

HERE AND NOW:

CONTEMPORARY
INDIGENOUS ART




Jamilah, Javier, Emma, & Pumehana

Exhibition Description:

Contemporary Indigineous art actively challenges traditional Western museum spaces with their very being in the museum space.

Contemporary Native art acts as a means to defy postcolonial spaces, ideology and practices. The exhibit will not be a standard room with paintings or artifacts encased in glass. Only non-conventional mediums, like film, fashion, pottery, and other mixed media sculpture, will be used. Each artist's background and style will be emphasized in order to dispute the stereotype of a homogenous Native art culture. Pay close attention to how concepts of past, present, and the future intertwine with the works. What is your perception of Indigineous art now? Come back to this question once you've experienced the exhibit.

Rangel
(2012)



Chelsea Herr,
"Resistance is
Futile" /
Manuela
Well-Off-Man

Theme(s)

- Redefining, reinventing, and reappropriating traditional 'Western' museum exhibits and the practices associated with these as a means to decolonialize these spaces, and offer an alternative to the way art, history and culture has been preserved.
- **Act of survivance involves the process of re-appropriating the Western standard; the practices museums employ towards the preservation of art, history and culture.**

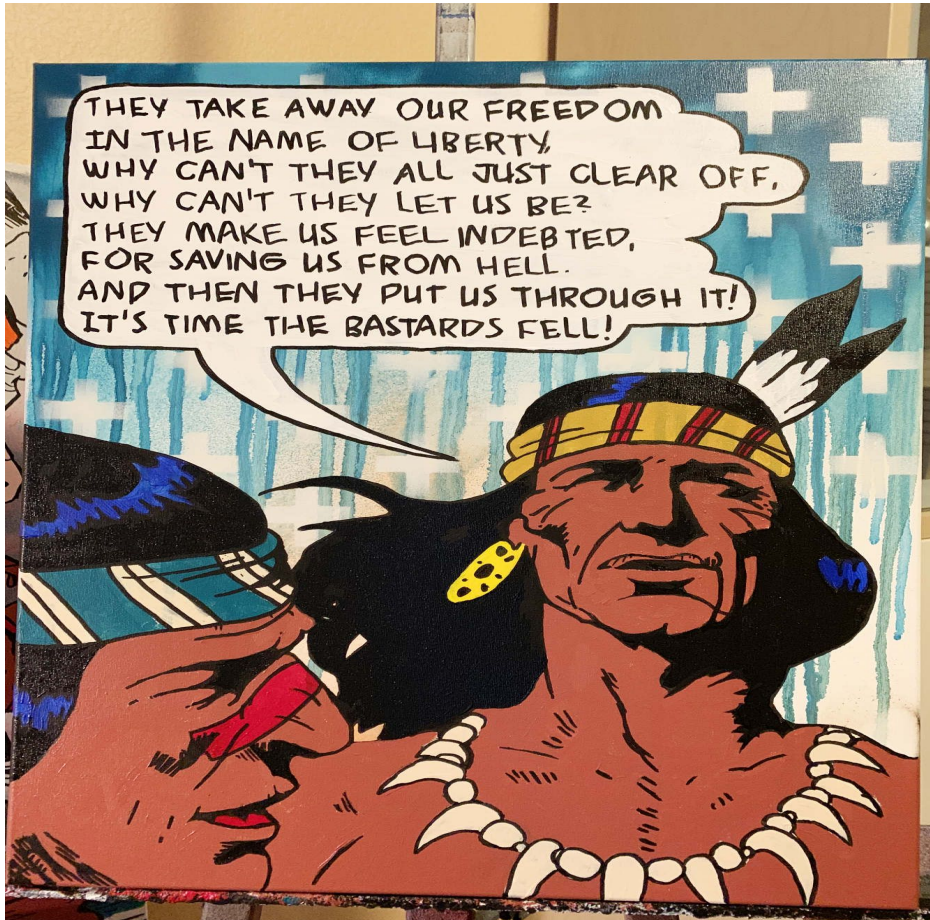
Content: The Artists





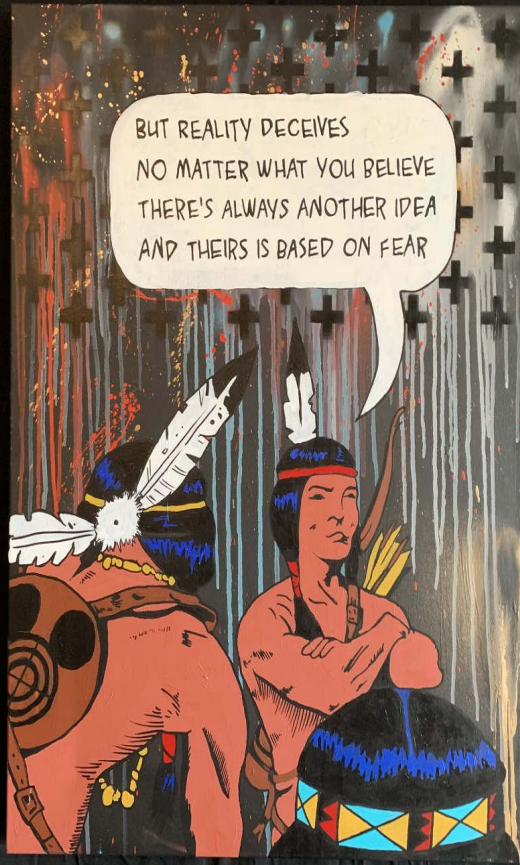
Thanks Process (DOA)

This piece uses lyrics from the song "Thanks Process" by D.O.A. (1971) to comment on gentrification and the colonization of Indigenous people. NOTICE: Instead of the Redcoat being the winner in this scenario, Deal places a caricature of a Native person as the victor, warping the ideology surrounding Indigenous individuals. This piece places the colonizer wearing a red coat, a term used for British soldiers, possibly making a critique on how while America is "free," Americans were never able to fully separate themselves from their deemed oppressors and therefore became oppressors themselves. With the theme of oppression, placing the Indigenous person as the victor changes the stereotype of being a person of the past and instead a person who is continuously taking action now.



Suspect Device (Stiff Little Fingers)

