





NATIONAL
MUSEUM
OF THE
AMERICAN
INDIAN

NATIVE ARTISTS IN THE AMERICAS

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN NATIVE ARTS PROGRAM: THE FIRST TEN YEARS



NATIVE ARTISTS IN THE AMERICAS

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Introduction by Keevin Lewis. Essays and artwork by the artists.

Edited by Jessica Welton.



Smithsonian
National Museum of the American Indian

National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C., Suitland, Maryland, and New York

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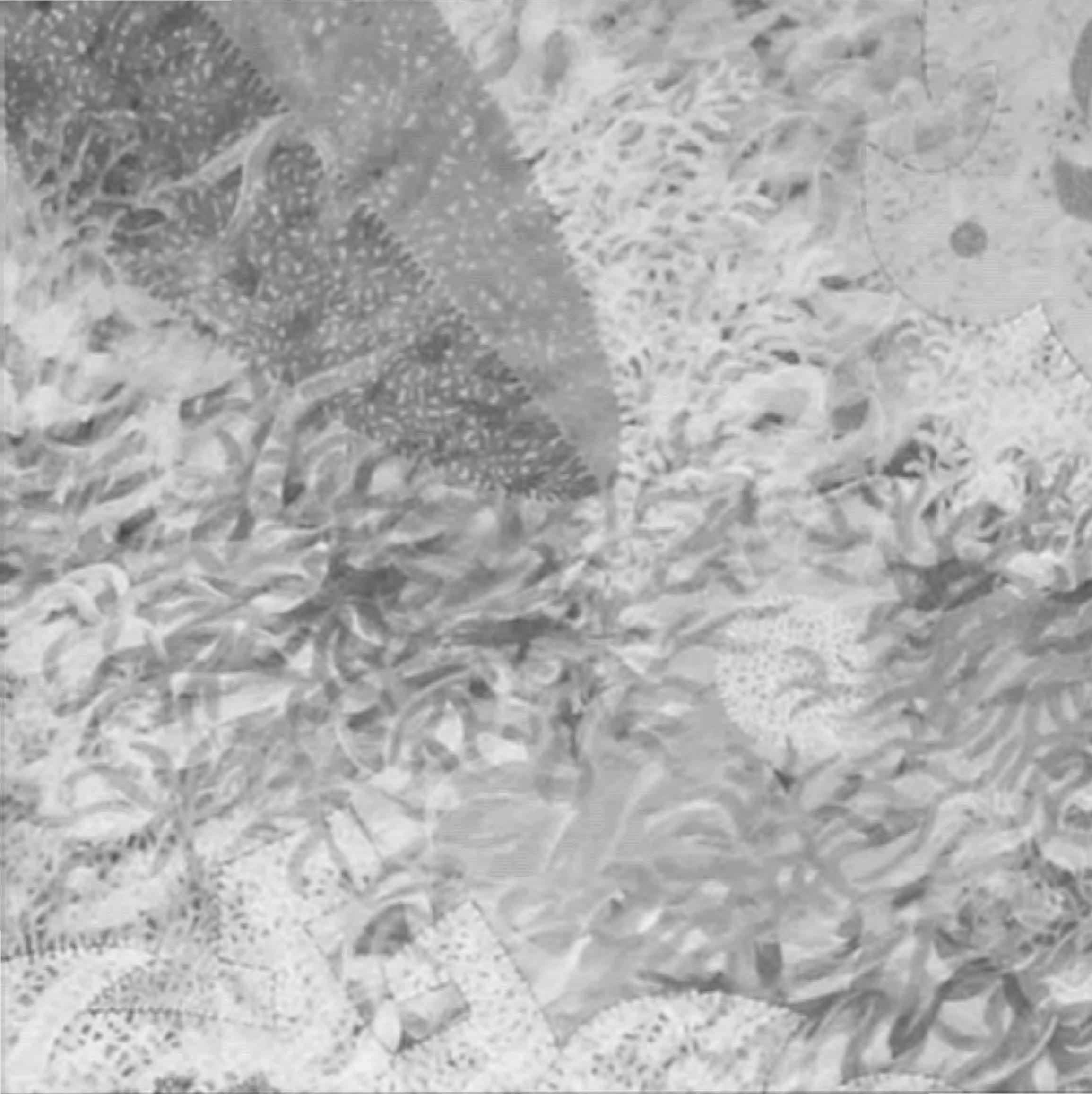
*The National
Museum of the
American Indian
is committed to
advancing
knowledge and
understanding of
the Native cultures
of the Western
Hemisphere—past,
present, and future—
through partnership
with Native
peoples and others.
The museum
works to support
the continuance
of culture,
traditional values,
and transitions
in contemporary
Native life.*



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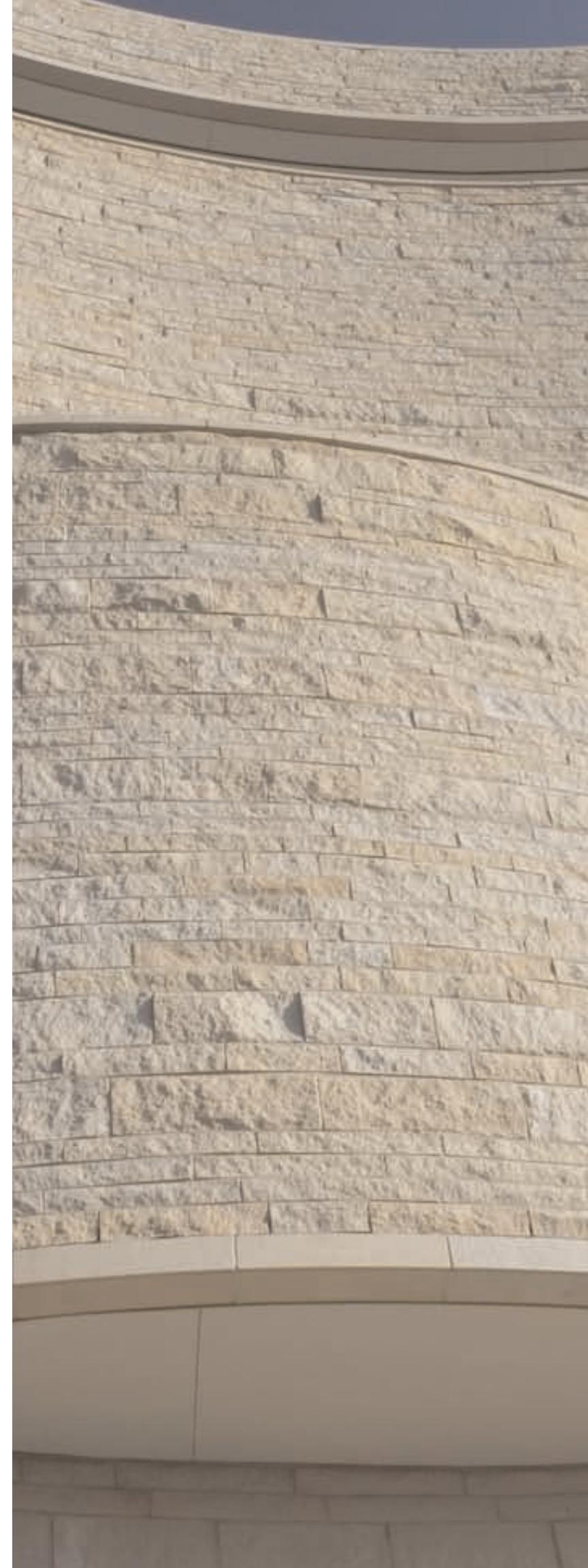
INTRODUCTION

KEEVIN LEWIS, NAVAJO

NMAI COMMUNITY AND CONSTITUENT SERVICES COORDINATOR

The Native Arts Program has grown into its current state through discussion, feedback, and experience over ten years.

Following my arrival at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in Washington, D.C., during the spring of 1995, I was tasked with defining, developing, and evaluating outreach programs that fit within the scope of what is now known as Community and Constituent Services. I used as resources the legislation of the National Museum of the American Indian Act, the NMAI Mission Statement, and “The Way of the People,” a document created to give direction to the museum in its early years, but quickly determined that listening to the needs of Native people would be critical to accomplish my job’s goals. The NMAI Native Arts Program (NAP) was born of these efforts, though it didn’t evolve overnight; it has grown into its current state







through discussions, feedback, and experience over ten years. I can say with confidence that the NAP will always continue to evolve and mold itself to the ever-changing needs of Native artists.

The Native Arts Program, which strives to be personally meaningful and culturally

appropriate, was developed to address two key factors: First, the NAP is an opportunity to learn in many different ways. Seeing cultural materials in museum collections, working with youth in the community, and collaborating on symposia all add to a growing base of Indigenous cultural knowledge, art, history, and language. And, in each project,

this knowledge is meant to be shared with a larger audience via gatherings, presentations, classroom instruction, the creation of new art, and high-tech outlets such as the Internet. The second factor I believe to be significant is that the NAP works to change stereotypical images and ideas about Native artists and art. As you will see in these profiles, the artistic styles and genres are as vast and diverse as the artists themselves.

