

RoundUP: Selected Works By Torry Mendoza
Urban Shaman Gallery

RoundUP: Aanind Gaa-ozhibii'ang Torry Mendoza

Don't Fence Me In

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The "Hollywood Indian" is a distorted image, symbolic of an invention culled from a constructed imagination influenced by the pseudo-scientific "vanishing race" theory, the Western concept of Manifest Destiny, and erroneous and misconstrued depictions of the Native represented in mass culture. The constant inconsistencies and fabrication of public mis-portrayal of race/culture developed and circulated through popular media such as film, art and literature, has affected, mislead, and exploited the historic truth and realities of Indigenous people all over the world throughout the 20th century.

Awe "Hollywood Indian" gaawiin bagakaabamaasii. Aaniin enaabamind anishinaabe gii-onjise imaa gii-inenjigaazod "wii-ani-jaagined." Mii iwe waabishkiiwe gaa-inendang Manifest Destiny gaa-ijigaadeg iwe aaniin gaa-inaabamaawaad anishinaaben odizhitwaawiniwaang. Owe enenimaawaad gakina awiya gii-debwetamoog aaniin enaadiziwaad Anishinaabeg memindage mazinaatebijiganing, mazinibii'igewining zhigwa mazina'iganing. Mii dash gaawiin gii-gikenimaasii aweneniwid awe Anishinaabeg apane igo ningodwaak daswaaki odaanaang.

Oversimplified one-dimensional caricature depictions of Native North Americans, projected larger than life on movie screens in Hollywood pictures, were viewed (and still are) as being "authentic," "primitive" and "popular" by movie-going audiences. Authenticity, Hollywood-style, overshadowed any form of diversity or reality spread across Native Nations and instead branded a Pan-Indian image to emerge, classifying Indians as either, good or bad, noble or savage with regard to their relationship to progress and white America.

Waabanda'iwewaad daabishkoo ji-nibwaakaasinig Anishinaaben, memindage gaa-mazinaatesenig, gakina awiya gii-inendamoog daabishkoo gii-debwemagadinig enaabamimind. Debwem gii-inendaam bigo inatebinind Anishinaabe aanagii abooshke bebakaan ayizhinaagoziwaad, ayizhitwaawaad igaye. Ningoding ako gii-minwaadiziwan gemaa

gii-majaadiziwan Anishinaaben, ningoding miinawaa gii-aangawi-ayaawan gemaa gii-gaashaadiziwan memindage gegoo waabishkiiwen wiidanokiimaad.

As Hollywood studios cranked out “Cowboy and Indian” and Western genre films, radio broadcast serials and television shows, the popularity of the “Hollywood Indian” soared. The genre generated a consumer’s drive, fantasy-laden aesthetics and the branding of “Indian” as a commodity, a concept, a problem, an anti-hero and eventually, a neo-spiritual influence. Imaginary Chiefs, princesses, savages and sidekicks were developed as a reflection far removed from the truth, conjured by misconceptions and fear that reduced the richness, legacy and complexity of 500 distinct cultures situated across the North American frontier. Eni-waabanda’iwewaad mazinaatebinaawaad “Anishinaabe’ dago Gaa-desabinid” iwe inaatebijiigewaad, noondaagomochiganing zhigwa gaa-mazinaatesenig, gakina awiya ogii-debwetaan. Mii gii-inenjigaazo Anishinaabe aaniin ji-izhinaagozipan, ji-aabajj’awaad, aweneniwinid, maji-gegoowid, gegoo danaabadizisig metas awiya daabishkoo gii-gichi-izhitwaad. Ogimaakaanikaanag, ogimaakwensag, bagwaji-ayaag, zhigwa babaapizhikaanaawaad. Ogii-gichi-giiwanasaawaan, mii gaa-izhi-gosind, gaa-ani-izhi-majenimind ambe 500 bebakaan gii-dinookaaniwiwag omaa Anishinaabeg.

They [Indians] are usually characterized as riding horses, hunting buffalos with bows and arrows or guns, and wearing tailored leather clothing and feathers in their hair or in headdresses. They are seen as consistently been cheated by whites and therefore as consistently as against whites. They are portrayed as persistently involved with warfare, fighting as tribal units under a chief, and taking the scalps or their enemies as war trophies. In more racist terms they are stereotyped as sexually desiring white women and therefore abducting them, being more adversely affected by alcohol than whites, and being humourless, taciturn, and speaking simple languages.”¹

Wiinawaa [Anishinaabeg] gii-waabamaawag desabiwaad, nooji’awaad mashkode-bizhikwa’ bimwaawaad gemaa baashkizwaawaad zhigwa biizikamowaad wawezhichiganan, badakibinewaad gaye. Daabida waabamaawag gagiiyezhi’igowaad waabishkiiwe gemaa gagiiyezhi’igod. Bizhishig miigaazowag, ogimaakaanikaanag niigaanitamaagowaad. Bishagindibezhiwewaad gemaa wawezhiichigaanaawaad nesaawaad. Zhigwa miinawaa onenimaawag daabishkoo agaawaanaawaad

¹ John A. Price, “The Stereotyping of North American Indians in Motion Pictures,” in *The Pretend Indians: Images of Native Americans in the Movies*, ed. Gretchen M. Bataille and Charles P. Silet (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1980) p. 75.