This piece uses lyrics from “Suspect Device” by Stiff Little Fingers (1979) to comment on the continued injustice being done to the Indigenous community. NOTICE: The crosses in the background could symbolize the church and how that was a tool for colonization in “modernizing” the “Savage Indian.” This idea translates through the lyrics in making Indigenous people feel indebted to their colonizers, to the point where figures like Christopher Columbus are held on a pedestal without the necessary repercussions of their actions. This piece further showcases the generational trauma that has been carried within the Indigenous community and again places the Native figure in an active role against colonizing their history.



Mickey Mouse Is Dead (Subhumans)

This piece uses lyrics from “Mickey Mouse Is Dead” by Subhumans (1981) to comment on the stereotype placed on Indigenous people in them being “Savage” and needing to be fixed or converted to be “better.” NOTICE: The crosses in the background could symbolize the church in missionary work where Indigenous people were told their traditions were wrong and their beliefs needed to change. Like the lyrics display, history has been written by oppressors and Deal brings this sense of duality within this piece in that history is not so straight forward and must be analyzed. It brings the stereotype of the “Indian” into play and references how that stereotype aided in colonization back then and even now. This piece references colonization as a thing of the present that is not apparent at first but noticeable once one pays attention.



“The Last American Indian on Earth” 2016

This performance piece incorporates Gregg Deal wearing a stereotypical “Indian” outfit, showing footage and pictures of him walking around and interacting with “modern day society.” Multiple individuals took pictures with him and some stated things that were both stereotypical and dehumanizing. Deal talks about how the act of taking a picture with him as an “Indian” worked as a sense of commodification of Indigenous people and their culture. NOTICE: In one part of this piece, it features a woman who Deal names as “Pocahontas Paige” who at first seems offended but quickly romanticizes the Indigenous experience. She begins to ask questions that are stereotypical like what tribe he comes from and what his “tribal name” is.

