



JACOB MEDERS: FAMILIAR TERRITORY

January 13 – March 10, 2023

First, take a look at **Jacob Meders: Familiar Territory** either at Vision Gallery or [online](#).

What do you notice about the artwork?

Jacob Meders,
Survival (Revised)



These pieces depict scenes from the 1800's. This period is called Westward expansion, as white settlers migrated from settlements in the eastern United States to land out west in search of opportunity.

Many white Americans believed in a concept called **manifest destiny**, in which they were chosen by God to possess all of the land between the western and eastern coasts of North America. In this painting from 1872, a European-style angel guides white settlers west.

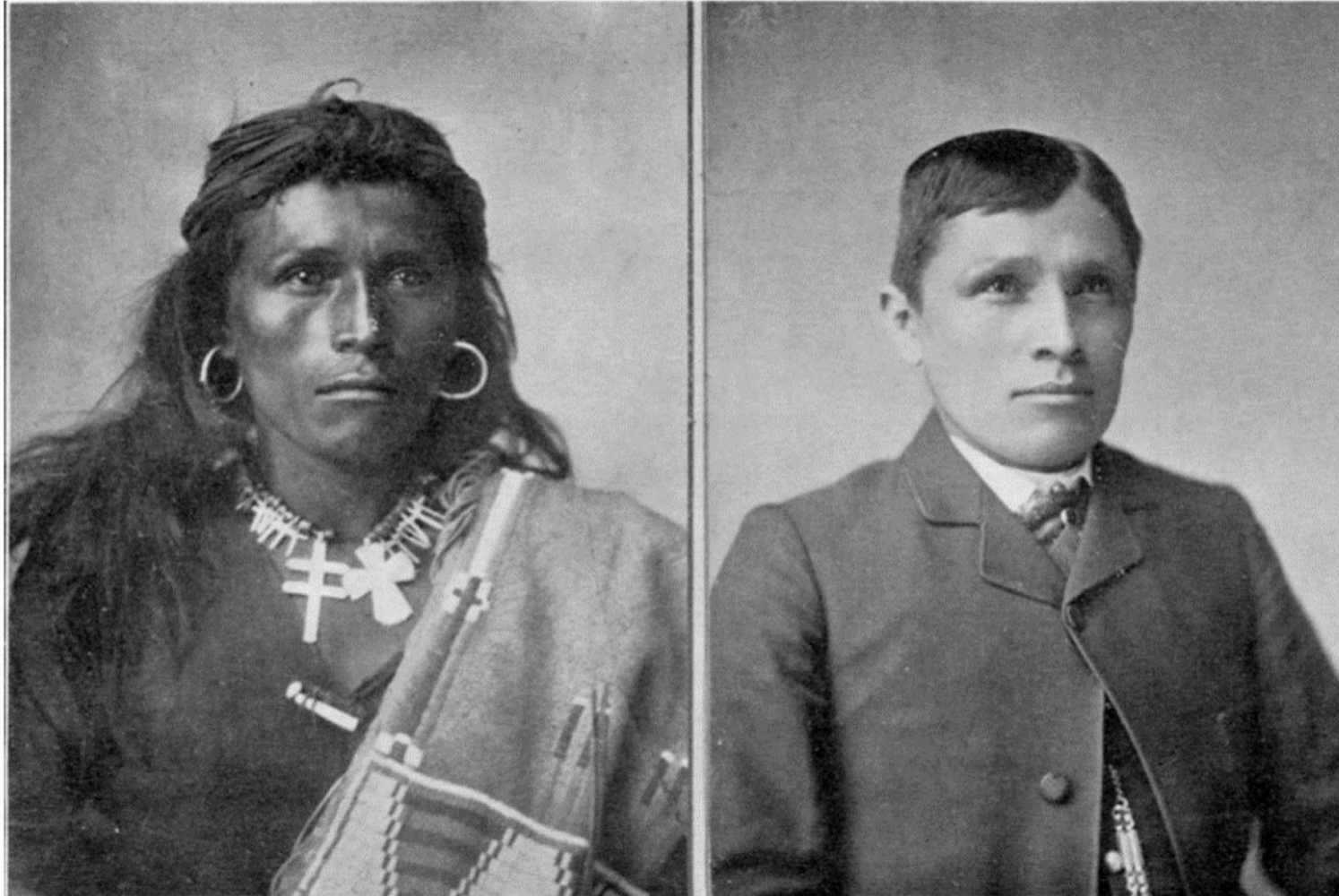
What else do you notice about this painting?



