

Minneapolis Institute of Art

Docent Training
Native American Art
Fall 2019

Mia

Questions to Ponder

The Power of Storytelling

What do you want to share with visitors?

Why do you want to share it?

Where do you come from?

Legacies of Museums

Truth-telling and Native art

How and why did we collect Native art?

What are the various ways Native people think about our collections and these legacies?

Who gets to tell stories? What does this do?

Initiatives at Mia and our Native art collection

Responsibility

Truth Telling and Educating

Reciprocity

Native partnerships
Many interpretations
Many perspectives

Respect

What to share and when to not share

It's okay *not* to know! Or share!



Dakota Artist

Cradle Cover, c. 1880







Each Time You Love
Love As Deeply As
If It Were Forever
Nothing Is Eternal
- Jeffrey Gibson

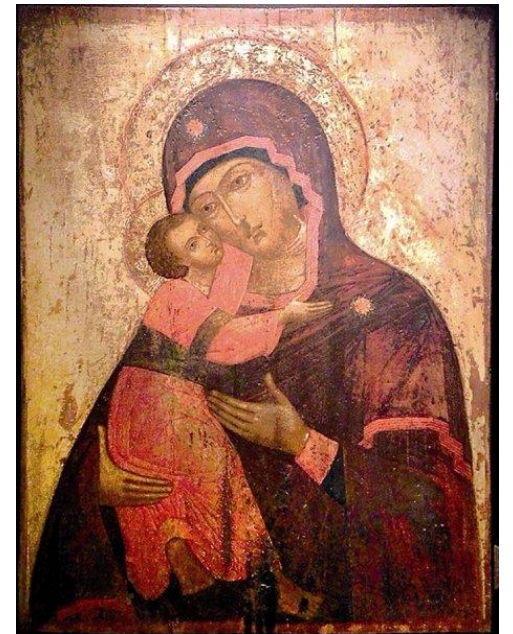


Pomo Artist, c. 1915

Basket



Marwin Begaye, Navajo
Relative from the Blue World





Small informational text cards placed on the display surface.

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The use of the American flag by the Dakhóta and Lak'hóta people

of the Očhéthi Šakówinj ("Seven Council Fires," as we are collectively known) shows a conscious thoughtfulness of our ongoing relationship with the United States: at times a political symbol, at other times used to protect our sovereignty and traditions.

Stars and Stripes were already existing artistic and religious symbols to us, so it's quite possible my ancestors considered the flag equally wakháŋ (having a mysterious power) when it was first gifted to us in the 1790s. Heháka Sápa (Black Elk) spoke that the morning star is the light leading us out of the darkness, representing knowledge and wisdom. I can imagine my ancestors wondering if these mysterious foreigners who also used stars to introduce themselves—they must want to walk the right path, no?

Through art, we have a long-existing tradition of depicting our military accomplishments and the respect for sacred items carried or worn into battle, even by our adversaries. In the 1860s the first U.S. flag imagery began to appear in our artwork as the policy towards us changed. Within Minnesota, the hostilities between us and the government exploded with the Dakhóta War of 1862. This resulted in the creation of a concentration camp of 1,600 captured Dakhóta people at Fort Snelling and the hanging of 38 Dakhóta men.

Exiled from Minnesota, my people were forced onto reservations and our ceremonies were outlawed as assimilation policies were enacted. However, under the guise of celebrating the 4th of July, we would bead clothing and other items meant for our own ceremonies with U.S. flags. That "patriotic" usage appeared to say to outsiders, "The Indians are assimilating, see?" This coded use of the flag is how some of the ceremonies managed to survive.

At those early July 4th celebrations on the reservations, we would fly the U.S. flag and sing a flag song in Dakhóta that honored warriors and their accomplishments against the U.S. military. At today's powwows, we still continue that tradition of flying the U.S. flag and singing a flag song to honor today's military veterans who have fought for our homelands. Thousands of Native people fought in World War I (1914–1918) without any obligation to do so—the U.S. didn't grant Native people citizenship until 1924. In World War II (1939–1945) we used our languages as code talkers to relay secret messages the Nazis couldn't decipher. It's a fact we join the armed forces in greater numbers per capita than any other ethnic group.

