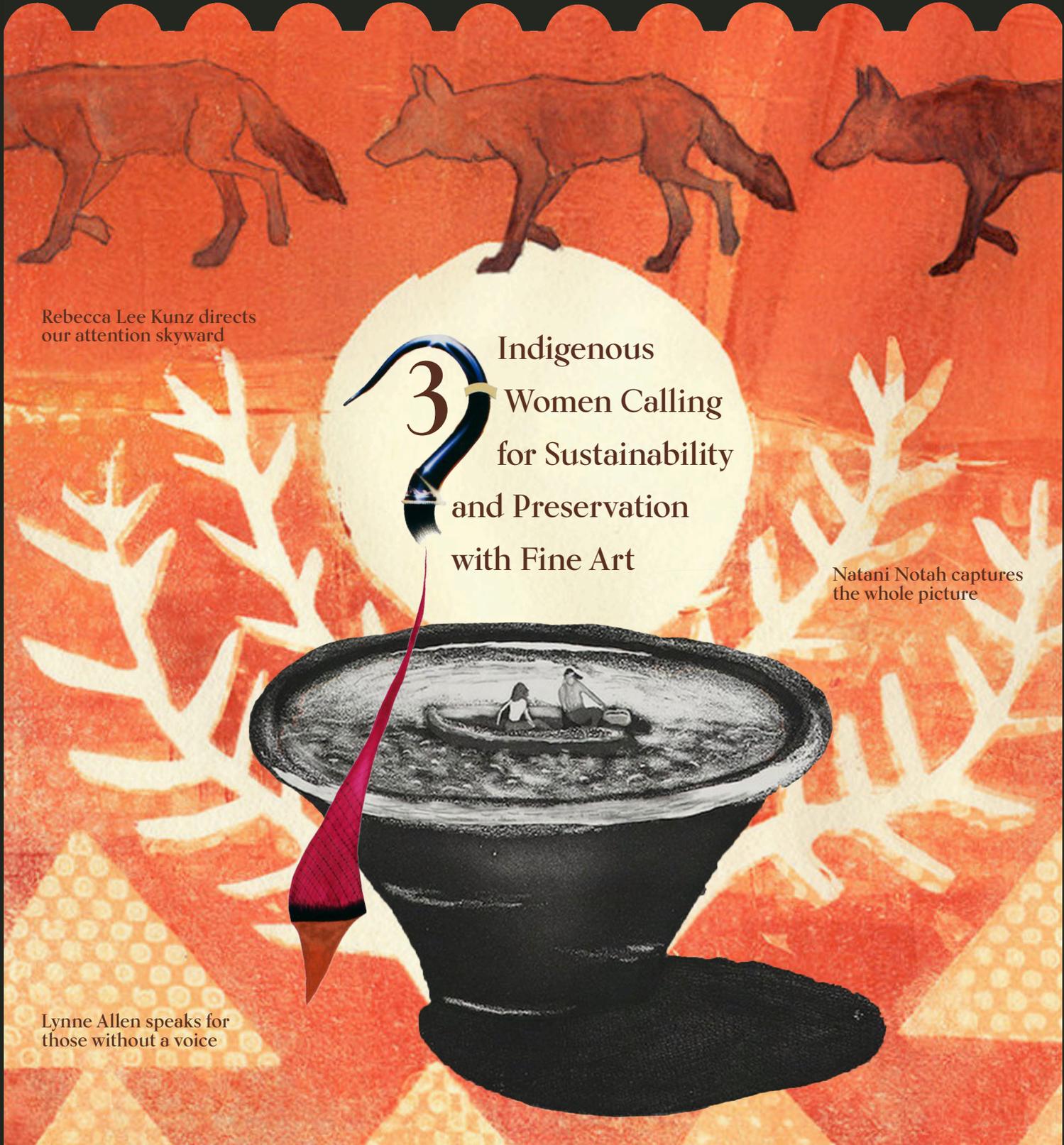


ECOFEMINISM



Rebecca Lee Kunz directs
our attention skyward

Indigenous
3 Women Calling
for Sustainability
and Preservation
with Fine Art

Natani Notah captures
the whole picture

Lynne Allen speaks for
those without a voice

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Pass the Peyote, 2023
22 x 30in. Mixed media (graphite, watercolor, acrylic, ink, charcoal pencil) and collage on archival paper.

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Skyward Rebecca Lee Kunz

Visual storyteller, Rebecca Lee Kunz is a Cherokee artist who creates mixed media art based on the way she believes that Cherokee legends interact with today's post-industrial world. Her *Story Paintings* (2023) collection is a dynamic set of giclée archival prints that detail how the history of the Cherokee people informs their future. Her work frames interesting cultural symbolism within striking, warm color palettes.

Photograph of Rebecca Lee Kunz, 2023
photograph, Tree of Life Studio

Sky Guides, 2023
22 x 30in. Mixed media (graphite, watercolor, acrylic, ink, charcoal pencil) and collage on archival paper
(As seen on front cover).

