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*Approved by the Thesis Committee:*

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**THE POWER OF VOICE:  
THE INDIAN ARTS RESEARCH CENTER'S IDENTITY  
SHIFT**

**by**

**LAURA ELLIFF**

**BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ANTHROPOLOGY, 2003  
GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN MUSEUM COLLECTIONS  
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**THESIS**

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**THE POWER OF VOICE:  
THE INDIAN ARTS RESEARCH CENTER'S IDENTITY SHIFT**

by

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**ABSTRACT**

Over the past three decades and in a significant shift, museum professionals have been collaborating with tribal communities by incorporating their voices into the daily tasks of exhibition design, education, and programs, as well as collections care and storage. This study will examine the Indian Arts Research Center's history and identity by highlighting collaborative projects that have resulted in the inclusion of Native voices and in some cases a joint decision-making process, which I argue has shifted the IARC's institutional identity. In the past, the IARC collection has mostly been managed and created by non-Native people, and Native input was not always consistently included. This shift to collaboration is significant in that it has created partnerships with tribal communities; no longer is the relationship between institutions and communities a one-way street. This study will also bring voices of IARC staff, Native artists, and cultural advisers to the forefront.

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## **Introduction**

In 2004, when I entered the museum profession, one of my first experiences was participating in the opening festivities at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in Washington, D.C. The institution where I had previously worked was hosting a temporary exhibition for the opening. I was drawn to this profession because objects and voices fascinate me; together they shape identities and tell stories about our history and lives. Museums and research institutions are places where we can learn about history, culture, or the arts. Each institution has a mission statement or a set of purposes stating its overall identity, which conveys the stories it tells. According to Polly Nordstrand (Hopi-Norwegian), a former curator at the Denver Art Museum, “Museums have a voice. In fact, we often hush when we enter. Is it so we can hear the stories that are there?” (Ogden 2004, 11).

This study will examine the history and identity of a research center by highlighting collaborative projects that have resulted in the inclusion of Native voices and in some cases a joint decision-making process, which I argue has shifted its institutional identity. Since 2008, I have worked as a collections manager at the Indian Arts Research Center (IARC), School for Advanced Research (SAR) in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The research center houses more than 12,000 Southwestern (U.S.) Native American objects, including pottery, basketry, textiles, and jewelry. Founded in 1922, the extensive collection is utilized by researchers who come from all over the world, and tribal community members frequently research the collection for artistic inspiration or to connect with community or family heritage. Historically, the staff at most institutions who directed the collection of Indian artifacts and material culture thought that Native

people would eventually disappear before the onslaught of white civilization. IARC's collection was created by art patrons, writers, and archaeologists in Santa Fe who were concerned that material culture from the adjacent pueblos was disappearing, so it was incumbent on them to revive and preserve the arts for prosperity. In the past, the IARC collection has mostly been managed and created by non-Native people, and Native input was not consistently included. The IARC has shifted to a joint decision-making process which is significant in creating and maintaining present and future partnerships with tribal communities. IARC staff have the important tasks of assuring that objects are treated with the utmost respect; that researchers, artists, and tribal communities are utilizing the collection; and that objects are accurately documented based on each tribe's wishes. The move to collaborative projects between institutions such as the IARC and tribes is important because the relationship between these institutions and communities is no longer a one-way street.

IARC became a division of SAR in 1964, and its programs and projects are entirely separate from the scholar and seminar programs and are managed by different staff. I point this out because of the strong negative attitude of some Native scholars or artists toward SAR, and the perception that it is not inviting to Native scholars, tribal communities, and/or Native artists. This negativity has been transferred to IARC programs, in spite of the ongoing collaborative projects and outreach. In this study I want to emphasize the *positive* aspects of the IARC and its relation to Native people today and for future generations.

