

FINDING BOUNDARIES FOR THE  
COMMODIFICATION OF NATIVE CULTURE: THE  
ANNUAL SANTA FE INDIAN MARKET

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Abstract: Known for being the epicenter of traditional and contemporary Native American art, the annual Santa Fe Indian Market has become the main source of income and exposure for many working Native artists selling their work in the Southwest. While the Market serves to benefit artists, the selection process has historically enforced problematic definitions of authenticity and tradition. Throughout the Indian Market's history, juries of non-Native anthropologists, private collectors, and museum curators imposed their definitions of what should be considered authentic and set standards that stereotype and objectify Native American art. In effect, Native artists participating in the Santa Fe Indian Market are vulnerable to niche marketing, which can lead to commodification and even marginalization. Working artists such as Jeffrey Gibson, Rose B. Simpson, and Naomi Bebo, among others, use their art to reclaim their artistic sovereignty by distinguishing themselves on the outskirts of the Santa Fe Indian Market. By taking such actions, they are breaking away from traditional expectations imposed by the juried selection process in the Market. Native artists are also highlighting the dichotomous mold set by Market juries between "traditional" and "contemporary" art, and only recently has Indian Market taken upon itself to break through the "boundaries" of these two categories, defying imposed definitions of what is traditional and authentic and letting Native American artists stand on their own terms.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Historical Context .....	2
State of the Field .....	5
Looking Forward .....	9
II. INDIGENOUS ARTISTS PARTICIPATING IN THE ANNUAL SANTA FE INDIAN MARKET .....	10
Perspectives from Participating Artists .....	11
Indian Market Patronage: Continued Colonialist Evaluations of Authenticity ....	19
Conclusion .....	24
III. DISRUPTING BOUNDARIES OF INDIAN MARKET'S AUTHORITY ON INDIGENOUS AUTHENTICITY .....	26
Authenticity and Identity .....	27
The Jurying Process and Market Categories .....	31
Decolonizing the Boundary Category .....	36
Anthropology, Authenticity and Audience .....	38
Conclusion .....	40

Chapter	Page
IV. CONFLICT AND DISASSOCIATION FROM SWAIA’S ANNUAL SANTA FE INDIAN MARKET .....	43
Santa Fe Indian Market: The Continuation of Ethno-Tourism.....	44
Reaping the Benefits on Their Own Terms: Alternatives to SWAIA’s Annual Indian Market.....	45
Indian Market takes the Gallery Approach for Contemporary Art Engagement...49	
SWAIA’s IM: Edge: Contemporary Themes in Gallery Settings .....	52
Conclusion .....	53
V. CONCLUSION.....	55
REFERENCES .....	59
APPENDICES .....	62

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Puebloan Women Selling Pots Outside of a Train. ....	62
2. Julian and Maria Martinez .....	63
3. Amber DuBoise-Shepherd. <i>Morning Talk and Coffee with Cheii</i> .....	64
4. Terran Last Gun. <i>Earth &amp; Sky Interactions</i> . ....	65
5. Santa Fe Indian Market. 2017 .....	66
6. The Charles and Valerie Diker Collection .....	67
7. Kelly Church. <i>Strength In Unity</i> . ....	68
8. Philbrook Museum of Art Downtown .....	69
9. Jason Garcia. <i>Cry of the Conqueror: Tewa Tales of Suspense #14</i> . ....	70
10. Jeffrey Gibson. <i>Freedom</i> . ....	71
11. Corey Stein. <i>Flat &amp; Hairy, Cold &amp; Hard</i> . ....	72
12. Corey Begay. Indigenous Fine Arts Market. ....	73
13. Signage from Free Indian Market .....	74
14. Signage for OXDX "Off Market" .....	75
15. Naomi Bebo. <i>Beaded Mask</i> .....	76
16. Rose B. Simpson. <i>Red</i> .....	77

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In 2015, I had the opportunity to spend the summer in Santa Fe, New Mexico, for a museum collections internship on behalf of the Oklahoma State University Museum of Art. During my time in Santa Fe, I was able to see the relationship between touristic visitors like myself and the Native people who were selling their art every weekend at the Palace of the Governors. I wanted to understand why Navajo jewelers and Puebloan potters were sitting on the ground with their artworks in front of them on a black velvet blanket—were they performing this seemingly subservient role for tourists? Pondering this led me to ask broader questions about the dynamics between Native artists and buyers of their work. Pushing my inquiry forward led me to research the largest festivity built around ethno-tourism of Native American art—the Santa Fe Indian Market. My own experience at Indian Market was from the perspective of an Anglo tourist, which led to introspection on my own complicit biases and expectations when surveying artists in the Market. While there is some scholarship on the history of the Indian Market, scholars seem hesitant to dive deeper into the issues that surround the market, namely how the market commodifies culture and the juried admittance sets precedents and standards on Native cultures. Calling out these expectations, pinpointing the issues they entail and bringing them to the foreground is controversial because, for many Native artists, the Santa Fe Indian Market is their



main source of income for the entire year. Indian Market allows Native artists agency in pricing their works as well as how they represent themselves; however, on a certain level, the market works as a touristic spectacle that compresses multiple cultures into one unified source and aesthetic. Rejecting a homogenous or totalizing assessment of the Indian Market, my thesis instead suggests the value of contextualizing the Santa Fe Indian Market within these broad perspectives as well as of making visible the structural position within art-world economics, tourism and leisure trades, and creative sovereignty politics. I also address the materiality of the objects made for the market, how objects are categorized by jurors, and what qualifications are expected through the Southwestern Association of Indian Arts (SWAIA). This thesis takes a deeper look at SWAIA's standards for art apply specifications that contribute to the expectation of "authenticity" of Native American art as products for audiences and buyers, rather than focusing on the artists' individuality and artistry.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

As the United States was rapidly advancing west to California during the Industrial Revolution, the Central Pacific Railroad from Sand Francisco to the East Coast in the 1860s making the nation's first Transcontinental Railroad. The railroad connected smaller rail lines that made remote towns and villages in the Southwest region more accessible than ever before. Curious travelers and passengers took a newly found interest in the Native inhabitants, namely, their traditional art and craftwork. Formerly self-sufficient Native communities then adapted and assimilated as newly imposed economic standards of industrialized living by selling their arts and crafts.<sup>1</sup> Local Native artists and craftsmen waited at train stations to sell their wares to

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<sup>1</sup> Wade, Edwin L. *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*. Ed. George W. Stocking. Madison, WI: U of Wisconsin, 1985. Print. Pg. 169.

passing by tourists from all over the world—many were collectors for prestigious art or science museums on the East Coast and Europe (Fig. 1). For many years after, railroad tourism shaped traditional methods of craft into the collectable objects—particularly Pueblo pottery—that appeased the market.<sup>2</sup> For example, the shapes and designs of pottery and basket weaving deviated from tradition in efforts to cater to the buyers’ wants. Not until the 1920s and 1930s did humanists and anthropologists begin to realize that the tourist market demands were homogenizing traditional Native art and craftwork.<sup>3</sup> Not only was the tourist market changing traditional crafts, but it was also changing the economic life of Native peoples of the southwest region by creating a system of competitive marketing that did not exist previously. The overwhelming amount of economic influence the railroad brought to southwestern Natives laid an unstable foundational market that made it nearly impossible to retain traditions in former methods of arts and crafts.

Furthering efforts to sustain tourism and outside interest in Southwest Native culture, the director of The Museum of New Mexico, Edgar Lee Hewett, offered to organize and host festivals that put local cultures proudly on display as a feature of Santa Fe. In 1922, the same year the San Ildefonso Pueblo, Maria Martinez, and her community began making the popular black-on-black pottery specifically for Anglo-anthropological interest, Santa Fe hosted a revival of the annual Spanish Fiesta that included an Indian Fair (Fig. 2). This fair allowed for tourists to come see Natives to sell their craftwork, share their traditional foods, perform their traditional dances and other ceremonies as for incoming spectators.<sup>4</sup> Ironically, the city began to thrive on

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<sup>2</sup> Bernstein, Bruce. *Santa Fe Indian Market: A History of Native Arts and the Marketplace*. Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico, 2012. Print. Pg. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Wade, Edwin L. *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*. Ed. George W. Stocking. Madison, WI: U of Wisconsin, 1985. Print. Pg. 180.

<sup>4</sup> Bernstein, Bruce. *Santa Fe Indian Market: A History of Native Arts and the Marketplace*. Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico, 2012. Print. Pg. 10.

the tourism from these markets and cultural displays, legislation in New Mexico passed the Dance Order in 1921 that aimed to prevent Natives from practicing their religious and ceremonial traditions.<sup>5</sup> Showing art that was intended to be deeply religious and sacred began to corrode the meaning of the ceremonies and crafts, marginalizing these things to mere trinkets of attraction. The Indian Festival helped increase the influx of richer Anglo people continued to shape Native traditional crafts to appease the market demand for their ideals of authentic Native aesthetics. As popularity of collecting Native arts increased, artist that entered their works in the Indian Fair started were subject to judges' approval of authenticity and could win cash prizes if their works were selected.<sup>6</sup> By creating this kind of standard of high artistic expectation, collectors and buyers could be persuaded to purchase works at high dollar prices based on "quality" and "authenticity" of "Native-ness."

After a few years, the Museum of New Mexico gave control of the Indian Fair to the Indian Fair Committee and then shortly after in 1934, handed the market over to the New Mexico Association of Indian Art (NMAIA).<sup>7</sup> NMAIA attempted to move the Indian Fair directly on location at nearby pueblos and reservations, but Anglo tourists were deterred because those locations were not as comfortable as metro of Santa Fe.<sup>8</sup> By 1936, the popularity of the arts portion of the Indian Fair called for an Indian Art Market to take place every Saturday in downtown Santa Fe providing more regular income to local Native and year-round tourist revenue for the city. As the yearly Indian Fair expanded every year, NMAIA took on a new form that was more regional, known as the Southwestern Association for Indian Arts or SWAIA,

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<sup>5</sup> Ahtone, Tristan. "Santa Fe: A Two-Market Town?" Featured News. Native Peoples Magazine, Sept.-Oct. 2014. Web.

<sup>6</sup> Bernstein, Bruce. Santa Fe Indian Market: A History of Native Arts and the Marketplace. Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico, 2012. Print. Pg. 10.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. Pg. 10.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. Pg. 10.

renamed the Indian Fair to the Indian Art Market. After a 94 year-long tradition of uniting indigenous tribes to sell their wares and form a temporary pan-Indian identity has strengthened their prestige as artists.<sup>9</sup> In more recent years, the Indian Art Market has brought around 175,000 tourists to Santa Fe every August and brings in about \$130 million for Santa Fe's local economy, making it the largest Native arts market in North America.<sup>10</sup>

## STATE OF THE FIELD

Perhaps one of the more useful texts for a broader history of the Santa Fe Indian Market is Bruce Bernstein's book, *Santa Fe Indian Market: A History of Native Arts and the Marketplace*, which gives a full and informative historical account of the Santa Fe Indian Market. Bernstein argues that Indian Market has provided a lot of opportunity for Native artists and has done a massive part in helping to preserve Native cultures. Bernstein establishes that Indian Market has played a critical role for tribal communities since it was established in 1922, and despite the change of presiding organizations over the years, Indian Market continues to thrive. Within this book, he also brings up how Hopi and Pueblo pottery has changed due to the influx of interest from tourists and dealers. The question of authenticity and how the market determines and addresses these issues does surface in some parts of this book. For instance, he addresses how objects became mass-produced specifically for tourist buyers and for the Indian Market.<sup>11</sup> His overall assessment of the Indian Market is slightly dated, but still useful for a broad overview of the Santa Fe Indian Market's long and revered history. Though Bernstein's work rings with optimism, his historic analysis was published in 2012, and many of the recent political issues and

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid. Pg. 15.

<sup>10</sup> Ahtone, Tristan. "Santa Fe: A Two-Market Town?" Featured News. Native Peoples Magazine, Sept.-Oct. 2014. Web.

<sup>11</sup> Bernstein, Bruce. *Santa Fe Indian Market: A History of Native Arts and the Marketplace*. Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico, 2012. Print.

rule changes affecting Indian Market might have changed his tune. However, because Bernstein's outlook is supposed to promote Santa Fe's History Museum of New Mexico, he is not presenting this historiography with any critical look at Indian Market as it functions for Native artists today.