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By Human Hands

Lynne Allen

Climate activist, Lynne Allen is a descendant of the Standing Rock Indigenous Peoples in South Dakota who has a passion for amplifying the voices of wildlife, and sufferers of injustice. Her *Endangered Species & Climate Change* (2019) collection portrays the emotions of wildlife in the face of extinction and how humans have a hand in their demise. The mixed media pieces exhibit dark landscapes and hand-drawn animals that call for confrontation, but express the warmth of tight-knit community banding together. The emotional weight of her work clearly communicates a call to action for audiences around the globe.

Photograph of Lynne Allen, 2022
photograph, Lynne Anne Studio

New World Order, 2024
22 x 30in. Mixed media (graphite, watercolor, acrylic, ink, charcoal pencil) and collage on archival paper
(As seen on front cover).

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Diné Natani Notah

Navajo artist, Natani Notah uses a variety of mediums to depict social issues affecting her community. In her *Thoughts on Being Thrown* (2022-2024) collection, she sheds light on the indigenous experience through a feminist lens. Her mixed media archival prints are designed to invoke feeling and understanding through the use of negative space, a light color palette, and symbolic hand-drawn objects.

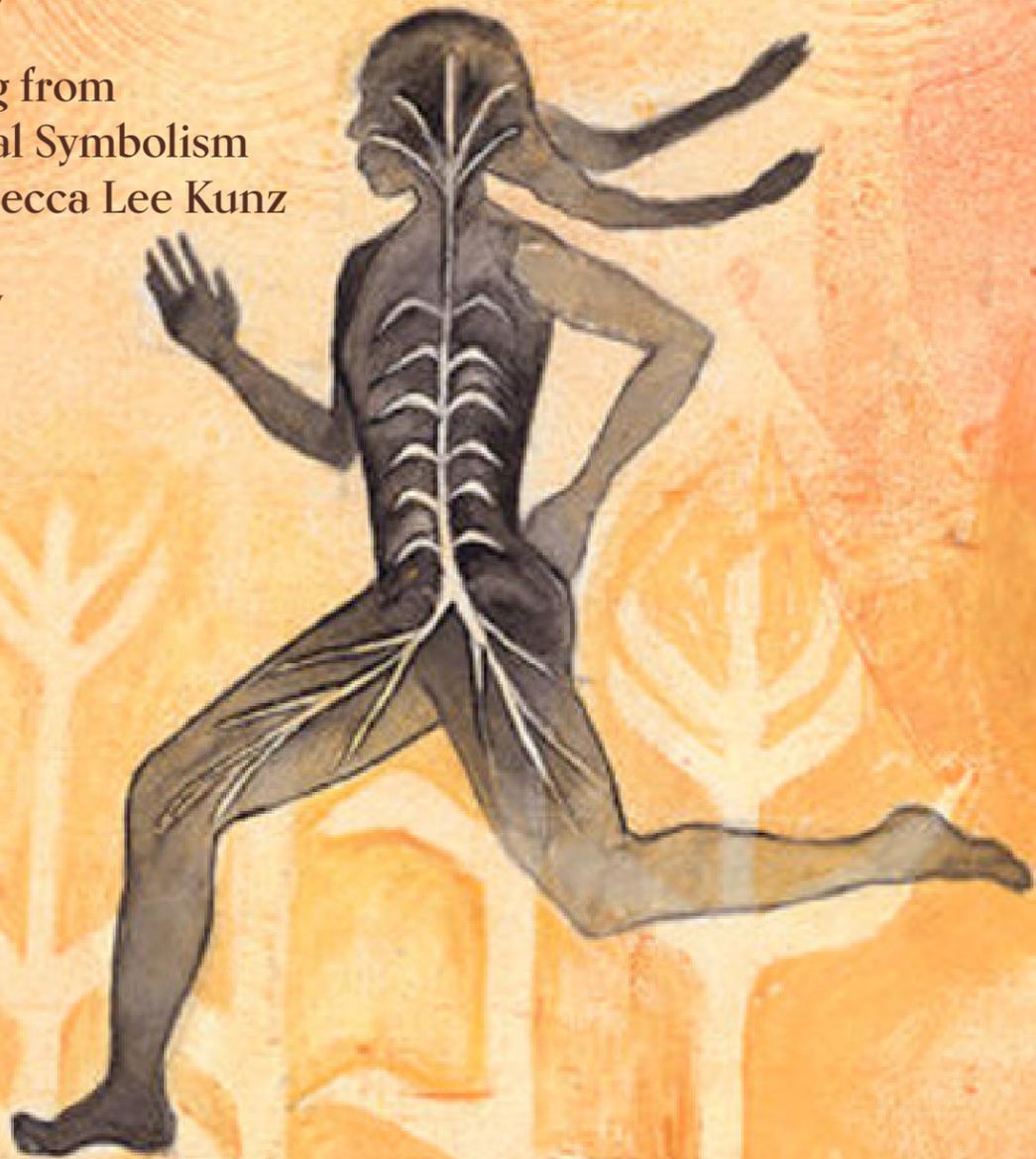
Photograph of Natani Notah, 2023
Melissa Lukenbaugh, photograph

Incoming, 2024
22 x 30in. Mixed media (graphite, watercolor, acrylic, ink, charcoal pencil) and collage on archival paper
(As seen on front cover).

