

Remembering the Future: 100 Years of Inspiring Art

Ann E. Marshall, director of research, and Diana F. Pardue, chief curator

Through the decades, the Heard Museum has experienced significant milestones in the process of exhibiting and collecting Indigenous paintings and sculpture. 2021 marked another important event as we celebrated examples from the Heard Museum collection in the exhibition *Remembering the Future: 100 Years of Inspiring Art*.

Looking back, it is important to note that Maie and Dwight Heard purchased three major works by Hopi artist Fred Kabotie in 1925. But it was with the leadership of curator Tom Cain in 1952 that the museum held its first exhibition of paintings, with help from Phoenix-based Native arts retailer Fred Wilson. Utilizing loans from local collectors, the Heard continued presenting painting exhibitions until 1964, when the museum began a series of single-artist exhibition sales shows that were scheduled monthly. The exhibitions were presented in the original auditorium of the Heard (now the Sandra Day O'Connor Gallery) in what was at that time called the Gallery of Indian Art.

The year 1973 marked another important milestone, as the Heard began a series of invitational exhibitions following a major expansion in the late 1960s. The first invitational held in the newly built Gallery of Indian Art was titled *Sculpture I*. In 1983, the Heard hosted the first in a series of fine-art invitationals that became the foundation for the biennial invitationals that continued through the year 2002. Three large-scale landmark exhibitions included *Shared Visions: Native American Painters and Sculptors in the Twentieth Century* in 1991, *Remix: New Modernities in a Post-Indian World* (in partnership with the National Museum of the American Indian) in 2007, and, more recently, *Larger Than Memory: Contemporary Art from Indigenous North America* in 2020.

These exhibitions and other significant individual-artist shows organized by the Heard brought contemporary works to our audiences while often adding significant works to the collection. Of particular note in this regard are Houser and Haozous: *A Sculpture Retrospective* in 1984, Dan Namingha: *Hopi-Tewa Reflections* in 1987, Harry Fonseca: *An Artist's Journey* in 2009, and T.C. Cannon: *Of God and Mortal Men* in 2017, as well as exhibitions from our colleagues at other museums, such as Oscar Howe: *A Retrospective Exhibition* in 1982, Kay WalkingStick: *An American Artist* in 2016, and Rick Bartow: *Things You Know But Cannot Explain* in 2017.

Opening this October, *Remembering the Future: 100 Years of Inspiring Art* presents art by more than 70 artists from the Heard Museum's collection. By looking back at past exhibitions and collecting practices, it is possible to identify important works in the collection, many of which were key to the myriad exhibitions that were previewed at the Heard. If there was a common theme, it was the emphasis on living artists and the creation

of programming that allowed the artists to provide exciting and inspirational ideas.

1920s

The decade of the 1920s featured several artists. Awa Tsireh from San Ildefonso Pueblo was the first Native artist to be known nationally. His paintings were included in exhibitions in Chicago, Indianapolis and New York in the 1920s, and he received major coverage in a 1925 article in the *New York Times*. Largely self-taught after being provided the tools to draw at San Ildefonso Day School, Awa Tsireh became the leading painter and was followed by younger San Ildefonso artists Tonita Peña, Tse Ye Mu (Romando Vigil) and Gilbert Atencio, all of whom trained at Dorothy Dunn's Studio at the Santa Fe Indian School. Fred Kabotie was another significant artist who came to prominence in the 1920s. Kabotie studied with Dunn, and, like many of these young artists, his work primarily focused on ceremonial themes. Kabotie spoke of his early interest in drawing Katsinam and ceremonies, painting what he missed while away from Hopi and at school. The Heard's paintings acquired in 1925 would have been painted around the time Kabotie was graduating from Santa Fe Public High School and beginning his career as an artist.

1930s

In the 1930s, the Heard acquired a Buffalo Dance painting by Tonita Peña, probably from the early 1930s. In her painting, Peña condensed the color and variety of a complex social ceremony into eight figures, shown in rhythmic coordination, with meticulously detailed accoutrements. Also acquired in this decade were paintings by Navajo artists Gerald Nailor and Andrew Van Tsinhnahjinnie, who also began their art practice at the Santa Fe Indian School in classes taught by Dorothy Dunn. Tsinhnahjinnie recalled Dunn supplying colors rather than dictating subject matter. His appreciation for color is evident in his painting of a Navajo woman dyeing yarn, which she has draped over nearby bushes. He selected a subject that plays out in the present, as weavers inspired by the past continue to explore color through the art of dyeing.