Taking a closer look at how art economics work for Indian Market, Carol Rosenstein's *Indian Market: A Tournament of Values*—specifically using the market values of Pueblo pottery as her primary example. Emphasizing how Pueblo pottery is a direct representation of Puebloan Culture, Rosenstein argues that once the pottery is admitted to the Indian Art Market, it enters a situation where its value and worth is determined solely on non-Native evaluation. This, in turn, makes the Pueblo pottery a commodity at the hands of ethno-tourism. Rosenstein further implies that once the Puebloan pottery reaches a state of commodification, every single association to the object itself, such as the Indigenous artist, the culture of origination, etc. then too, becomes a commodity. She also highlights methods of disassociation from commodity is to make art autonomously from the associated culture of art-making methods. With an extensive look into the buying and selling of Pueblo pottery, Rosenstein creates an argument on how the Indian Market abides by colonialist ideals in quality and authenticity in the market of Indigenous art. Rosenstein's research also evaluates the entire entry and judges' practice of the Southwestern Association for Indian Arts (SWAIA) organization for Indian Market. However, Rosenstein ends with an argument that the economical values associated with Native art in today's Indian Market are not decided by the 'white man,' but are mutually dependent on the relationships between artists and buyers.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Rosenstein, Carol, "Indian Market: A Tournament of Values," *Signs and Society* 2, no. 2 (September 2014): 230-248.

Much of the literature on Santa Fe Indian Market is from the anthropological studies on ethno-tourism. Hal Rothman's book *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* provides a historical reference for the tourism industry in the American Southwest. Rothman equates the vast development of tourism in the Southwest to a restructured form of colonialism. Rothman uses stories from locals to show the effects of tourism escalation in the Southwest. Avoiding romanticism, Rothman focuses on Santa Fe's tourism and voyeurism of local Native cultures, to the point of artifice. As the entire city of Santa Fe thrives of its Native and Spanish "look," it also becomes a touristic expectation—to perform authenticity through expected 'Indian' aesthetic. There are multiple examples throughout the book of Native artists "performing" native identity as well as making work for large audiences amidst the height of tourism in the Southwest in the early-mid 20th century.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, Phillip J. Deloria explores the fascination of Native people and culture throughout history and through the multitude of images and narrative portrayals of Native people throughout American history. Such expectations set the bar of interactions between Anglo tourists and Indigenous people, particularly artists when buyers approach a cultural object. The entirety of the book explores the relationships between Native people and the portrayal of Native people at pivotal moments in cultural interactions and relations. Whether Native people expanded themselves in the "primitive" role or blatantly disregarded it in the wake of American modernism, this book explains how Native people reacted or adapted narratives about their cultures from outside influences.<sup>14</sup> Further noting on the relationships between Anglo-American established museum institutions and "vanishing culture" entities, George W Stocking's book of collected essays,

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<sup>13</sup> Rothman, Hal. *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-century American West*. Development of Western Resources. Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 1998.

<sup>14</sup> Deloria, Philip Joseph. *Playing Indian*. Yale Historical Publications (Unnumbered). New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.

*Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Cultures*, closely examines the issues related between these two cultural dynamics. Coming from an anthropological perspective, these essays are engaging with the act of collecting ethnic-cultural objects, and how doing so has affected these relationships, both historically as well as contemporaneously. I am particularly interested in Edwin L Wade's essay, *The Ethnic Market in the Southwest, 1880-1980* as a mode to look at the perception of the Santa Fe Indian Market over the course of its history. Wade especially utilizes the Santa Fe Indian market to show the ever-changing dynamics between humanists/collectors, their traders/dealers, as well as the scholars and anthropologists who study them. Wade also emphasizes just how commercialized objects within the Indian market became during the revivalist era between 1920 and 1970, a time of which Native people were able to make a living selling their works to collectors. Additionally, Wade presents the eventual issue of how objects were approached by dealers in terms of their quality, authenticity, and materiality.<sup>15</sup>

While a lot of the scholarly sources are from anthropologists' work on the touristic aspects of Santa Fe Indian Market, most of my primary source work comes from local Santa Fe newspapers, national news medias, personal interviews, and youtube.com content from participating artists. Erin Joyce's Hyperallergic.com article, *The Perks and Problems of Santa Fe's Indian Market*, became a critical anchor for my argument on how the street market setup of Indian market seems more performative and exploitive than a prestigious platform for Native artists.<sup>16</sup> While my pool of interviews was very small, I had some productive conversations with participating artists about their experience with Indian Market and their relationship with their

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<sup>15</sup> Stocking, George W. *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*. Madison, WI: U of Wisconsin, 1985. Print.

Wade, Edwin L. "The Ethnic Market in the Southwest, 1880-1980."

<sup>16</sup> Joyce, Erin. "The Perks and Problems of Santa Fe's Indian Market." Hyperallergic. 09 Sept. 2015. Web.

patrons. However, because there is not a lot of scholarship on some issues regarding Indian Market, I was resigned to conduct my own research and investigation.

## LOOKING AHEAD

Highlighting Native American experiences of Indian Market, this thesis utilizes interviews that I conducted in Fall of 2019 with participating artists who weigh-in on the problems that the market puts forth. The theoretical basis of my thesis is under the consideration of Native American identity, outside ideas of authenticity, and creative sovereignty for artists. Further, I explore the ways in which SWAIA is progressively taking actions to consider the creative sovereignty while still maintaining colonialist ethno-tourism and economics. Starting with some rule changes for Indian Market 2020, SWAIA is taking an approach to dismantle expectations of Native objecthood with the “boundary” category that bridges the problematic “contemporary” and “traditional” dichotomy. Also, this paper explores fringe Native American arts markets that appeared after political unrest and changes in policy associated with SWAIA’s organization. This thesis explores the ways in which the current state of Santa Fe’s Indian Market is both adhering to the colonial ideals of deciding Native authenticity while simultaneously decolonizing itself by developing modes for which Native artists can pursue their own creative sovereignty.



## CHAPTER II

### INDIGENOUS ARTISTS PARTICIPATING IN THE ANNUAL SANTA FE INDIAN MARKET

For years, the Santa Fe Indian Market has maintained its prominence as the largest Market for Native American art, the participation is a required component for the overall success of the Market. By taking account of a wide range of Native artists' perspectives for critical evaluation of the Santa Fe Indian Market, my research takes a deep dive into the realities faced by participating artists in SWAIA's annual Indian Market. My process includes a lineup of questions for select artists at Indian Market to offer Native artists' perception of the Market to compliment my critique. I am interested in the materiality of the objects made for Indian Market and what qualifications are expected through the Southwestern Association of Indian Arts (SWAIA). My thesis will fully critique and examine how SWAIA's Indian Market functions as a beneficial platform for advancing Native artists and communities, but how it simultaneously perpetuates colonialist idealistic expectations of Indigenous authenticity that commodify Native art and culture. By conducting interviews with participating Native artists, my research aims to point out the contradictions between the SWAIA organization's mission and the actual realities of Indigenous artist's participation through the gaze and motivations of their patrons.

## PERSPECTIVES FROM PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

While many of the participating artists recognize the problems that the Indian Market presents, they still choose to submit their work because of the opportunity the Market provides. For many Native artists who chose to participate in the Market, their sales constitute most of their yearly income.<sup>17</sup> After visiting the Indian Market in 2019 and selecting artists at random to ask a series of questions about their participation in the SWAIA's Indian Market, I received some mixed responses.<sup>18</sup> While expanding on these responses, my intention is to provide full context theoretically as well as from a cultural perspective on how the Santa Fe Indian Market is serving participating Native artists. My questions for participating artists centered around the admission process, and the longevity of their participatory involvement with SWAIA Indian Market, their relationships with their buyers, I was hoping for a candid review of the Indian Market and as a whole. However, the responses I received were reserved, if not defensive—which is understandable considering the Market is an important source of exposure and representation for the artists.

My first question was “How long have you been a participant in the Santa Fe Indian Market?” While this question seems relatively simple, it informs me how many times artists are readmitted to the Indian Market over the course of their career as working Indigenous artists. Next, I asked, “Has your work even been rejected from the market?” Because artists are required to submit their work annually for showing at Indian Market, I inquired to know what the patterns

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<sup>17</sup> Tryk, Sheila., Mark. Nohl, and Southwestern Association on Indian Affairs. Santa Fe Indian Market : Showcase of Native American Art. Santa Fe, NM. 1993.

<sup>18</sup> While I was at Indian Market, I asked many artists if they would be willing to answer some questions at a less busy time. I assorted artists from different mediums, tribal affiliations, as well as the number of years they had participated in Indian Market. Out of the thirty artists that I selected and sent questions to via e-mail, I only received seven responses.

of the jury's decisions look like for these artists. Most artists were consistently readmitted each year, save for a few that had been denied. Admission of artwork is followed through a double-blind juried process, meaning that judges do not know the artists' names when evaluating the art, and artists do not know the judges' identities; therefore, inconsistencies in annual acceptance is to be expected. I also asked them how they think the Indian Market benefits them as a Native artist? This question was more of a tool to break the ice and further my inquiry. I got similar answers across the board for this question, because as expected, most of them get recognition as well as a chance to sell their work to a large audience. Pushing my questions further, I ask, "In what ways has the Santa Fe Indian Market served Indigenous communities? Are there any drawbacks?" With this question I was asking for what they think Indian Market is doing for all participating tribal entities more broadly. I tread carefully here, as SWAIA does give some preference for Southwestern Tribes due to the origin of the Market and in keeping with the aesthetic of the Santa Fe locale, but tribal organizations are discouraged from having a direct hand in the processes and selection of Indian Market. Additionally, artists representing a wide diversity of North American tribes participate in Indian Market each year, and their tribal affiliation is denoted on the Market's banner along with their name and the classification of their art. To get a sense of whether the artists I spoke with had witnessed firsthand the changes in form of Native craft traditions, I asked straightforwardly, "Do you think Indian Market creates direct change in Native artmaking and craft?"<sup>19</sup> Moving towards participation on the buyers end, I wanted to see how well artists are acquainted with their audience and buyers, so I asked the following questions: "As a participant of the Santa Fe Indian Market, who do you feel your

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<sup>19</sup> My question is framed around the overall history of Indian Market. As anthropologists like Edgar Lee Hewitt had a direct hand and influence in the making of the infamous black-on-black pottery by Maria Martinez, I want to know if artists think that buyers and procurers are still changing Indigenous art traditions. Bernstein, Bruce. Santa Fe Indian Market: A History of Native Arts and the Marketplace. Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 2012.

general audience is? Are you well-acquainted with your buyers? Do they ask for specific commissions? Do the buyers of your work make special requests or influence what you make or how it's made?" Lastly, I want to know how successful the artists' presence is outside of Indian Market, so I ask, "Do you also show your artwork in galleries or markets outside of the Santa Fe Indian Market?" I only received answers from seven artists, but they are from all over North America and represent differing tribes. Though my sample pool was small, I felt that the pool of artists willing to answer my questions truly represent the diversity in materiality and tribal representation that Indian Market admits each year.<sup>20</sup>

SWAIA has implemented recent rule changes that no longer allow for automatic annual readmittance into Indian Market. Although it was controversial, by ending the tenure policy, many new and young Indigenous artists are now given a shot to participate in Santa Fe Indian Market. The first question asking how long participants had been coming back to Santa Fe Indian Market yielded a surprising result. Younger artists like Amber Duboise-Shepherd (Fig. 3), making her second appearance at Indian Market, and Terran Last Gun (Fig. 4), making his debut with abstract screen prints, are younger artists who establish their careers by participating in Indian Market. Other artists within my survey returned after several years of participation. After SWAIA implemented the rule change, artists who were no longer grandfathered into having a reserved booth in Santa Fe Indian market formed a collective that established a Free Indian Market, set up on the outskirts of the Santa Fe Indian Market.<sup>21</sup> I will further elaborate on the

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<sup>20</sup> In chapter 3, I emphasize how SWAIA changed their tenured artist policy, which keeps elder artists from being grandfathered into Indian Market. However, to reflect these changes, I purposely sought out young artists showing their work for the first time.

<sup>21</sup> Edge, Sami. "An Alternative Indian Market In Santa Fe." *Santa Fe New Mexican*. Aug. 18, 2018.

Free Indian Market, which was in its second year when I conducted my interviews, in Chapter 3, “Conflict and Disassociation from SWAIA’s Santa Fe Indian Market.”

Based on reputation and production, most participating artists in SWAIA’s Indian Market do make an annual return. Ceramicist, Rowan Harrison explained that he has returned to Indian Market seven times, but has been rejected twice in the past; Harrison guesses that he was not admitted based on the quality of his work, and while he is not completely certain, he was given a place on a waiting list for Indian Market. Evaluations for acceptances into SWAIA’s Indian Market can seem random, but based on my discussions with participating artists, the continuity of participation demonstrates some semblance of preference, or at least recognition exhibited from the judges.

