

earth diplomacy



INDIGENOUS
AMERICAN ART,
ECOLOGICAL
CRISIS,
AND THE
COLD WAR

JESSICA L. HORTON

earth diplomacy

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INDIGENOUS AMERICAN

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For my father,
Robert Stanley Horton (1946–2022),
a veteran of the Vietnam War

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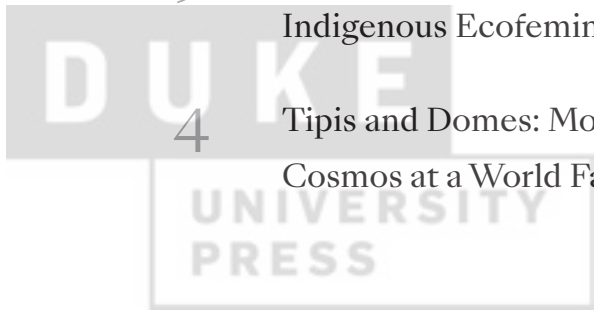
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IN 2013, while finishing my dissertation as a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts (CASVA) in Washington, DC, I stumbled on archival evidence of Native American artists' extensive role in Cold War cultural diplomacy. I felt a responsibility to tell this story, not the least because it formed a little-known prelude to the global engagements of contemporary Native artists (the subject of my first book). But I felt clear that the world did not need another study of post-World War II United States cultural hegemony, however critical. I'm grateful to my colleagues at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) and Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM) for hosting me as a post-doctoral fellow in 2013–2014, offering me the intellectual space to shape a different narrative. I benefited especially from the generous skepticism of Paul Chaat Smith, my mentor and friend, who was curating *Americans* (2017–2027) for NMAI. *Earth Diplomacy* was born at the intersection of our conversations about the world-shaping power of images of Native Americans and my encounters with the sensuous diplomatic arts on view in another NMAI exhibition, *Nation to Nation: Treaties Between the United States and American Indian Nations* (2014–2025).

This project found a home among the Americanists and material culture advocates at the University of Delaware (UD), where I have worked since 2015. I'm especially grateful to my faculty mentor, Wendy Bellion,

and two wonderful department chairs, Larry Nees and Sandy Isenstadt, for supporting my research schemes, including a UD General University Research Grant in 2016. I workshopped related ideas with my coinstructor Ikem Okoye and the students in our graduate seminar, *Diplomatic Things: Art and Architecture in Global Contexts*, in 2018. I thank members of the Americanist writing group in Philadelphia, Mariola Alvarez, Tiffany Barber, Jason Hill, Leah Modigliani, Erin Pauwels, Gwyndolyn Shaw, and Delia Solomons, for their friendship and keen eyes on nearly all of the chapters. Pascha Bueno-Hansen, visionary leader of the American Indian and Indigenous Relations Committee at UD, helped ground my academic work in Lenape and Nanticoke homelands and relationships. My inspiring friend Sarah Wasserman kept me sane and laughing. I constantly learned from my mentees pursuing new work at the intersection of Indigenous studies, art history, and ecocriticism, including Rachel Allen, Zoë Colón, Christine Garnier, Julia Hamer-Light, Ramey Mize, David Norman, Rachelle Pablo, Kaila Shedeem, Dakota Stevens, Victoria Sunnergren, Marina Tyquiengco, and Zoe Weldon-Yochim.

A two-month-long fellowship at the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum and Research Center in 2018 gave me precious time in Santa Fe–based collections and archives. I’m especially grateful to Ryan Flahive and James McGrath of the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) and Diane Bird and Tony Chavarria of the Laboratory of Anthropology for guiding my dive into the Cold War projects of IAIA and its predecessor, the Santa Fe Indian School. I loved sharing adventures with my friend and host, Carolyn Kastner, on many trips to Santa Fe. In 2019–2020, a Clark Art Institute fellowship and a Warhol Foundation Creative Capital Book Award allowed me a glorious year of research, writing, traveling, and hiking. I was in Chile researching Diné-Mapuche exchanges with the assistance of María Catrileo Chiguailaf when the COVID-19 pandemic erupted. Although I had to give up on a trip to Japan, I’m grateful to Ito Atsunori of the National Museum of Ethnology for sharing his research on Native American art at Expo 70 and scouring Osaka for the whereabouts of the Crow lodge at the center of chapter 4. The extraordinary hospitality of colleagues such as Ana Magalhães, Fernanda Pitta, Ilana Goldstein, and others taught me much about the dynamics of cultural exchange under the vast umbrella of “American” art when I served as a Terra Foundation visiting professor in São Paulo in 2022.

These and other opportunities were supported by letters and advice from my dear mentors Bill Anthes, Wendy Bellion, Janet Berlo, and Terry

Smith. Janet has given more time and love than anyone to my work. I am honored and grateful to be in her luminous orbit.

I received helpful feedback on the ideas in this book during invited lectures at the Courtauld Institute of Art in 2021, Department of History of Art and Architecture at Boston University in 2021, Department of History of Art and Architecture at Harvard University in 2019, and Visual and Media Culture Colloquia Series at the University of California, Santa Cruz, in 2018. I appreciate additional invitations to present this material at symposia and conferences such as Belatedness and Historiographies of North American Art at the Courtauld Institute for Art in 2023, Breaking the Chains: The Legacy of Oscar Howe at the Portland Museum of Art in 2023, Revolutionary Romances: Into the Cold—Alternative Artistic Trajectories into (Post-)Communist Europe at the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen in 2022, Environmental Diplomacy: Exploring Transprofessional Contributions to Global Survival at the Grace School of Applied Diplomacy at DePaul University in 2021, Feminism in American Art History at CASVA in 2020, Boundary Trouble: Self-Taught Artists and American Avant-Gardes at CASVA in 2018, The Buffalo in the Livingroom: Fritz Scholder and Contemporary Native Art at the Plains Art Museum in 2017, Fritz Scholder and the Art World at the Denver Art Museum in 2016, and Shifting Terrain: American Art in a Transnational Context at SAAM in 2015. Early ideas were also shared at conferences of the Native American Art Studies Association, Native American and Indigenous Studies Association, and College Art Association. Too many colleagues to name shared their expertise and hospitality at these events. Bill Anthes, Kathleen Ash-Milby, Julia Tatiana Bailey, Emily Burns, Lynne Cooke, David Peters Corbett, Amelia Goerlitz, John Lukavic, Kathleen Reinhardt, and David Wellman deserve special mention.

My early research and related ideas were published as articles in *American Art*, *The Art Bulletin*, and *Journal of Curatorial Studies*, and as chapters in *Fritz Scholder: Super Indian, 1967–1980* and *Art for a New Understanding: Native Voices, 1950s to Now*. I thank the many reviewers and editors who contributed big-picture ideas and fine-grain edits to help my work shine. Nowhere is this truer than at Duke University Press, where Ken Wissoker's vision has shaped radical new scholarship in Indigenous studies. Editorial associate Ryan Kendall patiently answered all my questions, development editor James Moore assisted with my successful application for a Wyeth Foundation publication grant

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I honor my grandma Eula, my cousin Taylor, my dad Robert, and my uncle Joe, who died while I was writing this book. These beloved kin remain a part of me and everything that I do. I leaned on the deep love and support of my strong, creative mother, Ann Horton, and my brilliant, inventive brother, Zach Horton. My family also grew joyfully during the course of this work. My darling husband, Jon Watts, gave me the best gift of listening deeply. I'm thankful that his many sweet people, especially Maggie O'Neill and Al Watts, have welcomed me into their lives.



INTRODUCTION

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AT THE AMERICAN LIBRARY in Bucharest in 1972, an oil painting of a larger-than-life Native American man holding a befeathered ceremonial pipe loomed over the heads of two men in dark suits. Standing beside Romanian painter Constantin Piliuta, the library director Robert K. Geis introduced the traveling exhibition, *Two American Painters: Fritz Scholder and T. C. Cannon*, by lauding art's possibilities for "strengthening the friendship between our two peoples"—that is, Americans and Romanians.¹ Yet *Indian and Rhinoceros* (1968) by painter Fritz Scholder (1937–2005), an enrolled member of the La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians, introduced an unsettling history of Indigenous *earth diplomacy* into the binary logic of Cold War statecraft (plate 1). Before and during the colonization of the Americas, Native leaders foregrounded other-than-human beings and systems—plants, animals, rivers, mountains, weather, and stars—in their negotiations with strangers. They mobilized rituals, regalia, and gifts to forge durable political contracts founded on kinship and reciprocity with all aspects of a living universe. Beginning in the seventeenth century, the smoking of sacred pipes and gifting of peace medals consecrated treaties between Indigenous and colonial nations.² *Indian and Rhinoceros* conjures an ensuing practice of painting and photographing Native leaders displaying the material arts of diplomacy during their negotiations with the United States.³ Initially made



I.1

Painter Constantin Piliuta (*left*) and Robert K. Geis (*right*), director of the American Library, stand before Fritz Scholder's painting, *Indian and Rhinoceros*, at the opening of *Two American Painters: Fritz Scholder and T. C. Cannon* at the American Library in Bucharest, Romania, 1972. Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, DC, SIA2015-000190.

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I.2

Southern Cheyenne Chief Wolf Robe with a ceremonial pipe in hand, wearing a silver Benjamin Harrison peace medal, which he received from the federal government in 1890 for assisting the Cherokee Commission in negotiations for the transfer of land, 1904. Silver gelatin print, 42.9 × 35.3 cm. Library of Congress LOT 4863, no. 15. Photograph by Gerthard Sisters.

to commemorate encounters between dignitaries, such portraits circulated as ethnographic curiosities and countercultural icons in American print culture following the federal government's violent campaign to remove Native nations from their ancestral homelands in the nineteenth century.⁴

Scholder painted diplomatic contracts between Indigenous nations and the United States in the wake of a fresh instance of their violation. In 1953, Congress formalized policies known as Indian Termination, which included canceling lingering treaty promises to Native nations, relocating individuals to cities, and opening Indigenous lands to resource development.⁵ Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) administrators claimed that poor, culturally distinct, and politically autonomous Native communities were “hothouses for communism” and resumed a longstanding process of assimilating them into capitalism.⁶ Indian Country was made to host mining operations and nuclear detonations to support the Cold War military-industrial complex, inaugurating toxic forms of “slow violence” that continue to permeate Indigenous bodies and ecologies as I write.⁷ The US government's treatment of Native people and land mirrored the top-down modernization policies it promoted in its dealings with foreign governments during the Cold War, marking a sustained effort to advance extractive frontiers around the world. Termination catalyzed a wave of political organizing that culminated in the establishment of the American Indian Movement (AIM) while Scholder was completing *Indian and Rhinoceros*. He arrived with the painting in Romania just as AIM members formed the Trail of Broken Treaties and stormed the BIA headquarters in Washington, DC.⁸

