History Revisited, Reviewed and Revised

Visiting scholar contributes to campus-wide discourse on race and ethnicity


Professor O’Brien’s research examines public representations of Indians in the Northeast. When examining sites of public history, including memorials and museums, she noticed a common narrative: Native people were assumed to have left the area or to have assimilated so deeply into non-Native culture and communities as to have virtually vanished. These narratives failed to account for the actual persistence of Indigenous life and culture in the area. In her talk, O’Brien explained that that non-Native Americans involved in the production of this historical record sought to eliminate accurate accounts of Indigenous residents of the area, a rhetorical strategy that functioned to discredit Indigenous claims to land, resources, and basic rights.

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Richard Bell has a sense of humor, but he is not amused by mainstream perceptions of Aboriginal art in Australia. One may deduce as much when viewing his art; this line of thinking is confirmed when he speaks about his work. This spring, the Indiana University Museum of Art was the final stop on Bell’s first solo tour of the United States with his exhibition “Uz Vs. Them.” While in Bloomington, Bell met with a number of students and faculty members to discuss his work. He explained to NAIS students and staff how his art reflects his perspective on the history of colonialism and racism in Australia, contemporary culture, and the present-day status of Aboriginal communities.

Bell works in a number of media forms, from painting to film, which were on display at IU. Some of his signature pieces are massive geometric paintings in bright colors, often layered with splatters of paint, bold phrases, and nearly imperceptible words. In another signature move, Bell adapts the look of pop art, à la Roy Lichtenstein, incorporating tongue-in-cheek captions that point out the absurdity of common anti-Aboriginal sentiments. These types of paintings challenge assumptions about what “Aboriginal art” should look like. Bell confronts these assumptions in other ways. In some of his large-format pieces, he incorporates more muted colors and shapes that some term a more “primitive” style; however, Bell bases these pieces on the work of non-Native artists who have gained fame for appropriating traditional Aboriginal motifs. During a tour of the exhibition, Bell explained that a non-Native art patron once commented that he liked Bell’s art, but couldn’t picture it hanging up in his house. In response, Bell produced a Lichtenstein-esque painting of a bedroom; on the wall he included a miniature version of one of his signature pieces. “I showed them how they could incorporate it into their décor!” Bell joked.

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Innovation in Language Instruction

Faculty and students involved with IU’s American Indian Studies Research Institute (AISRI) have been working since 2008 to develop a Lakota language curriculum for students at the Red Cloud Indian School at Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, South Dakota. The project, which is funded through a number of national grants, has involved the development of classroom texts, audio programs, and digital modules that enable students from Kindergarten to 12th grade to gain fluency in Lakota.

The Lakota Language Program (LLP) is a collaborative endeavor initiated by the superintendent of the Red Cloud School and undertaken by teachers and students at Red Cloud, fluent Lakota speakers, and faculty and staff at the AISRI. As part of the collaborative process, AISRI affiliates first consulted with stakeholders in the Pine Ridge community to develop initial drafts. Teachers and students have then used the materials and offered feedback, enabling AISRI researchers to revise the innovative written, audio, and digital modules. IU doctoral student Nicky Belle spent time in residence at Redbud to implement and review the curriculum, working with students and teachers to assess the effectiveness of the materials. The experience allowed Belle to participate in the local community and ultimately create a stronger bond between IU and the Red Cloud School.

The Lakota Language Project is just one of the language restoration projects underway at the AISRI. Other languages include Arikara, Assiniboine, and Pawnee.

The Art of Richard Bell (Continued from page 2)

In addition to his paintings, the exhibition featured films that Bell produced. One depicts a boxing match at an art gallery, and another presents Bell as a psychoanalyst, questioning light-haired, scantily-clad models on their inner thoughts about race. Although many of his pieces are cheeky, they all address serious issues, including the history and memory of colonialism and the ongoing problems of racism and appropriation. With its growing international exposure, Bell’s provocative art will continue pushing the boundaries of artistic expression and social commentary.

Firsting and Lasting (Continued from page 1)

O’Brien’s research demonstrates how historical "facts" are curated rather than simply reported. Her work furthers a key line of work in of Native American and Indigenous studies, a critical examination of the production of knowledge about Indigenous cultures and communities.