The meaning and use of the U.S. flag has changed many times for my people, all the while welcoming immigrants to these lands already long-inhabited by Indigenous people. Does it still represent freedom and democracy to new immigrants? Perhaps that depends on what side of the wall today's immigrants are on.

Marlena Myles, artist

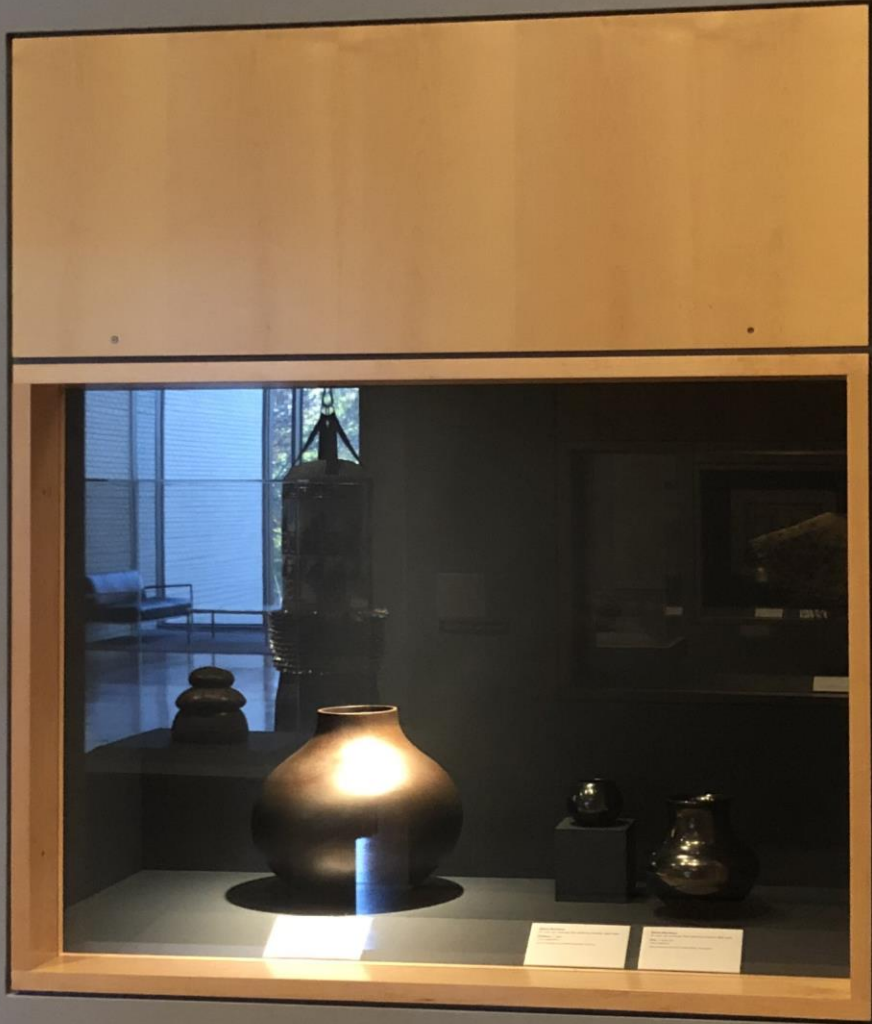
Sisithurwanj & Wahpéthurwanj of the Spirit Lake Dakhóta Tribe





