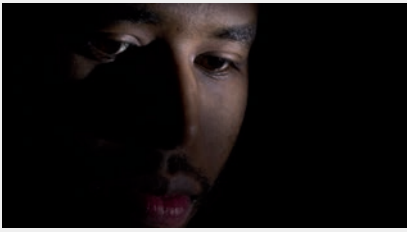


BORDER CROSSINGS

ORIGINS



POCAHONTAS AND AFTER

POCAHONTAS AND AFTER

Michael Walling



“There is something predatory in the act of taking a picture,” wrote Susan Sontag in “On Photography”. “To photograph people is to violate them, by seeing them as they never see themselves, by having knowledge of them they can never have; it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed.”

For Native Americans, there is a disturbing confluence of photography and colonisation: both bring indigenous peoples and their cultures under the control of the invader, made manifest as soldier, settler, ethnographic portraitist or snap-happy tourist. A person’s photograph is something that is “taken”: a photographic subject is “shot”, their image “captured”. So many

images of Native Americans tell us so little about the person in the picture, so much about the person behind the camera, their political agenda.

By setting up a dialogue between the colonial constructions of First Peoples seen in the photographic archives and the fertile diversity of contemporary London, we wanted to find a new approach to the relationship between subject and camera. The contemporary people featured in this exhibition have responded to archive photographs in ways that deconstruct underlying colonial assumptions, while honouring the indigenous people shown, to create startling new images that offer a sense of self-fashioned and fluid, performative personae. Children of African and Asian heritage, migrants from Latin America, refugees from recent conflicts: the participants in this project have taken the lead in making their own photographs, becoming the subjects of their own narratives.

The resulting exhibition, in which each portrait is displayed next to the archive image that was the subject’s chosen stimulus, reclaims the form’s potential as a participatory and democratic space; potent with possibilities of growth, introspection, laughter, beauty and sharing. It leads us towards what the Hopi photographer and artist Victor Masayesva has called “photography as ceremony, as ritual, something that sustains, enriches and adds to our spiritual well-being.”

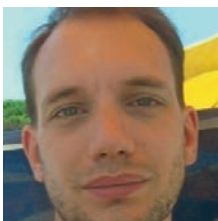
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POCAHONTAS AND AFTER

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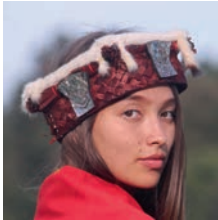
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REFLECTIONS ON POCAHONTAS

Sierra Tasi Baker



I could see my reflection in the museum glass. I traced my fingers across the cold material, fogging up the case with my breath. I tapped gently, wondering if the masks could hear me. Maybe if they knew I was here, they wouldn't feel so far from home.

I came to London, 2017, to study my Masters in Sustainable Urbanism at University College London. I was not expecting to find such a fascination with my culture, much less many sacred regalia, masks, objects and other heritage items from my tribe that I'm so familiar with seeing at home, at the British Museum and other museums across London. It was heartwarming and heart wrenching in the same sentence to know that we are acknowledged, but not understood. To see our masks behind glass, when at home they are part of our dinner conversations, part of our daily lives, they are lived and breathed in like no time has passed at all.

I am Musgamagw Dzawada'enuxw, Squamish, Kwakwaka'wakw, Musqeaum and Tlingit from the western coast of what has recently been known as British Columbia, and the Yukon in Canada. My Kwakiutl name is Gesuqwaluck which means 'creator' or 'creative one.' I am also part Hungarian from my mother's side. My late grandmother on my father's side is the high-ranking woman Tlakwagila'ogwa, Copper Woman, a 4 Copper Chieftain who has been known as Queen in her time here. Her Chieftainships now live on in my uncles and her matriarchal power in my aunts. I am a descendant of Chief Capilano, and his daughter, princess Kwasan whom married Captain Vancouver's mapmaker: British and Welsh, Joseph Baker in the late 1700s. I am also a descendant of Tlingit princess, Mary Ebbits, a master Chilkat Weaver, who married a British fur trader, Robert Hunt, in the 1850s. So, one could say, I am a Coast Salish princess, a "native princess", like Pocahontas with some British roots. Travelling and studying in London.

It occurred to me that this was serendipitous when the British Museum was hosting a lecture by Max Carocci on "'Princess' Pocahontas? Women, Leadership & Power in Native North America" discussing the socio-political roles of Native American women in the early 17th century – the time of Pocahontas. The real Pocahontas that is, not the Disney caricature that we're all so familiar with and that most native people are quite begrudged about. Naturally, I decided to attend and see how indigenous people are seen in

Britain. As a 'native princess' I was also curious how Britain, the seat of royal heraldry, would understand indigenous governance.

How much is understood? To be fair I was impressed with the breadth of knowledge of the lecturer. He expertly tried to unpack the stereotype that is the legacy of the Disney movie and reveal the real Pocahontas who lived and breathed in the 17th century and her experiences in coming to Britain.

Unfortunately, I was fantastically shocked at how little the general public knew about Pocahontas, present-day indigenous struggles, and how romanticized the public has been by the Disney franchise version and other choice works of propaganda. This romanticizing is highly problematic for a lot of indigenous people today. But my biggest issue was realizing that a lot of the British public think that native people are gone, that we've disappeared into history. It made me kinda scratch my head. It's almost laughable when some of my best friends are Inuit, Kwakwaka'wakw, Haida, and so on, even native friends from around the world such as Arawak, Taino from Jamaica or Wampanoag from the East Coast of Canada, native Hawaiian and Lakota from the States. We're all here, there are struggles, but we are still here, you probably know some of us. Our cultures are alive and permeate everything we do, in my tribe's case, when you have a 15,000 year old culture that spans 809 generations and your family has stories of when your ancestors survived the Great Flood, and any number of interesting tests of survival, you can be assured that our culture is rather flexible and resilient.

So, after listening to some rather interesting questions during the lecture, nodding my head as the lecturer did his best to answer them and respectfully saying "I don't know" when he didn't have them, I finally raised my hand and introduced myself. I asked the lecturer, "I am technically considered an indigenous princess," to a bunch of silent Ooo's and a few audience members waking up, "but we have a very different definition of what royalty means in our culture, since there is such a large gap of understanding between western colonial culture and indigenous, do you think this is the best translation? To be called princess?"

We discussed further, and came to a soft conclusion that it is the best way to translate the level of respect, but not, perhaps, the responsibilities and the very complex intricacies of our indigenous governance structures and philosophies. The conversation can certainly be an ongoing one, but for now, I am an



(Portrait of Pocahontas, aged 21. Print made by Simon van de Passe, 1616. British Museum)

indigenous princess from a noble family on the West Coast of Canada.

After the lecture, there was a flurry of activity as audience members came to ask me questions and offer unique opportunities. The word 'curiosity' bounced around in my mind. From this experience, Border Crossings' ORIGINS Festival asked me to get involved. I got the opportunity to speak to over 1,000 students about my culture, attend numerous gallery talks and to contribute to a Coast Salish exhibition opening at the Horniman Museum in 2019. Of note, through the ORIGINS Festival I was asked to attend a ceremony at Syon House where Pocahontas stayed for 6 months, in honour of the 400-year anniversary of Pocahontas' arrival in England.

Myself, a Wampanoag and a Dakota woman were all brought together to lead a healing ceremony honouring the hardships that Pocahontas and many other indigenous travellers have experienced coming to the UK. At Syon House I found out that Pocahontas died at 21, shortly after choosing to depart from London. I was struck by this: she was the same age as me.

Pocahontas was the daughter of Chief Powhatan, the paramount Chief in the Tsenacommacah, an alliance kingdom of about 30 Algonquian speaking groups in the tidewater region of Virginia in the more recently known, United States. An incredibly different culture

from my own, but their tribes are well-respected by ours. Pocahontas was captured during wars between the English settlers and her tribes over land when she was in her early teens. She was held for ransom and severely mistreated as recorded in her tribe's oral history. She, however, felt betrayed by her father for allowing her to be captured and set about to bring peace to their wars. She was baptized, taught English, and took the name 'Rebecca.' She married John Rolfe from the warring settlements, this brought peace for several years. In indigenous governance, this is often how peace treaties were organized. Her feelings towards John Rolfe are unknown.

The Virginia Company of London thought of this as a fantastic propaganda opportunity to promote its primary goal of converting indigenous people to Christianity. They decided to bring her to London to show how the 'savages' can be 'tamed'. Terminology that for obvious reasons makes most indigenous people fabulously annoyed. It was when she was about to return home she took ill on the ship as they were near Gravesend on the Thames, they returned to shore and she passed away.

She was not a woman without agency but her narrative was taken from her. As many native people find today, as we struggle to return our narratives to our people, and for our stories to be told from our own voices.

Pocahontas effectively ended a war and created a climate of peace for her people, but this tremendous victory for her was woven into a Christian narrative. Her story romanticized and used for agendas not her own. She was presented at court as a curiosity, a condition I ended up also feeling more often than expected as a native person living in London.

I also had the opportunity to meet the Queen at the July Canada 150 Celebrations at Canada House in London. There was an unofficial boycott of indigenous people attending this event. Canada 150 is contentious. It is meant to be a celebration of 150 years of confederation but to indigenous people this quickly translates to 150 years of colonialism, cultural genocide, and racialized atrocities. Just a bit dark to deal with on your weekday festivities. With the okay of our unofficial boycott group I decided to attend.

I wanted to change stereotype's and lay groundwork for opportunities for reconciliation. Captain Vancouver in his voyage into our Coast Salish territory was quoted to call our women "noble-women." I wanted to show this, we have our own power, and presence as indigenous people, and it existed long before we first met and will exist long-after. I wore a couture gown made by my aunt, a Coast Salish fashion designer, it is a gold paddle dress representing 'The Journey'. An innovative design made with Coast Salish teachings and values. It speaks to our resiliency as a people and our nobility.

