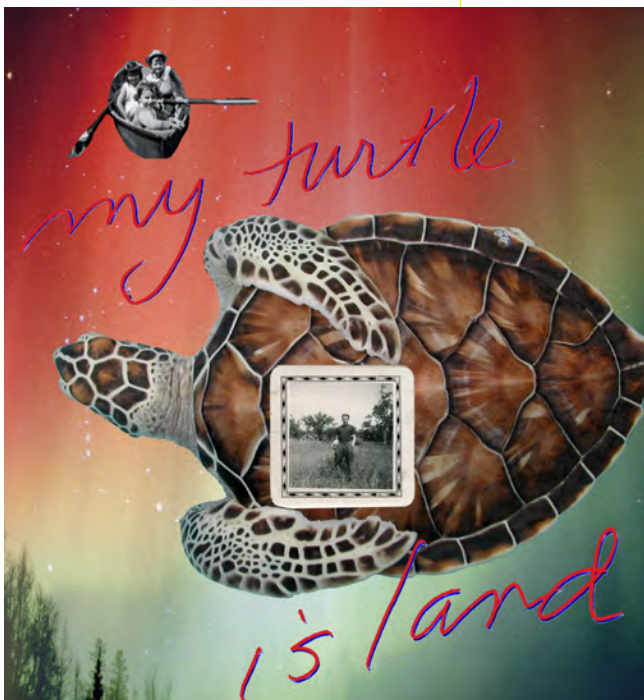


# ROSALIE FAVELL

Métis

My quest to find my place in the world has taken me many places physically, intellectually, and spiritually. My work comes from a culmination of searching for a way to comment on the worlds that I live in, investigating issues of personal and cultural identities. In an earlier work, *Longing and Not Belonging* (1997–1999), I explored the similarities between the family photo album and the ledger art of the Plains warrior artist at the turn of the nineteenth century that acted as a record of the exploits and history of the maker. This work also explored the realization of the heroes in my life: strong women—my mother, my sisters, my aunts, and my grandmothers. The images from *Plain(s) Warrior Artist* (1999–2005) depict this continuing struggle to find my place in the world, only a shift has occurred; instead of looking outside for a hero, I become one. My most recent work draws upon a number of religions and beliefs, in particular Buddhism. In addition, I look back even more deeply into my family history as a way to better understand these spiritual issues. In these works, I use aspects of both Christian and aboriginal spiritual practices and beliefs to express my mixed-heritage background. Moreover, as a means to understand my position as a contemporary aboriginal woman, I also focus on the life of my grandmother, whom I regard as a role model because she maintained both pride in her Métis roots and enthusiasm for modern life.



*My Turtle Island*, 2005.



*My Father's Hands*, 2005

*Navigating by Our Grandmothers, 2000*



*They Went Exploring, 2005*



# SHAN GOSHORN

Cherokee

I don't really consider myself a photographer. I happen to think of myself as an artist who uses a camera as a tool, much like I use paint or metal or glass. But even as a young teenager I was aware of the unique importance of photography to Indian people. I watched anthropologists and historians gather information about us without ever sharing the results. It was in the mid-1980s, when I joined NIIPA (Native Indian/Inuit Photographer's Association, an international group in Canada), that I became aware of an interesting shift in this observation. No longer content to just pose in front of a lens, Indians were now picking up cameras, be it an expensive system or a cheap disposable, and we were taking our own pictures of ourselves.

Once I began looking, I soon realized that we had photography leaders to guide us, and I was lucky to meet the daughter of one of the finest examples, Horace Poolaw, an Oklahoma Kiowa. Born in 1909, Mr. Poolaw's collection of negatives boasts imagery from everyday Native life as well as events of historical importance, but my favorite is

from his days as a World War II aerial photographer. It is a self-portrait. In this photo, both Poolaw and another Kiowa, Gus Palmer, are in the nose cone of a B-29. Both are also wearing full eagle-feather war bonnets.

The *Earth Renewal* series was started in 1996 during a very difficult pregnancy. Bedridden for four months, I went MIA from my stance as a human rights activist and focused instead on giving birth to a healthy daughter. I had lots of time to think about my work, so I spent it visualizing the details of a challenging series that addressed the nurturing and healing qualities for which I longed. The results are an ongoing body of hand-tinted black-and-white, double-exposed photographs (layered in the darkroom, not by computer) that illustrate the original teachings—that we still honor our role as caregiver to our mother, the earth. The main focus of many of our ceremonies and dances is renewal...of the earth and, hence, ourselves. Our commitment to this responsibility is manifested in physical, mental, and emotional sacrifice; her gift to us in return is the grounding force that gives us warrior strength to continue our modern battles.



*Self-portrait, from the Earth Renewal series, ca. 2002*

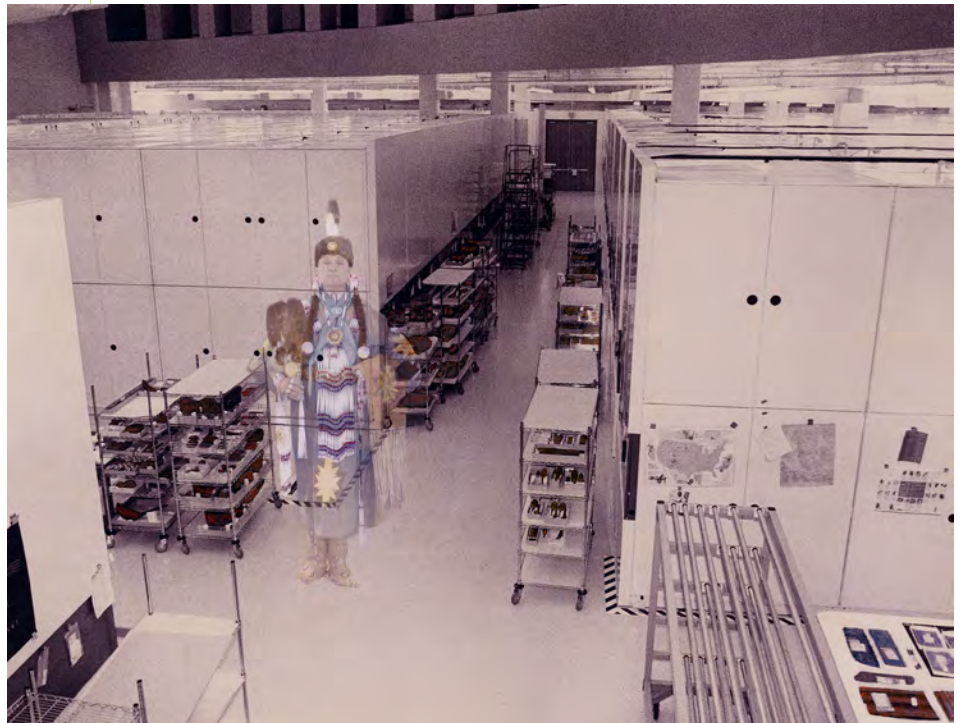


*Pawnee Woman in Field*, from the *Earth Renewal* series, ca. 2002

I started expanding the series in 2001 to address the issue of repatriation, the process involved in returning tribal artifacts and ancestral remains to Indian tribes from museum archives and collections. With the passage of NAGPRA (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act) in 1990, the tribes finally had a federal weapon to help them protect their burial sites from grave robbing and looting—a common, if unethical, means that many museums employed to acquire their massive Native American collections. I photographed the collections of several renowned museums and overlaid the images with those of Indian people. These two combined series have become *Earth Renewal*, *Earth Return*. With these images, I want to challenge museum policy about “owning” ancestral remains and society’s way of thinking about Indian people as archeological studies and show them instead as the real people they are.



