

Editorial

The Past and the Future Are Now

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Received: 5 July 2020; Accepted: 6 July 2020; Published: 9 July 2020



On 20 June 1918, Crescencio Martinez (Ta'ë), a painter and pottery designer from San Ildefonso Pueblo, died of influenza. He was thirty-nine years old. Indigenous communities in the Southwest were ravaged by the 1918 global pandemic, dying at far higher rates than their white counterparts. While the 1918 epidemic was particularly deadly for Native peoples, it was also an intensification of a complex matrix of health crises that had long ravaged Indigenous communities. The fate of many artists born at San Ildefonso around the turn of the twentieth century offers a glimpse of this reality. One of the earliest Pueblo painters on paper, Alfredo Montoya, is reported to have died of influenza in 1913 at the age of twenty-one. Awa Tsireh (Alfonso Roybal), who was Crescencio Martinez's nephew, lost his wife and infant son in 1921, also to influenza. He was never the same after these devastating losses. Tonita Peña (Quah Ah), who was born at San Ildefonso in 1893, was sent to live with her aunt Martina Vigil Montoya and uncle Florentino Montoya at Cochiti Pueblo in 1905 after her mother and little sister succumbed to influenza. Peña lost her first husband, Juan Rosario Chavez, after a short illness in 1912, her aunt Martina in 1916, and her uncle Florentine, who died of influenza around 1918. In 1920, her second husband Felipe Herrera died in a mining accident, and in December 1932 she lost a baby.¹

Tragedy was part of the everyday lives of Pueblo peoples, the result of social inequities and structural racism wrought by centuries of colonialism, violence, and oppression. This fact is brought into sharper focus by the current health crisis spurred by COVID-19, which is, once again, infecting and killing Indigenous people and other people of color at disproportionately high rates.²

¹ On Crescencio Martinez's death, see Edgar L. Hewett. 1918. "Crescencio Martinez—Artist." *El Palacio* 5: 67–69. On Alfredo Montoya's death, see Bertha P. Dutton. 1942. "Alfredo Montoya—Pioneer Artist." *El Palacio* 49: 143–4. Gregory Schaaf. 2000. *Pueblo Indian Pottery: 750 Artist Biographies, c. 1800-present*. American Indian Art Series. Santa Fe: CIAC Press. p. 208. claims Montoya died in "the flu epidemic of 1913," but provides no citation. On the death of Awa Tsireh's wife, see letter from Lansing B. Bloom to Edgar L. Hewett, 27 June 1921, Edgar L. Hewett Collection, Fray Angélico Chávez History Library, Santa Fe, box 17, folder 8. Bloom explains to Hewett that Awa Tsireh's wife had died the week before; he does not mention Awa Tsireh's son. Dunn describes Awa Tsireh as someone who carried a profound sense of "grief and loneliness" after the loss of his wife and infant son; see Dorothy Dunn. 1956. "Awa Tsireh: Painter of San Ildefonso." *El Palacio* 63: 108. On Tonita Peña moving to Cochiti and the deaths of her first husband, aunt, and uncle, see Samuel L. Gray. 1990. *Tonita Peña: Quah Ah 1893–1949*. Albuquerque: Avanyu Publishing, Inc., pp. 12–16. On Martina and Florentino Montoya's deaths, also see Jonathan Batkin. 1987. "Martina Vigil and Florentino Montoya: Master Potters of San Ildefonso and Cochiti Pueblos." *American Indian Art Magazine* 12: 31. On the death of Peña's baby, see Alice Corbin Henderson. 1933. *The Development of Modern Indian Painting*. Typescript of a paper read at the Colorado Spring Art Center, 1933, located in the William Penhallow Henderson Paper, Archives of American Art, Washington, DC, box 6.

² *Indian Country Today* has provided extensive news coverage of how the COVID-19 crisis is impacting Native communities. See, for example, "Arizona: 16 Percent of the COVID-19 Deaths Are Native Americans." April 13, 2020. Available online: <https://indiancountrytoday.com/news/arizona-16-percent-of-covid-19-deaths-are-native-americans-b-n3zYNsgUGFHiFSZpzPxxg> (accessed on 25 June 2020). On the crisis within Indigenous communities, also see Dana Hedgpeth, Darryl Fears, and Gregory Scruggs. 2020. "Indian Country, where residents suffer disproportionately from disease, is bracing for coronavirus." *The Washington Post*, April 4. Available online: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2020/04/04/native-american-coronavirus/> (accessed on 25 June 2020); "Coronavirus in Indian Country: Latest Case Counts," UCLA American Indian Studies Center. Available online: https://www.aisc.ucla.edu/progression_charts.aspx; Nicholas Kristof. 2020. "The Top U.S. Coronavirus Hot Spots are All on Indian Lands." *New York Times*, May 30. Available