Skyward

Learning from
Historical Symbolism
with Rebecca Lee Kunz

Written By
Sara Head



Growing up in a native Cherokee community in Oklahoma, Rebecca Lee Kunz developed an understanding of the world through indigenous oral traditions. In her adult life...

She creates intriguing mixed media pieces about her life as a contemporary indigenous woman.

She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in painting from the College of Santa Fe and started the Tree of Life Studio in 2007. Currently, Kunz creates fine art pieces and collections to share the stories from her culture. In 2023, she created a collection of Giclée archival pigment prints titled Story Paintings. The collection provides an inside look into wildlife navigating

a postindustrial world, where climate change threatens survival. By creating contemporary translations of ancient indigenous petroglyphs, she implants historical symbology in the scenes in her prints as subtle nods to the everlasting footprints of her ancestors.



Tree Of Life



Present throughout *Story Paintings*, the Tree of Life archetype illustrates the connection between all of creation. Kunz draws upon its institution for artistic inspiration and creativity. The Tree of Life depicts the interconnectedness of all life both physically and spiritually. Humanity draws upon nature for strength, courage, and even creativity. All life is connected in various ways, and it is important to pay homage to this truth in one's daily life. If humanity's connection with nature is interwoven in the Tree of Life, then humanity's creativity is the fabric of the Tree of Life's existence.



Skyward Return, 2023, 11 x 14in. Giclée archival pigment print.

“The Earth was tied to the Sky Vault by cords and this land became our new home.”
- Rebecca Lee Kunz

From Cinders, 2023

11 x 14in. Giclée archival pigment print.



Giclée Archival Pigment Prints

Kunz utilizes an interesting process when working with her medium. To make giclée archival pigment prints, she overlays a monoprint backdrop with graphite illustrations and vibrant watercolors. The result is a beautiful print that is best displayed in a floating frame.



The Fall of Matriarchy

Cherokee women originally focused on foraging and farming before outside forces pressured for change. As outside settlers began eroding indigenous land, the need for retaining land became a priority. Men in the tribes began helping the women with tilling the fields, ultimately neglecting their hunting grounds. In response, the native hunting grounds started to diminish. Western assimilation soon plagued the area under Thomas Jefferson's Civilization

Program in 1801. Then, industrialization followed quickly behind the transfer of land ownership. Traditional Cherokee resources increased in scarcity and the women of the tribes began working within the home. By 1819, the culture had lost more than 90% of their land. The land treaties with the United States were ultimately broken in 1838 when the Cherokee people were forcibly removed and transferred to different land. The Dawes Act of 1887 later passed in which the men in the tribes were given 160 acres of territory each in

in exchange for tribal lands. They were also offered US citizenship for tribal affiliation.

For the Cherokee women, the situation was even more grim. They were married to white men to gain allotment land and the Curtis Act of 1898 transferred their power as head of households to the Cherokee men.

In *Blackberry to Cotton* (pictured above), Kunz describes the toll that Western assimilation brought upon Cherokee women. The transition of the blackberry branch to the cotton sprig represents their

sorrowful switch from farming indigenous blackberry to industrial cotton.

Today's Cherokee women acknowledge that Western assimilation is responsible for the current connotations attached to their existence. Many women like Rebecca Lee Kunz are trying to recover what was lost. By incorporating references to lost traditions and accounts of historic aggressions, she is able to help the Cherokee people connect to the world their ancestors tended before it was taken from them.

“But, as prophecy tells us, one day the Earth will grow tired and fall back into the sea”

- Rebecca Lee Kunz



Sky Vault Descent, 2023, 11 x 14in. Giclée archival pigment print.

Falling Up

When confronted with the effects of climate change, Kunz finds Cherokee legends to be a source of comfort. She often references one influential indigenous story in particular: the Sky Vault. Passed down through oral tradition, the Sky Vault describes a safe haven in the sky where both humans and animals first resided. It remained a place of wonder until it became too crowded. This lack of space caused humans and wildlife to spread down to a land suspended by cords, otherwise known as Earth, underneath the Sky Vault. It is said that those on Earth will return back to the Sky Vault when the cords connecting the two places fray and solid ground turns into the sea. All of life on Earth shall fall upward, returning to the



the safe haven. Kunz interprets this legend as a natural explanation for the effects of global warming that are currently affecting the survival of the world and its inhabitants. She understands humanity's role in climate change and acknowledges the strength of nature.