Native Artists in the Americas/National Museum of the American Indian Native Arts Program: The First Ten Years, is a collection of NAP participant artwork partnered with personal thoughts, reflections, and reactions to the impact of the Native Arts Program on each of the artists' lives. As

of spring 2006, some 56 Native participants from seven countries throughout the Western Hemisphere have completed the program. This initial grouping of NAP participants is a first step toward the inclusion of all 56 participants from the first ten years.

Through my experiences with the Native Arts Program and its artists, I have learned a greater respect and admiration for the diversity and strength of each individual artist. Each group of participants brings a different set of interests, laughs, and experiences to the program. We are often told by each artist that after their NAP experience they are able to express and think about their work in new ways. From this, I see that art is a process—forever evolving into something different.

I can say with confidence that the NAP will always continue to evolve and mold itself to the ever-changing needs of Native artists.

THE HISTORY OF THE NATIVE ARTS PROGRAM

MOLLY McCACKEN
OUTREACH PROGRAM SPECIALIST

The Native Arts Program has provided opportunities to some 56 artists from as far away as Chile, Hawaii, and Alaska.

The Native Arts Program has been serving Native American artists and communities since 1996 as an outreach initiative developed through Community and Constituent Services at the National Museum of the American Indian. In its early stages, the program was called the Artist in Residence and was a collaborative effort between the National Museum of the American Indian and Atlatl, National Service Organization for Native American Arts, based in Phoenix, Arizona. Original ideas for developing NMAI art programs grew from a 1995 Native American Arts policy development meeting, and included giving Native artists access to museum collections in order to enhance their artwork, developing collaborative





opportunities between those artists and museums, and creating a community connection through a follow-up project.

As the program has grown and developed, several new opportunities have emerged that enhance the effectiveness of NMAI outreach endeavors, at the same time meeting the needs of Native artists of the Western Hemisphere and Hawai'i. In 2002, the Native Arts Program opened its doors for the first time to the NMAI's Latin American constituents by publishing the *Call for Proposals* in Spanish. The Native Arts Program has provided opportunities to some 56 artists from as far away as Chile, Hawai'i, and Alaska whose artistic media are as diverse as basketry, painting, song,

and poetry. The Native Arts Program underwent another phase of growth in 2003 by becoming more community-focused and engaging Native artists in conducting regional museum collection research, creating critical art dialogues for local symposia, and interacting with local Native youth groups in creating community murals. Community and Constituent Services also strives to document and make available these experiences through recordings and Web profiles.

Information on the Native Arts Program is available at www.AmericanIndian.si.edu or via email at NAP@si.edu





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GLORY TACHEENIE-CAMPOY

NAVAJO

ARIZONA, USA

PAINTER, MIXEDMEDIA AND TEXTILE ARTIST

VISITING ARTIST, 1996

*I drew my mother
and my father, our
hogans, our horses,
and our sheep;
I drew the Storm
Pattern rugs that
my mother and
aunt wove for the
trading post.*

I grew up in a traditional family of artists, medicine men, handtremblers, crystal gazers, herbalists, and healers. The land was our source of survival. We planted corn and crops, raised horses, sheep, and goats, and traded with the Hopis and other Pueblo tribes. This was a positive experience for us.

Our homes and shelters were built from local materials. Hogans, shade arbors, fences, corrals were all made by family and relatives helping each other.

My mother taught me how to weave when I was about seven years old. Art was very much a part of our daily lives. Although no one in my family had a degree in art, we survived by making and producing art.



I find that as an artist I am affected by the contemporary social conditions of people in my community and the world. This residency has benefited both my work and my people.



Glory Tacheenie-Campoy, *Three People on a Mesa*, 2003. Acrylic on canvas, 49 x 37.5 in.





BERNICE AKAMINE

HAWAI'IAN

HAWAII, USA

MIXEDMEDIA, GLASS, AND FIBER ARTIST, PHOTOGRAPER

VISITING ARTIST, 1999

What can I as a Native artist hope to give to those who follow after me, but eyes that see and respect for one's own and other cultures.

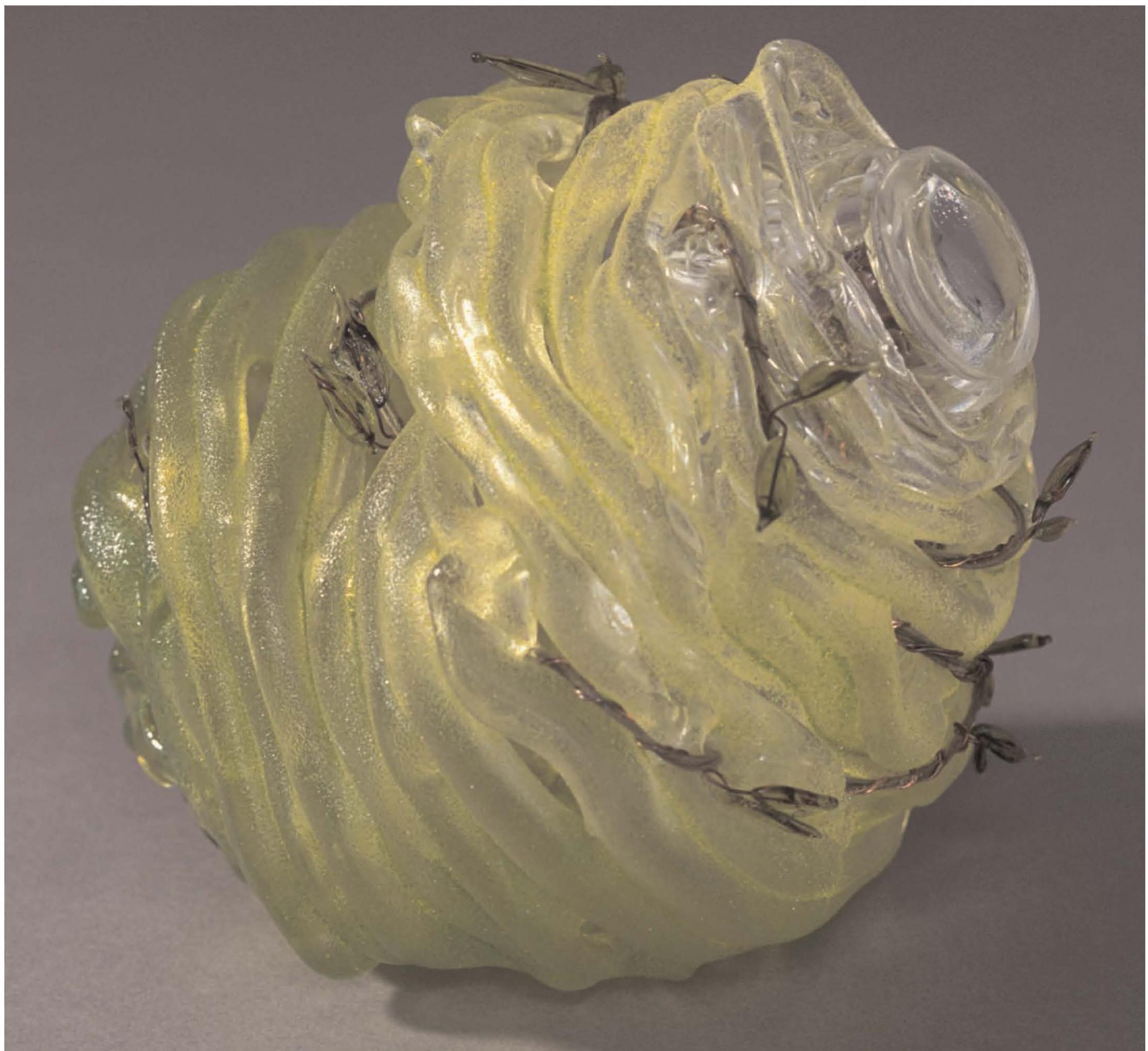
The Native Arts Program has done more than simply affect the process of art-making. Attending NAP has heightened my awareness as a *kanaka maoli* Native person, while challenging me to continue in the pursuit of knowledge, knowing that a great debt is owed to the ancestors.

Preservation of culture is paramount. Rather than regurgitating the past, it is important to produce contemporary artwork that rings true when focusing thematically on concepts, values, and *mo'olelo* (story or tradition) or that reflects the natural world of Hawai'i nei.

There are two very different bodies of artwork. One is a body of private emotions



and thoughts, while the second looks at traditional and contemporary Hawaiian themes. On occasion the two do merge with one another. Within both bodies of artwork it is my aim to extract the essence or core elements, and to present them in an abstract form, thereby eliciting a reaction or emotion within the viewer.