When I arrived at Canada House, before the festivities started I was treated to a display of the Queen's

private collection of Canadiana. I was surprised to find she had in her possession a Chilkat Blanket woven by my great-great-great-great Grandmother, Tlingit Princess, Mary Ebbits. I was also unseated by some choice letters the Queen had out on display of her predecessor's letters to the Canadian officials agreeing to the name "Canada," agreeing to this or that and dividing up the land. Key letters in Canadian history, but to a native person, these translate to the butchering up of our lands, territories, cultures, and peoples without regard for the existing nature of our stewardship of these lands. It was a surreal experience. It took everything I had to see the bigger picture in this. To remember every detail of history and see the positives. To paint a path of reconciliation in my darkest realizations of what Canada was built upon.

And then, just like that, I met the lovely Queen Elizabeth II of England. She asked me about my studies, if I was enjoying them, I said "yes of course" I told her the tribe I am from and it was an honour to meet her. She nodded and continued with the proceedings.

I remained slightly stricken throughout the rest of the event. I was unfortunately also unimpressed that the Canadian High Commission had not picked up on the "nuances" of what Canada 150 means to indigenous people and that the only allusion to our 15,000 years + of stewardship was in a brief song as metaphor, barely mentioned, if at all, in the speeches. I thanked the singer as well for her efforts to include us, since it was by her will that we were included, at all really. And later, news sources would report that "Native groups were in attendance." I was the only "native" there. Not plural, just me. I had a slight eyebrow twitch when I

saw the news reports, not unlike Pocahontas my narrative was being changed. I knew this would be the case though, and I made a conscious effort to introduce myself, and make my tribe's voices heard to those in attendance. I made a conscious effort to change those stereotypes.

If only the British, and the Canadians would also take ownership of their role in reconciliation as well, would a great weight be lifted off our shoulders. I have seen when Brits take ownership of their role in reconciliation, the ORIGINS Festival was a phenomenal example of this. I have seen when Canadians take ownership of their role in reconciliation, and great waves of change are accomplished. When the governments, when The Crown, addresses their roles in reconciliation, and commits to them, we will witness a new era of understanding. But there are many wounds that have yet to be healed, many bridges to be crossed, and many translations to be made before we can get there. I occasionally wonder what protocols would have to be met to sit down with Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, over a cup of tea, to discuss next steps in reconciliation.

In this way, I feel very lucky to witness where we have come as native and non-native people and where we are going. I have control over my own narrative. I can ask questions like "Is 'princess' the most appropriate translation? Is 'noblewoman'?" and be given the power to decide for myself.

Gila'Kasla - Thank You

Gesuqwaluck



PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE NATIVE AMERICAN IMAGE

Stephanie Pratt



Native Americans (those Indigenous peoples who are the original inhabitants of the Americas) have had their images taken, their faces and bodies captured in paint and print, their lives and cultures imagined and represented in a number of different media since

their very first encounter with Europeans. An early example is the engraved portrait of Pocahontas which is on display here and shows this young 21 year old Powhatan woman dressed in the English courtly fashions of 1616. She is seen in dynastic terms as the daughter of a potential English ally, the 'Emperor' Powhatan (his actual name was Wahunsenacah). But as we look at her in the print, can we be sure this is what she really looked like? How she really was in life? Some commentators have felt that Pocahontas looks uncomfortable in her starched and buttoned lace collar, but the stiffness in her pose and her dress is entirely in keeping with the conventions of the English courtly portrait at the time and this artist, Simon van de Passe, understood this. We need to remember that image-making is much more complicated than the direct act of seeing; artists did more than simply copy what was there in front of their eyes.

When we turn to look at photographs of Native American people, some of the most famous being taken by the American photographer Edward Sheriff Curtis (1868-1952), many of the same conditions apply. Essentially, taking a likeness operates on the basis of a negotiation. In Western terms that means, in having one's image taken, one is allowing just what one will permit the camera operator/portrait artist to see or not see: one can decide what aspects of one's self are going to be shown or displayed and what are going to be withheld. But when a Western artist/photographer takes an image of someone not privy to this negotiation the individual is literally subjected to the photographer's demands. The early photographs of Native American peoples are a case in point. They were made during a time of unequal power relations between the photographer's world and the world of his subjects and this imbalance cannot be ignored when considering the whole photographic project that Curtis, and others like him, undertook.

This is not to say that Native American communities were unaware of the invasive and detrimental potential of the photographic record. In 1910, Walpi, a village on the Hopi's First Mesa, forbade the use of all cameras during the annual Snake Dance (an important ceremonial event tied to the bringing of the rains and thus promoting proper plant, human and animal health) due to the ways that image-taking was altering



("Fasting": Teton Sioux Indian performing vision cry ceremony through fasting and chanting to the Great Mystery. Photo by Edward S. Curtis, 1907. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/90708211/>)

the ceremonial itself, and this general ban is still in force. In Native American folk terms, cameras and those that operate them can often be referred to as 'shadowcatchers', a term suggestive of the complex and problematic nature of having one's photo taken, catching an aspect of oneself in a flat image or shadow and by that process, capturing it and fixing it for all time. Like many World cultures, there are aspects of Native American life which are meant to be left as private or exclusive to one's gender or group or place in society and in some cases, photographers historically pushed past protests in order to take an image and thereby gain knowledge (and power) over those being photographed.

The current exhibition on display at Syon House asked its volunteers to engage directly and perceptively with a number of heritage photographs of Native Americans from the archive, and the exhibitors chose those images which spoke to each of them from distant times and places. These photographs provide us with a seemingly transparent screen in which to look into Indigenous past lives and cultures but as

mentioned above, what we are looking at is more than an 'objective' record. If we work carefully with the archive much more can be revealed. In pointing his or her camera towards a waiting subject, a photographer often captured more than they intended and in some of the incidental details recorded researchers have found much to tell us about those past lives. Some of these images show individuals facing the camera directly, whose faces may encourage a sympathetic response insofar as we may honour the sitter without ignoring the cultural politics underlying the image. Others show us people who have been posed and their representation staged by the photographer, having cleared out any evidence of the modern or technological realities of their own day and clothed them in what usually he thought was appropriate dress to make them appear more 'authentic.' These images are easier to deconstruct, but again, the sitters' dignity needs to be respected, if only by acknowledging their historical predicament.

Similarly, it would be wrong to vilify the photographer as either a devious manipulator of the truth or a dupe of the cultural politics of the day. For all the artifice we may detect in his photographs, Curtis intended to give a 'true' representation of what he thought was a disappearing way of life. He was very much affected by the notion that the process of Native Americans undergoing cultural change and acculturation to more Western modes of living during the late nineteenth century would see the end of indigenous culture, however that might be conceived. We know now that this attitude to Native American peoples and their cultures was a myth and sprung from deep ideological roots. Nevertheless, Curtis was very respectful of the communities he photographed and sincerely believed he was memorialising them and their way of life before it was too late.

The original images can therefore be de-constructed not in order to simply dismiss them as inauthentic but rather to become aware of the very particular conditions that brought them into being. Awareness of these conditions, the way each photograph is situated at the intersection of different lives, histories and circumstances, allows new work to emerge in response to it. Working with these photographs now has value, insofar as it allows us to see the extent to which Curtis' record of Native American life can be explored as a resource for individuals living in very different circumstances today. Sensitive to Curtis' situation and empathetic with respect to the original sitters, these new photographic responses are not merely a historical exercise; they draw out from his work new possibilities of engagement with different communities today.

Dr. Stephanie Pratt
Independent Scholar and Curator, Cultural
Ambassador at Large for the Crow Creek Dakota
Hunkpati and Tribal Council, Fort Thompson, South
Dakota, USA



(Sitting Bull. Photo by D.F. Barry, 1885. Retrieved from the Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/94506170/>)

FROM THE PHOTOGRAPHER

John Cobb



As a photographer weaned on the smell of darkroom chemicals it has been a pleasure to work with this collection of early 20th Century Native American portraits. In this digital age of ubiquitous and ephemeral photography it is easy to forget the power of a portrait – not simply as a

historical record, but as a valuable asset that can help inform and inspire subsequent generations.

“Photographs open doors into the past, but they also allow a look into the future.” Sally Mann (American photographer)

In this project, working with a collection of early 20th Century Native American portraits, we have developed a partnership so that volunteers create a visual dialogue between the past and present.

We use the heritage photograph as one half of a diptych - the pairing of two photographs together. The heritage photograph is the springboard for the volunteer to create the other half of the diptych – their self-portrait. In some diptychs the visual dialogue is obvious; in others it is subtler. The rich diversity in content reflects London's wide cultural tradition.

Edward Curtis paid his portrait subjects to fulfil his brief. By contrast, the self-portraits in this exhibition are a partnership between camera and subject. The volunteers prepared by participating in workshops on heritage images, cultural identity, and portrait photography. Each participant then selected a historical portrait, assembled their props and outfits, and worked on composition and lighting. We set up studios in school halls and community spaces across London.

Lighting, so evident in the work of Edward Curtis, was critical for the participants' self-portraits. As George Eastman, founder of the Eastman Kodak film company said “Embrace light. Admire it. Love it. But above all, know light. Know it for all your worth, and you will know the key to photography.”

While it is easy to be consumed by any one individual portrait, it is important that these photographs are read within the context of the whole – the synergy of the pairing portraits in combination with the accompanying narrative. The final selection for display at Syon House was made on these grounds.

With over 25 years' experience photographing riots to royals, I know the temptation to snatch the picture without due regard to the wishes of the subject – and become what Native Americans call a 'shadowcatcher'. This portrait project is the antithesis – it is a collaborative and considered visual journey founded on the plains of North America and concluded over a century later in contemporary London.