Being admitted to SWAIA’s Indian Market allots the 1,600 awarded artists a tent space for themselves and their work that is stationed on a street near the Plaza in downtown Santa Fe. Unlike a gallery space, this street market interaction mimics the relationships between tourists and Natives of a yesteryear colonial past. As Indian Market lasts only a weekend, and with a lot of foot traffic bustling by, it can be a jarring experience for both artists and attendees. In “The Perks and Problems with Santa Fe’s Indian Market,” Erin Joyce explains, “It can be hard to have any kind of meaningful engagement with the art when individuals and groups (mostly white) are filing past the artists’ booths, snapping pictures and looking at the stalls as though they were curiosities or specimens to behold. An objectifying gaze feels like the mode of operation among those who attend.”<sup>22</sup> Speaking from my own experience, I concur with Joyce’s description of the gaze as well as what she calls the “frenetic” atmosphere (Fig. 5).<sup>23</sup> Art markets can be hard to

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<sup>22</sup> Joyce, Erin. "The Perks and Problems of Santa Fe’s Indian Market." *Hyperallergic*. 09 Sept. 2015. Web.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

approach in general, but it may also be more problematic when a street art market is supposed to be representative of an entire culture. In his book *Playing Indian*, Philip J. Deloria addresses the myriad of ways in which Indianness is sought after and encountered through the colonial counterpart—that Indianness is observable and considered through the ethnographic object.<sup>24</sup> As one wanders through Indian Market, it is hard to decipher whether the art object or the artist are the priority of the Market.

Some aspects of Indian Market, such as the street market setting, as well as the good intentions of the blind juried process, ethnographically categorize and corner artists into a salesman position that creates an awkward disconnect between their work and potential buyers. The method of submission and admission into Indian Market forces artists to make artwork that matches an expected level of authenticity and Indigeneity set by the SWAIA's standards, which makes the art object prioritized in consideration above the artist. While most artists in my interviews do not directly consider this, most are willing to admit that they are not very well acquainted with their buyers. Since the beginning of Indian Market at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there has been an evident shift in how Native artists are able to place their own determined value on their work and have a platform from which they can gain a reputation and network. However, Deloria further explains that anthropology of the past has always skirted the line of ambivalence and contradiction which requires Non-Native participant observation.<sup>25</sup> The practices and relationships developed from Indian Market come from making the ethnographical observation more accessible to larger groups of incoming tourists. Similarly, an artist's success from Indian Market still relies on the former and more colonial aspects of anthropological and ethnographic

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<sup>24</sup> Deloria, Philip Joseph. *Playing Indian*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998. Pg. 93.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. Pg. 93.

principles. In a *Santa Fe Reporter* article about incoming native talent, journalist Matthew Irwin explains the problems that contemporary Indigenous artists face when considering the Annual Indian Market, “Events like SWAIA’s Santa Fe Indian Market provide a living for many Native communities by creating a space for artists to sell their work, they say, but allotting that space isn’t any different from allotting a reservation. Native Americans—and Native artists, as a form of spokespeople—want to be part of the American narrative.”<sup>26</sup> The current state of that narrative, and the way Indian Market operates, imposes a slippage between Indigenous artists as self-promoting entrepreneurs and Indigenous artists as figurative representations of their communities. As artists stand by their work while onlookers and buyers crowd around, are they separate from their work or the same? The direct relationship between the artist and the immediacy of the buyer would suggest that the relationship would be solidified, but according to how artists approached the subject, that is hardly the case.

Ethnographic and anthropological principles are still apparent in SWAIA’s evaluation of the art objects that are submitted to Indian Market. While in recent years, SWAIA has been more open to newer mediums of art and craft, the standards set by the submission process still adhere to the standards of traditional materials to convey authenticity and quality in accordance to the purchaser’s expectations. According to SWAIA’s participant application, the following are examples of standards that have been set by category, according to medium: for jewelry, artists are not allowed to use manufactured or commercial components or anything synthetic; for pottery, artists must disclose all artificial enhancements—polish or varnishes; in 2-dimensional

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<sup>26</sup> Irwin, Matthew. "Santa Fe’s Native Artists Are Breaking from Tradition, but Is Their Work Truly Contemporary?" *Santa Fe's Native Artists Are Breaking from Tradition, but Is Their Work Truly Contemporary?* Santa Fe Reporter, 5 Sept. 2012. Web.

arts, no photomechanical reproductions, as in postcards, etc.<sup>27</sup> With such standards in place, Native artists are required to adhere to more traditional ideals for their artmaking in order to be considered in SWAIA's Indian Market. In addition, these kinds of specifications are contributing to the expectation of 'authenticity' of Native American 'products' for audiences and buyers, rather than a focus on artists' individuality. While it is more understandable to carefully consider what Native artists are doing to preserve traditional art and craft-making, prescribing tradition as the ruling standard and expectation furthers other issues like fetishizing and commodifying Native arts. In my second chapter, I investigate these rules in detail and consider how SWAIA implements standards and categorizes art submissions. However, it is important to establish that, though Native artists apply through the admission process and their work is admitted through a blind jury selection, ultimately SWAIA and its (anonymous, but) trusted expert jurors are deciding what authentic Indigenous art is.

In my questions concerning selection based on expectations, many of the artists stated that the Market has made efforts to change their approach to non-traditional mediums used by Native American artists. Rowan Harrison stated, "One of the finer aspects of the show is seeing all the traditional and contemporary Native American work. When you come across an artist who is doing work that is contemporary, modern and innovative yet has those traditional connections that are still exciting, and it has the capacity to push your work further. Personally, myself each year I come to the Market, I try to bring something a little different to the table and that may mean using different approaches, techniques and materials in the work."<sup>28</sup> Harrison's work in Puebloan pottery traditions adheres to what people might expect to see when attending Indian

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<sup>27</sup> (swaia.org)

<sup>28</sup> Beason, Roxanne. Interview with Rowan Harrison. 2019.



Market, yet his designs are uniquely his own. In recent years, SWAIA is encouraging artists to bring innovative processes to traditional material and art practices—which contradicts how Indian Market has functioned to cater to only traditional Native arts. However, in an almost contrasting light, Corey Stein said, “I felt the Santa Fe Indian Market leaned more toward traditional art making and craft. I was happy they had ‘edge’ (IM: Edge, covered in Chapter 3) as evolving and welcoming contemporary art in Native cultures.”<sup>29</sup> Stein’s initial assumption is not a stretch as the Indian Market has long prioritized traditional Native crafts, giving higher preferences to Southwestern tribes because of location. Stein’s beadwork encapsulates contemporary scenes in her intricate beadwork with patterning inspired by her Tlingit heritage, her work cannot be boxed within either traditional or contemporary art making and her reservations about Indian Market wholly understandable. Erin Joyce further weighs the pros and cons of the Indian Market and into the assumptions that have guided it. She quotes IAIA alum, Michael C. Brown,

“The stereotyping the Indian market fosters trickles into other contemporary art worlds; ‘...but your work doesn’t look Native?’ I can give several personal experiences on the kind of feedback I have received and continue to receive about my work and about myself, the Native... I personally believe a lot of Native and First Nations artists who participate in the annual Market know exactly who their audience is. On some level I would even say the artists play their mostly white audience since the Market is their opportunity to sell their work.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Beason, Roxanne. Interview with Corey Stein. 2019.

<sup>30</sup> Joyce, Erin. "The Perks and Problems of Santa Fe’s Indian Market." *Hyperallergic*. 09 Sept. 2015. Web.

At the center of it all, the expectation of authentic Native-ness, to be discovered by patrons in the maker as well as the object, does inspire exaggerative performativity of Native identity for general white audiences. Using Pueblo Pottery as an example of how these performative and authentic expectations influence artists and the objects, Carole Rosenstein examines their evaluation in the Market. She explains that the standards for traditionally made Pueblo pottery are incredibly high; and though the pottery was made by Pueblo artists, they are evaluated and sold to non-Pueblo people.<sup>31</sup> She labels the scenario of art evaluation as alienating and suggests that the methods for this juried evaluation are what make Native art a commodity because there is a sudden assertion of value and quality that did not exist before.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, the artists' value is determined by Indian Market and their standards, which guarantee authenticity and quality for audience and patrons.

#### INDIAN MARKET PATRONAGE: CONTINUED COLONIALIST EVALUATIONS OF AUTHENTICITY

What complicates Indian Market's expectations for authenticity in Native art is not just SWAIA's rules, but also the patronage of buyers and marketgoers. Competition and patronage even exist amongst the buyers. For example, SWAIA hosts a 5:30 pm "Sneak Peek" for high donors before the preview of prizewinners is open to all members at 7 pm.<sup>33</sup> These strategies for heightening the admiration and anticipation of the Market has a substantial payoff for Native artists; prizewinners have been known to sell their works upwards of \$100,000.<sup>34</sup> While the

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<sup>31</sup> Rosenstein, Carol, "Indian Market: A Tournament of Values," *Signs and Society* 2, no. 2 (September 2014): Pg.231.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. Pg. 231.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. Pg. 241.

<sup>34</sup>Rosenstein, Carol, "Indian Market: A Tournament of Values," *Signs and Society* 2, no. 2 (September 2014). Pg. 242.

competitive stakes are high for Indian Market donors, they create a frenzy for bids before the Market officially kicks off. Despite the fervor, the prices of prizewinning Indigenous art pieces at Indian Market are still relatively low compared to other non-Native art markets. Indian Market creates a sense of prestige and status for Native artists, yet it does little to expand their marketability. In this scenario, what are the duties and implications of Indian Market patronage?

One factor that is a common consideration in the art world and is especially important when considering Native art is the overall audience and their gaze. How patrons view and rank the work sets the precedent for the elusive prestige—especially at Indian Market. These viewpoints are related to the study of the gaze theory which began in the 1970s; gaze theory explores the dynamics of gender, race and ethnicity viewed under power structures such as the patriarchy or post-colonial imperialism.<sup>35</sup> When Natives artists submit their work to Indian Market, the jury and patrons, both Native and non-Native apply their gaze—which is framed through cultural expertise, and knowledgeable aesthetic connoisseurship—to confer merit via acceptance and purchase. In the context of Indian Market, the Native artists must negotiate their relationship with the non-Native patron; in other words, the colonized artist is in the entangled position of benefiting if they build a successful relationship with colonizers or descendants of colonizers.<sup>36</sup> According to the authors of the essay, “The Entangled Gaze: Indigenous and European Views of Each Other,” the gaze becomes a fixated point of contact and exchange between cultures. Where many Native objects were traded, auctioned or stolen through colonial structures, Indian Market refocuses the colonial gaze in a way that the racial dynamic is the same, but the artists are now able to practice a level of artistic sovereignty and economic agency

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<sup>35</sup> McMaster, Gerald, Julia Lum, and Kaitlin McCormick. "The Entangled Gaze: Indigenous and European Views of Each Other." *Ab-Original 2*, no. 2 (2018): Pg. 131.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* Pg. 134.

they did not previously have.<sup>37</sup> The idea of an entangled gaze is easily applicable to SWAIA's Indian Market because of the ways in which it requires both Native artists' and outsiders' gazing to make the Market a ventured success. Aware of the non-Native gaze, Native people then create work based on trends of their own success and the success of their peers.

Within the gaze that patrons and collectors bestow on Native arts, an expectation of authenticity is set for artists to adhere to in making their work worth investment. Since the 1930s when commercial Navajo jewelry had taken over the tourism industry of the Southwest, many collectors were determined to go beyond the bounds of markets and pay for more individualized and authentically made Navajo jewelry pieces.<sup>38</sup> In her article, "Collecting the Southwest: Detached Mastery or Private Passion," curator Henrietta Lidichi places herself in the position of the buyer and the surveyor of quality when looking at different collections of Navajo jewelry within personal and museum collections, as well as within her own experiences in Native markets. She found that as jewelry became more popular, it was prone to commercialization by replication and use of synthetic materials, and that drove the collector's desire to find more "authentic" and handmade jewelry, even if was lacking in craftsmanship or looked "homely."<sup>39</sup> The pursuit of authenticity and quality drove collectors into commissioning and buying less refined craftsmanship. Lidichi's findings are only one example of how Native art has been transformed since the popularization of Native art acquisition. Indian Market artists are still being graded on the trends of what authenticity is, according to their peers and outside scholars and expert collectors. I find that Lidichi and Rosenstein's survey of changes to Native art in

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid. Pg. 134.

<sup>38</sup> Lidichi, Henrietta. "Collecting in the Southwest: Detached Mastery or Private Passion?" *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, no. 15 (2003): Pg. 71.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. Pg. 75.

accordance with market trends is as relevant to Native art made for Indian Market today. With talent and influence, artists at Indian Market can set trends for incoming buyers and tourists—and appeal can change the standards by which the Market dictates Native authenticity.

