



Dyani White Hawk

Hear Her



November 4 – December 15, 2021
List Gallery, Swarthmore College

Nemaxinkwelemawenanak Lenapeyok ok Lenapehoking

Swarthmore College is located on lands historically stewarded by the Lenape—also known as the Lenni Lenape and Delaware—Indigenous people whose ancestral homelands include northeastern Delaware, New Jersey, eastern Pennsylvania, and parts of New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont.¹ Diverse other Algonquian-family tribes, including the Nanticoke in southern New Jersey and eastern Delaware, considered the Lenape to be the grandfather tribe from which others descended.²

The Lenape diaspora reflects the long and complex history of oppressive practices endured by Native peoples. For example, in the late 1600s, Chief Tamanend (c. 1625–1701), signed a number of treaties and expressions of amity with William Penn and other Quaker settlers. However, the terms and spirit of the treaties were soon abrogated by the European colonists. During the 18th century, the Lenape were systematically displaced. By the 1860s, the United States government had forced many Lenape people to move under the Indian Removal Act and related policies; many dispersed throughout North America, ending up in Oklahoma, Wisconsin, Kansas, Indiana, Texas, and Canada. Others remained in their homelands through assimilating and hiding their culture.³

Today, notable Lenape communities include three federally-recognized First Nations in Canada: the Munsee-Delaware Nation, near the city of St. Thomas; the Delaware Nation at Moravian-town, in Chatham-Kent; and Six Nations of the Grand River, near Brantford, Ontario. In the US, the three federally-recognized

Lenape Nations are the Delaware Tribe of Indians in Bartlesville, Oklahoma; the Delaware Nation in the city of Anadarko, Oklahoma; and the Stockbridge-Munsee Tribe in Bowler, Wisconsin. Within the ancestral homelands of the Lenape, long-established communities include the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribal Nation, whose homelands include southern New Jersey, the Delaware Bay, southern New Jersey, and the Delmarva Peninsula, and the Ramapough Lenape Nation in northern New Jersey and southern New York. The state of New Jersey recognizes both tribes as well as the Powhatan Renape Nation. The state of Delaware recognizes the Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware, centered in Kent County.

Native people in Pennsylvania continue to face considerable obstacles. Writing for *Human Organization*, David Minderhout and Andrea Franz note the irony that although Pennsylvania was one of the first places Europeans encountered Indigenous people on this continent, it remains one of very few states that do not have a reservation nor officially recognize any Native American group within its borders.⁴ Nevertheless, in Pennsylvania and elsewhere, there are many individuals and groups dedicated to the continuity of Lenape language and culture. For example, The Delaware Tribe of Indians, based in Bartlesville, Oklahoma has established a definitive online guide, *The Lenape Talking Dictionary*. Another important resource is *Conversations in the Lenape Language*, by Shelley DePaul.

We acknowledge and honor the Lenape people and homeland

Swarthmore College supports language instruction and numerous other endeavors that increase awareness about Native cultures. Through *Hear Her: Works by Dyani White Hawk* and other exhibitions, the List Gallery hopes to increase understanding among Native and non-Native peoples and to contribute to a more just and inclusive society.

— Andrea Packard



1. The breadth of Lenape homelands was underscored by Kristin Jacobs, of the Delaware Nation of Ontario, Canada, and Nikole Webster, of the Mohican-Munsee Nation of Wisconsin, through email exchanges (Nov. 1–2, 2021). The Lenape intermingled with other Indigenous tribes in the Northeastern Woodlands for centuries before colonization.

2. For example, see: <https://nanticoke-lenape.info/history.htm>

3. Adapted from a land acknowledgement that was created by the Native American Heritage Month (NAHM) Committee at Swarthmore College: <https://www.swarthmore.edu/sustainability/land-and-natural-Environment>

4. Minderhout, David, and Andrea Frantz. “Invisible Indians: Native Americans in Pennsylvania.” *Human Organization* 67, no. 1 (2008): 61–67. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44127040>.

Above image: *LISTEN* (still), 2020–2021, see pages 28–32

HD video in collaboration with cinematographer Razelle Benally (Oglala Lakota / Diné) Kristin Jacobs – *Loowanáxung*; Tribe: Eelunaapéewi Lahnkéewiit (Delaware Nation of Ontario, Canada)

Nikole Pecore – *Miikwan*; Tribe: Mohican-Munsee Nation of Wisconsin Language: Lunáapeew; Location: Lenapahokiing, Delaware Water Gap, PA

***Finding Beauty in Community:
The Art of Dyani White Hawk***

Andrea Packard, List Gallery Director

The List Gallery is pleased to present the first Philadelphia-area solo exhibition of works by Dyani White Hawk (Sičáŋǵu Lakota), a Minneapolis-based visual artist, independent curator, and community advocate. *Hear Her* features a selection of mixed-media paintings, a suite of large-scale screenprints, a 20-foot-long photo-sculpture, and an installation of eight videos demonstrating the artist's prolific creativity and wide-ranging practice over the past decade. Whether she is working with traditional materials or incorporating new technologies, White Hawk puts Lakota values at the center of her work and fosters awareness about the diversity and importance of Native cultures. In particular, she emphasizes the essential role Native women play as cultural stewards, community leaders, and artistic innovators.

We are deeply grateful to White Hawk for providing statements about her work for this catalog. We are also indebted to Nancy Marie Mithlo (Chiricahua Apache) for her catalog essay, which examines White Hawk's practice in the broader context of both historic and contemporary Native Arts.