*Otoe-Missouria Woman in Front of Beadwork, from the Earth Renewal, Earth Return series, ca. 1998*



*Osage/Peoria man—in traditional switch dress—with overview of NMAI Collection, from the Earth Renewal, Earth Return series, ca. 1998*

As a native artist in contemporary America, I intend my work to be both provocative and educational—carrying an especially urgent message. In one sense, it is intensely personal; yet, in another—by virtue of my background and native roots, as part of an Indigenous group struggling for autonomy in the shadow of a dominant one—my work cannot escape an implicit politicism. Dealing with a culture in transition and its fight to survive within the confines of a foreign social structure and economic framework, my imagery explores the inherent ironies engendered by the confrontation of two opposing cultures and belief systems—including contemporary issues of identity and representation, displacement, land rights, Indigenous sovereignty, and the ambiguity of cultural boundaries.

In today's world, we are inundated with images of Indians in the media, Hollywood, and contemporary consumer society; yet the Native American remains an enigma. The subject of legend and popular fantasy, s/he is commonly viewed as an ageless anachronism forever frozen in the past, as exemplified by tired and hackneyed characterizations such as the “Noble Savage”; the stoic and ruthless warrior; the nubile, buckskin-clad maiden; the all-knowing shaman and spiritual guru; etc. Even today, after centuries of coexistence, the real Indian remains an elusive paradox to the majority of non-Native society.

As an Indian artist, I feel a responsibility to deconstruct the pervasive myths and misconceptions about Native Americans, in order to reveal more accurate and informed representations. I use my art as a means of demythologizing my own history and breaking down the prevailing stereotypes, social constructs, paternalistic attitudes, and romanticized images perpetuated by popular media and folklore.

In contrast to the seductive and glamorized (or, alternatively, demonized) caricatures that thrive in Hollywood and the collective American imagination, my images reveal a far different reality—one of people in transition, a traditional Indigenous culture desperately struggling to survive in the midst of a rapidly changing technological society. Attempting to counteract centuries of entrenched bias and misrepresentation, I use photography to document the everyday life experience of today's Indian, at once bringing a human face to contemporary Native America, while revealing the underlying issues and obstacles that incessantly plague us, undermining the very fabric of our culture and threatening our continued existence as people.

## ZIG JACKSON

Mandan/Hidatsa/Arikara



*Kennecott Copper Mine, Tooele, Utah, 2000*



*Take a Picture of the Indian/Take a Picture with the Indian, 2000*



*Snack Bar, Cones, and Shakes, I-40, Arizona, 2001*



L. FRANK  
MANRIQUEZ

Tongva/Ajachmem

Photography for me is really a love affair my eyes have with the beauty of light and form. Photographs are like flowers along a path. They present themselves; they call out to be chosen. The affair began for me when I was about eight or nine years old. My stepfather let me shoot with his Leica. I shot a lot so I was given a camera of my own: a pink Kodak "Hawkeye." I learned then that it is the eye behind the lens, not the lens itself, that sees.

Our mother:

She is fairly amused, but she knows our latest adventure will cost her money. She is slightly weary and very amused.

She used to go out and have her own adventures; now the children and the grandchildren bring their adventurous plans to her.

She is always glad when they come to her.

The three graces:

This is a plant of reality. A sacred plant that exposes all to the deserving.

*Our Mother, 2003*





*Thwarted Desires*, 2005



*Deer Food*, 2006



*Three Graces*, 2005

# LEE MARMON

## Laguna Pueblo

Like the gusts of wind that blow endlessly across the mesas, life in my native New Mexico has unfailingly perpetuated itself. Cultures have risen and fallen across the centuries. The march of time has always obscured individual faces. Most communities left behind only the barest vestiges of their ways as evidence that their civilizations ever existed.

My photography career on the Laguna reservation began as a youthful creative pursuit, but it evolved into something far greater and more lasting than I could have ever imagined. In 1947, my father, Henry Marmon, suggested that I take pictures of the tribal elders, "so we would have something to remember them by." Given my budding love for photography, it was a task that I embraced with commitment and enthusiasm.

It was by virtue of the confluence of my ethnic identity, my generational positioning, and sheer technological circumstance that I was uniquely positioned to harness the power of this distinctly white man's art form, and apply it to give a measure of immortality to the last generation of my people to live by their traditional ways and values.

Now, after more than half a century of practicing my craft, I realize that what I have created amounts to a lasting visual tribute to my native people, and to their now-

vanished way of life. In the course of pursuing my life's calling, I unsuspectingly became the final, humble chronicler of a watershed moment in the cultural evolution of my native people. It is my sincere hope that my collection of thousands of photographs has adequately captured and preserved their spirit, their essence, and their humanity, so that their faces, long since passed, will continue to touch the lives of generations yet unborn.



