Untouchable Artifacts—

A Virtual and Printed Exhibition on Indigenous Story-telling, History, and Resilience
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Untouchable Artifacts: A Virtual and Printed Exhibition on Indigenous Storytelling, History, and Resilience

View the virtual exhibition at www.fiveoaksmuseum.org

Curated by Rya Drake-Hueston and Kat Salas
Organized by Five Oaks Museum ©2021
Unlike too much of the indigenous art that exists within the confines of The Museum, this publication is not for sale nor can it be purchased.

The limited printings only exist only in the hands of the collaborating artists, or in public spaces where they are free and accessible to many.

In an effort to disrupt the practice of distancing indigenous artifacts from their creators, each of the artists in the publication have recorded themselves reading their story which is accessible by scanning the QR code below. For transparency, we want to share that all of the artists maintain all rights and ownership of their work, and were paid for their submissions.

We approached this exhibition as a platform to not only amplify indigenous voices, but to decolonize the tradition of storytelling.

Our liberation is not in history told by white men, nor in the stories told by overwhelmingly cis-gender, light skinned, straight, able bodied indigenous people. This is a collaboration between indigenous artists across Turtle Island who hold intersectional identities and ancestral knowledge.

These stories are the ephemera of joy, genocide, migration, grief, celebration, resilience, and history.

Scan this QR code to listen to the stories in this book as told by their respective creators.
About the Curators

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.

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 a complex intertwining narrative of displacement and survival, artistry and tradition. My great-grandmother, Mabel Chief Navajo, descended from Paiutes and settled our family at the mountain in the 1800's, where we have tended the land ever since. 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 taught me the beauty, history, sorrow and sacredness of the land I, now, am tending. All of my memories, and all of hers too, are at my fingertips. 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."
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.

On Storytelling:
"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 grandparents' 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 Tio 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."
"Blood history is what connects us to those who came before us and to those we have never met. When the United States failed to eradicate us, they attempted to erase our history. What they could not scrub away was our blood memory. Blood that carries the weight of historical trauma but is also intertwined with the resiliency of our ancestors who fought for the right of indigenous autonomy.

To Those Who Came Before Me, Who I Have Never Met is a memorial installation dedicated to the children who were lost during the boarding school era. These children, who succumbed to injury and illness, were often buried in unmarked graves and families were never notified. This installation is also a specific reflection on the time where my Great-Grandmother Phillippena (Phil) almost became one of those unidentified children.

When she was only three years old, Phillippena was taken from her family and was subsequently sent to the Fort Shaw Indian Boarding School in Montana. She was the youngest child that had ever entered that institution and many of the elder kids there took it upon themselves to raise her. One unfortunate day, when she was playing around, she ran into a hot water radiator and was severely burned. Left for dead by the school administrators, Grandma Phil was only able to pull through thanks to the collective efforts of her kin. Not all were as lucky as her though, and she never wanted these atrocities to be forgotten.

During the late 1970s, when my mother was a young adult, Grandma Phil had my mom drive her out to the old Fort Shaw Boarding School site. There is where Phillippena recollected on her times, whilst identifying all the areas where children were buried. Although she could not recall who was buried where, she did not want these children’s histories and lives forgotten. While her relation to them was not that of blood, their history is now my family's blood history. To this day, we still do not know their names, but we will always remember them."

- Anangookwe Wolf
“Our Creation story begins here.
A circle formed from the clay. A womb.
A ring forever tying us to the land.
A gathering place. PUVUNGNA.

What they are doing now is mindless.
Coming onto our lands, capturing our water, at Rancho Los Alamitos was mindless.
Building a university, a place of education, and not acknowledging our history of thousands upon thousands of years is mindless.
They are without minds.
Only beings without minds can be capable of such desecration.

Open land is bait for development.
They want to devour the flesh of our mother.
They are like coyote - Like Eyacque.
Eyoton. Thief. Ano.

Imagine if time were to freeze-
-imagine if Eno did not steal from Quiot.
Where would we be?

As people of the earth still -
White clay in our mouths in prayer.

When we became like humans we learned to build.
Thatched homes of willow and tulle, in the style of children: of ripe womb, round and with openings at the top to connect us to the stars -
To the creator.
And to Chinigchchinich.

In his last months, Moyla Xwayyaant Mukat, Quiot requested to betaken to healing waters which run beneath the lands and connect them like arteries.
He did not speak often. His voice was scarce and husky. He was thinking hard about the groups of races of beings needed for the people to survive.

