Native American Art Studies Association

Highlights of the 2013 Conference
Denver, Colorado

The conference in Denver this October was a memorable one, full of stimulating presentations and events, and well attended, despite the torrential flooding in the Boulder area in September and the Federal Government Shutdown in October which threatened our careful planning. We persevered! The pre-conference tour to Boulder was amended (see Tours Report), and the Board structure proved its resilience when committee members stepped in to cover for two key members who were unable to attend the first days of the conference. Thanks to the efforts of the Board and a dedicated and hard-working local committee, the program was only disrupted by a few last-minute (and unfortunate) speaker cancellations. Thanks to everyone who made this conference a success!
The conference opened with a blessing by John Emhoolah in the Sharp Auditorium of our host institution, the Denver Art Museum (DAM). It was followed by the Keynote address by T. Lulani Arquette, President/CEO of the Native Arts and Cultures Foundation who graciously accepted our invitation after Walter Echo-Hawk withdrew due to a personal emergency. The Plenary session, “The Art of Museum/Artist Relationships,” focused on museum/artist collaborations. Chaired by DAM associate curator John Lukavic, the panel discussion featured several prominent artists: Jeffrey Gibson, Rose B. Simpson, Kent Monkman and Virgil Ortiz.

Our evening activities included receptions at the Sheraton Hotel, the Denver Public Library Western History Collection, and History Colorado. One of the highlights for many was the performance “Casualties of Modernity,” by the artist Kent Monkman at DAM. We concluded our conference in celebratory fashion with a banquet in DAM’s Ponti Hall which honored artist D.Y. Begay with a Lifetime Achievement Award and was followed by a memorable and entertaining performance by the sketch comedy troupe the 1491s.
HONOR AWARD: D.Y. Begay

Artist D.Y. Begay was honored with NAASA’s Lifetime Achievement Award at the NAASA banquet. She was nominated by Janet Berlo, Jill Yohe and Ann Lane Hedlund. After introducing herself in Navajo, Yohe gave a heartfelt presentation about D.Y. and her contribution to the field. Excerpts from this presentation give a glimpse of the many contributions of this important artist:

“It is a tradition to alternate the Lifetime Achievement Award between artists and scholars, but this year the committee did not have to make that choice—D. Y. Begay is both. She is an eloquent and erudite writer and historian of her craft, as well as a talented artist.

D.Y. Begay’s legacy as an outstanding weaver and artist is rooted in traditional weaving techniques and forms. She creates unique and signature works of art that reference important themes, which are often firmly tied to concepts of place. Her own textiles push weaving in new directions, from her representations of desert landscapes, to her abstract designs in glorious colors, to interpretations of cultural patterns gathered in her travels. Her design sources are cosmopolitan, but her most powerful designs interpret Native-related imagery—from Plains parfleches to Hudson’s Bay point blankets.

A fourth generation weaver, who learned the traditional art of Navajo weaving from family members, she is experienced at herding and shearing sheep, carding and spinning wool, and harvesting plants for dyeing. While her most of her wools are hand-spun and dyed with plants she gathers, she expresses a diverse range of colors and design concepts drawn from contemporary culture and her international travels.

In addition to her artistic practice, D.Y. Begay is a curator of historic and contemporary art and offers her wisdom as a consultant to museums and cultural centers, tirelessly educating people about wools, dyes, weaving, and Navajo cultural traditions. As a teacher, D.Y. Begay travels the globe to introduce newcomers to the art of spinning and weaving in the tradition of her ancestors. As she teaches people to spin and weave, Begay also articulates the rich history of Navajo history and culture, as she transforms the historical practice into a living art form for her students.
Recognition of D.Y. Begay’s work is expressed in the breadth of local, national, and international institutions that have exhibited and collected her art. Her most recent exhibition at the C.N. Gorman Museum at the University of California at Davis closed on March 15, 2013. Her works have also been exhibited at the National Museum of the American Indian, New York City; Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian, Santa Fe, NM; Kennedy Museum of Art, Athens, OH; Mesa Art Center, Mesa, AZ; and National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland. D.Y. Begay's many curatorial credits include exhibitions in Athens, Ohio, (Kennedy Museum of Art); New York (National Museum of the American Indian); and Santa Fe, New Mexico (Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian). In addition, her art traveled in the Arts in Embassies program in 2006 and 2010.”