As Indian Market caters to the anticipation of incoming patrons, the trends that drive the buying and selling of art in the Market are just one small facet of how it has evolved in recent years. While SWAIA has become more inclusive of tribal nations across North America as well as allowing for more mediums to be considered during the application process, the problem that still lingers between the patrons and the artists themselves. According to anthropologist Molly H. Mullin, Native people undergo a process of Self-Othering, which creates a dichotomous structure between the artist and the patron.<sup>40</sup> Mullin emphasizes the westward tourism of New England people was a result of the fetishization of the “primitive” and “natural” lifestyle of the “first Americans,” which offered a unique aesthetic unlike anything they were used to; additionally, it was a way to break free from the grips of the federal government in the venture of business opportunity. However, according to Mullin, adopting Native cultures and aesthetics was never considered to be appropriation, even within the clear distinction between class/racial relations, “...the Southwest offered antique furniture at least as old as could be found in New England, inexpensive land and labor, and architecture, which, like pottery, weaving, and handmade silver jewelry, could be praised as a ‘true product of America’ and a ‘purely Indigenous.’”<sup>41</sup> While Mullin is mostly discussing the ideologies and motivations of ethnographers and anthropologists at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, these same driving motivations have set a precedent for the current state of Indian Market as it exists today. Non-native marketgoers and patrons will walk through

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<sup>40</sup> Mullin, Molly H., “The Patronage of Difference: Making Indian Art ‘Art, Not Ethnology’,” *Cultural Anthropology* 7, no. 4 (November 1992): Pg. 396.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* Pg. 398

SWAIA's Indian Market wearing Navajo Jewelry, clothing or Anishinaabe beadwork, without the consciousness of cultural appropriation.<sup>42</sup>

Anthropologists and ethnographers that are interested in Indigenous art and surveying and evaluating the aesthetics and craftsmanship of Native-made art are usually doing so in the interest of museum collections. Museums are another important entity driving the economics behind Indian Market. Museums as patrons perhaps have some of the most influence when coming to Indian Market because they send curators or donors to scout for specific objects to place within their collections with an appointed budget from the institution in hand. This selection of Indigenous art is done with the careful regard and judgement of someone “knowledgeable” or with “expertise” on cultures or cultural objects—not necessarily a person related to the tribe of origin. Mullin explicitly calls this method “blatant paternalism,” and though this tends to be the case, relations between patrons and Native artists are usually congenial because the art is under less scrutiny upon evaluation if the viewpoints of the patrons match those of the artists’.<sup>43</sup> Anthropologists and museums had been outdone by many wealthy patrons as far as supporting Native artists and collecting art works in the Southwest; however, they often joined forces to take a preservationist approach to collecting work, maintaining an eye for “traditional” art for their institutional collections.<sup>44</sup> As a result, dealers and collectors recognized the marketability of cultural “authenticity” in Native art that would increase the value of Indigenous cultural objects as a whole.<sup>45</sup> As the concept of authenticity is placed onto Native-made cultural objects, artists then lose their ability to create art works on their own terms with

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<sup>42</sup> Lott, Eric.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. Pg. 406.

<sup>44</sup> Wade, Edwin L. “The Ethnic Market in the Southwest, 1880-1980.” *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*. Ed. George W. Stocking. Madison, WI: U of Wisconsin, 1985. Print. Pg. 167-168.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. 168.

their own methods. While SWAIA has moved towards being more inclusive toward materiality and artmaking methods, the standards for “traditional” mediums and methods are still held accountable to institutional ideals of what authentic Native art and craftsmanship should look like—leaving artists with no authority on their own work. Consequently, as previously mentioned, artists participating in Indian Market are not always acquainted with their buyers at Indian Market, this lack of connection with their general audience and buyers leaves their work subject to appropriative action, misinterpretation, or placed out of context in a curatorial narrative. While artists with work in gallery or museum settings would obviously have not contact with their audience, it is perplexing that Indian Market does not create symbiotic relations between visiting patrons and the presenting artist. Should Indigenous artists’ presence be required for Indian Market if their relationship with their patron is solely on the basis for monetary exchange?

## CONCLUSION

While SWAIA attempts to operate in a way that makes Native art competitive with a global art economy, it is apparent that it is not stable as an art market alone, it relies on indigenous culture. Functioning as both a cultural sideshow, a street market under the guise of a juried art show does not allow for all participating artists to break through the mold of expected authenticity in a way that is competitive in the rest of the contemporary art world. If artists are accepted into Indian Market on an annual basis, opportunity for recognition as well as a stable income can be gained from participating. However, a lot of artists sell works large and small, trinket collectables for kitsch juxtaposed to their high-valued “fine art,” most of which cater to the regular Santa Fe tourists’ expectation of cultural folk craft in some way. Indian Market is a pan-Indian annual gathering that allow for these tribal cultures to converge for a special weekend where their art

and creativity is celebrated and rewarded, but the residual effects of colonial fetishization and structural evaluation of authenticity have left artists to make careful additions to their traditions and their art. While Indian Market has recently pushed beyond these expectations to find more grey area between the rulings of what is traditional or contemporary, SWAIA must help artists navigate their participation in a way that gives them the deserved individual recognition they deserve.



## CHAPTER III

### DISRUPTING BOUNDARIES OF INDIAN MARKET'S AUTHORITY ON INDIGENOUS AUTHENTICITY

In current curatorial practice, deliberate care is taken to avoid categorizing Native art as either “traditional” or “contemporary.” However, Indian Market’s classifications for juried selection negate this rule entirely, requiring artists to put their work in one of these two categories, or, for the first time in 2020, a “boundary” (grey-area) category.<sup>46</sup> Jurors and buyers who come to Santa Fe’s Indian Market are privy to these classifications. What impact does this have on how artworks purchased at Market are described when exhibited or included in museum collections? The “boundary” category was implemented in response to Native artists who have advocated against the dichotomy of “contemporary” or “traditional.” Will a subcategory like “boundary” function to negate this subjugation—and if so, how? In this chapter, I call attention to the rules and regulations of SWAIA’s Indian Market, asking how judges, chair members, and collectors make the call on how to “authenticate” Native art. How do chosen winners fit within SWAIA’s standards, and how is their art influenced by their relationship to those standards? Do judges’ decisions inform the pricing or materials selected by current and future participants. This chapter

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<sup>46</sup> SWAIA Santa Fe Indian Market, 2020 Standards per Classification

will explore how SWAIA’s rules and regulations apply within these classifications and how this applies to art mediums and materials in the process. Addressing these rules makes it clear how the authority and preferences of jurors have directed the standards for the ways in which art is made for Indian Market. When asked how she defined her audience, Seneca artist, Mary Jacobs simply stated, “the general public.”<sup>47</sup> However, the general public in attendance to Santa Fe, New Mexico, is simultaneously narrow and wide—a mix of very wealthy patrons, perusing tourists, and , of course, artists. Perhaps most importantly for artists who participate if Indian Market, however, their first audience is the jurors for the Market itself.

#### AUTHENTICITY AND IDENTITY

Setting a precedent for the entirety of the Indian Market is SWAIA’s standards to ensure that a Native person makes the art that is submitted. To enforce that standard, SWAIA requires all applicants to provide their United States, Canadian or Alaskan Corporation proof of tribal enrollment to be eligible. A copy of their tribal enrollment card, Certificate of Indian Blood, Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood, or Secured Certificate of Indian Status Card (Canada) must be included within the artist’s application.<sup>48</sup> To obtain a Certificate of Indian Blood (CIB), an applicant must trace and submit their Native lineage to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the BIA-federally recognized tribe from which they have descended from.<sup>49</sup> Another way to receive government-allocated Native citizenship is through proving a degree of “Native blood” though lineal Native bloodline of a federally-recognized tribe, when approved gives applicants a

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<sup>47</sup> Beason, Roxanne. Interview with Mary Jacobs.

<sup>48</sup> SWAIA 2020 Artist Policies. Sec. 1. Eligibility.

<sup>49</sup> Bureau of Indian Affairs. “Guide to Tracing American Indian and Alaska Native Ancestry.” U.S. Department of the Interior. Office of Public Affairs-Indian Affairs. Web.

Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB).<sup>50</sup> In Canada, the process of obtaining an Indian Status Card requires applicants to simply prove their identity as well as their Native ancestry utilizing the National archive of genealogy. This particular rule acts as a double-edged sword: while on the one hand, requiring proof of tribal enrollment stems from post-colonial racism and identity politics, it also serves as a method for deeming submissions as authentically Native art. According to Stephen Cornell and Joseph P. Kalt, tribal memberships were designed to determine who would have certain civil rights, be moved to a reservation, be imprisoned, or who could receive rations.<sup>51</sup> On the other hand, Cornell and Kalt further explains how tribal membership benefits when applied to the idea of self-determination and sovereignty for tribal politics in the post-colonial world. By creating a tribal-affiliated political system, the racist concept that developed tribal enrollment is kept in practice under the guise of positive intentions, such as the formation of self-governance, a sense of nationhood citizenship, and establishing laws to protect tribal nations' traditions, languages, and communities.<sup>52</sup>

Blood quantum and identity politics are contentious for Native people. By invoking externally imposed, essentialist definitions of Native identity as a benchmark for participation, SWAIA reinforces the colonialist standards of authenticity implied by the categories of 'traditional' and 'contemporary'—calling further into question the alleged objectivity of such evaluative criteria. These exclusionary rules of identity and authenticity have delayed SWAIA's

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<sup>50</sup> Bureau of Indian Affairs. "Certificate of Degree of Indian or Alaska Native Blood Instructions." U.S. Department of the Interior. Office of Public Affairs-Indian Affairs. Web.

<sup>51</sup> Ratteree, Kathleen, Oneida Nation, and Norbert S. Hill. 2017. "From Tribal Members to Native Nation Citizens. *The Great Vanishing Act: Blood Quantum and the Future of Native Nations*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing. Pg. 289.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid Pg. 293.

Indian Market to incorporate more “contemporary” art mediums, as well as needing ways to categorize Native art that will not depreciate the standards of authenticity already in place.

Despite Indian Market’s conservative and even colonialist approach to Native identity and artmaking, it has consistently taken a progressive stance in its annual themes. For example, the 2019 market was themed with the title, “Rise and Remember: Honoring the Resilience of Native Women.”<sup>53</sup> This theme highlights Native women artists who participate in the Indian Market but also alludes to activism regarding missing Indigenous women across North America. As art historian and critic America Meredith (Cherokee) suggested, in her directory for the 2019 Market, which appeared as a special issue of *First American Art*, much existing representative imagery of Native women and artists does not match reality; however, Indian Market’s choice of theme was an opportunity for 1,000 artists to open conversations about gender and Native experiences with 120,000 or more visitors.<sup>54</sup> As Indian Market has not always lent itself to progressive themes in the past, 2019 proves that SWAIA is taking steps to include those voices.

Even as SWAIA and Indian Market tries to establish themselves as progressive and representative, however, their position is still strict regarding the rules and regulations on objects entered in the Market. Though it seems that collectors and museum curators are generally working towards decolonizing museum institutions, they are purchasing work from Indian Market that has been problematically cast into the dichotomous categorizations of either “traditional” or “contemporary.” A recent example was in 2018, when the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City brought Native American art from the Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the

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<sup>53</sup> Meredith, America. *Being Seen: Native Women and Santa Fe Indian Market*. 2019 SWAIA Indian Market Artist Directory. Santa Fe New Mexican. 2019.

<sup>54</sup> SWAIA.org

Americas wing and into the American Art wing. The move was to show a feature exhibition entitled, *Art of Native America: The Charles and Valerie Diker Collection*, which brings Native art into the American narrative and features a large range of works that range for pre-colonial to 20<sup>th</sup> century Native American art (Fig. 6). This exhibition at the Met creates a break in the boundaries between contemporary and traditional in a very renowned collection, but also problematically only incorporates two Native men's (Allen Michaelson (Mohawk) and Jackson Pollys (Tlingit)) contributions of the didactic text for the elaborating the indigenous perspective of the entire exhibition.<sup>55</sup> Pushing Native voices to the foreground, works by Indigenous women artists are the star feature in Meredith's contributions to the Indian Market's 2019 directory. Page after page shows Indigenous women and LGBTQ+ identifying people proudly modeling contemporary and traditional Native fashion. In Meredith's article, "Strength in Unity: A Strawberry Basket Ripe with Meaning," Kelly Church (Potawatomi/Odawa/Ojibwe) wove a large, red strawberry basket in response to this theme. Church invited ten other artists to create 2x2" berries woven from their traditions as a collaboration with her work (Fig. 7).<sup>56</sup> While Church's collaborative strawberry basket piece, *Strength in Unity*, was made to be donated to the SWAIA organization, I ask myself what category SWAIA would classify this work? Woven in her traditional style, is it then "traditional," or does the red dye and shape make the Strawberry Basket "contemporary," or is it none of the above and slides into the all-too-convenient and limiting "boundary" category that has yet to be used in action by SWAIA jurors? Native artists have been avoiding this kind of categorization of their art, yet for Indian Market, it seems to have

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<sup>55</sup> Sandoval, Christine Howard. Broken Boxes Podcast. "Episode 77: Artists Christine Howard Sandoval and Cannupa Hanska Luger Live Stream at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's New Exhibit: Art of Native America: The Charles and Valerie Diker Collection." Web.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. Pg. 40.

more widely incentivized the preservation of traditions. While there might be some benefits to these categories in the jurying process, it does set a precedent to primitivize traditional arts in settings beyond Indian Market.