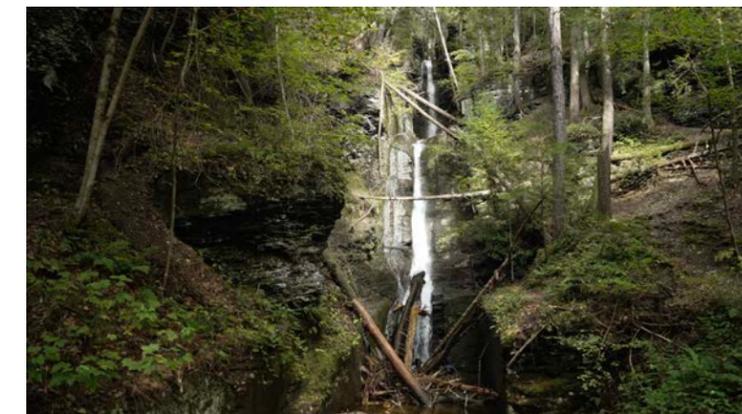
I first encountered White Hawk's work in person in July 2019, when I visited the seminal exhibition, *Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists*, organized by the Minneapolis Institute of Art. White Hawk, who is the former director of All My Relations Gallery in Minneapolis, served as a curatorial advisor for that exhibition of more than 115 works from 1,000 CE to the present. Her luminous 2016 painting, *Untitled (Quiet Strength I)*, stood out, even in this remarkable context.

When I invited White Hawk to exhibit at Swarthmore, she was preparing to install *LISTEN*, her ongoing series of videos, at the Plains Art Museum in Fargo, North Dakota. Each video in *LISTEN* creates what White Hawk calls "opportunities for epiphany." I can personally attest to the profound impact the videos and other works may have on a non-Native person. They not only fueled my efforts to learn about Native cultures, they also moved me to enroll in a Lenape language course.

When I began curating *Hear Her*, the *LISTEN* series featured eight languages: Cocopah, Dakota, Diné, Hock, Kwatsáan, Ojibwe, Seneca, and Tiwa. Since I knew that White Hawk intended to create more videos in the series—and that Swarthmore College was established on lands that were originally stewarded by the Lenape—I asked White Hawk if Swarthmore could commission her to create a video honoring Lenape speakers. We are grateful that she accepted this commission and created the Lenape portion of *LISTEN* in time for her List Gallery exhibition. To do so, White Hawk contacted Kristin Jacobs, a member of Eelunaapéewi Lahkéewiit (the Delaware Nation of Ontario in Canada), and Nikole Pecore, a member of the Mohican-Munsee Nation of Wisconsin. Both women met with White Hawk and cinematographer Razelle Benally (Oglala Lakota / Diné) in northern New Jersey and they traveled together to the Delaware Water Gap, where the Delaware River passes through the Appalachian Mountains—a place held sacred by many Lenape.

The List Gallery's modest size allows viewers to experience *LISTEN* in an intimate and immersive setting. The languages spoken on each video monitor blend—in what may be unexpected ways; at the same time, the placement of directional speakers allows visitors to hear each language by itself when they stand directly in front of the corresponding monitor. In addition, two video screens have been placed just outside the List Gallery, in the Lang Performing Arts Center lobby, to reach beyond the so-called "white cube" of a formal art exhibition setting, inviting the larger community to *Hear Her*—and to see more.

Visitors to the exhibition can take inspiration from the breadth and vitality of White Hawk's practice, whether they are examining labor-intensive paintings that were created in the artist's studio or viewing photographs and videos made in collaboration with Native people from a wide array of tribes and homelands. By listening and looking closely, visitors can experience a unique form of beauty—one that can only emerge through the patient craftwork, truth-telling, and guidance of a community that centers interconnectedness and value in all life.



LISTEN (still), 2020–2021, HD video in collaboration with cinematographer Razelle Benally (Oglala Lakota / Diné)
Language: Lunáapeew; Location: Lenapahokiing, Delaware Water Gap, PA. See pages 28–32

Closer

Nancy Marie Mithlo

Professor, UCLA Department of Gender Studies and core faculty,
American Indian Studies Interdepartmental Program

A little over a decade ago, Sičáŋǵu Lakota artist Dyani White Hawk asked me to visit her painting studio to see a work in progress. She had done something new and wondered what I thought of it. At the time, I was an assistant professor and she was an MFA student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Our lives have intersected in publishing, exhibiting, and expanding the reception of Native arts since.¹ These inter-lapping social worlds of Native arts—what White Hawk terms “our collective voices...not a singular voice, but a field, an ecosystem, a people”—are central factors to consider when interpreting Indigenous aesthetics. These relational values are fully present in the List Gallery exhibit, *Hear Her: Works by Dyani White Hawk*.²

The new work White Hawk showed me in Madison was a large-scale acrylic on canvas—a triptych that incorporated delicate yellow porcupine quills in vertical stripes against ochre, white and black backgrounds (shown at right). Titled *Tiošpaye*, (or extended family), White Hawk’s bold incorporation of diverse materials accomplished several important outcomes. Her decision to work in multiple media—bringing porcupine quills and later, beadwork, into conversation with the western tradition of easel painting—was a novel move. While the comingling of art forms thought of as “traditional” (beadwork, quillwork) with those considered “modern” may appear incongruous to those unfamiliar with Native aesthetics, in tribal communities, these associations are more readily accepted. With *Tiošpaye* and the later work incorporating beadwork, *These Roots Run Deep* (see page 7), White Hawk transgressed several boundaries simultaneously— notions

of time and productivity, conventional uses of quills and beads, and strict art historical analyses based on mutually exclusive categories of reception—tribal and modern.