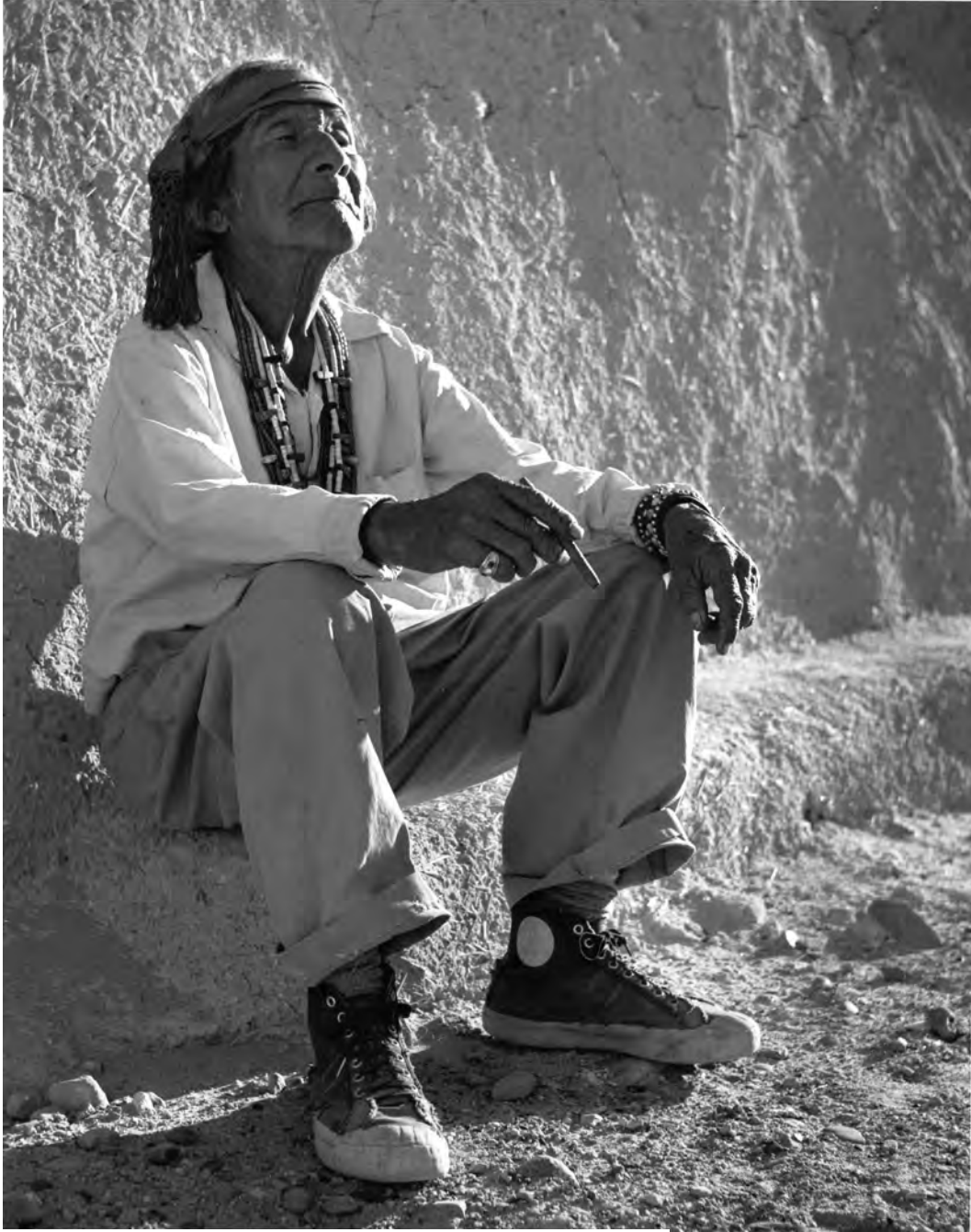
*Jose Teofilo, 1961*



*Laguna Deer Dancers, 1947*



*Laguna Eagle Dancers, 1962*



*White Man's Moccasins, 1954*

# LARRY MCNEIL

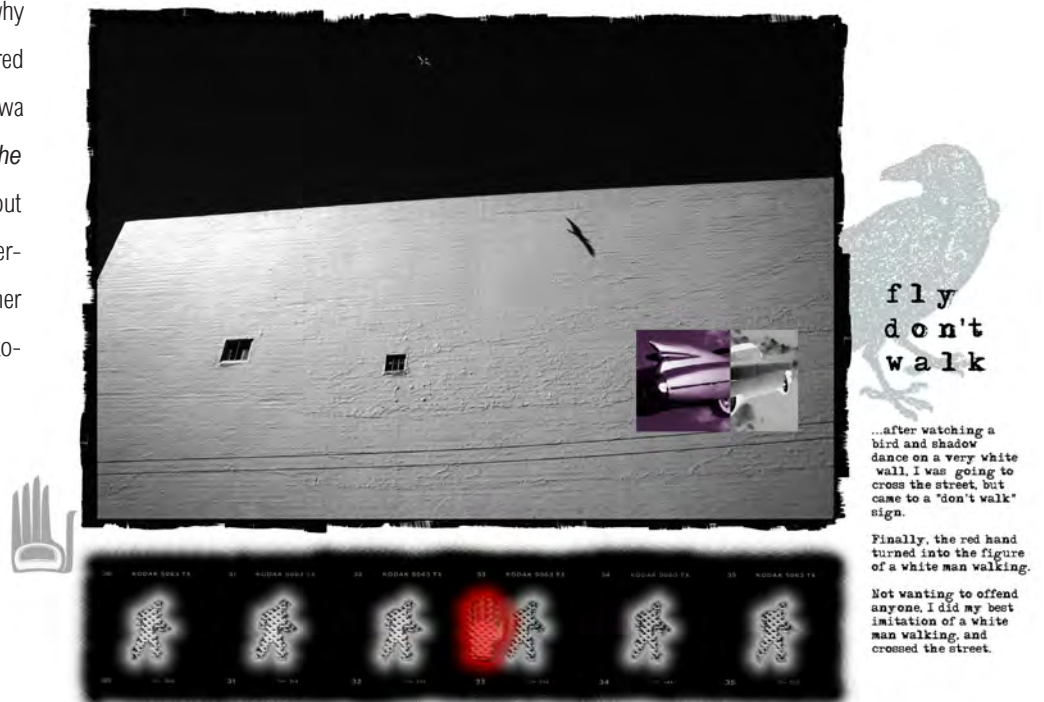
(a.k.a. Tee Harbor Jackson  
Xhe-Dhé McNeil)

Tlingit

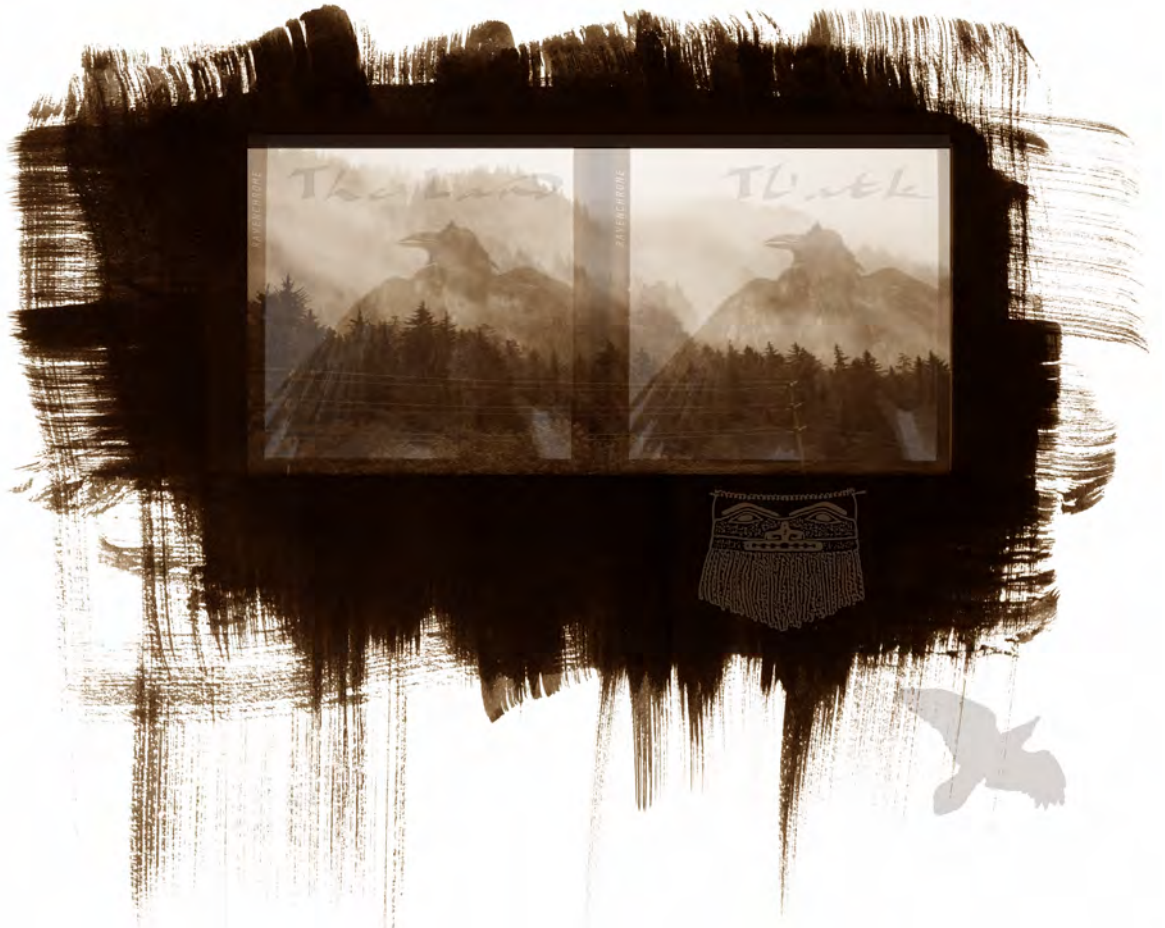
Like much of my other work, *Yéil* (this means “raven” in Tlingit) and *In the True Spirit of White Man* are about my view of some of the absurdities of our American culture. The intersection of cultures is a sight to behold, especially if you're stuck in the midst of it. If you can't laugh about it you'll end up crying the life-blood right out of yourself. These pieces were made as part of the larger *fly-by-night mythology* body of work that I've been working on for a number of years... maybe my entire life, come to think of it.

The most notable part of explaining the creative process for me has to do with first making the images and then going back and reworking them so that the pieces become decidedly mine in both style and content, as well as a collective member of an extended body of work. I am still using satire as a key component to how I examine the intersection of cultures and how I would describe the primary content of these prints. For an example, I am using our good friends Edward Curtis and Tonto as protagonists and catalysts for new work. Photography continues to be my primary media. I used a computer, digital camera, my trusty Hasselblad camera, palladium prints, bone-heads, and essentially my wits to make these prints.