He was enchanted by red legged frog woman. - WAHAHUT -
He was enchanted
He watched her as she sat along the lakes edge. She refused to swim.
Her long hair covered her back but as she stood up, his lust waned. She heard his thoughts and vowed to poison him. And so she did. And Ouiot fell ill, preparing to die.

Ouiot was frail and died in the month of Tawnuyil Mukat - big white month - July. His people were soon summoned and they gathered at Puvungna. So many came to the gathering that the land could not contain them.

His funeral bundle was prepared in the most careful of ways. Elderberry water washed his sparse belongings. A pole was erected high into the sky, like a swing tethered to the other worlds.

Patterns of the worlds above and the worlds below were made in the sand in the world we know.

White clay was used: covering the grounds like sacred snow. White clay was placed in the hair of all who attended. The sun made halos on the heads of all beings. The land shone.

Smoke rose from the fire like a dragon. Eno came. He leaped. He bit. But he could not reach his father's hearts to steal. The flames were too much and the people came with sticks to protect their father as he interred.

Eno leapt away, his fur was scorched and covered in ash. To this day his fur is singed from Ouiot's funerary pyre.

Today the land is overgrown with eucalyptus, scrub oaks, and invasive weeds. Non-native plants and dried, cut grass almost makes us forget how beautiful we must have been. How fertile and healthy we once were...how lovely we are. The shells poke through the tired dirt, remnants and reminders that it was sacred ground. That it is sacred ground. As it always will be.

The legend of the land is often unknown: even by its own people.
It's scattered and fragmented like Shell Midden -
- like our oral history -
Like our language
Like our tribe
Like our grasps on sovereignty -

We remain.
We are wild like the land.
We will always be the earth underfoot.
No matter what weight is placed on our backs -
- no matter what they try to build to stifle us-
- we will shake it off like water -
Like our mother does when she quakes -
We are ‘People of the earth,' Tongva.
The earth always returns to itself; its original state.

The red ties ornament the trees letting visitors know these are not just trees.
Red ochre is hard to find these days.
Cotton is not traditional -
But neither are eucalyptus -
We have to reclaim what we can after losing so much.

The trees are like us: our roots latched to the earth mother
- TAMAAYAWUT -
to survive.
We are misfits.
Our DNA from across the seas, nourished by a mother who does not judge our foreign bark and tree sap.
We are merely children grasping to hold onto whatever life we know. The land will not let us perish. It is not that cruel.
Tamaayawut will not let us die.
We, as mix-blood children, products of love, products of rape, seeds from the Spanish stock and foreigners - are still here today, surviving despite our biodiversity being varied - mixed - half blood - mulato - mestizo - indian - Outside our control.

Sling our hearts over and over across this land you mow over.

Tread our bones and carelessly crush them so carefully buried - So carelessly crushed - like Shell Midden.

The things we treasure are not hard, long lasting.
They do not burden us like gold or other material wealth.
Instead they soften, absorb, turn to dust so we may breathe them in,
So they may plant themselves in our lungs to our blood, to our hearts.

Our families are not ghosts. They’re still on this land just in different form. Intangible: We will slip from your hands.

The ancient ones watch and discuss in soft buzzing and gentle breezes. Our language drifts in and out of the branches like soft wings.

And when they are angry the air becomes dizzy and the grounds open and shake.

The vibrations of the land then become bitter on the tongue, but tasty in that way in which memories are triggered.

When it gets dark and the sun’s soft glow disappears from the soft earth, a presence settles on the land. What a place to behold before the light pollution stole its still demeanor and unmoving nuance.

The starlight would coat the lands in the most careful hues...
The moonlight would illuminate mother’s curves and crevices
And the darkness would swallow us all back to another time -
- but this same place.

Seeds would ride the warm winds and settle, heavy acorns would fall, be nourished by their mothers and take root at their feet.

Our mind and bodies so injured over so short a time could heal. Imagine what that could feel like?
Imagine who we could return to be?

I try to catch these thoughts, these small tufts of memories, floating in the think air over Puvungna, like seeds from our ancestors’ prayers.

The land is ripe. We just need to remember...
The land is here. We just need to remember...
That the now is the past.
The present is the ever was.
Prayers for Puvungna."

