

Our People

Our Land

Our Images



PROGRAMMING GUIDE

OUR PEOPLE, OUR LAND, OUR IMAGES



Larry McNeil (Tlingit), *Ye'il*, 2006, digital print, 31 x 30 inches, courtesy the artist and C. N. Gorman Museum, University of California, Davis, CA.



Shan Goshorn (Cherokee), *Pawnee Woman in Field* from the series "Earth Renewal/Earth Return," c. 2002, hand-tinted double-exposed black-and-white photograph, 24 x 30 inches, courtesy the artist and C. N. Gorman Museum, University of California, Davis, CA.



Will Wilson (Diné), *Auto Immune Response #4*, 2005, inkjet print, 20 x 28 inches, courtesy the artist and C. N. Gorman Museum, University of California, Davis, CA.



Pena Bonita (Apache/ Seminole), *Skywalker*, 2006, color print, 20 x 16 inches, courtesy the artist and C. N. Gorman Museum, University of California, Davis, CA.

OUR PEOPLE, OUR LAND, OUR IMAGES Opportunities to view indigenous peoples through the eyes of indigenous photographers are rare and recent. This photographic exhibition features works by indigenous artists from North America, Peru, Iraq, and New Zealand. The exhibition is distinctive in its historical reach, including newly discovered 19th century trailblazers, members of the next generation of emerging photographers, and well established contemporary artists.

Our People, Our Land, Our Images has been carefully constructed as a first person, indigenous account—this curatorial approach is reflected in the choices of photographers and their subjects, the catalogue essayists, and thoughtfully designed exhibition collateral. Reflecting contemporary trends, the photographs vary in style, from straightforward documentary accounts to aesthetically altered images combining overlays and collage. They stand united, however, in how they convey their makers' connections to the land, community, and traditions. Artists' statements, which appear in the catalogue and on the gallery walls, convey the plurality of the indigenous voices and their concerns.

Ultimately, the multiplicity of perspectives represented by the exhibition and its texts sustains an open-ended experience that will actively engage

audiences as they analyze how "the camera, in the hands of indigenous visionaries, becomes a tool or weapon that possesses the power to confront and deconstruct stereotypes, politics, and histories." *Our People, Our Land, Our Images* provides insight into the variations in and history of bicultural identity. Further, the exhibition demonstrates the longevity and continuing vitality of native traditions of photography and answers the overdue and continuing need to expand the knowledge of indigenous self-presentation in photography.

The C. N. Gorman Museum at the University of California, Davis, originally organized this exhibition in conjunction with a conference for international indigenous photographers held at the museum. Veronica Passalacqua, curator at the C.N. Gorman Museum, is the guest curator. For the past

fifteen years, Passalacqua has been active in the field of Native North American art as a writer, curator, and scholar. Most recently, Passalacqua facilitated the donation/repatriation of a significant private Lakota collection of artifacts to the Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum, Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Previous curatorial work includes exhibitions at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, England; the Navajo Nation Museum, Window Rock, Arizona; and the Barbican Art Gallery, London.

Learn more at: www.eusa.org/OurPeople



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TRAVELING EXHIBITION

Pre-Lesson Plan: Exploring Issues in Photography

Grade Level: 8–12

Time Required: 2 sessions

Objectives:

- Students will learn introductory information about issues in art.
- Students will discuss why artists explore various issues in art.
- Students will generate discussion questions prior to viewing the exhibition *Our People, Our Land, Our Images*.
- Students will select and discuss one work from the exhibition in smaller groups using questions.

Materials Needed:

- Exhibition tour of *Our People, Our Land, Our Images* (Student groups will select one work)
- Students' questions (for exhibition tour)
- Chalk board or overhead projector
- Paper and pens/ pencils

Directions:

Session 1: Issues and Art (1.5 hours)

1. Begin the session with a brief discussion on cultural, social, or political issues. Ask the students to share what they already know about different issues by giving examples. Write their examples on the board or overhead projector.
2. Once a generous number of issues are listed, select an example and ask the students to explain why they think the issue is important. Again, write their responses on the board. (Conduct this exercise with two or more examples.)
3. Next explain to the students that artists often address social concerns in their work. They use art to communicate ideas, stimulate conversation, and create change. Art and artists have the ability to give notice or awareness to an issue that affects a large number of people in a community or globally. Violence, prejudice, and environmental pollution are all types of issues that have been explored in art. Artists also use a variety of mediums to achieve their objectives, such as photography, screen printing, sculpture, and painting.