Given the stark politics surrounding it, the painting has been read as a straightforward critique of the BIA, the government agency responsible for decades of Indigenous wreckage. But *Indian and Rhinoceros* works through a more complex condition that is my concern throughout this book: the role of Indigenous diplomats—and the arts that embody their more-than-human relations—within international relations. Scholder ended his tenure as a BIA employee (he worked as a painting instructor at the federally funded Institute of American Indian Arts [IAIA] from 1964 to 1969), only to travel with another government entity, the US Information Agency (USIA).⁹ Simultaneous with Indian Termination in 1953, the USIA took charge of a vast overseas propaganda machine and enlisted Indigenous American arts in the ideological battle between capitalism and Communism abroad. For the ensuing two decades, exhibitions and artist tours were commissioned as part of a broad, paternalistic project

to manipulate images of Native Americans in the face of mounting condemnation from abroad. The US government was challenged to answer criticism of the colonization of Indigenous people and land, circulated by the Soviet Union and its allies through news media and popular culture as a warning to countries deemed vulnerable to US influence. Equally, the USIA sought to deflect international attention away from Indigenous political organizing that accelerated in response to Termination. While Native activists looked to decolonization movements abroad to bolster their demands for land-based sovereignty and justice, federal agents promulgated narratives of benevolent modernization and multiculturalism overseas.¹⁰ The Indigenous diplomat in this story—the one bearing the pipe *and* the one brandishing a paintbrush—accepts an alternative assignment described by philosopher Bruno Latour: “He sees that the official attachment is not the one to be ready to die for” and sets out to compose an altogether different cosmopolitics.¹¹

Earth Diplomacy answers a dearth of scholarship about Native American art at the intersection of Termination and the Cold War. It models an ecocritical art history centered on Indigenous makers in a formative period when modernization mandates, extractive industries, and radical movements were accelerating worldwide.¹² More broadly, this book positions Indigenous diplomatic arts as agents of a necessary project to reimagine our broken system of international relations. I linger on *Indian and Rhinoceros* at the start in order to frame the broader ecopolitical commitments of the project. The painting joins a diverse array of Indigenous creative practices that traveled around the world under the auspices of the USIA and the Department of State (DOS). These arts exceed familiar accounts of American art and diplomacy during the Cold War, which typically center the interests of the US government, its corporate allies, and art world elites. They foreground Indigenous Americans, along with their other-than-human kin, value systems, political priorities, and techniques of persuasion, as creative forces shaping international relations. I propose that Native arts and artists routinely bent Cold War tours toward an alternative project of revitalizing Indigenous diplomatic modalities premised on reciprocal alliances with earth kin.

Indian and Rhinoceros specifically engaged its geopolitical context by way of an intermedial analogy. Painting has been described as a disturbance of Pop art’s entanglements with late capitalism because the auratic medium absorbs some effects of popular media while maintaining a reflective distance from others.¹³ Scholder exploited the polysemy of

that intersection by combining visible brushstrokes with clichéd imagery, hard edges, superficial depth, and a cheery palette. He mapped Pop art's famed ambiguity as neither wholly critical nor entirely complicit onto the Indigenous diplomat, an insider-outsider necessarily bound up with the settler colonial institutions that exploit Native land and bodies.¹⁴ *Indian and Rhinoceros* quotes the appropriative gestures by which images of Plains leaders were plucked from the life-worlds of their subjects and endlessly reproduced to serve agendas infused with imperialist nostalgia.¹⁵ The diplomat turns his back on the titular rhino's rear end and an all-caps acronym, "BIA," yet the purple banner on which the letters float takes a sharp bite out of his shoulder. He looks as if he has been pasted into the indeterminate middle layer of a cut-paper collage. At the same time, the man is buttressed by regalia drawn from a Native art history in which the painted image conjoins plant and animal bodies to manifest—to *present*—more-than-human sources of protective power. *Indian and Rhinoceros* thus evinces a "double commitment" to colonial systems of mediation and Indigenous frameworks of immanence.¹⁶ More precisely, the work alerts us to a modern political ecology in which these seemingly incompatible systems cannot be readily disentangled. The painting at once invokes and arrests the Indigenous diplomat's de-racination through the chain of mechanical reproduction to make him yet again the agent of an unpredictable relationship.

What about the rhinoceros in the library? I see the looming pachyderm as a third term—and thus an opportunity to establish a new relational pattern—beyond the treacherous binary, *Indian and United States*. The five extant species that once ranged across Africa and South Asia were decimated by trophy hunting in the nineteenth century and illegal poaching in the twentieth.¹⁷ Scholder's variant most closely resembles *Rhinoceros sondaicus*, a single-horned, heavily armored species confined to Ujung Kulon National Park in Indonesia on the brink of extinction as I write. The last-known member in Vietnam roamed a region ravaged by the wartime defoliant herbicide Agent Orange, only to be shot for her horn in 2010.¹⁸ Like Indigenous peoples, rhinoceroses have endured Euro-American colonization, a violence registered by antiwar demonstrators as Scholder painted through the deadliest and costliest year of the Vietnam War.¹⁹ His international hosts may also have thought about Franco-Romanian playwright Eugène Ionesco's popular work *Rhinocéros* (1959), in which the inhabitants of a provincial French town become beasts in a satire of the dual spread of fascism and Communism across Eurasia.²⁰ By pairing the animal with an iconic chiefly

negotiator, Scholder conjured the global, more-than-human scope of Cold War relations, an arena in which long-standing Native “struggles for land and life” intersected warfare, ecocides, and decolonization throughout the majority world.²¹

FRAMING *EARTH DIPLOMACY*

Earth Diplomacy examines an array of Indigenous creative forms—paintings, textiles, adornment, architecture, and artistic demonstrations—that traveled across two decades and five continents under the auspices of the US government’s Cold War offensive. These arts were framed by a dominant practice of international relations that furthered the exclusion and exploitation of a vast majority of planetary life. Contemporary artists answered these conditions by engendering new practices of what I call *earth diplomacy*: sensuous material exchanges that invite political alliances inclusive of the land. While Native arts necessarily negotiated the colonial conditions of their making, they were enlivened with affect and spirit in excess of government scripts. They bore a potential to initiate cosmopolitical relationships guided by more-than-human kinship and reciprocity in lieu of extractive modernization projects that were accelerating around the world. I argue that this creative continuum subtly but profoundly deformed the United States’ efforts to assimilate the whole earth during the Cold War.²² At the same time, the aims of *Earth Diplomacy* reach beyond the period and subject matter of my study. Resonating with Indigenous studies scholarship on Traditional Ecological Knowledge, my phrase *earth diplomacy* specifies the transformative potential of Indigenous cosmologies whenever they are activated by Native arts in geopolitical arenas worldwide.²³ This book illuminates arts’ capacity to revitalize long-standing Indigenous cultures of reciprocity, toward cultivating a radically different future for international relations.

A few examples of traveling artists and artworks that do not figure prominently in my study serve to indicate the diversity of Indigenous aesthetic preoccupations, political affiliations, and sites of engagement during the Cold War. In 1956, Onondaga-adopted Lenape painter and performer Tom Two Arrows (Tomas Dorsey) shared Haudenosaunee dances, instruments, and stories across Asia while “villagers—Ainus of Japan, Koreans, Formosans—demonstrated their ancient dances for the American visitor.”²⁴ In 1960, members of the All Pakistan Women’s



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Begum Tazeen Faridi, secretary general of the All Pakistan Women's Association, and Safia Khan, principal of New Town High School, examine baskets included in *Pacific Northwest Indian Artifacts*, Karachi, Pakistan, 1960. Smithsonian Institution Archives, image #SIA2017-002063.

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I.4

Fred and Alice Kabotie with “Mrs. Garwell,” a local translator at the World Agricultural Fair in New Delhi, 1960. Collection of Hattie Kabotie Lomayesva.



I.5

A lunch box, serving bowl, silks, and other textiles that Alice and Fred Kabotie brought home from their trip to India in 1960. Collection of Hattie Kabotie Lomayesva. Photograph by Jessica L. Horton.

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Association handled Yurok and Karuk textiles from the exhibition *Pacific Northwest Indian Artifacts* with apparent delight in Karachi, Pakistan. That same year, a headline proclaimed, “Indians Excited over American ‘Indians’!” as Alice and Fred Kabotie created Hopi baskets and silver jewelry at the World Agricultural Fair in New Delhi, India.²⁵ The couple brought home Indian textiles and metalwork along with a hand-shot film documenting Fred Kabotie’s interactions with Brahmins (Hindu priests), hinting at the rich dialogical potential of such journeys.²⁶ Numerous other celebrated and lesser-known artists, including Harrison Begay, Lorencita Atencio Bird, Darryl Blackman, Helen Hardin, Allan Houser, Oscar Howe, Solomon McCombs, George Morrison, Tonita Peña, Fred Stevens, Bertha Stevens, and Pablita Velarde, nurtured the resilience of Indigenous relational practices in the unlikely shape of Cold War tours.²⁷ The chapters of *Earth Diplomacy* span the formal and cultural breadth of Native arts that traveled abroad, while providing fine-grain accounts of how earth diplomacy came to inhabit particular constellations of artworks, bodies, and environments.

The arts of *Earth Diplomacy* are united less by a particular material or formal quality than by a common relational ethos, an inheritance from distinct Indigenous systems of knowledge and governance that artists adapted to the challenges of Termination and the Cold War. I regularly refer to these arts as “modernisms” in an effort to capture their shared intervention in period modernization projects while appreciating the heterogeneity of their formal, material, and political affiliations. For the purposes of this book, modernization refers to myriad “processes, systems, and ideologies that beget modernity,” such as industrialization, urbanization, assimilation of bodies into labor markets, and intensifying resource extraction necessary to feed a relentless drive for progress.²⁸ The United States forcefully promoted free-market capitalism as the ideal pathway to modernization in both Native and foreign homelands during the Cold War. This offensive entailed a range of tactics, including Termination policies, coups to install business-friendly governments in the majority world backed by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and soft power demonstrations of the superiority of American culture abroad. Canonical abstract expressionist paintings and Indigenous “crafts” were equally implicated in the US propaganda frontiers.

In its various guises, United States–led modernization was a legacy and continuation of European colonialism that remapped the globe in earlier centuries. Here, it is useful to cite Dené political scientist Glen Coulthard’s clear-minded reformulation of Karl Marx’s theory of primitive

accumulation to address settler colonial processes of dispossession in the latter twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Just as the transition from feudalism to capitalism in Western Europe relied on the conquest of new land and labor to “violently strip—through ‘conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder’—noncapitalist producers, communities and societies from their means of production and subsistence,” so too did the United States’ Cold War offensive seek to transform nonconforming communities into capitalist lifeways by whatever means necessary at home and abroad.²⁹ Yet my study recognizes the extent to which the Soviet Union and its allies, as well as numerous nonaligned nations, also invested in a race to modernize at the vast expense of human and ecological health, regardless of the ideological banner flown above. The Native modernisms in *Earth Diplomacy* thus constitute critical interventions in a broader system of international relations shaped by competition over *how* (not whether) to modernize. This so-called balance of power has eclipsed alternative cosmopolitics and furthered the exploitation of the earth and its many bodies.