Society at large may be just awakening to widespread structural racism, mapped by a swell in public support for the Black Lives Matter movement, but people of color have never had the luxury of ignorance or denial. Indigenous men are three times more likely to be killed by police than white men. Indigenous women are at least 2.5 times more likely to experience violence than any other demographic. Oil pipelines continue to be built on and pollute reservation lands. Indigenous people, along with other people of color, have less access to healthcare, and, when they do receive treatment, they are often subject to racial profiling and implicit bias.³ Native people are underrepresented at universities, and, once there, faculty and students must navigate a system that, paradoxically, is both discriminatory and overburdens faculty of color as it struggles to address this discrimination.⁴ The depth of public indifference toward the United States' brutal history of conquest is evinced by infringements on Native lands, the continued popularity of "playing Indian" and of mythologized versions of U.S. history, widespread support for racist mascots, the celebration of tyrants and murderers in the form of statues and a public holiday, and the list goes on.⁵

online: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/30/opinion/sunday/coronavirus-native-americans.html> (accessed on 25 June 2020); and Gregory D. Smithers. 2020. "Covid-19 has been brutal in Indian country—just like past epidemics were." *The Washington Post*, May 20. Available online: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/05/20/covid-19-has-been-brutal-indian-country-just-like-past-epidemics-were/> (accessed on 25 June 2020).

- ³ The top five demographic groups killed by police, according to data collected between 1999 and 2011, are African American age 20–24 (7.1 per million population per year), Native American age 25–34 (6.6), Native American age 35–44 (5.9), African American age 25–34 (5.6), and Native American 20–24 (4.6); see Mike Males. 2014. "Who Are Police Killing?", Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice." August 26. Available online: <http://www.cjcenter.org/news/8113> (source of data, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics). On police use of lethal force against Native Americans and failures in the media to cover these deaths, see Jean Reith Schroedel and Roger J. Chin. 2020. "Whose Lives Matter: The Media's Failure to Cover Police Use of Lethal Force Against Native Americans." *Race and Justice* 10: 150–75. On rates of sexual violence against Native women and the challenges of collecting and analyzing this data, see Sarah Deer. 2015. *The Beginning and End of Rape: Confronting Sexual Violence in Native America*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 1–15. For statistics on violence against Native women, see André B. Rosay. 2016. "Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women and Men: 2010 Findings from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey." In *National Institute of Justice Research Report*. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice, May 2016. The recent (2016) controversy surrounding Energy Transfer Partners' Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) was widely covered in the press and protested by the #NoDAPL movement. TransCanada Corporation's Keystone Pipeline, whose extension triggered protests at Standing Rock, has repeatedly leaked oil; see Sarah Gibbens and Craig Welch. 2019. "Keystone Pipeline Spills 200,000 Gallons of Oil." *National Geographic*, November 16. Available online: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2017/11/keystone-oil-spill-south-dakota-spd/> (accessed on 25 June 2020); and Max Cohen. 2019. "Portion of Keystone Pipeline shut down after 380,000-gallon oil leak in North Dakota." *USA Today*, November 1. Available online: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2019/11/01/keystone-pipeline-leak-oil-spilled-north-dakota/4121954002/> (accessed on 25 June 2020). There have been many oil spills on Indigenous lands; see, for example, Ethan Lou and Alastair Sharp. 2017. "Canada oil pipeline spills 200,000 liters on aboriginal lands." *Reuters*, January 23. Available online: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-canada-pipeline-leak/canada-oil-pipeline-spills-200000-liters-on-aboriginal-land-idUSKBN1572UJ>. Health disparities felt by Native Americans are documented by the Indian Health Service; for the October 2019 "Fact Sheet," see <https://www.ihs.gov/newsroom/factsheets/disparities/>. On implicit bias and health care, see Khiara M. Bridges. 2018. "Implicit Bias and Racial Disparities in Health Care." *Human Rights Magazine* 43, no. 3. Special Issue on The State of Healthcare in the United States; Available online: https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human_rights_magazine_home/the-state-of-healthcare-in-the-united-states/racial-disparities-in-health-care/ (accessed on 25 June 2020). On how this issue affects Native people, see Jennie R. Joe. 2003. "The Rationing of Healthcare and Health Disparity for American Indians/Alaska Natives." In *Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care*. Edited by Brian D. Smedley, Adrienne Y. Smith, and Alan R. Nelson. Washington: The National Academies Press, pp. 528–51.
- ⁴ See Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy, Jessica A. Solyom, and Angelina E. Castago. 2015. "Indigenous Peoples in Higher Education." *Journal of American Indian Education* 54: 154–86; Patricia A. Matthew. 2016. "What Is Faculty Diversity Worth to a University." *The Atlantic*, November 23. Available online: <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/11/what-is-faculty-diversity-worth-to-a-university/508334/> (accessed on 25 June 2020); and Social Sciences Feminist Network Research Interest Group. 2017. "The Burden of Invisible Work in Academia: Social Inequalities and Time Use in Five University Departments." *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations* 39: 228–45. Special Issue on Diversity and Social Justice in Higher Education.
- ⁵ On the history of "playing Indian" and mythologizing American history, see Philip J. Deloria. 1998. *Playing Indian*. New Haven: Yale University Press. On mascots, see Jason Edward Black. 2002. "The 'Mascotting' of Native America: Construction, Commodity, and Assimilation." *American Indian Quarterly* 26: 605–22; Elizabeth M. Delacruz. 2003. "Racism American Style and Resistance to Change: Art Education's Role in the Indian Mascot Issue." *Art Education* 56: 13–20; Suzan Shown Harjo. 2005. "Just Good Sports: The Impact of 'Native' References in Sports on Native Youth and What Some Decolonizers Have Done About it." In *For Indigenous Eyes Only: A Decolonization Handbook*. Edited by Waziyatawin Angela Wilson and Michael Yellow Bird. Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press, pp. 31–52.