4. Ask the students: *Do you think artists have a role in reflecting and commenting on society in which they live? Should artists evoke differing points of view about social issues?*

Extension: Encourage the students to share examples of art that they have seen that focuses on an issue. Have the students explain the works and what was memorable about them.

5. Tell the students that they will soon visit a museum to see an exhibition that explores several themes and issues called *Our People, Our Land, Our Images*. The exhibition examines Indigenous people and issues regarding community, self-representation, stereotypes, cultural identity, and land through the photography of Indigenous artists from North America, Peru, Iraq, and New Zealand.

6. **Assignment: Student discussion groups**

Inform the students that they will be divided into smaller groups (4 or 5 students in each group if possible). Each group will select one work of art to discuss at the museum. Prior to dividing the class into groups encourage the students to generate a list of guiding questions to help address the works. Write the questions on the board or overhead projector and have the students decide which top 5 or 6 questions should be addressed in their gallery discussions.

The following are sample questions the students may address:

What issue does the work suggest, or what is it about? What symbols or objects do we see that suggest this? What are some expected or unexpected characteristics about the work? Do all the viewers agree on the meaning of the work? Why or why not? How effective does the artist convey his/ her ideas or concern or theme?

7. Divide the students into groups and instruct them to write down the questions. **Ask the students to read the artist's statements (labels) in the exhibition.** These will help the student get better insight into the work. Also remind the students to take the questions with them to the museum and be prepared to discuss their selections at a later class session.

Session 2: Museum Visit (1.5 hours)

1. At the museum, have the groups meet up and tour the exhibition. Then have them select a work to discuss in more detail. Again, the students should be sure to read the label for relevant information.
2. Encourage the students to discuss the work as a group with the generated questions from the first session. Each group should assign one member to take

notes for the group. Another member may also create a sketch or write a description of the selection to help remind the group of the work later.

3. Walk around to each group to assist with any questions or to help stimulate the discussion.
4. After the discussion/ visit, again remind the groups to be prepared to discuss their selections at the next class session.

Post-Lesson Plan: Exploring Issues in Photography

Grade Level: 8–12

Time Required: 2 sessions or more

Objectives:

- Student groups will review and discuss selected works in class.
- Students will use photography to explore an issue of their choice.

Materials Needed:

- Selected choices from *Our People, Our Land, Our Images*
- Student group notes from museum visit
- Cameras
- Poster boards
- Glue or other adhesives
- Paper and pens/ pencils

Discussion/ Art project:

1. At the beginning of class, ask the students to sit near their groups. Then ask for volunteers to start the session. Groups should state the work they selected, present information provided in the label, and address the answers to their questions.
2. **Assignment: Art project**
After the discussion, tell the students that they will now use photography to explore issues of their choice. They may use digital enhancing software such as Photoshop to manipulate their images.
3. Students should choose an issue that they may care deeply about and would like to try to bring awareness to. The issue should be something that is a general concern in the community or somewhere in the world. Some ideas include: traditions, pollution/environmental concerns, racism, gender discrimination, homelessness, cultural identity, bullying, school violence, and religious conflict.
4. Encourage the students to talk to people (family members or friends) who have been affected by the issue of their concern. How has the student been affected?
5. Have the students reflect on how the artists of *Our People, Our Land, Our Images* used photography to explore their themes.
6. Students may conduct Internet research and keep a notebook to jot down quotes or words that interest or appeal to them. Instruct the students to print their images and attach them to a poster board for display. They should also

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write a brief statement (writing exercise) that discusses their theme and thought process behind their image(s).

The following are a few questions that the students may address in the writing exercise: *What were some questions that came to your mind during the project? Why do you feel the way that you do about the issue? What has influenced your point of view?*

7. **Give the students a week to complete their art projects.** The finished works should be discussed and exhibited in the classroom.

Sources: Social and Political Issues in Art, Incredible Art Lessons, <http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/high/Sara-social.htm>;
Art and Social Issues (lesson plan), Columbus Museum of Art, http://artandsocialissues.cmaohio.org/web-content/pdf/art_social_issues.pdf