Bernice Akamine, *O Laka*, 2005. Glass, copper, and cloth covered wire, maile, lama, and palapalai.
14 x 15 x 14 mm.

LISA TELFORD

HAIDA
WASHINGTON, USA
FIBER AND CEDAR BARK ARTIST
VISITING ARTIST, 1999

*I will always be a
spokeswoman
for the Native Artist
Program.*

*It is an excellent
opportunity for an
artist's career.*

In the spring of 1998, I received an application for the Artist in Residence program from Atlatl. I read the application and felt it was meant for someone with more experience. Questions regarding "artistic growth and development"—I wasn't even sure what that was or how to begin to answer such questions. I didn't have ten slides, who would write my letters of recommendation? Those were just a few of the thoughts that were running through my head.

The waiting seemed like an eternity. On March 1st, 1999, I received a call from Keevin Lewis. My heart stopped as he said, "This is Keevin Lewis from the National Museum of the American Indian." Keevin told me that I had won. I burst into uncontrollable joyful



tears. I was floating on cloud nine the rest of the day. It felt like a dream.

I saw, studied, and touched objects I never dreamt I would ever experience. I was inspired by the perfection and techniques of artists in the past. I will duplicate the most beautiful cedar robe, the finest basket with false embroidery, and a headband no longer made today, among others. I will always cherish the wonderful friendships I developed through the Native Arts Program.



Lisa Telford, *Gladiator Dress*, 2005. Pounded red cedar bark and abalone shells.





JANET MARIE ROGERS

TUSCARORA–SIX NATIONS
BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA
MULTIMEDIA ARTIST
VISITING ARTIST, 2000

In hindsight, I feel my evolution as an artist may be described as a writer who wrote with a brush and/or a painter who paints with a pen.

Participating in the Native Arts Program has definitely changed the way I process Native art as a viewer. Spending time amongst the collections has put a permanent stamp on me, making me consider past creations, contemporary creations, and the future of Native art all at once. Given the history between Native communities and museums, my overall view of museums was not a good one. However, through conversations with museum staff and exhibit curators, I have come to understand that the objects residing inside the institutions are very much cared for and protected for future generations.



Silver, stone treasures
of many nations
living together on flat bed trays
behind gates
they wait
to be sorted
segregated
to be with their own
and end the confusion of confiscation
living in cramped quarters
with unfamiliar cousins
from far away places
representing things that have nothing to do with one another

I listened – they said

We like to light up eyes
be handled
adored
We crave human warmth
To be brought into the light
And visit with you
I watch as they wave
tearful goodbyes
pushed back into the dark
becoming one of a hundred shelves
lined up behind doors
where visual treats
rest
Safe and ready
To visit with you

EVELYN VANDERHOOP

HAIDA

BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

TEXTILE, WOOL, AND CEDAR BARK ARTIST, WATERCOLOR PAINTER

VISITING ARTIST, 2000

*The Beaver Apron
was inspired by my
being able to study
old aprons at the
museums that were
made available
through the Native
Arts Program.*

There are only about twelve Native people who know the Chilkat weaving technique and only four Native women who have enough knowledge and experience to weave a robe. In the fall of this year I will have finished my first Chilkat robe. I plan on weaving Chilkat all my life. I want to weave as well as my ancestors and to share that tradition with the next generation of weavers. I feel it is necessary to study their work. I would like to study in the New York museums as long as the grant allows. Chilkat weaving requires a great deal of commitment. My first robe has taken one year and eight months to complete.





Evelyn Vanderhoop, *Beaver Design Naxlin Apron*, 2001–2006.
Merino wool, beaver pelt, yellow cedar bark, deer hooves, width 37 in,

MARGARET ROACH WHEELER

CHICKASAW

MISSOURI, USA

FIBER SCULPTOR

VISITING ARTIST, 2000

To the early Native Americans, the garments they designed and wore were an extension of their thoughts and reflected their skills and tribal status.

I have had an innate belief in and commitment to the tradition and artwork of my ancestors. These traits have been reinforced by my participation in the National Museum of the American Indian Native Arts Program. After completing my fellowship, I have been teaching workshops and seminars on ancient fibers of Native North America. Several presentations—*Art of the Ancestors, Weaving a Legacy*, and *Adena Woman*—come directly from my research on artifacts from the Spiro Mound during the NAP fellowship.

are inspired by the costumes I photographed during my research at the NMAI Cultural Resources Center in Suitland, Maryland.

I believe artistry and craftsmanship that can be observed in the NMAI collections of Native American artifacts will inspire the modern artist to achieve the highest standard in their own work and to carry on this proud heritage.

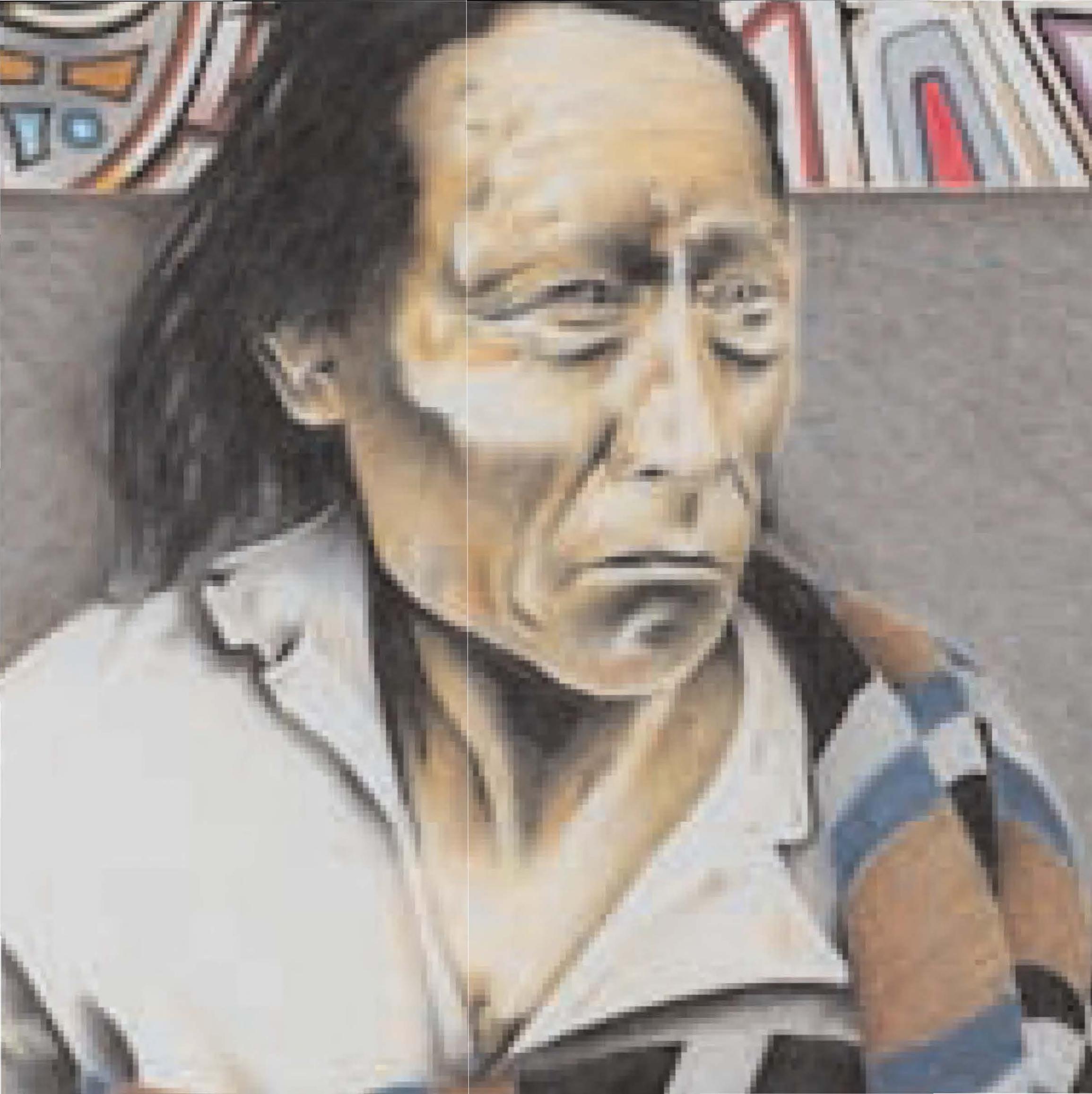
Currently, I am working on *A History of Native American Costumes*, which is a fashion show featuring my handwoven garments. Many of the designs in this show



Margaret Roach Wheeler, *The Messenger*, 2005.
Handwoven silk/wool Chief's robe and headdress with copper, shell, silver, and beads.