Joe and Mary Ann Calabaza, Santa
Domingo Pueblo

Heishi Necklace





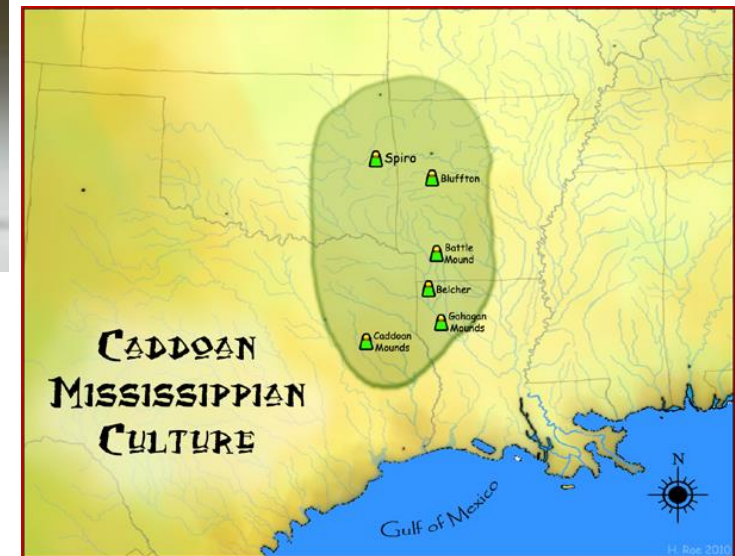
What conversations can emerge?
Les Namingha
George Morrison