The image *Yéil* is from my *raven asks Pontiac* series and is about the trickster asking Chief Pontiac why George Washington is so revered and Chief Pontiac of the Ottawa became a hood ornament. *In the True Spirit of White Man* is about stealing a car to search for America; an Indigenous Photographer on the road and making photographs along the way...

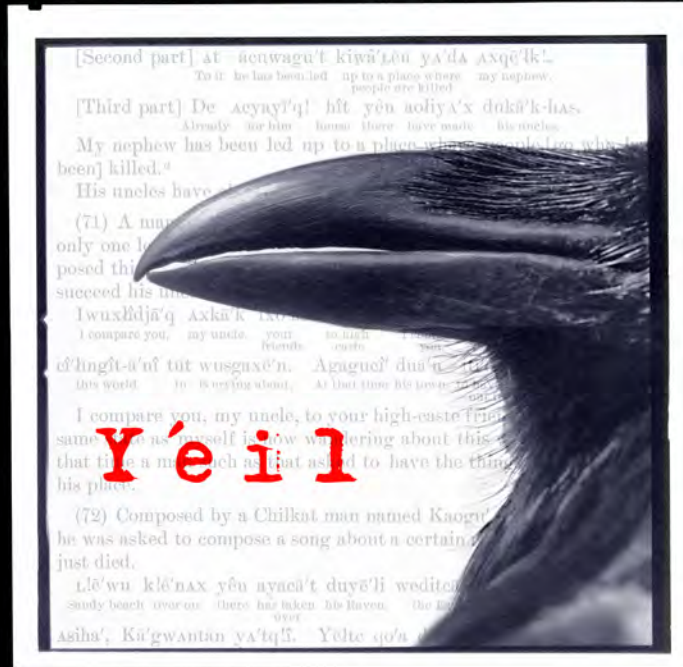


*Fly, don't walk, 1987*



**Pontiac: Why are you asking so many questions?**

**raven: I like shiny stuff, and boy are you shiny.**



Yéil, 2006

Opposite Top: *In the True Spirit of White Man*, 2002

Opposite Bottom: *Tlátk*, 2000



# SHELLEY NIRO

Mohawk

Most of my photographic work has revolved around and involved my family. I've used photos of my mother, my children, and my sisters in much of my work. I have always done this. Using their images has made me feel closer to them as I have spent a lot of time in the darkroom. So much time has had to be invested in the separation from family and loved ones to create.

With *Girls*, I am again using their images. I am relying on photobooth strips, taken at various times when we would plop ourselves down and begin the ritual of recording our faces as a recreational activity. Later these three-dollar memories became important artifacts for myself. With the ability of scanning and working on them in Photoshop, I can now take those images and continue to use them in a much different way than what their original purpose was.

*War* was created in a time of worldwide conflict. What is at stake? And what will be resolved? My father was in World War II. His father and his uncles were in World War I.

My brother, sisters, and myself were part of marching bands that often played in parades and Remembrance Day ceremonies. We sat through roll calls, teary-eyed get-togethers, and blurry speech memories of the survivors at veterans halls when all of the parades were over. Never totally appreciating the circumstances in which we were participating, we yawned our way through the day.

I no longer play in marching bands or witness the ever decreasing veteran presence at these affairs, but I appreciate the death toll and destruction caused by the continuing conflicts. The reason for war is beyond my simplistic rationale.

What is destroyed? Bodies of young men and the defenseless landscape.



*Girls*, 2006



*War, 2006*

# AIMEE RATANA

Ngai Tuhoe: Ngati Haka  
Patuheuheu/Ngati Raka

My works explore notions of collective memory and presence. Photography allows me to re-create intangible memories into visual, tangible objects. The images then have a physical presence that is not only seen, but felt when you hold them. Images of our *tupuna* (ancestors) and *whenua* (land) are viewed as *taonga tuku iho*, treasured cultural heritage items that are passed on from generation to generation.

I represent *taonga* through abstracted imagery for people to reinterpret and read, whether they are registering the form, the color, or the aesthetic or ethereal beauty of the object. The *hei tiki* is a representational form of many things to me. They reference *tupuna*, friends and family, people that have passed on. My images are to remind us of what was before, and also what has been lost. They reflect memories, times of hurt and times of laughter that have been shared between people, land, and objects. My works are about retaining, relearning, and sharing experiences that have happened. The works are there to provoke emotions of familiarity and establish shared connections through collective memories. The images may activate different thoughts and responses for the viewer depending on his or her perspective of life at the time.

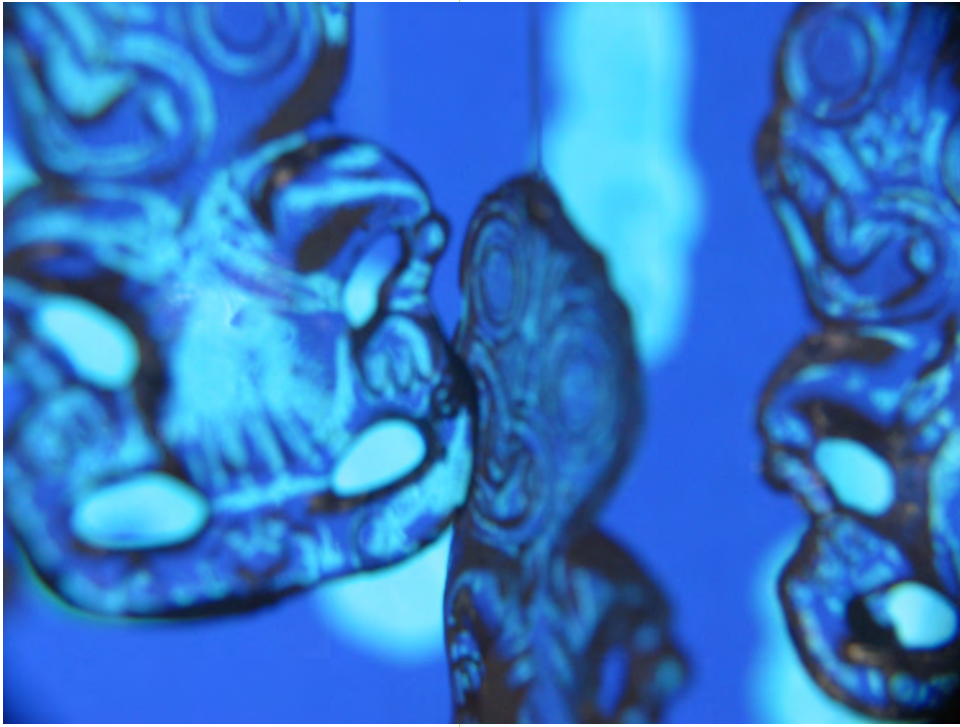
Photography is an important medium for me. Not only has it been used in the documentation of Maori culture as a “dying race,” but it also provides the tool to change the perception of the viewer: to view Maori and *taonga tuku iho*, from a Maori perspective, Maori photographing Maori. Images of our *tupuna* are displayed within our *wharenui* (meeting house). These hold as much significance and importance as the carvings, weavings, and paintings. This practice, which has been demonstrated for over one hundred years, shows the acceptance and appropriation of this Western technology, photography by Maori. It brings to light the significant context in which photography is placed within Maori culture.

The *Pukuwaitia* series explores the narrative of the importance of people. They share some of my personal memories with the viewer. These images are of family and friends and are a reflection of a special time that I shared with many other artists up in the Waipoua Forest. It shows the beauty of the land in which we live, but it also documents the crystal clear waters of the Kai Iwi Lakes. Hopefully these *taonga* stay this way and can be shared with many future generations.