Anna Tsouhlarakis

The following pieces are gathered from a variety of the artist's collections. Inherently performative and avant-garde, the following works represent the intersections of contemporary techniques such as minimalism with 'Indigenous art'. Inherently instrumental in initiating, leading and inspiring a movement that brings awareness of issues such as cultural ignorance and the tendency of Indigeneity art, culture, and history as being reduced to this category of the past; a thing that once was but is no longer, Tsouhlarakis pushes the boundary of what common museum spaces are and the methods they employ to "represent" and depict Indigenous culture and history through art.



Drawing II (Burn propaganda used for Native American relocation and assimilation, marks not evenly dispersed)

These fire and ash markings on canvas make for a politically charged piece that is part of a series of varying patterns of fire and ash burning marks on canvas; a collection of drawings that “burn” the historical documents and treaties that led to the displacement and genocide of Native communities and cultures.

NOTICE: Location of the marks. What does their uneven, asymmetrical distribution and nature communicate?



1/Look Straight Ahead

Minimalist and abstract are words that can be used to describe this sculpture. Here, the artist's utilization of IKEA furniture remnants, found pieces of wood, resin, porcupine quills, plaster, and sinew highlight a personal connection with the idea and practice of "binding," which is deeply influenced by her Navajo background. This piece is also part of a collection of sculptures that employ similar styles and mediums.

NOTICE: The title of the piece is purposely vague, signifying a deep and personal connection between artist and the piece.



Edges of the Ephemeral

A transportable, site-specific sculpture made out of wood, metal, crushed granite, and fabricated signs that contain anti-capitalist and other philosophical/spiritual messages. Overall, a piece that comments on cultural erasure; the impermanence, “short-lived” nature of Indigenous culture and history

NOTICE: The change in the signs’ overall themes and messages. The contrast between the sign’s prescribed meaning in a normal setting and the sign’s message within the art piece is purposeful and meticulously crafted. In addition, the fact that this piece is site-specific (meaning it can be transported and arranged in a variety of settings, allows for the viewer to think about decontextualizing the space surrounding this piece, and therefore, become fully submerged into the piece.)



Virgil Ortiz, Pueblo Revolt: 1680-2180

This piece is a futuristic depiction of the Pueblo Revolt created to further engage younger generations in this pivotal moment in American history. The Pueblo Revolt has largely been ignored and left out in the United States high school educational system. Virgil Ortiz's work attempts to address the shortcoming of the U.S educational system while also telling the history of the Pueblo people. This sci fi aesthetic is a common theme in Virgil Ortiz's artwork.



FASHION

Virgil Ortiz, REZ SPINE CARRY-ALL TOTE, VO insignia fabric interior

Virgil Ortiz is always looking for new ways to redefine what indigenous art is. In this piece he is using traditional and modern techniques to form a new style of fashion.

NOTICE: The intricate designs of the dress which shows patterns that can be seen in other forms of traditional indigenous art work. Also observe the black on black designs of the hand bag.



Virgil Ortiz, Cochiti red clay, white and red clay slip, black pigment derived from wild spinach plants

This piece shows how Ortiz mixes sci-fi iconography with traditional native methods to create pieces that are relatable to all young audiences.

NOTICE: This piece appears to be a traditional clay vase, however, it is covered with designs and images that are untraditional. The image on the vase is a version of one of his graphic sci fi images of his character Tahu, leader of the Blind Archers. This Tahu is displayed earlier on within this exhibit.

Design

Texts/labels structural choices

- **Title of piece**
- **Description (medium)**

Including both the title and a general description of the mediums employed in each piece was an element of 'traditional' museum spaces we decided to keep. This, we felt, would preserve and honor the original intentions of the artist: preservation through the re-adaptation and re-appropriation of western museum and cultural preservation practices.

- **NOTICE:** A section where we encourage viewers to delve in deeper into the piece. Because museum labels tend to be vague, and leave off details on some of the elements and artistic choices found in the piece, in light of this practice of "fully submerging" and 'de-contextualizing' spaces surrounding the artwork, we as curators felt it useful to include this section to promote deeper interactions and relationships between audience and artwork.