### *Concepts That Inform My Research*

Concepts based in Native American studies and museum studies inform this research project. First, this project will examine the concepts of the inclusion of Native voice and collaboration. Museum scholars such as Jennifer Shannon, Gerald McMaster, and Duane Champagne have offered definitions of the inclusion of Native voice, which will be discussed in Chapter 2. Collaboration will be examined as an outcome of the dialogue that was created by the e-mail questionnaires discussed in Chapter 4.

Second, I will unpack Anishinaabe scholar Gerald Vizenor's concept of *survivance*. Vizenor notes that "survivance is more than survival, more than endurance or mere response; the stories of survivance are an active presence" and "survivance is the continuance of stories" (1998, 15; 2008, 1). My main focus on survivance in this study is to examine how the inclusion of Native voice at the IARC signifies a presence and not an absence, which demonstrates IARC's identity shift to a joint decision-making process between tribal communities and the IARC (Vizenor 1998, 23). Furthermore, knowledge and stories are continuing or are being revitalized by visits to the collections at the IARC.

### *Voices & What's Ahead*

In order to highlight the importance of the IARC collaborative projects and voices, we must first turn to the historical branchings that led to where we are today. Hence, the first half of this study will focus on the steps that led to the IARC's identity shift. This will demonstrate the stepping stones most museums housing Native American collections have used. Thus, Native voices collaborative projects will not be presented until the second half of this study. In Chapter 1, I narrate a history of anthropological collecting of Native American material culture that ended up in museums across the

country. The history of anthropological collecting is significant because most museums were built on hegemonic and colonialist notions. Additionally, the collecting history was the precursor which eventually led to the shift toward collaboration. I then delineate a general overview of the history and creation of the IARC by outlining SAR's history to explain the original purposes and the overall identities of both institutions. In Chapter 2, I center on the history of the *museum collaboration movement* by looking at stepping stones such as Native activism in the 1970s-1980s; the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990; and the establishment of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). Activism, NAGPRA, and NMAI paved the way for collaboration and the inclusion of Native voices, which shifted the direction the IARC has taken.

The second half of this study will focus on the significance of the IARC identity shift by highlighting staff leadership, describing five collaborative projects since 2007, and it will also reveal voices from staff, artists, and cultural advisers who have been involved in these projects. Specifically, in Chapter 3, I demonstrate that under the guidance of the first Native American director, IARC's staff has moved in the direction of greater involvement with tribal communities. I will navigate through five collaborative projects: the Zuni collection reviews; moccasin seminars; artist fellowship outcomes; *Art, Gender, and Community* seminars; and future plans for IARC building expansion. These collaborative projects have resulted in strong partnerships with tribal communities. Overall, these projects indicate Native peoples' interest in the IARC, which in turn has fostered dialogue with Native peoples in order to make joint decisions.

Chapter 4 reveals the voices and stories at the IARC based on short e-mail questionnaires I conducted with IARC staff, Native artists, and cultural advisers. Gerald Vizenor's concept of survivance will also be discussed as a result of the collaborative projects and the e-mail questionnaires. Why is it important to highlight voices? The e-mail questionnaires are meant to create and capture the discourse of IARC's projects, which has not been previously examined. As a staff member at the IARC, I overhear comments from tribal communities or Native artists about *how great the IARC is; what a unique place it is; or yes, we are definitely coming back here again and we will tell everyone about this place*. There is a heavy discourse and *vibe* about the IARC, so I wanted to delve underneath the surface and dissect exactly what is going on at this institution.

### *Significance of the Study*

In terms of the significance of this study, first, no previous research has been conducted on the shift in direction the IARC has taken by collaborating with tribal communities. Second, I include narratives from the e-mail questionnaires from staff, Native artists, and cultural advisers who are involved in the IARC collaborative projects. Most of the literature published about the IARC is solely focused on objects and not people, or their voices. Third, this study demonstrates that the IARC is a welcoming institution for Native artists, researchers, and tribal community members. Fourth, this thesis is important because the IARC can also serve as a model for other research institutions that are just beginning to work with source communities.

I am very passionate about this research and I feel very fortunate to work at the IARC and to be involved with these collaborative projects. This study will bring my involvement and unheard IARC voices to light.

