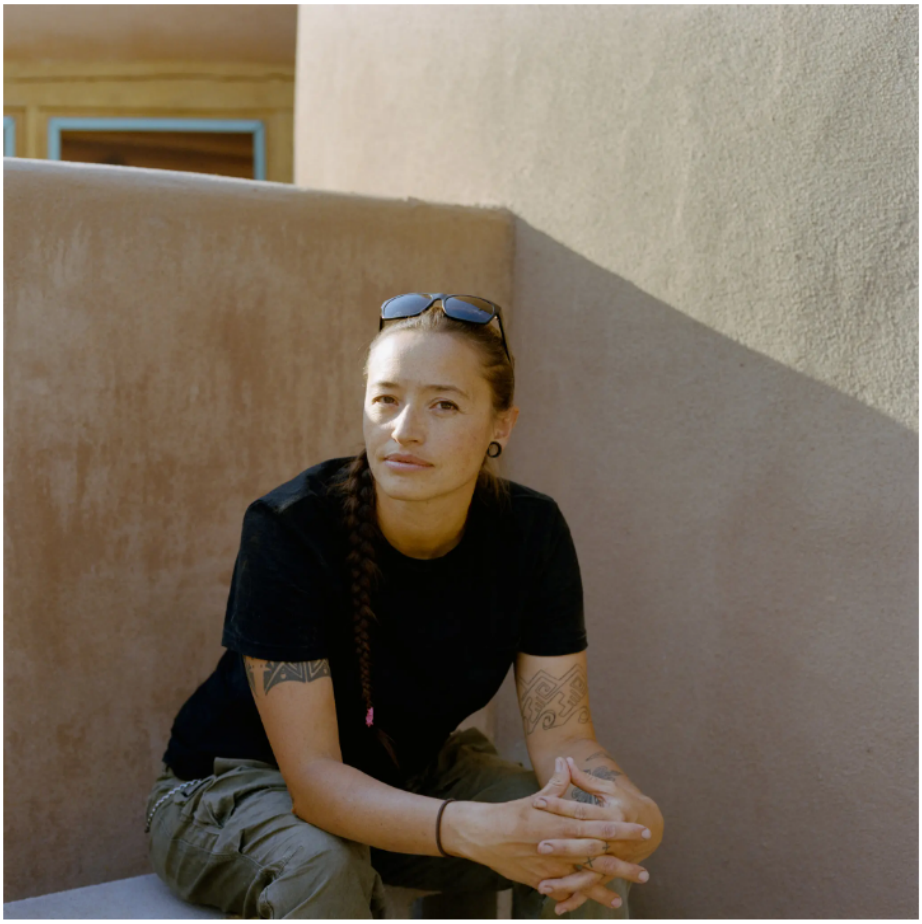
ROSE B. SIMPSON

SELECTED PRESS

The New York Times

Rose B. Simpson Thinks in Clay

"Clay was the earth that grew our food, was the house we lived in, was the pottery we ate out of and prayed with," says the Native American sculptor and rising star.



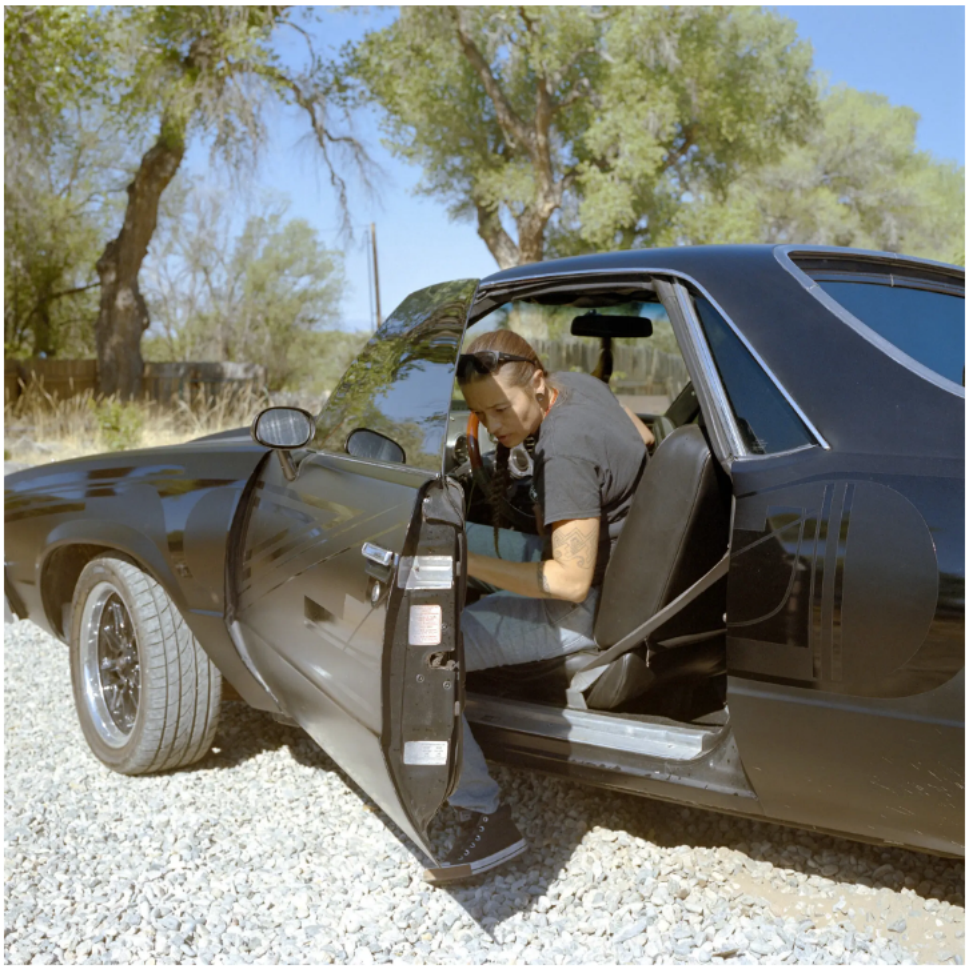
Rose B. Simpson outside her adobe studio in Española, New Mexico. With what a curator describes as her "'Mad Max,' 'Blade Runner' vibe," Simpson builds on — and rough up — pottery traditions from the Santa Clara Pueblo. Minesh Bacrania for The New York Times

By Jori Finkel
June 16, 2022

ESPAÑOLA, N.M. — The artist Rose B. Simpson was sitting in her 1985 Chevy El Camino inside her metalworking shop, trying to get the car to start. She popped the hood, turned the ignition and then lightly pumped the gas pedal. After she repeated this a few times, the car started to rumble loudly.

It wasn't her everyday car, but closer to a work of art she has made over the last 10 years, here in the self-proclaimed lowrider capital of the world. Simpson repaired large dents by learning how to shape metal at an auto body school. She replaced the engine with one she bought in a racing shop in Phoenix. And she painted the exterior with a black-on-black, gloss-and-matte geometric design and named the car Maria in homage to the celebrated Tewa potter Maria Martinez of the San Ildefonso Pueblo, who died in 1980.

"Maria is as close as I've come to making traditional pottery," said Simpson, 38, an enrolled member of the Santa Clara Pueblo (Kha'po Owingeh), based just south of Española. She belongs to a long line of ceramic artists there going back hundreds of years. But instead of making the sturdy, glossy red or black pottery her pueblo is known for, she's gaining art-world acclaim for her powerful androgynous figures of clay, often with metal adornments that look like jewelry or armor or both.



Simpson and her 1985 El Camino at her studio. Her car, Maria, is painted in the black-on-black Tewa style that Maria Martinez helped make famous. Minesh Bacrania for The New York Times

After showing off Maria ("I have to work on the idle"), Simpson crossed a patio to her ceramics studio on the property, a small adobe structure with a "clean room" for sewing and drawing in back. A dozen of her tender-fierce figures stood in front, crowded together. Some wore beaded necklaces while others were waiting to be adorned with car parts — metal gears and brake discs — like a motley band of warriors preparing for battle.

Several of these sculptures, which she calls "beings" or "ancestors," are now heading to East Coast museums: 11 recent works to the ICA Boston in August, and a new commission to the Fabric Workshop and Museum in Philadelphia in October. And on June 18, a series of 12 slender cast-concrete figures will

preside over a property in Williamstown, Mass., known as the Field Farm, part of a public art program run by the preservationist group The Trustees.

Called “Counterculture,” the nine-foot-tall herm-like figures have an otherworldly presence thanks to a startling visual effect: Simpson has carved out holes for eyes that go all the way to the backs of their heads, letting the light — or life — stream through.

“When you see light come through their eyes, it will be like the sky is seeing you,” the artist added, explaining that she was thinking about the global exploitation of natural resources. “I wanted to flip this script to make those resources watch you in an intimidating way.”

Concerned that ceramics at this scale could be fragile, Simpson made her molds for “Counterculture” by carving full-size versions in wood. But even these works began with clay maquettes.

Simpson starts a new sculpture in her studio using the coil method, a traditional pottery technique for building up a vessel by hand. Minesh Bacrania for The New York Times

“I think in clay,” she said. “Clay was the earth that grew our food, was the house we lived in, was the pottery we ate out of and prayed with. So my relationship to clay is ancestral and I think it has a deep genetic memory. It’s like a family member for us.” She remembers seeing her great-grandmother, the artist Rose Naranjo, speaking to her clay, and she said her mother, Roxanne Swentzell, learned to sculpt figures as a means to communicate long before she talked.

While Swentzell makes beautifully smooth sculptures of Indigenous women engaged in everyday activities, Simpson tends to rough things up. She leaves the surfaces of her figures uneven and adds adornments in metal, leather and other materials to create, in the words of the Los Angeles curator Helen Molesworth, “a badass, ‘Mad Max,’ ‘Blade Runner’ vibe.”

Molesworth first saw Simpson’s work in 2019 at the Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian while vacationing in Santa Fe. She was so struck by the “mixing of different textures, soft and hard” that she said she wondered if she wasn’t just “blissed out on holiday.” Back home, she was still fascinated and decided to feature Simpson in a group show, “Feedback,” last summer for the New York gallerist Jack Shainman. Next year Simpson will have a solo show with Shainman and another in San Francisco with her gallery of three years, Jessica Silverman. (The gallerists would not provide the range of prices for Simpson’s work.)

While Simpson works in Española on a family property, she lives with her young daughter on the Santa Clara Pueblo where she grew up. She was raised there mainly by her mother after her parents’ divorce. She said her father, a white artist, took her rock climbing and taught her how to sail on a local reservoir. “He had time to play with me, while my mom was surviving,” she said, describing the situation as “extreme poverty.” She went on to praise her mother’s resourcefulness and “deep relationship to the land.”

Simpson threaded ceramic beads to make necklaces for the herm-like figures in “Counterculture.” She has invited Indigenous people to add necklaces made with clay from their lands. Minesh Bacrania for The New York Times

“We grew most of our food. We ate our pets,” she said, mentioning turkeys, chickens and pigs. She also remembered her mother making their shoes by hand: cutting up blown-out tires salvaged from the dump with a jigsaw and then sewing leather straps onto the rubber.

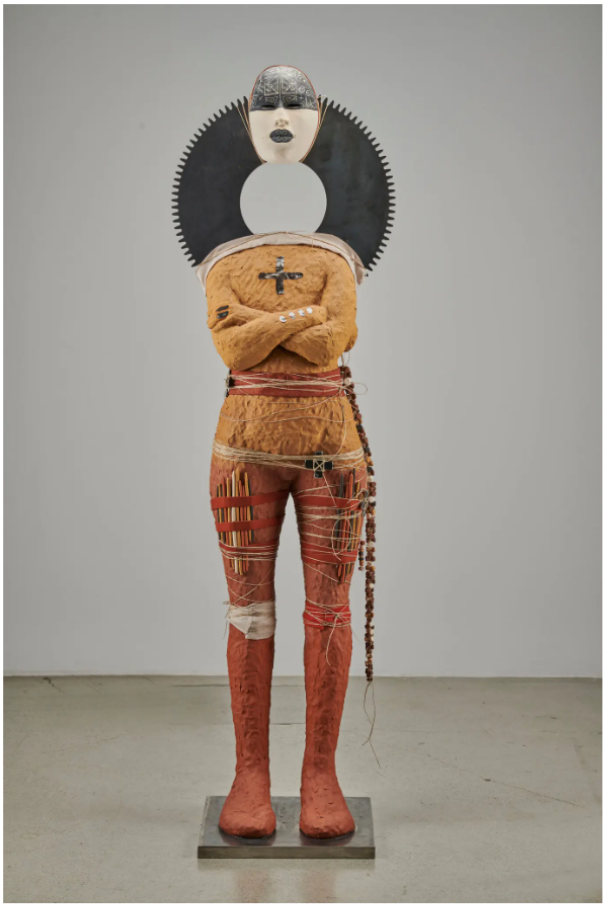
Simpson was home-schooled until high school, when she went to the Santa Fe Indian School, joined the yearbook committee and filled the book with drawings of her classmates in styles inspired by her favorite comic artists, including Los Bros Hernandez of “Love and Rockets.” After college in Albuquerque and Santa Fe, she went on to the Rhode Island School of Design for a master’s degree in fine arts. There she discovered that her more polished, realistic sculptures made for “a visual language that other people weren’t speaking or understanding.”

A turning point came during a school trip in 2010 to Kashihara, Japan. Encountering Japanese aesthetic traditions that prize acceptance of the process over perfection of the form — and don’t distinguish between art and craft — helped her think more seriously about her pueblo’s creative legacy and her own. “I was dropped in a world where I was completely incapable of communicating, which for me was not unlike the Western art world,” she said. “I realized that my artwork had to become way more specific and clear.”

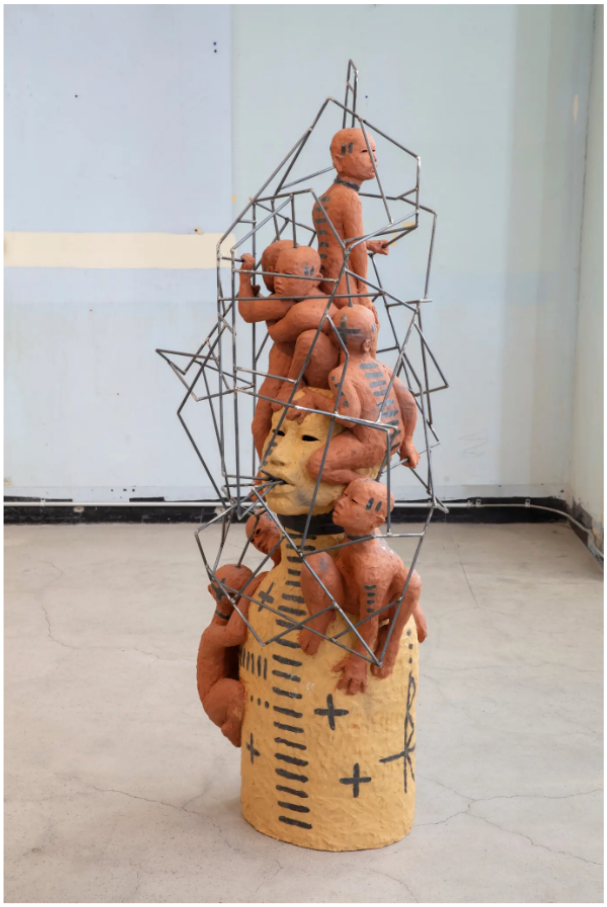
Simpson, right, with her mother, Roxanne Swentzell, at the greenhouse on their property in Española.
Minesh Bacrania for The New York Times

Her clarity came in the form of a technique she devised that she calls “slap-slab,” which she still uses today alongside traditional pottery methods. It involves throwing a slab of clay sideways on a floor or table until it’s very thin, maybe one-sixteenth of an inch. Then she tears off pieces by hand and affixes them to each other, with an effect that resembles papier-mâché. “You can see the seams, the pinches, the fingerprints, all of it,” she said.

Slap-slab embraces imperfection and intuition. “If you can get into an intuitive place, I believe you can really tickle the intuitive place in others.” It also gave her a metaphor for learning to accept oneself, lumps and all — or “building a muscle of acceptance and finding compassion for the sloppier, more complicated parts of ourselves.”



“Root A,” 2019. Simpson adorns many of her sculptures with metal pieces including car parts. Rose B. Simpson and Jessica Silverman



“Storyteller,” 2021. Some of her figures have grown rounder and carry children on their shoulders. Rose B. Simpson and Jessica Silverman

Almost six years ago, Simpson became a single mother, which has also shaped her work. As hollow clay forms, her sculptures were already vessels to some degree, but now she plays explicitly with the notion of the female body as a vessel, a vehicle for nourishment. Some of her figures have grown rounder and carry babies on their shoulders. One that appeared in “Feedback” is crawling with children — held together by a steel armature that seems equal parts cage and jungle gym. Their faces resemble that of the artist and her daughter. “You can’t tell someone else’s story. You can only tell your own,” she offered.

While she considers her work spiritual, Simpson is careful not to share specifics about the Santa Clara Pueblo’s religious practices or beliefs. “Native people have been subject to so many stereotypes that I

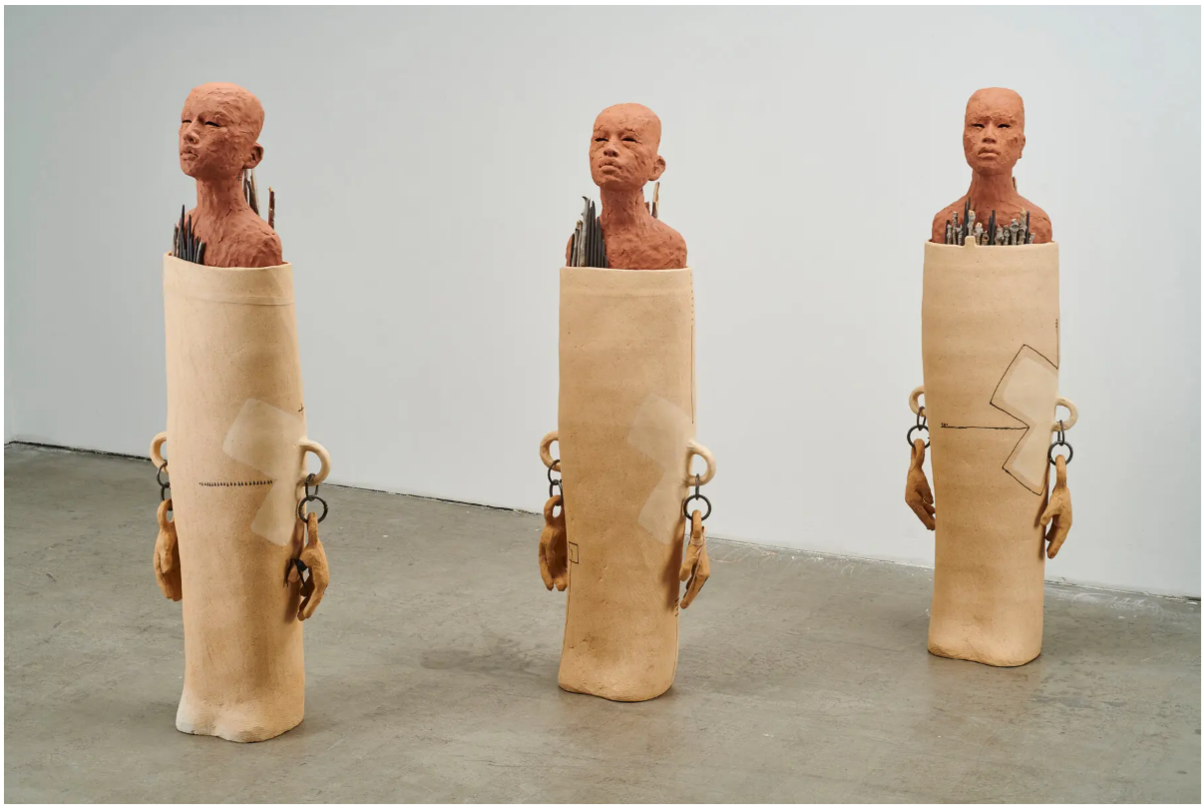
have to be super careful with that — we have seen through history how spiritual work just gets eaten up, spit out, exploited," she said. "People have been kicked out of the tribe for making art referencing a specific spiritual belief."

She has developed her own symbolic system, with "+" signs to mark the four cardinal directions, suggesting a journey, and "x" signs to represent "protection." (From what? "Negative forces," she said.) The signs are tattooed on her fingers and appear on her sculptures.

Then there is the bold jewelry decorating her sculptures. Miranda Belarde-Lewis, a Zuni/Tlingit scholar and curator who teaches at the University of Washington, sees it as a way for Simpson to convey both ancestral and individual identity. "The strength that she has learned from her mother, the strength to be herself as a Pueblo woman, comes across so loudly in her artworks," she said. "You can see this confidence in the defiant expression on their faces, but also the amount of jewelry they wear, and the size of their earrings," she said, adding, "That's a big thing in Native communities — we love our earrings."

The idea for "Counterculture," which will be up for a year, is a cascade of beaded necklaces. Having made some herself, Simpson has also invited the Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians, on whose ancestral land the Field Farm sits, to make beaded necklaces out of clay from their land to adorn her sculpted bodies. Her plan is to add more necklaces from Indigenous communities as the figures travel.

"Wherever they go, I'll be connecting with the people whose ancestral homeland is there to build a sort of relationship," she said. "Many tribes have been relocated, displaced from their own lands. So I wanted the opportunity to put their clay back in their hands."