- Weshoyot Alvitre
Wapahkesis
Nihithaw and Black (Woodland Cree)
Lac La Ronge Indian Band (First Nation in Treaty 6)
Honouring Black Lives; 2019
size 10 beads, felt, leather

"Tânsi kîthawāw Keisha nitisîthihkāson. Kaskitiwithiniw ikwa nihithaw nîtha ōma. Toronto ohci nîtha māka niwahkomakanak mistahi sakahikanihk, amachewīspimowimihk ikwa namipith sipihk ohci withawaw."
Hey Everyone! My name is Keisha. I just introduced myself in my indigenous language, Nihithawiwin woodland Cree TH Dialect. What I said is, “My name is Keisha. I am Black and I am Cree. I am from Tkaronto (Toronto). My Ancestors are from Lac La Ronge, Stanley Mission and Sucker River Reserve in North Central Saskatchewan.

I am going to be telling you a bit about my art piece which I call Honoring Black Lives. It is a Black Lives Matter Medallion made of size 10 beads on felt and backed with black leather. The lanyard has been substituted for chains.

While I was making this piece, I wanted it to be very impactful. When I was beading, I was putting my thoughts and good medicine into my beadwork. I was also thinking about all the lives that were lost during the trans-atlantic slave trade, which is also genocide. Being from two different oppressed groups that continue to go through genocide is really hard-so I was putting those thoughts into [the work] wanting to honor those lives, honoring my ancestors---some of whom didn’t survive being forcefully stolen and taken across the ocean.

With this piece, I wanted to emphasize solidarity between Black Folks, African Diasporic Folks, and Indigenous people to Turtle Island. I really wanted a message to speak to them. Colonization pits marginalized groups, people with trauma, against each other as a way to divide and conquer. This Medallion critiques that, showing that our pain does not need to be compared; there is space for all of our pain to be validated. Black and Indigenous liberation on this land is deeply connected. Today, Black and Indigenous people are mutually disproportionately incarcerated, our children make up a high percentage of those in the Child Welfare System, and we are mutually systematically impoverished. Today we share common marginalizations resulting from different aspects of colonialism.

In Tkaronto, I have seen the possibility of space being transformed. Rather than living in separate bubbles, we have created community and reciprocal relationships through solidarity at Black Lives Matter Toronto Tent City, in which Black and Indigenous folks gathered to protest the officer who shot Andre Louko in 2015 after not being charged. Black Lives Matter Toronto showed up in Solidarity with Occupy INAC an occupation of the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada building in Toronto because of the ongoing crisis of high suicide rates in indigenous communities. This came after the suicide epidemic crisis in Attawapiskat was announced.

I want to pose a question to folks who are Black, African Diasporic, folks who are indigenous to Turtle Island and those who intersect;

How can we (and can we) make space for each other, and each other’s pain? How do we show up for each other without re-inflicting trauma? And finally...what is our shared vision of the future where we are healthy, joyful, and prosperous?
A piece retelling how water was brought to my tribe, inspired by the story Upriver Coyote by A.L. Kroeber as told in Yurok Myths

"He is the one who did it, thinking we would go downhill to this river, to its bed. Then he thought, 'Well, it will not be alright if there's no water when they live and go about here... It will seem right if there was water.' Thereupon he said, 'Well, I will go for that.'

So he went. He went everywhere. But he found no water.

He thought, 'What will they do, those human beings? Because they will be well off only if they have water.' Then he circled its edge, the Ocean, it's the edge he traveled around. He arrived far upstream, not finding water. Back in the hills he traveled, and downstream; but he found none. He came far downstream and kept looking about there. He needed to find water before human beings arrived in the world.

'I want to find water.'

So he went everywhere, he thought, 'Well, to above I will go; up above let me look for water.'

Then he arrived in the sky, and kept going about, and went around everywhere there in the sky, but he did not find it there.

So he thought... 'Well, upriver I will go, traveling in the sky and upriver and coming down there.' Standing at the upriver end, by ladder he descended. He then came there where this river water now is.

That is where he saw a Woman at Pets Uk where it issues from, this water...

That is where she lived alone, this woman. He said to her, 'There is no water where the river bed stretches; it goes for nothing where it is furrowed.' She said, 'Is that so? There will be water. I will make it so that there shall be water.'
He said, 'Good, I will go wherever the water issues from.'

And he went.

And she said, 'From out of my body it will issue, that is how I will make water to be: From my body it will issue.'

