

## BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART

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### Blanton Museum Presents Exhibition Featuring Contemporary Native Art



***Native America: In Translation* brings together nine artists who explore Indigenous history, cultures, and representation through the camera lens.**

AUSTIN, TX — June 25, 2024 — The Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas at Austin presents [\*Native America: In Translation\*](#), a group exhibition that features nine Native American and First Nations artists working in photography and other lens-based media. Curated by Apsáalooke artist Wendy Red Star and organized by Aperture, it assembles more than 60 artworks that offer contemporary perspectives on identity, memory, tradition, and the history of photography. *Native America: In Translation* opens August 4, 2024, and is on view through January 5, 2025.

"*Native America: In Translation* beautifully centers artistic voices and highlights a wide range of Indigenous lens-based art in the Americas," said Blanton Director Simone Wicha. "The artists and artworks Wendy Red Star has selected delve into universal themes like memory and identity with remarkable depth and creativity. The exhibition's photography and other powerful visuals will no doubt be deeply moving for our visitors and foster insight and understanding of our rich American heritage."

The exhibition expands and builds upon the Fall 2020 issue of *Aperture* magazine, which Red Star guest edited. In putting together the exhibition, Red Star said, "I was thinking about young Native artists and what would be inspirational and important for them as a road map. The people included here have all

played an important part in forging pathways, in opening up space in the art world for new ways of seeing and thinking.”

The nine intergenerational artists featured represent various Native nations and affiliations across the Americas, and work in lens-based mediums from photography and video to installation and mixed media. Notably, the use of the camera lens across artistic mediums explores the nuanced history of photography in constructing representation of Native cultures. As featured artist and land rights activist **Marianne Nicolson** (Musgamakw Dzawada’enuxw First Nations) notes: “There has been a gap in our transmission of our knowledge, and we used photography as a memory device.”

“These artists beautifully and astutely claim the medium of photography to address social and cultural histories while telling deeply personal stories. The works across the exhibition uplift community and celebrate Indigenous heritage while looking towards our collective future,” said Hannah Klemm, curator of modern & contemporary art and organizing curator of the Blanton’s presentation.

After travelling to five U.S. institutions since its tour began in 2022, the Blanton will be the exhibition’s first and only stop in the Southwest. The more than 60 works in *Native America: In Translation* include a monumental installation by Nicolson, in which light projects through etched glass boxes that reference Kwakwaka’wakw songs, stories, and spiritual connection to the land; a 23-image installation by **Duane Linklater** (Omaskêko Ininiwak from Moose Cree First Nation), sourced from a 1995 issue of *Aperture* spotlighting contemporary Native American photographers; and a 6-image installation by **Alan Michelson** (Mohawk, Six Nations of the Grand River) of historic maps projected onto busts of George Washington that reference the 1779 military campaign against Iroquois villages.



Another artist featured is **Martine Gutierrez** (American), whose glossy photographs evoke high-end fashion spreads. These staged self-portraits stem from her 2018 magazine *Indigenous Woman*, in which she constructs a high-fashion world that challenges beauty ideals and rigid binaries. Gutierrez, a queer artist of Mayan heritage, said of the project: “No one was going to put me on the cover of a Paris fashion magazine, so I thought, I’m gonna make my own.”

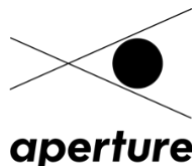
In addition to more well-known artists like Gutierrez, Linklater, and Michelson, the exhibition introduces many lesser-known Indigenous artists to wider audiences. One such artist is the late Cree artist **Kimowan Metchewais** (Cold Lake First Nations), who investigates landscape and Native language through his large-scale photo collages, amassed from an extensive archive of Polaroids. Red Star said of the late artist, whose work has influenced her own practice: “Kimowan is a gift — an important voice for Native artists and the contemporary art world.”

The exhibition also features photography by **Rebecca Belmore** (Lac Seul First Nation), **Nalikutaar Jacqueline Cleveland** (Yup'ik), **Koyoltzintli** (Ecuadorian-American), and contemporary retablos by **Guadalupe Maravilla** (American, b. El Salvador) — with a special inclusion of an additional artwork by Maravilla from the Blanton's collection.



*Native America: In Translation* is organized by Aperture and is made possible, in part, with generous support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Support for this exhibition at the Blanton is provided in part by the Carl & Marilyn Thoma Foundation.



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**PRESS PREVIEW: Friday, August 2 at 2 p.m.**

**PRESS IMAGES** available [here](#).

### **About the Blanton Museum of Art**

Founded in 1963, the Blanton Museum of Art holds the largest public collection in Central Texas with around 19,000 objects. Recognized as the home of Ellsworth Kelly's Austin, its major collecting areas are modern and contemporary American and Latin American art, Italian Renaissance and Baroque paintings, and prints and drawings. The Blanton offers thought-provoking, visually arresting, and personally moving encounters with art.

### **About Wendy Red Star**

Wendy Red Star (born in Billings, Montana, 1981) is a Portland, Oregon-based artist raised on the Apsáalooke (Crow) reservation. Her work is informed both by her cultural heritage and her engagement with many forms of creative expression, including photography, sculpture, video, fiber arts, and performance. An avid researcher of archives and historical narratives, Red Star seeks to recast her research, offering new and unexpected perspectives in work that is at once inquisitive, witty, and unsettling. Red Star holds a BFA from Montana State University, Bozeman, and an MFA in sculpture from the University of California, Los Angeles. Her monograph, *Wendy Red Star: Delegation*, was published by Aperture in 2022. *Native America: In Translation* extends Red Star's work as guest editor of the [Fall 2020 issue](#) of *Aperture* magazine.

### **About Aperture**

Aperture is a nonprofit publisher that leads conversations around photography worldwide. From its base in New York, Aperture connects global audiences and supports artists through its acclaimed quarterly magazine, books, exhibitions, digital platforms, public programs, limited-edition prints, and awards. Established in 1952 to advance "creative thinking, significantly expressed in words and photographs," Aperture champions photography's vital role in nurturing curiosity and encouraging a more just, tolerant society. For more information, visit [aperture.org](http://aperture.org)

Image captions:

Kimowan Metchewais, *Indian Handsign*, undated, framed, archival pigment print, 24 x 20 in., Courtesy of the Kimowan Metchewais [McLain] Collection, National Museum of the American Indian Archives Center, Smithsonian Institution

Martine Gutierrez, *Queer Rage, Imagine Life-Size, and I'm Tyra*, p66–67 from the series *Indigenous Woman*, 2018, framed digital C print, 42 x 28 in., Courtesy of the artist and RYAN LEE Gallery, New York

Rebecca Belmore, *matriarch*, 2018, from the series *nindinawemaganidog (all of my relations)*, framed archival pigment print, 56 x 42 in., Courtesy of the artist