**BUSINESS REPORT**

President Kathleen Ash-Milby led the biennial business meeting on Friday, October 18 at the Denver Public Library. Ash-Milby thanked the membership, donors, patrons, the local organizing committee and supporting local institutions before reporting on her work as NAASA President over the past two years. She discussed highlights of her term, including: the formation of a development committee, advancement of conference planning, and a review of the by-laws, which led to the first NAASA audit since the 1980s.

**Membership**

Alex Marr, NAASA Secretary, reported on conference attendance and membership figures. 180 members registered for the Denver conference. Including the additional 36 members who did not attend the conference, the Association counts 216 active memberships.

Of this total, 22 members signed up at the patron level, 64 registered at the standard level, and 113 enrolled at the basic membership level (the Association offered 17 complimentary memberships to keynote and plenary speakers as well as travel awardees). With a large jump in registration at upper levels from previous conference years, nearly forty percent of current NAASA members belong to the standard and patron levels, a great boon to NAASA.

**Financial**

Rebecca Head Trautmann, NAASA Treasurer, reported on NAASA’s finances. The estimated conference budget shows a projected surplus of approximately $6,700. Several factors allowed us to keep conference expenses low, including monetary and in-kind contributions from our local hosts, the Denver Art Museum (DAM) and the Denver Public Library (DPL), and holding the conference sessions at DAM and DPL, which allowed us to use the conference rooms with no rental fees and to use outside caterers at a lower cost. As noted in the Secretary’s report, a number of people joined or renewed their memberships at the Patron level, and many more did so at the Standard level. These higher level memberships, combined with member contributions to the Travel Award fund, allowed us to increase both the number of Travel
Awards given this conference and their dollar amounts. The PayPal option for membership and conference registration continues to be very popular, with about two-thirds of members taking advantage of it.

NAASA continues to maintain a healthy balance from conference to conference. We did have one significant additional business expense this year, of $2500 for an audit conducted by an accountant, which NAASA President Kathleen Ash-Milby arranged per NAASA’s by-laws.

**Travel Awards**
Chair of the Travel Award committee Michelle McGeough presented on the Travel Awardees, noting that, thanks to generous membership donations, this year the committee offered a 200% increase in the number of awards offered and an increase in award amounts. McGeough asked Travel Award recipients in attendance at the business meeting to stand for recognition. (See Travel Award Report, Page 6)

**Amendments to By-Laws**
Karen Kramer, Past President and Chair of the By-laws Committee, presented proposed amendments to two by-laws: 3.04, Auditing, and 9.03, Indemnity of Directors and Officers.

Kramer thanked everyone who has helped work on the by-laws over the past 30 years since the original by-laws were written, and for progress made on any amendments to the by-laws in the interim. Kramer reminded the membership that, as was previously noted in the October 2012 newsletter (Vol. 19, No. 2), we hosted special guest and legal advisor, Jean Johnston, at our June 2012 Board meeting, who helped us interpret all extant by-laws. She recommended that NAASA alter these two particular by-laws, which, as written, are not aligned with financial practices of non-profit organizations of our size and scope.

The membership voted to change **By-Law 3.04: Auditing**, which leaves the auditing matter to the *discretion* of the President, and allows for audit by a bookkeeper rather than certified public accountant, which would save the organization approximately $3000 per conference cycle, allowing us to channel these funds into meeting operational costs.

As well, membership voted to change **By-law 9.03: Indemnity of Directors and Officers** which relinquishes liability for individual board members and officers. The revised language is standard for organizations of our size and reflects today’s legal climate.

The revised language can be seen at the following link: [http://nativearts.org/about-naasa/by-laws/](http://nativearts.org/about-naasa/by-laws/)

**Elections**
Chair Rebecca Dobkins reported on the Nominating Committee and oversaw the election. Elections were held for President, Vice President, and Board members (four four-year positions). Kathleen Ash-Milby was re-elected President and Kate Morris as Vice President; they will serve two-year terms (2013-2015). Deana Dartt, Heather Igloliorte and Sherry Farelle Racette were elected as new members (2013-2017). Emil Her Many Horses was re-elected to another term (2013-2017).