As millions around the world are currently marching against structural racism and as monuments to oppressors begin to fall, it is crystal clear that the past has everything to do with the present. The past *is* now. As is highlighted by the address by Sičánǵu Lakota artist Dyani White Hawk Polk included in this Special Issue, contemporary Indigenous artists are creating powerful work that speaks to, and pushes back against, the history and legacy of colonialism. Their work also highlights Native resilience. In so doing, contemporary artists are building on a long tradition of “survivance”—a term advanced by Anishinaabe theorist Gerald Vizenor that offers a framework for understanding Native survival and resistance.⁶ The art of survivance is that of cultural pride and continuance. It is an art that dismisses outright and/or actively resists dominant constructions of authentic Indianness, which serve to simultaneously exploit and disenfranchise real Native people. The art of survivance is created for one’s self and one’s community. It is a mode that emphasizes Native visual sovereignty, a concept theorized by the Tuscarora artist, art historian, and curator Jolene Rickard.⁷ Rickard writes that visual sovereignty is part of a larger movement that detaches sovereignty from Western legal meaning and instead uses the concept to pronounce Indigenous peoples’ right to assert their worldviews, to self-represent, to resist colonial interference and constructions, and to live, create, and pray as they see fit.⁸

While the terms “survivance” and “visual sovereignty” were coined during the late twentieth century, the ideas and activism that stand behind them have a much longer history, as is underscored in both Vizenor’s and Rickard’s work. Native strategies of survivance and visual sovereignty reach back to the early years of European invasion and occupation. This Special Issue is comprised of essays that feature acts of Indigenous survivance and declarations of visual sovereignty from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The authors address how Indigenous people have mobilized images and objects in order to transform, accommodate, revise, and resist dominant structures, asserting Native peoples’ right to self-representation, self-determination, and self-governance. These stories are told through careful analyses of a wide range of topics, including drums and paintings by a Hunkpapa/Yanktonai holy man (see David W. Penney); the production and circulation of Lakota regalia for Wild West performances (see Emily C. Burns); basketry created by Native peoples in Southern California, which rebuffed assimilation (see Yve Chavez); the use of the American flag by the Alaska Native Brotherhood to articulate Tlingit and Haida sovereignty (see Emily L. Moore); tactics of “refusal” by San Ildefonso Pueblo laborers and artists that protected knowledge (see Sascha T. Scott); paintings by and the collection of early twentieth-century Haudenosaunee artists (see Scott Manning Stevens); the Midi Badi clan of the Hidatsa tribe’s successful negotiation for the return of a scared bundle in 1939 (see Jennifer Shannon); and T. C. Cannon’s formation of an Indigenous modernism (see Philip J. Deloria). The essays in this Special Issue highlight something else too—Native people are “cocreators of the heuristic category the West calls modernity,” to quote Philip Deloria.⁹ They have shaped the past, they shape the present, and they will continue to shape the future.

That future *is* now. It must be. Social justice and basic human rights can be delayed no further. Over the last several decades, the decolonizing movement has gained traction and is now fully in the public spotlight. A critical mass of Indigenous scholars—among them Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Sonya Atalay, Waziyatawin, Michael Yellow Bird, Eve Tuck, Amy Lonetree, Cutcha Risling Baldy, Maile Arvin, James Riding In, Susan Miller, Nick Estes, Melanie Yazzie, Jennifer O’Neal, and Jo-ann Archibald, just to name a few—are calling for the dismantling and restructuring of colonial institutions.

