Learn More!
Native American Art and Culture

Below is a range of resources that include general information about Native American culture and history as well as more specific references to individuals, art, and life. Resources include books, web sites, and films.

BOOKS: GENERAL AND EDUCATIONAL

This book has short, easily digestible explanations and descriptions relating to over 450 innovations and inventions attributed to the indigenous peoples of the Americas. It is an interesting and revealing reference book for docents or teachers.

This book has lots of maps and provides a good, basic background for Native American history and culture from prehistory through contact with Europeans and into contemporary life.

Fred Hoxie is a very prominent scholar of Native Americans and this book contains entries from over 250 authors that address a wide range of topics and themes, including descriptions of about 100 tribes. The entries are concise and easy-to-read, many include maps and photographs.

The scope of Native American dance—from the Fancy Dancers of the pow-wow circuit and the traditional keepers of sacred Indian ceremonies to the contemporary flourishes of modern Indian choreographers—is explored in this collection of essays by leading Native and non-Native scholars and practitioners of dance in the Indian community.
Rethinking Columbus: The Next 500 Years, by Bill Bigelow and Bob Peterson. 1998. This book looks at the way the “discovery of America” is taught in the classroom. It includes suggested activities and short reading pieces for students that will have varying degrees of usefulness depending upon your goals.

**BOOKS: ART AND LIFE**


Artisans, tribal leaders, a playwright, an architect, an archaeologist, and other professionals ponder Indian concepts of time, nature, the Creator, and the function of art. In intimate, distinct voices, they address their concerns about the fragmentation of Indian society, the commercialization of its arts, and the ways in which young Native Americans can express the conflicts and aspirations of their generation. Insightful and intensely personal, *All Roads Are Good* weaves together a rich tapestry of old and new Indian folkways.


In the 1960s and 1970s, the notion of American Indian art was turned on its head by artists who fought against prejudice and popular clichés. At the forefront of this revolution was Fritz Scholder (Luiseño, 1937–2005), whose dark, energetic, and unsettling paintings of Native Americans combined realism, tragedy, and spirituality with the genres of abstract expressionism and pop art. An artist of spectacular gifts and phenomenal output, Scholder had a career that spanned five decades and encompassed painting, printmaking, sculpture, and photography. This retrospective features hundreds of visually compelling artworks along with important and insightful discussion of Scholder’s major themes. The authors illuminate the paradoxes that framed Scholder’s life, his decades of prominence in the art world, and his myth-shattering depictions of the realities of Native American life.


George Morrison (Grand Portage Band of Chippewa, 1919–2000) and Allan Houser (Warm Springs Chiricahua Apache, 1914–94) shattered expectations for Native art and paved the way for successive generations to experiment with a wide array of styles and techniques.


This book explores Native creativity and the influence of its living traditions on contemporary American life. Articles by twenty-eight Native authors discuss how Native peoples represent themselves, their communities, and their cultures through a diverse range of the expressive arts. Two suggested articles: “The Old and the New: Different

This book presents a fascinating array of Native women’s clothing from the Plains, Plateau, and Great Basin regions of the United States and Canada, dating from the 1830s to the present and including dresses, shawls, moccasins, belts, bags, and hair accessories.

The Native people of the Pacific Northwest have long been renowned for the beauty and complexity of their art. In this lively and evocative collection of community self-portraits, writers from eleven Northwest Coast nations—the Coast Salish, Makah, Nuu-chah-nulth, Kwakwaka’wakw, Heiltsuk, Nuxalk, Tsimshian, Nisga’a, Gitxsan, Haida, and Tlingit—describe the meaning of cultural traditions in their lives today. In addition, Kwakwaka’wakw Chief Robert Joseph and NMAI curator Mary Jane Lenz explore the Northwest as a crossroads of Native and non-Native worlds, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and today.

WEB SITES

The web sites below offer a wide range of resources, including classroom guides and lessons, virtual tours of Native American exhibitions, and links to dancing at a pow-wow.

http://anthropology.si.edu/outreach/Indbibl/sterotyp.html
This resource addresses ways to avoid stereotypes about Native Americans when teaching, selecting textbooks, or designing exhibits and public programs. It is published by the National Museum of Natural History and can be found by searching for it on their web site.

http://www.ailanet.org/publications/index.htm
The American Indian Libraries Association’s website includes online publications that discuss stereotypes in children’s books and provide annotated lists of recommended children’s books.