Then it began to issue and made a lake.

She said, 'I will make water to be.'

Then, she stirred it up, and said, 'It is going to be all around everywhere on this earth. Everywhere it is going to issue, everywhere they will have water that issues into them.'

The water, she made it to issue out from her. She is the one who made it issue from her own body, the water, this river now.

Now, that is how it is.

- Coyote Park
“Amongst the Piñon Pines and dry grasses of Northwestern Arizona lay the colonial borders of the Navajo and Hopi Nation. Within these lands herds of wooly sheep flock the nearest bottleneck of high desert fauna, finding retreat under juniper scrubs and old sandstone crags; shade pulling to and fro as the sun touches horizon to horizon. Off in the distance, the brilliant farmer stands humbly over purple and crimson kernels, vines reach to the nearest water, pulling her moisture from the desert floor to her noble roots.

A stuffy room runs stale as bureaucrats and landowners oversee a large map pinned to an eggshell board. It’s 1882, Chester A. Arthur, signs off on the first slight in the 100 plus year land wars between the Navajo and Hopi, a think tank created to herd the Indians into the corral.

Almost a hundred years later the land disputes between the tribes allow for further laws to be passed in the feud, this time the Hopis see the raw end of the deal as their lands shrink and in 1974 a “joint use” area is created between the two tribes. This resulted in thousands of families being on the wrong side of the new boundaries, the land is cut into bizarre squares, Hopi here, Navajo here, Hopi Here, Navajo There.

Hostilities increase, property crimes increase, animals become a prime target of theft or damage, generations old grudges resurface. And the state comes in to Christianize both sides, offering pride in the state for trades of resources, an inch here, a farm here, a sacred site here. The result is the perfect farce between two relatively peaceful peoples, not too long ago who traded from mesa to valley, sharing bounty and love and combining culture. The Gods know we can do better, but St. Guadalupe has a fine grip on even the brownest kin. Love to us all as we find comfort in laughter and sunburnt cheeks rosied by the same sun that intersects these two strange lands.”

- Dakota Yazzie
“In the field there is a Maiden. Whether in the golden light of dawn or orange glow of twilight, she is ever present and lovely. She is not any maiden but a Corn Maiden, a symbol of abundance, life, nourishment, and fortitude. She sits and waits in the field growing ever more bountiful and radiant as the summer sun shines and the rains nourish her.

She is in the fields of every Hopi farmer since his life revolves around corn and the importance it brings: the continuation of life, culture, ceremony, wealth, and happiness. She appears naked, a fact some find rude and in poor taste, but she is simply as she was meant to be. The only things she has on are necklaces made from kernels that signify the types of corn growing in the field and turquoise earrings. She bares no markings of belonging to any group, clan, tribe or people, as clothes would tend to do, and she simply is as she was born.

She sits anxiously for the rising black clouds that are sure to nourish her, heavy with rain. She patiently waits in the wind and heat but she endures, growing stronger and resilient. She listens to the songs of men, birds, and bugs until she can be with the people. At the harvest she finally goes among them and provides them with the thing they’ve worked so hard for: corn.

She is beauty, resilience, and patience that Maiden in the field; a reminder of hard work and a teacher of how to live a good life.

This piece is not based on any specific traditional story but various viewpoints, teachings, and traditional concepts from within my own indigenous community. It is meant to be a reflection on corn and is a small representation of what corn means for my tribe with its many uses and importance.”

- Theo Beatty
My piece Angelitos was originally commissioned by Mujerista Market. When I was first thrown the idea of brown angels I was so excited to create exactly that. I took creative control to bring these two sitting babies to my world in the clouds.

Taking inspiration from Emile Munier's *Putto's Kiss*, I painted these two cherubs embracing, one kissing the others’ cheek gently. I wanted to capture innocence, lovingness, gentleness, all things indigenous children are not awarded the portrayal of.

Growing up I rarely ever saw representation in art, something that stuck with me as a child. Artistry seemed unattainable because the talent of Women of Color was never celebrated, specifically indigenous women artists. This seemed a predominately white and male space, from the subjects to the artists themselves. I took to loving cherubs for their serenity, examining paintings of white, winged babies since I was a child.

When painting these two brown angels, it felt healing. I painted something for other brown people to see their inner child. I wanted to make sure they [the angels] exuded nothing but comfort, relaxation, serenity, and love.