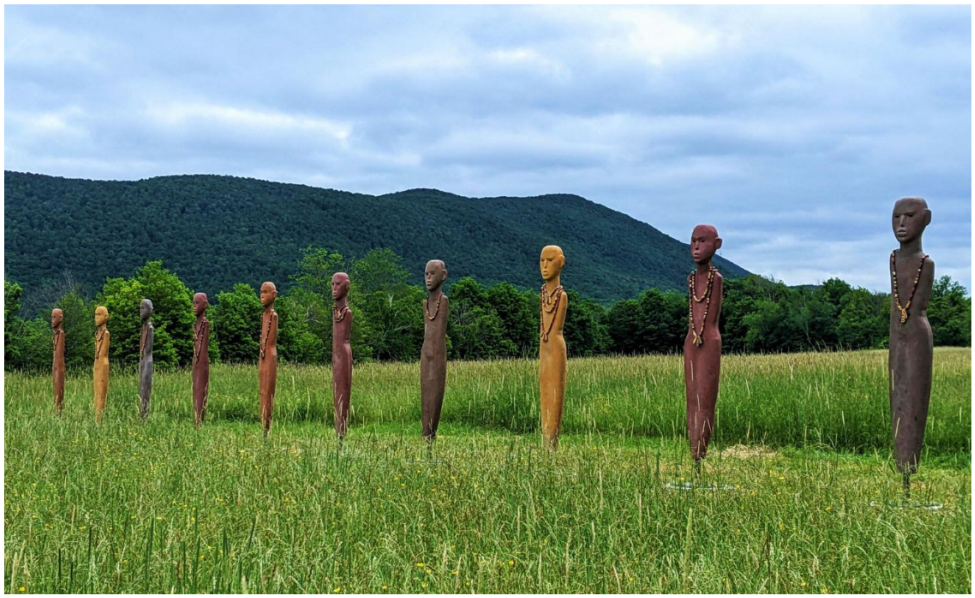
"The Remembering," 2020. Ceramic, metal, cottonwood sticks and leather. Simpson envisions different ways of safeguarding the human body in her work. Rose B. Simpson and Jessica Silverman

COUNTERCULTURE

Indigenous artist Rose B. Simpson's sculptures stand watch at Field Farm

Sculptural installation will remain on view through April 2023

By Jennifer Huberdeau, The Berkshire Eagle Jun 24, 2022



"Counterculture," a public art project of The Trustees of Reservations, is on view at Field Farm in Williamstown through spring 2023.
JENNIFER HUBERDEAU — THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE

WILLIAMSTOWN — They stand, 12 silent sentinels, watching over the land.

In this field, they bear witness to the wind as it blows, to the rain as it falls, to the stars in the night sky. They watch the fireflies flit in the dark of night and stand watch over the bobolinks that nest in the tall grasses of Field Farm Reservation, 316 preserved acres overseen by The Trustees of Reservations.

It is here that sculptor and mixed media artist Rose B. Simpson's slender, androgynous cast-concrete 9-foot-tall sculptures will stand, along the horizon line of the meadow, visible from Sloan Road, though April 30, 2023. Her most ambitious work to date, "Counterculture," honors generations of marginalized people and cultures, whose voices have been too often silenced by colonization and in many cases, forcibly removed from their homelands.

"I've been playing around with this idea being a witness, of witnessing; in that we look deeply at so many subjects, everything that we experience," Simpson said, during a recent interview in the meadow, at the foot of her sculptures. "How do we look deeper and ever deeper into those subjects?

"This piece, initially, was about looking at a sort of the post-apocalyptic landscape for indigenous people. So, they are witnesses of that really difficult history [of colonization] ... these could be put anywhere on this planet and they'd still be, in a sense, surveying that difficult history."

And this piece, she said, is about personal growth, for her, and her audience.

"So much of my work is about teaching myself how to slow down and question every moment, question the things I think I do know, that I'm certain about. I'm questioning, things that I'm told are true, those histories and the perspectives and looking deeper at any situation," Simpson said. "As I work to find that inside myself, I'm hoping the things I make in the investigation into my own personal evolution and growth become opportunities for other people to see that in in themselves."

Each sculpture's eyes are purposely left vacant — holes that show the sky and land behind them.

"The eyes go through, the form, all the way through to the back of the head, to sort of wake them up. They are watching," she said. "We were out there, up on the ladder the other day to put the necklaces on and I could see the wind go through, as dust came out of the eye. It made me realize the wind is actually whistling through the eye, that there's so many layers of what's watching you. We generally forget we're being held accountable or responsible by forces that we forget have any power over us."

Simpson, who traditionally works in clay, first created three figures as clay marquettes. She then made there full-scale models from wood, pine she carved with a chainsaw. The finished pine pieces were then shipped to Sculpture House Casting in New York City, where the 12 sculptures were cast in concrete.

It's the first time, she said, she's had someone else make castings of her work. Seeing the sculptures — as a dozen concrete statues of varying colors and individual personalities — for the first time, slowly rising above the horizon line as she drove up Sloane Road, was a moment for pause, Simpson said.

"When I first saw them, as I drove up the hill — they didn't have the necklaces on yet, but they had already been stood up in the line that they're in — I pulled over. I just had to swallow. It's really, really powerful to see them," she said. "I made these originals and then I trusted them in the hands of someone else. To witness my own work, in this way, is a first-time experience for me. And I'm learning a lot from it. I'm trying to make space for the power I feel from it and the immense strength that I witness, as well this reflection in these pieces. I don't know if I'm worthy, those parts of myself that feel really small and insignificant are having to grow to accept it. It's a big growing moment."

Originally planned for the Holmes Reservation in North Plymouth, another property of The Trustees, "Counterculture," was moved to Field Farm after the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, objected to having art from another tribe on their ancestral land. Simpson, 38, an enrolled member of the Santa Clara Pueblo (Kha'p'oe Ówîngeh) in New Mexico, and The Trustees deferred to the tribal sovereignty of the Wampanoag, choosing instead to move the work to Williamstown.

In this case, Field Farm is part of the ancestral home of the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians, the Muh-he-con-ne-ok (People of the waters that are never still), who now reside in Wisconsin after being forcibly relocated numerous times. The Mohican/Munsee lands extended across six states, from southwest Vermont, to portions of Pennsylvanian and New Jersey, including the entire Hudson River Valley and western Massachusetts and northwest Connecticut, up to the Connecticut River Valley.

"This project would not be possible without the Stockbridge-Munsees," said Jamilee Lacy, guest curator of The Trustees of Reservations' 2022 Art & Landscape program, during an opening celebration at Field Farm.

Changing the location of the sculptures, from a strip of land near the ocean to the woodlands and meadows of the Berkshires, wasn't as much of a challenge, as it was an adjustment for Simpson, who received her MFA in ceramics from the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence and is part of the group exhibition, "Ceramics in the Expanded Field," at Mass MoCA.

"When I first got here, this was unfamiliar turf for me. I'm always inspired by new environment and mostly because I love that sense of wonder when I don't know who these trees are, what kind of grass this is,

what these flowers are. I don't really know. I don't know what poison ivy looks like, for instance. And so I feel really naive. I feel so innocent and I'm in a state of wonder in this environment," she said.

"And so I feel like a visitor and I want to walk respectfully and I have to. I don't know who this tree is. I don't know what that plant is. I don't know how it will affect me. And so I approach it with caution but also care and respect. And when I showed up and saw these pieces here in this field, one of the most beautiful places I ever seen in my life I kept thinking what an honor to be here more than any building, any piece of architecture I could possibly imagine, that this field is the biggest honor I could imagine. And, that these pieces, get to get to last the seasons and watch this place so deeply and so long. They get to be sat on by birds. They get to watch the stars, go through the night, they get silence, they get winds, they get, you know, they get to watch the animals creep through the grass."

As part of the exhibition, Simpson will bring clay, harvested from around the stands of the sculptures, to Wisconsin, where she'll make beads with the community members, that will be added to necklaces that will be brought back and added to the sculptures.

It's a small way, she said, to connect the Stockbridge-Munsees with their ancestral homelands.

It's good to start thinking about what we can do to have reparations, to bring them home, to not just see it as a interesting thing, but as a call to action — as a call to heal, as a call to come home and feel these mountains in your soul, let the ancestors welcome you. Their ancestors are walking here still," Simpson said.

"What it would it be like to be torn from them, like that?," she asked. "I can't even imagine. I have the privilege of living in my ancestral homelands, where my history is so so, so deep there in my yard, in my backyard in my, my family that still lives all around me. I don't, I don't have that experience in the same way."

She is hopeful that work like hers will spark conversations that will help bring healing; help bring the Mohicans back to their homelands.

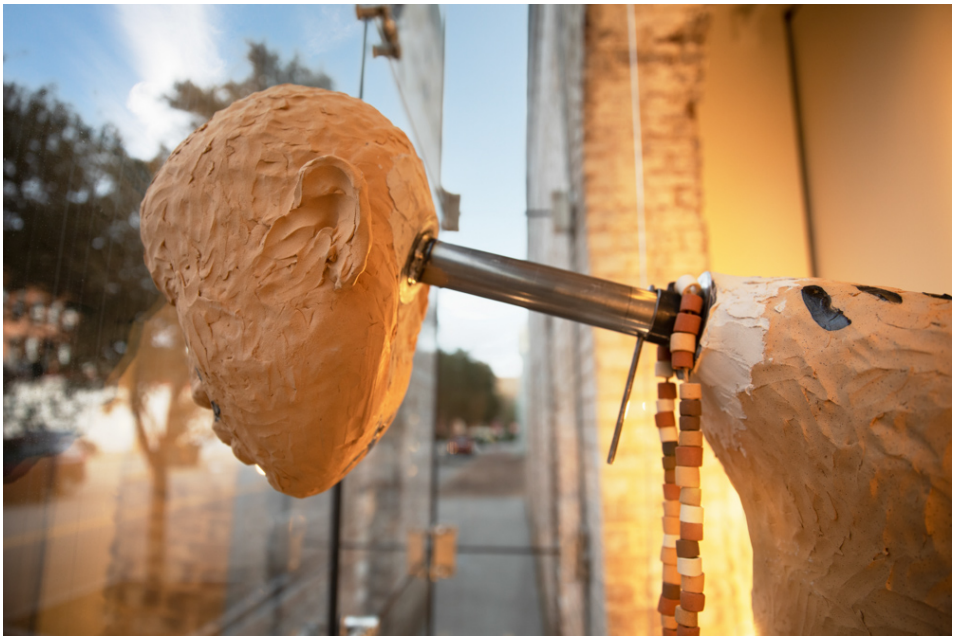
"I wonder how we can just start bringing awareness," she asked, saying that it's as simple as saying, "'Hey you need access to your ancestral, healing waters. How can we make that happen? You need to have a place that is yours to come home to, that you can pray at, that you can commune with your ancestors.'

"That's vital, having a place to listen to go and ask for direction and hear what they have to say, instead of calling across states for answers. That distance between them, that is really hard. We can start looking at ways that we can return some land to those people and start bringing their presence back.

"I can tell the land wants that. The land is calling for its people back."

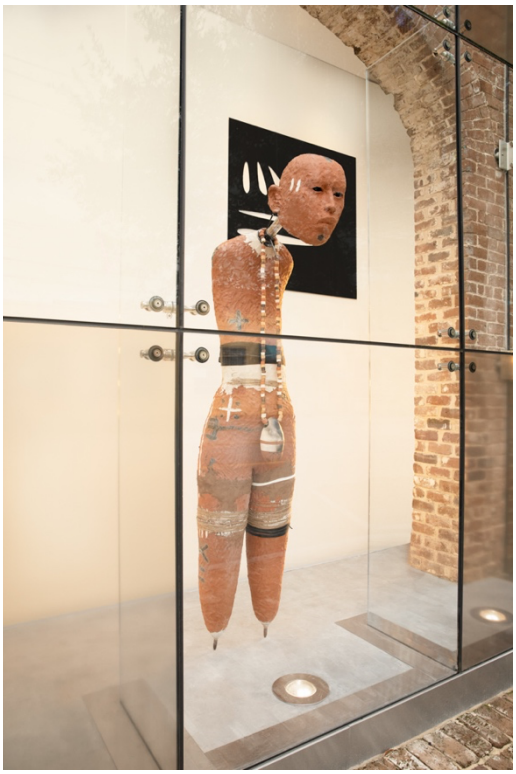
BURNAWAY

"Rose B. Simpson at the SCAD Museum of Art"
By Daniel Fuller
July 14, 2021



View of Rose B. Simpson, *Countdown*, 2021 at SCAD Museum of Art. Courtesy of the artist and Jessica Silverman, San Francisco. Photo courtesy of SCAD.

Defying gravity, the four 8-foot clay bodies of Rose B. Simpson's *Countdown*, her new body of works commissioned by the SCAD Museum of Art, pack a powerful presence. The figures stick their necks out, fully leaning with foreheads against the glass. It's an act of tremendous faith, an assumption that both the glass will hold, and we, the viewer, will catch them if all falls apart. The figures themselves are thin, androgynous, their bodies built from pockmarked clay surfaces. They are impressive, adorned with Native American glyphs and long hanging prayer beads. Their faces are stripped down, eroded to their essential humble cores with stoic expressions. Laid bare, the four figures feel as though they directly gaze at us in compassionate confrontation, a sincere attempt at reasoning. The viewer is left to answer their provocation with a broad tapestry of potential meanings: deeper understandings of nature and death, power and politics, capitalism and strength, art, and beauty. Standing under these sculptures is an emotional journey of mind and body.



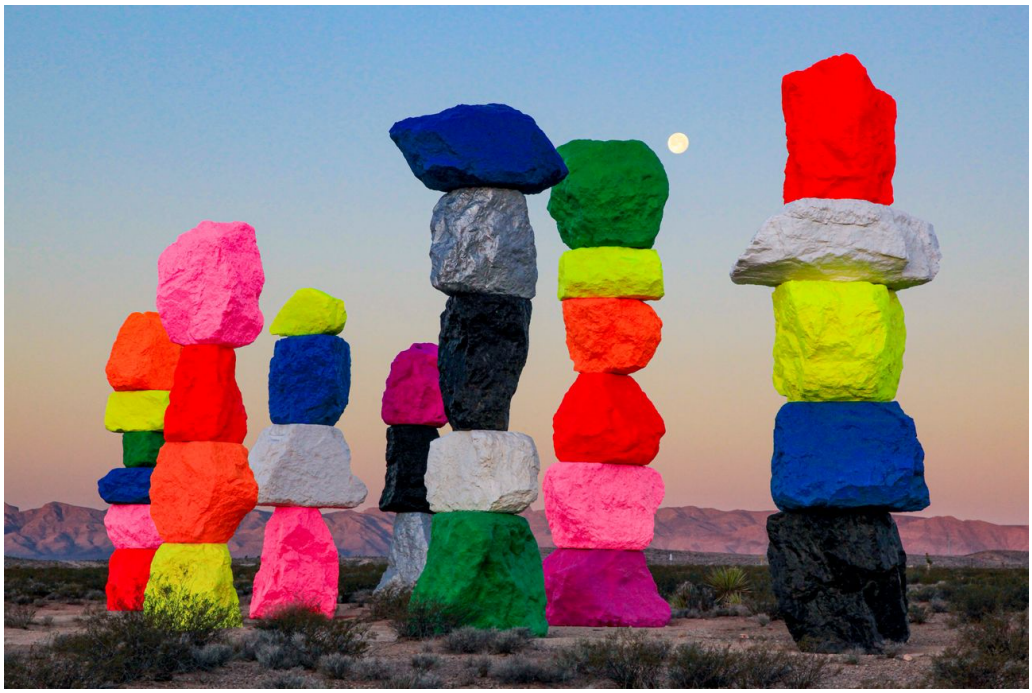
View of Rose B. Simpson, *Countdown*, 2021 at SCAD Museum of Art. Courtesy of the artist and Jessica Silverman, San Francisco. Photo courtesy of SCAD.

The exhibition is so captivating, but I can never fully take my mind off the SCAD Museum of Art as a building. The museum is situated in a renovated antebellum railroad complex. The distinctive Savannah Gray Bricks that make up the railway structure and the surrounding freight warehouses date back to 1853. When Henry McAlpin, the owner of the Hermitage Plantation, realized his land was situated on a rare-grey colored clay that was not suitable for crops, he redirected the labor of enslaved people from farming to hand-forming bricks—the resulting materials made the foundation for this art museum in a historically preserved building. The museum building itself conjures irreconcilable issues of monumentality, of memory, life, the hereafter.

In opposite corners on the glass and the walls behind the sculptures sit flattened sundials with their corresponding vinyl design. Alluding back to the exhibition's title this is the *Countdown*, the rare and elusive moment where the world is aligned. The magic hour as the sun rises and falls, where communication and connection happen in the form of perfect synchronicity. I stand, unsettled, waiting beneath these timeless sculptures with the suspense of the sun.

WSJ

Rose B. Simpson "Artists Explore New Ways of Sculpting the Land"
By Susan Delson
July 23, 2021



A photograph by Gianfranco Gorgoni of 'Seven Magic Mountains' by Ugo Rondinone, a 2016 land art work near Las Vegas.
Photo: Eestate of Gianfranco Gorgoni; artwork Ugo Rondinone

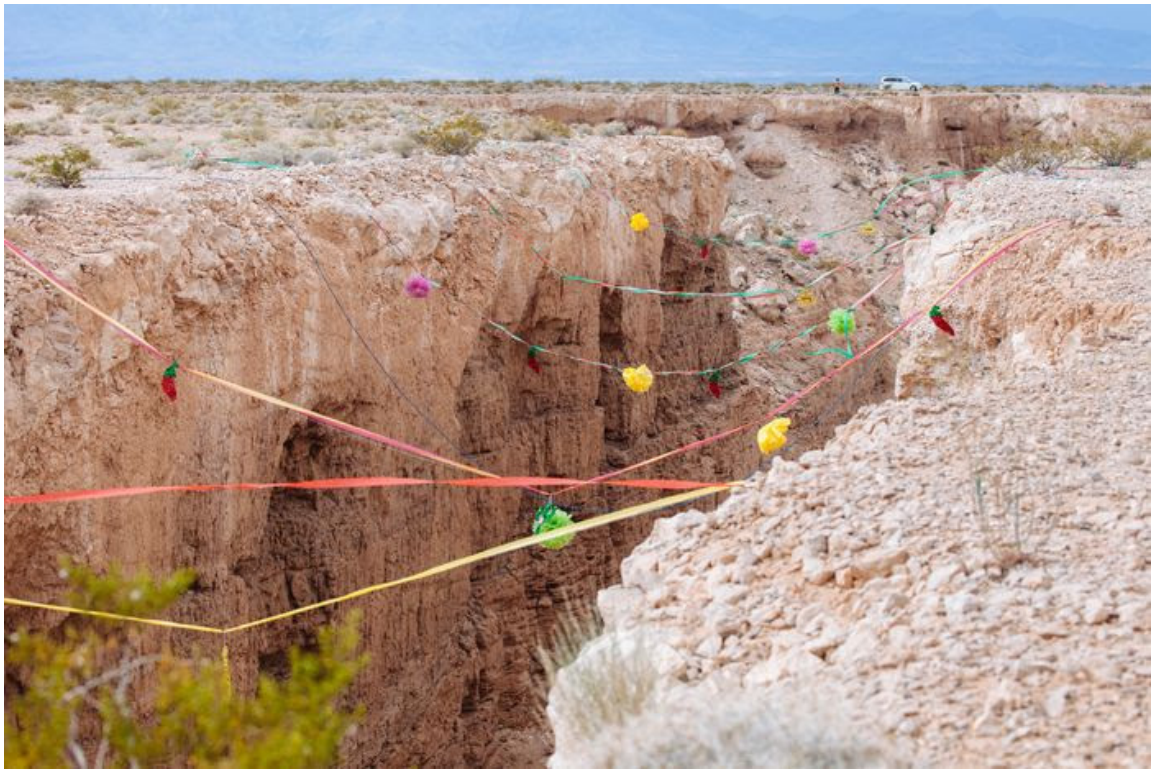
In 1969, a young artist named Michael Heizer headed into the Nevada desert 80 miles northeast of Las Vegas and cut a pair of trenches into a mesa, running 50 feet deep, 30 feet wide and a combined 1,500 feet long. Monumental enough to be seen in satellite photographs, "Double Negative" quickly became an icon in the emerging field of land art—art that uses land itself as its material, by marking, sculpting or otherwise intervening in the landscape.

Half a century on, land art is changing. For one thing, it's no longer the exclusive domain of male artists from New York, "talking tough and driving bulldozers" to make "geometric, minimalist gestures in the desert," said William Fox, director of the Center for Art + Environment at the Nevada Museum of Art in Reno. Contemporary artists tend to favor less intrusive approaches, Mr. Fox said, often addressing what he called "real-world, real-time concerns." And they're more likely to be women and people of color, including indigenous artists.

This summer, the Nevada Museum of Art is presenting five exhibitions exploring diverse aspects of land art, from iconic beginnings to new interpretations. The state has been home to 15 or more important works of land art, some of them now gone. "We're acknowledging these major earthworks in our backyard," said the museum's senior curator and deputy director Ann M. Wolfe. "But at the same time we're asking: Who are the artists who've been left out of the land art narrative, and who are the artists shaping the future of the field?"

As a starting point, "Gianfranco Gorgoni: Land Art Photographs" presents images by one of the first land art photographers, who was "on the ground when those pieces were being created in the 1960s and '70s," Ms. Wolfe noted. In 2015-16, Mr. Gorgoni returned to Nevada as the official photographer for "Seven Magic Mountains" (2016), a work by Swiss artist Ugo Rondinone that was commissioned by the museum and the New York-based Art Production Fund. Located 10 miles south of Las Vegas, "Seven Magic Mountains" is visited by about a thousand people a day, said Ms. Wolfe, drawn by its syncopated shapes and Vegas-inspired neon colors.

A model of "Seven Magic Mountains" is among the first works on view in "Land Art: Expanding the Atlas." Grouped under broad themes like Ground, Water, Space and Ruin, some 80 works by close to 50 artists trace an alternate history of the field, proposing different definitions of what land art might be.