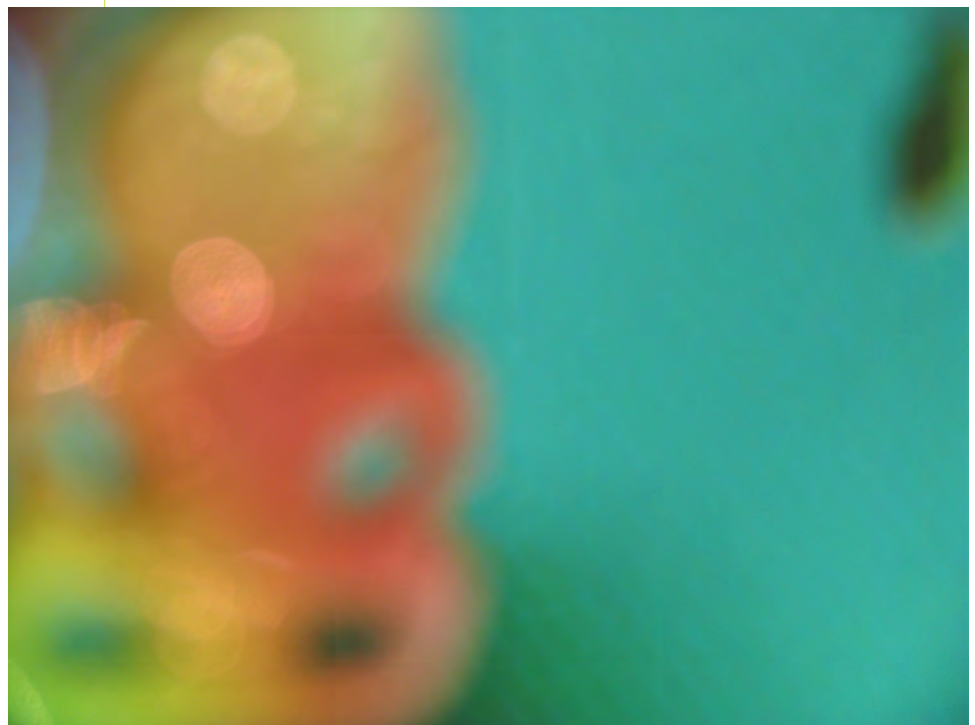
*He aha te mea nui o te ao, he tangata he tangata he tangata.  
What is most important of this world? It is people, it is people, it is people.*



*Top: Pukuwaitia IMG: 1, 2006*  
*Bottom: Pukuwaitia IMG: 2, 2006*



*Hei Tiki IV, 2005*



*Hei Tiki II, 2005*

It always amazes me the assumed position of colonialism and how its arrogance permeates all that is “American.” It has been over two hundred years since the first illegal immigrants arrived—a sad bunch, hungry, flea-ridden, sans religious freedom. Immigrants with a touch of scurvy searching for paradise. A paradise conveniently manifested by a God from another shore. And then I am always astounded that it was Native compassion that was instrumental in the survival of those wandering souls. I’m sure our people were profusely thanked for that first harvest of lifesaving Indigenous knowledge. But as soon as the visitors were able to fend for themselves, we were quickly pushed aside for a rather lengthy stint of manifest destiny, which unfortunately is still in place to this day. All a bit rude if you ask me.

Today, I cringe when I hear the song “This Land Is Your Land.” I know that Woody Guthrie had good intentions as a socialist and that the thirties and forties were hard for the American poor, but somehow Indigenous poor people kept getting overlooked even in times of “solidarity.”\*

*This land is your land, this land is my land,  
From the Redwood Forest to the New York Island,  
The Canadian mountain to the Gulf Stream waters,  
This land is made for you and me.*

My version:

*This land is Red land, this land is Aboriginal land,  
From the Haudenosaunee to the Coastal Miwok,  
The Northern Kaska to the Gulf Stream Choctaw,  
This land will be Native once again...*

...and I could keep going on, but the point I want to make would be detoured.

Here is the point: The images presented were created to infiltrate the mind. So when people see an image that they connect with popular culture—the Marlboro man, SUV commercials, or other icons of America—they should take time to consider the two truths. One: to be a true American you have to be a foreigner. Two: America is stolen land.

\*According to [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woody\\_Guthrie](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woody_Guthrie), “In February 1940, Guthrie wrote his most famous song, ‘This Land Is Your Land,’ which was inspired in part by his experiences during a cross-country trip and in part by his distaste for the Irving Berlin song ‘God Bless America,’ which he considered unrealistic and complacent (he was tired of hearing Kate Smith sing it on the radio).”

## HULLEAH J. TSINHNAHJINNIE

Seminole/Muskogee/Diné



Hoke-tee, 2003



*This is not a commercial, 1998*



*Damn! There goes the neighborhood, 1998*

NATALIE  
ROBERTSON

Ngati Porou/Clan Donnachaidh

*Whakatere* (to navigate, to drift, to float) reconsiders sites for cultural identification in the language and signs of the everyday city and explores the migration and assimilation of Maori into the urban environment where new kinds of “navigation” are required. It also suggests the tensions for Maori between local communities and their relationship to “back home.”

Identification with land and migration journeys is a central tenet of Maori culture. It is customary for Maori to introduce themselves formally through *pepeha* (proverbs as belonging to ancestral mountains, rivers, lakes), and then through significant *waka* (canoes), and finally through tribal affiliations. *Ngati Porou Pepeha* (2006) from the *Whakatere—Urban Drift* series describes a *pepeha* from my tribal area:

*Ko Hikurangi te maunga, ko Waiapu te awa, ko Ngati Porou te iwi.  
Hikurangi is the mountain, Waiapu the river, and Ngati Porou the people.*

A photographic response to moving to Auckland, New Zealand’s largest city, in 2001, *Whakatere—Urban Drift* consists of street signs that bear the Maori names of mountains, rivers, lakes, and harbors located elsewhere in New Zealand. The Ngati Porou ancestral mountain Hikurangi, Waiapu River, and Ngati Porou Place are represented in suburban street signs. For third- and fourth-generation Maori, assimilated into the urban context, the name of an ancestral mountain may no longer recall it as a physical entity but instead may evoke a mythological place known primarily through oral and visual histories. With their luminous text against a black sky, the photographs propose a navigation within the metropolis but also point back to a tribal place, remembering other landscapes.



*Ngati Porou Pepeha*, 2006,  
from the *Whakatere—Urban Drift* series





*Te Kooti Road*, 2006, from the *Whakatere—Urban Drift* series

# JEFFREY THOMAS

Iroquois/Onondaga

When I began my photographic career in the late 1970s I could not find any discourse about urban Indianness. While I knew firsthand the reality of an Indian migration to cities that began in the early twentieth century—my grandparents had moved to Buffalo from the Six Nations Reserve to look for work—there was little acknowledgment of this reality. Photographs continued to promote the romantic stereotype of stoic Indians in full regalia living on the land in remote areas. From this, one could easily draw the conclusion that First Nations people had never left reserve communities for urban centers.

Because I was born and raised in the city, identifying this absent urban First Nations aesthetic was very important for me. In order to understand why the void existed in the first place, I began by looking to history books for answers. Not surprisingly, what I found was a First Nations world seen through the prism of nineteenth-century Anglo values, recorded by its artists, photographers, Wild West show promoters, movie directors, and anthropologists. Because the Indian image was intended for white audiences and not for a First Nations audience, it is not surprising that I felt like an Indian tourist gazing at Indians.

These images provided me with important information about the attitudes that led to a one-dimensional view of First Nations people and why stereotypes flourish without any form of critical discourse. The government's assimilation policy dictated that Indians replace their savage identity for a Canadian or American identity. The controversial residential school program was based upon extinguishing First Nations identity through the re-education of its children. Consequently there was no need to consider how First Nations people would feel about the exploitation of their culture. Armed with these insights into the architecture of Indianness, I began to explore ways to extend the image and liberate the Indian from stasis.