This book approaches Native modernisms as translators of Indigenous relational systems that were incompatible with a capitalist-Communist binary, even as they were entangled in the Cold War modernization battlefield. Admittedly imperfect, *modernisms* is, to my mind, the most critical and capacious term available for the profoundly dialogical arts appearing on these pages. Here, I draw upon a substantial body of scholarship that insists on the capacity of the *s* to decenter a Euro-American modernist canon and contest its underlying spatiotemporal logics in the writing of global art histories.³⁰ The *s* is not a request for belated inclusion, a formula for yet another multiculturalism that renders radical difference familiar, safe, and sellable within a normative framework of colonial capitalism. Art history can no longer harbor a model in which aesthetic theories and formal innovations emanate from centers in Europe and the United States and arrive in Indigenous and majority world peripheries through the mobility of colonial agents. Nor is it enough to narrate the emergence of a purportedly decentered global contemporary art world after 1989. According to the *Mapping Modernisms: Art, Indigeneity, Colonialism* coeditors, Ruth B. Phillips and Elizabeth Harney, the *s* insists that myriad makers have long shared and shaped uneven global conditions of modernity—the often-devastating circumstances resulting from colonization and modernization—from within their own dynamic times, places, knowledge systems, and traditions of making.³¹ Their arts have also traveled the world and affected

far-flung people and places. Such dialogical, world-making processes are perhaps most legible-at-a-glance in the work of the Indigenous painters who bookend *Earth Diplomacy*, given that all trained and several taught in art programs that encouraged self-conscious engagement with Indigenous, Euro-American, and majority world art histories (see chapters 1, 5, and the conclusion). But those Indigenous artists whom the USIA categorized as “craftspeople” also reimaged customary arts of sandpainting, weaving, and tipi-making to respond to the damages wrought by modernization in their own communities and around the world (see chapters 2, 3, and 4). In each case, I demonstrate how specific formal and material innovations furthered the translation of Indigenous cosmologies into international relations to inaugurate processes of healing and rebalancing.

Following the transhistorical prompt in Scholder’s painting, my approach to artistic modernisms on the global terrain of the Cold War is energized by much older Indigenous material cultures of diplomacy. Native leaders have long relied on affectively rich arts to mediate vast differences and facilitate peaceful cohabitation with other Indigenous nations, European polities, and eventually the United States. Indigenous rituals, regalia, and gifts connected disparate human agents to the potency of other-than-human bodies and systems, engendering familial relations of reciprocity with the earth. Native diplomatic arts did not merely supplement treaties, the written colonial documents of these encounters. They functioned as sensuous contracts in their own right, embodying and extending relational values integral to Indigenous geopolitical frameworks. Native arts navigated global networks and implicated diverse communities in processes of translation, whether or not their makers traveled. They acted as agents of long-term and far-flung encounters intended to transform strangers into kin. These idioms survived and adapted to waves of modern US Indian policy designed to remake autonomous peoples into the dispossessed subjects of capitalism. Indigenous American modernisms’ hard-won continuities with historical practices of diplomacy were enhanced by their frequent juxtaposition with customary material culture—Dakota pipes, Tlingit house poles, Diné textiles, Pueblo pottery—in US-sponsored traveling exhibitions. *Earth Diplomacy* draws upon long-standing Indigenous political ecologies and examines their creative redeployment during the Cold War.

From the passage of Termination policy in 1953 to the AIM occupation of Wounded Knee in 1973, this book spans a period of intensifying

political radicalism that paralleled the federal government's export of Native American art. While AIM is most often recounted as a series of direct-action spectacles demanding justice from the settler colonial nation, *Earth Diplomacy* recovers an expanded cultural field of diplomacy that intersected, but was not equivalent to such contestation.³² The United States' longstanding denial of Indigenous nations as political equals fueled diverse forms of Native movement-building, including sustained diplomatic negotiations with those in power, that were overshadowed by the militancy of AIM. As historian Daniel M. Cobb has explored, Indigenous leaders defended their rights to land and sovereignty throughout the period of my study, often borrowing from the language of Cold War international relations and decolonization efforts abroad to make their case.³³ While AIM participants confronted the tyranny of US-Indian relations head-on, few artists discussed on these pages were directly involved in period activism. Some, like Scholder and Oscar Howe, maintained ambivalent relationships with the BIA, the USIA, and the DOS. Others' work was sent abroad without their knowledge, making them unwitting participants in Cold War diplomacy.

An overly simplistic characterization of such differences might read as follows: while activism responds to systemic oppression with resistance, diplomacy invests in the alchemy of kinship. Yet in practice, there is no hard boundary between such seemingly opposite modalities. Indigenous relationalities are not reducible to a binary choice between contestation and accommodation, terms set by colonial nations invested in a violent and competitive international imaginary. As Dakota legal scholar and activist Vine Deloria, Jr., stated, "restoring the old ways" and "a return to the ceremonial uses of the land" informed direct action throughout the 1960s and 1970s.³⁴ The revitalization of pipe smoking and other rituals knit distinct Native communities together in and beyond the purview of AIM, suggesting that earth diplomacy was an essential ingredient in government-sponsored initiatives and Indigenous activism alike. I argue that Cold War tours of Indigenous American arts helped to carry Native political ecologies through the devastations of Termination and into a new era of diplomatic alliance-building on Indigenous terms, marked by the establishment of the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC) of AIM and the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) in 1974.

Ensuring the vitality of Native cultures of diplomacy across the ruptures of Termination was an enormously challenging project that entailed ideological flexibility, political pragmatism, and visionary creativity in the service of a greater holism. This book centers techniques

of persuasion in the arts that complement other forms of political engagement, theorizing the sensorial toolkit of artistic modernisms as a powerful means of revitalizing Indigenous ecological and spiritual values. Art invests in earth diplomacy by connecting far-flung people to each other and the land, drawing upon more-than-human sources of power to generate the conditions for collective renewal and rebalancing. My account thus appreciates the fraught nature of artists' positions vis-à-vis the federal government without reinforcing a limited political choice "for" or "against" the settler colonial nation. *Earth Diplomacy* holds that although the United States has exercised a powerful influence, it is by no means an exclusive arbiter of Indigenous modernities. I delimit US hegemony to address what dominant narratives of the Cold War have silenced—namely, Indigenous and other-than-human agents' reshaping of diplomatic milieus through the material exchanges that attached them to others.

The modernisms found on these pages are also not aligned in a one-to-one relationship to Indigenous governments of the period. Historically contingent, circumscribed by colonialism, and often contested by their own citizens, Native leaders were under tremendous pressure to pursue modernization projects in order for their communities to persist as political collectives recognized by the United States. Born from the traumas of Indian Removal, the US government's management of the reservation system entailed efforts to sever leadership from the authority once vested in spiritual knowledge-keepers and institute patriarchy in lieu of kinship- and consensus-based political systems. Federal authorities further fragmented Native communities by diminishing the respected status and creative power of women and two-spirit individuals. (*Two-spirit* is a contemporary, pan-Indigenous term that describes a range of culturally specific nonbinary gender identities.) A defining feature of twentieth-century settler colonialism was the increasing alignment of Indigenous institutions with corporate interests; whether willed or coerced, these partnerships deviated from the diverse earth relationships that characterized ancestral lifeways.³⁵

In light of this painful history of colonial assimilation, Native studies scholars have argued that Indigenous nations must reinvest in customary forms of more-than-human kinship, spirituality, consensus-based governance, and the leadership of women and two-spirit people. Without such radical commitments, Native governments risk perpetuating the heteropatriarchal, ecocidal regimes of colonial nation-states.³⁶

Kha-’Po Owingeh (Santa Clara Pueblo) scholar Gregory Cajete writes that “the revitalization of Indigenous knowledge . . . provides the most direct route for Native sovereignty,” particularly teachings that support “the natural world as a vital participant and co-creator of community.”³⁷ *Earth Diplomacy* looks beyond formal political institutions and decolonial activism to consider the expansive ecopolitical imagination vested in Native arts. I follow the lead of Jolene Rickard, Heather Igloliorte, and other Native studies scholars in grasping creative praxis as a guarantor of resilient forms of Indigenous geopolitics. Art invests in the vitality of relational systems that are otherwise systematically oppressed in a modern international sphere designed to serve colonial logics of sovereignty.³⁸ The forms discussed in this book invite a capacious gathering of more-than-human communities across a variety of scales—an earth diplomacy that inhabits and overflows the historically contingent nations and relations that constitute our continuing international (dis)order.

Such expansive relational practices persist in animating both institutional and radical Native politics in the twenty-first century. Consider the United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People in 2007, which culminated decades of lobbying by Native American activists and leaders alike to affirm the “urgent need to respect and promote the inherent rights of indigenous peoples which derive from their political, economic, and social structures and from their cultures, spiritual traditions, histories and philosophies, especially their rights to their lands, territories, and resources.”³⁹ This unprecedented, if nonbinding declaration has its roots Haudenosaunee demands for recognition at the League of Nations in the 1920s and the lobbying of trans-Indigenous alliances such as the aforementioned WCIP and IITC at the United Nations in the 1970s.⁴⁰ In those cases, delegates drew upon the power of wampum belts, ceremonial pipes, regalia, singing, and drumming to generate diplomatic assemblages and affect political outcomes.⁴¹ Intertribal coalitions have also worked outside of normative international institutions for the liberation of Native peoples, lands, and waterways from capitalism and colonialism. For example, The Red Nation, established in 2014, builds transnational alliances based on “a politics of caretaking and affirmation . . . being given to us by our other-than-human relatives” that is specifically embodied in *k’é* (Diné kinship).⁴² *Earth Diplomacy* recovers a forgotten art history that supported the emergence of global Indigenous justice movements that are flourishing in many forms today.

As I write, diplomacy is thoroughly out of fashion, at once ideologically suspect and practicably disposable. In everyday parlance, the phrase “How diplomatic!” signals an uncritical and disingenuous passivity. Thanks in part to its recent manipulation by Cold War competitors, diplomacy is often confused with propaganda and stripped of its cultural and creative means to engender peaceful cohabitation.

At stake in the diminishment of diplomacy is the survival of life on the planet we share. “As soon as we begin to concern ourselves with the climate, with what belongs to the land . . . we are divided” observes Latour, such that it is impossible to sit down at the negotiating table and come to an agreement for the common good.⁴³ Philosopher Isabelle Stengers similarly considers the futility of diplomats at the UN Climate Change Conferences as evidence that the global ascendancy of capitalism has destroyed “the feeling of interdependence as an operative political affect.” Human and more-than-human relationships have been reduced to the predatory interests of wealth accumulation in lieu of affiliations founded in obligation to a collective. Under these conditions, she writes, “we can bid farewell not only to diplomacy but also, I am convinced, to the possibility that humans can, on this earth, safeguard any future worthy of the name.” Stengers goes on to map an alternative role for vernacular diplomats as “activators of the imagination,” storytellers who diverge from nation-state agendas to renew an atrophied sense of gratitude that humans exist thanks to others.⁴⁴ While I share a similar conclusion about artists, her universalizing account of an affective deficit must be tempered with recognition that Indigenous “cultures of gratitude” have persisted alongside and *within* failed modern institutions of diplomacy. Native stories, Potawatomi plant ecologist Robin Wall Kimmerer maintains, are filled with warnings about the dire spiritual and material consequences when humans forget to honor and return the abundant gifts from the earth. “In story, the spring dries up, the corn doesn’t grow, the animals do not return, and the legions of offended plants and animals and rivers rise up against the ones who neglected gratitude.”⁴⁵ Predictive of the damages wrought by colonial capitalism, Indigenous teachings on reciprocity guide the arts of earth diplomacy explored throughout this book.

