

form & concept

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Joely BigEagle-Kequahtoway, Leah Mata,
Erin Gingrich, Lozen Haozous, Mekko Harjo,
Kéyah Henry, Hapistinna (Graci) Horne, &
Daisy Trudell-Mills

We've Been Gathering Places
2024 IAIA MFA in Studio Arts Thesis Exhibition
May 10 - June 15 2024

OPENING RECEPTION
Friday, May 10, 5-7 PM



Time Capsule, Graci Horne 2023, video still, 6:59. Image courtesy of the artist.

(Santa Fe, NM) Gallery joins forces with budding MFA program to showcase immersive installations that draw together the worlds of commercially viable and academic art.

(May 2024) **form & concept** presents *We've Been Gathering Places*, this year's thesis exhibition for the MFA in Studio Arts program at the Institute of American Indian Arts. The exhibition will fill form & concept's 10,000-square-foot space in the Santa Fe Railyard with suspended installations, large-scale wall sculptures, paintings, photographs, multichannel new media works, and interactive displays that create space to explore themes of belonging, sustainability, cultural identity, and Indigeneity. **The exhibition opens with a reception at form & concept on Friday, May 10, 5-7 PM.**

A culmination and celebration of two years of rigorous studies by the program's graduating cohort, ***We've Been Gathering Places decompresses and telescopes space.*** Unspoken personal histories transform into visual experiences that inquire into the nature of incorporeal phenomena, like memory, as in Daisy Trudell-Mills's *The birds above me place me on the ground*; Sprawling landscapes become subtle topographies of ancestral memory and ecological consciousness, as in Leah Mata Fragua's handmade paperworks; & imaginative futures manifest themselves in our physical present, as in Joely BigEagle-Kequahtoway's *Buffalo Utopia/Human Dystopia*, which features four lifesize Buffalo figures imagined as the protectors of a post-colonial utopia where the environmental degradation of late-stage capitalism has ended.

The concentration on place unifies the work of the cohort, whose roots span North America, from Southcentral Alaska to Western Canada to Santa Fe, New Mexico and beyond. "There are references to places in the exhibition – a hogan, iconic earthworks, specific landforms," says Mario Caro, the Director of MFA in Studio Arts at IAIA. **"But the students are also identifying their cohort and themselves as gathering places** – for ideas, experiences and histories that flow out into discrete material vessels and sprawling installations."

The exhibition comes at a sensitive time for an art market still reeling from low consumer confidence in the aftermath of Covid-19. Often, deeply personal and challenging stories are rarely commercially viable, but form & concept is hoping to flip the paradigm; to find the universal in the personal. **"This exhibition reflects the remarkable geographic and cultural range of program participants, but it's also a portrait of a community that has grown increasingly enmeshed through mutual inspiration and critique.** This show holds individual thesis projects, but they undeniably rise in chorus," says Jordan Eddy, co-curator.

For the first time in Santa Fe's art market history, the disparate worlds of academic and commercially viable art will converge.

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For press or image inquiries, please contact Spencer Linford at spencer@formandconcept.center.

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Cohort Biographies

Joely BigEagle-Kequahtoway is an inter-disciplinary land-based buffalo artist. She is a fashion and textile designer, visual artist, beader, storyteller and co-founder of the Buffalo People Arts Institute. She is Nakota/Cree/Saulteaux from the White Bear First Nations - signatory to Treaty 4. She has degrees in Civil Engineering from the University of Calgary and Mathematics from the First Nations University of Canada. She is currently in the Master of Fine Arts program at the Institute of American Indian Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She loves to incorporate mathematics and geometry in her artwork and is inspired by the perfect symmetry in nature. Her mantra envelopes everything Tatanga (Buffalo) as it connects her to ancestral memories, the land and is the manifestational glue that keeps her world together.