This quiz is taken from A Pre-Visit Guide for Teachers, published by the National Museum of the American Indian’s education office. The complete guide can be downloaded at www.AmericanIndian.si.edu: click on Education, then on Printed Materials.

http://www.ncai.org/
The National Congress of American Indians, founded in 1944, is the oldest, largest, and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization serving the broad interests of tribal governments and communities. While on this site, go to the About tab and click on the link for the “Intro to Indian Nations in the U.S.” guide. This guide has been developed by the National Congress of American Indians, and seeks to provide a basic overview of the history and underlying principles of tribal governance.

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/weshallremain/beyond_broadcast/teach_and_learn
The teacher's guide that accompanies the PBS documentary We Shall Remain offers resources for educators to integrate Native American history into school curricula. The guide includes five film-specific sections with post-viewing questions, plus activities designed to foster student understanding of the important themes and issues that make Native history an essential part of American history.

Online exhibitions from the National Museum of the American Indian
Fritz Scholder: Indian/Not Indian: www.nmai.si.edu/exhibitions/scholder
Identity by Design: www.nmai.si.edu/exhibitions/identity_by_design
Listening to Our Ancestors: www.nmai.si.edu/listening

http://www.nmai.si.edu/subpage.cfm?subpage=education&second=pub
This link to the National Museum of the American Indian will bring you to its page of downloadable guides for educators.

http://www smithsonianeducation.org/educators/resource_library/american_indian_resources.html
This link will bring you to the American Indian Heritage Teaching Resource page sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution.

http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=324
This is a general lesson from the National Endowment for the Humanities on Native Americans titled Not “Indians,” Many Tribes: Native American Diversity. It focuses on three different Native American communities, including the Abenaki of northern New England.

http://www.arts mia.org/index.php?section_id=16
This link to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts will bring you to their teacher resource page, where you can download a classroom curriculum guide called Art of the Native Americans: Thaw Collection.

http://creativity.denverartmuseum.org/
The Denver Art Museum has an extensive collection of Native American art. On their page “Creativity Resources for Teachers,” educators can search for images, lesson plans, and other curriculum resources.

www.mnh.si.edu/arctic
The Arctic Studies Center at the National Museum of Natural History, established in 1988, specifically studies northern peoples, exploring history, archaeology, social change, and human lifeways across the circumpolar world. This will be a good reference for the Arctic objects in the exhibition.

www.heard.org
The Heard Museum web site has links to online exhibitions and “virtual tours” through Arizona’s tribal communities on their education page. They also have quite a few videos about various related topics.

http://americanhistory.si.edu/documentsgallery/exhibitions/ledger_drawing_1.html
This site features high-quality images of ledger drawings from the exhibition Keeping History: Plains Indian Ledger Drawings at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History (on view November 2009 - January 2010). It includes helpful information on the history of ledger drawing. Images can be viewed in a full-screen format.

https://plainsledgerart.org/
This site from the Plains Indian Ledger Art Project at the University of California at San Diego is dedicated to presenting and preserving Plains Indian ledger art and drawings on paper from the late nineteenth century. It allows viewers to scroll through images of complete ledger books.

Below are links to two YouTube videos of dancers at a pow-wow held at Dartmouth College in 2009. These might be useful as you think about and look at Dartmouth Pow-Wow Suite by artist Mateo Romero.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VIDgHReXJDY
This is a link to the thirty-seventh Annual Pow Wow at Dartmouth.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRZe9dFBR9E&feature=related
This is a link to the thirty-seventh Annual Pow-Wow at Dartmouth Grass Dance.

FILMS

We Shall Remain on PBS: see www.pbs.org for more information. We Shall Remain is a groundbreaking mini-series and provocative multi-media project that establishes Native history as an essential part of American history. Five ninety-minute documentaries spanning three hundred years tell the story of pivotal moments in U.S. history from the Native American perspective.

A fascinating portrait of a modern Native American family that erases the stereotype made infamous by Westerns. It shows the daily life of twelve-year-old Dominic Old Elk,
who is proud of his Indian heritage but is part of young America, too. Dominic is a Crow Indian. His great-great-grandfather was one of the scouts who warned General Custer not to attack the large force of Sioux and Cheyenne camped by the banks of the Little Big Horn. Recommended for grades 2 - 9, adults.

This film tells the story of three indigenous communities and the land they struggle to protect: the Lakota of the Great Plains, the Hopi of the Four Corners area, and the Wintu of northern California. Recommended for grades 7 - 12, college, adults.

*We Still Live Here*: [http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/catalog/wslh.html](http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/catalog/wslh.html)
Celebrated every Thanksgiving as the Indians who saved the Pilgrims from starvation, then largely forgotten, the Wampanoag tribes of Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard are now saying loud and clear, and in their Native tongue, Âs Nutayuneân, - We Still Live Here. Recommended for grades 10 - 12, college, adults.

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