## **Chapter 1: Historical Avenues**

In order to call attention to the importance of the IARC collaborative projects, we must first turn to the historical avenues that the IARC took to get to that destination. Thus, in this chapter, I provide an overview of the Indian Arts Research Center (IARC) by briefly describing the history of the School for Advanced Research (SAR). This background will provide a context for the original purposes and the overall identity of the IARC. However, first it is essential to offer a glimpse into the history of anthropological collecting of Native American material culture, much of which has ended up in museums across the country (and around the world). As noted in the Introduction, historically, museums and research institutions were created and interpreted by non-Native people as a result of the colonization process. Hence, the following section will briefly describe how these institutions were constructed in order to understand the direction the IARC has taken today by collaborative projects that encourage Native voices.

### *A Brief History of Anthropological Collecting Practices*

The collection of Native American material culture began in earnest in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. During 1880-1920, known as the “museum age,” thousands of artifacts were collected by hegemonic and colonial organizations in the Southwest (Jacknis 1985, 75). Private collectors, amateur archaeologists, and anthropologists mined American Indian cultures and sites under the assumption that these cultures and places would soon vanish. As Curtis Hinsley and Nancy Parezo have shown, collecting Native American material culture was integral to the creation of a unique American past in which the Native past was streamlined into an American heritage. During this period, the United States was formulating its concepts of American identity. For example, Manifest

Destiny was the belief that the United States was destined to expand its territory across North America. Moreover, the craving for artifacts by anthropologists was “indicative of desires for stasis and control over environment” (Hinsley 1992, 16). Native people were part of the American identity equation, but not as citizens, because most other Americans thought that Native people would fade away or assimilate into the main society.

Curtis Hinsley notes that world fairs, Wild West shows, and the formation of museum collections are examples of what he calls the *museum process* (1992, 18), or the rapid collecting of Native American material culture. For the majority of collectors, the standard criterion for inclusion was that objects had to be handmade and thus were considered traditional (Parezo 1987, 24). Handmade objects were thought to be unique and to speak to the antiquity of a community. Being “traditional” signified that objects were used in the community and by its members. In fact, the reason objects were being acquired was never explained to members of the Native communities. Commonly anthropologists might tell tribal communities that they would be “given the things they needed” or that “materials were being collected in order to save them for the Indians themselves” (Parezo 1987, 18). In reality, hundreds of objects that were sacred or culturally sensitive were stolen and put in museums or sold to traders. Nancy Parezo also noted that a museum was a foreign concept to Native communities, and thus few Native people ever saw their objects again. Numerous institutions and organizations were constructed during this era to establish places for research or to provide a place for storage of objects from archaeological and Native American material culture expeditions. Each institution developed its own criteria for categorizing their collection and formulated their own identity and narrative (Jacknis 2008, 6).



One organization, the Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE), was established in 1879 for the sole purpose of documenting and collecting material culture for anthropological research and publication (Parezo 1987, 8). Its first director, John Wesley Powell, launched several expeditions to the Southwest for research in the areas of archaeology, ethnology, and linguistics. The Southwest was a perfect region to examine theories of cultural evolution by analyzing the material culture, language, or everyday life of Indigenous communities (Parezo 1987, 18). Additionally, the Southwest was home to diverse Native peoples who had little direct contact with mainstream American society, and studying the people in this region recently acquired by the United States was paramount. The BAE's collecting practices and expeditions to the Southwest make up the bulk of the Smithsonian Institution's collections. Anthropologists Frank Hamilton Cushing and James Stevenson made several trips to Zuni and Hopi Pueblos in the early 1880s. According to Hinsley, "between 1879 and 1885, the Stevenson expeditions collected 12,609 artifacts at Zuni, a community of fewer than 2000 individuals" (Hinsley 1992, 13). Overall, the collecting practices moved at a swift pace as objects were taken from the communities and deposited into museum collections.

