

**Arts and the transmission of Plains Indian Knowledge**  
International symposium  
June 18 – 19, 2014  
Cinema room  
musée du quai Branly



Quilled and painted robe. © musée du quai Branly, photo Claude Germain

As an extension of the Plains Indians exhibition held at the musée du quai Branly from April 9th to July 20th, 2014), the department of Research and Higher education is organising a two-day international conference on the subject of Plains Indians' art and transmission of knowledge. Freely open to the public, this meeting will take place on the 18th and 19th of June 2014 in our cinema room.

Through its different sessions, the Symposium ***Arts and the transmission of Plains Indian knowledge*** will provide anthropological insights on the role of images in the transmission of knowledge, on the relationship between iconographic and discursive traditions (Pictography, body ornaments, paintings and carvings) and the interpretation of these traditions by contemporary artists.

## PROGRAM

Wednesday June 18<sup>th</sup> 2014

9:30            Opening and welcoming remarks

9:45-10:25            *Ledger art as it blended with native language writing among the Lakotas in the early twentieth century*

Raymond DeMallie, Professor, department of Anthropology, University of Indiana, Bloomington **Key note Speaker**

### Private ritual, public representation, circulation of images

10:25-11:05            *Iconography and Parallelism: a reading of the Dakota Bible*

Carlo Severi, EHESS-CNRS, Paris

*Carlo Severi is Directeur d'études at the École des hautes études en sciences sociales and directeur de recherche at the CNRS. A member of the Laboratoire d'anthropologie sociale of the Collège de France since 1985, he has been a Getty Scholar at the Getty Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities in Los Angeles (1994-95) and a Fellow of the Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin (2002-2003). Last year, he has been elected to a Visiting Fellowship at King's College, Cambridge. (UK). Among his books : La memoria rituale (La Nuova Italia, Florence 1993, Naven ou le donner à voir (with M. Houseman, CNRS Éditions de la MSH, 1994 ; English Transl. Brill, 1998) and Le principe de la chimère, Ed. Rue d'Ulm-Musée du Quai Branly, 2007.*

### Abstract

Based on the analysis of the so-called Dakota Bible of the Dahlem Museum in Berlin, this paper presents an application of the concept of parallelism, generally used in the field of Linguistics, to iconography. A comparison with the pictographic autobiography of the Unkpapa Sioux Chief "Half Moon" will help to outline a general interpretation of this kind of picture-writing.

11:05-11:20 *coffee break*

11:20-12:00            *From Sacred Performance to Public Performance: Two Centuries of Lakota Values*

Janet Catherine Berlo, Professor of Visual and Cultural Studies, University of Rochester

*Janet Catherine Berlo, Professor of Visual and Cultural Studies at the University of Rochester, has contributed to many exhibition catalogues of Native art, including Shapeshifting (2012), Infinity of Nations (2011), and Identity by Design: Plains Women's Dresses (2008). Her books include The Early Years of Native American Art History (1992), Plains Indian Drawings 1865-1935 (1996) and the second edition of Native North American Art (with Ruth Phillips, 1998) which will be published in the autumn of 2014. She has taught Native American art history as a visiting professor at Harvard and Yale Universities and has received grants from the Guggenheim*

*Foundation, the Getty Foundation (with Arthur Amiotte), and the National Endowment for the Humanities.*

### **Abstract**

As Lakota artist and scholar Arthur Amiotte has demonstrated, sacred performances such as the Sun Dance have long been public enactments of core Lakota values, and continue to operate in that fashion today. In addition, many performances that have been interpreted as purely “secular” enactments for tourists during the twentieth century—costumed performances in Buffalo Bill’s Wild West, or dances on train platforms in North Dakota—also demonstrate Lakota values of artistic excellence, generosity, and humility. University-trained artists of Sioux descent continue to embody and enact such values in non-traditional media such as photography and performance. Their works of art have a place in the global art world, a world that might not realize that such works resonate with deeply-held traditional values as well.