⁶ See Gerald R. Vizenor. 1994. *Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survivance*. Hanover: University Press of New England; and Gerald R. Vizenor. 2009. *Native Liberty: Natural Reason and Cultural Survivance*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

⁷ See Jolene Rickard. 1995. “Sovereignty: A Line in the Sand.” In *Strong Hearts: Native American Visions and Voices, Aperture*. no. 139. New York: Aperture, pp. 50–59; Jolene Rickard. 2011. “Visualizing Sovereignty in the Time of Biometric Sensors.” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 110: 465–82; and Jolene Rickard. 2017. “Diversifying Sovereignty and the Reception of Indigenous Art.” *Art Journal* 76: 81–84.

⁸ See Rickard. “Visualizing Sovereignty in the Time of Biometric Sensors.” 470–3.

⁹ Philip J. Deloria. 2019. *Becoming Mary Sully: Toward an American Indian Abstract*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, p. 22.

These calls have been extended to museums. Gone are the days when museums could rest on the myth that they are the guardians of “vanishing” Indigenous cultures. Some museums—an institution built on histories of theft and violence—are reaching out to Native communities for feedback and guidance on their collections and exhibitions, resulting in exhibitions that are more ethically produced and more accurate in their historical framing and cultural content. Museums that do not meaningfully engage with Indigenous communities when exhibiting Native objects and telling Native stories are under ever greater scrutiny.¹⁰ At the same time museums are being reshaped, Indigenous cultural centers are now widely recognized as innovative and important sites of community engagement. Objects that once lay dormant in storage spaces and glass cases are being activated and honored. Bastions of static knowledge worship are being replaced with dialogue and meaningful partnerships. Collaborative stewardship, for example, offers a promising path forward for both museums and cultural institutions, as Cynthia Chavez Lamar discusses in her essay for this issue.

We see a great deal of promise in how the study of Indigenous visual and material culture has been reshaped by the flourishing field of Native American and Indigenous studies. There is an ever-growing number of Indigenous scholars. There is long overdue pressure on universities and museums to hire Native American faculty and curators and to implement ethical standards for the study and collection of Indigenous culture. It is understood that journals, conferences, symposia, and other platforms for discussing Indigenous art can no longer exclude Indigenous voices, and that scholarship must acknowledge and address Indigenous ways of knowing and remembering. The anonymous, authoritarian scholarly voice is no longer assumed to be the standard, as scholars recognize the importance of critical self-reflection and first-person narration. While we recognize there has been movement in the right direction, we must also underscore the considerable work that is still needed to truly dismantle the power imbalances that remain in the academy, museums, and the art world.

These changes are all part of movements to both decolonize and democratize knowledge. One central component of democratizing knowledge is accessibility. We were drawn to working with *Arts* on this Special Issue because it is a reputable journal with a rigorous, blind peer-review process, but, as importantly, because it is open access. The high cost of monographs, anthologies, and journal subscriptions results in a narrowing of our audiences, too often excluding the very communities foregrounded in our scholarship. Because *Arts* is an open-access journal, anyone can download the essays in this Special Issue for free at anytime from anywhere. This accessibility is critical for reaching wider publics, but also for reaching students, since many students do not have the funds to buy the expensive textbooks and anthologies assigned for classes.

We would like to end by reflecting on the generosity that made this Special Issue possible. We thank the authors for their thoughtful essays, as well as the dozens of blind peer reviewers who offered critical feedback. These reviewers came from a wide-range of fields, including art history, Indigenous studies, visual studies, history, anthropology, museum studies, American studies, and so on. Each essay was blind reviewed by at least two, but sometimes three, scholars. A good many of these scholars are leaders in their respective fields. *Arts* asks scholars to review papers within two weeks. Much to our surprise given the multiple demands on scholars' time, a significant number of the papers were reviewed within a month, and, despite the quick turnaround, the feedback was typically incisive and extensive. This dedication and generosity to the study of Native visual and material culture gave us a good deal of hope for the field's future. It is encouraging to see this support. It speaks to the importance of fostering collaborative efforts to share scholarship about the vibrant and diverse

¹⁰ To give just two of the many recent examples, see Andrew R. Chow. 2017. “Walker Art Center Delays Opening of Sculpture Garden Following Controversy.” *New York Times*, May 30. Available online: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/30/arts/design/walker-art-center-sculpture-garden-dakota.html>; and, Steve Johnson. 2019. “Art Institute postpones major Native American pottery exhibit over cultural insensitivity concerns at the last minute.” *Chicago Tribune*, April 1. Available online: <https://www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/museums/ct-ent-art-institute-postpones-native-american-pottery-exhibition-0402-story.html> (accessed on 28 June 2020).

work of Native artists for current and future generations. It is also promising to see the ongoing efforts to understand how nineteenth- and twentieth-century artists influence and shape our understanding of the dynamic artistic production of contemporary Indigenous people. The future is now.



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