Spiro Mississippian
1200-1350

Gorgets





Otoe Missouria, c. 1900

Dance Blanket



Carla Hemlock, Kahnawake
Mohawk
Boomin' Out



Unangan or Alutiiq, c.
1800

Child's Vest



Tsistsistas (Cheyenne) or Lakǰóta, late
19th-early 20th century

Headdress

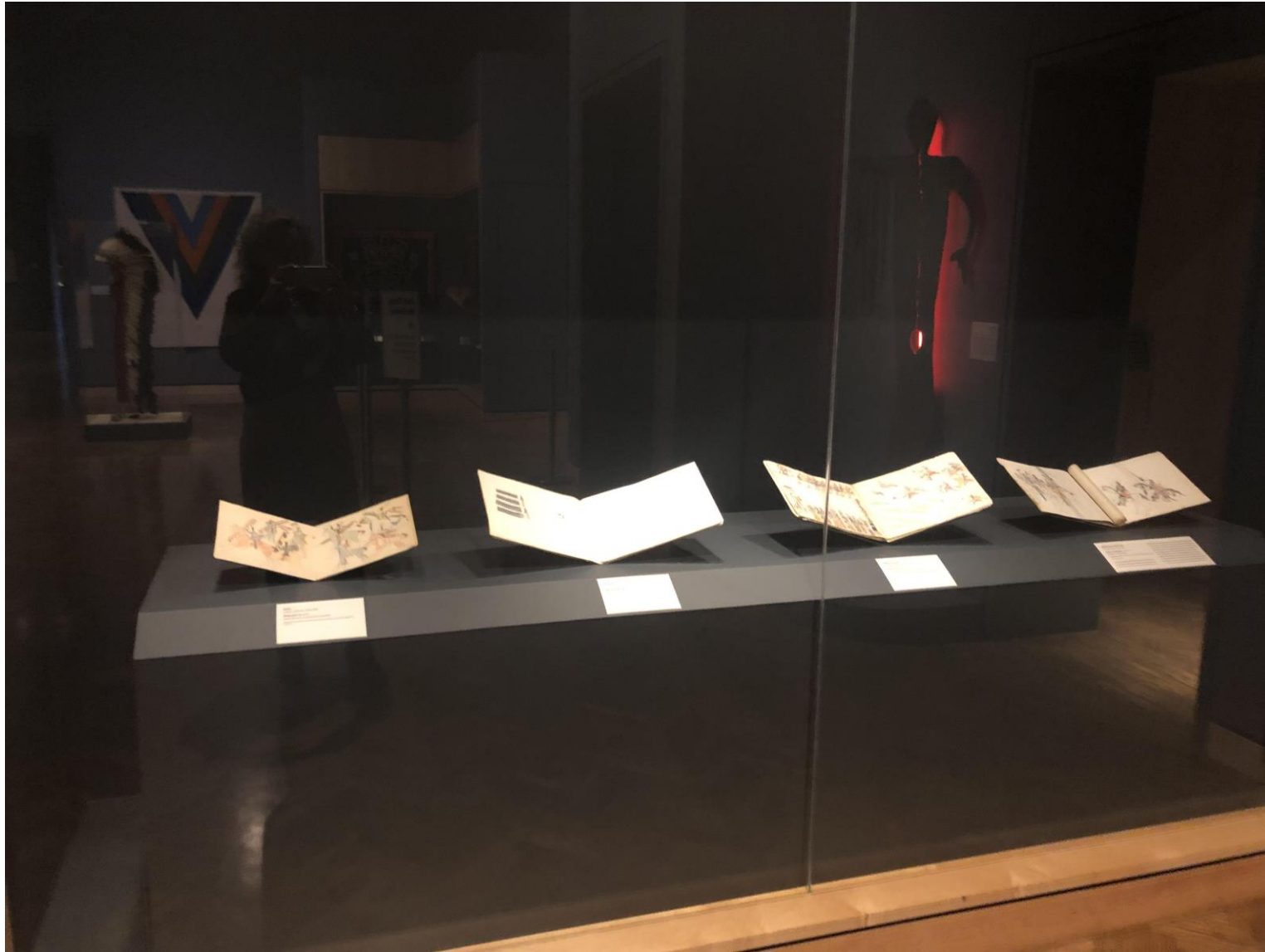


Ramona Sakiestewa, based on
Kenneth Noland painting
Ute Point



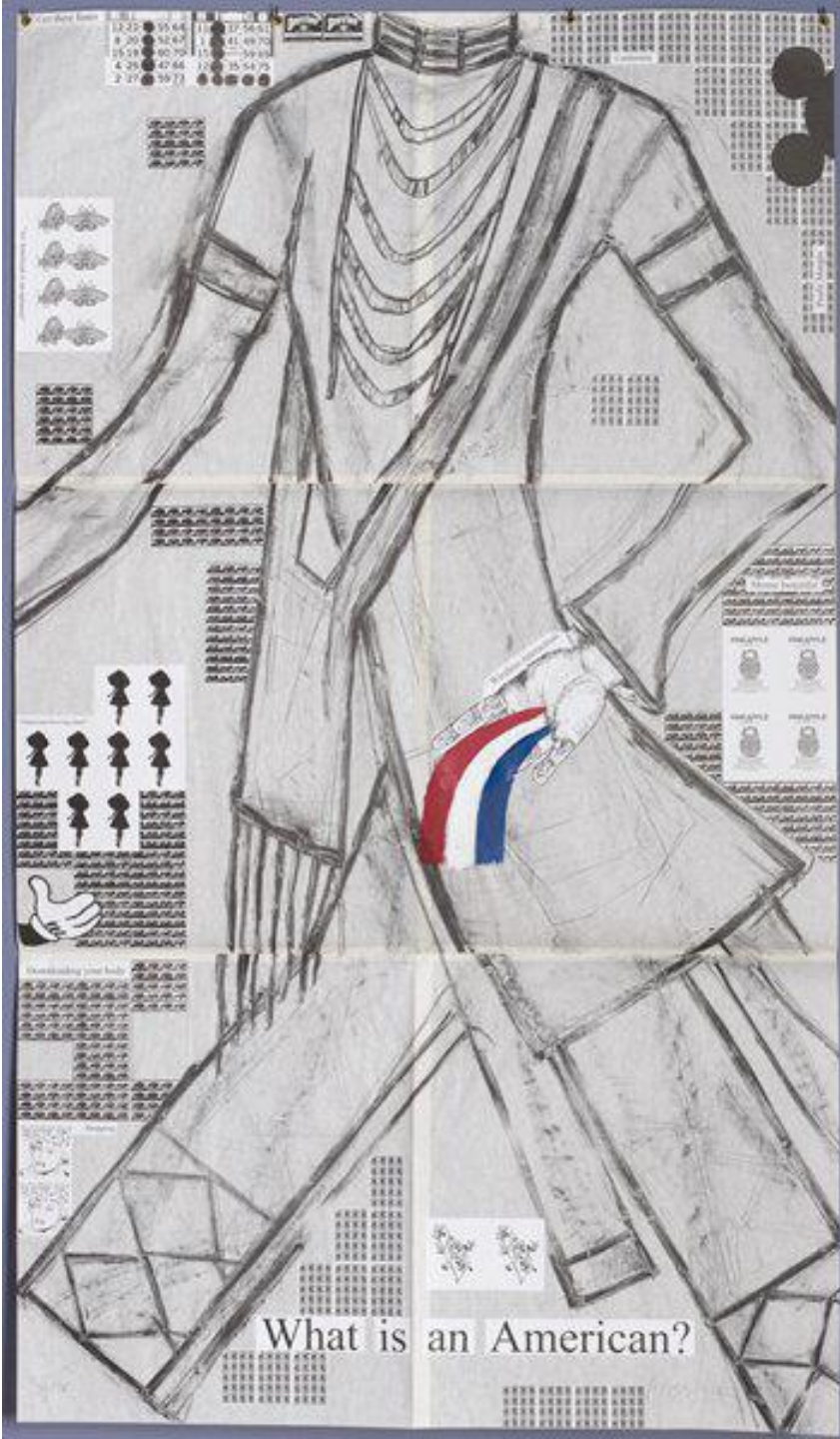
Hé Nún̄pa Wanič̄a, or
Joseph No Two Horns,
Hún̄kpaḥ̄na Lakḥóta , c.
1915