Tools for Erosion

In addition to climate change, Kunz focuses on exhibiting hardships experienced by North American indigenous cultures in the post-industrial world. In *Sky Split* (pictured on Page 11), she depicts the fall of the power of indigenous matriarchs due to the tools of industrialization gifted to tribes by United States government. In 1840, the US government provided industrial tools to the Cherokee people with the intention

of assimilating the group into modern society. Cherokee women were given spinning wheels and metal sewing needles to help them embark on the advancement of their people. Due to this, traditional craftsmanship like basket-weaving was partially lost and an indigenous woman's work shifted indoors. This was significant because the matriarchal power of Cherokee women stemmed from traditional farming roles. When the United States took over indigenous land, male plantation workers and slaves took over outdoor duties. With women focusing on duties within the home, the power of matriarchy began to deteriorate.

“From the depths we arrive with new vision, and sometimes profoundly clear sight”

- Rebecca Lee Kunz



Deliverance, 2023, 11 x 14in. Giclée archival pigment print.

Sky Split, 2023

11 x 14in. Giclée archival pigment print



Diné

Understanding the Societal
Strains Erasing Tradition
with Natani Notah

Written By
Sara Head

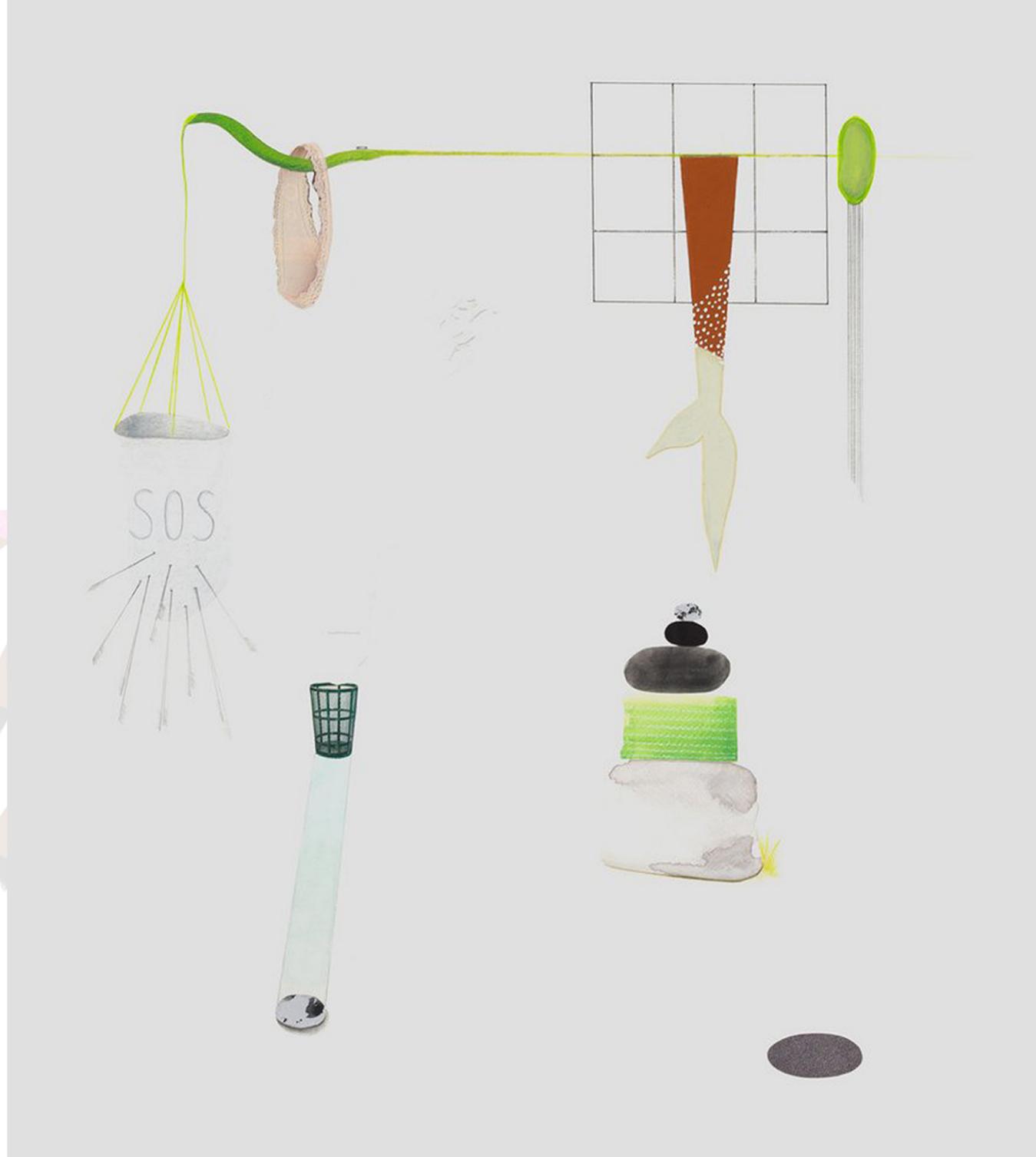


Incoming, 2024
22 x 30 in. Mixed media (graphite, watercolor, acrylic, ink, charcoal pencil) and collage on archival paper.