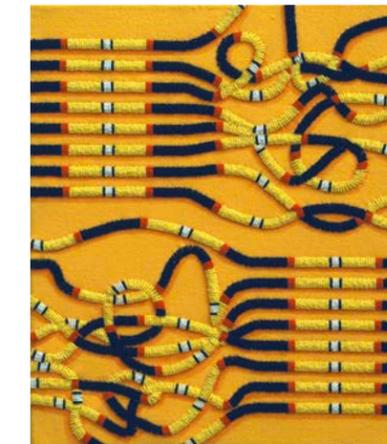
While it is commonly accepted that the tired categories of traditional and contemporary do not accurately reflect the realities of Native arts, other aspects of interpreting the field are not as apparent.³ Take time, for example. As a graduate student pursuing an MFA in painting, White Hawk was faced with the quandary of adhering to a productivity model that dictated what she terms



Dyani White Hawk, *Tiošpaye*, 2010
Acrylic, porcupine quills, thread on canvas and buckskin

“hyper-drive expectations” to create a series of works within a constricted time period adhering to an academic calendar.⁴ The time and care required for slow and precise art forms like quillwork and beadwork had to be faced and managed. White Hawk answered this challenge by creating simulated beadwork through painting, incorporating isolated areas within a canvas that featured the mixed media of beads and quills, and by abstracting and enlarging components of what are often considered ethnographic arts, such as moccasins, dresses, and quilts, into large-scale canvases. The meticulous care with which her canvas surfaces are rendered can be easily overlooked until one considers how the sheen of a line of beads and the undulating waves of lazy stitch patterns are ingeniously crafted into White Hawk’s easel painting practices. The meditative and laborious process of applying adornment to a flat surface is an inseparable aspect of working in the mediums of quillwork and beadwork. When these time and labor considerations are incorporated into art critique, aesthetic conversations are enriched.⁵

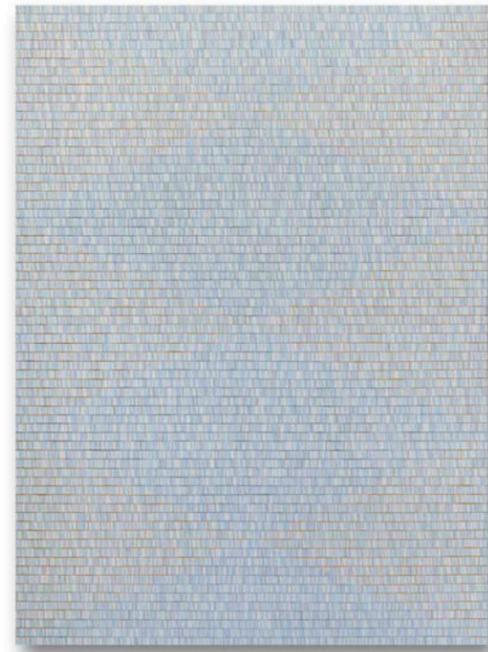
Today, some dozen years after my memorable studio visit, White Hawk’s creative legacy is firmly established, with her unique painting interventions serving as a central contribution to the way we think and write about Native arts. By patiently and persistently demonstrating how painting and mixed media can expand the perceptions of modernism and abstraction, White Hawk has successfully centered cultural practices in contemporary art historical discourses. *Hear Her: Works by Dyani White Hawk* at the List Gallery marks yet another breakthrough moment for White Hawk. Her strong incorporation of lens-based media in the show, rather than solely works on canvas, characterizes her current role as an “expert maker,” unbound by medium or art category. White Hawk’s genre-defying works expose the absurd nature of standard art historical discourses, rejecting both the terminology and the inherent biases of assumed neutral assessments of worth and value.



The act of naming can indicate both an exercise of self-definition, or, in the case of institutional definitions, the exertion of control. Systems of reception and exclusion are important to White Hawk and have informed much of the critical writing on her practice to date.⁶ Previous writers have compared White Hawk’s work to the great masters of studio painting, including Agnes Martin, Barnett Newman, and Robert Motherwell, all artists who incorporated American Indian influences as a part of their aesthetic practices.⁷ While these associations are not altogether inaccurate (White Hawk did study and admire Abstract Expressionists), the effect appears as an effort to elevate her work by way of comparison to great American master painters rather than to the original Native artisans whose works they mimicked.⁸ The lack of recognition for the vast artistic contributions of Indigenous arts practitioners throughout history is a core concern for White Hawk.

Given her absolute commitment to American Indian social and political realities as a basis of her artistic practice, it seems odd that little attention has been paid to comparisons of White Hawk’s

Dyani White Hawk, *These Roots Run Deep*, 2010
Size 13 seed beads and thread on canvas 11 1/2 x 10 inches



works to those of other contemporary artists who define themselves as Native art practitioners. What might be learned if examples within the field of American Indian arts were used solely as a frame of reference for understanding White Hawk's creative practices? Might this move to a decolonizing arts discourse result in a deeper understanding of White Hawk's aesthetic orientation, especially as she incorporates photography and film?

To get a closer interpretation of Native arts, a viewer needs a local roadmap. To get closer to the world of Native Arts entails understanding the history of American Indian art histories, connections, mentorships and genealogical influences.