Tipi Cover



Ft. Marion Prisoners

Ledger Books

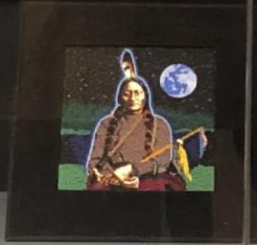
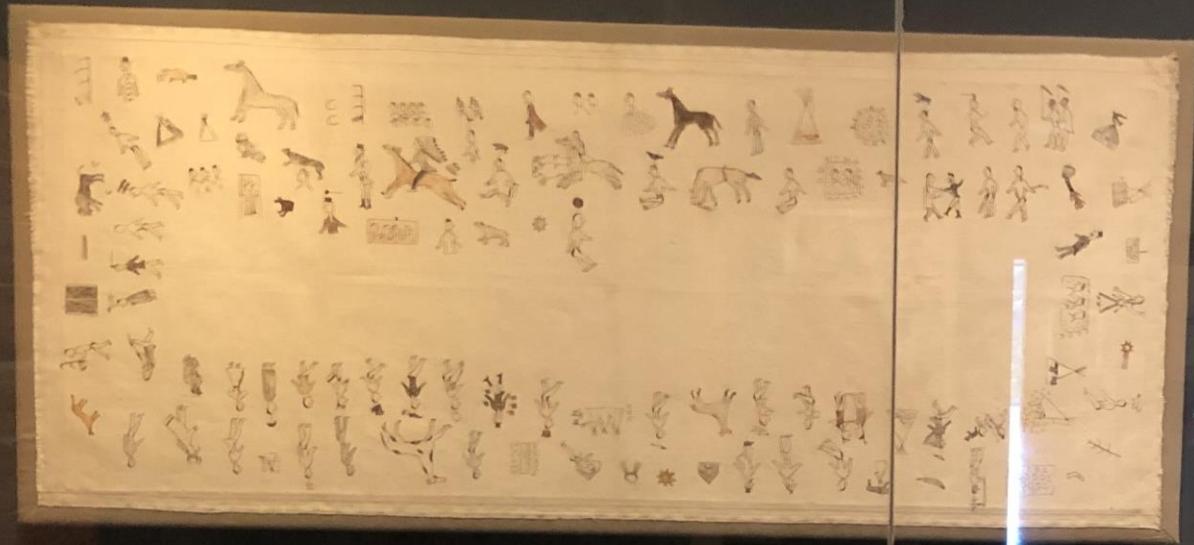


Jaune Quick-To-See-Smith
Salish, Nehiyawak and Aqwi-Dika

What Is An American?



Nez Perce Artist, c. 1875





Allan Houser
Chiricahua Apache, 1914-1994

Rendezvous



Maggie Thompson
Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior
Chippewa

Family Portrait