By the 1880s, the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad had connected the East to the West, and tourism began to escalate in the Southwest. The train traveled through many of the Pueblo communities and made stops so tourists could buy items from local artists. Tourists from the East began to flock to New Mexico, intrigued by its natural landscape and indigenous cultures so different from their own. As Hinsley proffers, "from adobe architecture to the muddy hands of pottery-makers, southwestern Indian cultures offered models of authenticity and nonhistorical stasis that stood in strong

contrast to industrial America” (1992, 16). The industrialization period made people think about the meaning of work and labor, so buying handmade items reflected authenticity. Thus, as the tourist industry began to take shape, the BAE wanted to collect as much as they could because the region was now more accessible to tourists and pot hunters who were searching for the same material culture.

Overall, the *museum process* or anthropological collecting practices encapsulated Native people as frozen in the past. It also served the needs of the hegemonic culture with its selective criteria of collecting only traditional objects. Moreover, institutions studied Native people and their objects with the perception that they were vanishing, and it was never a priority for collectors or museum professionals to include Native input. IARC was created on a similar model, except they collected material culture expressly for tribal communities. However, Native input was never sought. In the next sections, I provide a historical narrative of the IARC, beginning with a brief discussion of SAR. Background on both entities will reveal the overall institutional identities, and it will set the stage for the direction the IARC has taken toward collaborative projects that include Native voices.

### *The School for Advanced Research (SAR)*

SAR is a research institution that was initiated during the time of the *museum process* to support the research of anthropologists and archaeologists. In 1907, the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) decided to create a School of American Archaeology (SAA). Archaeologist Edgar Lee Hewett was selected as the director, and he envisioned a location in the Southwest. Thus, SAA was established in Santa Fe, New Mexico. As noted above, the Southwest offered a rich trove of traditional communities

virtually unassimilated into mainstream society. It also contained thousands of prehistoric sites that offered endless avenues for archaeological excavations and research. Through grant funding from the AIA, archaeological excavations were conducted in areas adjacent to Santa Fe, such as the Pajarito Plateau, and as far away as Mexico and South America. Archaeologists were interested in studying past indigenous populations and their material culture. Furthermore, Santa Fe was not on the main railroad line, and by 1900 the population had declined by 23 percent (Owen Lewis and Hagan 2007, 3). Rumors surfaced that Santa Fe might lose their territorial capital status, so local residents began to investigate what would make the city unique. Thus, the establishment of the SAA in Santa Fe was a perfect addition.

In 1917, SAA changed its name to School of American Research (SAR) to express the extended vision of research into disciplines other than archaeology such as linguistics, art, or ethnology. The institution would be housed at the Palace of the Governors, directly on the plaza in Santa Fe. SAR director Edgar Lee Hewett was influential in shaping the tourism industry by promoting art, history, and culture in Santa Fe, which sparked an interest in visitors collecting Native American art. In 1919 Hewett revitalized the Santa Fe Fiesta, which had been dormant, and over the next seven years, Hewett and SAR transformed the Fiesta into a vehicle for celebrating all the cultures of New Mexico. Hosting the cultural events and programs that surrounded the Fiesta was an opportunity for Hewett and SAR to promote Santa Fe and Pueblo cultures (Owen Lewis and Hagan 2007, 28). Since the original intent of the Fiesta was to celebrate the 1692 Spanish reconquest of Santa Fe, local Hispanics criticized Hewett for allowing Native

American cultures to be highlighted. Nevertheless, the promotion of Native cultures by the Fiesta led to a revitalization of Native art.

In 1922, SAR promoted Indian art by creating the Southwest Indian Fair, which today is the famous Santa Fe Indian Market held annually on the 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend in August. The fair was incorporated into the Fiesta events, and the rationale was “to encourage Indian artists to return to traditional arts and crafts by providing a marketplace for their work, to educate the public to appreciate and buy Indian art, and to help the artists make a living” (Owen Lewis and Hagan 2007, 33). Further, Hewett was also the founding director of the Museum of New Mexico (MNM). MNM was established in 1909 as under the auspices of SAA (SAR). They divided their duties between administrative and research (SAR) and public outreach (MNM), focusing on interpretative and educational programs. The MNM Fine Arts Museum was created in 1917 and hosted its first exhibition of Pueblo easel paintings in 1919. A state law passed in 1959, separating the two institutions. SAR remains in private hands and MNM is now publically funded.