John Gast, American Progress, 1872.
Chromolithograph published by George A. Croft.
Source: Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

However, this land was already occupied by hundreds of tribes of indigenous peoples. The 19th century was a period of turmoil as Native Americans were pushed from their ancestral lands either through unfair treaties with the United States government or forcibly through war.

Removed from their lands and forced to relocate, native peoples were required by the US government to live like white people in a process called **assimilation.**



They were legally prohibited from participating in their culture, including their ways of dress and ceremonies, because the government thought that this would undermine their control on native peoples. Thousands of indigenous people were **arrested or killed** in this period of time as the United States struggled for control.

The prints in this exhibition were originally by an artist named John Clymer, a white man. Though they depict events in the 1800s, he made them in the 1970s, a hundred years after they took place.



John Clymer,
Victory Ride

Donated to the City of Chandler's collection in the 1980's, these prints were not exhibited because they depicted Native Americans in ways that perpetuated harmful stereotypes.

These prints depict this period of huge loss and violence in a way that romanticizes it, or makes it seem more positive than it was.

This time period was certainly not positive for Native Americans, and these prints did not represent native peoples' side of the story about this time in history that continues to impact us today.

Jacob Meders, an indigenous artist, took back that perspective by altering the prints made by John Clymer.



Jacob Meders,
Victory Ride (Revised)

He used black paint to represent the **erasure** of Native lands, language, culture, traditions, religion, and even people, as enforced by the United States government.

Pause and consider: what do we lose by not being able to see these figures in this piece?

Jacob Meders, *Marie Dorian - Winter Refuge 1814* (Revised)



Also, he uses gold leaf to highlight a history of **resource extraction** that has devastated our physical and spiritual environment.



This extraction is driven by greed and power, resulting in the near-extinction of the bison and the receding water levels of the Colorado River, which remains a very important issue for Arizonans today.

Jacob Meders,
John Colter Meets Manuel Lisa (Revised)

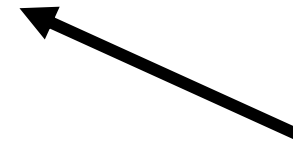


Jacob Meders, *Metis Brigade (Revised)*

Who do you think
these people are?
What are they
doing?



Jacob Meders, *Captain Clark and Buffalo Gangue (Revised)*



Can you tell what
the gold areas in
this piece originally
were?

By making these two changes to John Clymer's prints, Jacob Meders invites us to reconsider our relationships to the land and each other, as well as how we think about the history of the west.

How can we **learn from the perspectives of underrepresented people?**

How can we **be better stewards for our natural resources so that they are there for future generations?**

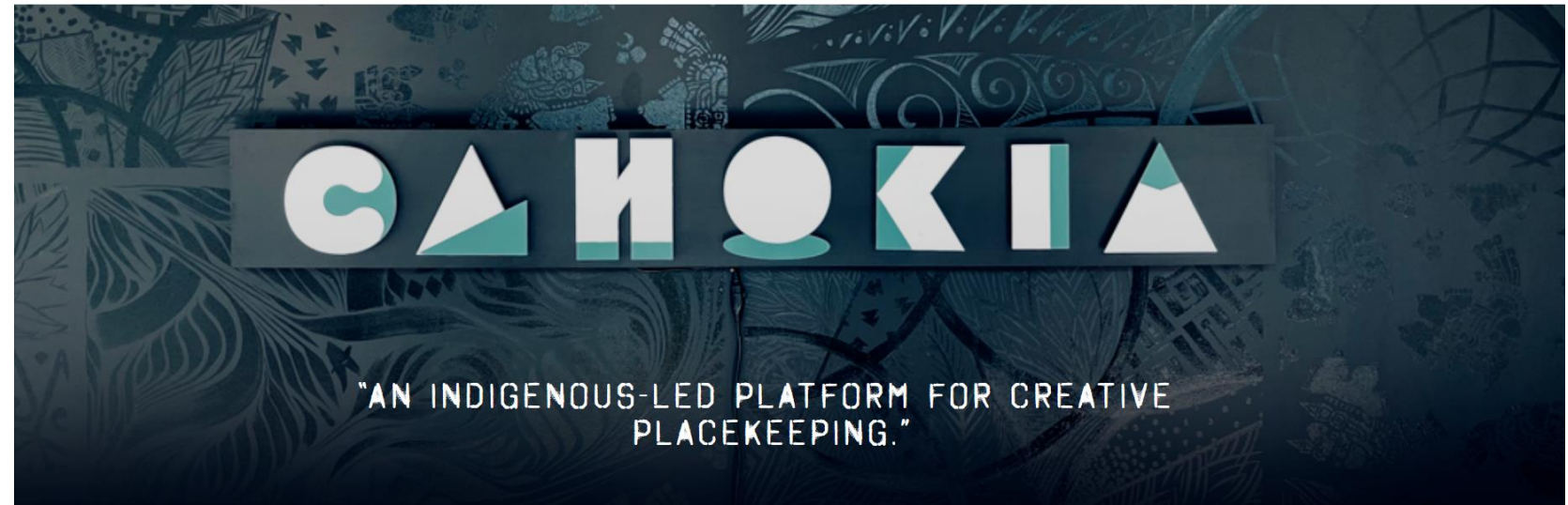
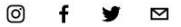
Indigenous people are very much **still here, despite centuries of oppression. There are many organizations and social movements working to restore cultural power to indigenous peoples.**