In contrast, Waldo Mootzka, with his *Pollination of the Cornseries*, was breaking new ground with exotic, European Art Deco–inspired works. Artists were receiving inspiration from a much wider world and experimenting with how it could fit into their past.

1940s

The 1940s selections feature action. Velino Herrera, another student at the Studio, painted horses, a rider and deer fleeing before a whirlwind. Ernest Spybuck created an animated scene of a Shawnee Indian war dance that, unlike earlier ceremony depictions, shows a rich landscape in which a lively group of community spectators visits and laughs. A young Charles Loloma created a mural for Hopi High School that portrays the Buffalo Dance. Loloma trained with Fred Kabotie, and at the age of only 17 traveled with him to San Francisco to paint murals at the 1939 Golden Gate International Exposition. As with Peña, Loloma was careful to depict certain aspects of the regalia correctly. A Hopi man knowledgeable about weaving, he captured the subtle differences in the twill weave of a

woman's dress.

1950s

Important works by Pablita Velarde and Pop Chalee were added to the museum's collection in the 1950s, with very different but colorful landscapes. Pop Chalee was a frequent presence in Fred Wilson's shop in downtown Phoenix. Her *Enchanted Forest* is a night scene that drew inspiration from her Taos childhood, but it is entirely fanciful as a rich variety of animals leap and gambol through glowing trees and bushes. In contrast, *Deer and Aspens* by Pablita Velarde could also be a night scene, an autumn night, but it is more realistic, with vividly colored leaves and foliage and deer whose bodies have coats with a velvet-like quality. They are both inspired scenes that make a viewer want to step inside.

1960s

In 1964, the first of the Heard's ambitiously scheduled monthly exhibitions featured Blackbear Bosin, whose painting *Kiowa Medicine Man* exemplifies his early work. Also from the 1960s is a cubist painting of an Apache Ga'an by Cheyenne artist W. Richard West Sr. West earned both a BFA and MFA from the University of Oklahoma and chaired the Bacone College art department from 1947 to 1970. He later taught at Haskell Institute for seven years, inspiring many of his American Indian students.

In 1960, Oscar Howe remembered the Ghost Dance tradition that swept through Plains and Great Basin areas, painting dancers enveloped in flames. Howe actively explored ways to bring forward the events of the past using his own painting style. He was certain that the way forward for American Indian art lay with artists free to make individual statements apart from the established canon of Indian art.

At the close of the decade, in 1969, the Heard Museum inaugurated its two-level, 3,000-square-foot Gallery of Indian Art. The first exhibition in the new gallery featured paintings by San Ildefonso Pueblo artist Gilbert Atencio. Later exhibitions featured paintings by Helen Hardin, Pop Chalee and Mary Morez.

1970s

With this gallery, the Heard moved into a new period in American Indian art.

Experimentation with style and subject matter, including social commentary, was growing. The invitational series that began with *Sculpture I* in 1973 was followed by a painting invitational in 1974, a second sculpture invitational in 1974-75 and a drawing invitational in 1977. With the inauguration of sculpture invitationals, sculpture became an increasingly important part of the Heard's collection. Funding provided by the National Endowment for the Arts allowed the museum to purchase 32 new works, including paintings by Oscar Howe and sculptures by John Hoover, Allan Houser and Doug Hyde.

Invitational artists George Morrison and T.C. Cannon explored new directions, with Morrison working in abstract expressionism and Cannon turning the clichés of "Indian painting" into ironic statements. Typifying the turbulence of a decade of protest, Michael Kabotie painted Hopi deer dancers protesting the behavior of visitors as one deer dancer seized a camera. Kabotie said, "This was my protest painting, and the confiscation of the camera by the deer dancer was the symbol of taking back the spiritual sovereignty of

Native ceremonies.”