John Cobb
Photographer



(Geronimo. Photo by Frank A. Rinehart, 1898. Retrieved from the Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2001701682/>)

CHARLOTTE OSBORNE

My photographic response is in dialogue with the theme of concealment that runs through my chosen archive image. The woman covers her face with fabric, concealing her true identity from the photographer. This parallels my tendency to hide my identity and personality in situations where I do not feel comfortable, and to subsequently adopt a facade of formality. The black suit jacket that covers the bright, striped top represents the suppression of my true identity. The contrast between the sophisticated suit jacket and the vivid, expressive T-shirt reflects the tension between the dual personalities that I have adopted, one of them exposing my true identity whilst the other masks, deceives and conceals.

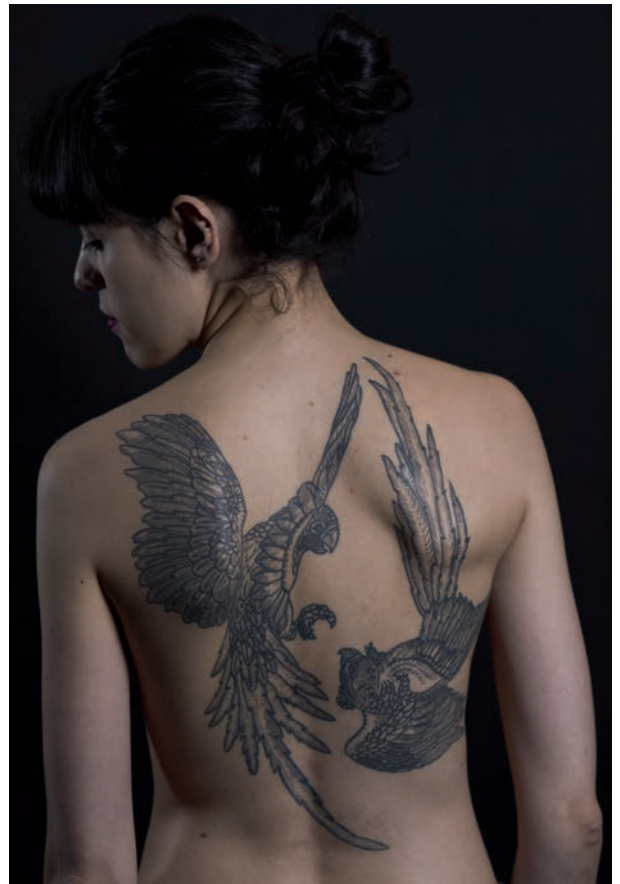
(Hesquiat Woman - photo by Edward S. Curtis, 1915. Northwestern University Library, Edward S. Curtis's "The North American Indian," 2003.)

INÉS ACHABAL

Edward Curtis took a picture in 1909 of an Arikara girl. In sepia, with her head tilted to the right, her gaze is avoiding the photographer's camera – perhaps on purpose or perhaps by indication of Curtis. With many layers of content, this image not only transmits the sensation of sadness and loss, but also projects the bon sauvage archetype, in which Western objects would be removed, and the native would be invited to pose and use garments usually unrelated to their everyday life or to their specific traditions; the clothing of the 1909 Arikara girl seems to be exactly the same of the 1907 Dakota girl Lucille, who was standing in front of a tree and coincidentally avoids Curtis' gaze, leading us to believe that there might have been some interference from the photographic team in regards to the garments.

As a response to the work of Edward Curtis, I chose the Arikara girl avoiding the photographer's gaze. To not create a doubt in the representation I have chosen of myself, as we could be led to believe by the similarities on clothing from the previously mentioned pictures, I cannot be adorned and decorated to represent my ethnicity. Although both our faces are captured in passiveness by the camera, my heritage and background is now part of my body and cannot be modified; the macaws that have become a modern symbol for Caracas – my city – can be interpreted or seen from different points of view, but cannot be taken from my body.

(Arikara Girl - photo by Edward S. Curtis, 1908. Retrieved from the Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/item/2006679644/>)



SEBASTIAN OLIVER WALLACE-ODOI

I am 9 years old and my parents come from Ghana. I chose this photo because it reminds me of Ghana. Because in Ghana cars are old and that car is old. I wore a blue shirt and blue trousers because it is traditional clothing. I had an underground backdrop because my dad works on the underground. I held a car because there are lots of cars in Ghana.

(Canadian Patriotic Indian Chiefs - photo by Ronald R. Mumford, 1915. British Library)

PH: This photograph, taken by R. R. Mumford, is something of a mystery. No concrete records exist elsewhere detailing who the photographer was and there is no supporting documentary evidence about where the photograph was taken. There is also no account of why it was produced. However, there are clues we can derive from the image and the three others which accompany it in the British Library's collections.

Firstly, the use of the word 'Patriotic' should make us suspicious of the intentions of the photographer. While the individuals depicted seem to be participating willingly, later photographs in the series suggest otherwise. In these a larger crowd is flanked by Canadian Mounted Police and a government official sits amongst the group of First Nations individuals. This suggests coercion is involved, these individuals are being, at best, encouraged or, at worst, forced to show support for the British Empire by gathering around and parading the Union Jack.

The flag is a key element to the photograph here as, along with the date the photograph was taken, it suggests the core motive for the production of the image. Mumford produced and copyrighted this series in 1915, during the First World War. As a result, despite the limited information available, we can conclude that the image was staged in order to act as a piece of propaganda for the British war effort.

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WALLID AHMED SOLOMAN JAMA

I am 10 years old and I was born in England. My parents come from Somalia. I have chosen the photograph because of the facial expression and the pose.

The heritage photo made me think of the pose, the position, the facial expression and the traditional clothes. I liked it because I am important and proud. I want to show off my culture to everyone. I wore a maawis, a Somali hat and a T-shirt. It is because it's traditional.

I call my photo "The brave and passionate boy."

(The daughter of Bad Horses - Cheyenne girl in a feather head-dress - photo by Edward S. Curtis 1905. Retrieved from the Library of Congress <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/94514309/>)

ALFIE JACK KIRKBY

I am 10 years old and I was born in London. I love sport and I think the Indigenous (Canadian) runner did too. The photo makes me feel proud and happy for him and he can be who he wants to be.

I had on me: weights, gym towel, medals and a football kit. I like my photo because it is all my favourite sports into one. I put that stuff on because it reminds me of my dad, because at a small age he had a bad knee and couldn't play football again.

Both the portraits remind me of sport because both are wearing medals from a sport event they have won. Also they both look very determined.

(Tom Longboat - photo by Charles Aylett, 1907. British Library)

PH: Cogwagee, or Tom Charles Longboat, is remembered as a distance runner of prodigious talent who had to constantly work against racist perspectives levelled against him during his athletic career. Taken in 1907, after his Boston Marathon victory, the photograph seen here highlights Cogwagee's difficult place in early twentieth century Canada.

Positioned next to his trophies, standing in a fashionably-styled room and adorned with a Maple Leaf on his chest the structure of the photograph appropriates Cogwagee and his success as a member of Canadian society. To white, metropolitan viewers of this image Cogwagee does not represent the Onondaga nation. Instead, the man and his success represent them and their nation. As the Toronto Daily Star put it after Cogwagee's Boston Marathon performance:

"Canada makes no bones about gaining a little glory from an Indian. In other matters than footraces we have become accustomed to leaders from the Six Nations. We give the Boston papers notice, one and all, that we claim Longboat as a Canadian."

Not only is the appropriation of Longboat in such text and images offensive, an illustration of the colonial arrogance that facilitates settler nations' appropriation of indigenous lands and bodies, it is also partial. Cogwagee was celebrated as 'Canadian' in victory but derided as a 'lazy Indian' in times of loss.



ROSE AL SARIA

I am 9 years old and I was born in London. My parents come from Iraq. My sister was born in Germany. I am non-religious but I am positive and believe in karma.

I had a connection with the heritage photo because me and my sister really love each other and that photo made me think of that.

I wanted the photos to show us powerful women. I chose the guitar and the microphone because my sister and I love music and singing. I chose these clothes because I am showing off my London culture. They were showing off their traditional clothes and we are showing off our 21st century clothes.

(The Misses Simeon - photo by Byron Harmon, 1907. British Library)

AFGHAN CHILDREN

We come from Afghanistan but we were born in the UK.

We chose the Inuit photo because there are a lot of people, everyone is together. They are wearing similar clothes, they might be family.

In our portrait, there are three boys wearing the same thing. These are special clothes we wear at Eid. It's a celebration picture. Green, red and black is the Afghanistan flag so a lot of traditional clothes are in these colours.

(Group of Inuit boys - photo by Edward Augustus Ingelfield, Greenland, 1854. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London)

PH: Byron Harmon worked as a photographer in the Rocky Mountains, producing images for sale to tourists. Operating in the early twentieth century Harmon's photography business was driven by the trans-continental railroad, which had drawn Canada together and made vast areas of the country newly accessible to various economic interests and tourists. A technically accomplished photographer, Harmon's subjects were, nonetheless, fairly standard tourist and postcard fare: locomotives, mountain scenes, hotels, winter sports and First Nations portraits dotted Harmon's work, as they did every other Canadian photographer catering to the tourist trade in this period.

Harmon's portraits of First Nations individuals predominantly depict members of the Stoney-Nakoda (iyârhe Nakodabi) and his access to First Nations lands and ceremonial events was tightly controlled. As the Canadian government managed and controlled First Nations reserves, they restricted the comings and goings of various individuals to these sights, photographers especially so. There were a limited number of photographers in western Canada at this time who had permission to enter and produce photographs, and Harmon was one of the select few.