I maintain that in order to reanimate a beleaguered framework of diplomacy, it is imperative to confront a history in which the knowledges of diverse peoples have been excluded from the realm of political

persuasion. It is necessary, in other words, to delimit the process by which modern nation-states have “colonized the spaces of diplomacy,” in geographer Jason Dittmer’s words.⁴⁶ As a growing number of scholars have observed, the apparent bankruptcy of the term reflects a longer history of co-optation by powerful modern nation-states to serve essentialist and exclusionary nationalisms. Consider, for example, the influential phrase *soft power*, coined by international relations scholar Joseph Nye to describe state-led efforts to instrumentalize culture for the purposes of moral persuasion. In Nye’s words, soft power names “the ability to get what you want from others . . . with attraction.”⁴⁷ His case in point is the Cold War, during which the United States and the Soviet Union marshaled culture to expand their spheres of influence abroad, seeking to attract allies and curb each other’s authority. As the cultural arm of an arsenal that includes coercive measures such as economic sanctions and military force (hard power), soft power facilitates alliances to serve national self-interest. During the Cold War, soft power functioned as a vehicle for exporting the same forms of extractive capitalism that the United States imposed on Indigenous American nations.

Soft power is inextricable from a broader “balance of power” logic, a venerated Euro-American political theory that has profoundly shaped international relations for more than half a century. Its many scholarly and practical uses share a common definition of power as an anthropocentric capacity to physically or ideologically dominate others. Power is dangerously concentrated in nation-states that are assumed to be self-interested, competitive, accumulative, and expansionist. The hegemonic ambitions of any one player are thus “balanced” by the rise of powerful competitors and the formation of counter-alliances.⁴⁸ This cynical, paranoid imaginary achieved a “startling renaissance . . . not only in the pages of learned journals, but in the daily press and in radio” during the Cold War.⁴⁹ It was spectacularly materialized in the nuclear arms race as well as the cultural contests between the United States, the Soviet Union, and their shifting allies. The euphemism, “balance,” occluded such nations’ common policy of exploiting Indigenous people and other-than-human beings in pursuit of extractive dominion.⁵⁰ Although increasingly debated after 1989, variations on the theory persist in shaping—and severely limiting—both the study and practice of diplomacy today. This narrow construct has eclipsed the diversity and dynamism of diplomatic relations as they are negotiated “on the ground.”⁵¹

The co-optation of diplomacy during the Cold War perpetuated longstanding patterns of Euro-American colonization that worked to expel

a multitude of cosmopolitical traditions from the governance of world affairs. During the early modern period of expansion, European nations increasingly excluded from political negotiations all those who they determined did not possess territorial sovereignty, or statehood. Denial was an active means of disempowering Indigenous peoples.⁵² This world-shaping process is evident throughout the Americas, wherein disrespect for Native autonomy and exploitation of land remain profoundly intertwined. When Europeans arrived in the Americas, they encountered myriad culturally and politically distinct Indigenous groups interrelated through conflict, diplomacy, and trade. Following Christopher Columbus's fateful first voyage, the Catholic Church supported the Doctrine of Discovery by divvying up hitherto unknown territories among Spanish and Portuguese competitors based upon their presumed rights of discovery. Following the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, the papal power of distribution gave way to the pragmatic, albeit often ignored, principle of "effective occupation" of such spaces. However, this concept could not be applied uniformly and unilaterally across their expanding empires, as the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, French, and English had to bargain with powerful alliances of Native nations as they vied for dominion in the Americas.⁵³ Treaties acknowledged that Indigenous people were present in the land before Europeans and—at least in theory—possessed sovereign rights to be respected within the emerging international order. While negotiating power existed on both sides, a goal of such arrangements for Euro-American nations was to accumulate capital through resource dominion. In *Nation to Nation: Treaties Between the United States and American Indian Nations*, historian Robert N. Clinton writes unflinchingly that "treaties with Indian Nations served as a Euro-American legal rationalization and ratification of the colonial dispossession of preexisting civilizations of their aboriginal homelands."⁵⁴ In practice, furthermore, Europeans rarely granted treaties with Native nations the status of contractual relationships between equals. Produced amid vast cultural misunderstandings and forms of coercion, treaties set in motion patterns of violability that the United States furthered in the twentieth century.

There were 368 treaties negotiated and signed by US and tribal leaders between 1777 and 1868.⁵⁵ Treaties remained a primary vehicle for land cessation, usually through sale. At first, active Native participation was a hallmark of the treaty process, as in other nation-to-nation agreements that the United States formed with sovereign nations outside its own borders.⁵⁶ In this context, diplomatic relations were vital

to the mediation of cultural and political differences in order to arrive at agreeable means of being-in-common. For Indigenous nations, diplomacy typically did not end with the signing of treaties; rather, it was an ongoing and dynamic process of exchange with the goal of maintaining positive relations. However, the situation shifted significantly after the War of 1812, which mitigated the threat of Native alliances with Britain. Increasingly, the federal government dictated relationships with Native people through preformed policies that were unilaterally—and often duplicitously—enacted. Relegated to the final stage of tribal consent, treaties were stripped of their relational richness and instrumentalized as tools of westward expansion. The violence of Indian Removal, the establishment of a reservation system, and the passage of aggressive assimilation measures were legitimized in part by asymmetrical treaty-making. In 1903, the Supreme Court dealt a final blow, ruling that Congress had plenary power to legislate for Indians, including the right to unilaterally abrogate treaties without tribal consent.⁵⁷ While the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 offered temporary reprieve by reducing federal intervention in Native governance, the path was cleared for the subsequent Termination era.

Products of profound power imbalances, treaties nonetheless speak to the persistence and dynamism of Indigenous cultures of diplomacy amid the ongoing colonization of the Americas. While American Indian political organizations were tremendously diverse upon contact with Europe, historians note that many governed by consensus, with values of cooperation, respect, and reciprocity guiding relationships among human and other-than-human constituents.⁵⁸ Power was typically not divinely appointed, hierarchically organized, nor centered exclusively on human individuals and institutions. Rather, as Deloria, Jr. has expressed, aptitude and meaning derived “directly from the world around [Native people], from their relationships with other forms of life.”⁵⁹ He names extended kinship networks, which include human, animal, plant, and stone relatives beyond the bounds of biological descent, as powerful generators of political efficacy and responsibility. It follows that customary practices of diplomacy did not tend to support the elevation of treaty partners above the earth in binary and hierarchical relationships. Indigenous diplomats worked to position Euro-Americans and their political institutions in a larger network of other-than-human persons with whom it was paramount to maintain good relations.

Rituals, regalia, gifts, and other arts facilitated diplomatic relations through unstable processes of translation and exchange. The practice of

Cherokee carpentry, according to art historian Mark Watson, provided a model for “persuasive, open-ended solicitation of alliances and political commitment” that shaped postcontact dependencies between European and Indigenous nations.⁶⁰ “Exchange was a complex symphony, attuned to the nuances of social life,” anthropologist and curator Castle McLaughlin writes of carved pipes, quilled and beaded clothing, and other materials that representatives from Eastern Woodlands and Plains nations gifted to the United States. Native delegates put these arts “into motion in order to pledge and affirm alliances, demonstrate status and power, leverage negotiations, secure resources and forgive transgressions.”⁶¹ Rickard asserts that the imperatives of Haudenosaunee diplomacy have produced a continuous tradition of “visual sovereignty” in the form of the Two Row Wampum, an abstract representation of peaceable relations between two nations as vessels traveling side-by-side down the same river. Wampum arts embody the values of respect and reciprocity that connect diverse human groups to other beings, land, water, and cosmos—“philosophical principles that transcend the colonial mythology of . . . the modern nation-state construct.”⁶² Art historian Annette de Stetcher similarly notes that for Huron-Wendat people, “the alliance that each wampum represented was a living one; the ‘word,’ the terms spoken by each ambassador, had a life by virtue of the ongoing international interaction that it represented” and was kept vital for future generations through oratory arts.⁶³ Often made from the bodies of earth kin, Indigenous diplomatic arts facilitate the translation of Indigenous political ecologies, the adoption of strangers into more-than-human families, and the instantiation of long-term caretaking responsibilities for all involved.

With apparently unwitting irony, the USIA circulated historical gifts and ritual tools alongside the contemporary Indigenous arts that gave them new life. For example, among Diné textiles and Pueblo pots exhibited in Bogotá, Stockholm, and Munich in 1962 appeared an undated *c’qnúpa wak’á* (sacred pipe). Attributed to the “Sioux” (Očhéthi Šakówiŋ, the seven allied bands of Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota people who compose the Great Sioux Nation), it was made of *inyayša* (pipe-stone), a deep red argillite quarried from *čhaynúŋp-ok’é* (known today as Pipestone National Monument in Minnesota).⁶⁴ In the text accompanying the display, visitors learned that “the peace pipe was used when Indians met together or when the white men conferred with them over such matters as treaties and the acquisition of land. The area from which the pipestone came was held by the Indians as sacred ground where all



I.6

Sioux Peace Pipe. 37.75 × 5 in. Materials and location unknown. *Back left*: Maria Tafaya (Santa Clara), pottery bowl. 8.5 × 10 in. diameter. *Back right*: Lucy M. Lewis (Acoma), pottery bowl. 6 × 8 in. diameter. SIA Project # 64–245, Folder: USIA RU 321, Office of Program Support, National Museum of American Art, 1956–1981, with related records from 1947, Box 87, Folder 1: Sandpainting and Handcraft Indian Exhibition.

Indians met in peace.”⁶⁵ Unlike the USIA label, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate citizen and feminist scholar Kim TallBear uses the present-tense to describe the ongoing relevance of a Dakota story in which a flood killed an entire people and pooled their blood in *čhaŋnúŋp-ok’é*; hence, “the stone is sometimes spoken of as a relative.”⁶⁶ A prayerful diplomatic tool carved from pipestone is likewise alive, with the capacity to bond those who smoke it by connecting them with the whole of the cosmos. By inviting newcomers to pass the pipe, Očhéthi Šakówiŋ dignitaries draw them into an expansive fold of *mitákuye oyás’iŋ* (all our relations).

The presence of this animate being in a US government–sponsored art exhibition that traveled abroad at the height of Termination conjured durable Indigenous diplomatic contracts that surpass interpretations of treaties as expendable words and alienable rights. An agreement sealed with smoke is a formalized expression of familial relations that entails reciprocal responsibilities dynamically enacted over the long term.⁶⁷ The pipe further indicates that Indigenous people have continued to nurture such bonds through the circulation of art, centuries after the introduction of written treaties and other legal documents. Thus materialized, Indigenous diplomatic idioms have survived the United States’ repeated,

spectacular violation of treaties. *Earth Diplomacy* proposes that Indigenous American arts breathed new life into the political ecologies pictured in *Indian and Rhinoceros* and materialized in “Sioux Peace Pipe.” Beyond the survival and redefinition of Indigenous communities as sovereign nations, such creative practices worked to rebalance a disordered universe by activating a capacious network of earth kin.