Justin Favela's 'Family Fiesta: Double Negative' (2015) staged a pop-up party at the site of a 1969 land art work by Michael Heizer. Photo: Courtesy of the artists Justin Favela. Photo credit: Mikayla Whitmore

Northern California artists Daniel McCormick and Mary O'Brien, for instance, specialize in watershed restoration and erosion control, working with woven basket forms that become part of the environment. Aboriginal Australian artist Reko Rennie uses an early land art technique—inscribing the terrain with tire-track circles—for a different purpose, reclaiming traditional territory on behalf of his people. And in the video "Family Fiesta: Double Negative" (2015), Justin Favela wryly critiques Mr. Heizer's pioneering earthwork by staging a pop-up party at the site, filling its minimalist void with color, camaraderie and Mexican *banda* music. "Great acoustics," he later noted.

For artist Rose B. Simpson of Santa Clara Pueblo, N.M., land art was an important context for the quartet of outsize female clay figures, called "Groundbeings," that anchor the exhibition "Rose B. Simpson: The Four." "It's as if they're emerging from or descending into the earth," said contemporary art curator JoAnne Northrup. A fourth exhibition spotlights High Desert Test Sites, an arts organization co-founded by artist Andrea Zittel in 2002 that stages events in desert locations, ranging from "experimental music to ephemeral structures to performances and happenings," Ms. Wolfe said.

All four shows are currently on view. On Aug. 28 they will be joined by "Judy Chicago: Dry Ice, Smoke, and Fireworks Archive," which focuses on a less-known aspect of the celebrated artist's work: a series of performances, called "Atmospheres," that Ms. Chicago initiated in 1968 in response to the monumental land art of that era.

Staged in the deserts where those massive interventions were taking place, the Atmospheres used ephemeral materials like smoke, fireworks and dry ice to "feminize the landscape," as Ms. Chicago put it. The exhibition includes large-scale photographs, videos and documentation of these performances, which the artist continues to create—including one in New Mexico last weekend, just before her 82nd birthday. Releasing colored smoke into the air, she has observed, "softened everything."

SANTA FE NEW MEXICAN

Rose B. Simpson: "Flying high: Rose B. Simpson"
Written by Michael Abatemarco
February 21, 2020

Rose B. Simpson makes her signature sculptures in her studio in Española, photo by Luke E. Montavon/ *The New Mexican*

It's a mild winter day in late January, and Rose B. Simpson, dressed in a dark sweatshirt and jeans, is busy at her potter's wheel, just starting on a new piece. Under her practiced hands, the rectangular clay slab quickly takes on cylindrical form. "I have a running joke with a friend of mine where I say, 'I have to go dig clay,' " says Simpson, who purchases 50-pound bags of it from a company in Albuquerque — unlike some of her Santa Clara Pueblo relatives, who gather clay by hand. "So I go to the store and get out my cornmeal and throw it, and say my prayers," she jokes, tossing up her hand as though making an offering. "What I'm asking my clay to do requires it to be really high-fired. I need it to be really dense and strong because I ask a lot of it."

It's early in the day and Simpson, 36, a recipient of the Women's Caucus for Art's 2020 President's Art & Activism Award, isn't wasting any time. At her Española studio, she's trying to get a head start on a project she plans to complete for the Anderson Ranch Arts Center in Colorado for a two-week residency in early March. The work she's doing now is for an exhibition slated to open in May at The School, an old schoolhouse in Kinderhook, New York, that's managed by the Jack Shainman Gallery.

The studio is attached to her mother Roxanne Swentzell's Flowering Tree Permaculture Institute, at Santa Clara Pueblo. It's a cramped space, no larger than a one-car garage, stacked with bags of pale, flesh-colored clay, and the air is perfumed with its earthy aroma. Bottles and tubes of glue and acrylic paint crowd the shelves next to Simpson's framed master's degree from the vaunted Rhode Island School of Design. ("Conferred with honors," it reads in a stately script.) The cement floor is gouged with deep scars that Simpson explains are from the time when her uncle, sculptor Michael

Naranjo, used the studio. "He was using an angle grinder on his stonework in here," she says. "And he's blind."

In one corner rests an old squat kiln, about waist high, with room enough for clay pieces no larger than 26 inches. That's pretty astounding, considering that much of Simpson's work is life-sized or larger. "You made everything with this kiln?" asked an incredulous Helen Molesworth, the curator of the New York show, when she saw it. Molesworth, who also served as curator-in-residence at the Anderson Ranch in 2019, convinced Simpson to apply for the residency to take advantage of the art center's large, walk-in kilns.

The Wheelwright retrospective and beyond

Simpson, who's been represented by Chiaroscuro Contemporary Art in Santa Fe for most of her professional life, had her first mid-career retrospective at the Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian in November 2018. Were it not for the birth of her daughter, Nugget, the exhibit would have opened a few years earlier, cementing Simpson's place as the youngest artist to ever have a solo show at the museum. "I lost my youngest position to T.C. Cannon," she says about the influential Kiowa art star whose life was cut short by a tragic car accident at the age of 31.

The Wheelwright show was the beginning of a new phase for Simpson that led to greater national interest in her work. "It's changed my life," she says. "I'm now represented by a gallery in San Francisco, the Jessica Silverman Gallery. It's just nuts who I've been talking to and connecting with."

If not for the Wheelwright show, it isn't likely that she would have been selected for the exhibition at The School — or for the Anderson Ranch residency, for that matter. But Molesworth saw the show on a visit to Santa Fe with her wife, Susan Dackerman of Stanford University's Cantor Arts Center, and took notice. "She was like, 'We thought we were in dreamy Santa Fe and your work was just good in context, but let's let the Santa Fe wash off and then we'll revisit the photos we took.' When they sat down and looked at the photos, they were like, 'No, it wasn't just Santa Fe. She's good.' "

Simpson's ceramics often betray the hand of the artist, whether she's creating busts, full-sized figures of Native warriors, dolls, installations, or works in her *Ancestor Masks* series. She doesn't try to disguise the fact that the pieces are clay; they're usually dimpled with the impressions of the busy fingers that molded them. Her warrior figures, some of which were shown at the Wheelwright in her 2018-2019 solo exhibition *LIT*, are free from specific tribal associations, offering imaginative interpretations of what a warrior could be. Some of them are based, she says, on her idea of what tribes living in a post-apocalyptic future might look like. They're mixed media works, painted with tribal designs of her own invention, and adorned with beads and jewelry made from metal and stone.

Many of her clay figures are female, but even so, the faces are anonymous, although they often bear a slight resemblance to her own rounded features, with tranquil, knowing eyes.

Dreams of speed and flight

With the award from the Women's Caucus and a flurry of other exhibitions in the pipeline (including an upcoming fall show at the Nevada Museum of Art in Reno), it's hard to imagine that Simpson ever wanted to be something other than an artist. She was born into one of the most prominent families

of Native artists in the country. In addition to her mother and her uncle Michael, other members of the family include ceramic artists Jody Folwell and Nora Naranjo Morse.

But when she was in high school, Simpson had other ambitions. "I really wanted to go into the Air Force. I used to make those plastic models of bomber planes and hang them from my ceiling. I wanted to fly so bad."

She took the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test (ASVAB) and got high scores. Soon after, various branches of the armed services started calling. "My mom kept hanging up on them. She sat me down and was like, 'You want to kill people?' and I was like, 'I just want to fly their airplanes, man.' "

Simpson hasn't yet satiated that desire. She talks — sheepishly at first, then animatedly — of possibly taking advantage of a Whirly-Girls International flight training scholarship to learn how to pilot a helicopter. "You can do search and rescue and there's a lot of side jobs you could do." She even considered building one of her own, and having the tribe sponsor the project. "I could give the governor rides up the canyon," she says, laughing. "I don't know."

If you know Simpson, you wouldn't have any doubt that she could pull it off. In a room adjoining her studio is a photo of artist Jeff Brock's souped-up 1952 Buick Super Riviera, Bombshell Betty, which broke several land-speed records at Utah's Bonneville Speedway. Simpson practically seethes, recalling her obsession with Brock and how she wanted to break his record and become "the world's fastest Indian." Adjacent to her studio is the auto body shop where she works on her own custom cars. But Maria, her signature 1985 Chevrolet El Camino, isn't there. The car, which she named after Native American potter Maria Martinez, sports black-on-black Pueblo designs in the style of San Ildefonso's sought-after pottery. It's currently on national tour, part of a traveling show called *Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists*.

Art as an act of healing the past

Simpson approaches the designs for her custom cars as she does all her art, with reverence and respect for her ancestry and empathy for the larger indigenous community. In part, that attitude is why she was selected for recognition by the Women's Caucus for Art.

"I've known about Rose for some time but had never really seen her work in quantity," says WCA president Margo Hobbs, who was impressed by what she saw at the Wheelwright. "It just blew me away. After, I was thinking that I should give her the President's Award because everything she's doing is right in line with what the Women's Caucus, as an organization, supports."

The award is specifically for a mid-career artist who embodies the organization's mission, which, Hobbs says, is to create community through art, art education, and social activism. "It's not just Rose's work, which is so profoundly expressive, but the work she does with her community, with at-risk youth, and the various environmental organizations she's involved with."

For her May exhibition at The School, Simpson saw an opportunity to make a positive statement about a dark period in American history. The sculpture she's working on depicts three youthful figures, standing back to back. At this early stage, they're androgynous figures, and may remain so.

They are meant to represent the souls of children from a bygone era, when Native youth were separated from their families, sent to boarding schools, and forced to assimilate into Western society.

The School was an abandoned schoolhouse that gallerist Shainman transformed into an art space. "Helen [Molesworth] was saying that when she first walked into the building, she could still hear the children's voices in the walls," Simpson says. "When I see it, I can't help seeing a boarding school. Assimilation was a policy of genocide of indigenous people. It was a way to kill us. As a mother, I'm still struggling with it."

Simpson speaks of how the abuse the children learned in boarding schools, particularly in the 19th century, contributed to persistent generational trauma and cycles of abuse. "This is what I've inherited and I'm trying to undo it," she says, fighting back tears. "I'm 36 years old, I have a 3-year-old and I'm still dealing with what happened to my people in the 1800s. And it's only one aspect of post-colonial stress disorder."

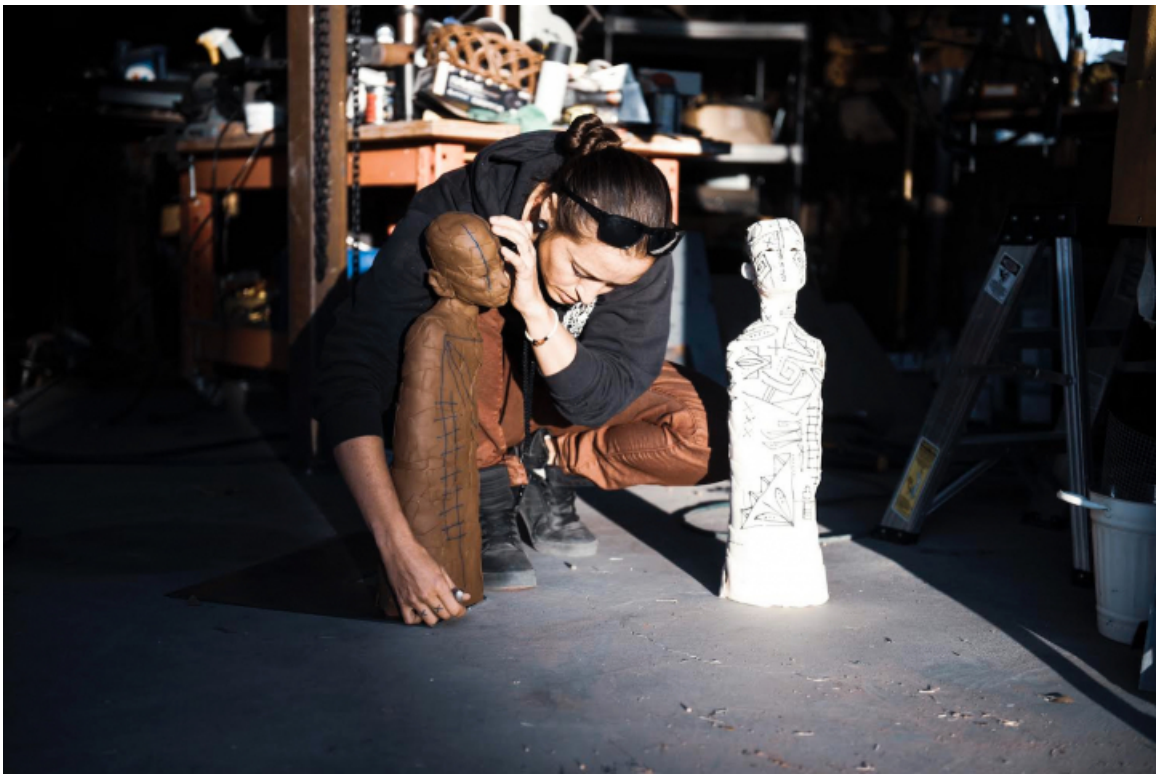
But the clay figures aren't really about the abuse. They're about the bonds that children formed with each other in order to survive, and the communities they built together. "It's the survival instinct," she says.

Simpson's work seems to come from a deeper place than ego can reach. She taps into a wellspring of the universal, to the core experiences of being human. It's what makes her work accessible and relatable. "I'm dedicated to being aware all the time. What we do and why. What we ingest, through our eyes even, is what we become. How does different art affect us? What is the intention behind it? It's pretty cool to have a space to build that conversation," she says of the upcoming show. "I see it as an opportunity, an access point, for the art world to share consciousness."

HYPERALLERGIC

Rose B.Simpson: "Meet the Art Community of the US Southwest: Rose B. Simpson Believes Culture Is for "Conscious Nurturing"

Written by Ellie Duke
March 9, 2020



Rose B. Simpson in her studio (courtesy the artist and Jessica Silverman Gallery)

Rose B. Simpson is a mixed-media artist from Santa Clara Pueblo, NM. Her work engages ceramic sculpture, metals, fashion, performance, music, installation, writing, and custom cars. She received an MFA in Ceramics from Rhode Island School of Design in 2011, an MFA in Creative Non-Fiction from the Institute of American Indian Arts in 2018, is collected in museums across the continent, and has exhibited internationally. She lives and works from her home at Santa Clara Pueblo, and hopes to teach her young daughter how to creatively engage the world.

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How long have you been in Santa Clara Pueblo/New Mexico?

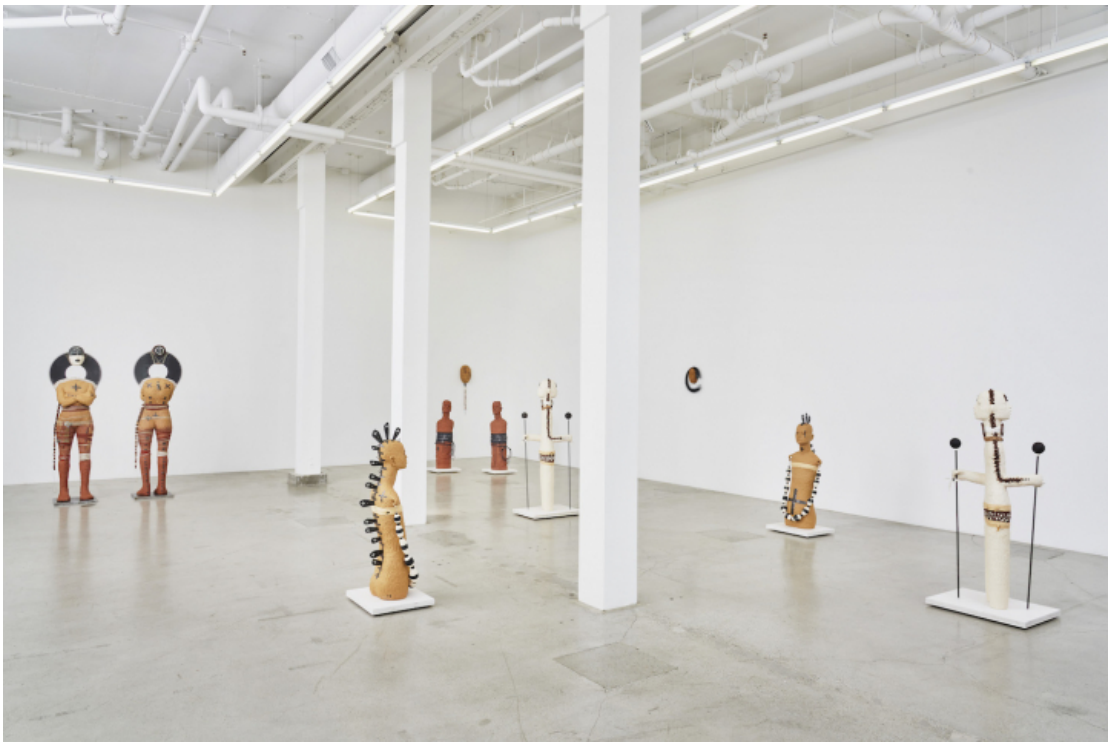
My ancestry dates back thousands of years to the area. I was raised at the Pueblo and after my first graduate degree, returned to live and raise my daughter. As my spirituality is heuristic, I have to be in place to practice.

What is the first strong memory you have of art?

My mother supported her family with her ceramic sculpture. So I remember watching her work from when I was still crawling. She was always telling me not to touch her work. I wanted to "help her" so bad. I don't think I was aware that there was any difference between "art" and "life."

What are you questioning through your practice right now?

I'm always tossing around the idea that for an art practice, we take resources from the earth, and my hope is that the works that are made make systemic change to benefit the planet. Right now I'm working on building awareness around the energy of colonization, around indigenous culture, bodies, and place.



(Courtesy the artist and Jessica Silverman Gallery)

What challenges do you face as an artist in the Southwest, New Mexico, or Santa Clara Pueblo?

Recently, I've had opportunities to show my work more extensively beyond Santa Fe and the Indian Art Market sphere. Juxtaposing those experiences, I can see how patronizing and disrespectful a small market like the one in the Southwest can be.

What is the most impactful or memorable art experience you've had in the last year?

In June of 2019 I got to participate in a group show at Jessica Silverman Gallery in San Francisco. It was the beginning of my representation by JSG, and a really amazing friendship with both Jessica Silverman and her partner, Sarah Thornton. I was given a solo show in the Fall of 2019, a show that pushed my creative process in some of the most vulnerable and exploratory ways. I fell back in love with my studio process.

When you are working a project do you have a specific audience in mind?

My work is intended to translate our humanity back to ourselves. I hope that I can educate some people on issues of unconsciousness around race, gender, and history, and I hope to honor lived experiences of those who have suffered Post Colonial Stress Disorder.

What questions do you feel aren't being asked of or by creative people in your community?

I think that we lack the capacity for healthy critical dialogue. Art is a powerful medium, and because of the economic importance of it for so many, I've found it difficult to critique or have challenging conversations around our creative intentionality.

How do you engage with and consume culture?

I don't think culture is for our consumption. I believe culture is for conscious nurturing. As someone who was initially equipped with a cultural identity, it is frustrating to see people use cultures that are not their own (especially Indigenous culture and lifeways) for their own benefit.

What are you currently working on?

I am at Anderson Ranch for an arts residency to finish work for a show at Jack Schainman's School at Kinderhook, curated by Helen Molesworth. Because the exhibition is going to be located at an abandoned and re-appropriated schoolhouse, I've been delving into the history of Western Education and Indigenous Boarding Schools as a genocidal tool in the war against indigenous culture. As someone who attended Indian Boarding School myself, this subject is very sensitive and I am very dedicated to this work.

Who in your community of artists, curators, archivists, organizers, directors, etc. is inspiring you right now?

I have wonderful conversations with some of my peers, artists that I respect immensely, including Dyani White-Hawk and Razelle Benally. Working with Jessica Silverman has been one of the most inspiring new forces in my life. Helen Molesworth and Susan Dackerman are people that I admire immensely, it is so good to have queer leaders making space in our global conversations. Tony Pandola is writing a book and our conversations seem to radicalize every energetic and philosophical apocalypse. Jamie Okuma, Cannupa Hanska Luger, Vanessa German, Nep Sidhu are some artists I look to for inspiration and energy.

Where are the centers for creative community in your region?

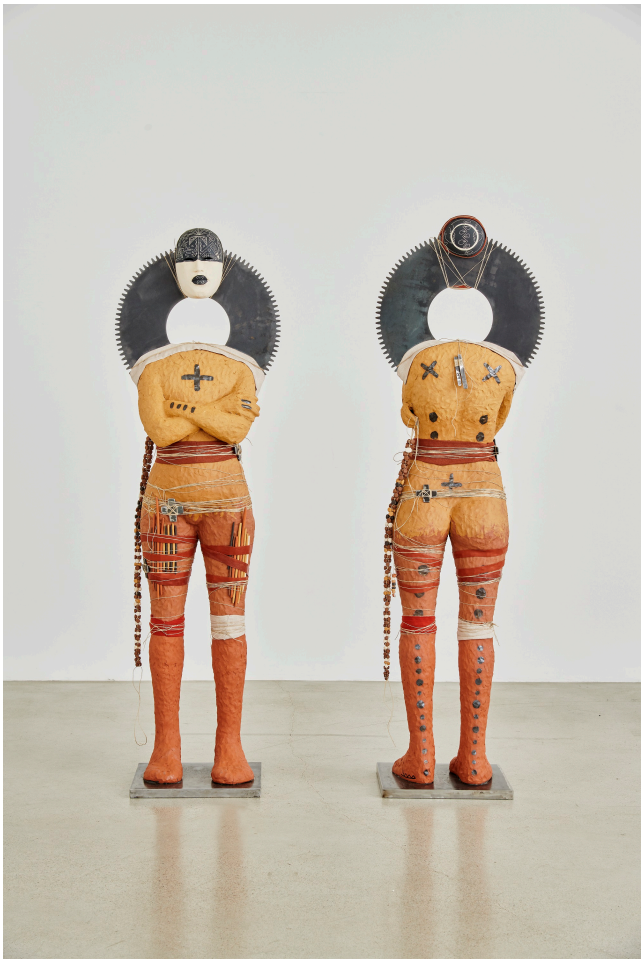
I am most connected to two very important creative machines: the Institute of American Indian Arts and the New Mexico School for the Arts. I believe that centers for critical creativity are the lifeblood of a very tenuous environmental and political future.