Hook Line and Sink Her, 2024
22 x 30 in. Mixed media (graphite, watercolor, acrylic, ink, charcoal pencil) and collage on archival paper.

The definition of an indigenous woman is something Natani Notah has contemplated all her life. She feels that the place an indigenous woman occupies in society has diminished due to...

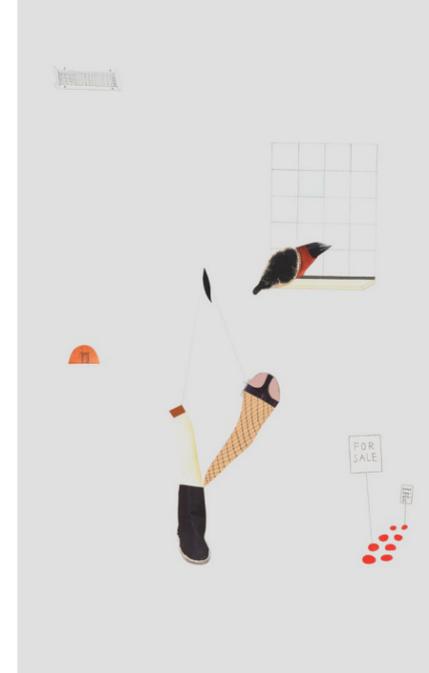


SOS, 2022, 22 x 30in, Mixed media (graphite, watercolor, acrylic, ink, charcoal pencil) and collage on archival paper.

... the difficulty of conforming to Western ideals.

Natani Notah obtained a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Fine Art with a minor in Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies from Cornell University in 2014 as well as a Master of Fine Arts degree in Art Practice from Stanford University in 2018. She currently resides in Tulsa, Oklahoma and is actively collaborating with fine art organizations to better display the indigenous experience in today's world. In terms of subject matter, Notah focuses

on using fine art to visually communicate the social and political issues facing not only indigenous communities, but also the world. She targets a specified scope on large topics like climate change, land ownership, womanhood, and many others. Her intentional chosen details reveal an intensified look at the compositional context.



Navajo Leg With a Fishing Net Stocking, 2022, 22 x 30in, Mixed media (graphite, watercolor, acrylic, ink, charcoal, pencil) and collage on archival paper.

Thoughts On Being Thrown

One of her more recent collections, *Thoughts on Being Thrown* (2022-2024) brings attention to social issues that affect indigenous men and women. She alludes to several political-social movements like the Pro-Choice movement and the indigenous Land Back movement in her work. As seen in *SOS* (pictured left), the artist depicts the indigenous traditions of sustainability and homeland struggling to exist when confronted with land ownership and climate change. The result is a delicate balance of interconnected objects reacting to the presence of one another. It feels as if any kind of aggressive force could destroy the entire formation. This is an idea that she wants audiences to acknowledge.

Although Notah's mixed media prints often appear haunting or complex in reason, there is still a sense of time for resolving issues. The light colors and white space give a lighter feeling to the difficult topics represented. In a softer way, she points out that there is still enough time to ensure better futures for both western and indigenous individuals alike.

“But wading through it all, I’m finding slivers of hope and refuge in my work...”