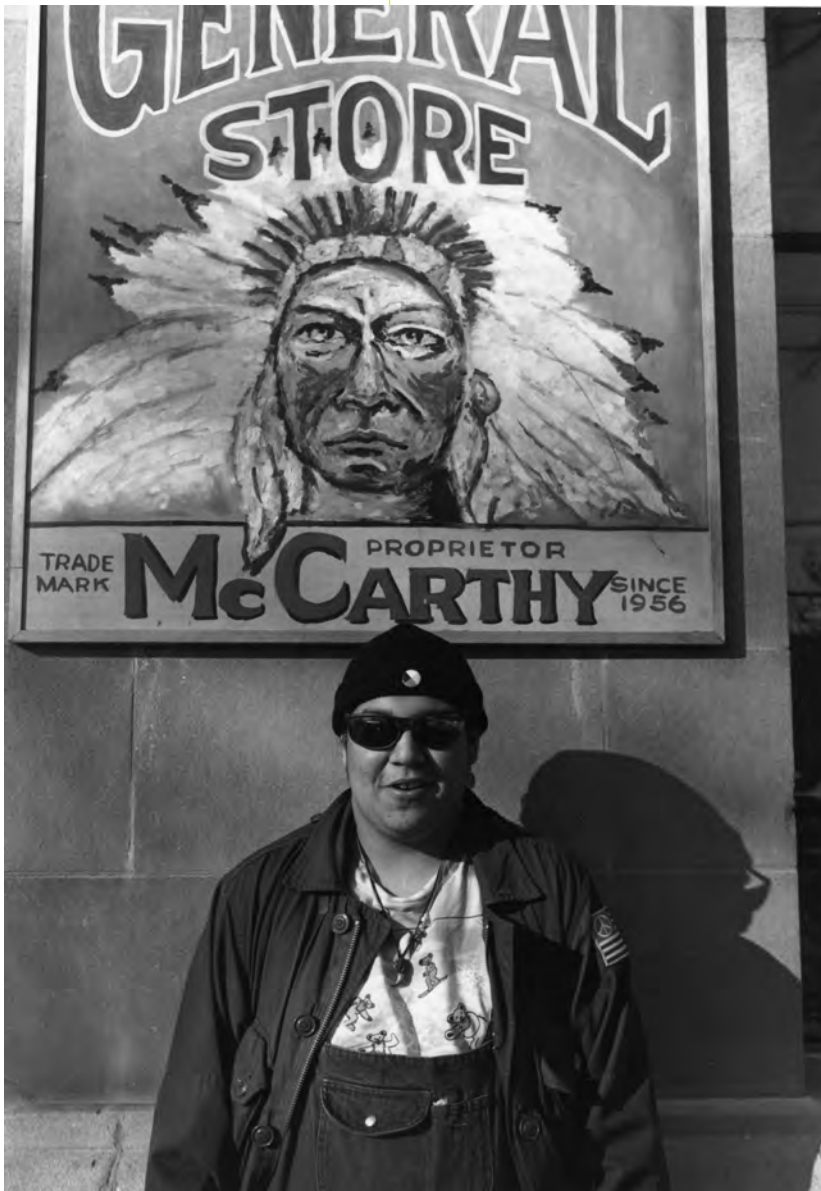


*Cigar Store Indians, London, 2002*

As a young boy in the Buffalo school system, I remember hearing the phrase “melting pot” and it made me think that I had to give up my sense of Indianness in order to fit in. This is what my father was doing, but at a great cost to him, his family, and his community. I am not willing to compromise my sense of who I am as an urban Indian. Through my work, I am attempting to visualize something that has been largely made invisible, namely: How do we, as First Nations people, maintain and nourish our Indianness when there is no support for it? For me, it comes through my work and by creating a dialogue about what

it means to be Indian and to be urban and how we negotiate between the two.

My elders taught me to be proud of being Iroquois, inspiring me with their stories and their caution to never forget where I came from. It was my challenge and I was determined to ensure that the description “urban Iroquois” could not be used as a derogatory assessment of my Indianness.



*How Do You Measure Up? 1994*



*North American (Indian), 2005*



*Canada Day, 2005*

# WILL WILSON

## Diné

Throughout my work I have focused on photographing Navajo People and our relationship to the land. While portraying this relationship I have always been aware of how our representation has never been without consequence. Historically, photography as a scientific means of categorization cannot be made separate from the social, political, economic, and ecological colonization of Native North America. Photography has been used to classify and reinforce theories of racial superiority and has strengthened anthropological discourse positioning American Indians as primitive “others.” More commonly, it has been used to reinforce negative stereotypes of Indians, pervasive throughout American culture.

My work is a response to the ways in which photography has been used as a mechanism of colonization. Decolonizing photography for the use of American Indians has to occur through the articulation of a Native representational subjectivity. In the place of colonizing representation, I want to produce images and sensory experiences that convey representation of, by, and for American Indians. This means developing a methodological practice, a framework from which to draw. It is toward these ends that I see my work progressing.

In my work there are stories that I grew up with, stories bringing together the cultural weave from which I came. These stories are personal to me as an individual and as a member/citizen of a people; therefore, they must be presented and received with respect. In a way, it is a ceremony; it's about exorcising discursive demons that have been planted in our minds, and about the processes of remembrance and continuance that enable us to keep functioning.

For Indians, I want to produce experiences that bring us close to home, while unsettling us with the evidences of colonization. I want my work to strengthen Indians with examples of resistance, and the possibilities of controlling one's own representation. For non-Indians, I want to call into question the uncritical consumption of images of American Indians both positive and negative. This is to be done by presenting experience that articulates a history of life constantly remembered, strengthened, and continued in the face of colonization.



*Auto Immune Response #2, 2005*



*Auto Immune Response #4, 2005*

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OUR FUTURE...



## ERENA BAKER

Ngati Toa Rangatira/Te Atiawa/  
Ngati Raukawa

My photographs endeavor to explore the customary practice of *rama tuna* (eeling), a practice that continues to be regularly undertaken by my people even today.