- Lili Navarro
"Waiting for my Birdman of Alcatraz dream:

I was a park ranger on Alcatraz Island for three years. Some of the other park rangers told me how they would spend the night sleeping in a famous criminal inmate’s prison cell. They claimed to have had wild dreams about the inmate.

So, one cold November night I had to spend the night alone on the island waiting for a barge with supplies. It was overtime and I needed the money, so I decided to find the cell of the infamous former inmate: the Birdman of Alcatraz. I found the cell belonging to the Birdman, Robert Stroud, and slept on the cold floor.

I slept and waited for the Birdman dreams to begin. Nothing happened, no crazy dreams.

In the painting, I can see myself sleeping on the cold floor waiting for the Birdman in my nondream."

- Fermin Salas
“Ever since I was a child I felt “special” spiritually,
Like an old soul or something bigger.

Endless adversities would paint the way for aimless navigation throughout most of my teens and 20’s.
I shared space with abandonment, insecurity and isolation.
Being the black sheep in a black sheep type family.
Constantly becoming the scapegoat.
I was an easy target.
I didn’t “belong” anywhere.

I was too Black to be Native or Mexican
And too Native or Mexican to be Black.
Living with white people who only wanted to see me as Native.
No matter where I lived I didn’t fit in.

I tried to make myself fit in.
I’d find myself in the wrong puzzle, and never could fit.
I found myself being a mixture of everywhere I lived,
I became so confused.
Never knowing what to claim for my home.

I lived on the reservation, but went to school and had friends in the town next to it.
Constantly switching between both areas for years and still not feeling like I could claim either for my home.
I lost myself in confusion and drugs.

For all the time I was lost, I STILL was always searching for a pathway out.
I found one.
In my 30’s the path became clearer;  
Like the debris had been swept away from the roads to my destinations.  
I was too much of a control freak to surrender to drugs forever.  
Not being able to have control over my life and the people that used around me was enough to make me want to quit.

I became a mother, and now my path is set to guide my young one through this forest called life.  
My goals have now been set to advocate for them in a way that wasn’t available for me.  
Now I have been able to find an outlet for the talent and nurturing I have inside me.  
Performance and production give me the satisfaction of being able to give back to my community.

When I perform, I feel that spirituality at its peak.  
Moving to music and connecting with people is home to me.  
I feel like the goddess I was born to be when I perform.  
I feel my ancestors as I raise my child.

Being in my 40’s now, I feel a symbiosis between all worlds and it feels peaceful.”

- Destiny Smokez
“Family, friends and the environment have always been the source of inspiration for my work.

This was a painting made for, and about, my mother Vicki Thomas. Even though my mother spent her childhood in Portland, the southwest is where she spent most of her life. It is where I was raised, and spent my most formative years.

Since I was young, my mom was always moving around. In her constant movement I saw her trying to find ways to be free, happy and native; all while trying to teach me the values and lessons passed down from her and my grandmother. They are both very strong women who come from strong matriarchal structures.

In this painting I chose to respect that power, movement and strength by using iconography drawn from both Chickasaw culture, and her independent way of being. The turtle, or tortoise, holds great meaning to me. It represents Turtle Island, and pays homage to the story of the Tortoise and the Hare; she was constantly on the move, but always landed on her feet by taking her time getting to where she wanted to be. Slow and steady wins the race. Chickasaw dancers also use turtle shells in their regalia, and I wanted to symbolize the respect and space she made for our culture by including other special objects—things that if you know, you know. These nearly indistinctive, but culturally recognizable, objects signify the invincibility and intimacy of the stories and lessons she taught me.

While I don’t believe in the homogeneity of the indigenous experience, there are some things that simply transcend culture; the most important being the broken down rez truck. My mom was always buying beaters and trying to fix them up; one of the things that comes with the territory of being in poverty. She wears it proudly, though; her long hair blows in the wind, while she’s surrounded by all the things she loves. In making the work, I got the chance to think about what she loved; what had meaning to her? What would she take with her on her journey? She moves through her landscape, with her power, beauty, humor and identity all sacred, all untouchable.”

- Phillip Thomas
WILL I REMEMBER

EVERYTHING YOU SAID
DID YOU LIKE THE RUG? I NEVER ASKED

I'M ALREADY LOSING STRANDS

YOU REMEMBERED ME & CRIED

My name is Julie Fiveash, I am Kinyaa’áanii born for Naakai Dine’é. My maternal grandfather’s clan is Táchii’nii and my paternal grandfather’s clan is Bilagaana. My pronouns are they/them/theirs and I identify as non-binary.