After the split, SAR rethought its future, mission, and identity. I will briefly highlight the scholar programs of the past forty years to illustrate the evolution of SAR’s identity. In the late 1960s, the anthropological, archaeological, and art scholar programs and publications blossomed with the hiring of a new director, Douglas W. Schwartz. Schwartz explained his conception of the future to the SAR board: “it has to do with supporting advanced scholars and artists, and with publishing. There are lots of good museums in New Mexico; we don’t need or want to become a museum” (Owen Lewis and Hagan 2007, 97). Schwartz proposed the “Advanced Study Program,” which involved hosting seminar series, lectures, and visiting scholars to help them carry out

research in the humanities (Owen Lewis and Hagan 2007, 96). Today, SAR still hosts advanced and short seminars where scholars come together to discuss a single topic. Scholars can also apply for numerous fellowships ranging from two-month to nine-month appointments, which also provide a stipend and a residence on the SAR campus. Furthermore, although SAR began as a place to study Native American cultures, a range of topics within the disciplines of History, Archaeology, Ethnic Studies, American Studies, and Anthropology is now being included. SAR provides a relaxing, private environment for research and writing, and the precious time that is otherwise difficult for scholars to obtain. SAR also holds weekly and monthly colloquia or lectures for the local community and SAR members. In addition, SAR Press has published hundreds of academic titles in the humanities and social sciences. As one can see, IARC is surrounded by academic programs.

The current SAR campus was previously the home of Amelia Elizabeth and Martha White, two wealthy businesswomen from New York who stopped in Santa Fe in 1918 while visiting the West to see a solar eclipse; they fell in love with the small city and had an estate constructed on seven acres in the early 1920s. Amelia supported the preservation of Native arts and was a long-time member of the Indian Arts Fund (IAF), the organization which formed today's IARC collection. She was also an advocate of Santa Fe's history and a member of the Old Santa Fe Association. The White sisters' estate was named El Delirio, meaning "The Madness," and for decades it was the center for parties and entertainment for writers, artists, and anthropologists. Early in the 1970s, SAR established a presence on the White estate and housed the Arroyo Hondo archaeological collection in a former dog kennel. In 1972, the estate was bequeathed to

SAR upon Amelia White's death at the age of 96. Amelia's love for Indian arts as a member of IAF, and her long-time membership of SAR, contributed to the first permanent home for both organizations.

Today, SAR is under the leadership of James F. Brooks, who was hired in 2005 as the president and CEO. Brooks has broadened programs by expanding the seminar series, resident fellowships, lecture series, and publications at SAR Press. In 2007, SAR celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and called for *new directions* for the century ahead, and formally changed its name to the School for Advanced Research (SAR) to reflect the broad disciplines and worldwide research it has been fostering in the fields of art, humanities, and the social sciences. Further, in 2012, SAR purchased an additional 7.4 acres adjacent to the west side of the campus. Plans are made for constructing a physical plant maintenance facility, a new collection storage facility for the IARC collections, and additional resident housing and artist studios. In the next section, I provide a brief history of IARC and how it became a division of SAR.

### *So, What Is the IARC?*

The IARC is a research collection with approximately 12,000 objects, including pottery, textiles, jewelry, paintings, and basketry (Figure 1.1). Founded in 1922, the extensive collection draws researchers from all over the world, and tribal community members frequently utilize the collection for artistic inspiration or to connect with community or family heritage.