The works Harmon has left behind depict members of the Stoney-Nakoda at the moment where Canadian colonialism tightens its grip on western First Nations peoples. They act as a lens onto Canada's metropolitan past too, reminding us how Canadians perceived and wished to consume First Nations culture at a central moment in Canada's colonial history.

CW: The first British expedition to take photographic equipment to the Arctic was probably the 1845 British Naval Northwest Passage Expedition, commanded by Sir John Franklin. The tragic loss of this expedition means that any photographs that the men took have never been recovered, apart from the portraits of the officers themselves, which were taken before the men departed. The rediscovery of the wrecks of HMS Erebus and HMS Terror in Arctic waters may mean that any other surviving images are, at some point, revealed. Nevertheless, the collections of the National Maritime Museum hold what are thought to be the earliest Arctic photographs, taken by Dr William Domville in western Greenland in 1852. This image, also part of the Museum's collections, is not much later than that, captured in the summer of 1854 in a similar region and rediscovered in an unlabelled box in 1994. One of twenty glass-plate negatives, it used the newly-invented wet collodion process, although the difficulties in taking photographs outdoors must have been considerable, particularly as the photographer needed to have a portable darkroom to hand. Nevertheless, the Inuit children, in their summer seal-skin clothing, pose patiently for the camera, and the photograph is a remarkably early portrait from the Arctic region.



CLAUDIA DATTOLI

Mirroring Gods

Wear the mask, let the ritual start. The gate is now open to connect you with the invisible. Wear the mask, be a newborn and you'll find yourself naked and fearless in front of your ancestors' spirits, begging them for protection and luck. Let the deity enter you and celebrate. The divine essence of human being finally comes to life and blossoms into a Mother Goddess.

Mirror, mirror, now help me thou: I can find no more Greatness around thee.

I come from a land inhabited by ancient spirits, and I pray that they can always preserve me from the aridity of modern life. I am rooted to the crossroad of great civilizations. All their attempts to capture the hidden essence of life have left me with a dancing Pulcinella, (the black mask in the bottle before me) to explore the lights and darks of our existence; with a cuorniciello (horn amulet), in a tough, tipped and twisted shape, symbol of strength and fertility, hanging around the bottle to bring me fortune and protect me against superstition. Yet, with a Greek theatre mask devoted to the cults of Dionysus, twisting its tongue around my finger to fully consecrate our bond. Although I keep these magical objects jealously, I ask myself: Can they really guide me in this journey on earth?

I mirror myself and feel the miserable human destiny of being trapped for survival in thousands invisible masks, painted on the skin. But in my smile, I hold a wish: May the masks still be a gate for Greatness and set us free.

(Nuhlimkilaka—Koskimo - Kwakiutl person wearing an oversize mask and hands representing a forest spirit, Nuhlimkilaka, ["bringer of confusion"] - photo by Edward S. Curtis, 1914. Northwestern University Library, Edward S. Curtis's "The North American Indian," 2003.)

JD: Curtis was determined in his photography to capture as many traditions as he could before they, as he feared, disappeared forever. This photograph, featuring a Koskimo Kwakwaka'wakw dancer in full costume, is absurdly staged. To obtain the photograph, Curtis required it to be taken outside, in full daylight and for the dancer to stand still. Thus while capturing the appearance of the regalia, Curtis loses all of the vitality which gives it purpose. In life, this costume would have been worn in a dark, smoky longhouse, at the height of a great feast or potlatch ceremony. The wearer would dance to song and drum beat, alongside other, similarly attired dancers, telling a story that everyone present knew by heart. The story of the Nuhlimkilaka, the bringer of confusion. The Nuhlimkilaka is but one of a pantheon of forest spirits in the lands of the Kwakwaka'wakw. Above every community lie vast, almost impenetrable forests, tangled and dark. These forests provide food and wood for the communities which live on their edges, but are also dangerous places, the danger manifested in the spirits who inhabit them which, if not approached with caution, can practice cruel and often fatal tricks on unwary wanderers.



JOSAPHAT PAUL BUYOMBO

I am nine years old and I was born in Portugal. My parents come from Portugal and Congo and my grandparents are from Congo. I like the heritage photograph because it reminds me of Congolese workers. And of my grandmother because she helped the country, she will be remembered. I feel like she is a hard worker and is making the bread for her family.

I wore my traditional T-shirt which was really good in the picture and making bread is part of my traditions.

It's to do with hard working people like in Congo. And that's what I want to show.

(Zuni bread maker. Photo by Edward S. Curtis, 1903. Retrieved from the Library of Congress <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/90715433/>)

DS: “Zuni Bread Maker”, taken by Edward Curtis in around 1903, is an image of quiet industry. In the foreground sits a basket with a stack of flatbreads; in the middleground the breadmaker shapes another circle of dough; and in the hinterground a flatbread slowly bakes in the fire. It is an image of generalized domestic labour, made so by the fact that the breadmaker sits side on, their face masked by hair, performing a task that is at once entirely quotidian and yet—as is the nature and purpose of Curtis’s photographs—a glimpse into a way of life outside the intended viewer’s experience. Taken to “capture” a vanishing way of life, as was the core of Curtis’s project, this photograph actually calls to mind the later work of Ojibwe painter Patrick Desjarlait. Desjarlait’s modernist paintings of traditional Ojibwe practices such as lake fishing, maple sugar processing, basket making, and wild ricing speak to the presence of Native custom in modernity and evoke powerful connections to place. Although in a sense Curtis’s photographs are always implicitly “out of time”, nevertheless, the Zuni bread maker’s craft persisted in that moment and persists to today, a mark of continuity rather than the exotic snapshot of a passing moment. Similarly the breadmaker’s body, hunched close to the ground in the adobe’d interior evokes that connection to place and seasonal cycle implicit in the act of breadmaking and its ingredients.



STEPHANIE GRACE EVANS

I am 9 years old and I was born in London. My grandparents came from Ireland for their job. I chose the photo because it reminds me of my granddad fishing. I was wearing my jacket because it was similar to the woman's jacket. The fishing rod was different to mine.

(Alaska Native woman fishing through ice - photo by Robinson Studio c.1910 - Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Centre)

CW: Ice-fishing is still practised throughout the Arctic today, and is a popular activity, particularly for families. Its main requirements are patience and the ability to remain still and silent for long periods of time, and being able to catch fish depends on a substantial body of knowledge, of how, when, and where to locate them. Historically, exquisitely carved lures were dangled into the icy waters to entice the fish, while the hunter waited, kakivak (spear) in hand, ready to rapidly make their move. Fish, such as Arctic char, continue to play an important role as dietary staples; it is particularly delicious eaten fresh and raw, with the liver and eyeballs being popular delicacies, although in warm weather, fish are dried to preserve them for future consumption. Nevertheless, as climate change is already affecting the Arctic to a significant extent, the length of the ice-fishing season is rapidly decreasing.



R-208 Eskimo Woman Fishing Through Ice

© Robinson



SHONA DAVIS

I am of mixed Native American and Swedish heritage. I have chosen the image of the Hopi maiden as I felt that her positioning within the portrait and the fact that she was not facing the camera indicated a thoughtfulness and story that she was not sharing with the viewer. I hoped this would resonate in my own portrait as I felt that if I was not facing the camera it could perhaps represent what I don't yet know about my Native American heritage and the parts of my heritage that I am still discovering. I am dressed in my portrait in a blouse and shawl made by my great grandmother in Sweden and holding a candle made by my great great grandfather from my family home in Sweden. These items represented for me a sense of one side of my family heritage and history and I wanted the story told through my positioning within the portrait to be about the discovery of the Native American part of my heritage.

(The Hopi Maiden - photo by Edward S. Curtis, c. 1905. Retrieved from the Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/item/2001695848>)

ALEXIA AND DESPINA ESTRADA

My name is Despina Estrada and I am 10 years old. I was born in 2007 in America.

My name is Alexia Estrada and I am 9 years old. I was born in 2008 in America. Our parents come from America and Cyprus and our grandparents are from Cyprus.

We chose the picture because we liked the position they were in and how it was two sisters.

They're sisters and so are we. They look like they have a large age difference. They didn't really want their picture taken because they don't look happy.

We took summer clothes and sandals because we come from Cyprus which is a hot country.

(Studio portrait of two Southampton Inuit children - photo by Geraldine Moodie - 1903-5 - British Museum)

GH: Edward Curtis' photograph of a Hopi maiden (possibly taken in 1906) shows a young woman with a traditional style squash blossom hairstyle. Her pose could speak of modesty or of a focus on more important matters than the presence and gaze of a visiting photographer. Pressures on the Hopi (whose homelands are now enveloped within northeastern Arizona) had already caused significant changes and would lead to the abandonment of the hairstyle within a decade of the photograph. However, change continued and many present-day Hopi young women display similarly impressive butterfly whorls of hair. However, throughout these processes of change – indicative of larger cultural, political, economic, ecological transformations – Hopi have continued to celebrate the virtues of humility, modesty and respect. The official website of the Hopi Nation speaks of a sacred covenant with the “ancient caretaker of the earth”, and especially of Hopituskwa (the Hopi lands), which encourages them to share in the task of living respectfully and humbly with other beings. It is not hard to see this attitude reflected in Curtis' portrait of a young woman who lowers her eyes and focuses elsewhere, even as she allows her hairstyle to be recorded for others to see.

CW: Even though they are set in a makeshift photographic studio in Fullerton Harbour, Geraldine Moodie's extraordinary portraits are notable for perfectly capturing the personality of their sitters. At the moment, we don't know the names of the two children pictured here, but their expressions are both familiar and timeless. The younger child, bundled into a jacket with the hood up, fists clenched, is directly staring at the camera, perhaps waiting for the moment when they can move again. The older child, a glint in their eye, seems also to be desperately trying to stay still, catching the eye of someone beyond the frame.