“Our communities are wildly artistic.”⁹

Schools of thought within the Native arts world emerge from specific geographic and chronological periods. As with any arts movement, the production of American Indian works is impacted by mentors, cohorts, government programs, and the zeitgeist of the times. Notably, White Hawk's fascination with line and abstraction is shared by the California Maidu painter Harry Fonseca (1946-2006), who called Santa Fe home for most of his adult life. Born thirty years before White Hawk, Fonseca represented the second generation of Native artists working in Santa Fe following the founding of the Santa Fe Indian School's art program in 1932. Known for his emblematic Coyote series, Fonseca also produced wildly energetic abstract works. His stripe painting series (at left, top) comprised some of the last canvases he created before his untimely death in 2006. The carefully applied horizontal lines were rendered so that they vibrate off the canvas with an energy and vitality that seemed to defy his deteriorating health.¹⁰



Top: Harry Fonseca (Nisenan Maidu, Hawaiian, Portuguese, 1946-2006), *Untitled*, n.d. Acrylic on canvas, 48 ½ x 66 ¼ x 1 ½ inches. © 2016 Harry Fonseca Collection Autry Museum, Los Angeles; 2016.10.242

Bottom: Dyani White Hawk, *Untitled (Quiet Strength VI)*, 2019. Acrylic and oil on canvas 72 x 52 inches

Installation view, *Dyani White Hawk: Speaking to Relatives*, February 18–May 16, 2021. Charlotte Crosby Kemper Gallery, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art. Photo: E.G. Schempf, 2021



White Hawk's *Untitled (Quiet Strength VI)*, shown on page 8, exercises a parallel energy, sensibility and grace. Its monochrome and pastels lines undulate and at times playfully crisscross in horizontal lines and geometric forms reminiscent of hourglass shapes found in both Lakota artforms and Navajo textiles. As a student at the tribal college, the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico (BFA 2008), White Hawk was a part of an aesthetic sensibility that prioritized painting as a central artistic impulse. Native art forms are a primary influence for the vast artistic output of New Mexico, a known destination for artists, including Agnes Martin, who called the state her home.

A similar set of associated pathways is present in White Hawk's large-scale color photographs of Native women titled *I Am Your Relative*. Created as a powerful antidote to representational silenc-

es, this work appears as a linear presentation of six Native women facing the camera and donning black t-shirts that read in succession: "I AM," "MORE THAN YOUR DESIRE," "MORE THAN YOUR FANTASY," "MORE THAN A MASCOT," "ANCESTRAL LOVE PRAYER SACRIFICE," and "YOUR RELATIVE" (see page 9). In response to the high rates of violence against Native women and the invisibility of these crimes, White Hawk's monumental statement creates an active presence-making. The physicality of six women rendered in life-size form and presented as a line of double-sided suspended images effectively mirrors White Hawk's 2017 performance on which this piece is based. Shared influences—the entanglements of the world of Native-arts making—are present in both the style of portraiture and the utilization of signage featured on the women's graphic t-shirts.

For *I Am Your Relative*, White Hawk selected University of Wisconsin-Madison Ho-Chunk photographer Tom Jones as the portrait series photographer. While she scripted the dress, posture and monochrome background utilized in the work, astute viewers can discern a congruent aesthetic between Jones and White Hawk that embraces the order of beadwork application, as seen in the serial placement of portraits, the straightforward composition, and the dignity and ease that the subjects convey in their posture and countenance. Jones' work typically features subjects squarely facing the camera in life-sized portraits exhibited in a linear fashion. A potent resonance is evident in White Hawk's *I Am Your Relative*, that is rendered in an encyclopedic manner—strung as clearly as a line of beads.

The world of Native arts, like any arts movement, produces genealogies of influence, support, and life-long friendships. White Hawk served as a curatorial assistant for Jones' 2009 Venice Biennale exhibit, *Rendezvoused*, featuring a series of Great Lakes historic re-enactors dressed in Native garb. Later, Jones served on White Hawk's MFA committee. Both artists call the Great Lakes



region (Minneapolis and Madison) home, providing (in a manner akin to the Southwest influence described above), a related sense of place, lighting, and even dress. These influences and mutual experiences create a relationality that is visually evident and also socially felt. A familial bond is a common motif of Indigenous arts practice as curators and artists organize, strategize, and execute exhibitions as a team of co-conspirators. Of this network of practitioners, White Hawk observes that the mutual appreciation, collaboration, and aid are "utterly necessary for us to make it anywhere."¹¹

White Hawk's incorporation of signage on shirts is a significant example of how Native artists incorporate new materials. Mohawk artist Shelley Niro employed this medium in her film and photo series *The Shirt*, featured in the 2003 Venice Biennale exhibit *Pellerossasogna: The Shirt* (shown at left). In a manner consistent with White Hawk's and Jones' predilection for a series of photographs, Niro likewise strings her photographic narrative together as in a line of beadwork. Her incorporation of t-shirt signage in *The Shirt* however, utilizes dark humor and irony as iconic references to commerce and consumerism rather than the declarative presence-making of White Hawk's *I am Your Relative*.

Harmonious sequencing and repetition are a mainstay of Indigenous aesthetics—in music, in ceremony, and in the visual arts. There is a glorious simplicity in the stacking of beads across a surface, in the movement of fringe swaying in unison along a line of dancers, and in the power of many voices in accompaniment to the sound of a drum. These registers of seeing, of comprehending, and of uplifting the spirit are all available if one is attuned to the prompts and attends to the significance of local and relational webs of influence present throughout generations of Native practitioners.

Careful listening and a willingness to forgo familiar sign posts are prerequisites to a deeper understanding of Native arts. Accessing the unique contours of Indigenous worldviews requires humility, patience, and the courage to enter unknown conceptual terrain. This ability to "get closer" moves the viewer towards White Hawk's ultimate aim of cultural understanding and compassion. Getting closer also leads the viewer to an appreciation of the vibrancy and power of contemporary Native arts practices enacted across time and space. These similar rhythms and movements are sustained by deep and significant relationality, an essential hallmark of Indigenous aesthetic practices.