W
O
R
K





STAR WALLOWING BULL

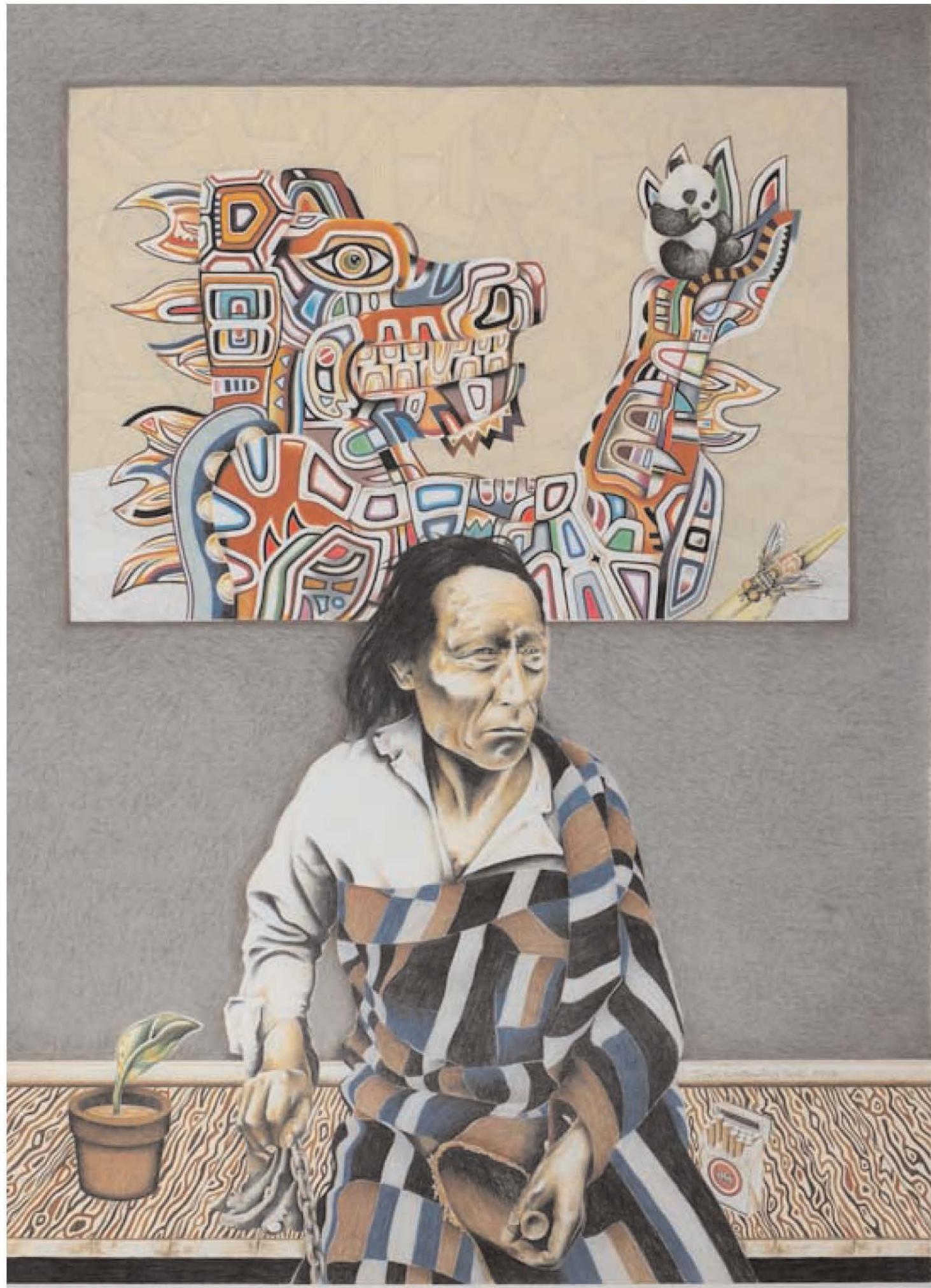
OJIBWE-ARAPAHO
NORTH DAKOTA, USA
PAINTER
VISITING ARTIST, 2001

Participation in the Native Arts Program gave me the confidence to pursue art-making as my primary means of earning an income. This helped me to build my self-esteem so much that art-making became my means of staying sober and working toward building a meaningful life; without that boost, I don't think I would be where I am today.

I like to express my thoughts about my people's history and politics through art. My work is not just about my people, but includes other tribes in this country: BLACK, WHITE, BROWN, and RED. I think that by dealing with these historical and political issues in my art, I can help people understand how other people feel.

With my work today, I like to look at historical pictures and draw from them. I like to read about history, and then an idea will come to me for a drawing. That's a major source for my work. I don't want to make the pictures realistic, but to make them different than what they are—to abstract them.





Star Wallowing Bull, *The Three Bears*, 2006. Colored pencil on paper, 30 x 22.25 in.





JERRY INGRAM

CHOCTAW

NEW MEXICO, USA

BEADWORK AND QUILLWORK ARTIST

VISITIG ARTIST, 2002

The Native Arts Program has educated me in many things besides the traditional clothing, beadwork, and quillwork of my focus tribes. It has taught me about the management of collections, how to get access for further museum research, and how to deal with the logistics of traveling in the urban areas of the East Coast.

Since participating in the NMAI Native Arts Program I have increased my search for cultural materials appropriate to the era I am attempting to represent. I have also been able to apply old sewing techniques that I learned from my visits to museum collections.

The NMAI Native Arts Program spurred me to share my knowledge with the students of the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where I have taught a Traditional Techniques Clothing class for several years. It is rewarding to watch the students grow and create using their own backgrounds, talents, and techniques learned in class. I am glad to provide inspiration and instruction to young artists.





Jerry Ingram, *Lakota Style Moccasins*, 2006. Brain-tanned
smoked buckskin, glass beads, thread.

REBECCA LYON

ATHABASCAN-ALEUT
ALASKA, USA
SCULPTOR, MIXEDMEDIA ARTIST
VISITING ARTIST, 2002

Even though I wear Gap jeans and live a nontraditional lifestyle, I have found I wear traditional clothing on the inside.

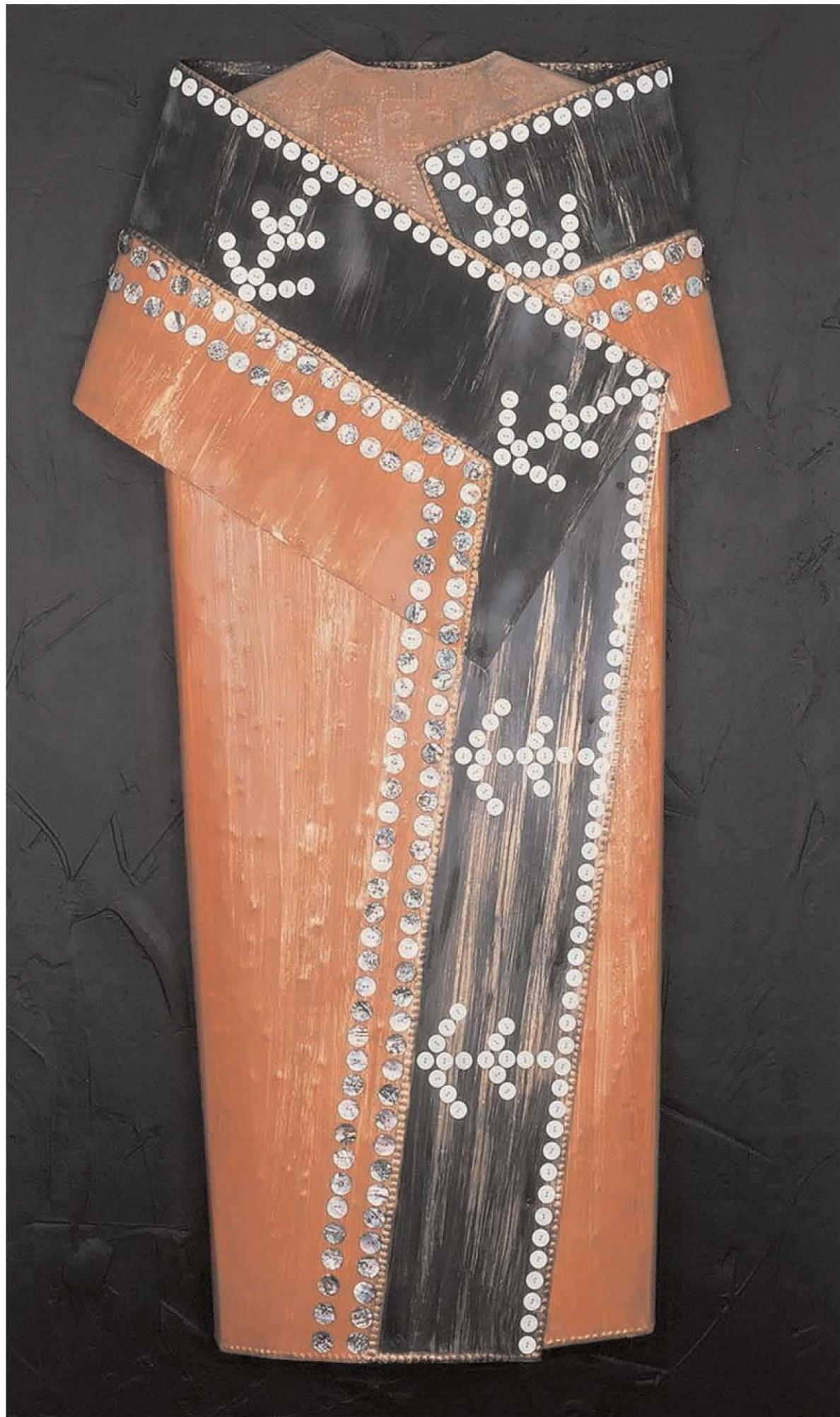
As I have looked back to make a connection with the past generations of women in my family and culture, I lament that no personal artifact or mementos from my great-grandmothers or the women before them have been passed down in my family. I have found myself searching through museum collections and anthropology books studying the clinical specimens of clothing attributed to my Athabascan ancestors, trying to make this connection.