ELEPHANT

Rose B. Simpson Explores the Human Condition Through Her Native American Past

By Ariella Wolens
December 16, 2019

A sense of place and spirituality go hand in hand in Simpson's intriguing ceramic sculptures, as seen in her current exhibition, Duo, which is on show at Jessica Silverman Gallery in San Francisco. She speaks to Ariella Wolens about her fascination with automobiles, and reflects on the place she calls home.

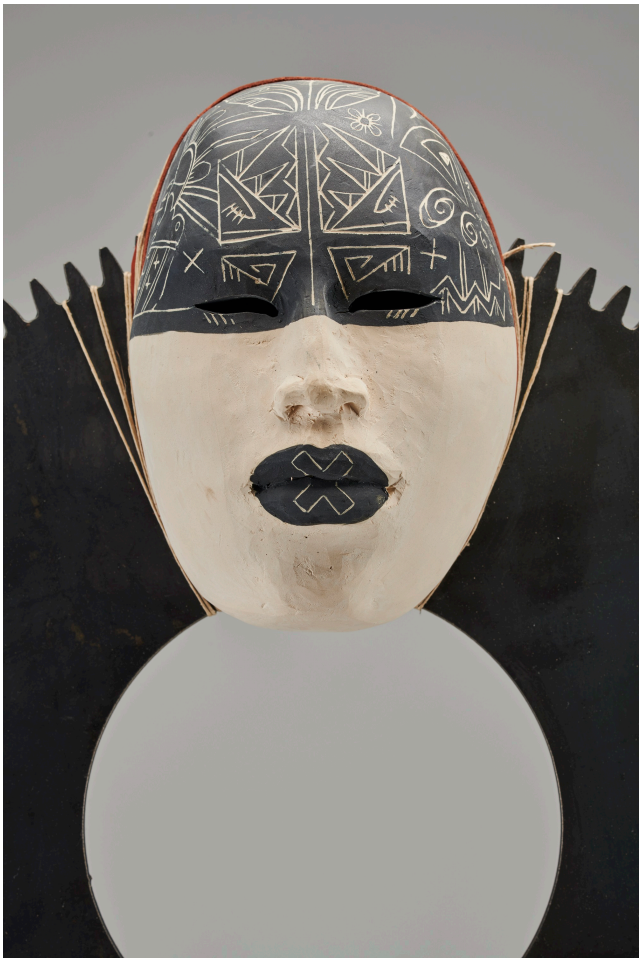


Rose B. Simpson, Duo Installation View, 2019. Courtesy of the artist and Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco. Photo by John Wilson White.

Rose B. Simpson speaks to me from her immutable home within the sun burnished landscape of her tribe's terra firma, otherwise known as the Santa Clara Pueblo. This historic area of the Pueblo people has existed for thousands of years; sustained by the waters of the Rio Grande and now abutted by the New Mexico capital of Santa Fe on one side, and the notorious city of Española—known as the Lowrider car capital of the world—on the other. As we're talking, Simpson's three-

year-old daughter can be heard playing in the background, adding her own charming narrative to our conversation as we discuss Simpson's recent successes.

One of these notable accomplishments is her current exhibition Duo, currently on view at Jessica Silverman Gallery in San Francisco. When I ask Simpson about the impetus behind the show, she describes the importance of site specificity to her work: "I was thinking about audience and space. I wanted to see an arrangement of bodies facing each other in a line, as a way to formally display relationships and activate the space between," she explains.



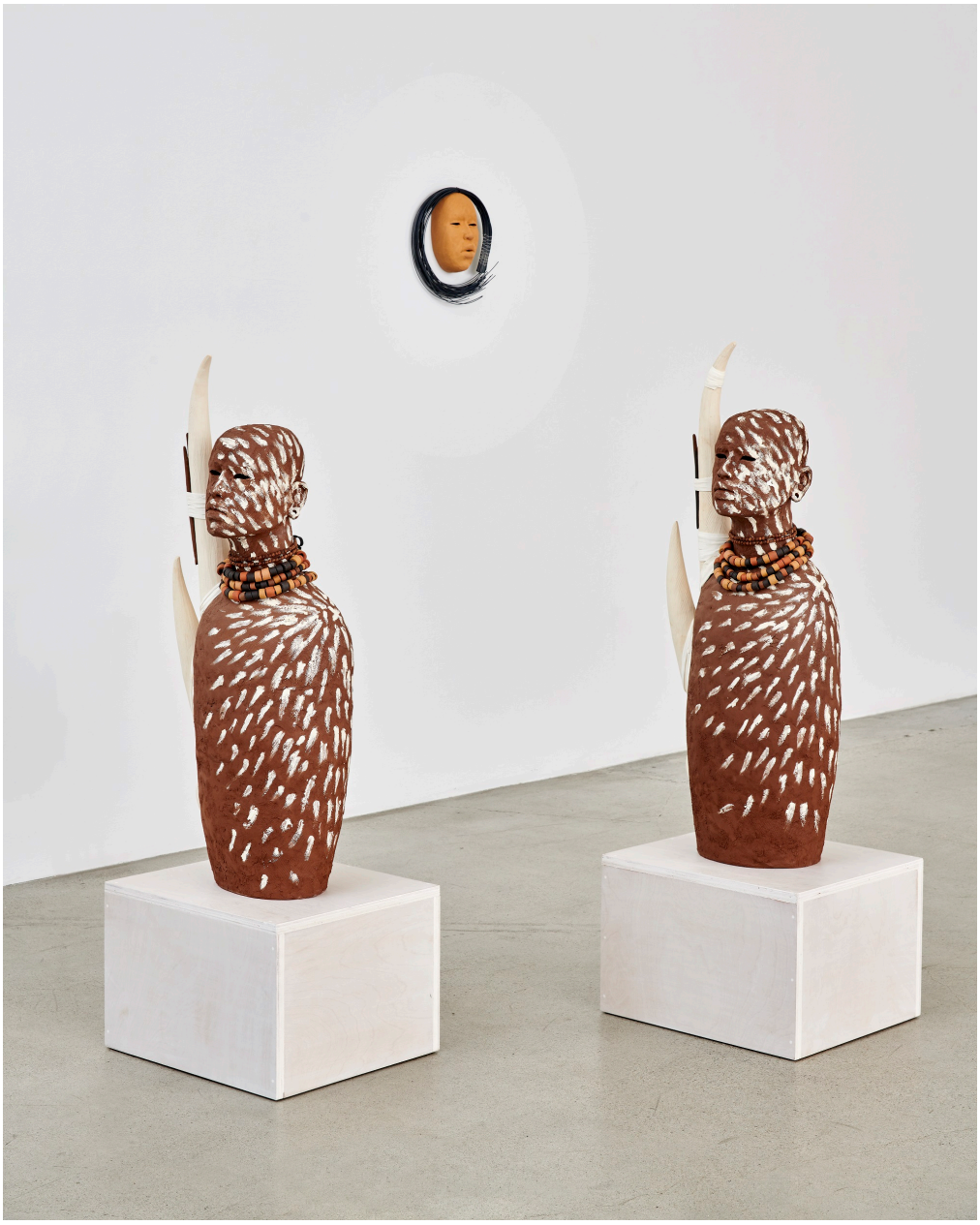
Rose B. Simpson, Detail of Root A, 2019. Courtesy of the artist and Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco. Photo by John Wilson White.

"The sculptural couplets elicit both the tension and fecundity of co-existence; the ability for beings to work together or against one another"

Eleven sets of genderless corporal sculptures, some evoking totemic forms, others akin to funerary masks, can be seen in the exhibition. The colours and processes hearken back to Simpson's own Pueblo culture and her tribe's venerated practice of creating ceramics and pottery. Simpson, along with her mother, Roxanne Swentzell, is among several Santa Clara sculptors whose work has received global recognition.

While each set of bodies in Duo consist of a double, they are not parts of a whole, but rather mutual individuals—equals with a common identity, twins navigating the world simultaneously but alone. The

sculptural couplets elicit both the tension and fecundity of co-existence; the ability for beings to work together or against one another. Simpson informs me that, though she created each work as doubles, they are sent into the world as single pieces.

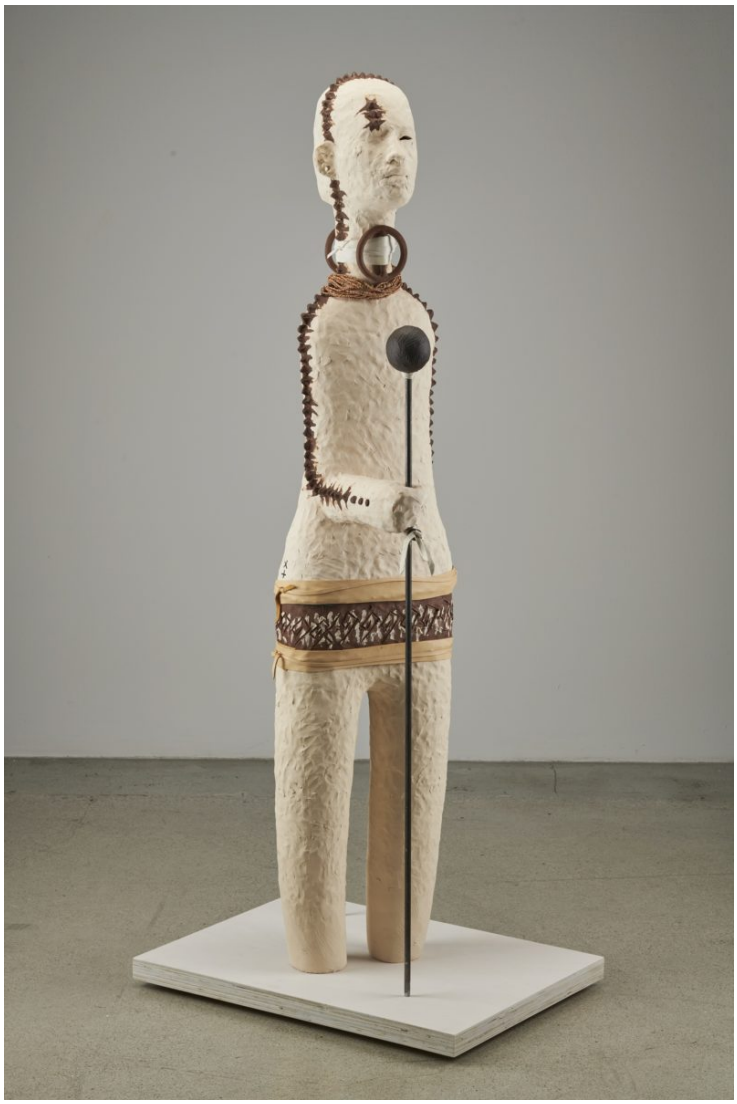


Rose B. Simpson, Duo Installation View, 2019. Courtesy of the artist and Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco. Photo by John Wilson White.

These can be purchased individually or together, therefore bestowing a weighted decision on the collector: "If someone buys one of them, they're responsible for the splitting of the work. To me, that adds to the conversation," she asserts. The twinness of the works is key; they are birthed together, but through circumstance have to navigate the world as solitary beings.

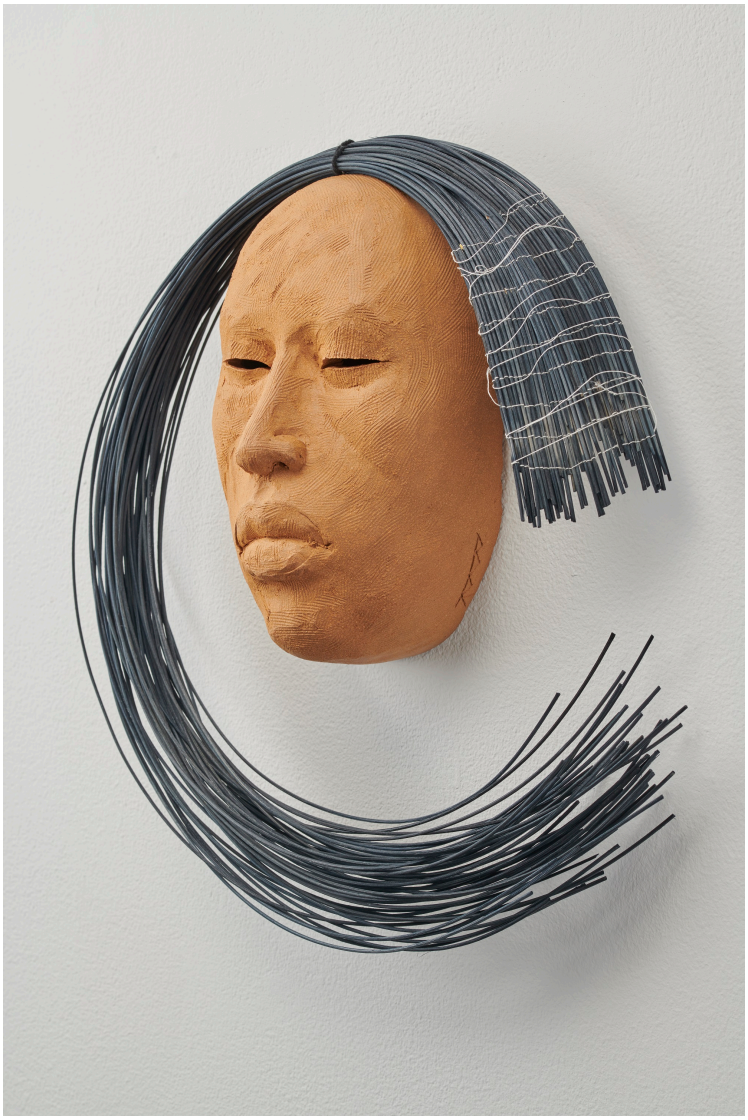
Simpson's bodily forms are evocatively tactile, with the trace of the artist's touch remaining strikingly visible on the ceramic surface. This is due largely to Simpson's idiosyncratic process of

furiously reworking the clay's density. With a method she calls "slap slab," she repeatedly throws clay onto a diagonal surface until the material is paper thin. From here, she applies an additive process to build up the body of the works in wafer-like strips, which come together to create the solid somatic form.



It could be said that Simpson's work is ultimately about the human condition. Her identity as a Native female may be in danger of becoming fetishized, but for the artist, her work exists within a far less prescriptive state. Simpson is forced to grapple with cultural insensitivity, but ultimately she sees the fight against the racial determination of her work as a privileged engagement: "I've had a lot of access because of these cultural fixations, which I've had to navigate in strange ways because the work that I do within the Native art sphere is considered weird and unheard of. Also, because I'm sensitive not to overshare or capitalize on my identity, I'm able to have a deeper conversation about humanity. Some of the decisions I've made are intentional to deconstructing the stereotypes around culture and gender."

Our discussion of gender inevitably leads to a discussion on Simpson's predilection for automobiles, and her active involvement in car culture. This obsession goes so far that she even formally studied Automotive Science at the Northern New Mexico College (she graduated in 2015), subsequent to receiving her formal art training at the Rhode Island School of Designand the University of New Mexico. With its built-in velocity and utilitarian economy, Simpson treats cars as a vessel in much the same way as she does her ceramic sculptures.



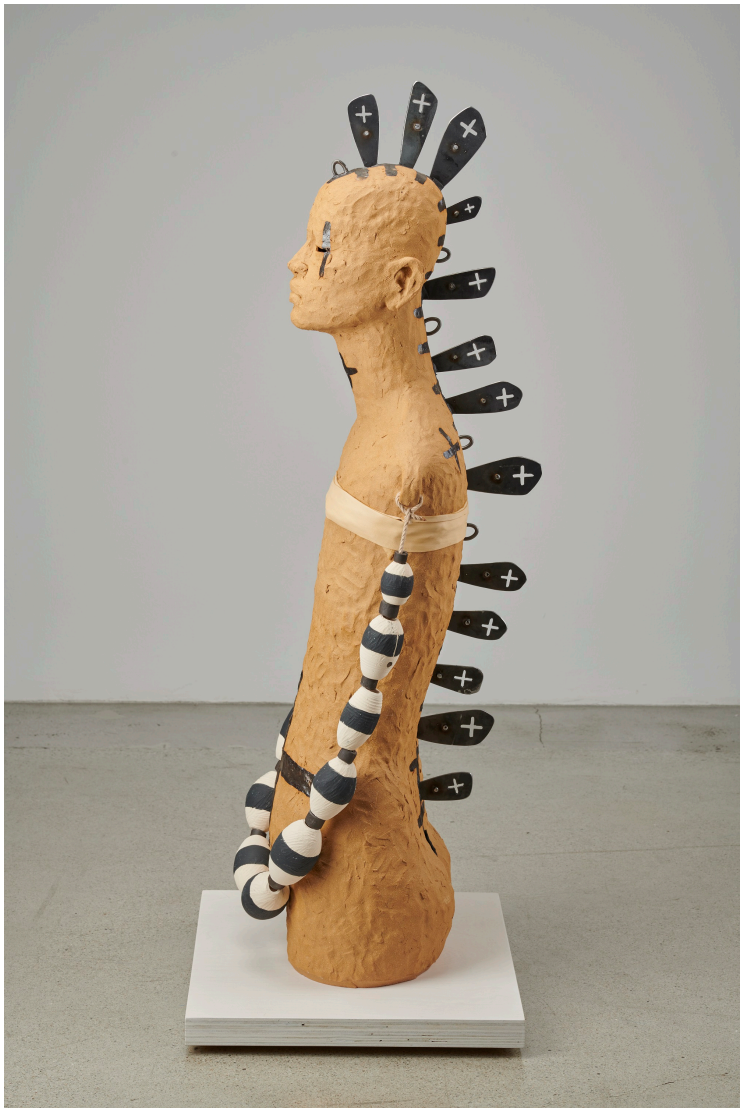
Rose B. Simpson, Moon 1, 2019. Courtesy of the artist and Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco. Photo by John Wilson White.

"Where Simpson comes from, cars are emphatically celebrated as symbols of pride, and as a means of survival"

Earlier this year Simpson installed Maria, her custom built 1984 Chevrolet El Camino, within the Minneapolis Institute of Art, as her contribution to the group exhibition Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists. The car's moniker pays homage to Maria Martinez, a Native potter of the San Ildefonso Pueblo, who painted using a distinct black-on-black technique. It is a process that continues to be implemented by Simpson's tribe, whereby alternating matte and polished

treatments are used to create geometric and figurative imagery. Simpson applied this technique to the body of her El Camino, painting swift geometric lines of glossy paint across the car's paneling.

For Simpson, this use of automobiles within her art is a way to speak to her identity through means that eschew stereotypical mores. Rose explains how the car culture of Española suffused her upbringing (the artist bought her first car at the age twelve.) Where Simpson comes from, cars are emphatically celebrated as symbols of pride, and as a means of survival.

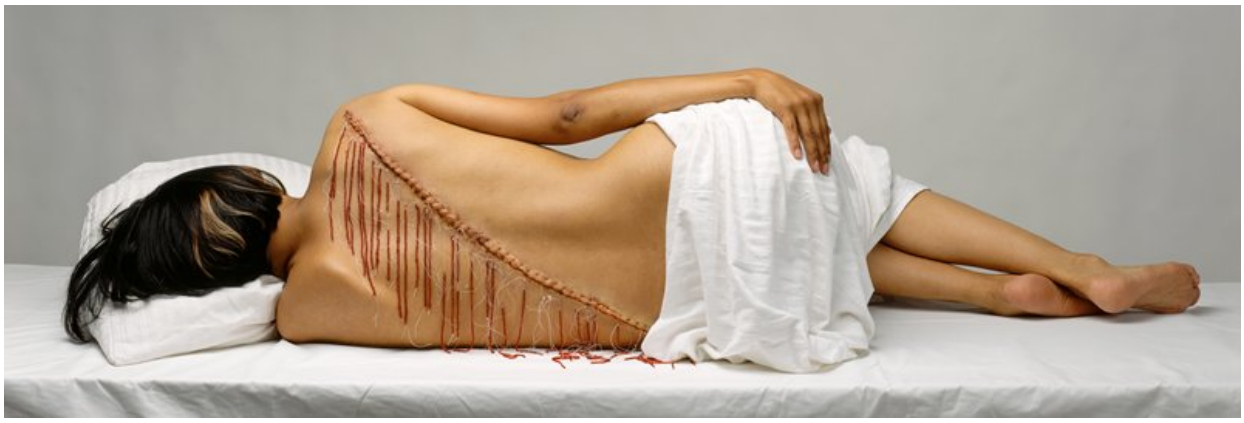


Rose B. River Girl 1, 2019. Courtesy of the artist and Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco. Photo by John Wilson White.

When I ask Simpson why she chose to continue to remain on her tribe's reservation while pursuing a career as an artist, she explains the nature of her Native spirituality, deeply rooted in a sense of place: "You can't go somewhere else and practice our indigenous religious belief system. I was raised very strongly in my traditional beliefs at the Pueblo, and because of that, to leave is to make a choice that is too hard." This fidelity speaks to Simpson's uncompromising nature. Simpson communicates her identity with reverence, and with a sanctity for its secrets.