Tom Jones, *Elizah Leonard*, 2019, digital photograph with beadwork, 40 x 40 inches
Edition of 5, from the series *Strong Unrelenting Spirits*. Image courtesy of Bockley Gallery

Shelley Niro, *The Shirt*, 2003 (detail), one of nine Duratrans transparencies presented in lightboxes, 4 3/4 x 43 5/16 x 54 5/16 inches. Image courtesy of the artist

Notes

1. White Hawk's published essay was completed while she was a MFA candidate at UW-Madison: "Unexpected Parallels: Commonalities between Native American and Outsider Arts," *Wicazo-Sa Review*, volume 27, issue 1 (2012). The Venice Biennale exhibit she participated in was *Rendezvoused—To Go Somewhere*, 53rd La Biennale di Venezia featuring the work of Andrea Carlson and UW-Madison professor of photography Tom Jones.

2. White Hawk email exchange with author August 31, 2021.

3. See First American Art Magazine Style Guideline: <https://firstamericanart-magazine.com/submissions/faam-style-guide/>. "Warning: Do *not* pair the terms *traditional* and *contemporary*; they are trite and create a false dichotomy."

4. Conversation with artist August 31, 2021.

5. For a more involved discussion of "traditional media" see Sherry Farell Racette's 2017 article in *Art Journal*: "Tuft Life: Stitching Sovereignty in Contemporary Indigenous Art" 76 (2): 114-123.<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00043249.2017.1367198?needAccess=true>

6. See the 2021 *Speaking to Relatives*, exhibit catalogue, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, MO.

7. For representative scholarship on this topic see Bill Anthes. *Native Moderns: American Indian Painting, 1940–1960*. Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2006. Accessed September 2, 2021. doi:10.2307/j.ctv11317sx.

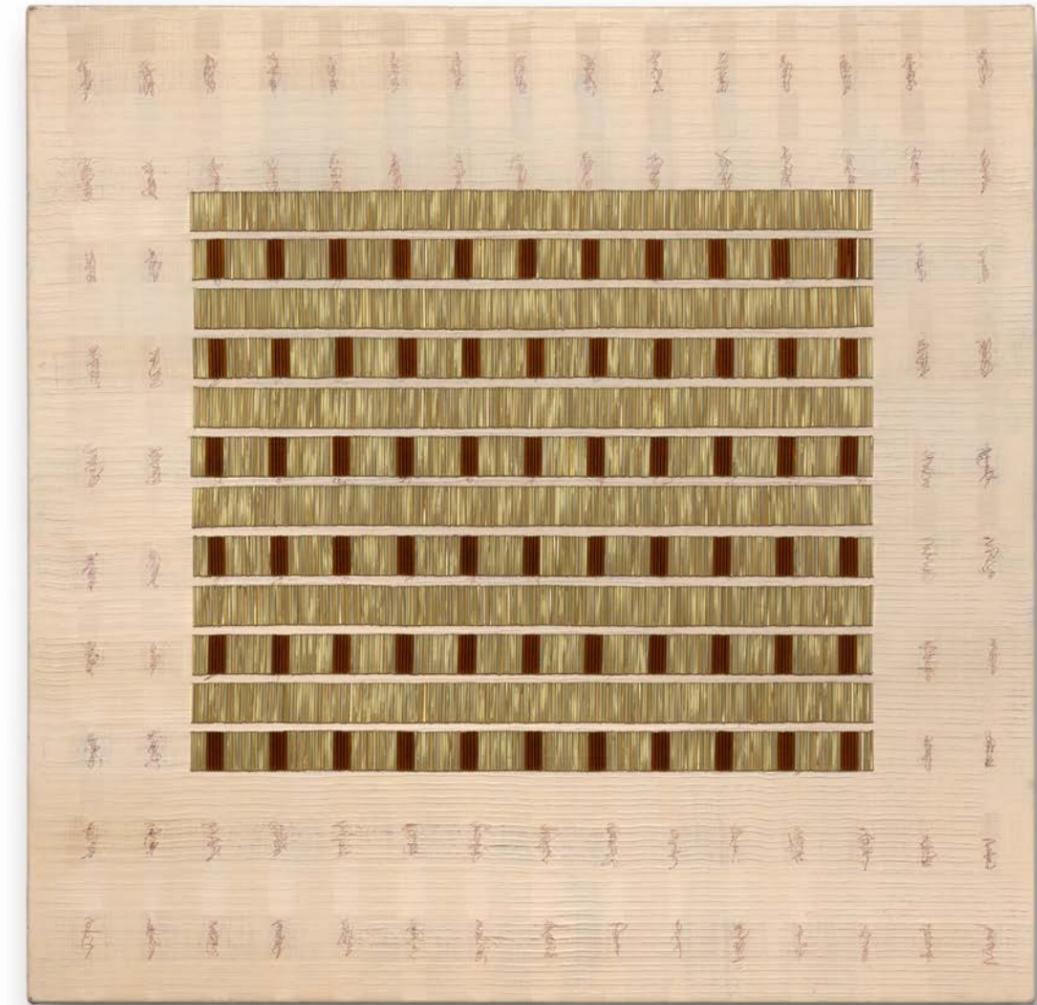
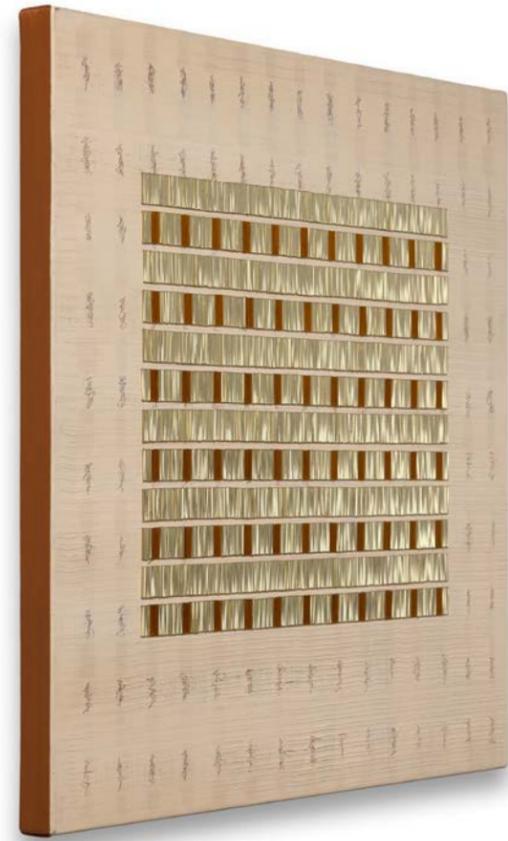
8. See for example the exhibition that demonstrates Agnes Martin's reliance on Navajo textiles: <https://www.pacegallery.com/exhibitions/agnes-martin-navajo-blankets/>. "While Martin took no direct inspiration from the aesthetics of Navajo weaving in her approach to painting, she spent much of her life in New Mexico, and the region's cultural history and artistic production suffused her experience."