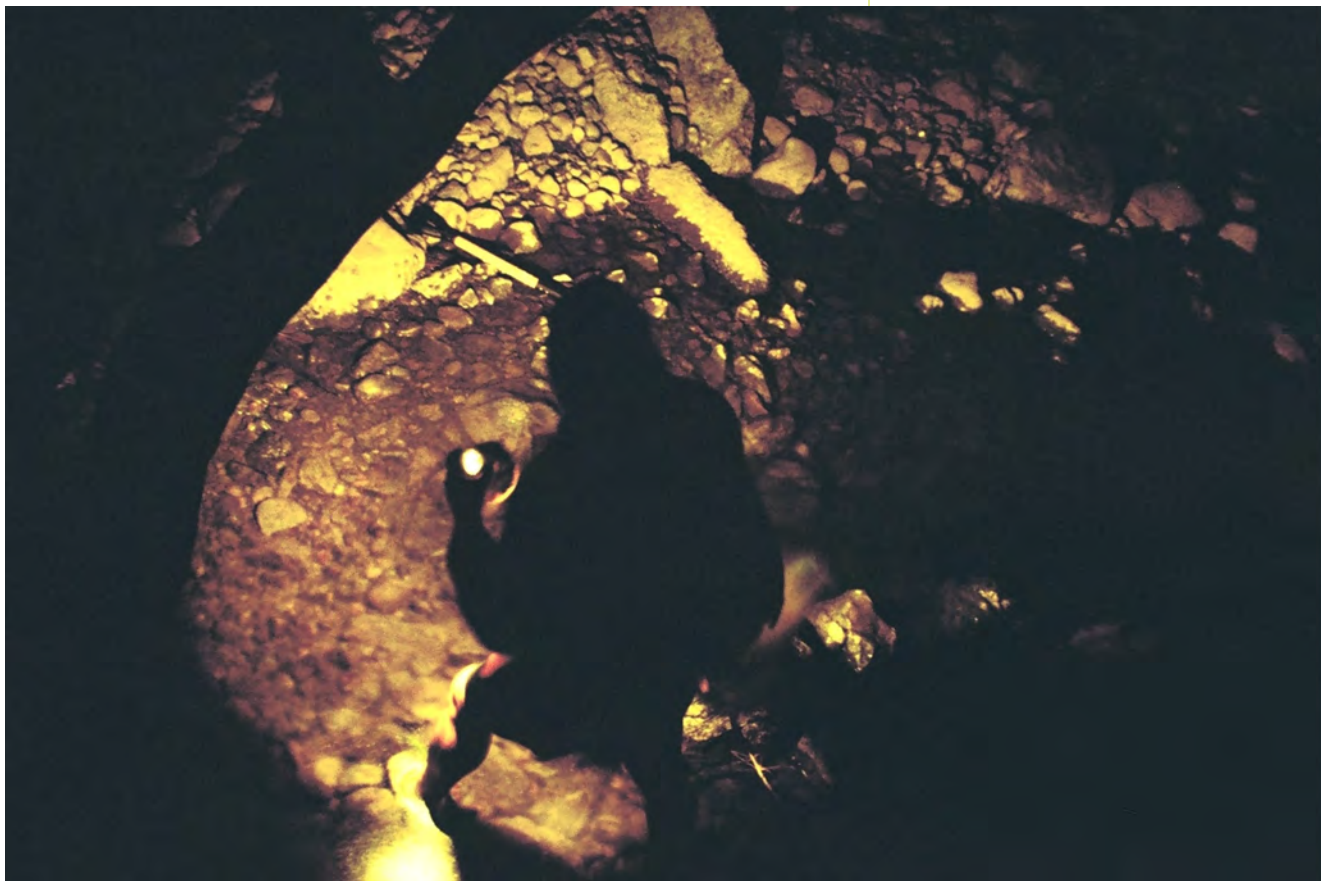
“Ko Tangaroa Ara Rau” (Tangaroa of the Many Pathways)

In this proverb, eels are referred to as Tangaroa, the god of all fish. This proverb refers to the elusiveness of eels, which regularly escape fishermen in their pursuit of this delicacy.

My intention in documenting the nocturnal practice of *rama tuna* is to encapsulate the elusive behavior of eels through night photography. Documenting this act I am able to control the representation of the fishermen. My aim is to record the act of representation from an Indigenous perspective, when an Indigenous artist takes a camera in hand.

I currently study at Massey University in Palmerston North, Aotearoa (New Zealand), and I will complete my Bachelor of Maori Visual Arts at the end of this year. I represent the next generation of Indigenous artists and my hope is to ensure the continued development and advancement of Indigenous photography.





*Rama Tuna #1, 2006*

Opposite: *Rama Tuna #2, 2006*

# NIKKI ISHAM

## Ojibwe

I remember times in my life as momentary flashes. I see things that I would have preferred not to see at all—the image, the moment has been forever burned into the visionary collective of my brain. When I remember something, the scene plays in my head like a sequence. Some call it a photographic memory. Either way, this strange sort of thinking led me to grow into an image saver, a video artist, a bit of a manipulator, and as of now, a philosopher.

I remember wanting to be able to accurately describe to someone something truly amazing, to advocate for a feeling or a belief. To *say something* in a way that could make eyes open and ears listen. The things that inspire me to take photographs are the moments. Sometimes everything just seems to fall into place with the natural photography that I do. A lot of times my intentions for digital manipulation inspire me to take photos of things that I can “play” with on the computer. Other times with the digital manipulation, I am looking for something specific. Most of the time, I just get into the mode where everything that is around me is jumping out at me: colors, people, moments, everything.

I travel around all over with my camera and just take pictures. When I look at them on the computer later, I get excited because I remember exactly why I took the picture, what I

may have been feeling. I remember almost everything about them. So unless I am looking for something specific, my influences are everywhere and scattered about everywhere I look.



*Oddity*, 2005



*Anty Fixes Cars, 2005*

# SIMONE MAGNER

## Ngati Awa/Ngati Maniapoto

For me, art making represents freedom on a cathartic level. I find the ritual of art making validation of “passion spent” in an investigation of personal knowledge. I find the artistic sequences of my process to be liberating, as the vehicle of self-discovery and recognition of my cultural identity.

My works are a personal journey of self-knowledge, and my photography is a visual record, acknowledging: my persona, the reclamation of my cultural base, my inherent birthright, and interpersonal relationships. I draw inspiration from my own mixed cultural heritage and experiences from other cultural bases. I represent spirituality as presented to me from a childhood Anglo perspective, combined with a newly discovered Māori spiritualism, based on cosmology and Māori oral histories. My artworks express events in my life and knowledge I am acquiring on my journey.

I begin a piece by sourcing old family and childhood photographs. These visual resources are evidence of my personal background, and are employed as mnemonic prompts to evoke a state of mind, to embark on my quest for self-identity. When I am working in the field of photographic image making, I am reminded that as a manipulator of scenarios, I am able to construct my own interpretation of personal histories. I want the artistic devices and manipulations I employ in my work to convey a sense of enlightenment, as reflective of my own response to reconnecting with my cultural base—Whānau (family), Hapū (extended family), and Iwi (tribe). I know a piece is finished when I feel the image encapsulates all the intangible elements I cannot express in any other manner.



*Zepher I, 2005*



*Man's World, 2005*

# ERICA LORD

Athabaskan/Inupiaq

In cultures throughout the world, there is a very human need to mark one's existence in history, to leave traces of one's life and work, clues that may unravel the story of that person, his or her culture or situation. Alaska, throughout history, has been a crossroads of cultures and populations—human, animal, and spiritual. I am both Alaska Native and settler, bloodlines that may at first seem opposite, but in some way came together in my family. The lineage that I was born into and the land I was removed from create a precarious balancing of cultures and I think it is these origins that have molded my identity. In my work, I try to explore worlds in which translation is suspended—the space beyond singular identities—where worlds collide, merge, or resist each other. Understanding that I move through multiple identities and languages in the context of my individual and cultural framework, I want to create a dialogue with others who also have to traverse cultural divisions and borders. Using Indigenous and post-colonial theologies, integrated with personal experience, I investigate the history and subsequent actions and reactions that exist not only within my history, but a history that is shared by many marginalized communities. I want to raise questions as well as declare convictions—challenge, deconstruct, and influence a new way of thinking about contemporary Native people, our life, and our art. In order for cultural survival, we must review our visual philosophy, deconstructing the imposed images as well as our own colonized minds. Through this, the multiplicity of self will evolve along with our expanded notions of what is authentic, traditional, or real. The worlds that exist within me—such as Woman, Native, Artist, Other—continue to separate and merge again, coming together in a voice that seems to be growing louder every day. I hope to merge the knowledge of my communities with the individual experience to create stories that grow and shift along with the worlds within and around. Through my art, I want to create a dialogue that will help to redefine our selves, our communities, and our beliefs.

Opposite: *Untitled (I Tan)*, Chicago 2006







*Silence, Rural Wisconsin, 2005*

Aria and Huia are friends of mine who, like me, are Maori and who live in the urban city of Tamaki Makaurau (Auckland, New Zealand). These images are from a larger body of work that is part of my Master in Art degree. I have chosen women of the same generation as myself to photograph and to talk to about their experiences. Each woman discussed her Maori identity using the door as a metaphor for thresholds, portals, and living in two worlds, being Maori within an urban context within a *Pakeha* (white) governed, multicultural society.