## THE JURYING PROCESS AND MARKET CATEGORIES

Slow to change, for the 2020 Indian Market, SWAIA has is implementing a “boundary” category for each medium classification. This new category is supposed to bridge the gap between the dichotomous positioning of Native art into “contemporary” or “traditional” art—while simultaneously retaining and protecting the high standards of traditional Native art. This remedy proposed by SWAIA may potentially solve a long-standing issue of juried preference toward either side of the dichotomy—to keep artists in the flux still eligible for consideration for Indian Market. The process of submission and admittance for Indian Market requires artists to send their application and images of their work to a panel of jurors. Three jurors then give artists a score out of 25 points based on a “4-Criteria” system that considers work based on technical execution, concept/design/creativity, aesthetics and Indian Market Standards, with a perfect score being 300 points possible.<sup>57</sup> Artists are selected based on their score, the highest percentages are qualified to place pending on the number of applicants within each category.<sup>58</sup> In the description for “Boundary,” SWAIA’s entry form states, “In 2020 we will introduce the “Boundary” Category within each division. This category is designed to give jurors and Class Managers more options when looking at pieces that do not necessarily conform to already existing Categories but use the same techniques and materials. In jewelry, for example, rather than move certain pieces to Sculpture or Diverse Arts, where an artist may not have juried in, the

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<sup>57</sup> SWAIA.org Artist/Exhibitor Information

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

piece will stay in jewelry but be considered “Boundary.” An example of a “Boundary” piece in jewelry is a silver seed pot with inlay.”<sup>59</sup> However, the definition of the “boundary” category is not clear; the ‘gray-area art’ could mean anything. The object categories in SWAIA’s rules and regulations make it clear that, the materiality of Native-made art is another way that jurors can authenticate and categorize art submissions.

Separating itself from other art markets and craft fair type-settings and in effort to maintain prestige, SWAIA’s classifications adhere to strict rules on the materiality of the objects in the juried selection process. The rules are documented by SWAIA’s Artist/Exhibitor Standards and Artist Policies, which is available to artists through SWAIA’s website, as the whole submission process is online.<sup>60</sup> SWAIA only gives simplified examples of how certain pieces might fall into the “boundary” category, whether applied to either “contemporary” or “traditional.” Using the Jewelry classification as an example, we can see how the categories work to regulate and define artworks. Unless otherwise specified and disclosed, jewelry must be made with organic material, especially for the traditional category. Only specific stones, preferably raw and unpolished or un-tumbled stones can be used and special attention is given to the regional stone sources; however, all deviations from traditional aspects and expectations of Indigenous jewelry pieces must be disclosed by the artist. Jewelry must be wearable, or it is to be moved to the sculpture category—although, the “boundary” category could potentially open an opportunity to bridge this gap due to how we still have not seen how this category will be applied. All non-plated metal types must be disclosed; only 14 karat gold or higher is allowed.<sup>61</sup> Any amount of adhesive used or any additional findings, such as clasps or closures, must be fully

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<sup>59</sup> SWAIA Santa Fe Indian Market, 2020 Standards per Classification

<sup>60</sup> SWAIA.org Artist/Exhibitor Information

<sup>61</sup> SWAIA 2020 Standards Per Classification

disclosed by artists in the submission process.<sup>62</sup> Some materials are specifically stated as “allowed with disclosure,” including stabilized turquoise, coral and apple coral (so long as it undyed and untreated, makes up less than 50% of the object, and is on a handmade object), cast jewelry, commercial chain (as finding only), sheet metals and precious metal clays.<sup>63</sup> Unallowed items are treated stones of any kind, whether dyed or tumbled, and machine-made items—or specifically not “Indian-made.”<sup>64</sup> Left blank in SWAIA’s Standards is the section determining what “tools and techniques” are allowed or not allowed. How would it be possible for artists, jurors and SWAIA’s organization to police how things are made by traditional tactics based on their rules? The first division or Division A is what qualifies as “traditional” Native jewelry: “for all traditionally-made jewelry using culturally acceptable materials (including silver, beads, quills, brass, copper and stones shells), traditional techniques, and traditional designs.” Division B in jewelry is “traditional” as it applies to materials and objects made in the style of Pre-Columbian fabrication. Everything else is pushed into the umbrella of Division C or “contemporary,” and “boundary” is not clearly defined in a Division for jewelry.

Similarly, stringent rules are in place for every medium at Market. For example, SWAIA also maintains strict rules for establishing the precedent for the authenticity of Indigenous pottery-making. Much like the rules set by the standards of jewelry, pottery is held to the traditional shapes and methods of pottery-making that are authentic to the tribal region of origin. All “traditional” pots must be made from local and hand-sourced clay, as well as entirely handmade without the use of “contemporary” tools and techniques. All slips, glazes, and firing techniques must be disclosed by the artist, especially if the pieces are fired in a kiln and not

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid. Findings such as pre-made earring hooks or chain fasteners, etc.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.



primitively fired.<sup>65</sup> Non-clay additions can be made in the traditional category, and stands are permitted for stability use only.<sup>66</sup> There are six specific divisions for the pottery category: Division A is traditional unpainted utilitarian pottery, Division B is traditional painted pottery (specifically Pueblo), Division C is traditional burnished red or black wares, Division D is contemporary pottery techniques using Native materials/decorative elements, Division E is contemporary pottery using commercial clays and glazes, and Division F is miniature pottery under 3 inches.<sup>67</sup> These standards state that special consideration is given artists' pottery that is made by hand with "Natively-sourced" clay materials and using traditional techniques. However, each pottery Division has room for the "boundary" classification.<sup>68</sup>

SWAIA's struggle to clearly define what "boundary" means for each distinct art classification and subdivision is may create confusion for artists submitting their work to Indian Market. Each "traditional" section, whether it is quillwork, pottery, textile production or diverse arts, all have a designated subsection for "boundary" consideration, without clearly defining what that means. The closest description given for what "boundary" could be in Indian Market's 2020 standards for submission is the jewelry seed pot mentioned above, which not only bridges between materiality and mediums but the seed pots are not necessarily always pieces of jewelry.<sup>69</sup> Even if the "boundary" category is an option given to judges and jurors for deciding what division or classification a work belongs, it still leaves artists out of knowing how their work will be placed within these categorizations. Those who push traditional works into "boundary" may be encouraged not to, and more contemporary artists might shy from utilizing

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

more traditional techniques to stay within their classification. As this ruling is very vague, artists have no idea how their works might be judged or what the benefits of being classified as “boundary” will mean for their work and their placement in the competition. Regardless of the questionable choice of making the “boundary” option available, most are required to maintain the standards of being Indigenous, traditional, handmade, and authentic to the mediums the artists are skilled in working. As the “boundary” category has no formal guideline, it is indeed left to the judge’s and juror’s discretion, which can be a problem because the juried process is entirely blind. How can one justify placing a work in the “boundary” category without a full and descriptive explanation of why they made that decision?

Indeed, even the concept of “boundary” further complicates the argument that Native art should not be categorized as neither traditional nor contemporary. As America Meredith has stated, “If it’s made by Native hands, it’s Native art,”—so why SWAIA would create an additional category for the in-between-ness of some art submissions.<sup>70</sup> Why distinguish works between traditional and contemporary in the first place? Perhaps “boundary” is a methodology that slowly breaks free from that dichotomous mold. The sentiment of Meredith and other working Indigenous artists seems to be that they would prefer not to be reduced to these categories at all. In Carole Rosenstein’s *Indian Market: A Tournament of Values*, she explains that the administrative order of value is based on the evaluation of objects based on how well they embody classifications, primarily when those classifications are meant to differentiate between traditional and non-traditional works.<sup>71</sup> Conversely, Rosenstein states that artists

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<sup>70</sup> Meredith, America. Ahalenia. “Ahalenia: Shedding Skin: Reconstructing Our Relationship to Art.” Ahalenia (blog), October 3, 2014.

<sup>71</sup> Rosenstein, Carol, “Indian Market: A Tournament of Values,” *Signs and Society* 2, no. 2 (September 2014): Pg. 245.

evaluate themselves based on innovative uses of their traditions and skills—further emphasizing Meredith’s position that Native people should choose and shape their artistic sovereignty.<sup>72</sup> If we prioritize creative sovereignty, Native artists participating in Indian Market should not be further subjected either to the longstanding categories of “traditional” and “contemporary,” or to the new, poorly-defined “boundary” classification.

### DECOLONIZING THE BOUNDARY CATEGORY

Conversely, a more positive outlook on the ruling of the “boundary” classification is that it breaks the “traditional” vs. “contemporary” mold in an undefined way that finally gives participating artists more freedom and range for submitted works. In Molly H. Mullin’s assessment of Indian Market as it functioned in the early 1990s, she suggests that having clearly-defined boundaries and classifications set by Indian Market encouraged a certain degree of confidence for buyers and patrons.<sup>73</sup> A purchase from Indian Market meant buying the most authentic and high quality piece of Native American art. The classifications have engendered expectations of authenticity that have conferred prestige upon certain artists. The “boundary” classification presents an opportunity to turn that idea on its head, decolonizing the evaluation of Indigenous art in Indian Market. Having the “boundary” classification in place also requires judges and jurors to make their evaluations based on the merit of the work alone. As artists will be awarded and admired for “boundary” artworks, they will instill a new confidence in Native art that fully acknowledges the creative sovereignty of participating Indigenous artists. Though “boundary” classification rule changes have not yet been fully implemented nor practiced by

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid. Pg. 245.

<sup>73</sup> Mullin, Molly H. *Culture in the Marketplace : Gender, Art, and Value in the American Southwest. Objects/histories.* Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2001. Pg. 134.

SWAIA, its introduction at the upcoming 2020 Indian Market will invite future discourse and critique on how Indian Market evaluates Indigenous art.

The “boundary” category has the potential to decolonize Indian Market in fruitful ways. Perhaps one of the most critical factors about Indigenous culture and art is that, though it is essential to retain the traditions and keep them alive, culture is not static and changes over time. When museum curators listen to Indigenous artists and practice post-colonial sensibilities within their practice, most museum displays of art become a morphed “boundary” category—mixing living Native artists’ “contemporary” work with “traditional” artifacts in the same setting. One example was curator Christina Burke’s 2013 display of Native American art, at the Philbrook Museum’s recently closed space in downtown Tulsa, Oklahoma (Fig. 8).<sup>74</sup> The display functioned as an in-between space for contemporary and traditional Native American work; Burke purposely position works like the 19<sup>th</sup> century moccasins in the same space with Pueblo pottery comic book covers made by Jason Garcia to eliminate any kind of chronological or geographical linearity (Fig. 9). The placement of contemporary art elevated and referenced the traditional works on display in the same area. Denver Art Museum has followed a similar practice while working with artists like Jeffery Gibson (Fig. 10), Rose B. Simpson, and Cannupa Hanska Luger. They do work that pushes into what SWAIA would consider “boundary” art. I would argue that having “boundary” an option for artists, jurors, and judges helps Indian Market serve as what Amy Lonetree calls a “decolonized space” for Native artists and communities.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> The Philbrook Museum’s downtown location in the Brady Arts district in Tulsa was closed December, 29<sup>th</sup> 2019 to make way for the Bob Dylan Center to house the Bob Dylan archives purchased by the George Kaiser Family Foundation and the University of Tulsa in 2016. All art was taken back to the Philbrook’s main campus in the Brookside district of Tulsa. Public Radio Tulsa. News, KWGS. “Philbrook Leaving Downtown.” Web.

<sup>75</sup> Lonetree, Amy. *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*. First Peoples (2010). Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012.

Indeed, Mullins emphasizes that Marketgoers need to know “what they are looking at” to establish value and have a sense of pleasure in their purchase.<sup>76</sup> Undefined, the “boundary” category completely conflates traditional and contemporary considerations, taking a step towards dismantling these categorizations and classifications entirely. “Boundary” ironically creates an openness that forces buyers and judges to reevaluate the Indian Market’s method of categorization.

### AUTHENTICITY, ANTHROPOLOGY AND AUDIENCE

Commodification of Native goods has been the definite reason why Indian Market has become popular and indeed why utilitarian objects made by Native people are even considered to be purely aesthetic and collectible pieces of art. As noted by Carole Rosenstein, the commodification of Indian art cannot be taken for granted, the high stakes of Indian Market are not in the commodification of Native art, but the administration of art.<sup>77</sup> Thus, the questions of “who” and “why” are of the utmost importance when considering who is deciding the authenticity of Native art. The submissions must meet the imposed ruling definition of Indianness set by SWAIA to even qualify for the high-stakes consumption, and Westernized elite standards of art have historically established these stakes.<sup>78</sup> Within Indian Market’s history, the authenticity of “traditional” Indigenous art has been the ruling standard and the most sought after by white elite collectors. However, as SWAIA has become more adaptable for Native artists to work with more “contemporary” art forms and mediums, the Market has moved to create

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<sup>76</sup> Mullin, Molly H. *Culture in the Marketplace : Gender, Art, and Value in the American Southwest*. Objects/histories. Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2001. Pg. 134.