Moodie, often acknowledged as one of the first professional female photographers in western Canada, had travelled to the north-western shores of Hudson Bay in 1904, joining her husband, who worked there for the North-West Mounted Police. The 'last of the Southampton tribe of Inuits' is written on the back of the photograph. Although this might suggest that the children were Sadlermiut, the original inhabitants of Southampton Island, this population was obliterated by disease in 1902–3, after the arrival of a Scottish whaling ship to the island. Attempts to settle the island by groups of Aivilingmiut had begun in 1897, so perhaps these children were from that particular Inuit group.



BAFT JHONBALAJ

I am 10 years old. I was born in England. My parents come from Albania.

I chose this photo because it reminds me of my grandfather and of the clothes they wear when it's winter in Albania. I feel happy about it because it shows people about the older times and where they are from and what they do.

I copied it and most of the clothes I wore resemble the photo. It shows what people wear and wore in the older times, and the small guitar reminds me of my country, as it is a traditional guitar with the Albanian flag on it.

(She-nuck-shoo, an Ivalik Chief - photo by Geraldine Moodie - Cape Fullerton 1903-5 - British Museum)

CW: Traditionally, Inuit societies have subsisted by sustainably and efficiently using the resources around them, particularly the wildlife of land and sea, creating a close interdependence between people and their environment. This portrait of She-nuck-shoo, a chief of the Aivilingmiut, encapsulates much of this. Photographed by Geraldine Moodie in the early twentieth century, he is wearing skin clothing, fur gloves and boots. This crucial apparel, hand-made by Inuit women, ensured survival in cold weather conditions. Women produced the beautifully stitched, water-tight clothing from the animals that men had hunted, such as caribou, using bows and arrows. Harpoons like the one that She-nuck-shoo is holding would be used to hunt at sea, particular for whales, walruses and seals.

The Aivilingmiut, a sub-group of the Iglulik Inuit, had actually been one of the earliest groups to develop relationships with the commercial whalers that visited the region, adapting their own hunting patterns to facilitate participation in whaling or to satisfy the demands of the whalers themselves.

MAYA LEWIS

I am 7 years old. I was born in England. My parents come from Egypt (Mum) and Jamaica (Dad).

The heritage photo makes me feel sad because she is sad, not smiling, and it's dark in the background. I chose it because I had those bracelets and necklaces.

I decided to wear the dress because the dress is from Egypt. I also had the flags from Egypt and Jamaica. I call my portrait "The mixed-race person".

(The silversmith's daughter - Navajo Indian, near Gallup, N. Mexico - 1920-30 - photographer unknown. Retrieved from the Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/item/2012646847/>)



SIMON F. SHAND

The photograph I chose as inspiration for my own photo was that of Red Hawk, an Oglala warrior, sitting on a horse that is drinking from a small pond in the Badlands of North Dakota.

What particularly appealed to me about this image was this extremely noble and proud looking figure surrounded by the serenity of the Great Plains of North America.

To me, it seems as though Red Hawk is gazing out across the plains and admiring this remarkable landscape. I also get the sense from his gaze that Red Hawk appreciates what he sees and recognises what value the land has and how it generously provides for his people.

In contrast to the photo of Red Hawk and his horse in this tranquil environment, the image of myself filling up my Triumph Bonneville at a Hammersmith petrol station, is in an extremely busy location; surrounded by the typical hustle and bustle of London traffic.

However, what the two images do share is the need to refuel. In addition to this, both images show the person responsible for refuelling taking the opportunity to take a moment and take in their surroundings, whether serene or chaotic.

(An Oasis in the Badlands - photo by Edward S. Curtis - c.1905 - Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/93506840/>)

CWh: This photograph shows Red Hawk, an Oglala (Sioux) warrior on his horse as it drinks from small pond in the North Dakota Badlands. The butt of his rifle can be seen tucked into the saddle on the far side of the horse as the warrior surveys the landscape. The landscape in this image gives a sense of vast openness – mountains in the far distance, and fertile grasslands almost as far as the eye can see.

Given the colonial period in which this photograph is taken it is not difficult to see how this could easily be understood as a land ripe for settling. However, the rifle suggests that the indigenous tribes would be ready to defend their way of life if needed. The impressive feather headdress shows a man of prestige in his community yet it is interesting that the warrior is not named in the caption, only in the short description that accompanied the photograph. It could be understood that by not-naming someone they have their subjectivity removed; they become an object and indeed in this shot the main object according to the title is the water pond not the proud man and his fine horse.



MARCELA KONONOVA

The most striking features in this picture are the clothes the girl is wearing and her face showing very little enjoyment. The attire is traditional Native American: however, it does not necessarily have to be exactly what the Kalispel were originally wearing. Curtis carried different kinds of Native American clothes with him, as he travelled around the country capturing the “vanishing race”. This girl’s face can be described as a natural reaction when Curtis made her wear the “traditional” costume of his choice and so enforced a constructed identity on her. The posture of her hands, too, shows a certain insecurity or distrust.

My response is trying to react to the main features of the original picture. The clothes, especially the motif on my T-shirt, the necklace, and the ribbon are parts of the traditional costume of my country – Slovakia. My expression is showing pride and enthusiasm. I am happy to be photographed being dressed in what makes my culture distinct from others. The posture of arms akimbo, which is the basic posture of traditional Slovak dancers, is a sign of self-confidence too. The posture and the facial expression are crucial when we represent Slovak culture in various international folk festivals.

By comparing these two pictures, one should recognise the importance of the involvement of the individual who is being photographed in the process of composition. Only their choice of clothing, expression or posture can show us who they really are.

(Touch her dress - Kalispel girl - photo by Edward S. Curtis, c. 1910 - Retrieved from the Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/item/95505756/>)

HANA AHMED

I am 9 years old. I was born in England and my parents come from France. My family are Muslims.

I chose this picture because I really liked the clothes from her culture and what she put in her hair. She looked uncomfortable and she was in a formal pose.

I wore my favourite comfortable clothes. I chose my headscarf because it’s also my favourite and I wear it on special occasions. The book I chose to be in my portrait was “The Adventures of Ulysses” because I like adventure books. I chose this book because my family had travelled to loads of places before by plane.

In the heritage photo she was very formal and I wanted to create the opposite. I think that she was made to wear her traditional clothes. I had the freedom to wear what I wanted in my portrait.

(Ke-wy-you - photo by Geraldine Moodie, 1903-05, Ivalik. British Museum)

CW: This portrait of Ke-wy-you, an Ivalik Inuit woman, is another of Geraldine Moodie’s photographs. Ke-wy-you wears an ‘attigi’, or beaded parka, an example of the incredible skill of Inuit seamstresses and an outlet for this particular maker’s individual creative flair, demonstrated by the striking geometric pattern on the coat and the heavy fringing. Clothing like this became popular in areas where there was ready access to beads, particularly through whalers and traders, and beaded parkas were highly valued as prestigious items of clothing by men and women alike. The weight of the beads is said to have made these inner parkas particularly warm. Such beautiful pieces were probably kept for special occasions, and beadwork panels may have become family heirlooms in themselves.

Fullerton Harbour, where Moodie was based, was a thriving centre for the whaling industry during this period. It was a hub for the production of beadwork like this in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.



ABDULAHI AHMED MOWLID AHMED

I am 9 years old and I was born in London. My parents are from Somalia.

I chose the picture because it blends in with my shirt and the head cover. We both look like each other by the clothes, we both have something in our head. We both look proud in our photos.

This headwear is important to me because wearing it makes me proud of my religion. I wear it 2 times a week. I would call my portrait "Islam".

(Warrior's feather head-dress—Cowichan - photo by Edward S. Curtis, 1913. Retrieved from the Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/item/97506215/>)

BEN HENRY STANLEY INGRAM

I am 10 years old.

I have chosen this photo because it reminds me of my little cousin who had cancer. I felt really sad about it.

I was looking away from the camera. The t-shirt I was wearing was "Stand up for cancer". I wore this t-shirt because it shows someone has cancer.

I was looking away from the camera like the other one. I was looking down because it shows that I was thinking about him.

(A Child of the Desert [Navajo] - photo by Edward S. Curtis, 1904. Retrieved from the Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/item/90710169/>)



RACHEL HARRIS

My heritage image is of a female shaman of the Hupa people. The Hupa crafted beautiful baskets: she holds two, balanced, one in each hand. The shells, her currency for her craft, hang around her neck. She looks straight into the camera, wise but posed and formal. I love what this photo shows us but we have to consider what is missing. It tells us very little about the true depths of her rituals, power, spirituality and belief.

In my photo, I wanted to try to capture the idea that belief and spirituality isn't what you can see but something much more subtle, something inside, one of the many parts that form a person's identity. My Shabbat candles represent the traditional side of my Judaism, a lighting ritual that my family perform most Friday nights. However, in my portrait, I am not saying a prayer over them but instead reading a novel; it too full of its own comments on religion and spirituality. A more honest illustration of me in my everyday. The nature of photography is capturing the visual and although the baskets and the shells represent who she is in one sense, I feel the true nature, depth and importance of being a shaman is lost. In my photo I'm trying to show that my Judaism is part of who I am, even though it is not always visible.

(Athapascan Hupa female shaman - photo by Edward S. Curtis, c. 1923, California. Retrieved from the Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/item/90710556/>)

GH: In about 1923, Edward Curtis photographed a Hupa woman in northwestern California. Her strong gaze, shell headbands and necklace speak of her assured authority. Curtis identified her as the Principal shaman of her people. Shaman is a hard working term, originating as a Siberian Tungus term for ritualists, healers and mediators between human communities and the larger-than-human world. The term has a complex history but is now commonly used to identify healers in many other communities. Exactly what distinguishes shamans from other healers is hotly contested. Interpreters often insist that shamans must be adept at entering trance or similar states, perhaps using rhythmic sounds, movements or psychotropics as aids. In many Indigenous communities less emphasis is placed on techniques for altering consciousness than in the quality of relations with beings who might help or hinder human well-being. Shamans build relationships with powerful other-than-human persons who enable them to combat illness or gain necessary knowledge - e.g. of the whereabouts of animals who may be willing to offer themselves as food. In the photograph, the Hupa woman holds two baskets. As well as evidencing her creative skills, these baskets speak of what Greg Sarris calls "weaving the dream" in his book about the Pomo medicine woman and basket weaver, Mabel McKay. The baskets are alive and play important roles in the ritual lives of these powerful women.