¹ John A. Price, “The Stereotyping of North American Indians in Motion Pictures,” in *The Pretend Indians: Images of Native Americans in the Movies*, ed. Gretchen M. Bataille dago Charles P. Silet (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1980) p. 75.

waabishkiiwekwe' mii daabishkoo gaa-onji-gimoodiwaad. Nawach gaye odayaawigonigowaa' minikwewin apiich wiin waabishkiiwe'. Daabishkoo gaye gii-baapiwinisig, ogiigidowinisig zhigwa anoojigo inwed gaagiigidod.

In **Round UP: Works By Torry Mendoza**, new media/video artist Torry Mendoza exhibits work centering on the re-appropriation and deconstruction of Indigenous identity in mass media/popular culture by confronting and dispelling the myths imposed on our collective spirit. By utilizing and re-appropriating Hollywood productions through hi-lo digital editing, remixes, mash-ups and satirical juxtapositions, Mendoza sears dominant society's image of Native Americans as a reflection upon themselves. Round UP stomps out the fires stemming from the arts (film, art, literature), sports (logos, mascots), and media (newspaper, broadcast) to eradicate any misunderstandings that influence denial of our own traditional and historical narratives and societal views.

Imaa RoundUP: Torry Mendoza onji, oshki-mazinaatebijiiged Torry Mendoza waabanda'iwe odoozhichiganan neyaab odaapinigaadeg zhigwa naniskonigaadeg aaniin enaabamind Anishinaabe miziwe. Oganawaabandaanaawaan wegonenan ini gaa-giiwanimokin aweneniwiyang. Owe izhichigewag odaapinamowaad ini mazinaatebijiiganan ezhi-aandaakizamowaad bebakaan izhi ji-maamiinotoowaad. Mendoza ikido ingiwe gaa-gii-giiwani-onenimaawaad Anishinaaben, gikenjigaade aaniin wiinawaa endinookaaniwiwaad. RoundUP odaatawe'aan ini gaa-giiwanimoomagakin (mazinaatebijiigeng, mazinibii'igeng, ozhibii'igeng), wedaminong (omazinishta'iganiwaan, odoodaminwaaganiwaan), zhigwa (ozhibii'iganing, noondaagomochiganing) ji-gwayakotoowaad gaa-gii-onenimaawaad Anishinaabe', mii aaniish gegiinawind wenji-majenindizoyang owe gii-bi-izhiseg.

Torry Mendoza taunts the Hollywood Indian in his short media works, stirring Tonto (Jay Silverheels ne Harry Smith) and the Lone Ranger's one-dimensional dialogue to a pulsating dance/techno beat in *Kemosabe Version 1.0* (2008). He scrutinizes the duo's relationship by remixing a conversation between the two, revealing a master and servant disposition similar to the disparate relationships assumed by the nation-state with native nations.

Torry Mendoza omamiikindaan awe Anishinaabe gaa-waabamind gaa-mazinaatesenig omazinaatebijiiganing. Meshkwajitood Tonto gaa-gii-inind (Jay Silverheels, Harry Smith ako) zhigwa awe Lone Ranger gii-gaagiigidowaad nawach minwewemochigem zhigwa imaa *Kemosabe Version 1.0* (2008). Odaanjitoo ezhi-gaganoonidinid waabanda'iwed awenen degokaazhiwed daabishkoo gichi-ogimaa gaa-doodawaad Anishinaabe'.

In *Stupid Fucking White Man* or *Going Indian* (2005), Mendoza spins the celebrity of the Academy award winning film *Dances With Wolves* by ridiculing Kevin Costner's character's wannabe desires and his attempt to go native. Mendoza captures and emphasizes the distortion between fantasy and reality by tweaking a redux version of Lt. Dunbar's choreographed disillusioned dance around the fire. Playing Indian, which has its own historical colonial roots, is an ongoing exercise in power, as well as evasion. Mendoza continues to dissect and appropriate Hollywood films starring past A-list white actors playing Indian (such as Charles Bronson, Lee Van Cleef, and Jack Palance) in *Red Man and Savages* (2005) as a means to raise conscious of the mis-representation and outright racist connotations articulated towards native peoples imparted through such popularized roles. By inserting the words Entertainment? Education? History? And Reality? into the mix and overlaying them as questions scrolling horizontally across the screen, Mendoza identifies the impact of the master narrative (film) and perpetrator (actor) as deceitful.