The Center for Research on Race and Ethnicity in Society was formed to foster discourses on race and ethnicity among IU students and faculty. In its first year on campus, IU’s CRRES brought a number of speakers with different disciplinary backgrounds to campus. In addition, the center sponsored informal coffee hours and professional development workshops, and offered research and travel grants to students and faculty members. In these ways, CRRES offers valuable opportunities for those engaged in Indigenous studies to connect with other researchers involved in critical race and ethnic studies.
This spring, patrons of the newly-remodeled IU Cinema enjoyed Native-produced films as part of the seventh Native Film Series. The series, which featured two contemporary films and an early film with a Native American cast, ran during the month of April. Films in the series included *Reel Injun* (2009), *The Daughter of Dawn* (1920), and *More than Frybread* (2011). Together the films exhibited for viewers a variety of historical and contemporary cinematic representations of Native Americans.

Kicking off the series, the documentary film *Reel Injun* offered a historical look at representations of Indians. Key Indigenous and non-Native filmmakers and actors, from Chris Eyre to Clint Eastwood, contributed to the film. The second offering was the silent film *The Daughter of Dawn*, which was originally released in 1920. For many years, historians believed the film was lost. However, footage from the film was discovered, restored and re-released by the Oklahoma Historical Society in 2012. Notable for its all-Native cast of 300 Kiowa and Comanche people, the film depicts life on the Plains and was filmed in southwestern Oklahoma.

The final film in the series, the comedic “mockumentary” *More Than Frybread*, follows participants from different tribal nations in Arizona who aspire to make the best frybread in the state.

The Department of American Studies, home of NAIS, was one sponsor of the film series. Additional campus and community sponsors included the First Nations Educational and Cultural Center, American Indian Student Association, Indiana University Student Association, Native American Graduate Students’ Association, Office of Multicultural Initiatives, and the Native American Community Center of Bloomington.

**Examining Tuscarora Identity**

Joseph Stahlman, PhD candidate in Anthropology, former NAIS Fellow and past director of the First Nations Educational and Cultural Center, will be defending his dissertation, “Identity among the Tuscarora of New York,” in the fall. Stahlman has conducted research in Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, South Africa, and the Dominican Republic since 2003, but his dissertation focus turned to his own community, the Tuscarora Nation of New York, in 2009. He decided to pursue a project on identity among the Tuscarora people because he had long faced questions on the topic. Stahlman interviewed nearly ninety of the 1,000 community members to learn their perspectives on identity formation and belonging. He discovered that common categories used to explain identity—genetic, cultural, historical and political—did not hold great significance. Rather, the Tuscarora maintain their sense of identity by regularly gathering as a community and striving to reach consensus when difficult issues arise. “They don’t always get along,” Stahlman explains, “but coming together keeps their identity strong.” In August, Stahlman will assume his position as IU’s first NAGPRA officer for the Vice Provost for Research. He is looking forward to working with the various units on the Indiana University campus as well as with Native Nations across the United States. In addition, Joseph wishes to bring Dr. Anthony F.C. Wallace to the IUB campus in October or November; anyone interested in helping with the visit can email Joseph at jstahlma@indiana.edu.
The seventh annual Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) conference was held June 13th through 15th at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada. NAISA was founded in 2007 to support the interdisciplinary study of Native peoples and cultures. This meeting was the association’s seventh, and its first held outside the U.S.

The association’s membership base and participation in the conference have been steadily growing since NAISA’s inception. This year, panelists representing a number of disciplines—including education, fine arts, anthropology, history, law, and social work—presented research on historical and contemporary Indigenous culture and policy. In addition to many attendees from North America, scholars traveled from Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Australia to participate.

Beyond traditional paper sessions, a number of events fostered dialogue and engagement in unconventional ways. During her presidential address, NAISA’s 2012-13 president, K. Tsianina Lomawaima, reflected on the purpose of Indigenous studies and the role that NAISA can play in the development of the field. The address wove together a personal narrative of Lomawaima’s aunt, who performed traditional music for soldiers overseas, with a story about last year’s meeting to chart a course for the direction of Indigenous studies. In the unique interactive address, Lomawaima, a professor of American Indian Studies at the University of Arizona, had the help of scholars who offered musical accompaniment and led the audience in spirited song.

