FIVE OAKS MUSEUM

SOCIAL MEDIA TAKEOVER:
KAT AND RYA

JULY 12, 2021

Hello everyone! We are Kat and Rya, co-curators of the upcoming show Untouchable Artifacts; a love letter to indigenous storytelling. The Five Oaks Museum has given us the week for a takeover! We will be sharing more info about ourselves and the show, leading up to the opening this coming Saturday!

Rya Drake-Hueston is Diné descended from Paiute and Hopi Ancestry from Navajo Mountain, UT. A sculptor, painter and performer, she uses her background in conservation and historical restoration to inform her artistic practice. Her body of work engages with cultural erasure, historical white-washing, and her family's experiences with the boarding school system at the turn of the 20th century.

Kat Salas is a multi-racial Chicana and Chiricahua Apache femme born in Gallup New Mexico. They describe their interdisciplinary practice as a desire to see art as a tool for revolution, braiding their work as an organizer and activist with their experience in the world of contemporary art. After spending much of her youth in the Adult Industry, Salas currently works at a mentorship program for youth survivors of Sex Trafficking and is a practicing tattooer wherein they fuse traditional indigenous hand poke tattooing with Chicano style single needle work.

JULY 13, 2021

Detail, “Angelitos” 2018
Lilliana Navarro
Xicana
Acrylic on Canvas

Untouchable Artifacts: A Virtual and Printed Exhibition on Storytelling, History, and Resilience is a love letter to the art, practice, and importance of indigenous storytelling on Turtle Island.

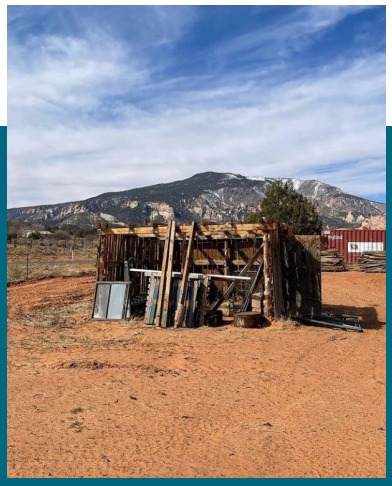
This Saturday, the show opens at 3pm online with live performances by Dakota Yazzie @juniper.needles Destiny Smokez @officiallydestinysmokez and storyteller Ed Edmo.

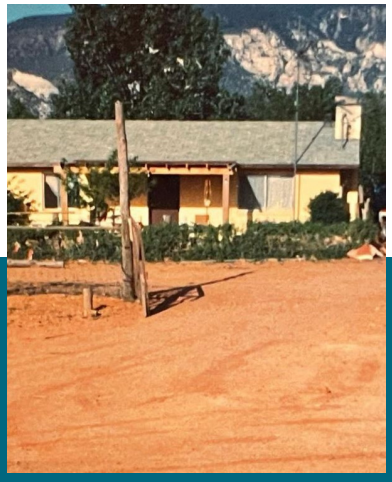
From its genesis, Untouchable Artifacts curators Kat Salas and Rya Drake-Hueston intended to create an exhibition celebrating the tradition of storytelling, and its power to transform and enhance the experience of online and two-dimensional work.

It is these artists whose storytelling is a catalyst; for healing, community, and ceremony.

The future of knowledge, history and heritage lies in creating space for those with powerful narratives to tell; not just those who history is comfortable with accepting. History as taught by colonizers is told through a white-washed and white-centric lens that erases any sort of disruption and intervention inconvenient to the crafted and carefully curated narrative of white supremacy. The indigenous artists featured in Untouchable Artifacts are telling stories that disrupt the white settler stereotype of indigenous storytelling by asking; who deserves to be recorded? What stories are important to be told? What has value, what knowledge is recorded and passed down as contemporary indigenous culture and heritage?

JULY 15, 2021





From the curators statement:

“The future of knowledge, history and heritage lies in creating space for those with powerful narratives to tell; not just those who history is comfortable with accepting. History as taught by colonizers is told through a white-washed and white-centric lens that erases any sort of disruption and intervention inconvenient to the crafted and carefully curated narrative of white supremacy. The indigenous artists featured in Untouchable Artifacts are telling stories that disrupt the white settler stereotype of indigenous storytelling by asking; who deserves to be recorded? What stories are important to be told? What has value, what knowledge is recorded and passed down as contemporary indigenous culture and heritage? “

Pictured: Four photos on Navajo Mountain taken 50 years apart, Greats grandmas sheep, home on the Rez, home as it is now, chubby Rez dog Chai hogan logs and harvested Navajo tea- also pictured a story about land stewardship, legacy, reverence, and change.