The reason I have done this is to allow the person to bring her own interpretation of her identity using the door to explain the “insider” and “outsider” aspects of being Maori. The door of a *marae* (traditional community meeting place) is described as a “Wharetangata,” the birth canal of a woman, which is linked to Hinenui te Po, the Goddess of Death. Our urban homes are now meeting places for the wider family and so become reconfigured as urban *marae*. The doors of our homes function as the entrance to our urban *marae*, and the women that stand before you become the new *pou* (leaders). This is the challenge to always look back to understand the past, to make changes in the present, and to look forward to the future of our Maoritanga.

The work highlights these things: that a lived Maori experience for this generation has been influenced by the past, by the urbanization of Maori families after World War II, by the loss of language in our parents’ generation and through the assimilation of our grandparents and the colonization of our ancestors. These things are what have shaped me and my *whanau* (family); these things are what have dictated these similarities of my generation—what we know about behaving Maori and what we don’t.

I am using the door as a metaphor to explain our connections to and dislocation from being Maori, for those involved and myself—connections being intrinsic or learned through other Maori who know, and dislocation being premeditated and a series of moves by the dominant culture of the time and the effects of colonization and assimilation, which have been and still are a part of a Maori experience. I also transform the door’s meaning and use a Maori understanding of the door to frame this discussion, to credit the Maori knowledge I have been passed on in spite of the moves to abolish Maori beliefs.

## ROCHELLE HUIA SMITH

Nga Puhī/Ngati Whatua

Direct descendant of  
Chief Hongi Hika



*Huia Thompson, from the Wharetangata series, 2006*



*Aria Campbell, from the Wharetangata series, 2006*

# NICOLE STAPLES

Ojibwe

My love for photography began with an art class in school. I made a camera out of a box. I designed it and it worked. To be able to take a picture with a box was a powerful feeling. At that moment I realized that I wanted to become a photographer.

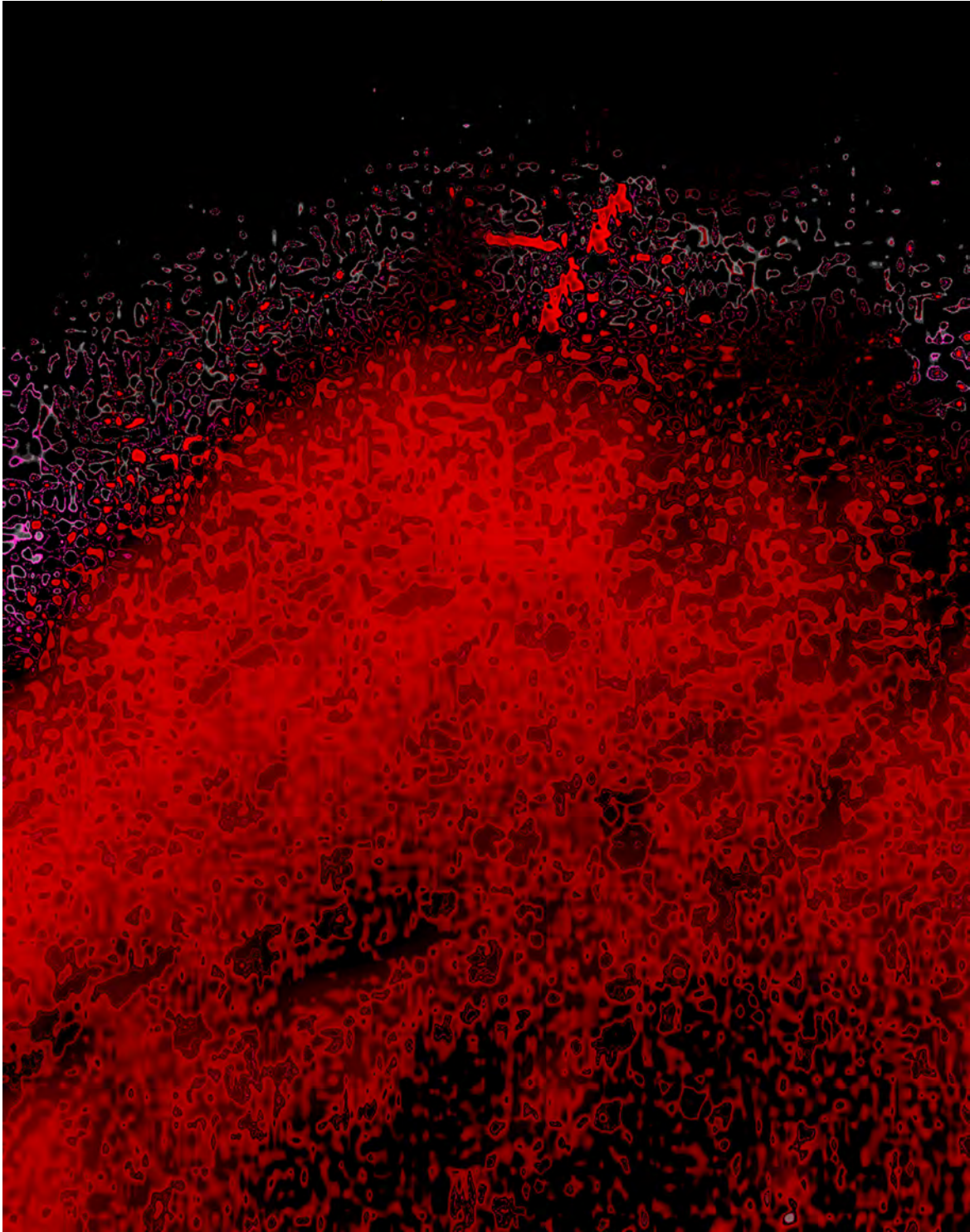
Taking pictures came naturally. I wanted to take all kinds of photographs—landscapes, portraits, everything. I didn't own a camera, so I only got to take pictures for school. Even so, something began stirring inside me. I got this feeling that made me curious. So I continued. Since that time I have used the camera to catch those beautiful, unforgettable, and sometimes painful moments. It's been a constant presence in my life when little else has.

I think that my community has a lot to do with my artwork. It is here in Cass Lake that I become a part of Ojichidaakweg or, as we call it, "Sisters." It's a program for girls and women who want to use photography to speak what they see and what they know. It has taught me how to step out into my community. It has shown me how to get important issues noticed. And getting things noticed is usually the first step to creating change.

I am now a freshman at Leech Lake Tribal College, kinda funny considering the fact that I am so much older now. I lost more than five years to an overwhelming drug addiction, but I've been in recovery now for two years (almost a lifetime). Now I am focusing on keeping myself on the road of sobriety. I want to stay strong for the youth that look up to me. I have so many younger cousins that follow in my steps, plus nephews and nieces. They don't need to follow the road of drug addiction like I did. I plan to use my talents as a photographer to remind them of that.

*The Road to..., 2006*





*Highway 2, 2001*

## ABOUT THE C. N. GORMAN MUSEUM

The C. N. Gorman Museum is a portal for Indigenous and non-Indigenous visionaries. It is a space where perceptions of contemporary Native American, Indigenous, and First Nations art are intellectually recalibrated. Exhibiting artists challenge critical issues of borders, stereotypes, and identity by speaking eloquently through their artistic media of choice.

Founded in 1973 by the Department of Native American Studies, the C. N. Gorman Museum is named in honor of retired faculty member Carl Nelson Gorman, Navajo artist, WWII code-talker, cultural historian, and advocate for Native peoples. It is in his honor that we encourage an understanding of Indigenous protocol, territories, and knowledge. The C. N. Gorman Museum is committed to the creative expressions of Native American artists, and artists of diverse cultures and histories. Changing exhibits feature contemporary artwork in a wide range of media, reflecting the canon in which Indigenous artists are working today. The museum's reputation of artistic excellence is proven by its company of exhibiting artists over the last thirty-three years, including some of the most established Native American artists, and strives to introduce the next generation of emerging Indigenous artists.

C. N. Gorman Museum

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# Heyday

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