My piece is centered on my grandmother, June Benally, who I lost last year in the middle of the world falling apart. I didn’t get to see her very much before she died due to the pandemic, and that eats away at me every day. Her life was interwoven into mine so that when she left, it felt like I was picking at every strand that I could still hold onto. The strands here are bright and looping, thick and wide, changing color as life and events happen but staying open to new possibilities. I’ve been drawing big loops lately and I like that I don’t know exactly where they’re going, but I let my hand find a path.

Regarding some of the text in this piece, I had gifted my grandma a rug I had wove, the first and only Navajo rug I’ve made. It was small, and it didn’t have that many colors but it took me three days to finish and I love it. It was an experience every day making that rug. I gifted the final result to my grandma, but I don’t remember what she said about it. The longer it gets without her around, I worry about the things I’ll forget. I want to weave in the things she told me, the funny things she worried about.

I’ve included some pictures I have of her. Seeing her young, smiling, excited, I see the person she was and will continue to be even after her death. I didn’t know this version of her, I wish I had. This version lives in pictures and stories now, and I just have to do my best in hoping I hold onto them. The loops have started to cover her image, time is passing and she fades just a little bit with it. But I’d like her to stay just a little bit longer, so I remember things. I go to bed thinking about how she was always the first one up and asking me where we kept the creamer. I try to remember all of her stories as best I can before they’re covered up forever.”

- Julie Fiveash
Artists

**Anangookwe** is an interdisciplinary artist who interweaves narratives of familial history in relation to cultural inheritance and present-day afflictions. By utilizing traditional and contemporary forms of craft, connecting the past and present, their main focus is to create a visual story of the interpersonal lives of those they’ve known and have never met for the future generation.

**Weshoyot Alvitre** is a female author and illustrator from the Tongva tribe of Southern California. She currently resides with her husband and two children on Ventureno Chumash Territory in Ventura, California. Her work focuses on an Indigenous lens and voice on projects from children’s books to adult market graphic novels. She has recently been published as artist in “GHOSTRIVER: The Fall and Rise of the Conestoga” graphic novel from Red Planet Books, ABQ, in collaboration with the Library Company of Philadelphia; “At The Mountains Base” written by Traci Sorell, Kokila; and was Art Director on the video game “When Rivers Were Trails.” She enjoys spinning yarn and collecting antiques.

Keisha Erwin (Wapahkesis) is an urban Afro-Indigenous emerging artist. They are Nihithaw and Afro-Caribbean. They are a band member of Lac La Ronge First Nation in north-central Saskatchewan, Treaty 6 territory but did not grow up in their community. The majority of their artwork is informed by their positionality and ancestry. Their work explores themes of displacement, solidarity, identity and intersectionality.
**Coyote Park** (he/they) is a 2Spirit, mixed race (Korean, White, Native American) artist from Honolulu, Hawai‘i that currently lives in Tongva Territory/Los Angeles. They are a photographer and storyteller who is Indigenous to California. Park focuses their work on their trans family, as they want to make images of people that they love and have shared lived experiences with. Park’s work celebrates the every day by documenting their home space and environments in building queer utopia. Park merges their written work with their passion for image making and has been working on a photo book entitled “All Kin is Blood Kin” surrounding themes of family, rebirth, bodies, sexuality, and love. Park’s practice is community and collaboration oriented, as they make photographs with their romantic partners and friendships. They are continuing to make photos in New York, California, and Hawai‘i with other QTPOC and of queer/trans couples, evolving their work through time and new experiences.

With a hand in music to multi-media arts, **Dakota Yazzie** is an Arizona artist and musician from the Diné tribe. He is originally from Tuba City, AZ, on the Navajo reservation, where a majority of his inspiration and commentary comes from. A place where you feel brown eyes checking on your every move and where the mutts roam in sometimes cute and hostile packs.

He currently resides in Dewey, AZ, where white supremacists walk proudly and freely in the domicile of their hicktown fineries. His work divulges the intricacies of indigenous identity and the political nature of being a dang Indian. His mother and father often roll their eyes as yet again his pension for 21st century hedonism outrule his spiritual return to Hozhojí (sorry Shima).