During a visit to a museum, I stood for a long time in front of a diorama depicting an Athabascan village. I carefully studied a beautiful woman's moose hide dress draped over a plaster mannequin, and a great sadness overcame me. I realized that what I was doing was very much like visiting a loved one's grave, as



if the dress held the spirit of all those women who had come before me. It was then that I decided to recreate the clothing of women from four of Alaska's Native cultures in copper.

The clothing we wear identifies and holds the human spirit. I have created these dresses to represent a gathering of women's spirits housed inside the most feminine of metals—copper. The use of nontraditional materials moves the visual dialogue into the present. This is my way of honoring the women of the North for their ability to survive natural and cultural adversity and for their artistry.



Rebecca Lyon, *Tlingit/Haida Woman*, 2004. Copper, shell buttons, and patinas, 40.5 x 70 x 8 in.

No 8
No 6
No 1





JOSÉ ANTONIO ANCÁN JARA

MAPUCHE

REGIÓN DE LA ARAUCANÍA, CHILE

SCULPTOR, WRITER

VISITING ARTIST, 2003

My proposal is based on the analysis of ethnographic materials from the Mapuche community held in existing museum collections. Since that material is virtually unknown in its original context, simply recognizing it creates a significant advance in increasing the value and promotion of Mapuche culture.

Contained in the extensive bibliography on the Mapuche people is a valuable set of photographs of Native people from different communities who were taken prisoner by Argentinean soldiers at the end of the 19th century. Standing out among these images are several of Saiweke, the last Mapuche community leader to lay down his arms. His life was extensively documented by the many travelers who met him, but I find it curious that there are no representations of him or of any other Mapuche protagonists prior to their imprisonment.

My Native Arts Program research was based on the review and analysis of museum and ethnographic data from the Mapuche community in collections from the several

museums I visited. Since that material is virtually unknown in its original context, simply seeing and recognizing it creates a significant advance in increasing the value and promotion of Mapuche culture.

The article I include here draws on the results of my Native Arts Program research. The first *Biennale of Indigenous Art and Culture* in Santiago, Chile (January 2006), showcased the work of the foremost Mapuche engraver and artist, Santos Chávez (1934-2001). Using Santos Chávez's legacy as a departing point, the article conducts a critical reflection of the responsibilities I believe that contemporary indigenous artists have today.

GRABADOS DE SANTOS CHAVEZ: REENCUENTRO DESDE LA TIERRA QUE ESTA AL OTRO LADO DEL MAR

“Yo soy una partícula en el cosmos, ¿Qué somos en el sistema planetario, en el espacio infinito?... El equilibrio, la armonía, el sentido, el simbolismo, la poesía... es toda mi vida de niño, solo en el campo, el mundo que interpreto en mi obra. A lo lejos sale una ventana por ahí [...] no puedo decir "lo sé todo," así que sigo trabajando, sufriendo y buscando para hallar ese no sé qué que uno busca....” (Santos Chávez)

En más de una oportunidad, en particular en sus últimos años antes de viajar a la Tierra al Otro lado del Mar, se le escucharon decir a Santos Chávez palabras como estas.

[For the rest of the essay in Spanish, click here.](#)

On more than one occasion, particularly in his final years before making the trip to the Land on the Other Side of the Sea, Santos Chávez was heard to say words like these.

[For the rest of the English translation, click here.](#)

BARBARA D. FRANCIS

PENOBCOT
MAINE, USA
BROWN ASH BASKETMAKER
VISITING ARTIST, 2003

It is not enough to know technique and materials, it is to touch the brown ash and realize the gift of possibility within the tree itself.

Once the rhythmic pounding begins to loosen the growth rings (of the chosen brown ash tree) my imagination starts seeing baskets. They come to me in my dreams and often when I am doing chores unrelated to basketry. I will sketch them and once I pick up my materials, my hands know exactly what they are supposed to do.

An extension of myself reaches back into the time of my ancient ones, and I become part of the life that has flowed through my ancestors since their beginning.





Barbara Daigle Francis, *Penobscot Curly Bowl*, 2006. Brown ash bound with loose sweetgrass, diameter 5.5 in.

TERI ROFKAR

TLINGIT

ALASKA, USA

BASKETMAKER, RAVEN'S TAIL WEAVER

VISITING ARTIST, 2003

*While I weave
in an ancient
traditional
technique, I
am alive
and engaged
in today's
contemporary
world.*

I was introduced to Tlingit weaving as a child, but it wasn't until the mid-1980s that I made a commitment to become the best basket-weaver I could. I was fortunate. My journey took me into the backrooms of the Smithsonian, American Natural History, University of Pennsylvania, Metropolitan, and Brooklyn museums as a Visiting Artist in 2003. It was an awakening! I still look at my notes and refer to my photos—they contain so many inspiring ideas just waiting to be woven.

When I visit artifacts, it is as if I am visiting old friends; they challenge me always! But I am able to experience the life these pieces hold today—humor and visual trickery, heavy use, and even sorrow. I was looking at old baskets in one museum on the East



Coast, thinking of the time and place they were collected. The design and style of weaving give them a high probability of being my grandmothers' and great-grandmothers' baskets. These baskets don't speak only of the past, but reflect an intimate relationship between today, tomorrow, and yesterday. It is up to me to add my voice, a song for the future. Not over the soft voices of the past, but in harmony, as a chorus becomes strong with new life.



Teri Rofkar, *Earthquake*, 2004. Tlingit Raven's Tail weaving, wool with sea otter trim, ca. 72 x 54 in.

THE
CROWN





UMARA NUPOWHOTUK/BUCHEA

SIBERIAN YUPIK AND INUPIAQ

ALASKA, USA

HIDE AND FUR ARTIST

VISITING ARTIST, 2004

After my research at the Smithsonian, my dreams became more vivid and I began to better understand what my grandmother had been trying to tell me for years.

The elderly women encouraged me to touch their tattooed faces so that I could feel the designs, but now all of them have passed away. I create the masks because I want future generations to remember the tattoos, to remember these traditions.

The beads on my masks have special meaning for me. In my first memory of my childhood, I remember wearing beads all over my body, around my neck, waist, arms, wrists, thighs, and ankles. My grandparents were old and had taken me, as their first-born grandchild, to renew their youth. Their only daughter had passed away, and I am her namesake. My grandparents gave me all of her beads that were not buried with her. Beads have significance in our culture and

were used by the shamans. If a shaman put a bead on the seat of a boat captain, he would fall ill. When someone was sick, a shaman could put their sickness into the hole in the center of a bead and it would be buried.

I sincerely hope that the Smithsonian will maintain the collection of artifacts so that the future generations of artists can share in my experience. I would prefer that all of the artifacts remain in one central place so that my grandchildren and great-grandchildren can go and see them. Every generation's art is unique and should be cherished and preserved.



Umara Nupowhotuk/Buchea, *Annie*, 2003. Bleached caribou hide, fur, and beads, 14 x 12 in.

OSWALDO “ACHU” DELEON KANTULE

KUNA

CIUDAD DE PANAMÁ, PANAMA

PAINTER

VISITING ARTIST, 2004

*I have learned that
my ancestors
expressed their way
of seeing the
world, their fears and
frustrations in the
molas, sculptures,
and drawings.*

After my participation in the Native Arts Program, I believe that there are important differences in the creation of my works. Now, before beginning a piece, I take more care in choosing the elements that I consider using, without copying them exactly. I believe my works to have become more spiritual and deep.



Since my participation in the program, I can say as an individual that I have more concrete arguments supporting the validity of my work. It now clearly reflects the philosophy and values of my culture as well as my values as an individual.



Oswaldo "Achu" Deleon Kantule, *Espiritus del Galu*, 2006. Acrylic on canvas, 40 x 30 in.