BEYOND COLD WAR AMERICAN ART

In foregrounding occluded Indigenous and other-than-human agents, *Earth Diplomacy* entails a reassessment of the overdetermined relationship between American art and Cold War politics. My account exits a familiar script in which the United States wielded art as an ideological “weapon” in the binary battle between capitalism and Communism, even as it shares the same troubled historical terrain. In *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War*, art historian Serge Guilbaut provided a methodological blueprint for subsequent studies, focused on the critical exposé of nation-centered ideological manipulations and propaganda coups. Building on studies of abstract expressionists’ rise to international prominence in the context of the Cold War by Max Kozloff and Eva Crockett, he issued a corrective to purely formalist interpretations that foregrounds “the social and political factors that enter into aesthetic production.”⁶⁸ Guilbaut established that the careers of canonical artists such as Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning were propelled by ideologies that simultaneously associated creative freedom with an avant-garde revolt against political instrumentalization (particularly the social realisms promoted first by fascist Germany, then by the Soviet Union) and the universal benevolence of capitalism in the image of the United States. The alleged purity of much postwar abstraction was ideologically malleable, the story goes, precisely because it negated a discernible political stance. Art historian Frances Stonor Saunders subsequently mined this vein of ideological critique by exposing the extent to which the CIA covertly manipulated the work of prominent modernists to serve as propaganda in Western Europe in the 1950s and 1960s.⁶⁹ Although the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and businessman, politician, and art collector Nelson Rockefeller are key players in the nefarious public-private partnerships she narrates, no mention is made of their patronage of Native modernisms—an element that shaped the abstract expressionist canon (see chapter 2) while

introducing profound Indigenous differences into the story of Cold War American art.

As historian Gregory Barnhisel emphasizes, such revisionist accounts tend to a construct a sleek, efficient, univocal propaganda machine in lieu of “a large, diverse, and messy set of official and nongovernmental programs” filled with distinct agendas and ample rivalries.⁷⁰ They similarly neglect the multiplicity of artistic practices that were entangled with the Cold War, in which figural traditions endured alongside abstraction and artists pursued their own political commitments and international connections. Historian Michael Krenn has enlarged the topical scope of period studies by mapping an expanse of contested public-private partnerships, highlighting the export of sports, theater, jazz, opera, painting, “folk art,” and more (although Native art is again absent). A major player in my own study, the USIA was charged with winning international “hearts and minds” by advocating for the universal adoption of liberal democracy, capitalism, individualism, freedom, and multiculturalism—an ideological project that appeared clear enough on paper, but was perpetually muddled by contingencies and controversies in both domestic and foreign contexts.⁷¹ Notably, the agency struggled to respond to international queries about racism, as numerous scholars have illuminated in relation to African Americans’ participation in Cold War programs.⁷² Overseas audiences watched civil rights protests unfold while Black athletes, musicians, and painters—“a minority resisting a dominant power through cultural means” in the words of historian Lisa E. Davenport—were paradoxically charged with promoting America.⁷³ Art historian Alex Taylor reminds us that all such actors were more than mere pawns in a game played on high; they were witting collaborators and canny detractors who altered the course of the cultural Cold War.⁷⁴ Conflict emerging from this cacophony led to the near collapse of the international art program in the early 1970s, coinciding with the international prominence of AIM—a confluence that I will explore in the conclusion to *Earth Diplomacy*.⁷⁵

This literature provides a valuable foundation for my study by mapping the ideological frameworks that guided, and at times undermined, alliances between national, corporate, and art world interests. Yet, as is often the case in the historiography of American art, Native makers are a *structuring* absence, an exclusion that shores up the parameters of inquiry and makes certain conceptual possibilities unthinkable. While consistently critical of the United States, much Cold War American art history is marked by an underlying “methodological nationalism” that

naturalizes the nation-state as the primary unit of analyses and the ultimate horizon of cultural imagination.⁷⁶ The voices of powerful individuals and institutions set the diplomatic agenda; others (marginalized communities, other-than-humans, works of art) are left to respond or defect. Even as many postwar historians of American art have embraced transnationalism, trading US exceptionalism for an emphasis on linkages across cultural categories and geopolitical borders, extractive capitalism is an assumed foundation that delimits how such relationships are imagined. Interpretation of diverse postwar modernisms remains hinged to concepts such as freedom, individualism, multiculturalism, and universalism—Western humanist terms mined by nations and corporations on a path to neoliberal globalization. Indigenous knowledges and practices, particularly those in which humans share power, kinship, and responsibility with other beings and systems, are thereby rendered unimaginable.

Without sustained rethinking, Cold War methodological nationalism continues to curb our ability to imagine a different present and future. In so far as it upholds the binary standoff between Communism and capitalism as an exclusive ideological parameter, this approach quietly underwrites a narrative of post-1989 globalization as the inevitable triumph of the latter. The enduring image of a nuclear standoff between superpowers obscures a more fundamental truth: the Cold War accelerated resource exploitation on all sides, precipitating vast humanitarian and environmental crises that threaten the very future of the earth. We need a methodological toolkit, historical, critical, and creative, that can identify and support the survival of alternative lifeways. It is crucial to reopen Cold War narratives beyond elite political formations to account for the participation of nonconforming collectivities, human and otherwise. Crucially, the familiar language of “race,” “nation,” and even “human” is inadequate to address the scope of Native diplomatic arts inside and across the borders of the United States. At home and abroad, federal officials failed to suppress the status of Indigenous people and their other-than-human kin as deviant “nations within.”⁷⁷ My search for scholarship on Indigenous arts implicated in other nations’ soft power initiatives suggests that similar dynamics unfolded in US-allied settler nations between World War II and the rise of the IITC and WCIP. Notable examples include the export of exhibitions of Aboriginal art from Australia beginning in the 1940s and Inuit art from Canada in the 1950s and 1960s.⁷⁸ More sustained scholarly attention to Indigenous makers who participated in international relations from within their own cosmopo-

litical traditions is needed to fully historicize diplomacy in the twentieth century and reimagine it in the twenty-first.

It is possible that much vital Indigenous artistic activity has been overlooked *because* it bears the stain of government intervention, in this case hegemonic initiatives overseas. *Earth Diplomacy* wrests a more expansive framework for conceptualizing and practicing diplomacy from the taint of Cold War propaganda. To that end, I do not make a simple case for the inclusion of Native actors within familiar art historical accounts of the period. Instead, I examine how creative practices Indigenized government arts initiatives, transforming them into a surprisingly fertile terrain for the enlargement of Native relational systems around the world. Through diverse artistic forms, a troubling flow of actors—noncompliant Native persons and their other-than-human kin—subtly but insistently deformed a modern international system premised on their externalization and exploitation. At the very moment that federal Indian policy corralled Native people into an oppositional dialectic of assimilation or resistance, Cold War arts initiatives paradoxically stimulated the creative expression of Indigenous diplomatic cultures through unfolding global networks. Put another way, “soft power” became filled with “Red Power,” a phrase popularized by Deloria, Jr. to describe a surge in Native political, cultural, and spiritual activity leading up to, and including the occupations of AIM.⁷⁹

NOT THE ECOLOGICAL INDIAN

In arguing for an earth-centered continuum of Indigenous art and politics, *Earth Diplomacy* necessarily confronts an enduring stereotype of the Ecological Indian that was embraced by government, corporate, and environmentalist actors during the period of my study. Deloria, Jr. described the one-dimensional personas that circulated in popular culture: “[Native Americans] were either a villainous warlike group that lurked in the darkness thirsting for the blood of innocent settlers or the calm, wise, dignified elder sitting on the mesa dispensing his wisdom in poetic aphorisms.”⁸⁰ Non-Indigenous engagements with the latter ranged from manipulations in the service of so-called green capitalism, exemplified by the “crying Indian” who mourned polluted waterways in a famous 1971 Keep America Beautiful ad campaign, to hippies and environmentalists who embraced Native America as a uniform symbol of resistance to capitalism, to genuine, if fleeting, political alliances, for example

between AIM and the Black Panthers.⁸¹ While appreciating the complexity of these deployments, I remain particularly skeptical of their origin in a colonial fantasy of premodern holism. As Finis Dunaway has articulated, the Ecological Indian is an anachronism who bears passive witness to the despoilment of wilderness from the sidelines of modernity.⁸² Natives and nature are equated, othered, and stripped of their potential for adaptation and response, passively awaiting the advent of extractive capitalism. The stereotype neglects the continuing violence of settler colonialism as well as the hard-won resilience and far-reaching contributions of Indigenous Americans to global modernity. While it may have short-term political utility, the ongoing circulation of this primitivist trope in both popular and academic spaces eclipses the myriad, complex ways in which past and present Indigenous practitioners relate to other-than-human beings and systems under imposed conditions of colonial capitalism. The practices of earth diplomacy assessed on these pages respond to extractive processes through a mixture of negotiation, refusal, and the revitalization of alternative relational systems. In charting the activation of Native political ecologies through the circulation of diverse modernisms, this book aims to replace the one-dimensional figure of the Ecological Indian with a multiplicity of Indigenous earth diplomats: creative translators whose environmental credentials are based on a highly adaptable, always-already political relationship to earthly upheavals.

My corrective draws upon contemporary, interdisciplinary work on political ecology, environmental justice, and decolonization. “Political” has helpfully modified the roots of “ecology” in the natural sciences, a discipline that was bound up with nineteenth-century Euro-American imperialism. German biologist Ernst Haeckel coined the term *ecology* in 1866 to describe the total relationship between organisms and their environments, yet his description of complex relationality stopped short of crediting Indigenous cosmologies and implicating colonial cultures.⁸³ Subsequent formations of ecology challenged the exceptionalism that Western scientific discourses granted certain human elites; today, scholars are more likely to describe an assemblage of diverse human and non-human agents and processes that are “inextricable from social, political and economic forces.”⁸⁴ Far from untouched, nature is the site of intensive government and multinational corporate management, privatization, speculation, and extraction, even as it is composed of myriad resistant and resilient beings. While feel-good formulations of ecology-as-interdependency abound, advocates of environmental justice counter by pinpointing global corporate leaders and allied politicians as perpe-

trators of pollution, deforestation, and other forms of “slow violence” that disproportionately target poor and marginalized communities of color around the world.⁸⁵ The logic of extraction, a “withdrawal without depositing,” indulges a fantasy of limitless growth for a few while laying waste to an expendable majority.⁸⁶ Latin American studies scholar Macarena Gómez-Barris similarly defines *extractivismo* in the Americas as a colonial process of “violently reorganizing social life as well as the land by thieving resources from Indigenous and Afro-descendent territories.”⁸⁷ It is for this reason that Native Americans frequently experience the impending climate apocalypse as “colonial déjà vu,” according to Potawatomi scholar Kyle Powys Whyte.⁸⁸ The global map of climate change follows the contours of Euro-American colonial expansion, connecting waves of refugees fleeing uninhabitable territories in the Global South to Indigenous communities displaced from their ancestral lands within affluent northern settler nations.