Imaa Stupid Fucking White Man gemaa Going Indian (2005), Mendoza obabaapizhi'aa' ini gaa-mazinaatesenid *Dances With Wolves* gaa-gii-bakinaagemagak mazinaatebijigan, aaniin Kevin Costner gaa-izhi-noonde-bwaaniwid. Mendoza waabanda'iwe miinawaa wegonen debwemagak zhigwa debwemagasinog aanjitood iwe Lt. Dunbar gaa-gii-giiwitaashimod ishkodeng. Anishinaabekaazod, odaanaang gaa-izhichigeng, daabishkoo gagwe-dibenjigewin abooshke noonde-dazhindanziwan gegoo. Aanjigo Mendoza onaanaagadawaabandaanan ini mazinaatebijiganan gaa-gii-ayaamagakin memindage waabishkiiweg anishinaabekaazowaad. Daabishkoo (Charles Bronson, Lee Van Cleef zhigwa Jack Palance) imaa ezhinikaadeg *Red Man and Savages*. Wii-waabanda'iwed aaniin gaa-izhi-giiwanimowaad onenimaakaanaawaad Anishinaaben. Ikidowinan odaabajitoonaawaan daabishkoo ji-moojigitoowin? Gikina'amaagoowin? Odaanaang? Gagetin idash? Odoozhibii'aan mezinaatesenig wegonen ji-naagajitooyan. Mendoza ogikendaan mezinaatebijigewin zhigwa aweneniwikaazod imaa ji-giiwanimowaad.

With *Technical Difficulties Part I and II*, Mendoza goes a step further to examine and expose occurrences of ethnic fraud by focusing on the acceptance of Indigeneity gained by notoriety. Two fictional American characters – Iron Eyes Cody famous for the “Keep America Beautiful” commercial (otherwise known as the “crying Indian”) and Billy Jack, a half-breed war vet character from a cult film series feeding off of the civil rights movement - are constructed lore, who blur the boundaries between fact and fiction, real and make-believe to become popular and iconographic across America. Mendoza edits snippets of the popular tv commercial and movie with constant interruptions disguised as broadcast difficulties as a means for viewers to acknowledge that something is wrong with this picture.

Iwe wiin *Technical Difficulties Part I* zhigwa *Part II*, Mendoza awashime doodam wii-waabanda'iwed aandi imaa wendizid awiya giwanimotaaged anishinaabewiwin onji. Niizh

Gichi-mookomaani gii-anishinaabewikaazowaad mazinaatesewaad, bezhig Iron Eyes Cody gaa-mazinaatesed imaa “Keep America Beautiful” (ningoding ako “mewid Anishinaabe” gii-inaa’) zhigwa Billy Jack, daabishkoo gii-aabitagoozhaaniwid gii-izhaad miigaading, gii-ondizi apii Anishinaabeg gaa-gii-gagwe-miigaadamowaad ezhiwebiziwindwaa – gii-michi-ozhichigaade, gaawiin gakina debwewin, mii gaa-onji-ondizing imaa. Mendoza ogii-aanjitooon ini mazinaatebijiganan, endasing maadaatesenig ogiishkinaan gegoo ji-ikidod daabishkoo gegoo maazhisenig imaa ji-gikendang awe genawaabandang gegoo ji-onji-naagajitood mezinaatesenig.

Contrary to Popular Belief (2005), and *Good Riddance Chief Illiniwink* (2008), finds Mendoza critically toying with stereotypes created, romanticized and perpetuated by the enduring attitudes and misconceptions embedded in the cultural landscape and memory that spans the history of oppressed people, Native peoples, to resonate the gamut of representation developed, sustained and distorted by society and media. With *The Mechanics of Being NDN* 2009, Mendoza takes an animated post-modern spin on the highly renowned sculpture *The End Of The Trail* (1915) by James Earle Fraser. Chock full of clichés, Mendoza breaths new life into the sculptures hundred year-old presence by imagining a new dawn in the frontier, far from the limitations imposed on imaginary Indians.

Contrary to Popular Belief (2005) zhigwa *Good Riddance Chief Illiniwink* (2008), giwaabamaa Mendoza gaganawaabandang ini aaniin igo gaa-izhi-onenimind Anishinaabe noongom geyaabi enaabamind maamikawiseng odaanaang onji gaa-gii-bi-datagokaanindwaa. Anishinaabeg, ji-gikenjigaadeg gaa-bi-onenimind miziwe abooshke ini gaa-waabandamang zhigwa gaa-noondamang. Zhigwa imaa *The Mechanics of Being NDN* 2009, Mendoza odaanjitooon iwe ozhikwajigewin *The End Of The Trail* (1915) James Earle Fraser onji. Miziwe izhigiizhwewinan, Mendoza bakaan odizhisidoonan ini ozhikwajiganan ningodwaak endaso-biboonemagakin, biidaaban bakaan wii-izhiseg gaawiin daabishkoo gaa-gii-michi-ozhi’aawaad aaniin ji-izhi-ayaanid Anishinaabe’.