Leah Mata Fragua is an artist, educator, and member of the yak tityu tityu yak tiłhini (Northern Chumash) tribe located on the Central California Coast. As a place-based artist, Leah's kincentric approach seamlessly blends shared iconography with personal imagery, highlighting the impact each has on the other. She uses a diverse range of materials, from found to organic, traditional to modern, to explore the interconnectedness and dependence between land, kinships, and self. She understands that her art is a reflection of the way she prioritizes the protection of traditional materials and the continuation of art forms that are important to her community and intersect with her individual practice.

Erin Ggaadimits Ivalu Gingrich (Koyukon Denaá/Iñupiaq) is a carver, interdisciplinary artist and scholar living, working, and subsisting in the subarctic climate of South-Central Alaska. Through carved, painted, and beaded sculpture and mask forms, photography, film, installation, poetics, and design, Ivalu creates representations of the revered wild relatives and homelands that have provided for her, her family, and her ancestors since time immemorial. Connection to the realities of subsistence lifeways and arctic survival is vital to Ivalu's work that mirrors what keeps us fed, warm, and present in the circumpolar north. With ancestral ties to the communities of Nulato, Nome, and Utqiagvik; Ivalu currently resides between the Dena'ina Homelands of Anchorage and Cohoe, Alaska.

Lozen Haozous was born and raised in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She is a part of the Fort Sill Apache Tribe of Oklahoma. She got her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Photography and Media at the California Institute of the Arts and is continuing her education at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Studio Arts. She is a digital photographer who creates work about her identity as a Native American and Hispanic woman and addressing her speech disability through her photography. She also likes to photograph local models as part of the New Mexico Street Meet and experiment with creative shoots.

Mekko Harjo is an interdisciplinary artist living in Brooklyn, NY. Harjo received his BA from Bard College in 2009 and will receive his MFA from the Institute of American Indian Arts in May of 2024. Harjo has exhibited in venues across the country, including SITE Santa Fe in New Mexico, 321 Gallery, Jane Hartsook Gallery, and Choplet Gallery in New York, and Self Help Graphics in Los Angeles. Harjo was selected as a SITE Scholar for the 2022-2023 season and was a 2023 fellow at The Workshop, NY. Harjo was a winter resident at the Wassaic Project, NY in 2024. Harjo is an enrolled member of the Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma.

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Kéyah Keenan Henry is a Diné a multi-media artist from Mariano Lake, NM. He was Salt born for Toweringhouse clan whose parents are Jennie DeGroat and Kenneth Bill Henry. He earned his BFA in Studio Arts from Northern Arizona University and is now pursuing his MFA from the Institute of American Indian Arts. For twenty years he worked as an auto body tech and still continues to work on his own vehicles. He is primarily a painter and has developed his practice to include earth pigments, using the elements from the lands he has visited and gathered.

“In beauty I walk, with beauty before me I walk, with beauty behind me I walk, with beauty above me I walk, with beauty around me I walk, it has become beauty again.”

Graci Horne was born and raised in Mnisota [Minnesota]. Her Dakota and Lakota bands are Sisseton Wahpeton, Hunkpapa, and Wahpekute. She is a multi-disciplinary artist, specializing in painting, printmaking, paper cut-outs, puppetry, film, installation, and poetry. Horne’s work has subtle references to Dakota pop culture, Dakota feminism, Indigenous futurism, environmental justice, and social and political issues. Working as a community artist full-time, Horne teaches workshops to people ranging in age from five to one hundred. She is also an independent curator, lecturer, and performer.

Daisy Trudell-Mills is a queer multidisciplinary artist of Xicana, Jewish, and Dakota descent working in installation, textiles, found materials, and illustrations on fabric and paper. Daisy’s work explores personal, place, and material-based narratives. Their work has been exhibited in New Mexico, Seattle, and Chicago. They received the Lorraine Shula Scholarship in 2017, the National Museum of Women in the Arts Scholarship in 2019 and the SURFACE: Emerging Artist of New Mexico Award in 2021. Recently, they were a recipient of the Kindle Project: Makers Muse Grant 2022-23. They earned their Bachelor of Fine Arts with a concentration in Sculpture from New Mexico Highlands University in 2019.

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