**Figure 1.1: Overview of IARC Vault 1**

*Photograph by Laura Elliff*

As the origin story has been told numerous times, a Zuni Ashiwi pot broke just prior to a dinner party journalist Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant was hosting at her house in Tesuque. With the arrival of other art patrons, anthropologists, and writers at the party, a discussion ensued on the decline of craftsmanship in Pueblo pottery. The art patrons were concerned about losing this precious art form for future Native generations. Kenneth Chapman, a dinner guest, was pondering the idea of preserving art for Native people. For example, when San Ildefonso potter Maria Martinez was asked about creating new design elements and combining them with old ones, she replied, “You ought to do better than we can, because you have been taking all our old pottery away from us and making pictures of it, and then sending it away, and we can’t remember any of the old designs” (Munson 2007, 69). Hence, the broken pot led to the development of the IARC collection.

In 1922, the Pueblo Pottery Fund (PPF) was created by a small group of Santa Fe patrons, including H. P. Mera and Kenneth Chapman. The PPF’s intent was to acquire the best examples of Pueblo pottery by purchase or donation. PPF’s incentive for collecting

the finest pieces was the perceived overall drop in the quality of Southwest Native art. Moreover, the qualities of tradition and authenticity were frequently used by IAF members as criteria for collecting. Kenneth Chapman and IAF members advocated for inclusion of traditional designs to enable Native artists to revive them in their own pottery. In addition, because the railroad had brought many tourists to the Southwest, Pueblo potters were making smaller ceramic items of nontraditional forms, such as ash trays, instead of traditional water jars or serving bowls. IAF members were trying to influence artists to stop making these types of kitsch items. Chapman was keen on capturing past designs to reinvent pottery styles for each Pueblo. For example, he encouraged potters in Acoma to revitalize Mimbres designs. Overall, this reconnecting the old with the new resulted in “Pueblo pottery as fine art” (Munson 2007, 152).

In 1923, the PPF hosted their first exhibition to inform the local art community that their organization was dedicated to the preservation and promotion of Native art. The exhibit featured twenty pieces of “rare” Zuni ceramics (Nolan Clark 1965, 23). The event took place at the Art Gallery of the Museum of New Mexico, which today is known as the New Mexico Museum of Art.

The PPF began as an informal organization, and the pottery was kept in the home of H. P. Mera. However, by 1925, the collection had grown to 477 pieces (in only three years), and the members began to rethink the scope of their mission (Indian Arts Fund Papers 1925, AC01:007). They changed the name to the Indian Arts Fund (IAF) and added other objects, such as textiles, jewelry, and basketry, to the collection. In its first year as a formal organization, IAF adopted a set of bylaws, a mission statement, and a resolution for the establishment of a fund to be used for a permanent building for the



collections. The organization had grown to approximately twenty-five members, and a formal board of trustees was established.

Over the years, the IAF collection has been moved several times, and it has a complicated history of ownership. John D. Rockefeller Jr., the wealthy financier from New York, visited Santa Fe in 1924 and spoke with Edgar Lee Hewett about the possibility of constructing a new research facility, library, and building to house the collection. He asked Hewett to write a report, which was never delivered. In 1926, Rockefeller visited the Southwest again and met with Kenneth Chapman, who showed him the basement of the Fine Arts Museum where the IAF pottery collection was housed. Shortly after this visit, Chapman submitted a proposal to Rockefeller for the construction of a museum and research facility southeast of the plaza. This move irritated Hewett, so he submitted a report that included a request for funding to support research outside of the Southwest, in places as far away as Siberia. But Rockefeller was interested in the American Southwest and chose not to fund Hewett's project.

In 1928, Rockefeller accepted the proposal for a new "Museum and Laboratory of Anthropology" that would also house the IAF collection (Owen Lewis and Hagan 2007, 36). Further, Rockefeller specified that he did not want the new facility to be associated with SAR or MNM. In 1929, the IAF collections were still housed in the Fine Arts Museum basement, which was known as the "Pottery Room" (Indian Arts Fund Papers 1926, AC01:007). Hewett was upset by the proposal and demanded that the collections be withdrawn from the museum. A temporary home was found at Sena Plaza, and then the IAF collections were moved to the Laboratory of Anthropology when it opened in 1931.