### **12:00-12h45          *American Cultural Resources and Heritage Protection Laws***

**Diane J. Humetewa**, Special Advisor to ASU President Michael M. Crow, Special Counsel, General Counsel’s Office & Professor of Practice, College of Law, Arizona State University

*Diane J. Humetewa was nominated by President Obama in January 2014 to be a federal district court judge for the District of Arizona and is currently awaiting U.S. Senate confirmation. Since 2011, she has served as Special Advisor to the President and Special Counsel in the Office of General Counsel at Arizona State University. She is also a Professor of Practice at Arizona State University’s Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law. From 2009 to 2011, Humetewa was Of Counsel with Squire, Sanders & Dempsey LLP. She worked in the United States Attorney’s Office in the District of Arizona from 1996 to 2009, serving as Senior Litigation Counsel from 2001 to 2007 and as the United States Attorney from 2007 to 2009. During her tenure in the United States Attorney’s Office, Humetewa also served as Counsel to the Deputy Attorney General from 1996 to 1998. From 1993 to 1996, she was Deputy Counsel for the United States Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. Humetewa received her J.D. in 1993 from Arizona State University College of Law and her B.S. in 1987 from Arizona State University. She is a member of the Hopi Indian Tribe and, from 2002 to 2007, was an Appellate Court Judge for the Hopi Tribe Appellate Court.*

### **Abstract**

How the American legal system evolved to protect cultural resources, including American Indian/Native American cultural resources.

**1:00-2:30 pm          lunch break**

## **Pictographs, graphic and writing systems**

**2:30 – 2:50 “Pitch” by André Delpuech on an unseen Lakota painted Hide (ca 1850) – musée du quai Branly acquisition**

**2:50-3:30**                    ***The Origin and Development of Plains Biographic Art***

**James D. Keyser**, archaeologist, specialist of Plain Indian Rock Art

*James Keyser grew up on western Montana's Flathead Indian Reservation where he saw his first pictograph site in 1959. Fifteen years later as a University of Montana graduate student he conducted his first rock art research project that ultimately led to a position doing the initial intensive documentation of Writing-On-Stone, the Northwestern Plains' premier rock art site complex. Since that 1977 project he has completed research on more than 30 rock art sites and site complexes from Alaska to New Mexico and in the Valcamonica in Italy. Keyser has authored more than 125 publications on rock art. He is also the author of five books including Indian Rock Art of the Columbia Plateau, Plains Indian Rock Art, The Five Crows Ledger: Warrior Art of the Flathead Indians, and L'Art des Indiens des Grandes Plaines.*

*Keyser currently splits his residence between Portland, Oregon and San Giorgio Scarampi in Piemonte, Italy.*

**Abstract**

Historic period Plains Indian warrior artists drew biographic pictographs on media as diverse as tipi covers, bison robes, ledger books, clothing, and various tools. Painted to glorify their war records, these detailed narratives are best known from painted bison robes found in dozens of museums worldwide and thousands of ledger drawings that are frequently sold by top auction houses. But the evolutionary roots of this art form extend far earlier into prehistory where the only evidence that still exists is the pictographs and petroglyphs carved and painted on cliffs and in caves across the Plains from southern Canada to the canyons along the Rio Grande in the northeastern Mexican state of Coahuila.

These sites, with thousands of rock art images from Ceremonial and Biographic tradition art, show that Biographic tradition art developed directly from earlier Ceremonial tradition imagery that dates prior to the first contacts between Euro-Americans and Plains tribes. Showing examples of every sort of Biographic narrative known in later media, these rock art sites illustrate evolutionary changes in this art and items of material culture that are known nowhere else.

**3:30-4:10**                    ***Discerning ethnic differences in Plains Indian hide painting.***

**Arni Brownstone**, curator, Royal Ontario Museum,

*Arni Brownstone was born in Regina, Saskatchewan, in 1947. He graduated from York University in Toronto with a degree in visual art in 1974. In the same year he began employment in the ethnology department of the Royal Ontario Museum where he continues to work today. He was also a visual artist until 1985 when he discontinued that practice in favour of studying of Plains Indian painting. In 1993 he published War Paint, a book on Blackfoot and Tsuu T'ina (Sarcee) paintings. Since then he has published fifteen articles on various aspects of Plains Indian painting. At the moment he has a book in press on Tsuu T'ina painting and is writing a book that broadly surveys large-scale Plains Indian paintings from the early 1800s to the early 1900s.*

**Abstract**

Plains Indian figurative paintings comprise one of the most significant, and interesting, bodies of Native American art. Best characterized as pictorial narrative paintings, for much of the nineteenth century they were largely concerned with two subjects: events of the supernatural and events of war. This paper will broadly

survey war-exploit paintings executed between about 1800 and 1860, largely from the central and northwestern plains. Works from the Mandan, Hidatsa, Dakota, Blackfoot, Crow and other groups will be considered.