**NAASA 2015: Santa Fe, NM**
After a presentation by Ryan Rice (Museum of Contemporary Native Art) and Carolyn Kastner (Georgia O’Keefe Museum) the membership voted unanimously to approve the bid for NAASA 2015 to be held in Santa Fe, New Mexico.
The pre-conference visit to Charlie Eagle Plume’s historic trading post in the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains was “washed out” by September’s torrential rains and floods that destroyed the canyon roads of northern Colorado. Largely undamaged museums in Boulder became the sole focus, thanks to the rallying around of tour members and staff, turning the trip into a car pool. A special exhibition at the University of Colorado Natural History Museum presented outstanding pottery from the Museum’s Southwestern prehistoric collection, the legacy of famed archaeologists Earl Morris and Joe Ben Wheat. Curator of Archeology Steve Lekson took us through the ceramic stories of each region and new theories of their inter-relations.

At the University of Colorado Art Museum, a new gallery show of contemporary Native American artists featured greatly contrasting works by two native artists at CU, Melanie Yazzie, Professor of Printmaking, and C. Maxx Stevens, CU artist-in-residence. Yazzie’s prints of this period were quiet and peaceful, perhaps expressing the Navajo dictum to “Walk in Beauty.” Stevens also looked at her roots but through a different lens – a large installation that used an amazing variety of materials and media to express the Oklahoma home of her childhood.

The Sunday post-conference tour visited three regional museums that epitomize the types of institutions that house and exhibit American Indian collections in Colorado. The Taylor Museum of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center emphasizes art *per se* in displayed works and in a deep reserve collection that attracts researchers. Anthropology museums within universities and colleges teach students with “the real thing,” support research, store its discoveries, and give a venue for student presentations. We visited such a museum at the Anthropology Museum of the University of Denver, which had a student exhibition on outstanding DU women scholars in Native arts. Finally, the tour at Denver Museum of Nature and Science sampled a large Native American collection imbedded in a major natural history museum. Visits behind-the-scenes showed scientific groupings of material as well as individual objects with records that help extend cultural research and educational potential.

Joyce Herold, Local Tours Organizer
Banquet
NAASA members celebrated at a banquet on Saturday, October 19 in Ponti Hall at Denver Art Museum.
Thank you all for another opportunity to lead the Native American Art Studies Association as we enter our 4th (!) decade. I am so pleased to serve a second term with my friend and colleague, Kate Morris, and our dedicated Board. The elections brought in three new members and we are excited to see the diversification of our Board increase. We offer a fond farewell to outgoing Board members Rebecca Dobkins, Carolyn Kastner and Michelle McGeough. We are grateful for their generous contributions of time and good humor!

It was very fitting that we held the 2013 conference in Denver, the site of one of NAASA’s early conferences in 1987 and the institutional home of scholar Richard Conn, whose contributions are recognized through the ongoing Richard Conn Travel Award for emerging scholars. We were privileged to utilize the fine facilities of the Denver Art Museum and the Denver Public Library. We extend our hardiest thanks to the staff of these two institutions who anchored our Local Organizing Committee: Nancy Blomberg, John Lukavic, Eric Berkemeyer from DAM and Jim Kroll from DPL. Joyce Herold, Emeritus Curator from the Denver Museum of Nature and Science led the local tours committee and showed enormous flexibility when we were faced with the unexpected intervention of Mother Nature. We are also grateful for the in-kind contribution of History Colorado and several museums on the tour agenda. The energy, ideas and persistence of these individuals led to the success of our conference which we deeply appreciate.

I am so pleased to report that our membership levels have increased including the number of members who have become NAASA Patrons. The Board wishes to give special acknowledgment to the following Patron members:

Anonymous
Kathleen Ash-Milby
Janet Catherine Berlo
Nancy Blomberg
Rebecca Dobkins
Kate Duncan
Barbara Hail
Nancy Harris
Mary Hamilton
Aldona Jonaitis
Carolyn Kastner
Karen Kramer
Henrietta Liddchi
Kate Morris
Simon Ottenberg
Ruth Phillips
W. Jackson Rushing, III
Allan J. Ryan
Daniel Swan
Joyce M. Szabo
Robin K. Wright
Susan Kennedy Zeller

John Lukavic, Eric Berkemeyer, Nancy Blomberg
Thanks to the Denver Art Museum for organizing and providing support for the Plenary Session, and facilitating the additional support for the Plenary Panel, Kent Monkman’s performance and sponsorship of the 1491s provided through the generosity of Vicki and Kent Logan. We are also grateful for their assistance in working with Virgil Ortiz who agreed to contribute an original design for our NAASA 2013 program and registration bag.