<sup>77</sup> Rosenstein, Carol, “Indian Market: A Tournament of Values,” *Signs and Society* 2, no. 2 (September 2014): Pg. 246.

<sup>78</sup> Appadurai, Arjun. *Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspectives*. Cambridge University Press.

categorical emphasis to keep said ruling standards of authenticity in place. Again, the ill-defined “boundary” category in a place ironically adjourns categorization, and very well may, to a degree, withdraw immediate and innocuous consumption of art at Indian Market.

Historically, the study of anthropology been at the heart of pushing the exchange and consumption of Native goods as well as pushing the boundaries in defining/redefining the authenticity of Native American art. As a historian of anthropology, George W. Stocking, explains that objects serve as both commodity and exchange between “Others” and the “restricted political economy of anthropological research.”<sup>79</sup> Stocking elaborates that the exchange of cultural objects with museums is a mode of which anthropologists have been able to capitalize on their research over less marketable topics.<sup>80</sup> However, Daniel Miller, an anthropologist that studies the human relation to things and consumption, describes that the “Western” consumption of cultural goods was viewed as the loss of culture because of its threat to authenticity on the principles of pure anthropological objectification.<sup>81</sup> In a similar sentiment regarding the kind of cultural tourism that Indian Market provides for visiting buyers, collectors and surveyors, Melanie Smith and Mike Robinson state that the “loss of authenticity is damaging to the host community and the experience of the visitor.”<sup>82</sup> In some aspects, Indian Market utilizes some of the more problematic aspects of cultural tourism in the street vendor setup as well as the element of forced performativity of Indigeneity. However, sometimes that becomes an advantage for Indigenous artists to assert themselves with self-marketing into spaces that

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<sup>79</sup> Stocking, George W. *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*. Madison, WI: U of Wisconsin, 1985. Print. Pg. 113.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.* Pg. 114.

<sup>81</sup> Miller, Daniel. *Acknowledging Consumption*. Material Cultures. London: Routledge, 1995. Pg. 263.

<sup>82</sup> Smith, Melanie K., and Mike Robinson. 2006. *Cultural Tourism in a Changing World : Politics, Participation and (Re)Presentation*. Tourism and Cultural Change. Clevedon, UK: Channel View Publications.

would not be available to them otherwise. Because the stakes are so high, simply being accepted into the Market is the opportunity to bridge the “boundary” from the marketplace into competitive and prestigious platforms such as museums and galleries. Despite the changes in medium and SWAIA’s growth and acceptance of newer and varying mediums of art, Indigenous artists’ authenticity—their Native-ness is accepted by many attendees based on their admittance into Indian Market alone.

The cultural tourism and expectations of Native authenticity that SWAIA’s Indian Market standards expect from participating artists are the direct result of cultural exchanges between anthropologists and Indigenous communities. In Edwin L. Wade’s assessment of ethnic art markets, specifically in the American Southwest, he explains that scholars and collectors had become dependent on object acquisition, which made them a powerful patron that completely manipulated the imagery and make of Native art from the period of 1920-1960.<sup>83</sup> When Native artists pushed these boundaries and created abstract work, Indian art markets and collectors were slow to accept more contemporary and abstracted stylizations of Indian art. The Philbrook Indian Annual, another popular juried art show that ran from 1946-1979, was met with controversy as an abstract artist, Oscar Howe, was rejected for not adhering to the traditional style of Indian painting.<sup>84</sup> As Native artists like Howe were pushing the “boundaries” of Indigenous art with their own interpretation and stylization, they were met with resistance based on the market demands and expectations set form by the museum and scholarly authority. This earlier

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<sup>83</sup> Wade, Edwin L. *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*. Ed. George W. Stocking. Madison, WI: U of Wisconsin, 1985. Print.

<sup>84</sup> “Out Of Many: Religious Pluralism in America | Oscar Howe and the Philbrook Museum of Art, 1958 · Creating the Other: Challenges in Native American Art.” Newberry Library Publications. Web.

microcosm could explain SWAIA's hesitation to implement categorization that allows as much potential flexibility as the "boundary" classification will.

Mulling over the possibilities presented by SWAIA's implementation of the new "boundary" category, I contacted Corey Stein, whose work most closely reflects what I consider pushing the boundaries of traditional art. Her outstanding work entitled, *Flat and Hairy, Cold and Hard*, is an autobiographical "bare-skin" rug beaded to resemble skin, internal flesh as well as the vulnerable cultural reflections of her Jewish and Tlingit heritage. When laid out flat, the beaded imagery resembles a bearskin rug, only with human features. The attached mask portion is halved to show a skull embedded in landscape on one side and muscle, protruding bone and hair on the other; attached to the hood is a breastplate with female breast imagery (Fig. 11). A front skirt of the Tlingit style is on the front with both Jewish and Tlingit symbols. I asked, if by SWAIA's definition, she thought her work would be considered "boundary," to which she replied, "I would love to think it does... my work does not follow the typical conventions of SWAIA's strictness." She goes on to say, "all of my work is beads, no one taught me, so I could see why judges would have a tough time deciding where to put my work."<sup>85</sup> She also mentions that she did not apply for SWAIA's Indian Market for 2020 because of a scheduling conflict, and thus was only just hearing about this new addition to the categorical divide. She seemed pleased to hear that SWAIA would take such actions. Stein thinks that a lot of the surrounding museums, notably the Heard Museum may have influenced this change. Stein emphasized, "we still need traditional art," pointing out that special considerations for continued traditions should be made because retaining such traditions is vital to the continued resilience of Native American culture. Stein's work is just one example of many submissions that SWAIA might now categorize as

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<sup>85</sup> Stein, Corey. Beason, Roxanne. Phone Interview. 2020.



“boundary” art, suggesting that this category has the potential to allow for more innovation and creativity in the scope of Indigenous artistry within Indian Market.

## CONCLUSION

As SWAIA struggles to give Native artists creative sovereignty that would distance them from anthropologist and touristic evaluations and expectations of aesthetic and authenticity, the time for them to branch out from the dichotomous “traditional” vs. “contemporary” is well past-due. If the success of the Indian Market continues to rely on the touristic voyeurism and consumption of Native culture, it will be necessary for Native people to control and advocate for how Native art should be defined. “Boundary,” in practice, could mean anything, and as a result, it has the potential to create fairness for artists pushing their Indigenous traditions to incorporate their own artistic style and influences. However, despite the benefits of the “boundary” category, SWAIA persists in using its categories and criteria to keep the art submitted to Indian Market authentically Native, -via the required proof of tribal membership and their strict standards for the materiality of the submitted work. Participating artists’ work can stand on its own and convey Native community and identity. It may not need SWAIA’s dictation of what that is supposed to entail. When all art made by the hands of Native people is Native art, “boundary” helps break up the problematic development of the dichotomy of traditional Native art and contemporary Native art within the art market. As the rules have not yet been in action, it will be interesting to see if Indian Market artists will broaden the scope of what will be seen and collected in the future.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONFLICT AND DISASSOCIATION FROM SWAIA'S ANNUAL SANTA FE INDIAN MARKET

At times, Indigenous artists and organizers have resisted compliance with SWAIA's standards and rule changes. Because Indian Market upholds prestige despite having the appearance of any other ethno-touristic cultural markets, many contemporary Native artists are seeking other ways to show exhibit their work that engages audiences beyond the realm of festival tent spaces.

Artists and leaders alike have shown their dissatisfaction for the operations and regulations of SWAIA, and many responded by showing their work in Santa Fe galleries and museums, or even by creating their own coinciding market space. Many of these outlying markets have paralleled their schedule with SWAIA's Indian Market to reap the benefits of that target audience. I stumbled upon some of these external markets, and after learning about the participants operating outside the bounds of SWAIA, I wanted to share their stories. After learning that markets like the Indigenous Fine Arts Market and Free Indian Market were established as a response to SWAIA's rule changes, I found it compelling to investigate alternative modes for Native artists to exhibit their work that does not quite fit within the bounds of Indian Market. As SWAIA presses artists into galleries to highlight their contemporaneity and converge the street market vending with highbrow art settings, I want to interrogate how the organization draws those lines of who goes

where. This chapter will thoroughly assess the conflicts with and deliberate disassociations from Indian Market, and how the organization of outlying markets and gallery exhibitions exposes SWAIA's lacking inclusivity for Native artists.

#### SANTA FE INDIAN MARKET: THE CONTINUATION OF ETHNO-TOURISM

From Indian Market's humble beginnings starting in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, its economic exchange between Native artists and outsiders has relied on ethnic tourism. As travelers made their way to the Southwest, their curiosity and privilege created an awkward boundary between themselves as observers and the Native being observed.<sup>86</sup> As Santa Fe became the site of cultural fairs like the Spanish and Indian fairs, it quickly became gentrified for cultural tourism at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The evidence of this can be seen in the historic downtown plaza of Santa Fe, the very place the annual Indian Market takes place. The downtown Plaza does not have stores for necessities. Instead, the area's shopping caters to luxury goods and the colonial enterprise of regional cultural arts.<sup>87</sup> As Hal Rothman describes, the city of Santa Fe feels like two separate places, one where Hispanic/Chicano and Indigenous people work to maintain a semblance of middle-class American life, and another that caters to the Anglo New Age "settlers" and incoming tourists.<sup>88</sup> I emphasize the word "settlers" because many of the wealthier, white residents of Santa Fe are not from the area, and many of them have residencies that are merely seasonal vacation properties. Therefore, maintaining arts fairs like Indian Market, the International Folk Art Market, and Spanish Market is entirely at the leisure and behest of the wealthier patrons and tourists coming to Santa Fe.

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<sup>86</sup> Rothman, Hal. *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-century American West*. Development of Western Resources. Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 1998. Pg. 30.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. Pg. 355.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. Pg. 355.

## REAPING THE BENEFITS ON THEIR OWN TERMS: ALTERNATIVES TO SWAIA'S INDIAN MARKET

Only recently have frustrations with SWAIA's Indian Market surfaced. Some artists felt SWAIA's jury had been readmitting the same artists every year, which did not allow room for up and coming artists. Before the summer of 2014, a sudden resignation of the chief officer in charge of SWAIA's Indian Market, John Torrez Nez, resulted in artists' support for launching a Native-run art market called Indigenous Fine Art Market or IFAM.<sup>89</sup> Nez released a statement that it was his "fiduciary duty" to leave his tenured position as CEO for SWAIA, leaving for his own ethical principles based on trust.<sup>90</sup> IFAM was smaller, featured around 400 artists, and was hosted in Santa Fe the same weekend as SWAIA's Indian Market. Dr. Adrienne Keene of the Native Appropriations website interviewed an IFAM supporting artist and jewelry maker, Nanibaa Beck, who expressed the aspirations of the organization in her statement, "The goal is to turn the "M" in IFAM from "market" to "movement." Nanibaa says, "Tradition is not static, it's vibrant. If you think about 'Movement' like the movement of water, it's going to move, adapt, and change...so we can think about movement as tradition." The IFAM juried market strived for inclusion, their application process for art specifications stated, "If your indigenous hands made the art, it is "indigenous art" to IFAM, regardless of subject matter, media, traditional or contemporary forms. It is about quality art."<sup>91</sup> Also, IFAM aimed to be more inclusive to other tribal affiliations outside the Southwest because they held a second Market every spring on the East Coast, and eventually became an international market (Fig. 12).<sup>92</sup> However, many viewed

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<sup>89</sup> Keene, Adrienne. "Indigenous Fine Art Market: A Market for the People by the People." *Native Appropriations*. 13 June 2014. Web.

<sup>90</sup> Ahtone, Tristan. "Santa Fe: A Two-Market Town?" *Featured News*. Native Peoples Magazine, Sept.-Oct. 2014. Web.

<sup>91</sup> This website does not exist anymore. IFAM. Indigifam.org.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

the IFAM market as problematic for the longstanding SWAIA participants because it broadened and separated the Markets, which added a new layer of competition for Native Artists. A reporter for National Public Radio, Tristan Ahtone, further explained the concern for participants in both markets, “For many artists, Indian Market weekend sales can constitute up to half of their artist income for the year. With two markets vying for visibility, there's the risk that competition may drive down prices artists can receive for their work, while Indian arts and culture stay front and center for the state's tourism industry.”<sup>93</sup> While enough admiration exists for Native art in the Santa Fe area for IFAM to hold its own independence and sovereignty, it is nonetheless perceived as having the potential to create complications for itself and the competing SWAIA market. However, in 2017 IFAM was disbanded as its lead organizer, Torrez Nez, was indicted with a second-degree felony charge for embezzling \$37,000 while he was in charge of SWAIA’s campaign to raise relief funds for the 2011 tsunami in Japan.<sup>94</sup> Because IFAM was one of the first instances of establishing an large-scale Native market outside of Indian Market with the intention of integrating traditional and contemporary art mediums, it was a highlight of interest for the discourse of SWAIA’s politics and choices for ruling standards. Indeed, IFAM’s timely disbanding opened a forum of discourse for SWAIA to consider some changes to allow for more inclusive attitudes toward artists and mediums.