9. Bemis Alumni ARTalks: Dyani White Hawk. Streamed live on Feb 9, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZkqANAP1HSA&t=50s> at 26.30. Accessed July 22, 2021.

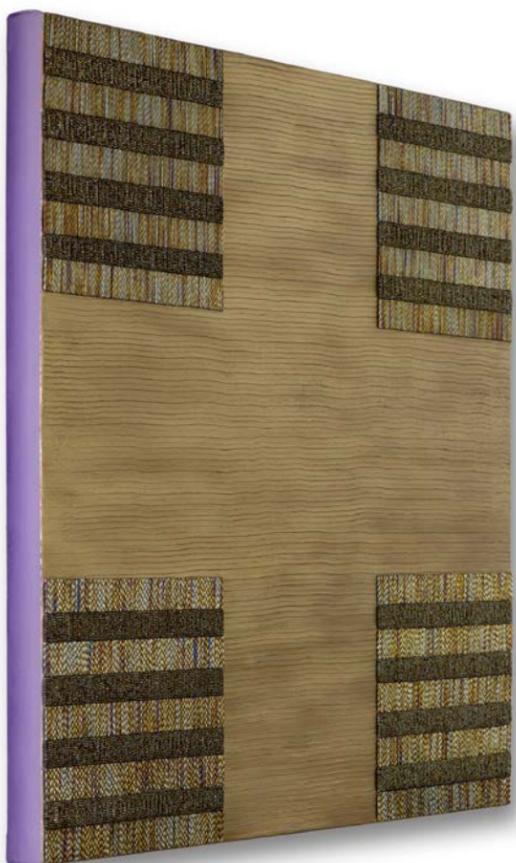
10. Author conversation with Harry Fonseca, n.d.

11. Conversation with artist August 31, 2021.

Nancy Marie Mithlo (Chiricahua Apache), is professor of Gender Studies at UCLA, and a core faculty member with the American Indian Studies Interdepartmental program. She earned her doctorate in cultural anthropology from Stanford University in 1993; her dissertation focused on the negotiated role of contemporary American Indian artists. Her recent publications include *Knowing Native Arts* (University of Nebraska Press, 2020), *Making History: IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts* (Senior Editor and contributor, University of New Mexico Press, 2020) and *Fraud in American Indian Communities* (Senior Editor and contributor, UCLA American Indian Culture and Research Journal, 2019). In 2018–2019 she was a UCLA Institute of American Cultures, American Indian Studies Center Visiting Scholar; a George A. and Eliza Gardner Howard Foundation Fellow, Brown University; and a Getty Research Institute Guest Researcher. She was a co-curator and Senior Editor of the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian touring exhibit and publication *For a Love of His People: The Photography of Horace Poolaw* (Yale University Press, 2014). She edited and contributed to *American Indian Curatorial Practice* (*Wicazo-Sa Review*, 2012) and *Manifestations: New Native Art Criticism* (Museum of Contemporary Native Arts and DAP, 2011). Mithlo's curatorial work has resulted in nine exhibits at the Venice Biennale. From 2014 through 2018, she was Chair of American Indian Studies at the Autry Museum of the American West.







18 *Untitled (Bronze)*, 2019, acrylic, oil, bugle and seed beads, synthetic sinew, thread on canvas, 30 x 30 inches
Courtesy of the Davis Museum at Wellesley College, Wellesley, Massachusetts
Museum purchase, The Dorothy Johnston Towne (Class of 1923) Fund

Takes Care of Them, 2019

pages 24 – 28

Inspired by Plains-style women’s dentalium dresses, the set speaks to the ways in which Native women collectively care for our communities. Through acts of creation, nurturing, leadership, love, and protection carried out in infinite forms, our grandmothers, aunts, sisters, cousins, nieces, and friends collectively care for our communities. As a suite, these works speak to the importance of kinship roles and tribal structures that emphasize the necessity of extended family and tribal and communal ties as meaningful and significant relationships necessary for the rearing of healthy and happy individuals and communities.