RAGHE KEYRE

Glimpse: Modestly Mysterious

They are both in control. They have both agreed to be captured but they are only willing to give you what they want to give you. They use cultural Native American material to hide and reveal a Cheyenne person. They also use technology and light to hide and reveal a Somali person as the face exposed resembles the Horn of Africa.

Some things you just aren't entitled to know unless you give time and space to understand, accept and contemplate. These individuals are both the same and they are both different, same intentions, different methods, same mystery, different time period, same modesty, different culture. They are both well known and they are both unknown. They are both the same and they are both different. They are both in control.

("A Favorite Cheyenne Costume", 1911 - Photogravure by Edward S. Curtis. Image: 7 1/4 x 5 in. (18.4 x 12.7 cm) Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of John Anton, San Diego, CA (AC1997.247.1) digital image © Museum Associates / LACMA)

DS: Taken in Seattle in 1911 for his volume of photographs titled *The North American Indian*, Edward Curtis's "A Favorite Cheyenne Costume" speaks implicitly of the illusory quality of his project. At first glance, an adorned figure looks back at the viewer, striking in the simplicity of their attire, their gaze authentic and true. The Cheyenne, of course, were Plains people; like many of Curtis's photographs, then, this image belies the fact of displacement—taken in Seattle, its subject is, or at least was, more likely native to Montana. Understanding this, the way the costume masks the subject's face—denying the viewer certainty about their gender, even—freights the scene with far more complex questions about identity, visibility, indexicality, and the power of the image to both reveal and conceal. The subject's agency resides in their fixed stare, their image revealing little even as Curtis sought to "capture" a certain reality; Curtis was known by some of the tribes he visited as the shadow (or soul) catcher; if the eyes really are a window to the soul, this apparently simple, apparently peaceful image suggests a contest of gazes, over the power of looking and the refusal to be seen.

RAZANNE FARES

I am 10 years old and I was born in London. My parents come from Morocco. My mum and dad got married in Morocco and they have very different ways of getting married.

I chose this heritage photograph because it is unique and independent and it has a different hairstyle. I would call it "Innocent".

In my portrait, my clothing was a pretty blue dress with white-silvery patterns at the collar. I also has a whitish sparkly headband. We sometimes wear the headband to make it more special. I chose to look in the distance because it looked mysterious. I had a black background so I can stand out.

It reminds me of independence and being proud of your culture and religion. I decided to chose this pose because it's boring to just look at the camera. I call this portrait "Independence".

(Chaiwa—Tewa girl - photo by Edward S. Curtis, c.1906. Retrieved from the Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/97518918/>)



SANI MULIAUMASEALI'I

I engaged with the image instantly, as I saw the clear connection with the material, Raffia, which we also use in the Pacific. We both use it similarly: made into a full-length girdle and worn around the waist, with smaller ones on the wrists.

They were natural fibres in the picture, I'd expect, and mine were a mixture of natural and plastic. The subject's pose was interesting to me: a mixture of defiance - measured, but defiant nonetheless - and submissiveness.

The Head-dress Mask was fierce but askew and revealed the naked face. The revealing of his face, for me, facilitated the escaped cultural secret. Any form of mystery that may have existed is obliterated and with it any intrinsic power. The subject is reduced to role playing, pacifying any sense of ceremonial self that may have been present. 'they're just like us, after all' sort of thing.

We also have head-dresses in Samoa, but not masks as such. He looked like a caged animal, not knowing where or who he is in the context of a studio.

I felt a similar sense of no man's land during our shoot; insecure as to who I was supposed to be and represent. This is a daily occurrence given that my cultural background is not the dominant one. My face markings sufficed as a type of masking, and are typically Samoan and instantly recognisable as such.

This is important to me.

The mask in my case was my suit. An Yves Saint Laurent sky blue beautifully lined single breasted suit, befitting occasion.

It is actually my father's wedding suit. An awkward arranged marriage between cultures. The battlefield of an arranged union whereby inner conflict is never too far from the surface. I am in the west, dressed in the contractual combat gear of commerce and yet I cannot - and will not - take leave any of my heritage.

The red neck adornments, necklace 'Ula fala' is only found in Samoa and denotes nobility. The 'whisk' or 'fue' held awkwardly in my left hand is to shoo away flies - there were none in the studio.



(Atlumhl-- Koskimo - photo by Edward S. Curtis 1914 - Retrieved from the Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/item/90716105/>)





My name is **Anas Kerarim** and I am 6 years old. I was born in Algeria.

I like hiding. In my picture I am hiding under a blanket from Algeria.

Navajo girl - Photo by Edward S. Curtis c. 1904. Retrieved from the Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/item/95504520/>



My name is **Barbod Altafikhahan** and I am 10 years old. I was born in Karaj, Iran. My parents come from Iran and my grandparents are from Iran. My dad was born in Bijar, Iran. My mum was born in England.

I have chosen this photograph because I like how these clothes are unique and stand out. This picture means a lot to me because it is very traditional. It reminds of my Kurdish traditions and what I wear to go and pray in Mashad. I've only been to Mashad once because I am young and I should know a lot about the prophets.

I had a bowl of nuts because it made me feel about Buba Nowruz who takes some nuts and leaves money on a plate.

Youth in holiday costume-Umatilla - Photo by Edward S. Curtis, c.1910. Retrieved from the Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/item/95505718/>



My name is **Betanya T. Solomon** and I am 10 years old. I was born in London. My parents come from Ethiopia & Eritrea.

When I was about 8 years old, I had a dream my granddad died. We went to the park and the tree reminded me of that. The girl herself looks sad and the memory looks sad. We were both outside by a tree. We were both wearing our traditional clothes. We were both looking at the camera and looking sad.

The dress is from Ethiopia. We wear it for Ethiopian New Year. I had 3 flags: UK for me, Ethiopian for Mum and Eritrean for Dad.

Umatilla child - Photo by Edward S. Curtis, c.1910. Retrieved from the Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/item/94507926/>



My name is **Bethania Belete** and I am 7 years old. I was born in England. My parents come from Ethiopia. I have 2 sisters and a little brother in Ethiopia.

In my culture I've got special clothes which I wear in important occasions. The girl in the picture looks about my age and is wearing clothes particular to her culture. The girl looks serious in the picture. When I am in a picture I choose to smile to reflect my personality. She looks proud of her clothes. I feel proud when I wear mine.

Jicarilla girl in feast dress - photo by Edward S. Curtis c.1904 - Retrieved from the Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/item/2003652712/>



I was initially drawn to this photograph of Inuk Woman, Ung-Ung-a, because of the way she is presented - looking straight into the camera, seeming very proud. With a lack of background or accessories, the photographer lets her speak for herself, without imposing any stereotypes, misconceptions, or Eurocentric and colonialist judgments. My goal was to recreate the set up of the original picture, while adding some contemporary touches such as the plywood background. My intentions were to show the similarities one can find between humans, even when distanced by geography and time. - **Constance Crassier**

Ung-ung-a - photo by Geraldine Moodie c.1903-5, Cape Fullerton. British Museum.

CW: This portrait is striking for its informality and her direct gaze towards the camera. Although Geraldine Moodie talks about the women that she met and photographed in her diary, she doesn't seem to mention this particular person. Nevertheless, she clearly found plenty of willing subjects for her work, writing 'Every day I decide to take no more fresh [photographs], and then some distinctive face or good-looking woman or child turn up and out comes the camera again.'



My name is **Emily-Rose Faith Slade** and I am 6 years old. The photo reminds me of my younger brother because me and my brother like to snuggle. I like my onesie because it makes me warm and cosy.

Navajo child - photo by Edward S. Curtis c.1904. Retrieved from the Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/item/2001695800/>

The Native American picture makes me feel sad because my brother looks like that when he is sad.



My name is **Frankie O'Reilly** and I am 8 years old. I was born in Ireland. I think the photo is a good representation. Good to see where she lives and how her clothes are traditional.

A child's lodge -1910. Northwestern University Library, Edward S. Curtis's "The North American Indian," 2003.

I wore a green dress because my dad and I both like the colour and it's in the Irish flag. I chose to wear my great nanny's necklace that she gave me. I brought in my flag which my mum and I made.

CWh: In this photo, the young girl is not only un-named and thus not given any subjectivity; she is merely dressing for the lodge. It is the tepee that is the subject of this photograph. However, the young girl looks directly toward the camera and thus at us. Thus, although small and according to the title of the image, insignificant, her direct gaze is fierce, and by causing the viewer to focus on her rather than the lodge, she reclaims her subjectivity and is the main focus on our attention.

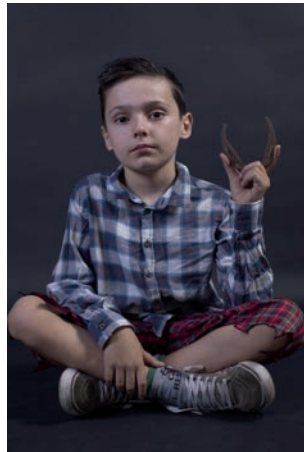
We were both outside and on the grass representing our culture in traditional clothes. We were both looking straight at the camera.