BENJAMIN JACANAMIJOY TISOY

PUEBLO INGA DEL VALLE DE SIBUNDOY

BOGATA D.C., COLOMBIA

PAINTER

VISITING ARTIST, 2004

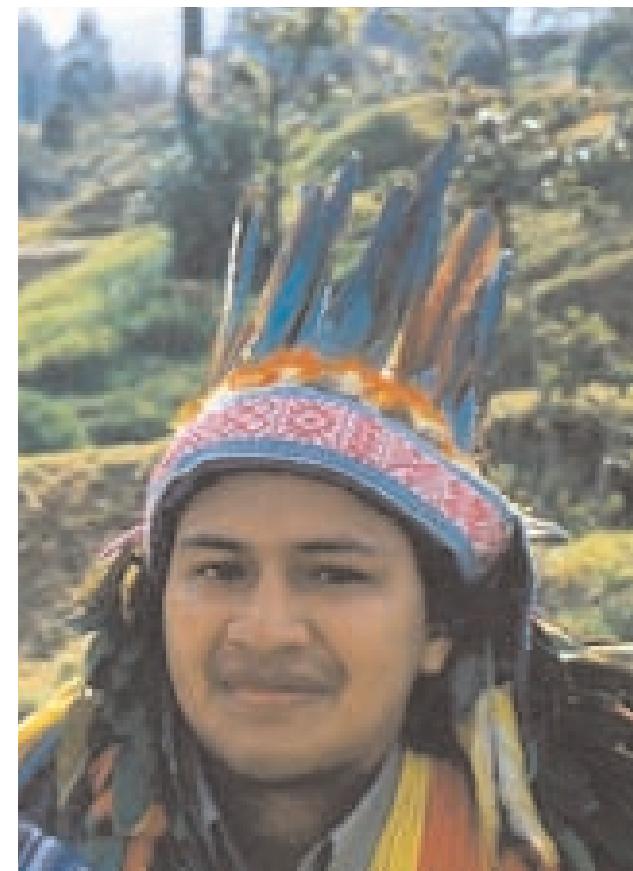
My work as an artist and researcher has allowed me to point out the relationship between the art of weaving and the art of living through the chumbe symbols and to tell stories in a specific place of life and thought.

I believe that the NMAI's Native Arts Program stimulates Indigenous artists in every respect. My participation in this program has been inspirational for artists from my community as well as for artists from all across Colombia.

Through the Visiting Artist fellowship, I was able to visit organizations such as the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics of New York University, which in turn allowed me to meet other artists.

At home, I was able to create a more formal connection with the children, youth, and elders of my community through the development of the Youth Mural Project.

Within this framework, I can confirm that the



support received from the program in validating my work as an artist is very significant. NMAI has revalidated my determination to continue researching and weaving the thread of tradition through both my painting and writing.



Benjamin Jacanamijoy, *Lugar de sol, frió y sangre*, 2005. Acrylic on linen, 78.75 x 71 in.

HERIBERTO MARTÍNEZ PIOQUINTO

PUEBLO MIXE

SANTA MARIA ALOTEPEC MIXE PUEBLO, OAXACA, MEXICO

PAINTER

YOUTH MURAL PROJECT, 2004

*I work to reflect
my values in my art
as well as my
Mixe culture from
Alotepec and
other communities
in Oaxaca, Mexico.*

The Native Arts Program has changed the way I create art. Before this project the people in my town didn't recognize me as a painter. Now the community realizes that through the Youth Mural Project I was able to showcase the history of our village. The people of surrounding communities are pleased with the mural as well. Perhaps the most interesting result was that when I began work on the mural, the local musicians and municipal authority were in conflict, but through the painting they united and worked together for the good of the community. It was also exciting that only five months later I was contracted to paint another mural in the Municipal Palace.



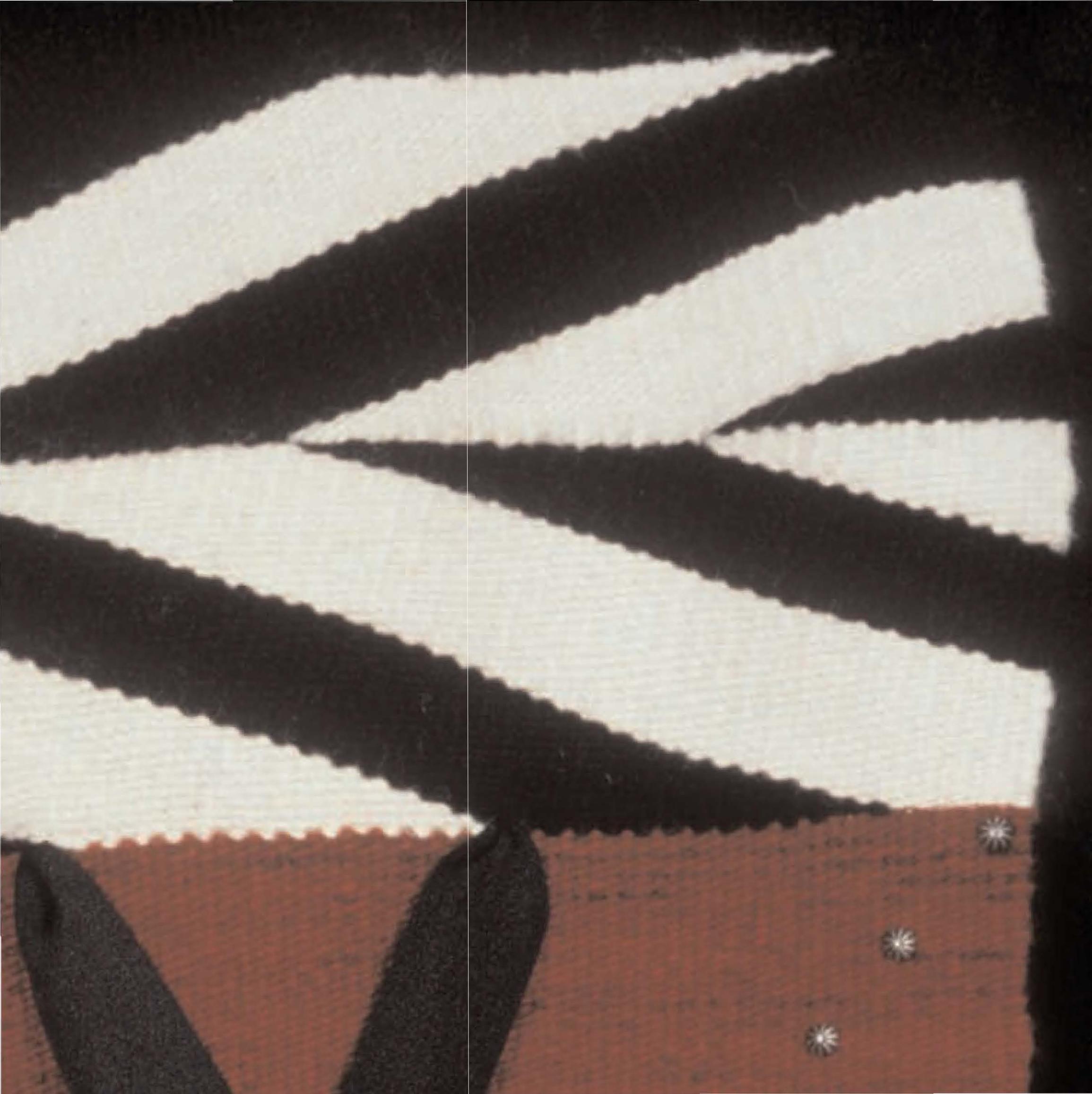
For me, art is important because it forms part of my being, part of my life, and part of my people. As a human being I believe that one day I will go to the beyond. I don't know where I will go, but my art will remain.



Heriberto Martinez Pioquinto, *xuxpë woojpë, jiawën ja napookmëtë, ayuuk käläjpn*
(*Music: Soul of the Ayuuk people of Alotepec*), 2004. 9 x 4 m.

1234567890





NADEMA AGARD

CHEROKEE/LAKOTA/POWHATAN

NEW YORK, USA

PAINTER

COMMUNITY ARTS SYMPOSIUM, 2005

Before European portraits were introduced to Native Americans, we portrayed ourselves not as specific individuals, but as tribal members.

I feel that the Native Arts Program has reclaimed that sense of community on a hemispheric level.

Since I have participated in this program, I have made art not just as a personal expression, but also as a spiritual and cultural statement. Being part of the program has given me a great sense of personal accomplishment, but it has also been a vehicle in which I have been able to give opportunities to other Native artists. That is what it is all about for me as a Native person—that we belong and take care of each other, because one person's success benefits the whole community or nation.

Being one among many accomplished artists in this program has given me a sense of community that is of great importance in the Native world and particularly for the Lakota. We call it *tiospaye*, or extended family.