Example label: Virgil Ortiz, Cochiti red clay, white and red clay slip, black pigment derived from wild spinach plants

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ANNA TSOUHLARAKIS

"SPACESHIP"

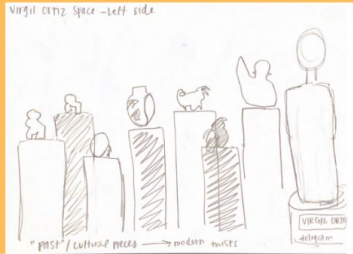
SPIRAL SCULPTURE



MANNEQUINS OF FASHION PIECES



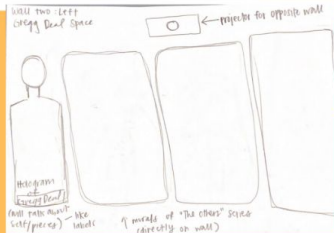
VIRGIL ORTIZ



DISPLAYS OF SELECTED POTTERY PIECES

"THE OTHERS" SERIES MURALS

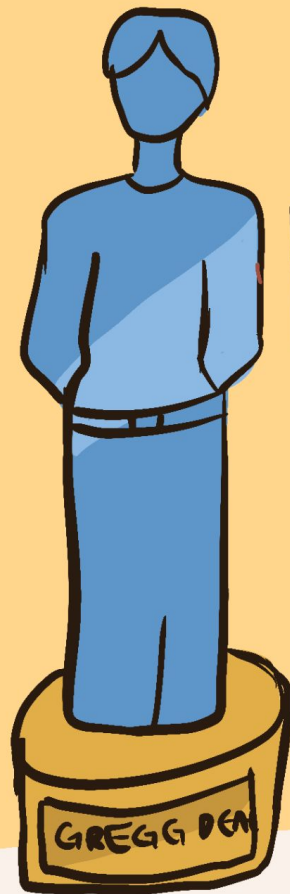
GREGG DEAL



PROJECTION OF "THE LAST INDIAN ON EARTH"

Entrance





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This exhibition will showcase contemporary Indigenous artworks that actively challenge traditional Western museum spaces and their representation of Indigenous art. It will effectively tackle this process by using contemporary Indigenous art as a process: a means to defy postcolonial spaces, ideology and practices. The exhibit will not be a room with paintings or artifacts encased in glass. Only non-conventional mediums like film, fashion, pottery, and other mixed media sculpture will be used. We wish to respect the artists and the messages of their work by decolonizing the museum space and separating the value of art that is typically placed through a Western setting.



ARTISTS



Gregg Deal was born to the Pyramid Lake Paiut Tribe in 1975. Much of his art relies on punk influence which is translated through his performance and comic pieces.

Virgil Ortiz is a Cochiti Pueblo artist that incorporates Indigenous Futurism twists into traditional pottery art as well as a wide variety of mediums from fashion, film, and glass.



Anna Tsouhlarakis is a Native artist who is of Navajo, Creek, and Greek descent. Her work has elements from the indigenous community in tandem with her work through social media.

CURATORIAL TEAM

EMMA BARTHOLOMAY

Emma Bartholomay is currently a first year student at Colorado College. She is undecided but interested in studying history. Emma is fascinated with art because of the way it can be used to enhance the telling of history. A fun fact about her is that she has a twin sister!

JAMILAH MARONDE

Jamilah Maronde is a second year Psychology major at Colorado College. The murals in her native Chicago have always fascinated her, as well as pottery as an art medium. A fun fact about her is that in her free time, she bikes around her neighborhood.

JAVIER CANTU

Javier Cantu is a third year student at Colorado College majoring in History and Southwest Studies. To Javier, art is uniquely human, and he deeply admires the ways in which art is used as a means to express something about the human condition (specifically through film, comedy, and music). A fun fact about him is that eating chocolate makes him sneeze.

PUMEHANA HOLMES

Pumehana Holmes is currently a first year student at Colorado College. She is undeclared but interested in majoring in Creative Writing and minoring in The Ancient World. Pumehana loves the way art can be used to tell a story. A fun fact about her is that she knows American Sign Language.



Collaborative Process!