I chose the image of the Native American Cheyenne leader Two Moons as the inspiration for my own portrait, as it seemed to encapsulate the qualities I aspire to in my position as a father and grandfather, and in my professional role as a Headteacher. This includes projecting a calm, confident, sincere and influential persona to ensure the trust, confidence and security of those around me. I was hoping to capture the sense of serene self-assurance and integrity which he achieves without appearing in any way arrogant or unapproachable. I was also keen to be depicted in scene which represents my role as guardian of the children in my care illustrating that I feel privileged to be entrusted with such a responsibility. - **Gary Murrell**

Two Moons - one of the Cheyenne chiefs at the battle of Little Bighorn in 1876, when Custer's command was annihilated by a force of Sioux and Cheyenne.

Photo by Edward S. Curtis c.1910. Northwestern University Library, Edward S. Curtis's "The North American Indian," 2003.



My name is **Jayden Jeffrey Coffey** and I am 9 years old. I was born in England. My parents come from Ireland.

I chose this photograph because in Ireland the horses are very special. Also it seems that they are special to the Native Americans. They are wearing chains for decoration and ropes for either making the horse go faster or to keep the person on the horse. They are wearing traditional clothes but appropriate for horse riding. The horses are wearing horse shoes and in my portrait I am holding a horseshoe. I call the portrait "Silence".

Gussie Good Stonie and friends on horseback - photo by Byron Harman, 1907. British Library.



My name is **Kaith Bekrar** and I am 10 years old. I was born in Egypt. My parents come from Dubai. I have been to lots of countries.

The setting of the heritage picture is similar to my portrait because both are surrounded by trees and space. Also we both are looking at the distance.

A smoky day at the Sugar Bowl--Hupa - photo by Edward S. Curtis, 1923. Retrieved from the Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2002719660/>



My name is **Lujain Sam Camila Alsamarraie** and I am 10 years old. I was born in Liverpool, England. My parents come from Iraq and Russia. My grandfather was part of the army. He earned a death penny. My grandmother was Camila who died of a heart attack. The heritage photo reminds me of my grandmother in a photo when she was little and living in Iraq/Russia. I wore an old button shirt that my grandmother handed to me two weeks before her death along with the earrings.

A Nambe girl - photo by Edward S. Curtis, c.1905. Retrieved from the Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/94514103/>











My name is **Mahir Rahman** and I am 8 years old. I was born in Bangladesh.

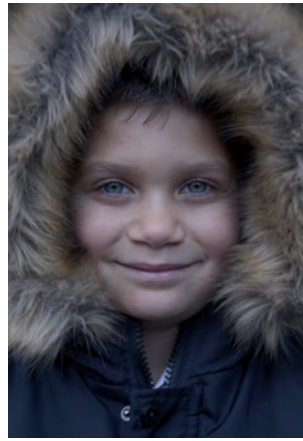
I am wearing a long kameez and big trousers from Bangladesh. Because a cow died from a Bengali tiger when we were going to a wedding with traditional clothes. I also have my mum's favourite sari on the back, the one she wore on the wedding day.

It had to be a picture with pride, people don't smile in wedding pictures. I thought the boy in the picture looked proud too.

Portrait of young Inuit boy, Too-doo-licks - photo by Gerladine Moodie, 1905, Fullerton Harbour. Glenbow Archives NC-81-49

CW: Too-Doo-Licks, apparently known as 'McGinty' to the whalers of Cape Fullerton, was only about twelve years old in this photograph. His pose here, with fingers tucked into his jacket, suggests a defiance that hides the vulnerability that Moodie noted on meeting him. In her diary she described the young boy's reaction as he boarded the ship, the S. S. Arctic, to join the crew: 'He kept up all right till the steamer began to move and then the old battered hat sank lower till it rested on the railing and he had a good cry. Since then he seems quite happy.'

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|  |  | <p>The portrait of the woman from the Skokomish tribe grabbed my attention, because she extremely resembled to my mom. Not her face, but the expression on her face. It showed something very powerful, as if she had seen a lot in her life, just like my mom. For my portrait I chose an amulet that my mother gave to me when I first went to school. She brought it from Vietnam and said it would help in my studies, and to become successful. This is one of the few things that I brought to London. It hangs next to my mirror, reminding me of her and my purpose to do well at my studies. - Mai Nguyen</p> | <p>Tsatsalatsa - Skokomish - 1912. Northwestern University Library, Edward S. Curtis's "The North American Indian," 2003.</p> |
|  |  | <p>My name is Malick Ray Karim and I am 8 years old. I was born in London. My parents come from Germany and Zanzibar and my grandparents are from Greece and New Zealand.</p> <p>I chose this picture because the boy feels proud. I was looking away because I felt like it.</p> | <p>Okuwa-Tsire ("Cloud Bird"), San Idefonso - portrait of a Tewa boy - photo by Edward S. Curtis, c.1905 - Retrieved from the Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/item/92519842/</p> |
|  |  | <p>My name is Manika Kaur Chahil and I am 10 years old. I was born in East London. Dad is from East London and Mum is from India. The heritage photo looked very exotic and different, and the lady looked very pretty. It reminded me of the photo of my mum getting married. In most of the pictures people are sad, but in this photo it looks like she's about to get married. I am wearing a dress from India. My grandma bought it for me. In my family photo album there are photos of my family in India. We were both proud and smiling. We are both looking straight at the camera. It's certainly a posed photo. It looks like we were proud of our cultures.</p> | <p>Wishham bride - photo by Edward S. Curtis, c.1910 - Retrieved from the Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/item/92511284/</p> |
|  |  | <p>Curtis travelled around the United States carrying props and garments used to stage different atmospheres. Hence we cannot know for sure if she's expressing her cultural heritage through her garments. What made me pick this image was her gaze looking back at the photographer. I felt very drawn to her eyes and thought how would I see myself if I had never seen my reflection on a mirror or a photograph of me. She felt to me as an eternal aspect of the feminine essence from where I could be reflected through her. I borrowed elements from the Huototja People's culture, Tantric traditions and practices to make my own image. - Maria Graciela Rojas</p> | <p>An Apache girl about fourteen years of age - photo by Edward S. Curtis - 1903. Northwestern University Library, Edward S. Curtis's "The North American Indian," 2003.</p> |



My name is **Morris Bukraba** and I am 7 years old. My parents come from Poland.

I chose this photograph because it was a cold day and I was warm. It reminds me of the cold and snow in Poland.

We were wearing gigantic coats. I was smiling because I like snow but he wasn't because it was cold for him.

Noatak child - photo by Edward S. Curtis, 1929 - Retrieved from the Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/item/93503088/>

CW: Unfortunately, little is known about this Inupiaq child, swamped by the enormous hood of their parka. This is one of a series of portraits taken in Alaska by Curtis, the final elements of a thirty-year project to document Native Americans in a mammoth work, "The North American Indian", which was published in twenty volumes over a period of more than twenty years. At the age of 59, this expedition was the most dangerous of Curtis's career, not least because of poor weather conditions.



My name is **Munir Safi** and I am 7 years old. My family come from England and Spain.

I chose this photo because it was a group of friends instead of one person. I decided to have a portrait of me playing with my friends.

Hopi children - photo by Edward S. Curtis, c.1905. Retrieved from the Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/item/94514259/>



My name is **Negeste Berhanu Geletu** and I am 10 years old. My parents come from Ethiopia.

I chose the heritage photo because I have a lot of similar things, jewellery and traditional dress. It reminds me of an Ethiopian flag. Because everything is similar and it has a flag at the back.

In my portrait, I had a traditional dress and some jewellery because it is part of my tradition and I wear it to church. The girls in the family also wear traditional clothes.

A young Yakima - c.1910. Northwestern University Library, Edward S. Curtis's "The North American Indian," 2003.



My name is **Ramsey Tarek Mesloub** and I am 7 years old. My Dad is from Algeria.

The boy in the picture is about my age. It makes me happy because it reminds me of when I was little.

We both have our hand on the hips.

I decided to wear this because I support Algeria. I would give the portrait the title "Algerian team".

Kiyoukayouk, an Inuit boy - photo by Geraldine Moodie, c 1903-5 - British Museum



My name is **Raquel De Sá Francisco** and I am 11 years old. I was born in Portugal. My parents come from Lisbon and Angola.

I chose this picture because I like playing outside with my family. I feel happy because the little girl and I like to play. I also feel sad because I think she doesn't like it when people take pictures of her.

I am wearing my traditional clothes: peach long dress with peach side straps. I only wear it in Portugal. Black shoes, black straps and point. The dress is important because it is traditional.

Innocence, an Umatilla girl - photo by Edward S. Curtis - c.1910 - Retrieved from the Library of Congress www.loc.gov/item/94503199/



We are **Resina** (46 - Bengali), **Zara** (10 - English) and **Robi** (5 - Maltese). We chose this picture because there were 3 people in the family and there are 3 people in our family here. It is quite a formal photo. We changed the photo that people took of us and made it more informal. It looked like us, because there were only three people. We wore these clothes because they mean we are from a certain country. We call our portrait "Happiness of Families".

"Eskimo Widow and children" - Photo by Geraldine Moodie, Cape Fullerton, 1903-05. British Museum.



I was born and raised in Italy with my mother's family, but my father is Egyptian. I have never had contact with him or his culture. I chose to draw inspiration from Edward Curtis' picture of the Inuit Family, which symbolises the importance of family ties no matter the distance or the origins.

The pendant shown in the picture was my grandmother's graduation present, to make me remember her. The way I am wearing the pendant has been inspired by the tattoo of the Inuit filmmaker Alethea Arnaquq-Baril. Drawing inspiration from different indigenous people and cultures represents my own varied heritage and culture. - **Sara Abou El Ella**





A family group - Noatak - photo by Edward S. Curtis, c.1929 - Retrieved from the Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/item/97510644/>



My name is **Sara Gajek** and I am 10 years old. I was born in Warszawa, Poland. I chose this image because in summer my mum carries me like that.