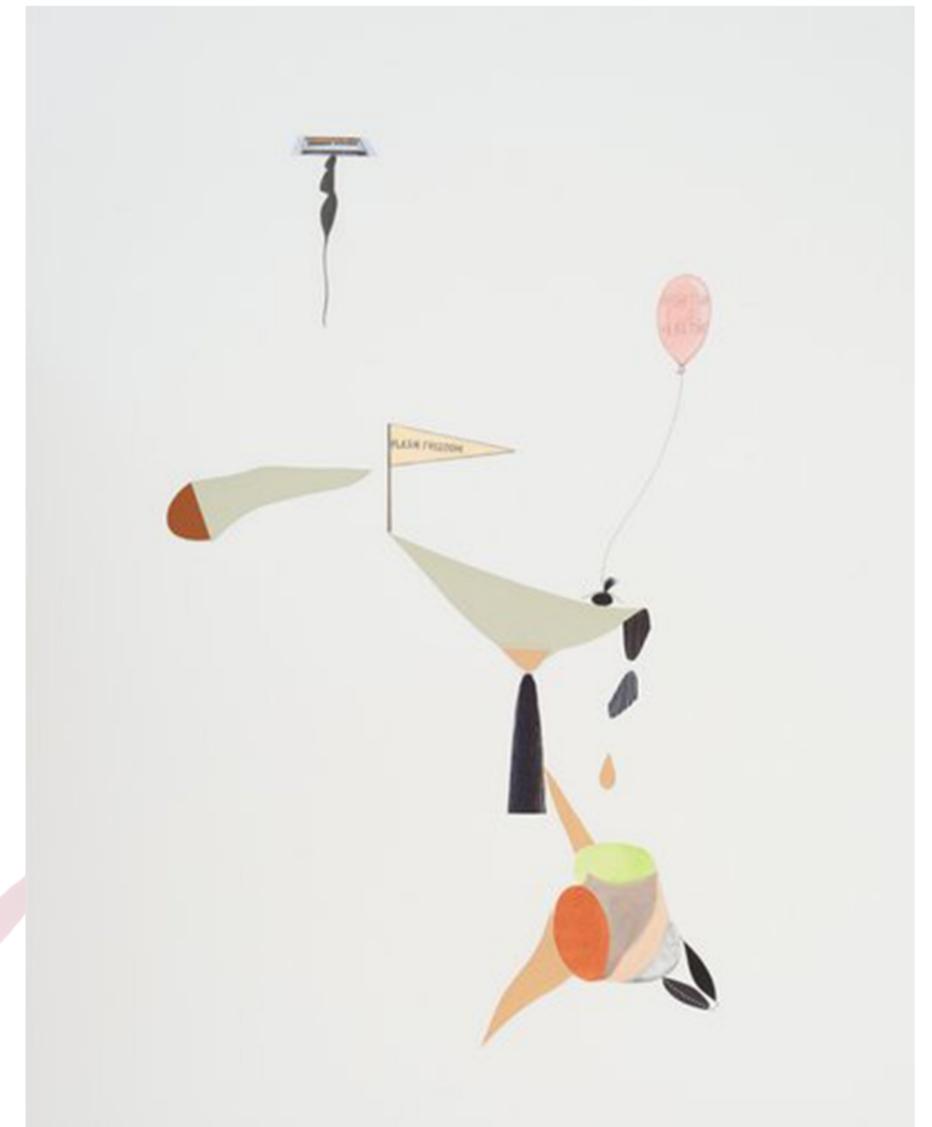
- Natani Notah

Diné

In some of her work, Notah speaks about Diné womanhood. The reference derives from the experiences of indigenous women throughout history and within a modern day context. Many North American indigenous cultures are matriarchal communities, where women are seen as strong leaders and providers in the

tribe. Through pieces like *Navajo Leg With a Fishnet Stocking* (pictured left) and *Flesh Freedom* (pictured below), the artist discusses how the historical struggles of an indigenous woman collide with the newfound strife of conforming to Western societal ideals. The balance in these pieces reveals the beauty, but the objects point toward physical brutality and self-sacrifice.

Flesh Freedom, 2022, 22 x 30in, Mixed media (graphite, watercolor, acrylic, ink, charcoal, pencil) and collage on archival paper.





Airborne, 2023, 22 x 30in. Mixed media (graphite, watercolor, acrylic, ink, charcoal, pencil) and collage on archival paper.

Land Back

Colonialism, seizure of land, and displacement have vastly plagued the North American indigenous peoples in history. In response, indigenous communities started the Land Back Movement, which calls for the land and resources taken by the United States to be returned to the native tribes that occupied it originally. Notah describes the atrocities and misfortunes experienced by her Navajo and Lakota ancestors in pieces like *Grabbing For Land*



Close-Up of *Airborne*, 2023, 22 x 30in. Mixed media (graphite, watercolor, acrylic, ink, charcoal, pencil) and collage on archival paper.

(pictured on page 17), *Swing Low* (pictured below) *Airborne* (pictured on the left). She utilizes negative space and map-like linework to directly reference how the loss of sacred land has caused tumultuous effects that are still felt by indigenous descendants to this day. The colors and environmental elements included in these pieces allude to the destruction done to these lands due to governmental mismanagement and overall neglect. Due to indigenous cultural values involving spiritual connections to the Earth, members of the Land Back Movement have expressed a deep desire to introduce sustainability practices for revival of the environment in these stolen zones. The spiritual love for the land is a major driving factor for the movement's call to action.

“...break down these lines that tend to divide us.”

- Natani Notah



Swing Low, 2022, 22 x 30in. Mixed media (graphite, watercolor, acrylic, ink, charcoal, pencil) and collage on archival paper.



Grabbing For Land, 2022

22 x 30in. Mixed media (graphite, watercolor, acrylic, ink, charcoal, pencil) and collage on archival paper.

Loss

Starting a Conversation
about Conservation
with Lynne Allen

Written By
Sara Head

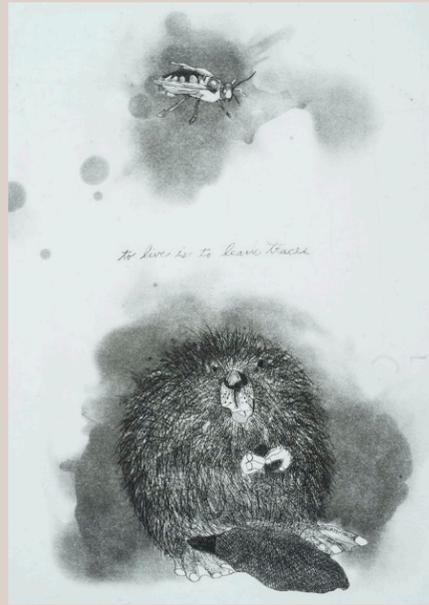
Activism for those without voices
is one of Lynne Allen's passions in
life. As a member of the Standing
Rock Indigenous Peoples of
South Dakota, she understands
how interconnected...