The idea for this suite of four dresses came from the honored roles veterans serve within the pow wow arena as well as the practice of asking four veterans to stand in the four cardinal directions during the *wabléniča* ceremony. I was inspired by the ways that, within our everyday lives, Native women also stand guard, protect, and nurture our well being. Each print is individually named with a quality that embodies the ways women care for us all and aims to acknowledge and show gratitude for the many women in my life who have helped Create, Nurture, Protect, and Lead in ways that have taught me what it means to be a good relative.

– Dyani White Hawk

I Am Your Relative, 2020

pages 24 – 28

The following statement, commissioned by the artist, was written by Sasha Brown (Santee Dakota).

These photographs and corresponding installation are dedicated to Indigenous women and girls; our connections to one another, our complex and varied identities, our power, strength, survival and humanity.

The piece is based in and reflects Očeti Šakowin (L/N/Dakota) tribal beliefs and understandings of *mitakuye oyasin* which translates to “all my relations.” The concept of *mitakuye oyasin* speaks to our common humanity and destiny. We are all related and connected to each other as human beings, to all life, and to the land. The health and wellbeing of one affects all. We all have equal value and inherent worth. In recognition of that relationship, our women and girls should be looked after, cared for and protected at equal value to all others.

Women and girls are the heartbeat of our Native Nations. Traditionally, women were highly respected and fundamentally understood to be leaders, decision makers and life givers of the people. Native women in today’s America are not seen as human. We are often not seen at all. Our profound invisibility gives way to gross stereotypes and distorted sexualized caricatures that dehumanize and commodify us. With invisibility comes a vulnerability that predators know they can utilize and manipulate. As a result, Indigenous women and girls face disproportionately high rates of violence and abuse. According to research from the National Institute for Justice, the research arm of the Department of Justice, Indigenous women face a murder rate 10 times higher than the national average, with 84% experiencing some form of violence in their life-

times. Sixty-one percent of Indigenous women (three out of five) have been assaulted in their lifetimes. This is unacceptable. Lack of visibility and the dehumanization of Indigenous women in mainstream society have exacerbated violence, erasure and the epidemic of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG).

These photos serve as a reminder that Indigenous women are more than the stereotypes placed upon us. We are more than the horrific statistics and more than someone’s sexual fantasy. We are mothers, daughters, and family members who are contributing to our communities, Nations, and America in immense and vital ways. We have defied and survived attempts at genocide, termination, and assimilation. We are resilient and strong. Our existence is rooted in generations of strength, survival, interdependence, and love.

As human beings, we are all related to one another. It is our collective responsibility to stand up for one another. Our Indigenous sisters deserve to be heard, seen, cared for, and protected. It is our collective responsibility to advocate for justice for MMIW and create a healthy future for Indigenous women and girls. Please act now to support the important work taking place to protect and care for Indigenous women and children.

As an ally, you can advocate for Indigenous representation, disrupt false narratives and stereotypes, and use your position to uplift the voices, lived experiences, and contributions of Indigenous women and girls.



Takes Care of Them, 2019, screenprint with metallic foil, suite of four prints, individually titled from left: *Wówahokun̄kiya* | *Lead*, *Wókaḡe* | *Create*, *Nakíčižij* | *Protect*, and *Wacháŋtognaka* | *Nurture*
Edition of 18, each print: 32 x 55 1/2 inches. Courtesy of Highpoint Editions, publisher and lender





LISTEN, 2020–2021

Multi-channel HD video installation with sound
Dyani White Hawk in collaboration with cinematographer
Razelle Benally (Oglala Lakota / Diné)

How many languages can you identify by sound?

French? German? Russian? Spanish? Chinese? Japanese? Hindi?
Italian? Swedish? Irish? Hmong? Somali? Dutch? Portuguese?
Vietnamese? Arabic? . . .

The average American adult can likely identify, simply by sound,
upwards of 10-20 languages. The majority of those languages, in-
cluding English, are not from this land.

Conversely, the majority of Americans are likely not able to iden-
tify by sound more than one or two, if any, of the languages from
this land. Due to the forces of colonization, this reality has likely
never even crossed the minds of most.

Can you identify by sound Dakota? Ojibwe? Hočąk? Menominee?
Diné? Tiwa? Quechan? Cocopah? Seneca? Comanche? Kiowa?
Cherokee? Yupik? Keres? . . .

“According to the Indigenous Language Institute, there were once
more than 300 indigenous languages spoken in the United States,
and approximately 175 remain today. They also estimate that
without restoration efforts, there will be at most 20 still spoken in
2050.” – Koyfman, S., *Babbal Magazine*, October 4, 2017

LISTEN aims to chip away at one of the biggest challenges fac-
ing Native people, the tremendous lack of knowledge among
the American public regarding Native people, history, and our

contemporary tribal nations. Because the full national history
of this land is not taught in our public education systems, most
Americans are largely oblivious to the history and contemporary
realities of Native people.

LISTEN is a video installation created for museum and gallery
spaces with between eight and 24 monitors, as the project grows.
In each monitor, footage of land and environment is behind and
layered over the body of a Native woman Indigenous to that re-
gion. Each woman speaks for the duration of the video in her
Indigenous language. Some speak about their experiences in
boarding school, when they were forced to abandon speaking their
Native languages. Others share prayers, stories of their relation-
ship to the land and tribal and personal stories. The aim is not for
you to be able to understand or translate what they are sharing,
but simply to be introduced to and familiarized with the cadence
and sounds of a small sampling of the Indigenous languages of
this land.

LISTEN provides a window into the immense division between
the greater American public and our Indigenous Nations, as well
as the tremendous omissions of truth in how our national history
is taught.