If you have not had a chance to take our Survey on your experiences at the NAASA 2013 conference, please take a moment to give us your feedback. The link is on our website homepage (nativearts.org) or can be reached at: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/P7GT63N.

It’s hard to believe, but our plans for the conference in Santa Fe in 2015 are already in motion! The Board will meet this June and the local committee is meeting and making plans. We can’t wait to see what they have in store for us and look forward to returning to Santa Fe.

## Travel Awards

We are pleased to report that thanks to the continuing generosity of NAASA members and supporters, especially those of you who increased your membership levels, we were able to grant **nine** travel awards this year, more than double the number we awarded at our last conference. We also increased the amount of the awards from $500 to $650, in addition to providing complimentary registration and membership for awardees.

The following individuals were honored with NAASA Travel Awards:

- Ramona Big Head (Allan Houser Award)
- Delia Cross Child (Richard Conn Award)
- Lisa Whitecloud Richards (Oscar Howe Award)
- Korah English
- Kristina Ronan
- Catherine A. Nichols
- Ashley Holland
- Mattie Reynolds
- Anya Montiel

The purpose of the awards is to encourage greater participation by students, emerging scholars and Native artists. We hope that our success in increasing the number and amount of awards will encourage NAASA members to continue to donate to the Travel Award Fund and to renew at increased membership levels.

We would like to thank individual members and groups for their donations to the Travel Award Fund:

- **Allan Houser Award** – W. Jackson Rushing, III
- **Richard Conn Award** – Douglas Society

Bill Anthes, Ruth Belikove, Janet Catherine Berlo, Nancy Blomberg, Katie Bunn-Marcuse, Diane Dittemore, Korah English, Suzanne Fricke, Barbara Hail, Mary Hamilton, Nancy Harris, Carolyn Kastner Karen Kramer, Emily Moore, Allan J. Ryan, Robin K. Wright, Susan Kennedy Zeller
Introducing New Board Members

**Election to Board of Directors**
Kathleen Ash-Milby was re-elected President and Kate Morris was re-elected Vice President, each for a second term of two years. Emil Her Many Horses was re-elected for second four-year term, and Ryan Rice, Henrietta Lidchi, and Norman Vorano will continue their terms through 2015, as will Karen Kramer as Past-President. We are also pleased to confirm that Rebecca Head Trautmann (Treasurer) and Alexander Brier Marr (Secretary) will continue their appointments. Please see previous editions of the NAASA newsletter for all of their bios (18.4, 19.1, 19.5).

We welcome our three newly elected board members who will serve four-year terms through 2017: Deana Dartt, Heather Igloliorte and Sherry Farrell Racette.

**Heather Igloliorte**

Heather Igloliorte (Inuit, Nunatsiavut Territory of Labrador) is an Assistant Professor of Aboriginal art history at Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec. She recently completed her PhD in Cultural Mediations at Carleton University’s Institute for Comparative Studies in Literature, Art and Culture (ICSLAC); her dissertation contributes the first art history of the Nunatsiavummiut, focusing on over 400 years of post-contact production, *Nunatsiavummi Sananguagusigisimagangi / Nunatsiavut Art History: Continuity, Resilience, and Transformation in Inuit Art* (2013).

Heather is also an active independent curator. One of her current projects is the reinstallation of the permanent collection of Inuit art at the Musée National des Beaux-Arts du Québec. Other recent curatorial projects include *aboDIGITAL: The Art of Jordan Bennett* (2012), *Decolonize Me* (Ottawa Art Gallery, 2011 - 2015), and "we were so far away": *The Inuit Experience of Residential Schools* (Legacy of Hope Foundation, 2009 - ongoing). Her teaching and research interests center on Inuit and other Native North American visual and material culture, circumpolar art studies, the global exhibition of Indigenous arts and culture, and issues of colonization, sovereignty, resistance and resilience. Some of her recent publications include chapters and catalogue essays in *Manifestations: New Native Art Criticism* (2012); *Changing Hands: Art Without Reservation* 3 (2012); *Curating Difficult Knowledge* (2011); *Native American Art At Dartmouth: Highlights from the Hood Museum of Art* (2011); *Inuit Modern* (2010); *Response, Responsibility, and Renewal: Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Journey* (2009); and *Negotiations in a Vacant Lot: Studying the Visual in Canada* (forthcoming, 2014). Igloliorte served as an Executive Member of the Board of Directors for the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective (2005–2011) and as the President of Gallery 101 (Ottawa, 2009–2011); she currently serves on the Indigenous Advisory Council of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (opening 2014) and the *Inuit Art Quarterly* Editorial Advisory Committee.