In 1947, due to sporadic funding, the Laboratory of Anthropology became an entity of SAR/MNM. Twelve years later, in 1959, state legislation was passed which separated SAR and MNM. The future of the IAF was uncertain, and in 1962 their collections were moved from the Laboratory of Anthropology back to the Fine Arts Museum. In 1964, SAR took ownership of the collections, and the IAF organization officially disbanded in 1972. That same year, Amelia Elizabeth White's estate was bequeathed to SAR and Douglas Schwartz planned the construction of a new facility.

In 1978, a facility to house the IAF collections was constructed on the SAR campus and was named the Indian Arts Research Center (IARC). As the collection grew from donations, an additional vault was added in 1986. The construction of both vaults and the main IARC building was funded by Perrine Dixon McCune in honor of her late husband, Marshall, who was a board member and supporter of SAR. The vaults had open-storage shelving, which looked very impressive as one entered the vaults. Art Wolf, curator of collections, said in 1978, "We wanted to combine proper storage with stylish display" (Owen Lewis and Hagan 2007, 141). The open-storage shelving allowed for accessibility to scholars and artists. Douglas Schwartz's vision for the IARC facility was to "first, take care of the collection through a series of grants for conservation; second, bring in researchers to help enrich the information about the collection, and third, make the collection available for artists to use for inspiration" (Owen Lewis and Hagan 2007, 141). Today, the collection contains 12,000 objects and future plans to establish another collections storage facility are underway. I will now briefly discuss the IARC's mission statements and the organization's programming and outreach.

### Mission Statements That Define IARC's Identity: Then and Now

It is important to analyze the evolution of the original PPF/IAF/IARC mission statements to dig deeper into the organization's original purposes and intent. The excerpt below from a *Santa Fe New Mexican* article in 1922 titled the "Pueblo Pottery Fund" demonstrates PPF's original intent of preserving Pueblo pottery for Native artists and communities to study for future generations.

"... a group of people interested in the ceramics of this period (*post-Spanish contact*), – and fully realizing the necessity for the immediate acquisition of a representative collection, before the material needed becomes unavailable or destroyed – it was decided to form an association to build up such a series. This series, it is hoped, will be representative of all the pottery-making pueblos. *The series should be of great value, not only to students, but also to the Pueblo potters of the present day.* . . . This collection, where the ancient and harmonious designs of their ancestors will be recorded, is certain to prove a source of cultural pride and *education*, and *will be a stimulus to a revival of finer traditions*" (Nolan Clark 1965, 10, emphasis added).

This purpose is still one of the main goals for the IARC today. Moreover, one phrase, "will be a stimulus to a revival of finer traditions," reveals that PPF's purpose was also to assist Native artists in revitalizing their art traditions. Today, the original intent is being realized as Native artists come to the IARC to utilize the collection.

In late 1925, the renamed Indian Arts Fund (IAF) adopted articles of incorporation and bylaws, appointed a board of trustees, and recruited new members. The abbreviated passage below is significant because it was the first mission statement of the newly formalized organization.

“To encourage and promote Indian Arts among the Indians of New Mexico and elsewhere; to preserve, *improve*, and to revive their ancient arts and crafts; to collect and to preserve ancient and modern specimens of Indian arts of every character; to perpetuate and disseminate Indian Art in all its phases and manifestations . . . and *to provide for the delivering and holding of lectures, exhibitions, public meetings, classes and conferences calculated directly or indirectly to advance the cause of Indian arts; to print, publish, and sell (not for profit) magazine articles, pamphlets, and reports for the dissemination of knowledge concerning Indian arts throughout the world*” (Indian Arts Fund Papers 1925, AC01:001; emphasis added).

