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Indigenous Photography: 100 Years and Counting

*Our People, Our Land, Our Images* Exhibition

Opens

April 9, 2013 at Sordoni Art Gallery

Opportunities to view indigenous peoples through the eyes of indigenous photographers are rare and recent. *Our People, Our Land, Our Images*, which opens April 9th at the Sordoni Art Gallery at Wilkes University, presents the works of three generations of indigenous photographers from North America, South America, the Middle East, and New Zealand. They include newly discovered, nineteenth-century trailblazers, well established contemporary practitioners, and emerging photographers from the next generation. The exhibition runs through May 19, and then re-opens June 4 through August 11, 2013 (summer hours in effect).

The fifty-one works in the exhibition tell their stories through differing photographic approaches, ranging from straightforward documentary to aesthetically altered images that combine overlays and collage. The images stand united, however, in exploring their creators’ connections to their land, community, and traditions. Artists’ statements accompanying the exhibition convey a variety of indigenous voices and concerns. The twenty-six artists in the exhibition include Cherokee Jennie Ross Cobb, the earliest known female Native American photographer.

The many perspectives represented in the exhibition offers an open-ended experience that asks audiences to think about how the camera in the hands of indigenous --- more ---
peoples becomes a tool with the power to confront and analyze stereotypes, politics, and histories. *Our People, Our Land, Our Images* also demonstrates the longevity and continuing vitality of native photographic traditions.

The Sordoni Art Gallery is open to the public and is located at 150 South River Street in the Stark Learning Center on the Wilkes University campus. The Gallery is open Tuesday through Sunday, from 12 noon to 4:30 p.m., with abbreviated summer hours. Admission is free. For more information, call 570-408-4325 or visit www.wilkes.edu/sordoniartgallery.

Guest curator Veronica Passalacqua of The C. N. Gorman Museum at the University of California, Davis, originally organized this exhibition in conjunction with a conference for international indigenous photographers held at the Museum. For the past fifteen years, Passalacqua has been active in the field of Native North American art as a writer, curator, and scholar. Most recently, she facilitated the donation/repatriation of a significant private Lakota collection of artifacts to the Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum, Pine Ridge Reservation. Previous curatorial work includes exhibitions at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford; the Navajo Nation Museum, Window Rock; and the Barbican Art Gallery, London.

The exhibition is toured by ExhibitsUSA, a national program of Mid-America Arts Alliance. ExhibitsUSA sends more than 25 exhibitions on tour to more than 100 small- and mid-sized communities every year. Mid-America is the oldest nonprofit regional arts organization in the United States. More information is available at www.maaa.org and www.eusa.org.

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