Dakota’s works are meant to be at times absurd, bringing to light the humorous nature of colonialism and the ***kery that goes along with it. At other times they are heartbreaking. A delineation of worlds falling in and out of one another, a return to the primordial*

In 2020, Dakota received a record label deal with UPC for his work with the band ‘Earth Surface People.’ The band are going to record their debut album in August 2021, his past works with Earth Surface People include the ‘Juniper EP,’ which is available on all streaming platforms. He is also showing art at the Pathways Festival in Santa Fe, NM, in August of 2021.

* = not the Jackson Pollock type of primordial
Theodore Beatty grew up on the Hopi Reservation in the town of Polacca, Arizona; he is Hopi, Tewa, and White Mountain Apache and is Deer and Flute clan. Theo spent most of his life on the reservation where he was raised to appreciate, respect, and participate in traditional Hopi beliefs. When he was a boy he became interested in art by drawing katsina or kachina figures (personifications of nature spirits that visit the Hopi people) that he would see and would also gain an interest in making Hopi pottery. Theo would leave the reservation after high school in his pursuit of higher education. He had some difficulties bouncing from university to university and major to major until coming to his senses of what he should do, make art. He received his Associate of Art from Paradise Valley Community College in 2015 and then attended Arizona State University where he would receive his Bachelors of Fine Art in Drawing in 2018. Theo’s primary focus was on figural works in both painting and drawing. Using his knowledge of anatomy and elements of Hopi design he was influenced to create his current works of art. He takes inspiration from Hopi pottery designs, katsinam or kachinas, figural work, and blended them into his drawings and paintings. Sticking to a primarily earth toned palette, to keep with colors found in Hopi pottery, Theo designs figures and elements taken from Hopi culture to tell stories and share some of his own personal views of the people and his beliefs. He currently resides between his home town of Polacca and Phoenix, Arizona.

Lili Navarro specializes in acrylic portraiture, depicting femme in all ways it is exhibited by those around her. Lili’s work is about representation. Her paintings depict brown people in celebratory ways; bathed in gold rays like the Virgin of Guadalupe, or surrounded by roses. Her subjects are beautiful, powerful and present.
Born November 30th, 1957, Fermin Salas spent much of his early life in Arizona and Stockton, California. Salas attended the University of New Mexico followed by Cal State Sacramento after which he became one of the first Native American park rangers at Yosemite National Park. Salas has a degree in Art with a focus in Printmaking and minor is History and was a traditional Native American Powwow dancer for many years. Featured in The Herd Museum, Crocker Art Museum, and galleries across the Southwest, Salas’ work explores the fallacy of mysticism, Native American tropes, and the impact of Spanish colonialism on indigenous experience using dark humor, bold imagery, and contemporary abstraction.

Destiny Smokez is a drag performer/show producer. She co-produces Melange: A Queer and BIPOC Variety Show, and Crown Me. She is also part of Portland's BallRoom KIKI Scene where she is the Prince of the House Of Flora. Destiny uses her art as an outlet from her past to her future.

Phillip Thomas is a Chickasaw artist. Thomas’s work is multidimensional, mixed media paintings. He currently resides in Portland, Oregon where he spends his time working. When he was a youth most of his life was spent moving back and forth, from the east to west coast. Through this he has been exposed to a range of American culture which has had a huge impact on his train of thought and how he approaches the content of his work. Thomas received his BFA in 2015 where he worked on refining his overall technique and content.
Julie Fiveash is Kinyaa’áanii born for Naakai Dine’é. Their maternal grandfather’s clan is Táchii’nii and their paternal grandfather’s clan is Bilagaana. Julie’s pronouns are they/them/their and they identify as non-binary. They are from Yuma, Arizona and currently reside in Los Angeles. They received their B.A. in Studio Art from Dartmouth College. Their experience in college creating zines and publishing comics in the college newspaper encouraged them to keep making comics and they moved to San Francisco shortly after graduating. There, they managed a comic book store while traveling to sell their work at zinefests and comic festivals. Their work has been featured in two Dirty Diamond comic collections and has been a featured artist on the “Baylies.” They’ve moderated panels at the Queer Comics Conference in 2019 and was recently featured in “Parsley, Sage, Rosemary, & Quarantine: Recipe Comics for Social Distancing.” They are currently wrapping up their MLIS degree at UCLA’s Department of Information Studies and continues to make art and comics.
Untouchable

Artifacts

A Virtual and Printed Exhibition on Indigenous Story-telling, History, and Resilience