– Dyani White Hawk



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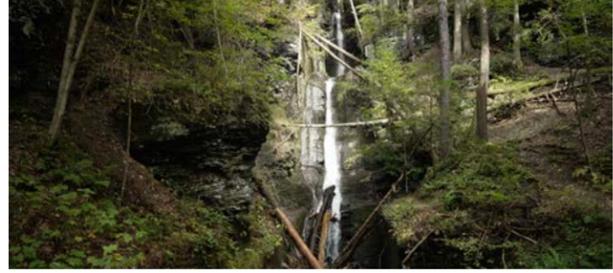
12



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LISTEN

Video Stills

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1. Language: Seneca
Location: Tonowanda Seneca Nation Reservation, NY
2. Leiha Peters – *Gěöya 'e:s*
Tribe: Seneca
Language: Seneca
Location: Tonowanda Seneca Nation Reservation, NY
3. Andrea “Osh” Fairbanks – *Bagwajikwe*
Tribe: Leech Lake Anishinaabe
Language: Ojibwe
Location: Mille Lacs Indian Reservation, MN
4. Language: Ojibwe
Location: Mille Lacs Indian Reservation, MN
5. Lorraine Ryan German – *Oyáte Wacinyanpi Wiŋ*
Tribe: Sisseton Whapeton Dakota
Language: Dakota
Location: Lake Traverse Reservation, SD
6. Language: Dakota
Location: Lake Traverse Reservation, SD

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7. Language: Cocopah
Location: Cocopah Indian Reservation, AZ
8. Irene Sharkey
Tribe: Cocopah
Language: Cocopah
Location: Cocopah Indian Reservation, AZ

9. Lucinda Polk – *Oshiny*
Tribe: Quechan
Language: Kwatsáan
Location: Ft. Yuma Quechan Reservation, CA

10. Language: Kwatsáan
Location: Ft. Yuma Quechan Reservation, CA

11. JoAnn Jones – *Haahe maanjwiga*
Tribe: Ho-Chunk
Language: Hocąk
Location: Devil's Lake, WI

12. Language: Hocąk
Location: Devil's Lake, WI

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13. Language: Tiwa
Location: Taos Pueblo, NM

14. RoseMarie Lujan
Tribe: Taos Pueblo
Language: Tiwa
Location: Taos Pueblo, NM

15. Language: Diné
Location: Tsé' baa'ádotłizhí, Blue Hills, St. Michaels, AZ

16. Shandiin Hiosik Yazzie
Tribe: Diné, Akimel O'odham, Yoeme
Language: Diné
Location: Tsé' baa'ádotłizhí: Blue Hills, St. Michaels, AZ

17. Kristin Jacobs – *Loowanáxung*
Tribe: Eelunaapéewi Lahkéewiit (Delaware Nation of Ontario, Canada)
Nikole Pecore – *Miikwan*
Tribe: Mohican-Munsee Nation of Wisconsin
Language: Lunáapeew
Location: Lenapahokiing, Delaware Water Gap, PA

18. Language: Lunáapeew
Location: Lenapahokiing, Delaware Water Gap, PA

Dyani White Hawk (Sičánǵu Lakota) is a visual artist and independent curator based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She earned an MFA from the University of Wisconsin-Madison (2011) and a BFA from the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico (2008). She served as gallery director and curator for the All My Relations Gallery in Minneapolis from 2011 to 2015. White Hawk has received numerous awards and fellowships, including the Carolyn Glasoe Bailey Foundation Minnesota Art Prize (2020), United States Artists Fellowship in Visual Art (2019), Eiteljorg Fellowship for Contemporary Art (2019), Jerome Hill Artists Fellowship (2019), Forecast for Public Art Mid-Career Development Grant (2019), Nancy Graves Grant for Visual Artists (2018); Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant (2014); and the McKnight Visual Artist Fellowship (2014/2015). She has also been awarded artist residencies in New Orleans, Santa Fe, Australia, South Africa, Russia, and Germany. Recent or planned museum surveys of her work include the following: *She Gives*, at the Plains Museum of Art (2020); *Speaking to Relatives*, a major ten-year survey exhibition, at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art (2021); and *Hear Her*, which will travel to the Halsey Institute of Art, South Carolina, in early 2022. White Hawk's work has been collected by numerous distinguished museums, including the Aktá Lakota Museum, Chamberlain, SD; the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Walker Art Center and Minneapolis Institute of Art in Minneapolis, MN; Saint Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, MO; the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; and the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. White Hawk is also a sought-after curator, juror, and institutional-review panelist. Recently, she was a consulting curator for the seminal traveling exhibition, *Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists*, organized by the Minneapolis Institute of Art. Dyani White Hawk is represented by Bockley Gallery.



Artist's website: <https://www.dyaniwhitehawk.com/>

Artist's Acknowledgements

Wopila tanka, thank you so very much to the many people in my life that support my practice directly and indirectly through friendship, family, support, and love. As the years go by, the love and gratitude I have for my family grows deeper. They make so much room for my practice to thrive and evolve. They protect that room and cheer me on every step of the way. Often, they work beside me. In many ways, the work that comes from my studio is an extension of my family, both by blood and marriage, as well as family through community and kinship.

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Last, but certainly not least, I am thankful to my community (in its many forms) and ancestors that came before me. I am so happy to be a part of the continuum of art on this land base.

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– Andrea Packard

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Unless otherwise noted, images of works by Dyani White Hawk appear courtesy of the artist and Bockley Gallery.

Front cover:

LISTEN (stills), 2020–2021, HD videos in collaboration with cinematographer Razelle Benally (Oglala Lakota / Diné)

Back cover:

LISTEN (still), 2020–2021, HD video in collaboration with cinematographer Razelle Benally (Oglala Lakota / Diné)
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Editor: Andrea Packard

Design: Tess Wei

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