Art in America

Native Women Artists
June/July, 2019



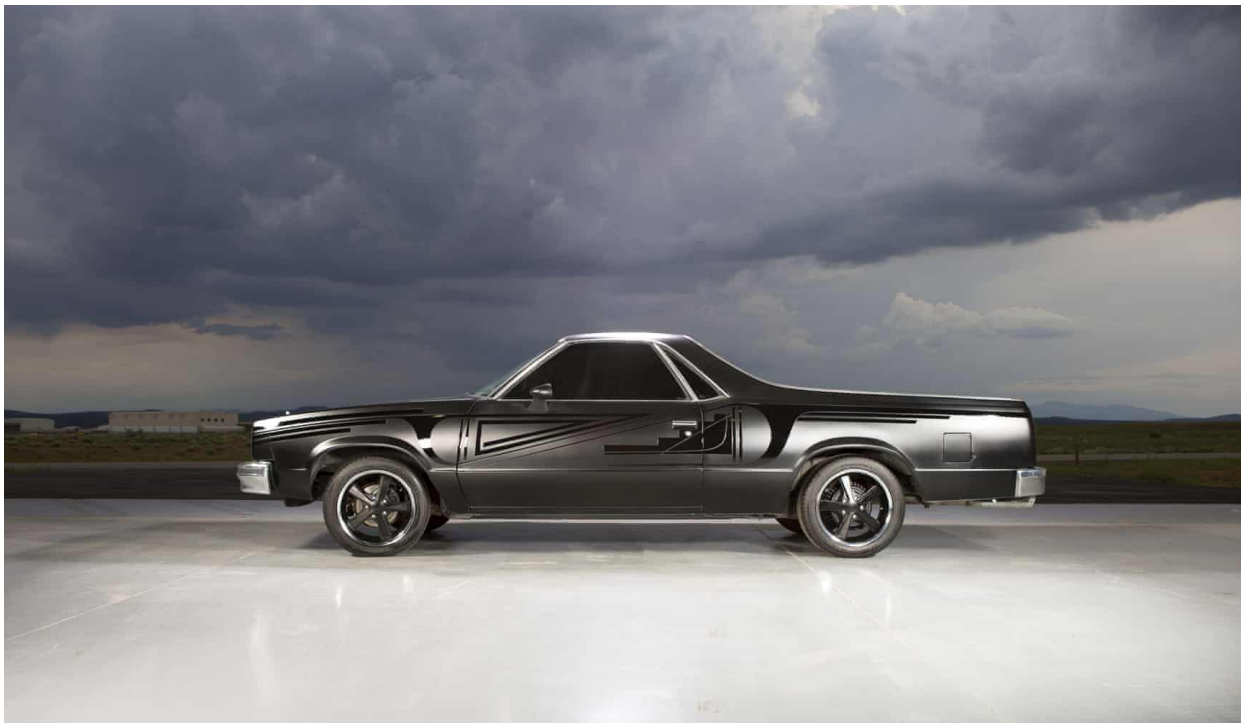
Rebecca Belmore, Fringe, 2007, Transparency in light box, 96 1/4 x 32 3/4 x 6 1/2 inches

"Hearts of Our People" showcases the artistic achievements of Native American women from the past one thousand years. Organized by Minneapolis Institute of Art associate curator Jill Ahlberg Yohe and Native independent curator Teri Greeves, the exhibition brings together more than 115 artists. The works, ranging from pottery and textiles to photographs and a painted Chevy El Camino, are drawn from the museum's permanent collection and the holdings of over thirty institutions and private individuals. Accompanying pro-grams include a symposium by artists and scholars, screenings of movies by and about Native women, and artist talks. Following its Minneapolis debut, the show will travel to the Frist Art Museum in Nashville, the Renwick Gallery in Washington, D.C., and the Philbrook Museum of Art in Tulsa.

Forbes

A Spectacular Exhibit Of Indigenous Women Artists Counters 500 Years Of Exploitation And Ignorance

By Jonathon Keats
June 10, 2019



Rose B. Simpson (Santa Clara Pueblo), Maria, 2014. 1985 Chevy El Camino. Collection of the Artist. © 2014 Rose B. Simpson. Image: © Kate Russell

At the beginning of the 20th century, a Native American potter named Maria Martinez received an unusual request from an archaeologist excavating a site near her home at the San Ildefonso Pueblo in northern New Mexico. He showed her a potsherd unlike anything made in her village – a remnant of an antiquated style in which patterns were rendered in black on black – and asked if she could replicate it for historical research.

Not only did she recapitulate her ancestors' technique. She also revived it, developing new permutations that were admired by her people and outsiders alike. Her descendants still make it today.

Martinez's distinctive blackware is featured in *Hearts of Our People*, a vital survey of art by Native American women that opened at the Minneapolis Institute of Art last week. Curated with input from a geographically diverse panel of Native artists and Native and non-Native scholars, the exhibition and accompanying catalogue provide an engaging perspective on the artistic practices of Indigenous women representing tribes ranging from Yup'ik to Osage over the past millennium.

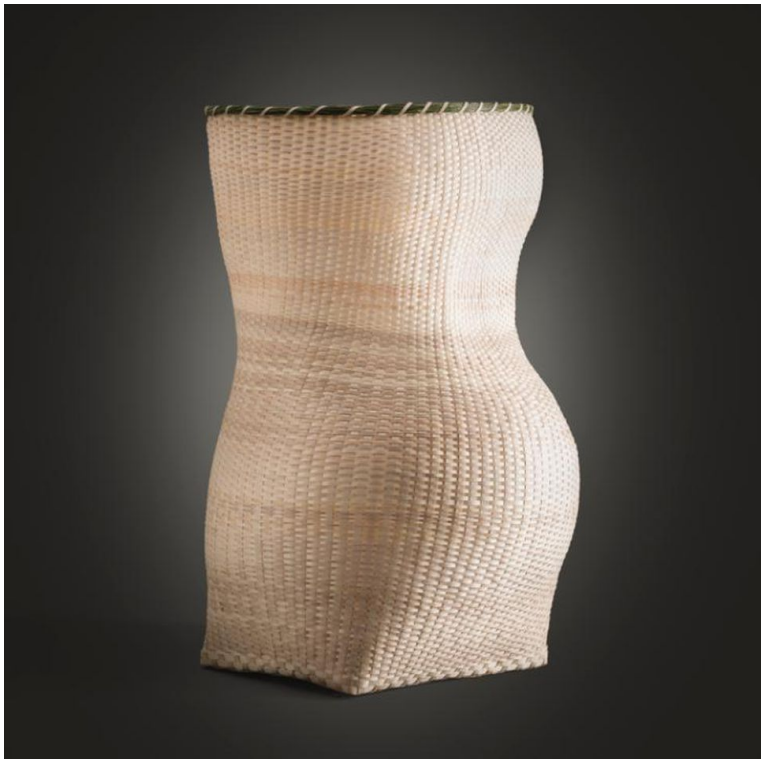
Although Martinez was an exceptional artist by any standard, her dynamic balance of tradition and innovation is strikingly pervasive, recurrent throughout the exhibit. Artists past and present have meaningfully addressed their communal heritage through modes of expression uniquely their own. Their

work simultaneously maintains continuity and adds to their culture. In many cases, it also provides a cross-cultural portal for non-Native viewers.

A work by a contemporary Santa Clara Pueblo artist named Rose B. Simpson, created in tribute to Martinez, provides a good basis for appreciating these complex dynamics. Several years ago, while loading crops into the bed of a Chevy El Camino, Simpson realized that the car was a lot like a pot. "In the same way our bodies are vessels, the things we eat out of are vessels—it's a utilitarian object," she explains in the exhibition catalogue. To make the association explicit, she painted the Chevy black on black, using a design evocative of San Ildefonso blackware, and dubbed her artwork *Maria*. The strong visual impact reflects Simpson's motivation to make what she dubs an "empowered vessel". The El Camino becomes a vehicle for affirming her personal strength, and relating it to the power that women hold in her culture as makers of life-sustaining pottery.

As *Hearts of Our People* shows, the interplay of tradition and innovation is not only manifest in ceramics, but can equally be found in long-established media ranging from textiles to beading to carving to painting, as well as newer media such as digital photography and video. Basketry is especially well represented, and serves to illustrate the tensions that Native artists have faced in post-colonial America and how they've confronted existential threats ranging from genocide to assimilation.

Like ceramics, baskets have a long history as utilitarian objects and cultural artifacts, serving day-to-day functions while also holding communities together through practices of gathering and making. Within and beyond tribal boundaries, the most refined examples have been admired as artworks and treated as commodities. In *Hearts of Our People*, early 20th century baskets by Washoe artist Louisa Keyser and Yurok/Hupa/Karuk artist Elizabeth Hickox show the aesthetic splendor of basketry, equal to Maria Martinez's pottery, while their personal stories reveal the ugly circumstances in which they were compelled to work.



Cherish Parrish (Odawa/Pottawatami), Gun Lake Band of Pottawatami, The Next Generation—Carriers of Culture, 2018, Black ash and Sweet Grass.

For instance, although Keyser invented a new form of Washoe basket called a *degikup*, the non-Native shop that sold her work instead advertised her 'authenticity', appealing to non-Native buyers' desire for primitivism. She was even given a make-believe name, Dat So La Lee, to tout her exoticism. The marketing paid off in the sense that her large baskets sold for more than $1,000, a hundred times the price of basketry by nameless female contemporaries. As commodities, these baskets sustained Keyser and her community, much as Maria Martinez and her painter husband Julian helped bring their Pueblo from the brink of starvation to relative affluence. But this imprint of primitivism has remained for nearly a century, at least for non-Native viewers, denigrating the creators by ignoring their inventiveness, imagination and humanity. For that reason, *Hearts of our People* is an essential corrective.

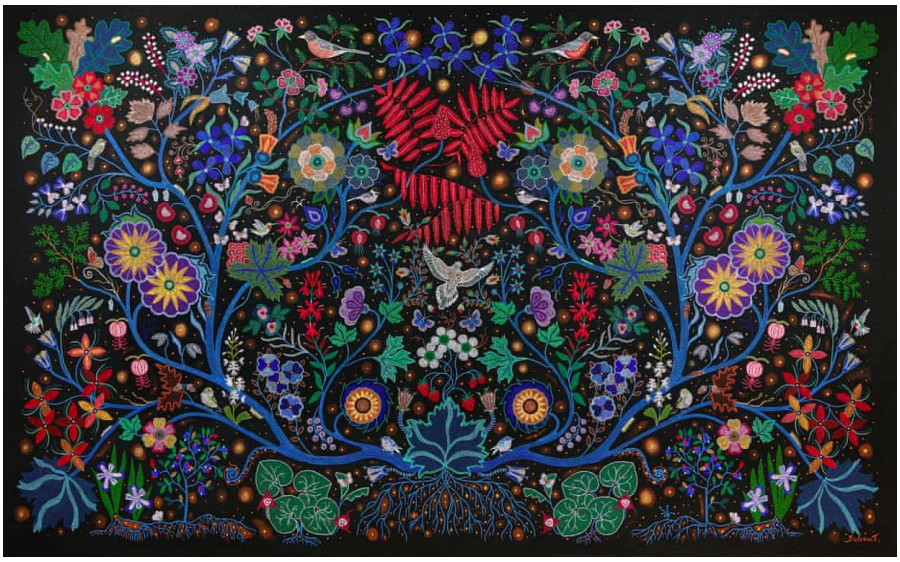
The exhibition is also an important corrective in a second way. At least since the 18th century, when Immanuel Kant wrote his *Critique of Judgment*, the Western elite has viewed utility as antithetical to art. Craft is belittled, with the result that Native art has often not been taken seriously, a problem exacerbated by non-Native ignorance of the multiple valences of utility in Indigenous societies. Although it would be unwise to generalize, given the vast diversity of these cultures, many dimensions of utility are revealed through this exhibit. One of the most significant is the role of craft as a communal activity, weaving collaborations on a daily basis and intergenerationally.

The philosophical implications are profound – as profound as the meaning of any artwork Kant would have appreciated – and they're extremely relevant for all peoples today, as society becomes more fractured and shortsighted amidst xenophobia and environmental destruction. The Native practice of thinking in terms of the next seven generations – and acting accordingly – is one that we all need to adopt, and it can be imbued through encounters with Indigenous art.

No single artwork can possibly contain all of these values, though one contemporary basket comes astonishingly close. The Ottawa/Ojibwe/Pottawatomi artist Cherish Parrish has woven a black ash basket in a shape reminiscent of a pregnant woman, a form she describes as "a universal idea for something beautiful and appreciated, something only women can do". Her vessel, titled *The Next Generation—The Carriers of Culture*, embodies the unity of utility and beauty by relating basket and belly, while simultaneously suggesting that the future of a people is borne through heritage as much as biology.

More than just an illustration of grandiose principles, Parrish's basket is a product of these processes, unifying object and meaning. *The Next Generation* really is a carrier of culture – the living descendant of ancient tribal traditions that may eventually birth meaningful art of its own.

The Often-Overlooked Aspect of Native American Art: Women
By Shyam Patel
June 6, 2019



Christi Belcourt; Métis, born 1966; The Wisdom of the Universe, 2014; Acrylic on canvas; Unframed: 171 × 282 cm (67 5/16 × 111 in.); Art Gallery of Ontario; Purchased with funds donated by Greg Latremoille, 2014; 2014/6

Although most outsiders don't realize it, Native American art is largely the product of women's work. "This material culture stems from a Native female understanding of the world, her own identity, who her people are, and how this knowledge can be passed on," says Kiowa beadwork artist Teri Greeves. To illustrate this often-overlooked aspect of Native art, Greeves and the Minneapolis Institute of Art's Jill Ahlberg Yohe organized an exhibition of some-120 works conceived over the span of a millennium by female artists from indigenous nations that, collectively, represent all regions of Native North America.

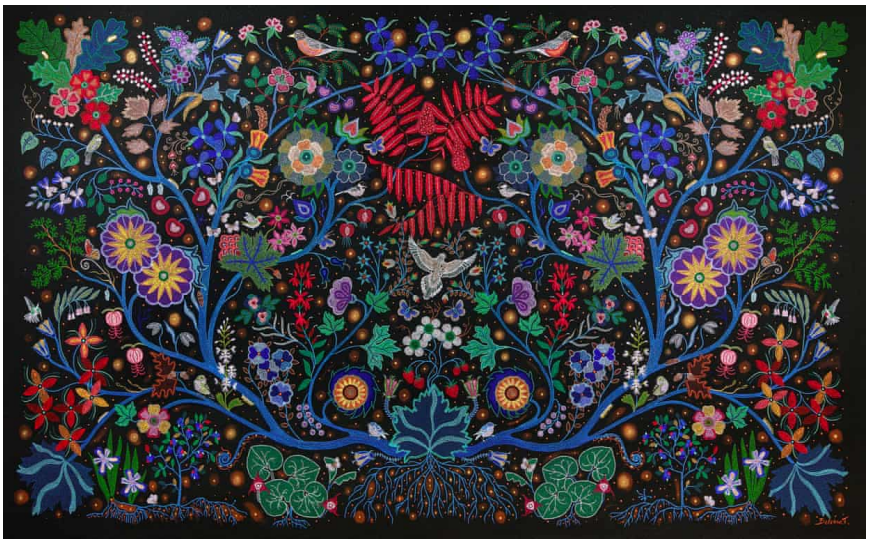
Titled *Hearts of Our People: Native American Women Artists*, the show, which opened at MIA on June 2, includes contemporary works such as Santa Clara Pueblo artist Rose B. Simpson's *Maria*, a customized 1984 Chevrolet El Camino; Romanesque 19th-century sculpture by Edmonia Lewis; and ancient pottery by the Hohokam and Mimbres tribes. "No one other than the individual who comes from the community that's created these works can speak to it," says Greeves, citing the importance of the Native Exhibition Advisory Board (a panel of 21 Native and non-Native female artists and scholars) in selecting the works on view. The final assemblage was organized into three overarching themes that connect each object: relationships, power, and legacy.

"When you see a dress made for a young woman, you're seeing four deer taken by her uncle, tanned by her aunt, and beaded by her mother," Greeves continues. "She wore it understanding her relationship to the deer sacrificed for her, the trade routes that brought her the beads, and the love of her family." While the show reaches across time, media, and Native communities, it's by no means a definitive study of Native American women's art. "It's the first step toward a conversation around Native art we hope will continue in art institutes," Greeves says. "This is barely the tip of the iceberg."

The Guardian

'It's long overdue': the first exhibition for Native American female artists

By Nadja Sayej
June 13, 2019

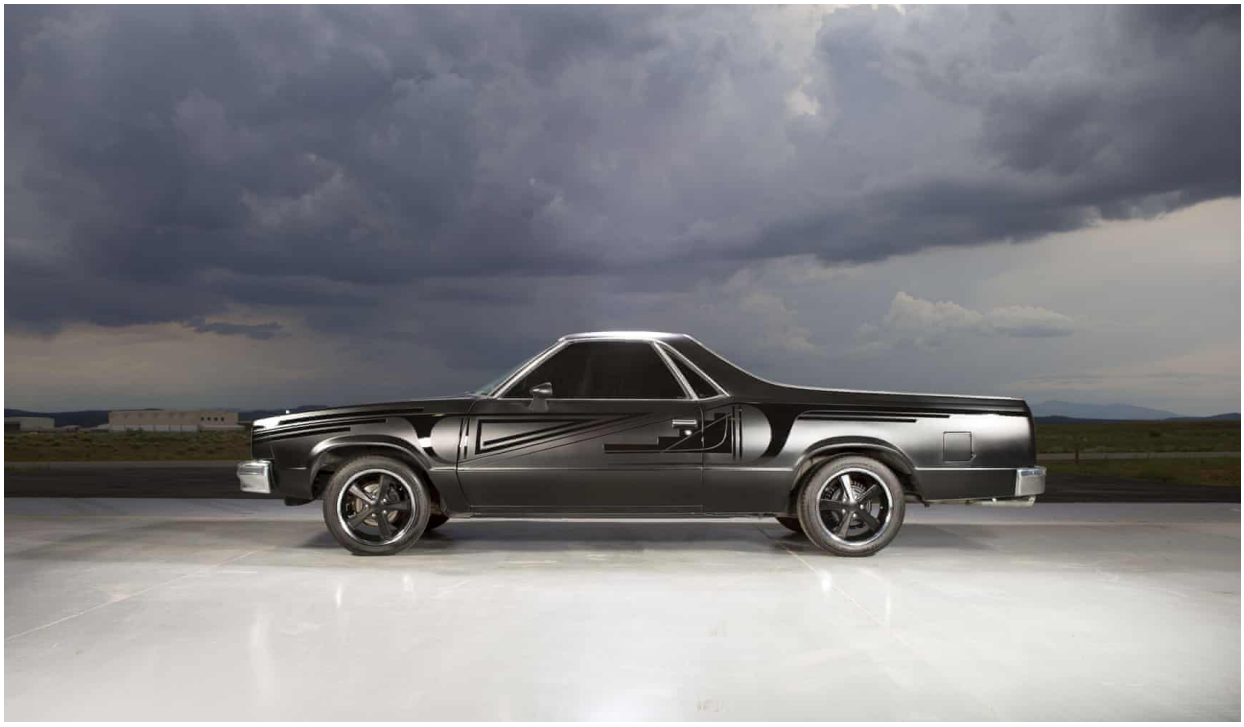


Christi Belcourt (Métis) - The Wisdom of the Universe, 2014. Photograph: Art Gallery of Ontario

Walk into most museums and there might be something missing on the wall labels beside Native American artworks – an Apache dress from the 19th century might just read: "Title, year, materials." What's missing? The artist's name. Though many of the artists' names were not recorded, and will forever be anonymous, many that have been recorded are now being recognized as never before.

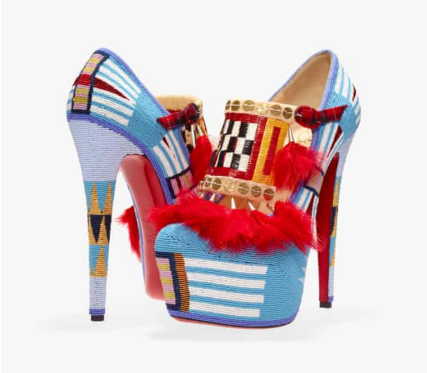
Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists is the first ever museum retrospective of Native American and Canadian female artists. It opened at the Minneapolis Institute of Art, and until 18 August, over 115 artists from 50 Native communities are being given the credit they deserve. "This is the first, believe it or not, show devoted to Native women artists," said Jill Ahlberg Yohe, who co-curated the exhibit with Teri Greeves. "It's the first to honor Native women from ancient times to the contemporary moment." Then why did it take so long?

Most 19th-century art collectors were "men with a Victorian sensibility," Yohe said. For the most part, these men weren't interested "in identifying women, or individualizing Native people". She added: "90% of Native art is made by women. Native artists know this. It's just non-Native people who haven't recognized that." Yohe has been working on this exhibition since 2015. "It dawned on me after scouring the collections that all the work is made by women," she said. Putting together the show meant more than just plucking out items from renowned collections. Rather than repeating the same old narratives, the co-curators wanted to incorporate fresh voices. That led them to working with 21 women, both Native and non-Native scholars and artists, to curate this show as part of their "exhibition advisory board". "That's what made it special," said Yohe. "We have the voices, expertise and knowledge from all these women."



Rose Simpson's 1985 Chevy pays homage to Maria Martinez. Photograph: Collection of the artist.