I wore traditional clothes and I had an ice-cream to create a summer mood. The top, skirt and bandana are important to me because they are Polish traditional clothes. I only use them in Poland. My mum always has me on her back in the summer while I eat chocolate ice-cream. It reminds me of Polish culture during the summer, going to the park to eat ice-cream.

Woman and child (Joe Moses), Nunivak - photo by Edward S. Curtis, c. 1929. Retrieved from the Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/item/93503092/>

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|  |  | <p>My name is Zahra Jessie Barbalho Alsebah and I am 8 years old. My parents come from Brazil.</p> <p>I like the pose on the picture. It was really a close-up. I liked her earrings. She was wearing a fluffy jacket and I was too. She had square large earrings and I had modern hoop earrings. I also had a very close picture.</p> | <p>Tsawatenok girl - photo by Edward S. Curtis c. 1914 - Retrieved from the Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/item/93511813/</p> |
|  |  | <p>My name is Zainab Hassan and I am 8 years old. I was born in London. My parents come from Somalia. My parents gave me my name because my mum's mum name is Zainab and a Prophet's daughter name is Zainab.</p> <p>The heritage photo reminds me of my mum and dad's wedding photo. I was wearing some Somalian traditional clothing. They are home clothes and I had a water carrier.</p> | <p>A Kwakiutl bridal group - 1914. Northwestern University Library, Edward S. Curtis's "The North American Indian," 2003.</p> |

JD: The Tsawataineuk are a band of Kwakwaka'wakw people, who live on the islands of the Broughton Archipelago off the Northern shore of Vancouver Island. When Edward Curtis visited these communities in 1914, he sought to capture their unique culture so that it would be preserved for the day when the aggressive policies of the Canadian government eradicated it entirely. What he found was a people already profoundly changed; traditional dress and dance was being replaced and abandoned, and so he persuaded the inhabitants of the communities to "dress up" in ways he felt best reflected their traditions.

What he failed to understand, is that the "abandonment" of these practices was a survival mechanism, designed to conceal that, out of sight of authorities, traditional practices continued in adapted form, and have survived to the modern day.

The adolescent girl in the image chosen by Zahra was named Margaret Frank and no doubt selected by Curtis for her beauty. She wears a cape made of dried and twisted cedar bark and huge ear-rings made from Hailotis shell, mother of pearl, designed to flash and dazzle as the wearer danced in the firelight of ceremonial occasions. Kept in secure boxes and passed through generations, these ear-rings would have been valuable family heirlooms, worn only at the most important of feasts.

The image chosen by Zainab may be a still from Curtis' 1914 feature film "In the Land of Headhunters": it certainly seems to replicate a sequence from that production. This film is a powerful example of colonial appropriation of indigenous identity. Curtis was determined to make an 'authentic' film; he hauled the production team and their equipment to the remote islands of British Columbia and filmed an entirely indigenous Kwakwaka'wakw cast in indigenous costume. But the story they told was one Curtis himself invented and wrote: Curtis, for all his good intentions, wanted only those parts of indigeneity which he himself could control. In reality, the people he found had begun to abandon traditions in the face of oppression, and Curtis had to make changes as he saw fit. For example, he forced the male actors to shave their "inauthentic" moustaches, apparently unaware that facial hair has been fashionable among the Kwakwaka'wakw long before Europeans arrived. Many of the costumes and props Curtis had made for the production, as they could no longer be found in the communities with which he worked, although they were made by indigenous artists who produced high-quality pieces for the production. The result however was oddly static productions such as this image, in which the "bridal party" stare woodenly at the camera. In life, as the great box drum implies, Kwakwaka'wakw weddings are loud, raucous celebrations of love and family, noted for their dancing, feasting and song.



THE VANISHING RACE

Christina Welch

The archive image on the previous page is Edward Curtis's photograph "The Vanishing Race" (1904). It was taken in Canyon de Chelly, and shows six Navajo riding into the distance. With the image picturing the subjects moving away from the viewer this, together, with the caption, strongly implies that the subjects are disappearing; they are very literally heading off into the sunset.

Although a little hazy, it can be seen that one of the riders (the second one in the row of five) has turned to look at the photographer (and thus the viewer) as if to acknowledge the departing. This particular image was the frontispiece to Curtis' Twenty Volume publication, "The North American Indian". Curtis' work was nostalgic in tone, reflecting his belief that the North American Indians were part of the historical landscape of America, a landscape that, like the Indians themselves, were vanishing in the wake of colonial expansion. As was common at this time, Curtis also understood to Indian peoples to be primitive and not fit for more modern ways of living. However, there are a number of photographs which Curtis took that show they had adapted to modern life, and indeed Curtis travelled with boxes of traditional dress to enable those he photographed to look the part.

His photograph Makah Whaler (1915) is one such image; his oldest brother Asahel (also a photographer) took a photograph of Makah whalers in 1910; whereas Curtis put the whaler in skins for the shot (dress that the hunters had not worn for generations), his typical garb as shown by Asahel, was Western in style; a jumper, trousers and boots.

(Retrieved from the Library of Congress
<https://www.loc.gov/item/2004672871/>)

Michael Walling

The second image reproduced here was taken on June 15th 2017, at Syon House. It shows three contemporary Native American women - Stephanie Pratt (Dakota Sioux), Gabe Hughes (Wampanoag) and Sierra Tasi Baker (Musgamagw Dzawada'enuxw, Squamish, Kwakwaka'wakw, Musqeaum and Tlingit) - who had come to Syon House to commemorate Pocahontas' visit there, four hundred years before.

The contrast with Edward Curtis' romantic and morbid image of a vanishing race could scarcely be stronger. In John Cobb's photograph, these three women are moving towards the camera, not away from it. They are not looking back at the historic house behind them, but are marching forwards determinedly into the future. Their costumes combine tradition with modernity.

And they are here - in contemporary cosmopolitan London. They will be a crucial part of our shared future.

AFTERWORD

Meryl McMaster

Meryl McMaster is a contemporary artist based in Ottawa, Canada, who uses photography as a medium to explore her First Nations Cree and European heritages.

My process begins with exploring questions of how our sense of self is constructed through land, lineage, history, and culture. Specifically, within my recent bodies of work I have been exploring the liminality of being betwixt my Indigenous (Plains Cree) and Euro-Canadian (British/Dutch) cultures and the conflict found at the intersection of self-exploration and heritage.

Going through school I was taught very little about the inception of Canada from an Indigenous perspective. I was aware of the life experiences of my relatives and learned the stories of my ancestry through family, but the relative absence of formal education in this area and the greater emphasis on Euro-Canadian history in school had a lasting impact. I learned a bit about the intersection between my heritages, but usually in negative ways. This experience made me view my history largely from the colonial perspective, with my identity being informed by stories that were thought of as important and significant from that point of view. This said to me that this history was not to be questioned, talked about, or remembered. I wanted to know both narratives, not just the written story. This erasure, in part, shaped a partial understanding of my family history, instilling a problematic feeling of being borne out of two heritages and not fully understanding their relationship.

I've come to understand that the narratives we inherit influence our identities as they inform our relationship with the past. Knowing this, I feel empowered to re-examine the stories that Canada was built upon. My work generally looks to the past to form a fuller understanding of the present. I often do this by creating moments for introspection and contemplation of where we are and where we ought to go next. My work isn't intended to resolve this dilemma but rather to create an opportunity for reflection and conversation. Each of us has a complicated relationship with the past with gaps and biases, and it is important to me to expose and explore these gaps so that we may encounter our next moments better prepared.

My style of photographic portraiture and self-portraiture incorporates the spontaneity of photography, the manual production of objects or sculptural garments that I create in my studio, and performance. Through these elements I create dream-like images wherein I am free to step outside of the narratives that have informed my identity in challenging or problematic ways and to view myself

from alternate perspectives. In my works, many different media form a mosaic that illustrates a new journey of self-discovery wherein I explore the tensions complicating our understanding of personal identity.

I also make use of different natural landscapes as backdrops for my self-portraits. This approach of working in the natural environment is inspired by important personal experiences. A key influence on my work has been the transformative experiences I have had while exploring and working in remote natural landscapes within Canada and abroad. These moments were an important catalyst in the process of making my personal identity more transparent to me. Within these environments I find myself highly attuned to my surroundings, enabling a deep introspection into my relationship with others and my place in the world. I continue this process of self-discovery back in the city, reproducing the insights inspired by nature through sculpture and photography. This allows me to bring the viewer on a journey to explore these most personal and intimate themes alongside me.



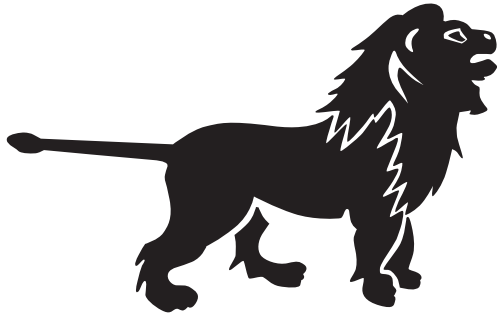
Meryl McMaster: Time's Gravity
2015
Giclée Print on Watercolour Paper
30" x 45"

BORDER CROSSINGS

ORIGINS

POCAHONTAS AND AFTER

Exhibition at **Syon House and Park** opened March 28th 2018



Partners: Baldwin Gallery; British Library; British Museum; CARAS (Community Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers); Cavendish Primary School; Marlborough Primary School; National Maritime Museum, Greenwich; The Open University; University of Kent & University of East Anglia research project "Beyond the Spectacle".

Huge thanks to all the project volunteers - and to Gordon McDonald from London Underground for the sign.

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