1980s

In the 1980s, the museum's permanent collection grew further with the addition of the sculpture *Red Totem* by George Morrison and three female forms: *Hidden Beauty*, a nude in Carrara marble by Allan Houser, and two sculptures by Bob Haozous, a mounted carved marionette titled *Puppet Princess* and an environmental statement, *Ozone Madonna*. In creating *Hidden Beauty*, Houser chose to sculpt a nude figure, commonly done in mainstream art, but infrequently done by American Indian artists at the time. Haozous continued to amplify social statements. In *Ozone Madonna*, the feminine “Earth mother” is besieged by pollutant-spewing cars, and in *Puppet Princess*, the fetishized “Indian princess” is reduced to puppet status.

Harry Fonseca's *When Coyote Leaves the Rez* was added, as were works by Biennial artists Jean LaMarr, Emmi Whitehorse, Kay WalkingStick, Joe Feddersen, Linda Lomahaftewa and Frank LaPena.

NO PHOTOGRAPHS
and
RECORDINGS

of ceremonial dances...
Violators will be fined
\$50 and equipment
confiscated.

Under order of
The Governor and
TRIBAL COUNCIL...



1990s

When Dr. Rennard Strickland and Heard Museum Curator of Fine Art Margaret Archuleta developed the exhibition *Shared Visions: Native American Painters and Sculptors in the Twentieth Century*, they planned a history-making conference, held May 8-11, 1991. It was an important time to stop and reflect, as the 20th century was in its last decade and many American Indian art events were contemplating the 1992 Quincentenary of Columbus' arrival in the Western Hemisphere. Fourteen of the panelists who spoke at the conference are represented in *Remembering the Future*, including elders Allan Houser, W. Richard West, Joe Herrera, George Morrison and Pablita Velarde. Velarde's memories of early painters created a link to the past. During the conference, Frank LaPena, listening to Houser, Velarde and West, said, "Looking at the elders, they have inspired me more by their example, than teaching me directly," Some works, such as Jaune Quick-to-See Smith's *Rain* and James Lavadour's *New Blood*, were purchased for inclusion in the *Shared Visions* exhibition. Other pieces in the museum's collection from this time are by Biennial artists Rick Bartow and Peter Jemison, as well as early works in glass by Preston Singletary and Susan Point.

2000s

In the 2000s, among the additions to the permanent collection were Diné photographer Will Wilson's *Auto Immune Response #1*, a reaction to climate change from his exhibition, as well as the ceramic sculpture about family and relationships titled *Mothers and Daughters* by Roxanne Swentzell and Rose Simpson from the exhibition *Mothers and Daughters: Stories in Clay*.

2010s

The 2010s added important works, including Shonto Begay's *Moab Bound*. The Heard also commissioned the work *Grand Canyon* by Tony Abeyta to complement the exhibition *Over the Edge: Fred Harvey at the Grand Canyon and in the Great Southwest*. Works by Kent Monkman, Cara Romero and Meryl McMaster were included in the exhibition *Larger Than Memory*.

Michael Kabotie (Hopi), 1942 - 2009, *Deer Dancers Protestors*, 1972.
Acrylic on matboard, 46 x 18 inches. Heard Museum purchase, IAC457.

2020s

The most recent addition to the museum's fine-art collection is Steven Yazzie's 2021 painting *The Protector*, from his Coyote Series. Yazzie's protector in the painting is the rainbow. He explained, "A title for the painting came to me after the completion of the work. The rainbow in this regard is the originator of this theme of protection for Navajos. It is the protector of our stories, our life ways, and the world we live in." As for Coyote, Yazzie said, "To create a bit of drama, Coyote stares back and focuses intently on this sculptural object in the foreground. This is the moment in question ... the intersection of spiritual beings, of the ancestral and the modern."

Steven J. Yazzie (Dine/Laguna Pueblo), b. 1970, *The Protector*, 2021. Oil on canvas. Gift of Drs. William G. and Kathleen L. Howard, 4988-1.



Reflecting on the inspiration that the 1991 *Shared Visions Conference* brought to participants and attendees, we hope to bring together artists showing in *Remembering the Future* in 2022. After 30 years of change and challenges, it seems an appropriate time to gather once again to remember and to find inspiration for the future.