Photo credit: Anne-Renée Hotte
Deana Dartt

Deana Dartt (Coastal Band Chumash), curator of Native American Art at the Portland Art Museum, seeks to develop approaches to research, scholarship and exhibition that underscore indigenous methodologies. Motivated by this goal, Dartt is currently integrating first-person, community-centered Object Stories into the Native American galleries. She recently received a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to develop new scholarship and interpretation of the collection resulting in a major exhibition of Northwest Coast Native Art. This exhibition (accompanied by a comprehensive catalogue documenting works in the collection) will open at the Museum in October 2017 as part of the Museum’s 125th Anniversary celebration and then travel. Prior to her appointment at PAM, Deana curated Indigenous Voices Reply, at the Burke Museum and in collaboration with the Quileute Nation, developed the Truth versus Twilight website which addresses stereotypes about Native people in popular culture. Prior to her appointment at PAM, Deana curated Indigenous Voices Reply, at the Burke Museum and in collaboration with the Quileute Nation, developed the Truth versus Twilight website which addresses stereotypes about Native people in popular culture. She received her M.A. and Ph.D in Anthropology from the University of Oregon.

Sherry Farrell Racette

Sherry Farrell Racette is an interdisciplinary scholar with an active arts and curatorial practice. Her scholarly interests merge history, women’s and gender studies, with contemporary and traditional First Nations and Métis art criticism and history. Recent essays include What Stories Do These Garments Tell? (McCord Museum 2013), Nimble Fingers, Strong Backs: First Nations and Metis Women in Fur Trade and Rural Economies (Williams 2012), “I Want to Call Their Names in Resistance”: Writing Aboriginal Women into Canadian Art History (Hunault and Anderson 2011), Returning Fire, Pointing the Canon: Aboriginal Photography as Resistance (Payne and Kunnard 2011), and Encoded Knowledge: Memory and Objects in Contemporary Native American Art (Mithlo 2011).

Farrell Racette has illustrated nine books for children and young adults, and her paintings and textile works have been widely exhibited, most recently in the group exhibitions Greatest Hits: the Juno Tour of Canadian Art organized by the Mackenzie Art Gallery, Regina, Saskatchewan (2013) and Soul Sister: Reimagining Kateri Tekakwitha at the Museum of Contemporary Native Arts in Santa Fe New Mexico. Recent curatorial projects are Resilience/Resistance: Métis Art, 1870-2011 organized for the Batoche Heritage Centre in 2011, and Native Women & Film an annual event for filmmakers at the University of Manitoba. Racette has a BFA and an interdisciplinary PhD from the University of Manitoba where she is currently cross-appointed to the Departments of Native Studies and Women and Gender Studies. She also has an MEd in curriculum and instruction from the University of Regina. Farrell Racette was the 2009–2010 Anne Ray Fellow at the School for Advanced Research in Santa Fe New Mexico. She is a member of Timiskaming First Nation (Algonquin) in northwestern Quebec, and was born and currently resides in Manitoba.
Native American Art Studies Association

Membership

Name:

Institutional Affiliation:

Street Address:

City, State, Zip:

Email:  
Phone/cell:

Membership – through 2015  Choose your level:  

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Would you like to donate to the Travel Award fund? $ 

Total to be paid in U.S. dollars: $ 

To pay by credit card:

1) Download form at  www.nativearts.org
2) Email form to  naasamail@gmail.com
3) You will receive invoice.
4) Follow instructions to pay with a credit card via PayPal.

To pay by check or money order
(US Funds only): Payable to “NAASA”

Mail with completed form to:
NAASA c/o Kathleen Ash-Milby
NMAI-George Gustav Heye Center
One Bowling Green
New York, NY 10004

Invoice payable upon receipt.  
Membership is NOT complete until paid in full.