Learn more about how you can get involved with them on the following slides!

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NDN Collective is an Indigenous-led organization dedicated to building Indigenous power. Through organizing, activism, philanthropy, grantmaking, capacity-building and narrative change, we are creating sustainable solutions on Indigenous terms.

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Native Women Lead in partnership with New Mexico Community Capital has been named an award recipient of \$10 million in the national #EqualityCantWait Challenge!

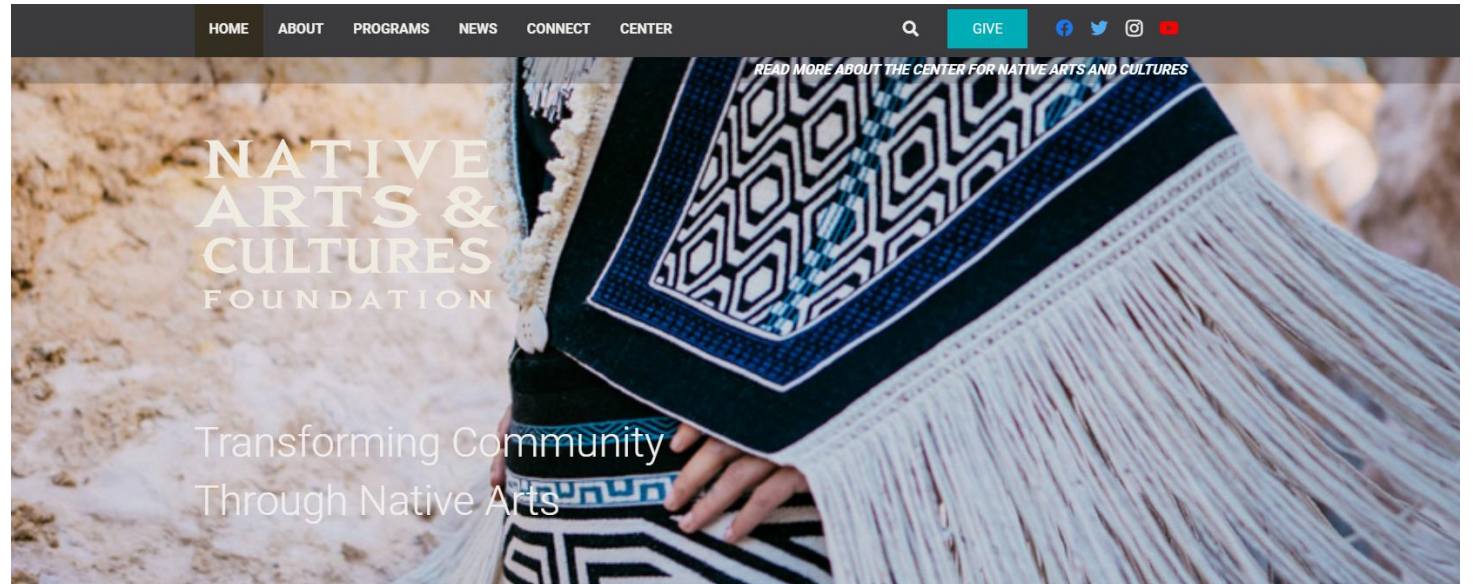
First Peoples Fund

<https://www.firstpeoplesfund.org/>



Native Arts and Cultures Foundation

<https://www.nativeartsandcultures.org/>



The Native Arts and Cultures Foundation is now accepting applications for The SHIFT – Transformative Change and Indigenous Art program

Did this exhibit make you think about the story of cowboys and Indians in a different way?



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