Another noteworthy event was a talk by four women who helped to found “Idle No More,” an international movement that began as a series of teach-ins in Saskatoon. Additional activities include receptions, a comedy show, and bus tours of Saskatoon and Wanuskewin, a nearby natural heritage site.

There was some concern about last-minute presenter cancellations at the Saskatoon meeting. Recognizing that conference attendance does require a significant financial commitment, the NAISA council encouraged those interested in participating to begin their search early for funding to help cover the costs of travel and housing.

The 2014 NAISA conference will be held in Austin, Texas, from May 29 to 31. This conference will be more selective due to the limited availability of conference rooms. Those interested in presenting are encouraged to submit proposals for cohesive panels rather than individual papers. Proposals should clearly explain the topic, findings, and significance of each paper. A diverse group of panelists will also help increase the chances of a successful panel proposal, so connecting with researchers at different career stages and from different geographic regions would be beneficial. Now is the perfect time to begin forming your panel!

NAISA’s Mission

...to promote Native American and Indigenous studies through the encouragement of academic freedom, research, teaching, publication, the recognition of Indigenous knowledges and methodologies, the strengthening of relations among persons and institutions devoted to such studies, and the broadening of knowledge among the general public about Native American and Indigenous studies in all its diversity and complexity.

From the Constitution of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association, amended August 2012

Above: K. Tsianina Lomawaima’s address
Below: Opening ceremony
Photos by m.pet productions
**Upcoming Events & Conferences**

- **American Indian Council’s Traditional Powwow.** Boone County Fairgrounds, Lebanon, Indiana, August 17-18. [http://www.americanindiancenter.org/](http://www.americanindiancenter.org/)
- **Exhibit Opening for “Photos in Black and White: Margaret Bourke-White and the Dawn of Apartheid in South Africa.”** Mathers Museum, Friday, September 6, 4 - 6. [www.mathers.indiana.edu](http://www.mathers.indiana.edu)

**Conference and Workshop Opportunities**

- **2013 Algonquian Conference.** *University of Ottawa, October 18-20, 2013.* Proposals are invited in English, French, or any Algonquian language for papers in all areas of Algonquian research. Presentations will be 20 minutes long followed by a 10-minute question period. Abstracts should be no more than 300 words in length, excluding title and references. Abstracts must be submitted in Word or PDF via e-mail to emathieu@uottawa.ca. Abstracts using IPA fonts should be submitted as a PDF. In the subject field of the e-mail enter: Algonquian conference abstract submission. In the body of the e-mail, include the following information: 1) Title of the paper; 2) Name(s) of the presenter(s); 3) Department and affiliation; 4) Student or non-student; 5) E-mail address for each speaker; 6) Postal address; 7) Your requirements for audio-visual equipment. **Submission deadline is September 8, 2013.**

- **2014 Northeast Modern Language Association: “Pro-Indigenous Feminisms, Communal Autobiography, & Water” Panel.** Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, April 3-6, 2014. Panel will be submitted for consideration to the Women’s and Gender Studies Section. For more information, visit [http://nemla.org/convention/2014/cfp_womensstudies.html](http://nemla.org/convention/2014/cfp_womensstudies.html). Address questions and abstracts to menoukha.case@esc.edu & ssellers@gettysburg.edu. **Submission deadline is September 30, 2013.**

- **2014 American Indian Workshop: “Communication is Key.”** *University of Leiden, Netherlands, May 21-25.* The organizers seek proposals from all disciplines that address the conference theme. Questions to consider could include: What can Native languages tell us about communication? What is communicated through material culture, and how is this achieved over time? How do power dynamics and imbalances influence communication? How do communication styles reflect the structure of society? How is research in the field of Native American Studies communicated, and to whom? For more information and submission instructions, visit [http://www.american-indian-workshop.org/](http://www.american-indian-workshop.org/). **Submission deadline is October 31, 2013.**

- **2014 Native American and Indigenous Studies Association Conference.** *University of Texas at Austin, Texas, May 29-31, 2014.* For more information, visit [www.naisa.org](http://www.naisa.org). **Submission deadline will be announced in the fall.**

**Publication Opportunities**

- **The Native American and Indigenous Studies Association** seeks articles and reviews for its new journal, which will be published by the University of Minnesota Press. Articles and book reviews will be accepted on a rolling basis. For more information and submission instructions, visit [www.naisa.org](http://www.naisa.org).