

Indigenous American sculpture. I'm gratified the catalogue discusses Edmonia Lewis (Mississaugas Ojibwe, ca. 1844–1907), who pioneered monumental, marble sculpture for Native Americans in the modern era. Bronze, a copper alloy, has precontact roots in the Andes and Mesoamerica, but not in what is now the United States. Bronze, steel, and aluminum may be relatively new materials for Native American women artists, and women may still be the minority in the world of sculpture, but *Courage and Compassion* demonstrates that a strong cohort of Indigenous women sculptors are making this medium their own and creating bold, public statements that are larger than life. These artists are taking this art form and integrating it into their own tribal expressions. As Roxanne Swentzell shared at the show's opening, a sculpture "is not just something to put on your mantle. It is a living thing. It's alive and in action right now. It is causing blessings to happen right now. They are alive. They are not just a composition; they are a prayer." —*America Meredith*

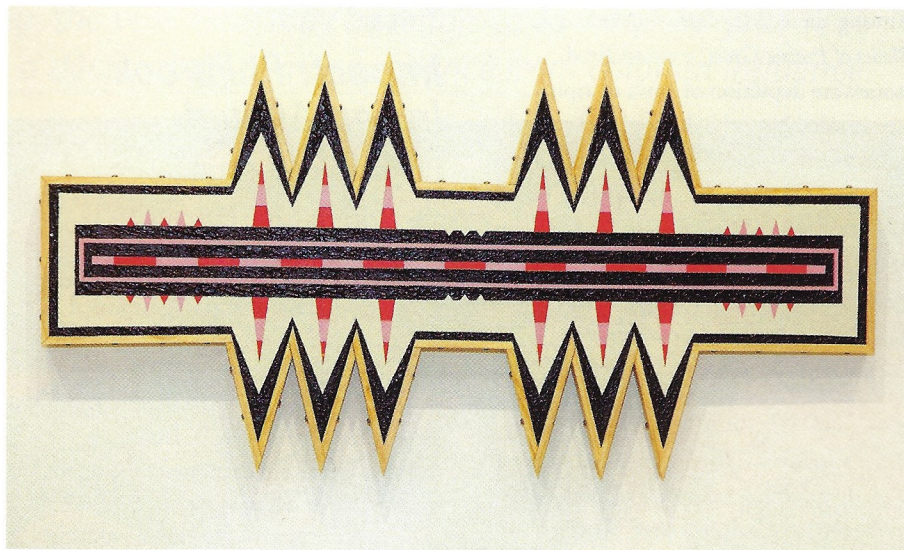
## Tulsa

### **Here & Now:** **Contemporary** **Native American** **Art of Oklahoma**

108 Contemporary

**S**TRATEGICALLY LOCATED next to Philbrook Downtown in Tulsa's energized Brady District, the 108 Contemporary gallery is a lambent space, with crisp, white lines and abundance of light to delight the senses. *Here & Now* is a diverse display. Featuring 35 works by 19 Oklahoma Native American artists, the exhibit celebrates the many ways artists bring their traditional knowledge and sensibilities to reflect on their current world.

Formerly known as the Brady Craft Alliance, 108 Contemporary is a nonprofit, fine craft organization that showcases Oklahoma artists—those with an Oklahoma heritage as well as those



**Michael Elizondo Jr. (Southern Cheyenne-Kaw-Chumash), *Mere Extraction*, 2014, mixed media painting on board. Image courtesy of 108 Contemporary.**

now residing in the state. The gallery has done much work over the years to bring appreciation and recognition to artists who work outside of the easel. Although the current show is exclusively Native American artists, tribal people are always represented in the gallery's store and are included in most exhibits. According to Krystle Brewer, associate director, the opening reception drew over 2,000 people, making it the most successful opening in the organization's history.

The gallery's focus on showcasing and elevating fine crafts benefits Native artists who have struggled for recognition of their media and legitimate status for many years. Gone, thank heavens, are the days when this complex art was considered "cabin crafts." Gone, too, are the days when baskets, pottery, etc., were viewed as pretty, utilitarian objects. With the information written on their website and blog, the gallery does an excellent job of expanding the reach and depth of the show and encouraging sales and understanding. Practiced and casual visitors are brought into the story of each piece through artist statements clarifying the intent of each artist.

The exhibit's jurors Heather Ahtone (Chickasaw-Choctaw) and Mickel Yantz, have separated the artists into three main groups. Recognizing that within each group are newer artists and those who have achieved national prominence, their

first category includes those who work in materials seen as "traditional." These include Anita Fields (Osage-Muscogee Creek), Margaret Roach Wheeler (Chickasaw-Choctaw), Molly Murphy Adams (Oglala Lakota descent), Troy Jackson (Cherokee Nation), Shan Goshorn (Eastern Band Cherokee), Laura Borders (Cherokee Nation), and Mel Cornshucker (Cherokee Nation).

The second grouping includes those who incorporate new tools, devices, and materials in their work. These are the artists who "challenge the expected." Included are Heidi Bigknife (Shawnee Tribe), Holly Wilson (Delaware Nation-Cherokee), Tony A. Tiger (Sac and Fox-Muscogee-Seminole), Bobby C. Martin (Muscogee Creek), and Michael Elizondo Jr. (Southern Cheyenne-Kaw-Chumash).

The artists of the third group are described as those "whose works retain a visual connection with traditions but defy categorization." Within this group are Marcus "Maka Wase" Bush (Lakota), Royce Myers (Cherokee Nation), Randi Narcomey Watson (Seminole), John Owen (Cherokee Nation), Robert Shinn (Cherokee Nation), and Stephen Wood (Cherokee Nation). "Each brings a flair for the fantastic to art," says the gallery's website.

Many of the artists produced excellent works of recognizable style and medium, while others created visual surprises.