In 2018, Free Indian Market was formed as a response to SWAIA’s implemented rule changed that no longer granted longtime returning artists a guaranteed booth space at Indian Market.<sup>95</sup> Because most Indigenous cultures believe in profound honor and respect for elders,

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<sup>93</sup> Ahtone, Tristan. "Dueling Markets Show Native American Art Is Big Business." NPR. NPR, 28 July 2014. Web.

<sup>94</sup> Abatemarco, Michael. "Creators of Indigenous Fine Art Market Break from Group to Launch Newer Event." Santa Fe New Mexican. Sept. 16., 2016

<sup>95</sup> Edge, Sami. "An Alternative Indian Market in Santa Fe." Santa Fe New Mexican. Aug. 18, 2018. Web.

especially those carrying on art traditions, an overwhelming negative response to SWAIA's rule changes inspired Free Indian Market to provide a space for these artists. Scheduled on the same weekend as Santa Fe Indian Market, Free Indian Market's first year was host to 279 artists at the Scottish Rite Center on the outer edge of downtown Santa Fe.<sup>96</sup> As the name indicates, artists participating in Free Indian Market do not have to pay for their booth space.<sup>97</sup> Free Indian Market organizer, Gregory Shaaf, is a retired associate professor of American Indian studies, as well as the director for the Center of Indigenous Arts and Culture. His goal in helping create this alternative Market was to honor elder and displaced Indigenous artists with space where they can continue their longstanding tradition of selling their work during the Indian Market.<sup>98</sup>

Interviewing artists in Free Indian Market's first year of operation, Sami Edge heard a variety of reasoning and feelings about their absence from the Indian Market. Lloyd Suina, the son of Cochiti Pueblo potter Ada Suina, told Edge that it was the first year his mother was rejected from Indian Market. Suina stated, "It doesn't matter who you are, how many ribbons you won, what your accomplishments are...I think it's more of heartbreak for her that someone else thinks her art isn't up to the standards."<sup>99</sup> Other sentiments reported by Edge conveyed that this was still a chance to continue their ways of life and share them with their community.<sup>100</sup> In my own attendance at Santa Fe Indian Market in August 2019, I visited Free Indian Market on my way to the Plaza. I was able to discuss how this outlying Market came to be with participating graphic designer and co-organizer, Ashley Lynn Browning. She made it clear that, "this isn't an oppositional market. It's here for us who were rejected after years of being grandfathered into

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Sims, Jonathan. IndianCountryToday.com. "Santa Fe's Free Indian Market Is Just That, Free." Aug. 23, 2019. Web.

<sup>98</sup> Edge, Sami. "An Alternative Indian Market in Santa Fe." Santa Fe New Mexican. Aug. 18, 2018. Web.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

Indian Market to honor elder artists.”<sup>101</sup> In some ways, Free Indian Market is a way for Native artists to create their own space to sell their work on their own terms (Fig. 13). However, it also clings to the earlier modes of authentication that colonial cultural and ethnographic tourist markets require, much like SWAIA’s Indian Market still does. It still maintains the street market setup, expected interaction as well as the reliance of the same Indian Market patrons.

Another side market that coincided with the 2019 Santa Fe Indian Market was called “Off-Market,” and was sponsored and produced by OXDX Clothing. Diné artist and designer Jared Yazzie, founder of OXDX fashion label based out of Tempe, Arizona, states that “OXDX” is an abbreviation of the word “overdose,” to which he applies as a metaphor for modern society—one from which Indigenous people continuously have to detox themselves to remember their culture and traditions.<sup>102</sup> He calls his side market the “Off-Market” with a cheeky subtitle, “Official Un-Official Underground Market.” Situated just a few doors down from Santa Fe’s downtown plaza, Off-Market takes visitors into the basement of a downtown building to survey “underground” works of off-beat Indigenous designers, artists, and makers. Yazzie explains at his first event, titled “NDN Market Clearance Outlet 2018,” “We’re getting off the ‘bougie-ness’ of Indian Market and trying to make it a real market for Native people, run by Native people... we want to make this an annual thing.”<sup>103</sup> Not discriminating on mediums, Yazzie’s underground Market is host to makers such as Quw’utsun’ Made: health and beauty products made by Arianna Johnny-Wadsworth (Quw’utsun’/Cowichan); Indigenous Goddess Gang, a collection of Indigenous female artists; Calandra R. Etsitty, designer of contemporary fashion and traditional Diné attire; Dominique Daye Hunter, poet, writer, designer, and hip-hop artist; Bobby Wilson,

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<sup>101</sup> Beason, Roxanne. Interview with Ashley Lynn Bowling. Santa Fe, NM. Aug. 17, 2019.

<sup>102</sup> Yazzie, Jared. [Oxdxclothing.com](http://Oxdxclothing.com). web.

<sup>103</sup> “OXDX | “NDN MRKT Clearance Outlet” 2018” Youtube.com. Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Web.

artist and designer associated with the 1491's; and the list goes on.<sup>104</sup> Saturday night of Indian Market, OXDX hosts a fashion show that features artists participating in the Off-Market.

Arianna Johnny-Wadsworth beautifully sums up the intentions behind having Off-Market in her statement, "I'm an indigenous skincare brand... Santa Fe Indian Market doesn't have a category for someone like me. This is for young folks who are like-minded who are all about streetwear and fashion, and we're all about taking care of each other in that good way."<sup>105</sup> Yazzie's plan to help younger Indigenous artists and entrepreneurs adds flair to the happenings around the Indian Market that only enrich the whole scene (Fig. 14). Not only is this an opportunity for younger artists working outside of the margins of SWAIA's standards to reach a broad audience, but it also helps Indian Market audiences understand what exists beyond those confines as well.

#### INDIAN MARKET TAKES THE GALLERY APPROACH FOR CONTEMPORARY ART ENGAGEMENT

As I have previously highlighted, there is no question that Native artists participating in Indian Market do receive perks and recognition if their work is accepted. However, Indigenous artists and makers have found ways to engage and reap the benefits of the ethno-touristic Indian Market without the juried acceptance according to biased selection criteria and standards. While the Indian Market is the main feature, tourists are invited to visit the local galleries and museums in the area. The Institute of American Indian Art's (IAIA) Museum of Contemporary Native Arts (MoCNA) is situated adjacent to the historic Palace of the Governors in the central downtown plaza. Many tourists would see exhibitions put on by MoCNA while in attendance in Indian Market, primarily because IAIA and SWAIA are both associated through creating opportunities

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<sup>104</sup> Yazzie, Jared. Oxdxclothing.com. web.

<sup>105</sup> "OXDX | "NDN MRKT Clearance Outlet" 2018" Youtube.com. Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Web.



for Native artists. For example, In 2015, MoCNA hosted a show put together by Carcross/Tagish curator, Candice Hopkins, about the apocalypse of Native culture. Based on the book by Cormac McCarthy, *Blood Meridian*, about occurring Native American massacres during the period Western U.S. settlement, Hopkins' exhibition, entitled, "An Evening Redness in the West," confronts intended market audiences with art that is reflective of the horrors of Southwest and Native American history.<sup>106</sup> Hopkins explains that the timing of the exhibition being held during the same weekend as the Indian Market was a conscious decision to remind market audiences about "something people deliberately forget."<sup>107</sup> The controversial show features Native artists working with apocalyptic themes, such as Rose B. Simpson, Jeffrey Gibson, Naomi Bebo (Fig. 15), Norman Akers, Andrea Carlson, Joseph Tisiga, Virgil Ortiz, Shuvinai Ashoona, Duane Linklater, Death Convention Singers, and Scott Jones.<sup>108</sup> Choctaw artist, Jeffrey Gibson's piece titled, *Burn, Baby, Burn*, is a beaded wall-hanging tapestry made from a repurposed army wool blanket fringed with tin bells and fringe; the center features the words "Burn, Baby Burn" as the central focus of the Chillkat-inspired beaded design work.<sup>109</sup> A more direct apocalyptic reference can be seen in Naomi Bebo's (Menominee/Ho-Chunk) work, which shows a traditional, ceremonial Native mask with an added element, a hand-beaded Iraqi War gas mask.<sup>110</sup> The show ostensibly gives an informative, artistic perspective that is contradictory to the accessible, consumable Native art sold in the Indian Market. Hopkins explains her goal of confronting

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<sup>106</sup> Roberts, Kathaleen. "The Institute of American Indian Arts Reminds How Violently the West Was Settled." *Albuquerque Journal*. 16 Aug. 2015.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Abatemarco, Michael. "State of the Arts: Indian Market & Indigenous Fine Art Market." *State of the Arts*. Santa Fe New Mexican, 4 Sept. 2015. Web.

<sup>109</sup> Roberts, Kathaleen. "The Institute of American Indian Arts Reminds How Violently the West Was Settled." *Albuquerque Journal*. 16 Aug. 2015.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

market audiences with conscious awareness of Native history in “An Evening Redness in the West” in her statement, “I was looking to do something that’s powerful and challenging.”<sup>111</sup>

More recently, contemporary artists have made strides to separate themselves from the Indian Market to retain the individual artistic identity focus their audiences on the higher consciousness of their own perceptions of Native life and artistry. By straying away from the ancestral pottery of the Santa Clara Pueblo tradition, multimedia artist, potter, and sculptor, Rose B. Simpson raises conscious questions about the expectations of the authenticity of Native art with her own artistic identity and adaptations of media (Fig. 16).<sup>112</sup> In an interview with Angie Collier, Simpson is asked if she has received criticism from her elders for not staying within the realm of traditional Pueblo pottery. She replied, “I had an incredible opportunity to be raised by elders who were the groundbreakers of their times, providing me with the freedom to move forward in ways that they may have struggled to achieve.”<sup>113</sup> Her mother, Roxanne Swentzell, a working artist and regular participant in SWAIA’s Indian Market, pushed her own work beyond expectations of traditional art subject matter within the realm of Pueblo pottery. Simpson also utilizes aspects of Punk and Hip-Hip ‘underground’ culture and aesthetic in conjunction with her Native roots within her art because of how empowering it is for the youth—it gives relevant definition to a culture on the edge of extinction.<sup>114</sup> During a public talk at SWAIA’s Indian Market, Simpson expresses her feelings about the Market by stating, “I get frustrated by our culture, our tradition, being promoted by economy. Why does it have to be that young people follow pottery making because it is an income because that’s what people like rather than what

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Buffalo Thunder Art. "Artist - Rose B. Simpson." YouTube.com Dec. 15, 2011. Web.

<sup>113</sup> Collier, Angie. "Rose Bean Simpson - Santa Clara Pueblo." Contemporary North American Indigenous Artists. Winter 2011. Web.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

they like?... I want to challenge the stereotypes that we place on ourselves and those based on the economy.”<sup>115</sup> While Simpson has attended and benefitted from the Indian Market her entire life, she is not a participant. She chooses to display her works in local Santa Fe galleries during the weekend of the Market instead.<sup>116</sup> With gratitude and great appreciation, Simpson recognizes the beauty of the Indian Market for Native people, communities, and her own family; however, she wants artists to question the definition of Native ‘authenticity,’ especially within the confines of the Market.<sup>117</sup> Similar to Simpson, other Native contemporary artists are raising questions and ideas of Indigenous artistic consciousness and authenticity during the Indian Market.

#### SWAIA’S IM: EDGE: CONTEMPORARY THEMES IN GALLERY SETTINGS

Attempting to engage Indian Market audiences with broader social themes, SWAIA has started a gallery show titled, “IM: Edge.” Beginning in 2015, “IM: Edge” was established as an initiative to incorporate all types of contemporary mediums in a gallery setting for the large audiences coming to the Indian Market.<sup>118</sup> It is sponsored by longtime collectors of Native art as well as trustees of IAIA, JoAnn and Bob Balzer, and the show is held at the Santa Fe Community Convention Center in downtown Santa Fe.<sup>119</sup> Because of its popularity, “IM: Edge” has become a mainstay as a part of the broader, annual Indian Market. Not only is the gallery show creating a different atmosphere for artists and audiences that separates itself from Indian Market setting-wise, but the entries are not as limited by SWAIA’s stringent rules on art mediums and materials. As a result, participating artists can push the boundaries of authenticity and tradition.<sup>120</sup> “IM:

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<sup>115</sup> Collier, Angie. "Rose Bean Simpson - Santa Clara Pueblo." Contemporary North American Indigenous Artists. Winter 2011. Web.