Upon entering the exhibition, there's a parked 1985 Chevy El Camino by Rose Simpson, a work which pays homage to the 20th-century potter Maria Martinez, "the first self-identified non-anonymous Native artist," said Yohe. That sets the tone for the entire show, which is divided into three sections: legacy, relationships and power. The exhibition includes the work of 12 Canadian artists to trace tribes and communities that were established long before borders between the two countries. "The borders between the US and Canada weren't created by indigenous people, but by outside influences," said Yohe. "All this work is connected to our history, whether it was made in 1500 or 2019. It's all a part of the American and Canadian story." Métis artist Christi Belcourt shows The Wisdom of the Universe, a painting from 2014 that features animals on the endangered species list in Canada, alongside Haida fashion designer Dorothy Grant, who sketches Haida artwork on to clothing, is showing her wool Hummingbird Dress from 1989, the same year she debuted her first collection. Though craft and fashion play a role in this exhibit, it's not where it ends. "It's the gendered aspect of women's work," said Yohe. "These categories don't work; they just don't work in Native communities."



Jamie Okuma's Adaption II from 2012.
Photograph: Charles Walbridge/Minneapolis Institute of Arts

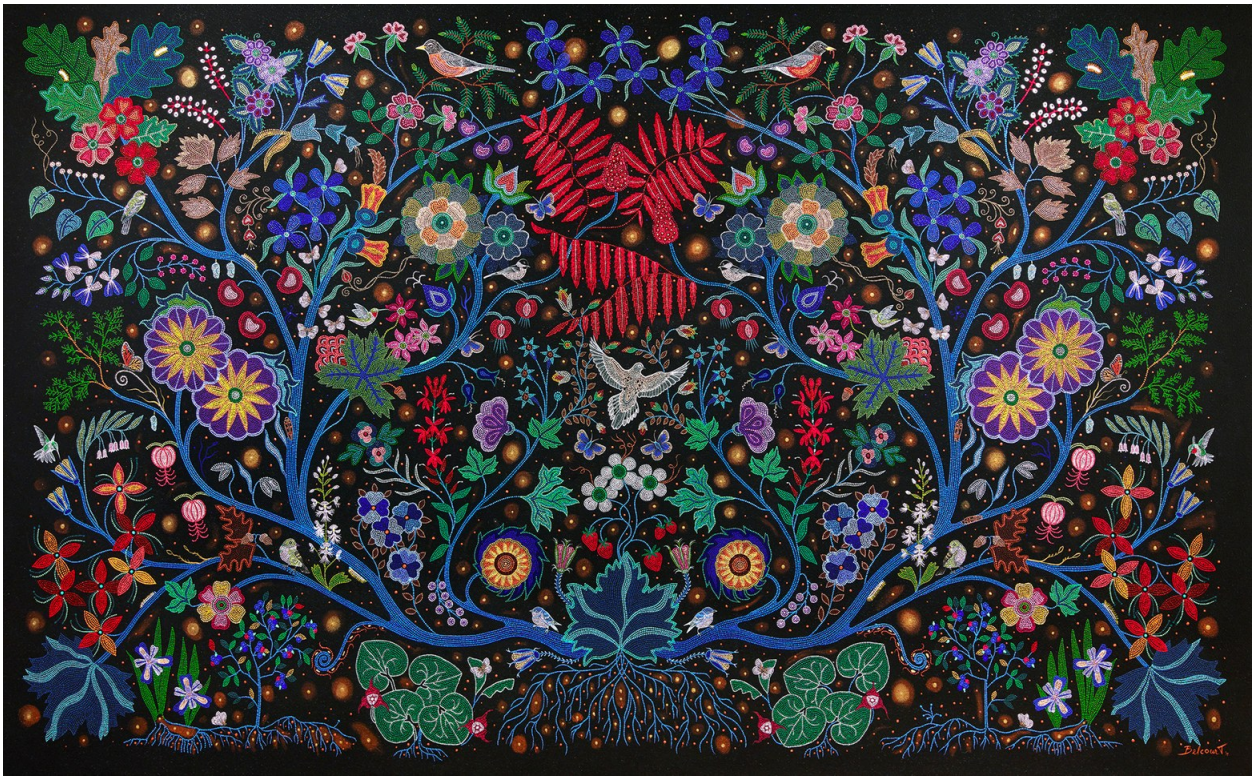
One of the most fun pieces in the exhibit is a pair of heels by the Luiseño/Shoshone-Bannock artist Jamie Okuma, who is showing her Adaption II shoes from 2012. The artist has taken a pair of Christian Louboutin heels and covered them in what Yohe calls "Native couture" – including the likes of glass beads, porcupine quills and buckskin. The work counteracts the stereotype that Native art lives in the past and lacks sophistication. The Creek-Cherokee artist Joan Hill is showing her 1990 painting Women's Voices at the Council, which shows the head of a tribe, a woman she refers to as the "Beloved Woman", meeting with other women as part of the decision-making for their tribe. Haida artist Freda Diesing shows Mask, Old Woman with Labret from 1974, which depicts a woman with a labret, a body modification known as "lip plugs", which were recognized as status symbols for women on the north-west coast. (Diesing was one of the few female carvers of her generation and her Haida name Skil Kew Wat means "magical little woman").

The artworks here are more than just decorative or folk-art masterpieces. They offer an overlooked, often silenced narrative. "Their work tells the story of Native people, the idea of resilience, despite all measures of annihilation of federal policy, settlers and acts of genocide," said Yohe. The Anishinaabe artist Rebecca Belmore shows Fringe, a sculpture from 2007, which draws attention to the violence against First Nations womenwith a gaping back scar the artist believes will never disappear. But this exhibition is, in part, about healing. For one, it aims to be a counter-narrative. They're calling it "corrective art history" to the dusty old textbooks that ignored them for decades. "It's long overdue," said Yohe. "Native women's art history is American history."

VOGUE

In "Hearts of Our People," Indigenous Women Reclaim Space Through Art

By Christian Allaire
June 3, 2019



Christi Belcourt, *The Wisdom of the Universe*, 2014
Photo: Greg Latremoille / Courtesy of The Art Gallery of Ontario

Art has served as an outlet for indigenous women to carry on their traditional crafts and stories for centuries. They've continued to create even while contending with legacies of unimaginable oppression, like the residential and boarding schools many were forced into throughout the 19th century in the United States, in which colonizers attempted to wipe out their culture and assimilate them into a white, Christian way of life.

Today, their works are heavily referenced in mainstream fashion and design, and often without acknowledgment; indigenous women artists are frequently victims of cultural appropriation. It seems undoubtedly related to this erasure that there has yet to be a major retrospective in a major museum devoted to exploring these women—until now.

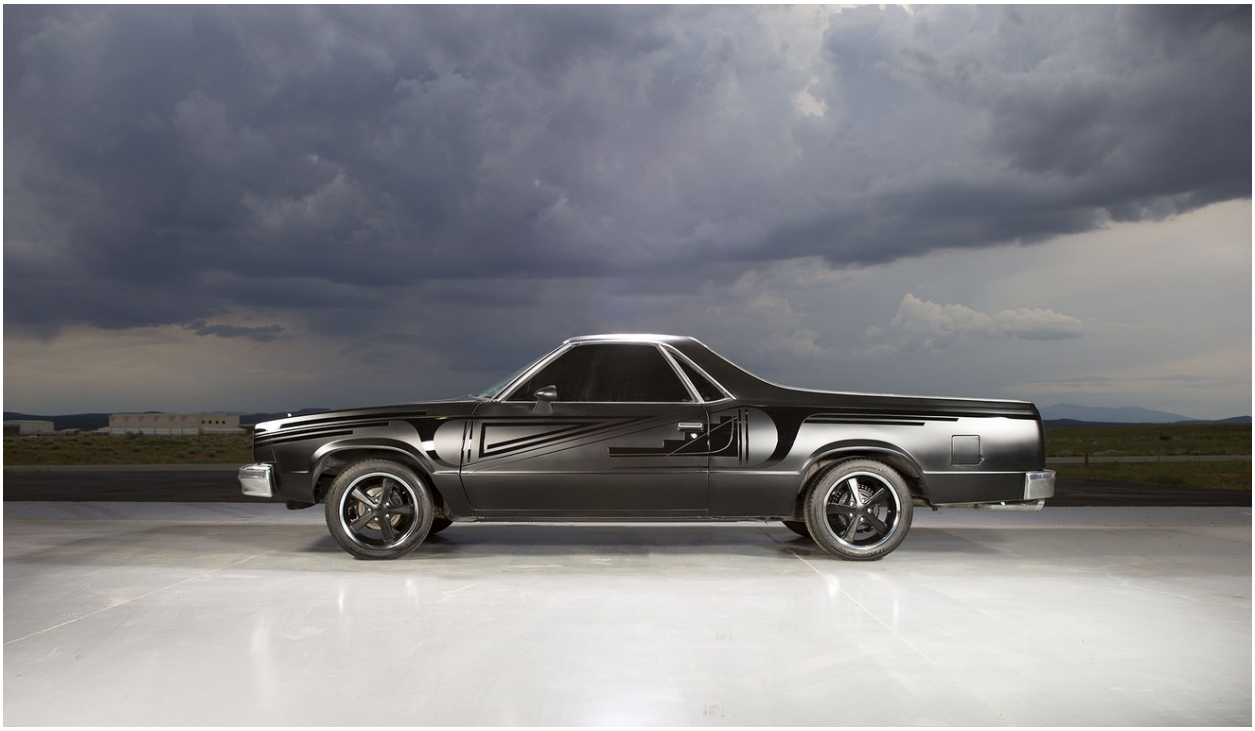
Through August 18, the Minneapolis Institute of Art (MIA) is presenting "Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists," the first major showcase to provide visibility to the indigenous women, both from Canada and the United States, who have repeatedly been ignored in the mainstream art world. Curated by Teri Greeves and Jill Ahlberg Yohe, it features 117 different objects, all made by native

women, that span more than 1,000 years, including paintings, sculptures, garments, and more. The artists themselves also range in tribe and location.

The project has been a long time coming for curators Yohe and Greeves. The pair have been working on this project for more than four years, and during the acquisition process, the duo worked with an advisory board of 21 different native artists and scholars to ensure that the final selection represented the right mix of region, medium, and tribe."Neither one of us could speak with authority on all these other nations," said Greeves, while Yohe added, "To tell a story that's as rich as this, we can't tell that story. The board helped us make sure that we were comprehensive in scope." To accomplish their goal, the curators split the exhibit into three themes: legacy, relationship, and power.

Inside, the works manage to do these big ideas justice. Power, for example, comes roaring at you at high speed: A totally customized El Camino, made by the mixed-media artist Rose B. Simpson, a Santa Clara Pueblo, opens the show. With her work, *Maria*, she presents herself as a petrolhead—something viewed as a very masculine hobby—then gives it a native woman's twist, outfitting the car with decals inspired by the lines found in Pueblo ceramics, which are often made and mastered by women.

In another room, a large-scale painting, titled *The Wisdom of the Universe*, by Métis artist Christi Belcourt—painted in a dotted style, to give her canvas the appearance of being beaded—explores the relationship between indigenous people and nature. Animals, plants, and water hold a sacred place in indigenous life, and Belcourt specifically refers to 21st-century climate change, only painting species that are on Canada's endangered list. It's an extremely beautiful piece with an ugly message at its core.



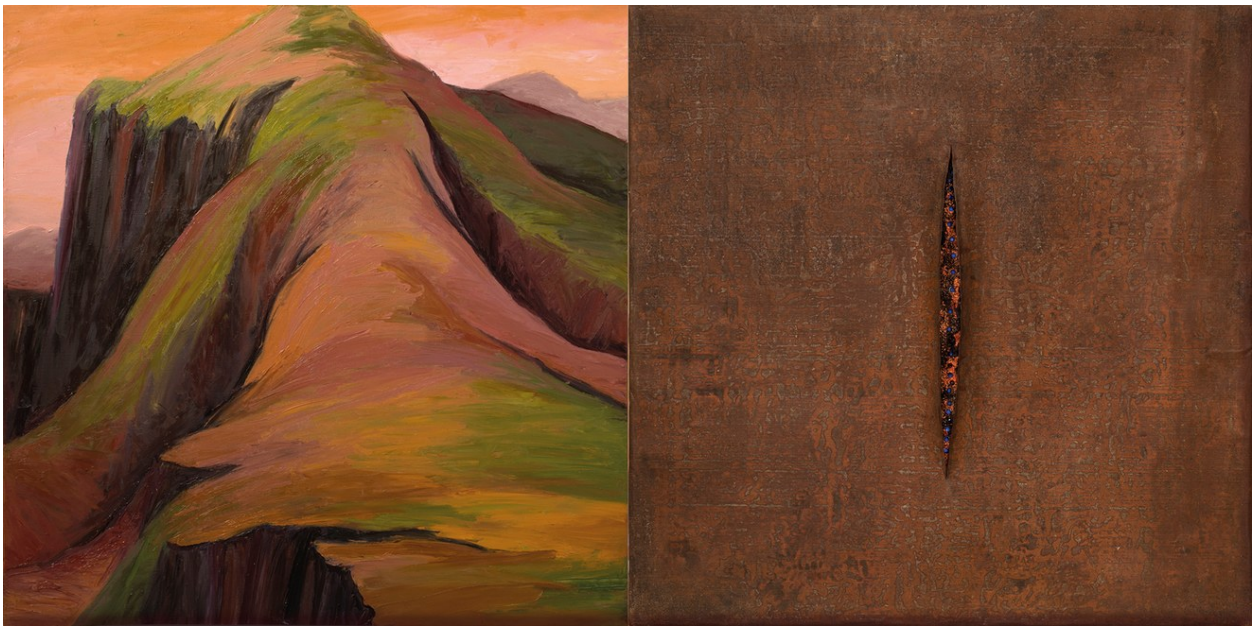
Rose B. Simpson, Maria, 2014. Photo: Kate Russell

Meanwhile, Legacy is a theme that runs through just about every piece in the show. A standout sample is the collaboration jewelry, titled *Adornment: Iconic Perceptions*, by Kiowa jeweler Keri Ataumbi and Shoshone-Bannock and Luiseño artist Jamie Okuma, both profiled for *Vogue* here. On a glimmering cocktail ring and necklace, Okuma beaded portraits of Pocahontas, based on historical illustrations of her in the 17th and 18th century; Ataumbi then set Okuma's beading with precious metal, pearls, and stones. They are fabulous pieces of fashion that reimagine a historical figure who has long been misunderstood and stereotyped.

In general, the fashion pieces show just how much indigenous art has evolved, and they cut through any myth of its homogeneity. An Anishinaabe jingle dress and beaded headband from the 1900s evokes the flapper-style silhouettes that dominated the time period, showing that a traditional garment can even reflect the current trends of the day. Another piece by Okuma, a hand-beaded pair of Christian Louboutin platforms, combines traditional craft with an ultramodern flourish.

One can't help but notice the timing of a show like "Hearts of Our People." Women's rights are increasingly under attack in America; controversial, draconian laws, for example, threaten to overture *Roe v. Wade*. Revisiting traumas specific to indigenous women and connecting to their struggles through solidarity—that's something Greeves believes this show can provide.

"This exhibit was supposed to open in 2016, when Hillary [Clinton] was supposed to be president. Then the election happened," Greeves said. "I realized, everything happens for a reason. This kind of showing of native women's effect on American art, making that declaration now and making a stand on women's power, is actually healing medicine for this moment. This is happening when it's supposed to be happening."



Kay WalkingStick, Venere Alpina, 1997
Photo: Kay WalkingStick / Minneapolis Institute of Art

DATEBOOK

4 Gallery Exhibitions to Share This Holiday Season
Written by Charles Desmarais
November 20, 2019

There's no shortage of opportunities to enjoy — and perhaps share with visitors — thoughtful art exhibitions at Bay Area museums this holiday season.

They run the gamut from art in the age of Black Power (at the de Young Museum through March 15) to the colorful, unpolished art of Burning Man (Oakland Museum through Feb. 16); from James Tissot's flowery depictions of 19th century high society in England and France (Legion of Honor through Feb. 9) to conceptually formidable contemporary works (two good shows at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art into February and beyond).

Don't let such bounty blind you, however, to the wealth of smart private gallery exhibitions, all without an admission charge.

Photography celebrates an anniversary

Of particular interest to many in this photography-obsessed region will be Fraenkel Gallery's 40th anniversary exhibition, "Long Story Short" (through Jan. 18). Jeffrey Fraenkel and Frish Brandt have built their business into one of the best of its kind worldwide. They did that by focusing first on great images and letting the commerce develop organically.

A case in point is the entertaining current show. It includes works by masters like Diane Arbus, Richard Avedon, Romare Bearden, Sophie Calle and Alfred Stieglitz but pays equal attention to a large number of irresistibly confounding pictures labeled, simply, "photographer unknown."

Edifice complex

The Mexico City artist Damián Ortega is known for an eclectic body of sculptural work. Often, elemental concepts of construction or its crafted opposite — controlled erosion and meticulous disassembly — are at the center of his method. His use of unconventional materials and surprising images calls a different kind of attention to the idea of building. A 1998 work in the collection of New York's Guggenheim Museum, for example, might be a Constructivist sculpture dating to the early 20th century, were it not pieced together of interlocking discs of hardened tortillas.

That sense of whimsy is an Ortega trademark. For his show at Adrian Rosenfeld, "Estridentópolis," in collaboration with the prominent Mexican gallery Kurimanzutto, seven hybrid buildings sprout animal heads and appendages. Each stands about 8 feet high or taller and references an architecturally distinguished high-rise in a major city — the Empire State and Chrysler Buildings in New York, Chicago's Marina Towers, and so forth. All are lovingly formed of discarded paper bags that once held cement. These are put to use as papier-mâché (in Spanish, *papel maché*) and as pasted sheets, carefully matched so that the colorful typography becomes a decorative element.

A cement-bag "Working Class Shirt," overalls and work gloves in the show hint at the unlikely parity of humble human labor and utopian aspiration that formed our modern, Modernist cities.

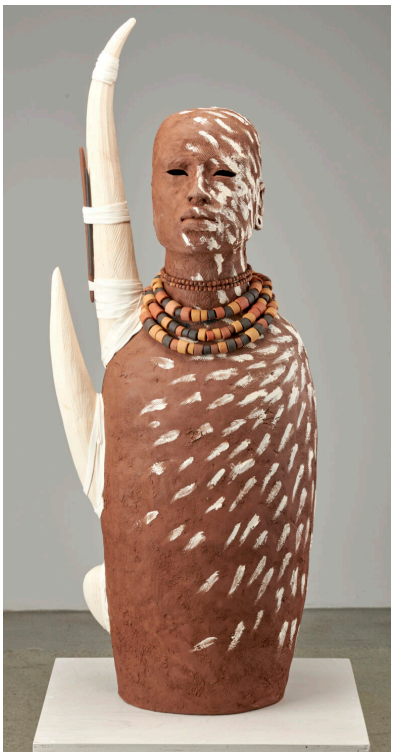
Restructuring perception

Miriam Böhm's exhibition "While, Weil," at Ratio 3 through Dec. 20, is a bracing mind game with a refreshing visual payoff. The best word for how one feels after spending 45 minutes carefully unraveling Böhm's photographic puzzles? Restored.

The Berlin artist takes three basic approaches. Least engaging at the surface level, yet challenging on closer inspection, are photographs of what appear to be cut scraps of cardboard and other photos, which are pieced together into abstract designs. Their interest derives from minute clues to their construction, provided by shifts of focus and light across the picture plane, and barely discernible imperfections of cutting and matching.

More baffling are large rectangular scrims, subtly painted to suggest that rectangular apertures have been cut from their centers. Another layer of illusion is added by hanging each scrim in front of photographic wallpaper that depicts, yep, a rectangular aperture.

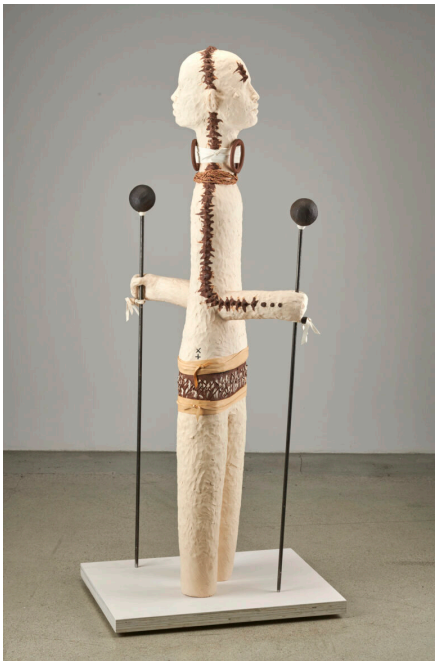
The best works by far, however, are rephotographed landscape images that have been folded, cut, repositioned, subtly lighted and otherwise altered to disorienting effect. These works pose once again what had seemed a long-solved conundrum, calling on us to enter the psychosocial fray that sets picture against the thing pictured, and then against the world.



"Tusked 1" is a 2019 work by Rose B. Simpson. Photo: John Wilson White, Jessica Silverman Gallery

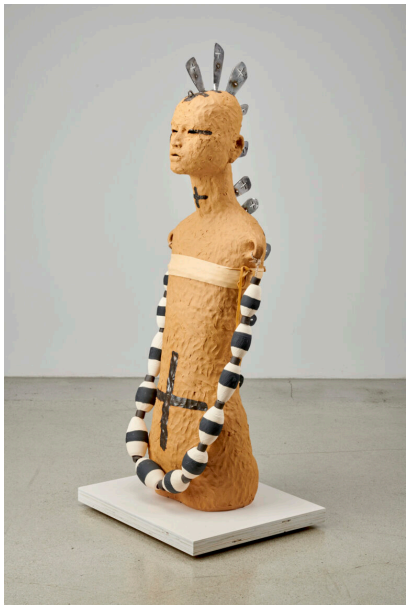
Native talent

If Rose B. Simpson had her way, viewers of her somber clay figures would know the history of Native American bravery in the face of colonialism and genocide. They would respect the complexities of her Tewa tribal culture of the American Southwest, and the distinction between her own Pueblo of Santa Clara and that of San Ildefonso. But there's a great deal they would never learn, because there is much that is meant to be private, even sacred. To be shared among Tewa alone.