My phrase *earth diplomacy* builds upon related strands of political ecology dedicated to “sustainable diplomacies” and “earth jurisprudence.” Such discourses recognize how thoroughly the modern nation-state system has suppressed the political agency of heterogeneous, ecologically embedded human communities.⁸⁹ This structural absence is evident in the spectacular failure of governments around the world to recognize the sovereignty of Indigenous communities or coordinate meaningful action on large-scale catastrophes such as climate change, mass species extinction, and the flight of refugees from increasingly uninhabitable regions. A few international relations scholars have challenged the dominance of statecraft anchored in the self-interest of nation-states and argued for the expansion of diplomatic cultures to encompass other-than-human beings and systems deemed crucial to the survival of all life.⁹⁰ At the outset of the essay collection, *Sustainable Diplomacies*, Costas M. Constantinou and James Der Derian write that diplomacy “should not only be concerned with advocacy, policy implementation, and public relations but also—and more crucially—with innovation and creativity, experimentation in finding ways and terms under which rival entities and ways of living can co-exist and flourish (including biodiversity and future generations).”⁹¹ Their articulation draws on the foundational work of political theorist David Joseph Wellman, who has pushed against the secular and anthropocentric rationalization of negotiations in modern international relations. “A new definition of balance of power is in order,” he insists, one that incorporates all elements of the biosphere and restores oppressed ecological and spiritual knowledges to the theory

and practice of diplomacy.⁹² At stake in such inclusions is “a more intimate and profound understanding of the lives, beliefs, and concerns of people ‘on the ground.’”⁹³ Ground is more than a metaphor in his estimation; it points to the “ecological location” of the communities in question, which shapes their sense of connection and responsibility to others with whom they share the earth.⁹⁴ The artists of *Earth Diplomacy* similarly work to implicate faraway communities and their environments in sacred homeland ecologies, for example by incorporating sandstone pigments from Diné Bekéyah (the Diné homeland) or portraits of powerful beings that animate the Dakota universe in artworks that retraced the transnational path of capitalism during the Cold War.

In the face of accelerating globalization and its ravages, Native studies scholars and Indigenous leaders have called for a renewed and reconfigured framework of jurisprudence that includes the earth itself. Ecuador and Bolivia led the way by incorporating the rights of Mother Earth into their constitutions, albeit with many challenges to implementation. Artists, curators, and activists are meanwhile reimaging the cultural and legal status of forests, rivers, oceans, and atmosphere, often drawing upon Indigenous frameworks of knowledge.⁹⁵ In 2012, artistic codirectors Gerald McMaster of the Siksika First Nation and Dutch curator Catherine de Zegher featured the English translation of *mitákuye oyás'ŋ* (all our relations), an Očhéthi Šakówiŋ prayer, as the title and guiding philosophy of the Sydney Biennale. They mobilized an inspired diplomatic idiom of kinship among humans, animals, plants, rivers, and mountains to frame a mega-exhibition, a gathering of diverse artistic practices from around the world.⁹⁶ In 2016, crowds from New Zealand to Japan took to the streets to speak out against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline across sacred Indigenous waterways and burial sites. The Očhéthi Šakówiŋ and their allies chanted “water is life” as ceremonial pipes were passed through camps near the Standing Rock Reservation in South Dakota. The House of Tears Carvers of the Lummi Nation in western Washington arrived bearing a crest pole carved with white buffalo—a sacred being for Očhéthi Šakówiŋ—on a flatbed truck, part of their five-thousand-mile journey to generate solidarity with communities battling the fossil fuels industry in Canada and the United States.⁹⁷ A national constitution, a mega-exhibition, and an trans-Indigenous environmental justice movement; in each of these examples, Native political ecologies guided a gathering of more-than-human communities, modeling forms of being-in-common that transcend the borders and logics of modern nation-states.

In such cases and throughout this book, art is mobilized as a sensuous, compelling, and connective tool—an agent of earth diplomacy. It has the potential to distill and mobilize the complex ecologies that bind humans to the earth, returning a vital relationality to the occlusive sphere of the international. My approach puts critical developments in Indigenous studies in dialogue with emergent ecocritical methods in art history, particularly James Nisbet’s articulation of the “work of art as an ecological object” during a period of growing environmental consciousness in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s. Ecological processes can challenge habits of discernment and meaning-making because they operate at beyond-human scales: too minute, vast, durational, diffuse, or complex to be readily grasped by the senses and assimilated into existing ideational systems. For Nisbet, artworks are material and theoretical constellations with a unique capacity to condense and render perceptible otherwise elusive environmental conditions.⁹⁸

In my account, art is similarly conceived less as an object than a relational nexus, an affectively charged gathering of materials, bodies, and media. I draw additional inspiration from Dittmer’s theory of the diplomatic assemblage, which holds that international relations entail more than the coming together of preformed geopolitical subjects. Their meeting is shaped by a surplus emotional charge from “material circulations—of media, of objects, of bodies and their practices” that can “subtly rework the political cognition of those engaged in foreign policy making.”⁹⁹ While such insights are often cast as methodologically groundbreaking in relation to a Euro-American canon, they are anticipated by customary Indigenous arts that function as portals between ecological, spiritual, and political systems. Indigenous diplomats have long recognized art’s involvement with what philosopher Jacques Rancière has called the “distribution of the sensible,” with the potential to shift the boundaries of what is felt, thought, and therefore available to politics.¹⁰⁰ Made of earth and elaborated by human hands, such entities are activated by ritualized exchanges that bind relationships of all kinds. Certain artforms may possess a lifeforce of their own and act on their human interlocutors in unpredictable ways. Energized by long-standing Indigenous material practices, the contemporary arts discussed in this book are similarly imbued with the capacity to illuminate, organize, and affect a thick web of life. Here, my account departs from Dittmer’s, which decenters human agencies, because Native artists often wittingly compose assemblages for distinct political purposes. Conceived as persuasive agents in cosmopolitical relationships, Indigenous arts have the potential

to recalibrate a modern international system founded on the exploitation of people and land.

Earth Diplomacy names this relational capacity. It references an affective charge generated by the sensuous specificity of artworks and creative practices. Its effects can at times be glimpsed in the colonial archives charged with telling those arts' stories—particularly in historical photographs that index assemblages of artworks, bodies, and environments. But the phrase also points to an interpretive ethics on the part of art historians, such as myself, who assume responsibilities to research Native arts within their historical contexts and contribute to their afterlives in publications and exhibitions. In this context, earth diplomacy entails challenging perceptual habits that too readily support the assimilation of Indigenous arts into the normative representational politics of the United States.¹⁰¹ It names a commitment to taking seriously the agency of mountains, rivers, plants, and animals—Indigenous relatives and ecological sources of much Native art—within international relations. And it means lifting up arts' ongoing potential to affect political cognition in shifting environments of encounter, including our own.

THE CHAPTERS

My chapters draw upon understudied archives and oral histories to follow select exhibitions, artworks, and makers on their journeys through Indigenous and foreign homelands. Regional biases embedded in the United States' international art program are mirrored in my selections. While the government circulated historical Native arts collections from across North America, contemporaneous artworks and artists' tours—the focus of my study—were most often commissioned from members of Indigenous nations in the Southwest and the Plains. The DOS and USIA inherited these relationships from the BIA's Indian Arts and Crafts Board (1935–present), a New Deal initiative to stimulate a high-end market for Native arts in communities already well-traversed by tourists and anthropologists.¹⁰² The Pueblo, Diné, Blackfeet, and Dakota artists who animate these chapters encountered a morass of stereotypes; as I discuss throughout, Ecological Indian fantasies have most firmly attached to the ceremonial and hunting cultures of the Plains and Southwest. The circulation of such colonial tropes worldwide undoubtedly shaped the US government's selection of artists. My chapters emphasize how

Indigenous makers utilized these fraught conditions to engender diverse practices of earth diplomacy.

Chapter 1, “Contested Kinship: More-than-Human Relations or the Family of Man?,” acts as a companion to this introduction by mapping the ideological and geopolitical contours of Cold War Native arts activity in greater detail. I assess the fraught relationship between the US government and Indigenous arts at the crossroads of Indian Termination and USIA propaganda, focusing on the international circulation of a modern painting movement headquartered in New Mexico and Oklahoma. I discuss two well-documented group exhibitions that established the federal government’s narrative blueprint for tours of Native modernisms discussed throughout this book. *Contemporary American Indian Paintings* at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, in 1953 and *Contemporary American Indian Paintings from the Margretta S. Dietrich Collection*, which toured the “Near East” from 1964 to 1966, surveyed spare, delicate scenes of Native lifeways that were produced in and around Santa Fe in the first half of the twentieth century. Through these exhibitions, curator Dorothy Dunn, the white founding director of the Studio School (1932–1962) at the Santa Fe Indian School (SFIS), reinvented herself as a cold warrior, exerting an outsized influence on period propaganda concerning Native Americans. In tension with Dunn’s narrative, I develop a framework of trans-Indigenous, more-than-human kinship that reconnects the modern Native painting movement to customary practices of Indigenous diplomacy. Functioning as a nonnormative form of geopolitics, Native kinship practices were systematically attacked by the federal government during Termination. They persisted as an unsettling sign of difference in the United States’ efforts to expand the frontiers of extractive capitalism throughout the majority world. This contested cosmopolitics can be glimpsed in the Indigenous aphorisms cited throughout the most famous Cold War exhibition, *The Family of Man*, traveled by the USIA to thirty-seven countries from 1955 to 1966.¹⁰³ I propose that it was more fully realized through group exhibitions of Native American paintings—and in one case, a painter—that toured in tandem. To develop this argument, I examine the capacious human, plant, and animal families depicted in traveling works by Kha’Po Owingeh (Santa Clara Pueblo) artist Pablita Velarde, Mvskoke (Muscogee [Creek] Nation) artist Solomon McCombs, and Diné (Navajo Nation) artist Harrison Begay.

Chapters 2 and 3 turn away from painted modernisms to consider the embodied modalities of two Diné earth diplomats who traveled with

their work. The *haatali* (singer, healer) Fred Stevens and expert weaver Bertha Stevens demonstrated their respective arts on a three-year-long tour alongside *American Indian Art and Handicraft*, an exhibition of student and faculty artwork from the Institute of American Indian Arts through Eurasia and the Americas from 1966 to 1968. Chapter 2, “Rebalancing Power: Diné Sandpainting and Sand Mining,” analyzes Fred Stevens’s efforts to safely translate sandpainting, an ephemeral ceremonial art that facilitates cosmic rebalancing, into public demonstrations and durable gifts for the purposes of diplomatic exchange. His altered variants worked against the grain of an established narrative of the secularization and commercialization of Native religious arts after World War II by transferring an ethics of reciprocity from ceremonial to geopolitical agents. They palpably connected Diné efforts to protect sacred homelands from military-industrial incursions to the acceleration of sand mining to feed a global building boom in countries abroad. Stevens grasped sandpaintings’ potential to heal an out-of-balance system of international relations when he collaborated with curators to consolidate sand into a lasting gift at the Horniman Museum in London in 1966 and when he stole construction sand in order to demonstrate for the cultural program of the inhospitable Olympic Games in Mexico City amid the global uprisings of 1968.