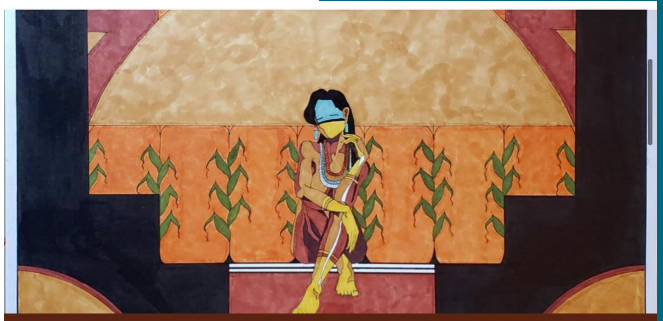
JULY 16, 2021

Picture: Stella Drake, Rya's grandmother, c. 1939-1940

On Storytelling: I grew up at the base of the holy mountain Natsis'áán, on what is now the Navajo Reservation. Originally the land of the Paiute tribe, the community is an intertwining narrative. My great-grandmother, Mabel Chief Navajo, descended from Paiutes and settled my grandfathers family at the mountain in the 1800's. Our histories are our own, told and passed down from generation to generation; only through listening can you learn and know who has walked before you, and be blessed by their memory. It was my grandmother, Stella Drake, who told me all her memories of this space. It is through her stories and her words that mere buildings become welcoming homes, that gestures and words become ceremony. It is for her that I honor storytelling and its ability to bring love and life into any space; even when I struggle with remembering everything she taught us. Even as my memory grows faint; as time passes, we will keep telling her stories.

JULY 16, 2021

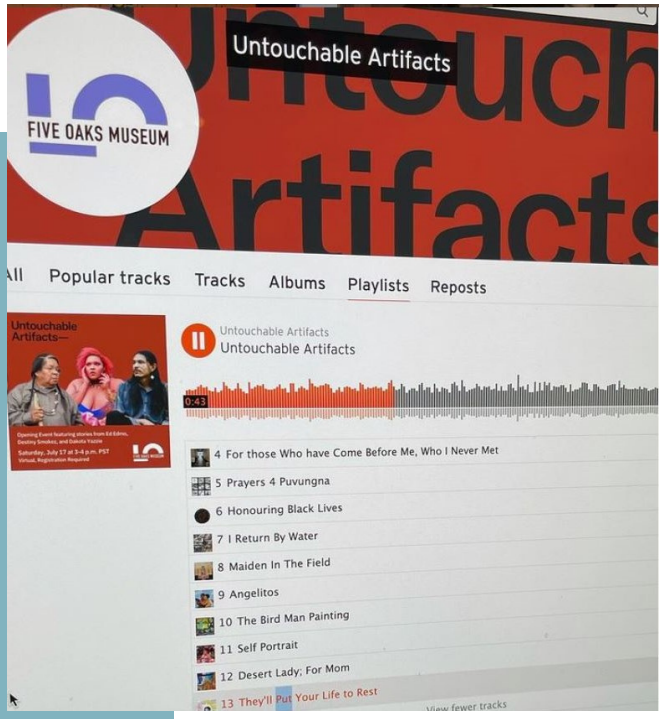
Pictured: a photo taken of my grandparents (back row) in the 1940s.
On Story telling by @secondhand_powwow
My most vivid childhood memories are of my father telling us stories about growing up in Stockton, California. Sometimes it was in the living room with a guitar, sometimes it was before we went to bed in the room he, my mother, my sister and I shared in our grandparent's house, sometimes it was on river in a kayak and other times a U-Haul floating on a road in the heat of the Southwest.
This is how I came to know my family history- This is how I learned about the Red Power movement, about how my dad and his best friend Harry Fonseca used to clown white college photographers who would try to take "historical portraits" in mismatched traditional regalia. This is how I know about my Grandpa Joe working on the Santa Fe Pacific Railroad after immigrating to Arizona and spending most of his life as a migrant worker. This is how I know my Tío Joey held it down at Chicano Park against the crooked LAPD and this is how I learned how beautiful my Aunt Rita was before she was killed in a car accident.
I dedicate this publication to my ancestors and family who endured so much to make sure I knew our history, for whom I am eternally grateful. Thank you.



Untouchable Artifacts

Our 2021 art exhibition is a love letter to the art, practice, and importance of indigenous storytelling on Turtle Island.

JULY 17, 2021

Untouchable Artifacts is now live on the Five Oaks Museum website! Thanks to everyone, especially the museum staff and contributing artists, for an amazing opening event. Be sure to check out the recordings of the artists telling their stories themselves on the SoundCloud linked through the QR code on the site!

Kat and Rya signing off for now ❤