Rose B. Simpson's 4½-foot-tall "Frère 1" is on view at Jessica Silverman Gallery through Dec.21.Photo: John Wilson White, Jessica Silverman Gallery

I found this out over the course of a delightful conversation I had with Simpson at a small party in her honor. I was pleased, not least because it justified the approach I always take to unfamiliar art. I don't generally talk to artists or curators before I write a review. I assume I can never know all the references and life experiences that may be relevant to the work. That frees me to take it in on equal human terms. Of course, as in any social interaction, the more we learn about an artist's language and approach, the deeper our appreciation. But that comes best after engagement with the art, not before.



Rose B. Simpson's "River Girl A" is among the works in the Jessica Silverman Gallery show.Photo: John Wilson White, Jessica Silverman Gallery

There is, in any case, a regal solemnity about the figures in Simpson's exhibition "Duo," at Jessica Silverman Gallery through Dec. 21, that seems outside of culture. Or, more precisely, that supersedes any single society.

The title of the exhibition is reflected by the works throughout. Siblings, lovers and alter egos; pairing, coupling and mirroring. A pair of Janus-like figures look to the past and to the future, symbolizing at once both beginning and end.

"Long Story Short": 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday. Through Jan. 18. Free. Fraenkel Gallery, 49 Geary St., S.F. 415-981-2661. **https://fraenkelgallery.com**

Damián Ortega: "Estridentópolis": 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday. Through Jan. 25. Free. Adrian Rosenfeld, 1150 25th St., S.F. 415-285-2841. **adrianrosenfeld.com**

Miriam Böhm: "While, Weil": 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday. Through Dec. 20. Free. Ratio 3, 2831-A Mission St., S.F. 415-821-3371. **https://ratio3.org**

Rose B. Simpson: "Duo": 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday. Through Dec. 21. Free. Jessica Silverman Gallery, 488 Ellis St., S.F. 415-255-9508. **https://jessicasilvermangallery.com**

KQED Arts

A groundbreaking exhibition finally tells the stories of Native women artists

Written by Jeffrey Brown and Kira Wakeam
October 18, 2019

"Hearts of Our People" is the country's first ever exhibition devoted solely to the works of Native American women. The Minneapolis Institute of Arts assembled the retrospective, which is currently at Nashville's Frist Art Museum and will visit Tulsa and Washington, D.C. in 2020. Jeffrey Brown reports on how the show brings attention to a realm previously "not at all addressed in the art world."

Read the Full Transcript

- **Judy Woodruff:**
  And now a look at an art show that is both making history and teaching it. Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists is the country's first ever exhibition devoted solely to the works of Native American women. Jeffrey Brown traveled to Minnesota and New Mexico to meet with some of the team behind the retrospective. It's part of our ongoing arts and culture series, Canvas.

- **Jeffrey Brown:**
  How many artists have a master's in fine arts and studied auto mechanics? Meet Rose Simpson, whose day of making art includes hours coiling clay in her studio, soldering metal pieces for sculptures in her garage, and spending time under the hood of a 64 Buick Riviera she's fixing up. Simpson lives and works on the Santa Clara Pueblo just outside Espanola, New Mexico. Her mother, Roxanne Swentzell, is a ceramicist, as was her mother, a tradition through time.

- **Rose Simpson:**
  I come from a long, long line of artists and creative people. And long line, I mean, like, as far as you can go back.

- **Jeffrey Brown:**
  You're not talking about 10 or 20 years. You're talking about hundreds.

- **Rose Simpson:**
  Yes, I'm talking about hundreds, possibly thousands.

- **Jeffrey Brown:**
  Continuity and seeing art as part of daily life.
  Simpson's work is a contemporary take on the traditions of her Santa Clara Tewa ancestors. And now she's part of a groundbreaking exhibition, the first of its kind dedicated to more than 1,000 years of artistic achievements by Native American women.
  Put together by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, where we saw it, the exhibition is called Hearts of Our People.

- **Jill Ahlberg Yohe:**
  Seeing these works of art together.

- **Jeffrey Brown:**
  Co-curator Jill Ahlberg Yohe:

- **Jill Ahlberg Yohe:**
  This exhibition was really necessary in a non-Native context, because it had never been explored before. And that was stunning, because something that is so clear in Native communities wasn't at all addressed in the art world.

- **Jeffrey Brown:**
  On display, some 117 works of art from more than 50 Native American communities across the U.S. and Canada. There are traditional pieces, like this Anishinaabe jingle dress created in 1900 and worn for dancing at powwows, and a Hohokam bowl dating back to 1,000 A.D. There's also contemporary photography, video and installation pieces, like Fringe, a 2007 piece by Rebecca Belmore tackling the issue of violence against Native people, particularly women. Whenever possible, the creators of these works are named. Rather than generic craftspeople, the exhibition wants us to see creative individuals making art.

- **Jill Ahlberg Yohe:**
  I think that the way — that the development of collecting Native American art and the stories that had previously been told are ones that position Native women as non-artists.

- **Jeffrey Brown:**
  Contemporary artists are shown alongside those of their ancestors, highlighting the way Native women's art has adapted, while remaining connected to generations past. One example? This towering stack of blankets by Seneca artist Marie Watt entitled Blanket Stories, displayed next to a traditional Navajo chief's blanket from the 1880s. And then there's Rose Simpson's piece, a restored 1985 Chevrolet El Camino she named Maria. Sitting at the show's entrance, it's paired with a large vase by the car's namesake, Maria Martinez, the celebrated pioneer of the black-on-black Pueblo pottery style emulated in the car's paint job. But a car as art? Rose Simpson made Maria herself, to use, to drive. Plus, she realized it holds things, just like some of her other creations.

- **Rose Simpson:**
  It hit me like, pew, it's a pot. It is a super contemporary vessel. This is why there is no disconnect between life and art.

- **Jeffrey Brown:**
  No disconnect?

- **Rose Simpson:**
  No. And this is — what does art have to do with cars? I'm like, what does art have to do with life? What does life have to do with art? The point is that we have ripped art away from our lives. And so the more I could apply the creative process to every part of my life, then the stronger I felt as a person.

- **Jeffrey Brown:**
  Given the show's size and scope, Jill Ahlberg Yohe and co-curator Teri Greeves knew they could not put it together alone. They assembled an advisory board of scholars, historians and artists, 21 women in total, Native and non-Native.

- **Dyani White Hawk:**

The work is indigenous, truly indigenous art form.

- **Jeffrey Brown:**
  Among the advisers, Dyani White Hawk of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, a painter and mixed media artist based in Minneapolis.

- **Dyani White Hawk:**
  This exhibit covers 1,000 years.

- **Jeffrey Brown:**
  Yes.

- **Dyani White Hawk:**
  Still, it was so hard to pick the pieces that were going to go in the show, because there's so many that could be.

- **Jeffrey Brown:**
  White Hawk's work mixes modern techniques with traditional Lakota artforms like bead and quill work. She says the recognition of Native women artists is long overdue.

- **Dyani White Hawk:**
  The vast majority of Native arts has been supported by women over generations, but it's an aside. It's a side note in the way that we understand and look at American art history. And it's not a truthful and honest way to understand the history and artistic history of this land.

- **Jeffrey Brown:**
  Rose Simpson also served on the museum's advisory board. For her, being in the show is an opportunity to open doors for other Native American artists.

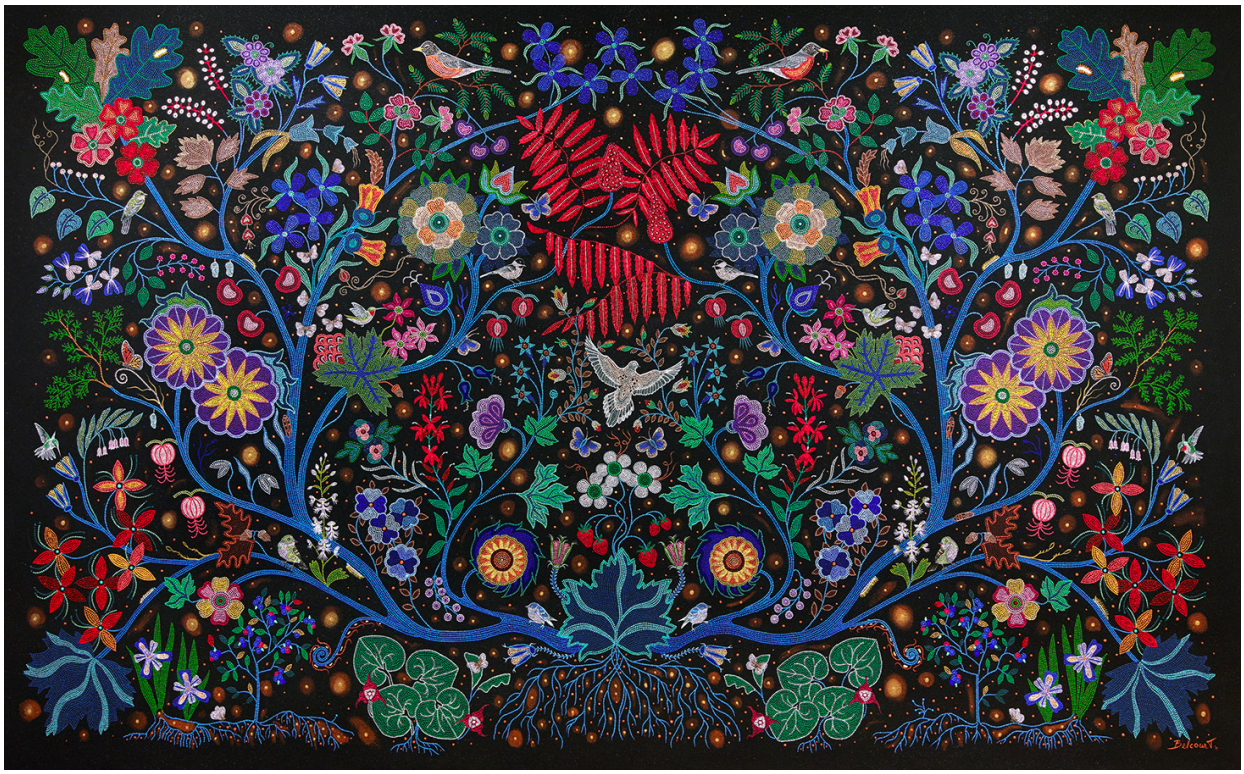
- **Rose Simpson:**
  It's absolutely about changing a mind-set. The first step is to infiltrate and then get respect, and then pull it back the other way. I was handed this — the baton, right? And I have to go further and really respect it and be responsible with it.

- **Jeffrey Brown:**
  And she's choosing to remain in her rural home, where she's passing on an ancient artistic tradition to her own daughter. For the "PBS NewsHour," I'm Jeffrey Brown on the Santa Clara Pueblo in New Mexico.

HYPERALLERGIC

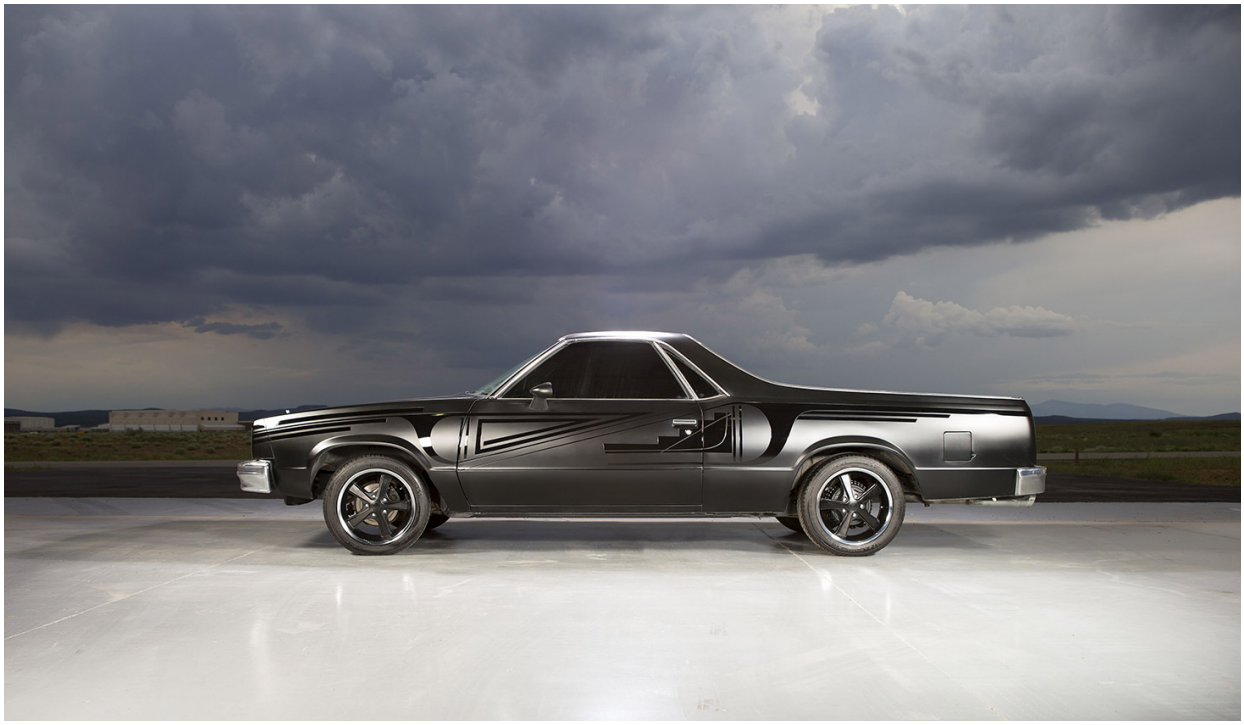
The Undersung Art of Native American Women, Front and Center

Written by Erica Cardwell
August 15, 2019



Christi Belcourt, "The Wisdom of the Universe," 2014, acrylic on canvas 71 x 114 x ½ x 3 ⅜ inches (courtesy Art Gallery of Ontario)

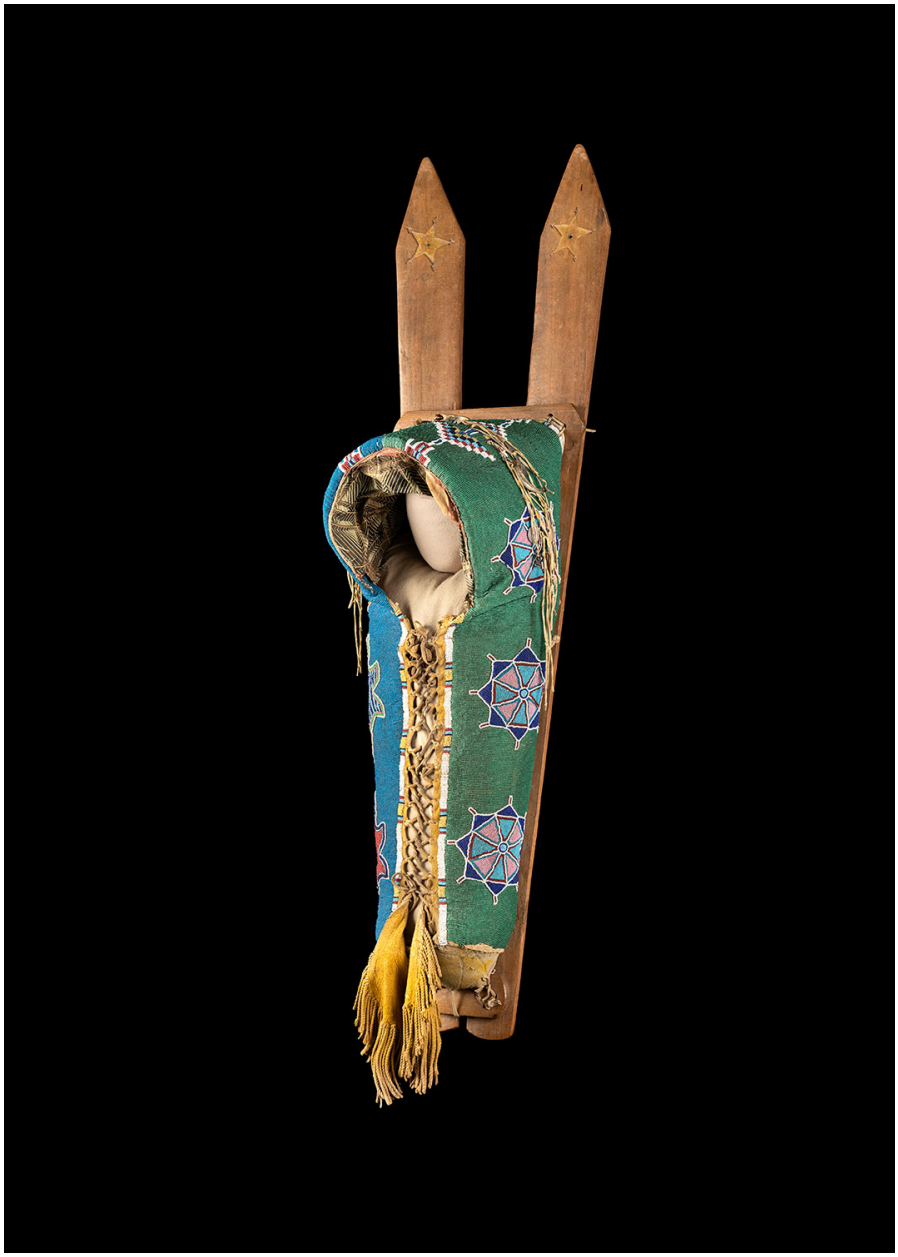
MINNEAPOLIS — Upon first arrival to *Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists,* the feature exhibition at Minneapolis Institute of Art, visitors are greeted by a 1985 Chevy El Camino parked in the center of the gallery. "Maria" (2014), was conceptualized by Rose B. Simpson, alongside the exhibition advisory board. Simpson describes "Maria" as an "empowered vessel," similar to a pot or basket, with its rounded corners and "black on black" interior and exterior. While bold, the decision to place "Maria" at center stage, was both a measured pronouncement of the exhibition terms and an impracticality. However, Jill Ahlberg Yohe, the institute's Associate Curator of Native American Art, insists that it was easy to get the car into the building. On my first visit, I circled the car with Ahlberg Yohe, pausing from time to time to eavesdrop on people, particularly men, who were admiring its interior and new engine. On my second visit to the exhibition, I found myself subconsciously disinterested, being that I am not much of a car person, skipping the installation altogether, in order to move onto the "art."



Rose B. Simpson, Santa Clara Pueblo "Maria" (2014) 1985 Chevy El Camino 117 x 74 x 56] (courtesy Collection of Rose Simpson)

The car, as an object, is initially framed in distracting codes of machismo messaging and a ploy for engagement. According to Simpson, the car as art object represents the legacy of agency and power endowed by the Santa Clara Pueblo female experience. As a challenge to Western perception, "Maria" introduces a new dimension to the role of Native women's art in the cultural and institutional landscape. The car, and its charged position, is both a tool for unlearning and expanding interpretations.

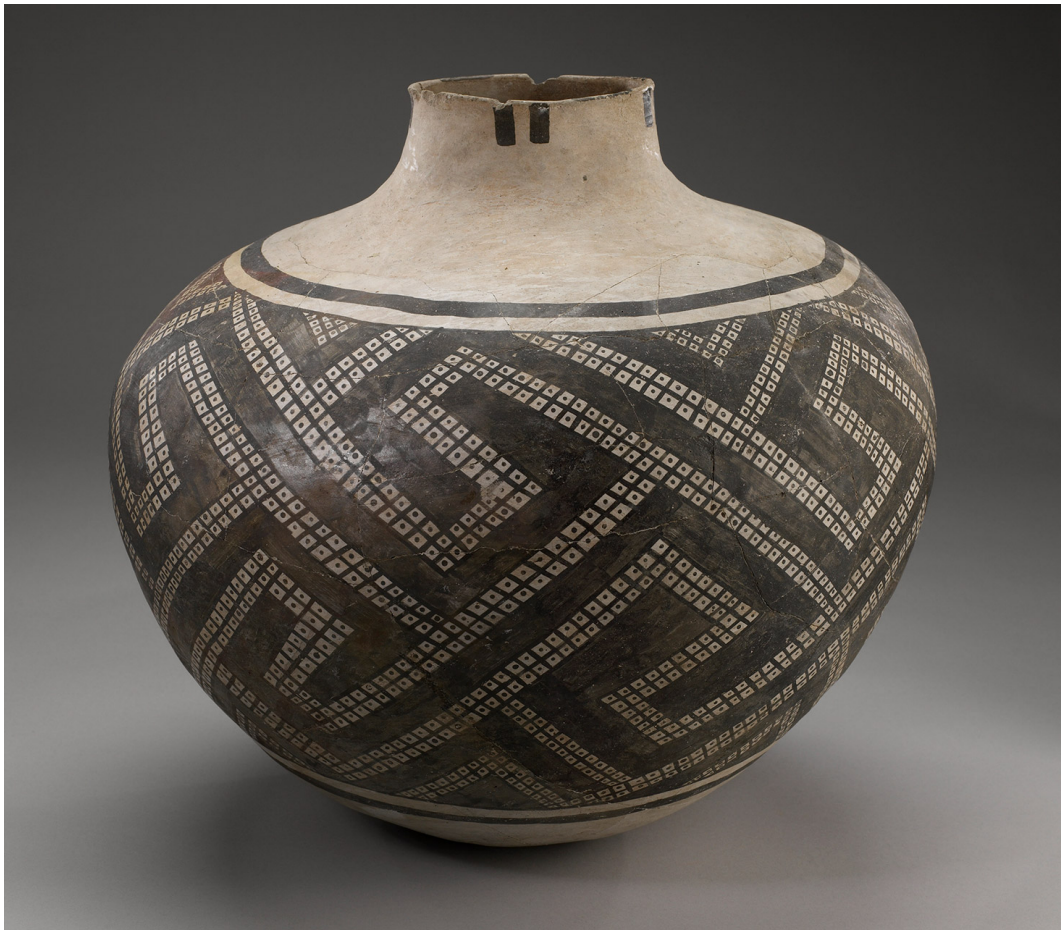
In a 2013 conversation between Ahlberg Yohe and independent curator and beadmaker, Teri Greeves of the Kiowa Nation, the pair considered, why hadn't there been an exhibition dedicated to Native women artists? *Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists* sought to answer this question. To make it happen, Ahlberg Yohe, Greeves, and research assistant Dakota Hoska collaborated with an advisory board comprised of 21 Native women artists, as well as scholars, curators, and historians on Native North America. As the board convened, one central and more specific question was posed, "Why do Native women artists create?"