<sup>116</sup> Brossy, Chee. "Natives Look for Evolution at Indian Market." Navajo Times E-Edition, 25 Aug. 2011. Web.

<sup>117</sup> SWAIA.org

<sup>118</sup> IM: Edge. Swaia.org. Web.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> SWAIA 2019 ARTIST APPLICATION. Swaia.org. Web.

Edge” requires a \$25 application fee, and like Indian Market, the submission process is juried. All sold artwork gives a 15% commission to the gallery; however, participating artists will still receive the benefits of the broad audience that attends the annual Indian Market. Writing for *First American Art Magazine*, Rosemary Diaz explains how the 2016 “IM: Edge” does better justice to some artists’ work than the outdoor market space. She states that Ira Lujan’s glass sculpture installation, as well as Kathleen Wall’s portraits, would be impossible to appreciate in the same way within the “hectic booth” characteristic of the street market setup of the rest of Indian Market.<sup>121</sup> In 2019, a specific theme was in place for the year’s “IM: Edge” show, “Honoring the Strength and Resilience of Indigenous Women,” which showed works engaging with womanhood by Indigenous female artists. A fashion show was held amidst the gallery to highlight Indigenous women working in fashion design. IM: Edge may be a place where audiences can engage, which allows them to contemplate different works from the Indian Market as well as specific social themes, but is it ‘edgy’ enough to question the colonialist structures of contemporary art markets?

## CONCLUSION

Witnessing how Indian Market operates and functions for a lot of participating Indigenous artists, I was interested in why these other markets surfaced if and why SWAIA was not the sufficient platform of choice. While the success of other markets like IFAM, “Off-Market” and Free Indian Market rely on the abundant audience of Indian Market, their establishment allows spectators to take note of the fallacies of SWAIA’s Indian Market as well as the entirety of ethno-tourism. I found that the organizers of these smaller markets had their reasons for parting

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<sup>121</sup> Diaz, Rosemary. “Indian Market ‘Edge.’” *First American Art Magazine*. Aug. 8, 2016.

ways with SWAIA; they still relied on the same cultural, touristic street market vendor system still utilized for the Santa Fe Indian Market. Though IFAM was short-lived, their statement of needing a fresh approach to the Indian Market was received—and extended by more recent alternative markets. The relationship between SWAIA and fringe markets remains complicated: even as SWAIA overturned its tenure policy, Indian Market will still benefit those showing their art in the Free Indian Market. Indeed, the alternative to showing in Indian Market is to place work in surrounding galleries and museums, but it is hard to say whether that garners as much success for artists in booths at Indian Market.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Nearing 98 years since its founding, the rich history of the annual Santa Fe Indian Market has become the platform of cultural exchange as well as the pinnacle of prestige for most working North American Indigenous artists. As railroad tourism created a niche for westward travelers, interest in the Southwest and the Indigenous residents there attracted many anthropologists, ethnographers, and museum collectors alike to the region.<sup>122</sup> Although anthropologists like Edgar Lee Hewitt have had a direct change in how Native objects are made, these colonial standards for what Native authenticity is was directly embedded in how the Indian Market operated.<sup>123</sup> Since 1922, Indian Market has changed drastically, and though traditions are still upheld, the art made through traditional mediums have changed and adapted to reflect the contemporary experiences of Native American people. As SWAIA has been slow to disconnect itself from the colonial expectations of authenticity in Native art, they are still under immense pressure from the expressed discontent of artists to change and evolve how they represent Native art and culture.

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<sup>122</sup> Bernstein, Bruce. *Santa Fe Indian Market: A History of Native Arts and the Marketplace*. Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 2012. Pg. 10.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.* Pg. 11.

After years of championing Native authenticity, SWAIA's Santa Fe Indian Market is reaching the point where they must find ways to give artists more authority and creative sovereignty of their work. My line of inquiry for Native artists participating in Indian Market focuses on their presence at the market and how they interpret their successes. Because I am not Native myself, I tread carefully to not dismiss their hesitancy to address my questions nor their desire to avoid direct criticism of SWAIA and Indian Market. Many participating artists make their yearly income at Indian Market, making criticism of SWAIA an uncomfortable and contentious conversation topic. However, as SWAIA and Indian Market has made some drastic recent changes to improve their operations, it is disconcerting for artists to recognize the issues within the organization while simultaneously approaching criticism with caution. However, artists like Corey Stein have been more open in expressing the problematic preconceptions of SWAIA's preferences for Southwestern "traditional" art. Stein also praises the improvements that have been implemented to be more inclusive for more contemporary artists, like having more options like the "boundary" category and "IM: Edge." These changes present opportunities for artists to participate without their work designated as either "traditional" or "contemporary"—which does help recognize them outside of colonial expectations of Native art.

Indeed, the category of "boundary" for the juried selections in Indian Market not only break down the binary of "contemporary" versus "traditional" Native American, but it also is more inclusive to materiality of objects. "Boundary" is a necessary and clever way to open Indian Market to progressive ways of upsetting the SWAIA's standards and the expectation of authenticity within Native American art and aesthetics. As artists like Church and Stein create

contemporary expressions of their tribal traditions, “boundary” allows an opportunity for their work to succeed among the mix of traditional makers and contemporary artists.

Other artists and organizers have taken their discrepancies with SWAIA and Indian Market and created their own spaces for highlighting Native artists. However, the street market still leaves artists at the mercy of ethno-tourism and being observed as though they are Indigenous objects themselves. As markets like IFAM, Free Indian Market and OXDX give artists options and a means to express their dissatisfaction with SWAIA without losing their primary audience, Indian Market still hold the anchor for which they thrive. Indeed, SWAIA has also recognized the limits of the street vendor setup and has enabled outlets like “IM: Edge” to bring audiences into gallery-type engagement and discourse with Indigenous art.

Will Indian Market ever be able to branch beyond the street market and find more organic ways to fully embrace Indigenous creative sovereignty? Though recent dramatic changes like the “boundary” category has yet to be exercised in the jurying process, it allows judges and artists to operate on the premise of changing the way audiences and jurors view Native American artworks and traditions. From branching into Native fashion design, graphic design, printmaking, and other non-traditional art mediums, SWAIA is demonstrating that Indian Market is pushing away from the stagnant nature of ethno-tourist markets and is including contemporaneous Indigenous creativity every year. While some SWAIA’s moves to make way for more young and contemporary participation has created problematic and controversial issues—such as the end of the tenure policy—Indian Market is at least attempting to remain a receptive entity for these critiques. SWAIA’s standards for the materiality of art are entirely colonial in nature, and existing more for the patrons, curators, and art collectors to authenticate Indigenous art. Would it be beneficial to completely disregard such standards? Or would the fear of losing the power to



decide what Native traditions look like continue to override the needs and wants of participating artists? These are questions I hope to answer as SWAIA's rules evolve when they are confronted with questions such as these paired with a hard look at their colonial history. Additionally, as jurors are provided more options for categorizing new and different media when consulting evaluating submissions in upcoming Indian Markets, the authority shifts to the artists as they are given more undefined creative sovereignty.

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APPENDICES



*Figure 1. Puebloan Women Selling Pots Outside of a Train. Late 19th Century.*



*Figure 2. Julian and Maria Martinez, San Ildefonso Pueblo.*



Figure 3. Amber DuBoise-Shepherd. *Morning Talk and Coffee with Cheii*. 2017. Oil Paint on Paper.



*Figure 4. Terran Last Gun. Earth & Sky Interactions. 2020.*

3-color serigraph on white Stonehenge paper

3 x 2 inches, edition of 25





*Figure 5. Santa Fe Indian Market. 2017. Courtesy of the Santa Fe New Mexican.*



*Figure 6. The Charles and Valerie Diker Collection at The Met Fifth Avenue, October 4, 2018-October 6, 2019*



*Figure 7. Kelly Church. Strength In Unity. 2019. Basket Weaving and Mixed Media.*



*Figure 8. Philbrook Museum of Art Downtown Native American Art Exhibit. Curated by Christina Burke.*



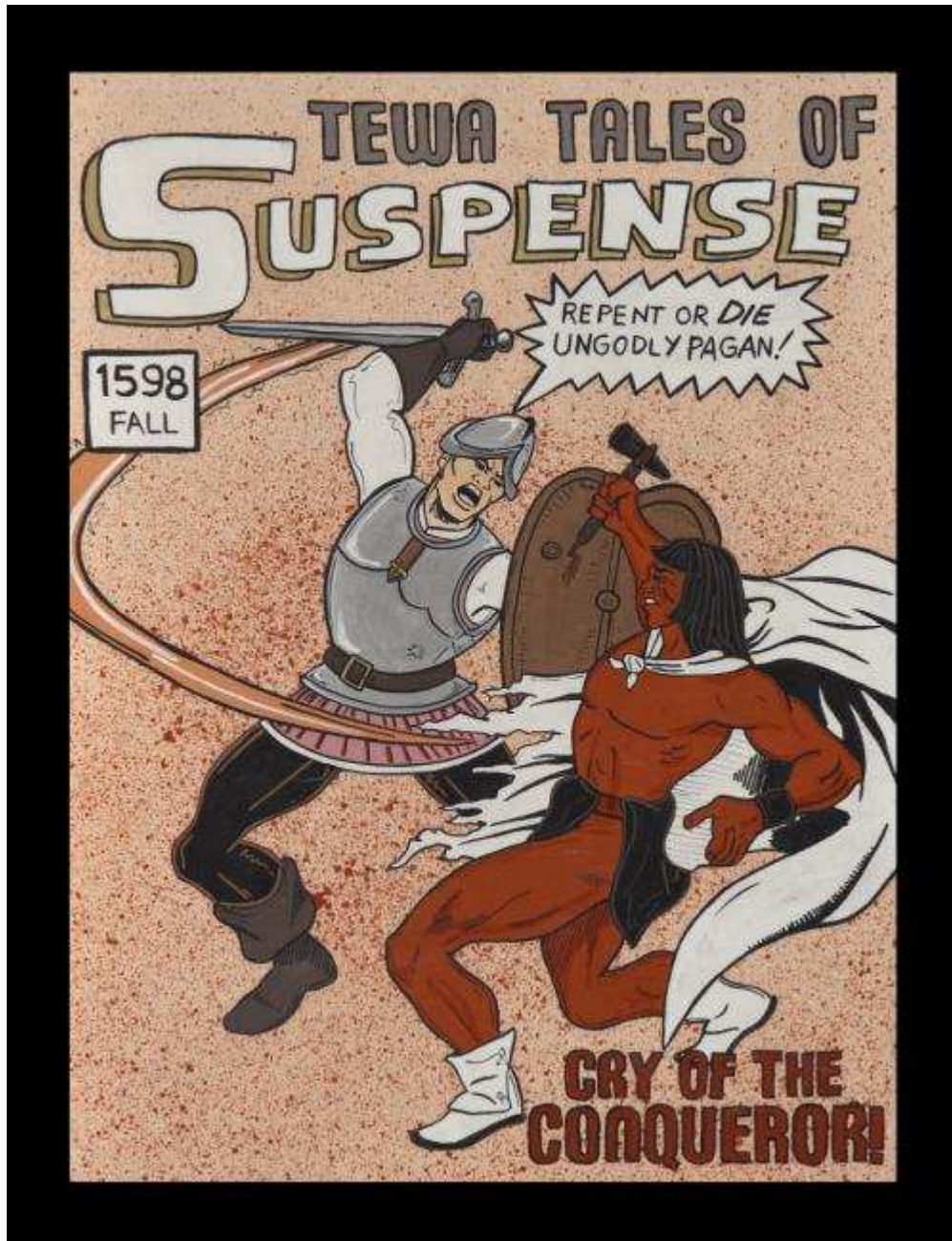


Figure 9. Jason Garcia. *Cry of the Conqueror: Tewa Tales of Suspense #14*. 2012. Native-clay ceramic and natural pigments. Philbrook Museum of Art.



Figure 10. Jeffrey Gibson. *Freedom*. 2013. Repurposed tipi poles, rawhide lacing, artificial sinew, buffalo hide, acrylic paint, wool, glass and plastic beads, sterling silver, turquoise, and quartz. Denver Museum of Art.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> I was unable to find an image of this piece in its permanent placement among Native American artifacts from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century.



Figure 11. Corey Stein. *Flat & Hairy, Cold & Hard*. 2012. Seed beads and hand-sewn felt.





Figure 12. Corey Begay. Indigenous Fine Arts Market. Santa Fe New Mexican. Aug. 18, 2016.





Figure 13. Signage from Free Indian Market. 2019.

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Figure 14. Signage for OXDX "Off Market"



*Figure 15. Naomi Bebo. Beaded Mask. 2010. Seed beads, deer hide on Iraqi gas mask.*



Figure 16. Rose B. Simpson. *Red*. 2013. Clay and Mixed Media. Approx. 33" x 15" x 11" Denver Museum of Art.

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