Endangered, 2019,
14.75 x 20in, Etching and woodcut.

... the survival of the environment is with the continuation of humankind.

To aid her journey in environmentalism, she obtained a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of New Mexico as well as a Master of Art for Teachers from the University of Washington. It is evident in her work that her passions lie in wildlife conservation and justice for victims of misfortune. She is recognized for compelling mixed media artwork that tackles intense societal and environmental issues with powerful commentary and calls to action. A strong advocate for conservation, Allen uses her artistic prowess in tandem with her environmental awareness to inspire the betterment of the world in terms of sustainability and preservation. The subjects of Allen's pieces are often plagued by dark themes with small glimmers of hope.



To Live Is To Leave Traces, 2019, Ink on paper.

Mixed Media Work

To accurately exhibit these pressing environmental issues, she employs a mix of many different mediums in her pieces.

Some of her favorite mediums are lithography, woodcut, etching, watercolor, and acrylic paint. By using a variety of mediums, she gives herself the space to experiment with artistic expression and powerful meaning. Complexity in medium allows her to achieve layered compositions that mirror the complexity of the issues she addresses. When looking at her collections, the audience can acknowledge the versatility of her artistic skill and the pure creativity embodied in her work. The visual and conceptual depth created with her attention to detail inspires onlookers to reevaluate their own footprint on Earth.



“My art making is a love affair with the forsaken.”

- Lynne Allen

Facing extinction, 2019, 19 x 21 in, etching and woodcut chine colle.



Crested Ibis, 2019
14 x 18in, etchings, hand coloring.



Unnamed, 2019, etching.

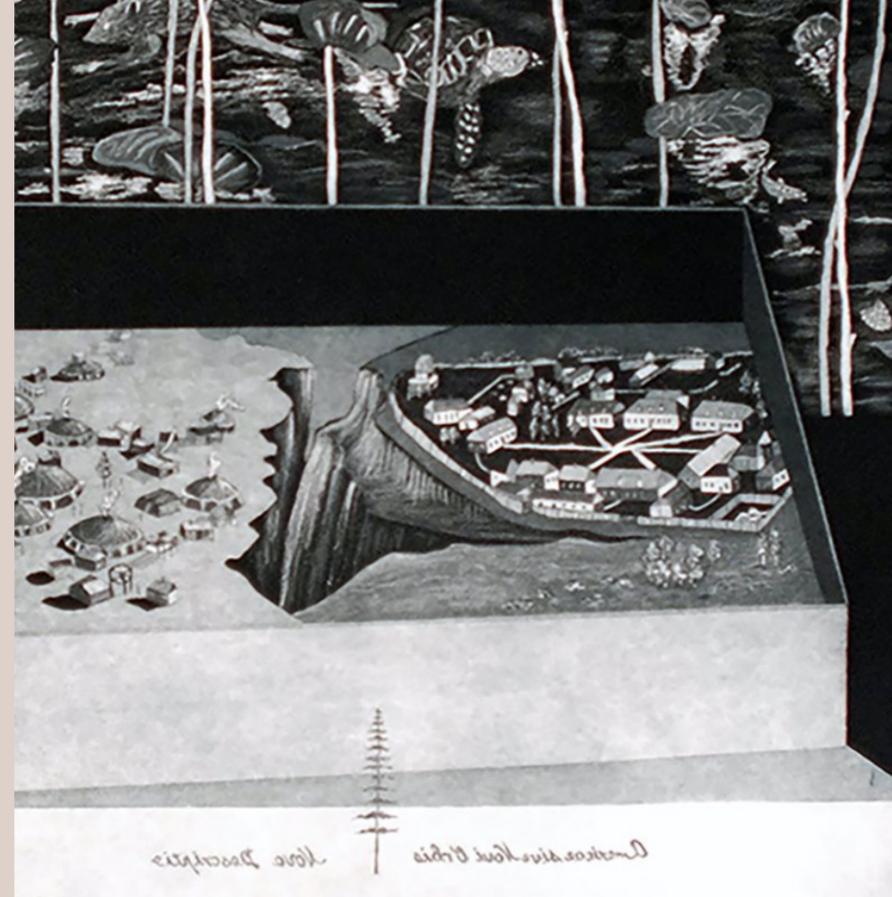
Conservation

In her Endangered Species & Climate Change (2019) collection, Allen depicts various types of wildlife facing the current mass extinction event triggered by climate change. In these pieces, she calls the audience to action, using artistic expression to explain that it is humanity's responsibility to fix this ongoing issue. The pieces in the collection display dreary, yet ecological color palettes full of green,

blue, and black hues. The animals are etched by hand in a soft realism style. The negative space feels as if it encapsulates an ominous feeling in many of the pieces. Allen often fills gaps in the spaces around the wildlife subjects with scattered imagery of human trash to highlight the devastation caused by the human tradition of discarding without thought. Western society is known for its poor waste



management and intense contribution to global atmospheric emissions. Allen provides direct references to this in her work. She believes that this issue is an enormous wrong that humanity needs to make right. If human hands tore apart these precious habitats, then it is human hands that must rebuild the ecosystems.