Kiowa artist, "Cradleboard" (1890) Wood, leather, venetian glass beadwork 43 ½ x 11 ½ x 10 ½ inches (courtesy Denver Museum of Nature and Science)

After three years of extensive meetings, phone calls, and emails with the advisory board, Greeves and Ahlberg Yohe narrowed down the exhibition into three themes, including several sub-themes: Legacy, or the continuum of resilience as it relates to children and ancestors; Relationship, or further, the Indigenous concept of interconnectivity and relationships called Kincentricity as well as Collaboration; and Power, which encompasses Honor/Diplomacy (certainly as it relates to land sovereignty) along with Dignity, Grace, and Balance. These themes uphold the confluence of spirituality and practice within Indigenous organizing structures, producing an exhibition that includes 115 diverse works spanning 1,000 years, with an impressive 70% of the ancestral art identified by name. This model is a crucial guide for dismantling more general ideas around diversity and inclusion in traditional curatorial

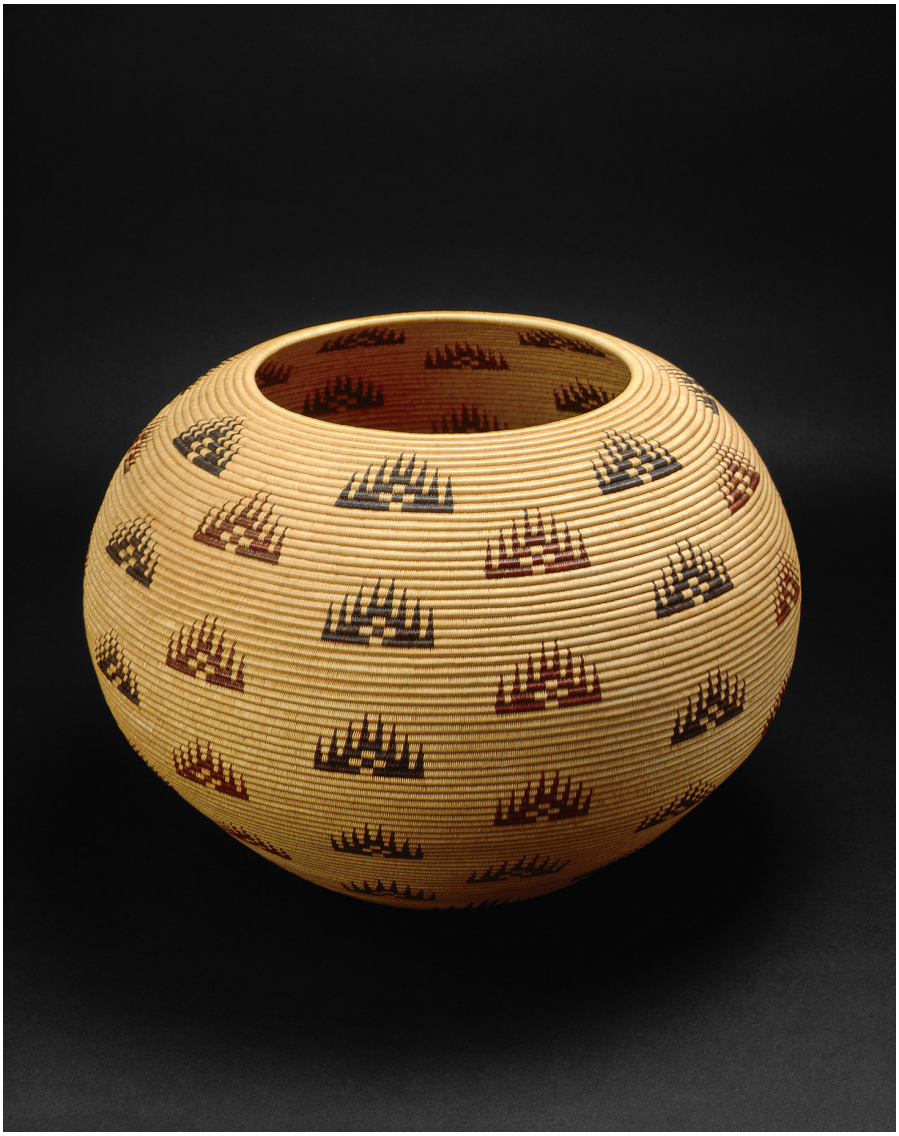
practice. Both curators were dedicated to presenting the show through an immersive collaboration process that centered Indigenous values, rather than the translation of these values into palatable white supremacist standards.



Ancient Pueblo artist, "Pot (Olla)" (c. 1000–1300) Clay, pigments (courtesy Minneapolis Institute of Art, The Putnam Dana McMillan Fund)

The predominance of Native art is attributed to pottery, beadwork, and textiles. Ahlberg Yohe has observed that Native women contribute roughly 90% of the art found within Native and Indigenous collections. Much of this work is craft, an artistic practice that is ingrained from birth. Given that these practices are usually intended for domestic use, Native art is typically perceived as "primitive novelties" or souvenirs. These creative methods, however, need not be relegated to oversimplified defining concepts such as "creative outlets" and "functional craft," especially as they relate to the history of colonization and subsequent Western trade and market production. As Ahlberg Yohe puts it, "it is important for experience and artistry to be on equal terms."

Given this duality, along with the breadth of the exhibition, *Hearts of Our People* will probably require a second look for most visitors. It is a massive undertaking with a substantial collection of art from Native North America. Containing sculpture, textiles, paintings, photographs, collage, video, audio, and music, the depth of the exhibition gives the viewer the sense of a retrospective survey, breathing new life into these works of art.

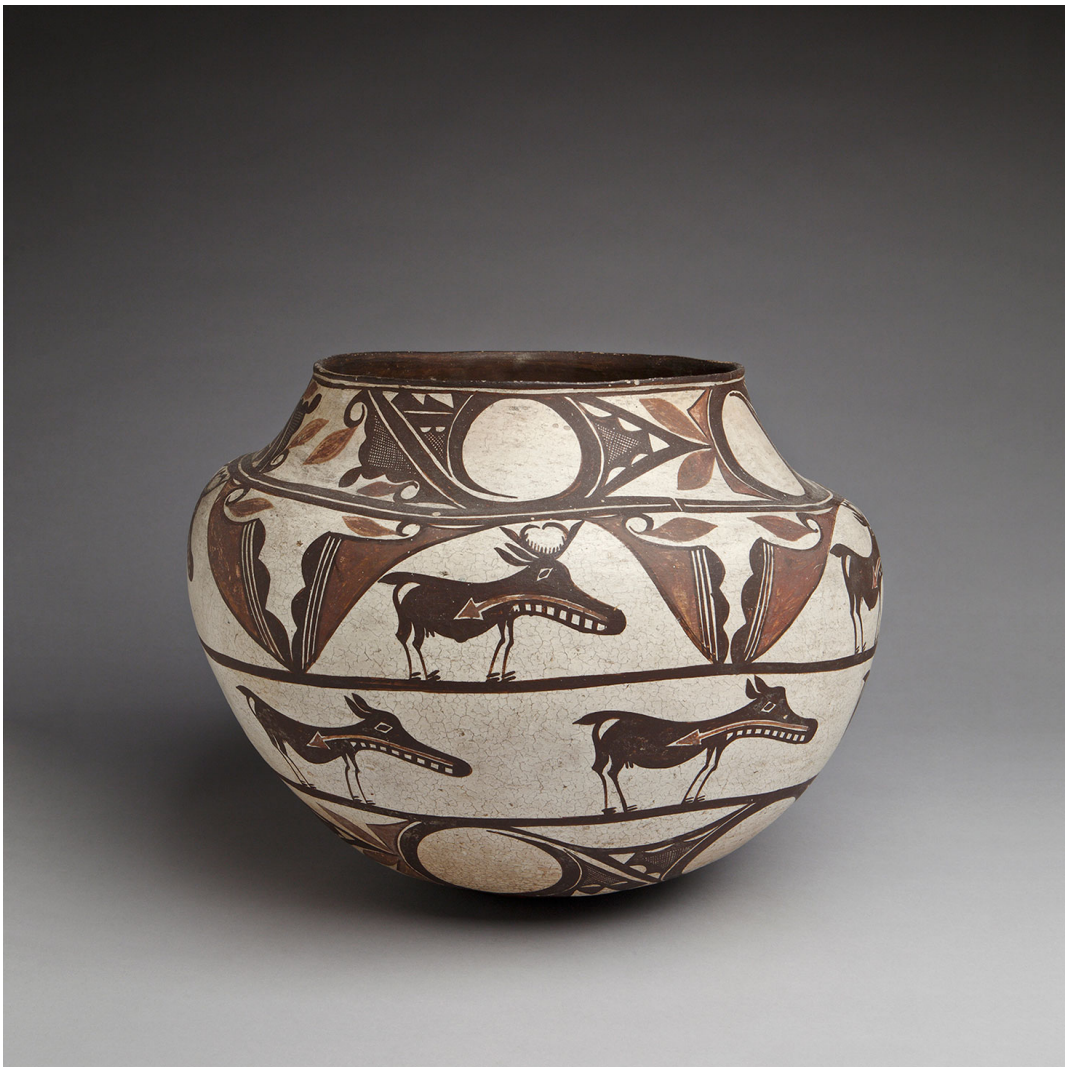


Louisa Keyser ("Dat so la lee"), Washoe, "Beacon Lights basket" (July 1, 1904–September 6, 1905) Willow, dyed bracken fern root, western redbud (courtesy Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, New York, Gift of Eugene Victor Thaw Art Foundation, Thaw Collection of American Indian Art)

The impressive 343-page exhibition catalogue further contextualizes the exhibition. It includes scholarly articles and personal essays from members of their advisory board and artists with work in the exhibition. In their essay, "Encircles Everything: A Transformative History of Native Women Arts," Janet Catherine Berlo, Professor of Art History at the University of Rochester and Ruth B. Phillips, Professor of Art History at Carleton University in Ottawa, recall Abe and Amy Cohn as major players in the colonization of Washoe baskets. Their intent was to collaborate, but instead the Cohns exploited the basket weaving artist Louisa Keyser by giving her the name "Dat-so-la Lee", making her fame a distraction from the broader community of basket weavers. Keyser's "Beacon Lights Basket" (1904) is representative of the artist's signature *degikup* style — the rounded curve of the baskets is formed through a meticulous style of taut weaving, resembling rows of corn. Washoe baskets were known for their shape and the ability to hold water. According to Berlo and Phillips, "[the Cohns'] propagandistic misinformation has until recently obscured the

artists' greatest achievements in providing a critical economic and artistic resource for their communities at a time of cultural upheaval so great that it threatened their very survival."

Lea S. McChesney, curator of ethnology at the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology and director of the Alfonso Ortiz Center for Intercultural Studies at the University of New Mexico, uses the term "soft power," in her essay "Carrying On: Gender and Innovation in Historic Pueblo Pottery, to further elaborate on the significance of women's pottery and makers. McChesney believes that through aesthetics, women's pottery can influence and transform space and relationships.

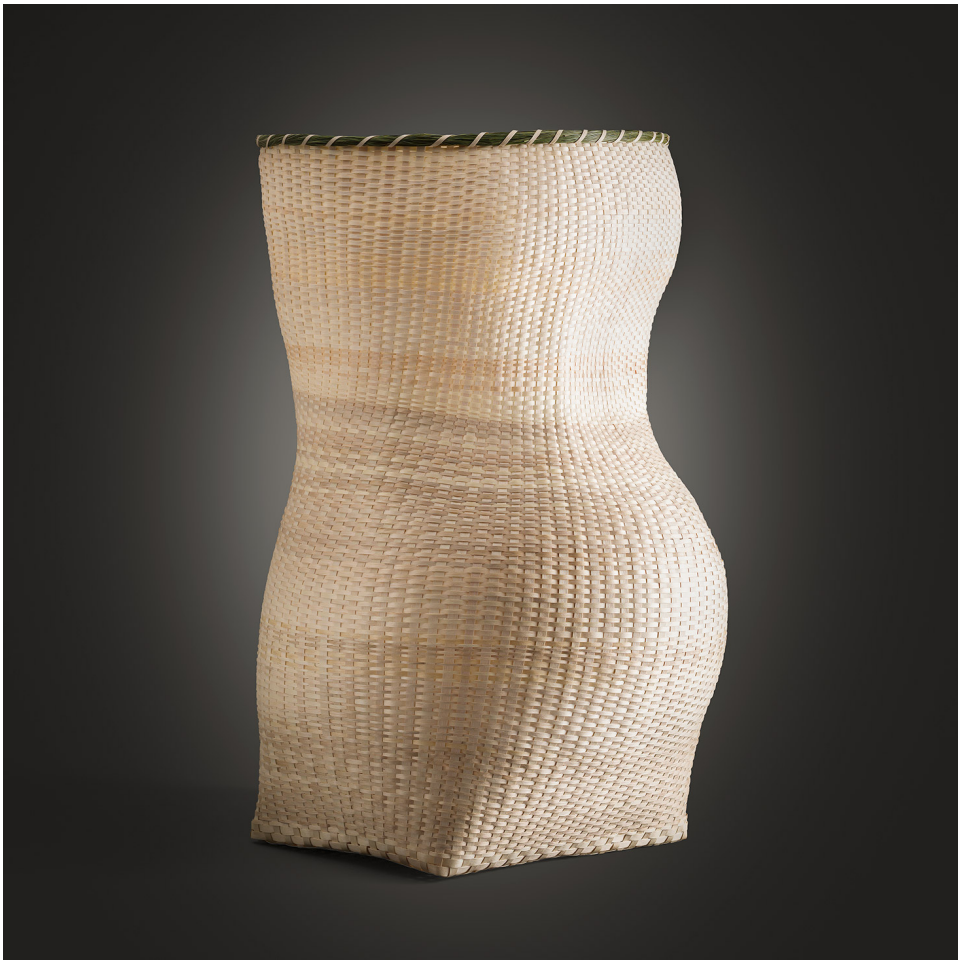


Arroh-a-och, Laguna Pueblo, "Storage Jar" (1870-1880) Clay, natural pigments, 12.5 x 15 inches (image courtesy the School for Advanced Research, photograph by Addison Doty, © School for Advanced Research)

While clay and pottery have unquestionable links to women within Indigenous cultural practice, the expansiveness of gender is more clearly recognized within these communities. The Native concept of gender is configured much differently than biologically focused structures found in the West. Often, in the framing of artistic production of pre- and post-colonial work that is not rooted in the West, artists with gender identities that do not fit within a binary or linear framework are either lumped into the category of "woman" without distinction, or disregarded.

The artist Arroh-a-och is described as *k'u kweemu*, or "like a woman and sister/brother" by Laguna community member Max Early and utilized she/her/hers pronouns and Laguna female gender words. Though little is known about the artist, Arroh-a-och, her "Storage Jar" is widely recognized as a signature piece of Pueblo pottery.

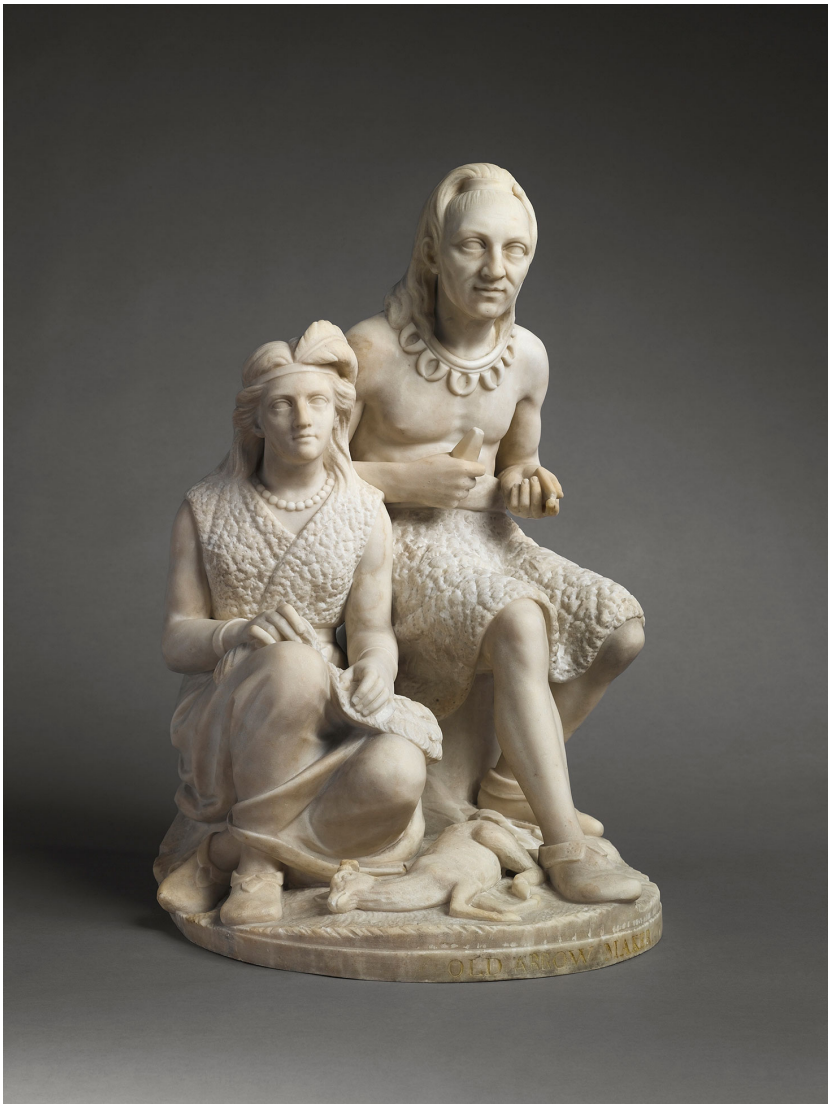
The debut of *Hearts of Our People* occurs at a particular watershed moment in the art world, when several shows centered around women artists have opened or are forthcoming, thus producing a further examination of the concept of endangerment. Many of these shows had been in the works for years prior to the lead up to the 2016 election, a fact highlighted by the foolhardy name of a recent *New York Times*article, "Female Artists Are (Finally) Getting Their Turn." This recent surge of art shows dedicated to women artists offers the retrospective sense of preservation, at a time when our physical bodies are at stake, a critical shift in power at an uneasy juncture in history.



Cherish Parrish, Grand Traverse Bay Anishinaabe, "The Next Generation – Carriers of Culture" (2018) Black ash and sweet grass 23 x 12 x 14" (courtesy Gun Lake band of Pottawatomi)

Edmonia Lewis, the neoclassical sculptor, is another example of an under-recognized woman artist in this show. Lewis was of Haitian, Mississauga and African American heritage and trained

and lived in Rome, Italy. One of her most famous sculptures, "The Old Arrow Maker," is on view in the exhibition; it depicts Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem, "The Song of Hiawatha." Widely known for her sculpture "Forever Free," which represents two freed slaves, Lewis was known for creating narratives of Black and Indigenous people as a dogged means of inclusion. However, in spite of her efforts and mastery of Western sculpture, Lewis is rarely included in contemporary discussions of neoclassical art, even when these discussions are centered on women artists.



Edmonia Lewis, Mississauga and African American, "The Old Arrow Maker" (modeled 1866, carved c. 1872) Marble, 20 x 14 x 14 inches, (courtesy Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art Bentonville, Arkansas; photo: Sotheby's)

Hearts of our People addresses this categorical denial in a signature painting from the exhibition, "The Wisdom of the Universe" (2014), by Christi Belcourt of the Michif tribe. The painting displays an ornate midnight covered in coiling, rooted vines. Birds, flowers, and golden stars are nestled into the foreground, and upon an even closer look, round-faced clover, berries, hanging spiders and fresh herbs can be seen. The pastoral impression of the work seems familiar on first look; it is in the presence of such vibrance and lushness that one could experience both possibility and

prosperity, somewhat disguising the sinister absence coursing its way throughout the piece. Unless you read the wall text, it would be hard to discern that every element of animal or plant life in the painting is either nearing extinction or endangered. The viewer, now privy to Belcourt's knowledge, can more adequately perceive the intuition of the painting, and experience the connection between life and art, with measurable injustice in between. The future, while ominous, is also ongoing within this context.

From the advisory council who gathered for long-term curatorial visioning, to the engagement with ancestral artistic inheritance, *Hearts of Our People* has developed new traditions within the institutional complexity of the fine art world. *Hearts*, a prescient title, is an appropriate front-facing sentiment as both a mode and a context for looking.

Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists *is now on view at the Minneapolis Institute of Art through August 18. The exhibition was curated by Jill Ahlberg Yohe and Teri Greeves, with the Native Exhibition Advisory Board, a panel of 21 Native artists and Native and non-Native scholars from across North America, fully credited here. The exhibition will travel to the Frist Museum in Nashville September 27, 2019–January 12, 2020, to the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C. February 21, 2020–May 17, 2020, and to Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa June 28, 2020–September 20, 2020.*