My recent works have incorporated my emphasis on New York iconography with respect to an Algonquin presence and my Lakota warrior woman spirit. It is very specific to New York, but with a deep traditional and spiritual motive. Although changed, it still incorporates a larger, more cosmic agenda. It also seeks to include a cosmopolitan environment within the circle of Indigenous aesthetics, putting it on the cutting edge, with spiritual borders crossing and cross-cultural dialoguing.



Nadema Agard, *Warrior Woman Stance*, 1997-2005. Pastel and digital image, 23 x 29 in.

MARTHA GRADOLF

WINNEBAGO OF NEBRASKA

INDIANA, USA

WEAVER

VISITING ARTIST, 2005

*I weave the beauty
and truth of our
many cultures into
webs and I weave
to make my family
proud.*

The Native Arts Program had a big impact on me. Having the opportunity to view and study so many fine examples of Winnebago textiles in the various museum collections was an experience that could not have been accomplished without going through the NAP program. Holding the bags and examining the weave structures was a literal view into the past. Thinking of the people who created the bags, their families, their day-to-day lives, and how the bags were used was a tangible connection to my ancestors.

Primarily, I am a contemporary artist weaving nontraditional items. I had not thought of weaving traditional utilitarian objects until going through the Native Arts Program. I have added twining and



Thunderbird designs on some of my recent weavings. These are techniques and designs of the Woodland bags that I researched and studied. I will continue to incorporate the traditional weave structure and designs, colors, and fibers into my contemporary weavings. This will keep the traditional style alive as it moves into a contemporary form. And in the not-so-distant future, I hope to add the traditional Woodland bags to my weaving repertoire.



Martha Gradolf, *A Little Bling for the Chiefs*, 2006. Wool, copper, nickel spots, Swarovski crystals, paper, and poly ribbon, 16 x 36 in. with 7 in. fringe.

JASON LUJAN

CHIRICAHUA APACHE
NEW YORK, USA
CONCEPTUAL ARTIST
VISITING ARTIST, 2005

My art serves a means to both control and release my identity as an Indian. It's not so much a reflection of cultural values as a narrative of how and what Native culture could look like once it escapes the boundaries of traditionalism and parochialism.

My participation with the NAP allowed me to experience indigenous material pasts within contemporary contexts. I handled ancient objects and considered them not for their original virtues, but for what purpose they served now. The comparisons between the objects and myself, as a person (with all that the term *American Indian* implies), has intensified my desire to create, create, create.

I want to produce a body of work that reminds the audience that Native objects seen and presented in museums are being presented outside of their original context. In the museum environment Native objects are disconnected from their makers' original intent. Generally, museum audiences tend



to view cultural objects within the framework of the institution, in a rarified status that becomes perceived as being their natural state. I want to illustrate the impossibility of speaking authentically about the Indian experience in this environment.



Jason Lujan, *Peripheral Actions*, 2005. Installation.

JORGE “KAASIP” MASHUMBRA JIMBICTI

SHUAR

PROVINCIA DE PASTAZA, ECUADOR

MUSICIAN

VISITING ARTIST, 2005

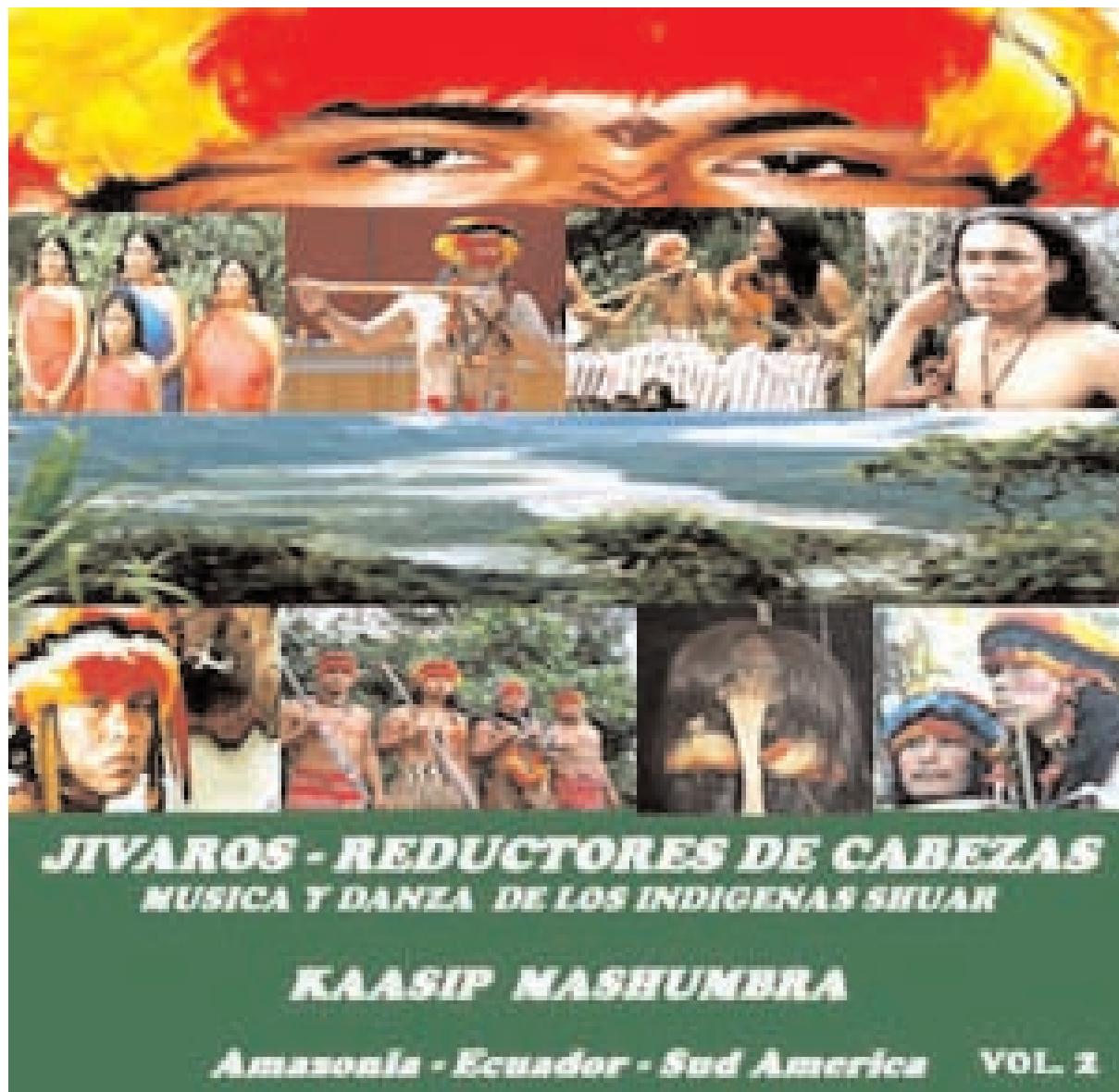
*After my experience
with the Native Arts
Program, I value
even more my music
and dance.*

I am proud of the youths from different communities within my Shuar pueblo who have not lost the value and richness of the culture of the rainforest. I feel an Indigenous pride because, in the different museums that I visited, the materials and values of my pueblo exist, and among other Indigenous cultures of the world, it is the Shuar culture that stands out.

As an Indigenous musician from the Amazonian rainforest, I have noticed that my art has progressed into another style of tones and has begun to fuse classical rhythms from my Shuar pueblo with current rhythms from the Western world. This has been accomplished without losing the originality of Shuar music. I achieved this



variation after having been a fellow in the Native Arts Program at NMAI in 2005.



To hear a sample of Jorge's music, click [here](#).

Jivaros–The Headshrinkers, 2005. Four songs sung in the Shuar language and fused with different Shuar and Western instruments, two of which are ancestral ritual songs and one of which is in Spanish. All of the songs were inspired by the Amazon rainforest.

KEVIN POURIER

OGLALA LAKOTA
SOUTH DAKOTA, USA
BUFFALO HORN ARTIST
VISITING ARTIST, 2005

When I started making buffalo horn items, I was beginning a journey that would lead me to finding out many things about myself, my Lakota people and lifeways that would influence my life in a great way.

My participation in the NMAI Fellowship program introduced me to several new ideas on how things were made with buffalo horn. The horn cups I recently started to make and the small buffalo horn spoons that each individual owned, I have begun making those also. Being able to hold and examine things that were made by my relatives had a dramatic effect on my understanding of what this material really meant to the Lakotas. I saw the care and hard work that went into making objects created out of love for each other. I had always known how things were made to be given away, but to see them firsthand and realize that they are as beautiful as any art made today made me realize just how wonderful our lifeways really are.





Kevin Pourier, *Swallowtail Horn Cup*, 2006. Buffalo horn, length 16 in.