In virtually all the Plains Indian tribes there were successful warriors who communicated their achievements on publically displayed animal hide paintings, most often on buffalo skin robes. Although there is a rich legacy of surviving war-exploit paintings, there are significant impediments to realizing their potential as sources of cultural knowledge. Tribal representation is very uneven and there is a paucity of reliable documentation on cultural origins. For the most part, we have only a rudimentary understanding of the dynamics of how this art form changed over time and from one culture to the next. The large surfaces of hide paintings are covered with small and often faded figures, so photographs rarely permit a clear reading of both details and their placement in the overall composition.

To overcome these obstacles, this paper will utilize as many tools as possible to shed light on these paintings. The problem of visual access will be addressed through accurate illustrations of the originals. Formal and iconographic qualities will be analyzed in an effort to identify cultural and regional styles and patterns. Relevant information drawn from the ethnographic record will also be considered, as will the structure of painting supports and other technical matters.

**4:10 – 4:25**            *coffee break*

**4:25-5:05**            *A superficial sameness: plains pictorial art*

**Candace S. Greene**, ethnologist with the Department of Anthropology of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, Washington, USA

*Candace S. Greene holds a PhD in Anthropology from the University of Oklahoma. Her research focuses on material culture of the Plains region, particularly pictorial art. Her publications include Silver Horn: Master Illustrator of the Kiowa (2001); The Year the Stars Fell: Lakota Winter Counts (2007); and One Hundred Summers: A Kiowa Calendar Record (2010). She is interested in increasing the research use of museum collections and directs the Summer Institute in Museum Anthropology, a research training program based at the Smithsonian and supported by the National Science Foundation.*

### **Abstract**

The term "ledger art," referencing the ruled account books in which Plains artists sometimes placed drawings, has come to be applied to a broad range of Plains pictorial art. Stylistic commonalities can be recognized across a diversity of media and a broad sweep of time, ranging from petroglyphs in Montana to painted fans in Florida. Behind this superficial similarity, however, lie vast differences in meaning. Moving beyond style, this paper will consider issues of production, consumption, display, and circulation in painted hides, muslins, winter counts, works made for sale, and yes, even ledger books.

**5:05-6:00**            *general discussion*

**Discussant: Christian Feest**, ethnologist, former director of Ethnology Museum in Wien.

**Thursday June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

**Identity by design : clothing and body adornment**

**9:30 -10:10 *The Art of Enchantment: Tattoos and Tattooing Bundles of the Great Plains***

**Lars Krutak**, Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution

*Lars Krutak is the Repatriation Case Officer for Alaska at the National Museum of Natural History. His research focuses on global practices of Indigenous body art and his publications include: The Tattooing Arts of Tribal Women (2007); Kalinga Tattoo (2010); Magical Tattoos and Scarification (2012); and Tattoo Traditions of Native North America (2014).*

**Abstract**

Rock art panels in Missouri provide evidence that tattooing probably has been an indelible feature of Great Plains culture for at least one thousand years, if not longer. In the historic period, ethnographic records reveal that tattooing was practiced amongst most groups inhabiting this vast culture area, with the tradition reaching its apex amongst Siouan groups, including the Hidatsa, Mandan, Osage, Ponca, Omaha, Otoe, and Ioway. Although each tribal society employed specific abstract designs in ritualistically mandated patterns, the religious structure of belief behind the origins of these corporeal symbols was remarkably similar.

Although the practice of tattooing was ubiquitous across the Great Plains, tattoos could not be worn by just anyone. Warriors had to prove themselves on the field of battle by winning specific war honors to merit the right to be tattooed. Women traditionally earned their "marks of honor" through their fathers, who, upon lavishing large quantities of gifts on those individuals who witnessed the ceremony, reserved their progeny's place among families of high social standing.

Tattooing on the plains also provided a ritual means by which to enhance one's access to the supernatural. This spiritual energy was embodied in specific forms of iconography, the human bodies that absorbed it, and especially the tattooing bundles from which such designs were created. Because these ancestral toolkits served as the primary repository for the transfer of sacred power, this paper will examine the properties, significance, and use of tattooing bundles with specific reference to traditional Eastern Plains religion and tattooing practices through an exploratory narrative based on studies of associative material culture and ethnographic sources. Through describing this largely understudied world of visual culture, I seek to expand not only our knowledge of Great Plains tattooing traditions but also the Indigenous biographies and belief systems that inspired it.

**10:10 -10:50 *Identity by design***

**Emil Her Many Horses**, curator, National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution.

*Emil Her Many Horses is a curator in the office of Museum Research at the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution. He specializes in the*

central Plains cultures. He is a member of the Oglala Lakota nation of South Dakota and served as lead curator for the inaugural permanent exhibition, "Our Universes: Traditional Knowledge Shapes Our World".