Fractured, 2019, 34 x 39in, etching.

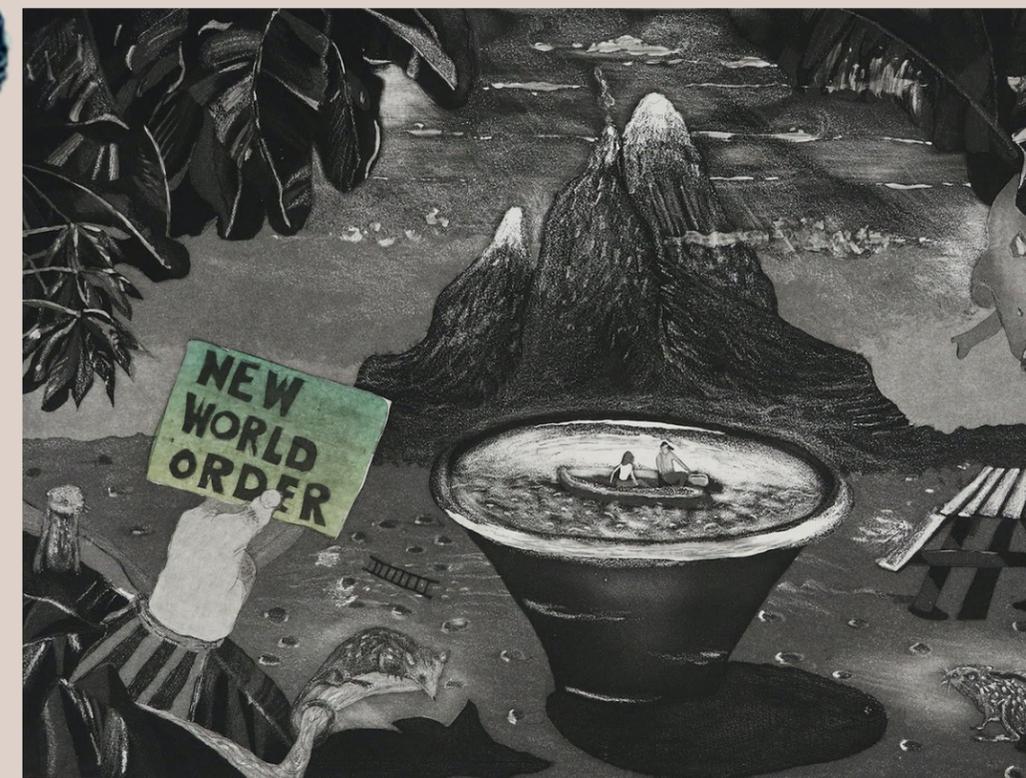
Advocacy

Lynne Allen's passion for the environment and the preservation of indigenous cultures goes far past her artistic expression. In fact, she engages in multiple different realms of activism in her daily life. Her artistic materials and messages are only one part of her story. She also engages with communities and young people through educational outreach. She takes her exhibitions around the globe in order to further inspire others to take action in conservation. Supporting conservation initiatives and political advocacy are additional forms of her service. She uses the platform she has established with her artistic expression to amplify and advocate for policies that will extend protections for Earth's ecosystems. Her indigenous roots solidify her desire to connect humanity and nature together.

By encouraging people to reflect on the world's mismanagement of ecological systems, Allen promotes conservation within individuals internationally. Her deep commitment to the environment seems to be contagious. Thanks to her work, humanity is one step closer to fully appreciating the natural world.



New World Order, 2019, 27 x 34in, etching.



Conclusion

Rebecca Lee Kunz, Natani Notah, and Lynne Allen are three indigenous women who use their artistic expression to inform the world about their experiences and humanity's sacred connection to the Earth. The emotions and meanings present in their artwork successfully create calls to action regarding social, political, and environmental issues. By paying attention to meaningful messages in visual art, we can better acknowledge our place in the world. To live alongside one another is not enough. We must love and cherish the ecosystem that birthed us.

“However, in the end, the strength and beauty of the human spirit is that of a survivor and has its own beauty.”

- Lynne Allen



Author & Magazine Designer: Sara Head
Professor Tim Hiltabiddle
SCAD Course: GRDS 353

Typographer: Kevin King
Kumlien Pro was chosen for this magazine due to the typographer's strong ties to the North American indigenous tribes. Kevin King has dedicated much of his life to assisting indigenous communities with transcribing their language into the digital world. His work preserves the longevity of indigenous legends and history in the face of evolving technology.