While her husband’s fame occasioned their travels, Bertha Stevens’s transformative practice of weaving new places and agents into the vital holism of the Diné homeland, takes center stage in chapter 3, “Earth Mothers: Diné Weaving and Trans-Indigenous Ecofeminism.” The 1966–1968 tour occasioned her sharing of a cosmologically derived Diné responsibility to perpetuate all life with disparate women who were similarly negotiating a heteropatriarchal, ecocidal form of international relations. Her exchanges with Scottish, Turkish, and Mapuche weavers prompt me to reassess the Indigenous roots of ecofeminism, a discourse that shaped environmental art, politics, and theory in the final decades of the twentieth century. Its primarily white practitioners sought alternatives to Euro-American patriarchy in majority world women’s activism and an essentialized Mother Earth that they borrowed from Native American sources. Like Stevens’s textiles, my analysis is modeled on Diné oral stories relating the original transmission of sacred weaving knowledge from Na’ashjéii Asdzáá (Spider Woman) to Asdzáá Náádleehé (Changing Woman) and her human children. Stevens transformed such matricentered knowledge into a practice of earth diplomacy that elevated

the customary power of Indigenous women during her visit with Mapuche weavers in Quetrahue, Chile, in 1968.

The remaining two chapters shift attention to artists' creative reconfiguration of Plains diplomatic cultures in the shape of painted lodges and ceremonial pipes, which circulated internationally as icons of environmental holism and countercultural resistance in the 1960s and 1970s. Chapter 4, "Tipis and Domes: Modeling the Blackfeet Cosmos at a World Fair," centers on the Crow lodge, a painted tipi that the USIA commissioned from Blackfeet artist Darryl Blackman for the US Pavilion at Expo 70 in Japan. Garnering a record-breaking sixty-four million visitors, the first Asian exposition was charged with simulating a "city of the future" in an era of whole earth images, dome mega-architecture, and dystopian accounts of Western progress. Drawing on a longer history of exhibiting Native American architectural models in colonial exhibitions, I demonstrate that Cold War World Fairs became stages for Indigenous futurisms in which artists materialized ancient gifts from the earth in order to expand a circle of reciprocity. Chapter 5, "The Truth-Line: Oscar Howe's Sacred Pipe Modernism," charts a shifting history of Indigenous material diplomacy based on the ritual smoking of the *c'qnúpa wak'á* and its revival during the Cold War. Conjoining diverse Native communities across long distances prior to colonization, this pan-Indigenous practice survived a treacherous history of colonial treaty negotiations to be reimagined by artists and activists in the Termination era. My account centers on the work of prominent modernist painter Oscar Howe, who materialized a theory of Dakota ethics and aesthetics through figurative abstractions that distilled the spiritual and ecological truths he saw embodied in pipe ceremonies. The artist toured as an "American Specialist" to nine countries in Europe, South Asia, and the Middle East in 1971, just as AIM activists were embracing the *c'qnúpa wak'á* as a potent unifying symbol of Red Power.

In the conclusion, "Artist-Diplomat-Vampire," I return to Scholder's paintings, which conjured the United States' betrayal of its treaty obligations to Native nations before diverse publics abroad at the height of AIM. Disgusted by the federal government's propaganda, the artist defected from a USIA tour in Romania to visit Dracula's castle and paint a little-known *Indian/Vampir* series on canvases that fit in his suitcase. Emblematic of the failure of modern nation-state diplomacy, the small paintings align Native Americans and Transylvanians in a global struggle against dispossession. They foretell the flourishing of

alternative cultures of diplomacy beyond the coffin of broken treaties and US propaganda.¹⁰⁴ The narrative of *Earth Diplomacy* draws to a close in 1973, as the AIM occupation of Wounded Knee was broadcast globally and Native art largely fell off the United States' Cold War agenda. Yet IITC and the WCIP would soon fill the void, circumventing federal sponsorship and pursuing diplomatic alliances on Indigenous terms.

Earth Diplomacy delimits the tyranny of US-Native relations in the Termination era. It also foreshadows a dire twenty-first century predicament in which the official disposability of diplomacy collides with the global scale of humanitarian and ecological crises. By illuminating a specific past terrain in which creative and political processes were mutually transformative, I intend this book to hold up a mirror to the present, reflecting the limitations and possibilities that still adhere to our faltering system of international relations. I grasp the top-down application of colonial power as one facet of a larger story centered on creative Indigenous contributions to a modernity that continues to unfold. In a period when the United States was busy consolidating hierarchies and exclusions at home and abroad, the unsettling entanglement of Native art with disparate communities around the world kept the promise of mutual flourishing amid differences alive. The case studies in this book contribute to the pluralized history *and future* of earth diplomacy by taking seriously the imaginative contributions of nonstate actors and the specific lands through which they live and travel. Such practices persist as a vital potential in archives and artforms, regardless of whether the relationships they invite are fully realized in a particular time and place. The arts described on these pages are provocations to reimagine international relations through modalities of kinship and reciprocity beyond the destructive framework of colonial capitalism. The unfinished history of earth diplomacy is embodied in Scholder's pipe-bearing ambassador, who faces outward as if inviting a new relationship to unfold.

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INTRODUCTION

- 1 “Scholder-Cannon Exhibit,” USIA report materials from American Embassy in Bucharest, December 12, 1972. SIA 000315, Box 14.
- 2 For example, see, Depkat, “Peace Medal Diplomacy in Indian-White”; Harjo, “Introduction”; McLaughlin, *Arts of Diplomacy*.
- 3 Among the earliest examples, the portraits of four Iroquois leaders painted by John Verelst upon their diplomatic visit to London in 1710 combined ethnographic curiosity with political utility. See Muller, “From Palace to Longhouse.” For other illuminating studies that foreground Native leaders’ agency in the creation of their portraits, see Hutchinson, “Dress of His Nation”; de Stetcher, “Of Chiefs and Kings”; Zamir, *Gift of the Face*.
- 4 For an account of the changing status of photographed Native leaders from dignitaries to icons, see Goodyear, *Red Cloud*.
- 5 The notion of art as a “weapon” was first articulated in Crockoft, “Abstract Expressionism.”
- 6 Cobb, *Native Activism in Cold War America*. See also Burt, *Tribalism in Crisis*.
- 7 See Voyles, *Wastelanding*; Masco, *Nuclear Borderlands*; Nixon: *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*.
- 8 Horton, “Painter, Traveler, Diplomat.”
- 9 Winona Garmhausen, interview with Fritz Scholder, July 1975, IAIA-MS-07, Garmhausen Papers, Box 4, Folder 7.

- 10 Cobb, "Talking the Language of the Larger World," 162; Denson, "Native Americans in Cold War Public Diplomacy"; Kýrová, "Right to Think for Themselves," 76–77; Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors*, 306. See also Rosier, "They Are Ancestral Homelands."
- 11 Latour in conversation with Davis, "Diplomacy in the Face of Gaia," 51. Here, Latour adapts Isabelle Stengers's point that diplomats, as translators, face an inherent risk of becoming betrayers. See Stengers, *Cosmopolitics II*, 376–77.
- 12 I'm building on a handful of foundational studies of postwar Native American art history that address Indian Termination and the Cold War, notably Anthes, *Native Moderns*; and Gritton, *Institute of American Indian Arts*. Other single artist monographs, essays, and exhibition catalogues are cited throughout this book.
- 13 Foster, *First Pop Age*, 6.
- 14 Foster, *First Pop Age*, 7.
- 15 Ronato Rosaldo writes that "the agents of colonialism long for the very forms of life they intentionally altered or destroyed." "Imperialist Nostalgia," 108.
- 16 Foster, *First Pop Age*, 62.
- 17 This history is recounted in Orenstein, *Ivory, Horn, and Blood*.
- 18 Chris Baraniuk, "We Know Exactly How the Vietnamese Javan Rhino Went Extinct," *BBC News*, September 21, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/earth/story/20160920-we-know-exactly-how-the-vietnamese-javan-rhino-went-extinct>; Orenstein, *Ivory, Horn, and Blood*, 29, 119–20.
- 19 Hall, *Vietnam War*, 89.
- 20 See Caute, *Dancer Defects*, 339–40; Quinney, "Excess and Identity," 39–40.
- 21 I borrow the phrase from Anishanaabeg environmental activist Winona LaDuke, who articulates the conjunction of Native sovereignty and environmental justice concerns in *All Our Relations*.
- 22 The concept of the "whole earth" references the first satellite images of the planet that circulated widely in popular culture after 1967, notably on the cover of the green lifestyle magazine, *The Whole Earth Catalog*, first published in 1968. See Maniaque-Benton, *Whole Earth Field Guide*.
- 23 Nelson and Shilling, eds., *Traditional Ecological Knowledge*.
- 24 *New York Herald Tribune*, December 30, 1956, quoted in Prevots, *Dance for Export*, 112.
- 25 "Indians Excited over American 'Indians,'" *Wallace Farmer*, February 6, 1960: 24–25; "Histórico Encuentro de Navajos y Mapuches," *El Diario Austral*, Temuco, July 24, 1968. IAIA RG-1 Exhibit Buenos Aires Argentina, SG-8, 1968, Series 7 Exhibits, Box 5, Folder 5.

- 26 Hattie Kaboutie Lomayesva, in conversation with the author, Riverside, CA, 2015.
- 27 Solomon McCombs Papers, 1941–1974, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, <https://sova.si.edu/record/NAA.1974.0401?s=470&n=10&t=C&q=African+American+photographers&i=471>.
- 28 Harney and Phillips, “Introduction,” 5.
- 29 Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, 7–8.
- 30 While this literature is large and growing, I have found the critical overviews in the following texts especially useful for Indigenous North American art histories: Anthes, *Native Moderns*; Doyle and Winkiel, *Geomodernisms*; Friedman, “Periodizing Modernism”; Harney and Phillips, “Introduction”; Mercer, *Cosmopolitan Modernisms*; Phillips, “Aesthetic Primitivism Revisited”; Thomas, *Possessions*. Beyond the modernisms discourse, scholars have offered compelling accounts of Indigenous North American travelers and mobile cultural forms as agents of modernity, for example: Burns, *Transnational Frontiers*; Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*; Feest, *Indians and Europe*; Thrush, *Indigenous London*; Weaver, *Red Atlantic*.
- 31 Harney and Phillips, “Introduction,” 7–10. *Mapping Modernisms* is the first publication to result from the Multiple Modernisms Project, which was inaugurated by a workshop at the Clark Art Institute in 2010.
- 32 The definitive account is Smith and Warrior, *Like a Hurricane*.
- 33 Cobb, “Talking the Language of the Larger World”; see also Rosier, “They Are Ancestral Homelands.”
- 34 Deloria, Jr., *God Is Red*, 10.
- 35 Gilio-Whitaker, *As Long as Grass Grows*, 70–71.
- 36 This literature is vast. See discussions in Driskill et al., ed., *Queer Indigenous Studies*; Justice, Rifkin, and Schneider, “Sexuality, Nationality, Indigeneity”; Suzack et al., eds., *Indigenous Women and Feminism*; Moreton-Robinson, *Sovereign Subjects*; Teves, Smith, and Raheja, eds., *Native Studies Keywords*.
- 37 Cajete, “Native Science and Sustaining Indigenous Communities,” 19.
- 38 Igloliorte, “Arctic Culture/Global Indigeneity”; Rickard, “Visualizing Sovereignty in the Time of Biometric Sensors.”
- 39 “United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,” 3; Lee, “Navajo Nation,” 170–86. For more on this history, see Henderson, *Indigenous Diplomacy and the Rights of Peoples*; Lightfoot, *Global Indigenous Politics*.
- 40 Akwesasne Notes, ed., “Deskahé”; International Indian Treaty Council, “For the Continuing Independence of Native Nations”;