Emil Her Many Horses served as co-curator for the exhibition titled, "Identity by Design: Tradition, Change and Celebration in Native Women's Dresses" and served as the lead curator for the "Our Peoples community" exhibitions featuring the history of the Chiricahua Apache of New Mexico and the Blackfeet from Montana.

He has also curated the exhibition titled, "A Song for the Horse Nation" which opened at the NMAI's George Gustav Heye Center in New York City in November of 2009 and NMAI's mall museum on October 29, 2011.

### **Abstract**

Fifty five Native dresses from the Plains, Plateau and Great Basins regions comprise "Identity by Design: Tradition, Change and Celebration in Native Women's Dresses," which opened in September of 2007 at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. and in 2008 in New York, at the George Gustav Heye Center. The exhibition included dresses and accessories from the early 1800s to the present.

"Identity by Design" examines the roles of Native women through these works, from a heavily fringed White Mountain Apache's cape and skirt, worn at the start of a girl's entry into womanhood to the many masterful quillwork and beadwork designs that signify the hand of a mature, accomplished artist.

The exhibition traces the development of the side-fold dress (ca. 1830), the two-hide dress and the three hide dress styles, to the elaborate beaded powwow regalia by contemporary dressmakers Joyce Growing Thunder Fogarty (Assiniboine/Sioux) and Rebecca Brady (Cheyenne/Sac and Fox).

### **10:50 - 11:10 coffee break**

#### **11:10 - 11h50      *Tradition and Transition***

**Rhonda Elaine Holy Bear, Lakota Doll Artist**

*Rhonda Holy Bear was born in South Dakota in 1959. Rhonda is a Lakota doll artist. She has been creating dolls for over 35 years. She spent her formative years on the Cheyenne River Sioux Indian Reservation in South Dakota and, later, in Chicago. Rhonda would eventually move to the southwest, settling in New Mexico and, most recently, Las Vegas Nevada. As a youth, Rhonda researched the work of her ancestors in the vaults of the Chicago Field museum. Her meticulous research and artistic gifts would establish Rhonda as a notable leader in her field. Her innovative dolls, a combination of sculpture and traditional techniques, have elevated the prominence of Plains Indian dolls in contemporary Native American art. What were once primarily considered playthings are now highly collectible art figures. Her work has been prominently displayed in museums and private collections in United States and around the world. Most recently, her work has been featured in Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian and at the Art Institute of Chicago. Rhonda was recently honored in a naming ceremony in her native South Dakota. Her Lakota name is "Wakah Wayuphika Win" (Making (beauty) with Exceptional Skills Woman).*

## **Abstract**

I will speak about how I helped to advance plains dolls as an art-form. I strove to instil elements of fine art in the creation of my figures. I incorporated many of the lessons I learned through my research to create figures which paid homage to the old ways, while advancing the art-form, using contemporary techniques.

**11:50-12:40**            **discussion**

**Discussant:** Pierre Déléage, CNRS, Laboratoire d'anthropologie sociale or  
Baptiste Gille, post-doctoral researcher at the musée du quai Branly

**12:45 – 2:00pm**      **lunch break**

## **From the tradition of ledgers to contemporary art**

**2:00-2:40 pm**            ***Ledger and Ledger-Style Artists Past and Present: Recording  
Dynamic and Vital Narratives***

**Joyce M. Szabo**, *Regents' Professor of Art History at the University of New Mexico, USA*

*Joyce M. Szabo, , obtained her undergraduate degree in Art and English from Wittenberg University, her MA in Art History from Vanderbilt University, and her PhD in Art History from the University of New Mexico. She was the Gordon Russell Visiting Professor of Native American Studies at Dartmouth College in the summer of 2013 and the William H. Morton Distinguished Fellow at Dartmouth College in the fall 2010. Other awards include her selection as the Oscar Howe Lecturer by the Oscar Howe Memorial Association and The Institute of American Indian Studies at The University of South Dakota in 2005. Her publications include Imprisoned Art, Complex Patronage: Plains Drawings by Howling Wolf and Zotom at the Autry National Center (2011); Fort Marion Art: The Arthur and Shifra Silberman Collection (2007); A Life in Balance: The Art of Conrad House (2006); Painters, Patrons, and Identity: Essays in Native American Art to Honor J. J. Brody, editor and contributing author (2001); Howling Wolf and the History of Ledger Art (1994); and Howling Wolf: An Autobiography of a Plains Warrior-Artis (1992).*

## **Abstract**

Late nineteenth and early twentieth century Plains warrior-artists rendered images on the pages of commercial ledger books as well as other sources of paper. Today generally referred to as ledger art, these drawings most often recorded battle encounters, but as confinement to reservations limited additional depictions of war beyond those of memories from earlier eras, men began to expand the subjects they drew to include hunting, courting and ritual scenes as well as diverse other genre images from daily life. Southern Plains men incarcerated in St. Augustine, Florida, between mid-1875 and mid-1878, also created ledger-style drawings of the new life they faced on the East Coast as well as many expressing their clear memories of the homes and families from whom they were separated.