VICTORIA MITCHELL VAZQUEZ

CHEROKEE

OKLAHOMA, USA

POTTER

VISITING ARTIST, 2005

The basic difference I see in the way I create my pottery now, as opposed to before my participation, is that I think more carefully about why I want to make a certain piece, what my pottery will represent in my thinking, and what I wish the viewer to see in my work.

I feel so connected to those who went before me, wondering what they were thinking about as they worked, if they were women or men, if they visited with others as they worked or, like me, worked alone in a special place. I require more solitude now when I am working and find that the music I previously listened to while working seems almost like an intrusion.

The fact that so many artisans before me created not only utilitarian vessels, but also artistic expressions of things in nature—plant life, animal and human effigies, some reflecting humor, individuality, and a high level of skill—was amazing. My appreciation has elevated for what my ancestors created without the use of modern tools, alternative



methods of firing, and the fact the pottery from thousands of years ago is still intact. It is a very special look into the past that so few of us are honored to see.



Victoria Maurine Mitchell Vazquez, *Mother and Child–Nativity*, 2005. Native Oklahoma clay, height 7 in.

10
8
6
2



JOHNNY BEAR CONTRERAS

SAN PASQUAL BAND OF KUMEYAAY

CALIFORNIA, USA

SCULPTOR

VISITING ARTIST, 2006

I feel we should be able to use our past, traditional values and recognize ways to adapt themes into a contemporary lifestyle without being too left-field or out of touch with convention.

The time I spent at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., and in some of the most prestigious archives in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia became a turning point in my career. The memorable people I met will continue to enrich my life as relationships develop. Although all aspects of my work have changed and continue to do so, my most memorable moment came while I was exploring the collection of the New York Natural History Museum. I learned much about the researching process and, after considerable time, I discovered the Eagle skirt of my Kumeyaay ancestor from a hundred years ago. All things came to a small point and all sources of my existence condensed for that micromoment. I knew at once that what I



was doing was relevant and that my artwork was my destiny. I had come face to face with the most sacred object I can imagine, in, of all places, the middle of that ball of energy that is New York City. I give thanks that I was given this opportunity and was able to recognize that these objects possess power. This knowledge has empowered me spiritually and at the same time shown me that the responsibility that comes with this empowerment is manageable.



Johnny Bear Contreras, *The Bird Singers Past to Present*, 2006.
Clay model currently being cast, height ca. 31 in.

BENJAMIN JACANAMIJOY TISOY

PUEBLO INGA DEL VALLE DE SIBUNDOY

BOGATA D.C., COLOMBIA

PAINTER

YOUTH MURAL PROJECT, 2006

At this time there is no mural of any kind made for or by the Native communities of this region.

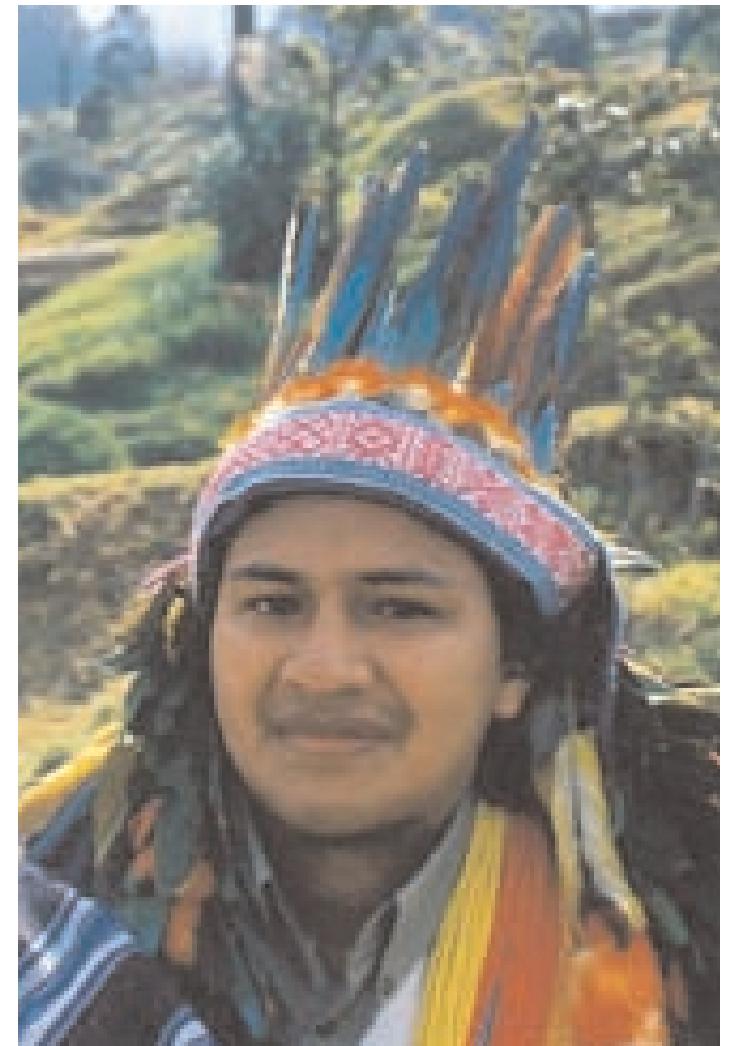
Therefore, it is important to promote this technique

among the Inga youth as a way of recuperating our own picture of Inga history.

My professional work actually includes the experience of intercultural understanding which brings me closer to the true essence of our own history. Knowing the collections of chumbes at the NMAI, as well as knowing the people who work with this institution, has been invaluable for my way of creating art.

Before, I concentrated specifically on the symbolic and artistic concepts of the art of weaving in the Inga culture. Today, without forgetting the history of my elders, my purpose grows deeper into the concept of the art of weaving life, which is in turn related to the art of telling stories.

Remembering the past of my pueblo through the chumbes in the NMAI collection made



me remember that the world is only one world and that the responsibility to maintain living culture, both tangible and intangible, of the Indigenous peoples is in the hands of the current generations.



Benjamin Jacanamajoy Tisoy, *Tree of Blood in a Cold Place*, 2005. Acrylic on linen, 79 x 71 in.

MICHAEL KABOTIE/LOMAWYWESA

HOPI
ARIZONA, USA
PAINTER, JEWELER
VISITING ARTIST, 2006

Art allows me to express what I have learned, and what would otherwise be incommunicable.

The arts are both the core substance and a visual reflection of my life quest/art journey. It is my belief that this quest must be shared with others through my arts. During 1967 and 1968 I went through my Hopi manhood initiations, in which I was introduced to the integral concept that the basic fabric of life is interwoven with *uti*, or fear. My initiation directed and challenged me to understand the nature of *uti* from both its destructive and its positive, creative side. It has taken me since my initiation to begin to comprehend the nature of this challenge and the nature of *uti*, and to begin the creative process of transforming *uti* into *uti he e*, or sacredness. This is the challenge now at the center of my life quest/art journey.



Through the Visiting Artist program I have learned much about the Anasazi, Mesoamerica, and the Hopewell Moundbuilders. I will follow the visual path of these ancestors, learn their song and dance, and share with the world the archetypal dreams of our mentors.



Michael Kabotie with Delbridge Honanie, *Journey of the Human Spirit* (mural detail), 2004. Acrylic.

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

1996

Glory Tacheenie-Campoy
Jack TóBaahe Gene

Kenneth Johnson

Silyas “Art” Saunders
Nelda Schrupp
Lisa Telford

1997

Douglas Miles
Susie Silook

2000

Shonto Begay
Janet Marie Rogers
Donna Shakespeare-Cummings
Evelyn Vanderhoop
Margaret Roach Wheeler
Jeff Yellowhair

1998

Joe Baker
Pat Courtney Gold
Terrol Dew Johnson
Mario Martinez
Wendy Ponca
Virginia Yazzie-Ballenger

2001

Theresa J. Carter
Donna Mendez
Marianne Nicolson
Star Wallowing Bull
Laura Wong-Whitebear

1999

Bernice Akamine
Marcus Amerman
Jimmy Horn

2002

*Jerry Ingram
Rebecca Lyon
Mario Martinez
Morris Muskett*

2003

*José Antonio Ancán Jara
Chris Cornelius
Kilohana Domingo
Barbara Francis
Luke Madrigal
Teri Rofkar*

2004

*Umara Nupowhotuk/Buchea
Oswaldo “Achu” Deleón Kantule
Benjamin Jacanamijoy Tisoy
Heriberto Martínez Pioquinto
Kent Monkman
Mateo Romero*

2005

*Nadema Agard
Marcus “Quese iMC” Frejo
Martha Gradolf
Jason Lujan
Jorge “Kaasip” Mashumbra Jimbicti
Kevin Pourier
Victoria Mitchell Vazquez*

2006

*Kevin “Mooshka” Cata
Kelly Church
Mario Otoniel Chavajay Cumatz
Johnny Bear Contreras
Benjamin Jacanamijoy Tisoy
Michael Kabotie/Lomawywesa
Deborah Spears Moorehead
Jim Yellowhawk*