- Geneva Declaration, "For Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms," in Cobb, *Say We Are Nations*, 167–71, 172–75; Crossen, "Another Wave of Anti-Colonialism," 542–48.
- 41 Tóth, *From Wounded Knee to Checkpoint Charlie*, 143–44, 158. Tóth reports that Deskaheh carried a wampum belt from the Museum of the American Indian to demonstrate the Haudenosaunee sovereignty at the League of Nations in 1922 (144).
- 42 Melanie K. Yazzie, quoted in Banerjee, "From the Red Nation to the Red Deal," 439, 446; "About," Red Nation, accessed November 6, 2023, <https://therednation.org/about/>.
- 43 Latour, *Facing Gaia*, 243. Latour sketches an imaginary path toward a renewed diplomacy in which Euro-Americans (those he calls the "Moderns") negotiate with the value systems of global others who are finally treated as equals in the face of the climate change. Latour, *Inquiry into Modes of Existence*, especially 12–23.
- 44 Stengers, "We Are Divided." A discussion of the diplomat as an analogy for the public, political negotiations required of climate researchers appears in Stengers, *Cosmopolitics II*, 376–92.
- 45 Kimmerer, "*Mishkos Kenomagwen*, the Lessons of Grass," 31.
- 46 Dittmer, *Diplomatic Material*, 12.
- 47 "Joseph Nye on Soft Power," *Foreign Policy Association*, February 22, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_58v19OtIIg. Nye's classic account is *Soft Power*. He has continued to extend his analysis in relation to current events, including the rise of China and climate change.
- 48 I address assumptions common to balance of power discourses rather than parse differences within this large and diverse literature, drawing especially from David Joseph Wellman's critique of Hans J. Morgenthau's paradigmatic *Politics Among Nations*. See Wellman, *Sustainable Diplomacy*, 14–18. For other recent overviews, see Sheehan, *Balance of Power*; Vasquez and Elman, *Realism and the Balance of Power*; Zartman, *Imbalance of Power*.
- 49 Haas, "Balance of Power," 442. Haas's influential assessment of the theory was contemporaneous with the formation of the USIA.
- 50 Gómez-Barris, *Extractive Zone*, xviii. During the 1950s and 1960s, the Soviet Union pursued the removal and assimilation of Indigenous peoples and intensified resource extraction, mirroring United States policy. Bartels and Bartels, "Indigenous Peoples of the Russian North and Cold War Ideology," 268.
- 51 Wellman, *Sustainable Diplomacy*, 4.
- 52 Conastantinou and Der Derian, "Introduction," 9.
- 53 Savelle, *Origins of American Diplomacy*, 200.
- 54 Clinton, "Treaties with Native Nations," 15.
- 55 Harjo, "Introduction," xi.

- 56 Clinton, "Treaties with Native Nations," 23.
- 57 Clinton, "Treaties with Native Nations," 30.
- 58 Clinton, "Treaties with Native Nations," 19.
- 59 Deloria, Jr., *God Is Red*, 67.
- 60 Watson, "Jimmie Durham's *Building a Nation*," 1004. See also Watson, "Diplomatic Aesthetics."
- 61 McLaughlin, *Arts of Diplomacy*, 36.
- 62 Rickard, "Visualizing Sovereignty in the Time of Biometric Sensors," 469.
- 63 de Stecher, "Integrated Practices," 56.
- 64 The items were borrowed from the collection of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board (IACB), an agency within the Department of the Interior that was established in 1935 to promote Native nations' economic development by growing a modern market for Native arts. While the Pueblo pots in the photograph were transferred from the IACB collection to the National Museum of the American Indian in 1999, Conor McMahon, chief curator of the IACB, was unable to find information on the provenance or whereabouts of the pipe. Email to the author, July 12, 2021.
- 65 In 1964 the exhibition traveled to Stockholm, Helsinki, Oslo, Copenhagen, Berlin, Belgrade, and Munich for month-long showings. USIA Circular "Confirming Itinerary for Project 64-245," Washington, DC, to Belgrade, Berlin, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Oslo, Stockholm, April 2, 1964. SIA Project # 64-245, Folder: USIA RU 321, Office of Program Support, National Museum of American Art, 1956-1981, with related records from 1947, Box 87, Folder 1: Sandpainting and Handcraft Indian Exhibit.
- 66 TallBear, "Indigenous Reflection on Working Beyond the Human/Not Human," 233. For an art historical treatment of Dakhóta pipestone, including the colonial circumstances under which *inyayša* was dubbed "catlinite," see Johnson, "George Catlin, Artistic Prospecting, and Dakhóta Agency in the Archive."
- 67 Clinton, "Treaties with Native Nations," 19-20.
- 68 Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art*, 7. See also Crockett, "Abstract Expressionism"; Kozloff, "American Painting During the Cold War."
- 69 Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*.
- 70 Barnhisel, *Cold War Modernists*, 8.
- 71 Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters for the Human Spirit*, 1.
- 72 Allied studies of African Americans as Cold War cultural diplomats include Blake, "Cold War Diplomacy and Civil Rights Activism"; Davenport, *Jazz Diplomacy*; Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*; Krenn, *Diplomacy*; Thomas, *Globetrotting*; Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows up the World*.

- 73 Davenport, *Jazz Diplomacy*, 16.
- 74 Taylor, "Transnational Transactions," 93.
- 75 Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters for the Human Spirit*, 5.
- 76 Wimmer and Schiller, "Methodological Nationalism."
- 77 Deloria, Jr. and Lytle, *Nations Within*.
- 78 See Bleiker and Butler, "Radical Dreaming"; Vorano, "Inuit Art."
- 79 Initial uses of the phrase are credited to members of the pan-Indigenous activist organization, the National Indian Youth Congress, at the American Indian Capital Conference on Poverty in 1964 and to Deloria, Jr., at the convention of the National Congress of American Indians in 1966. Josephy, Nagel, and Johnson, "Introduction," 13. Bradley G. Shreve argues that the phrase should be exclusively associated with militancy in *Red Power Rising*, 6–8; 159. I uphold Deloria, Jr.'s more expansive definition of the revitalization of Indigenous spiritual and land-based power that underlay overt political activity during this period, discussed in *God Is Red*, 10.
- 80 Deloria, Jr., *God Is Red*, 25.
- 81 See Dunaway, *Seeing Green*; Rosier, "Modern America Desperately Needs to Listen"; Siddons, "Red Power in the Black Panther"; Smith, *Hippies, Indians, and the Fight for Red Power*; Sturgeon, *Environmentalism in Popular Culture*, especially chapter 2, "Frontiers of Nature: The Ecological Indian in U.S. Film," 53–79; Gilio-Whitaker, *As Long as Grass Grows*, especially chapter 5, "(Not So) Strange Bedfellows: Indian Country's Ambivalent Relationship with the Environmental Movement," 91–110.
- 82 Dunaway, *Seeing Green*, 89.
- 83 Haeckel, *Generelle Morphologie der Organismen*, 286. By comparison, scientist Alexander Von Humboldt's nascent theory of global ecological interconnectivity, which influenced Haeckel, drew upon Indigenous cosmologies and criticized the environmental impacts of Spanish colonialism and slavery. See Humboldt, *Personal Narrative of a Journey*; Sachs, "Ultimate 'Other.'"
- 84 Demos, *Decolonizing Nature*, 7.
- 85 Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*.
- 86 Vargas, "On Extraction," 113; Voyles, *Wastelanding*.
- 87 Gómez-Barris, *Extractive Zone*, xvii.
- 88 Whyte, "Indigenous Science (Fiction) for the Anthropocene," 227.
- 89 Dittmer, *Diplomatic Material*, 12.
- 90 See Conastantinou and Der Derian, "Introduction"; Wellman, *Sustainable Diplomacy*.
- 91 Conastantinou and Der Derian, "Introduction," 2.
- 92 Wellman, *Sustainable Diplomacy*, 30.

- 93 Wellman, *Sustainable Diplomacy*, 4.
- 94 Wellman, “Promise of Sustainable Diplomacy,” 25. Wellman’s use of “ecological location” in turn draws on Spencer, *Gay and Gaia*.
- 95 See Demos, “Rights of Nature”; Lightfoot, *Global Indigenous Politics*, 3.
- 96 A version of the prayer was published in de Zegher, “Arc Are Ark Arm Art . . . Act!,” 104. See also LaDuke, *All Our Relations*.
- 97 “About the Journey,” *Totem Pole Journey*, October 25, 2016, <https://totempolejourney.com/about-the-journey/>. See Horton, “Indigenous Artists Against the Anthropocene,” 67–69.
- 98 Nisbet, *Ecologies, Environments, and Energy Systems*, 3.
- 99 Dittmer, *Diplomatic Material*, 3.
- 100 Rancière, *Politics of Aesthetics*, 12–13. Rancière’s insights are usefully mobilized to assess the Australian government’s diplomatic deployment of Aboriginal art in Bleiker and Butler, “Radical Dreaming.”
- 101 Robinson, *Hungry Listening*, 13.
- 102 McLerran, *New Deal for Native Art*, 93–101.
- 103 Turner, “*Family of Man* and the Politics of Attention in Cold War America,” 55–56.
- 104 Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters for the Human Spirit*, 5.

CHAPTER 1. CONTESTED KINSHIP

An earlier version of the final section of this chapter was previously published as “Plural Diplomacies between Indian Termination and the Cold War: Contemporary American Indian Paintings in the ‘Near East,’ 1964–1966,” *Journal of Curatorial Studies* 5, no. 3 (October 2016): 340–66.

- 1 “‘Contemporary American Indian Painting’ Exhibition to Open November 8 at the National Gallery of Art,” press release, National Gallery of Art, November 8, 1953, 1. NGA Archives, Microfilm 7A7, Exhibition Files, 1942–1970, Contemporary American Indian Painting: November 8–December 6, 1953.
- 2 Dwight Eisenhower, “Statement by the President,” August 15, 1953, quoted in Rosier, *Serving Their Country*, 163. I capitalize “Termination” to refer to the overarching policy, realized through numerous discrete presidential and congressional actions from the mid-1940s until the mid-1960s.
- 3 Gritton, *Institute of American Indian Arts*, 71.
- 4 Krenn, *Fall-Out Shelters for the Human Spirit*, 89.
- 5 In 1938, the DOS established the Division of Cultural Relations with the primary aim of facilitating cultural and scientific exchanges with Latin American countries; in 1941 it provided