After the first couple of decades of the twentieth century, ledger drawings were replaced by other styles and types of drawing and painting that were encouraged in boarding schools and ultimately colleges and universities. However, by the 1970s,



Plains artists were again looking to their ancestors' ledger art tradition for inspiration, and ledger-style drawings using linear outlines, rich patterning and vital visual narratives began to be made in significant numbers. Today many artists, both men and women, create ledger-style work that, in some cases, recall the reasons that such drawings were initially created as records of achievements. Others employ the style to rewrite history from a Native understanding, drawing back into recorded history a Native point of view long ignored. Many comment on daily life and fill their images with humor and satire aimed at both Native and non-Native audiences. Contemporary Native artists, like their predecessors, render ledger-style images as dynamic narratives of contemporary life.

**2:40-3:20                    *Between Two Worlds. Native Artists in Transition***

**Joëlle Rostkowski**, ethnohistorian, docteur d'État (EHESS)

*Joëlle Rostkowski is an ethnohistorian, docteur d'État (EHESS), M.A. in American Studies (Cornell University). She teaches at the School of Higher Studies in Social Sciences in Paris. She is an international consultant and one of the founders of the American Indian Workshop, first European Research Group on Native American Studies. Joëlle Rostkowski is the Scientific Advisor to the "Plains Indians" exhibition at the musée du quai Branly. She has contributed to many publications and exhibitions with the framework of UNESCO. She is also the author of: The Incomplete Conversion: North American Indians and Christianity (Albin Michel 1998), Native American Renaissance: A Century of Reconquests, winner of the French Academy History Prize and Conversations with Remarkable Native Americans (SUNY Press, 2012).*

*With Nelcya Delanoë she has published : Indians in American History (Armand Colin, 1996, updated in 2014), Indian Voices, American Voice, Two Visions of the Conquest of America (Albin Michel, 2003) and translated Native North American Art, Janet Berlo and Ruth Phillips, Oxford History of Art, 1998 (Amérique du Nord, Arts premiers, Albin Michel, 2006).*

**Abstract**

During the second part of the twentieth century, Native American artists have had access to mainstream American art but they also have tried to express traditional values and to reinterpret their history. Living between two worlds, they have been torn between traditional art forms, and « fine art », appealing to a universal audience. Within that general perspective the paper will discuss the work of some artists (all represented in the Plains Indian Exhibition at the Quai Branly Museum) who have marked the transition between tribal art and contemporary art, namely Dick West, Oscar Howe, T.C. Cannon and Allan Houser.

**3:20-3:40    *coffee break***

**3:40- 4:20    *From Plains Indian Art to Native American Modernism. History and Development in a Changing Art World***

**Peter Bolz**, former curator, Native American department, Ethnological Museum Berlin, Germany.

*Peter Bolz worked from 1986 to 2012 at the Berlin Ethnological Museum. During this time he collected about 40 paintings, sculptures and lithographs from modern Native*

*American artists, and about 100 silkscreen prints from the Northwest Coast. Together with the paintings and sculptures collected earlier, Berlin today owns one of the largest collections of modern Native American art in Europe, published 2012 in the exhibition catalog "Native American Modernism. Art from North America". Besides this, Peter Bolz published about the North American collections of the Berlin museum, museum history, and the culture, history and religion of the Lakota.*

**Abstract:**

The writings of John Ewers and others leave no doubt that there was a specific Plains Indian art style in the 19th century. How did this change in the 20th and 21st centuries? Do plains artists still work in a specific plains style? And what can we say about those non-plains artists using plains motives? Is there still a plains style in modern Native art, or is this only pan-Indian art, pluralistic modernism, or just individual art?

**4:20 - 5:10** *General discussion*

**Discussant :** Marie Mauzé, Research director at CNRS, Laboratoire d'anthropologie social.

**5:10 - 5:50** **Closing remarks**

**6:00** **Cocktail**