The organization specifically sought to “improve ancient arts and crafts,” which is no longer considered an appropriate role for the IARC. Moreover, this statement also mentions providing educational opportunities through lectures, classes, or exhibitions, whereas in 1922, the original statement just mentioned *education*. The group also wished to publish knowledge concerning Indian arts. Although it is not clearly stated, this knowledge was likely gathered without Native input. Today, for all in-house publications about the IARC collection, knowledge is obtained from Native peoples.

In 2007, the IARC’s Collections Management Policy and Procedures (CMPP) were revised, which was also the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of SAR as an institution. According to the mission statement, the purpose is “to conserve, protect, and provide greater access to a systematic research collection of Native American material culture, *examine long-range and integrated Native American scholarship*, promote artistic development, and participate in the debate of historic, ethnographic and contemporary issues in culture and the arts” (Indian Arts Research Center, 2007; emphasis added). The CMPP states how

IARC will care for and manage the collection on a daily basis. This is the first mention in IARC's mission statements of incorporating Native American scholarship, or Native input.

In 2012, the guiding principles below were compiled by the IARC staff for submission to the SAR board of managers.

- Connect people with collections and other resources
- Develop educational outcomes to reach a wide audience
- Encourage and *foster collaborations* with constituents and other institutions
- Facilitate interaction and discussion around Native arts and cultures
- *Listen and observe* to understand the needs and respect the knowledge of constituents
- Share and exchange knowledge about collections-based processes and outcomes
- *Respect all cultures*, values, perspectives, and beliefs (Indian Arts Research Center, 2012; emphasis added)

They list the values held by the staff as they perform their jobs. The 2012 guiding principles are noteworthy for the three phrases emphasized above: foster collaborations, listen and observe, and respect all cultures. Previous IARC mission statements did not incorporate these identity characteristics, and none of them listed guiding principles. I argue that the 2012 guiding principles serve as evidence and reflect the IARC identity shift. Throughout the years, the stated IAF mission was to preserve and promote Native art so local communities could study what their ancestors had made, and revive their art for future generations. Today, IARC maintains these goals but does so by partnering with Native communities. Historically, the IARC collection has mostly been created and managed by non-Native people, and Native input was not obtained from communities. These characteristics will shed light on the collaborative projects and the shift the IARC has taken, as discussed in the second half of this study.

## Programs

I now proffer a historical glimpse into the programming and outreach of the IARC. In 1926, the first brochure was distributed describing IAF's goals and vision (Nolan Clark 1965, 27). In 1927, the New Mexico Association on Indian Affairs (NMAIA) asked IAF for educational material about the collection "for the purpose of encouraging Indian children to appreciate and study their own art" (Indian Arts Fund Papers 1927, AC01:007). Kenneth Chapman compiled approximately 20 photographs of traditional pottery to send out to the Pueblo day schools in areas such as Cochiti and Zuni. In 1929, the IAF hosted a three-day exhibition in the basement of the Fine Arts Museum to display pottery and textiles (Nolan Clark 1965, 33). The exhibition drew 400 visitors, and immediately the IAF was noticed within the Santa Fe community as artists looked to the organization for direction. Items from the IAF collection were also loaned for exhibitions, such as one in Sweden in 1930 and another in New York in 1931. The IAF also hosted educational gatherings, such as a Navajo Weaving Conference held in 1933, which brought weavers together to examine and discuss Navajo textiles. In the 1950s, Native artists were invited to examine the Pueblo pottery collection, and particularly the painted designs. Members of local communities such as Santo Domingo Pueblo frequently visited, and also Acoma potter Lucy Lewis became interested in pre-contact pottery designs.

The IAF also had visits from the Santa Fe Indian School's (SFIS) silver and textile classes to study the collection. In 1890, the SFIS was established as a boarding school similar to Carlisle Indian School, as a place to assimilate and educate Indians to "live like the white man." In the 1930s and 1940s, SFIS was significant partner with the

IAF as it became a renowned art school for Indian painting. Dorothy Dunn established a Studio School, and many painters from this era are represented in the IARC collection. Students from the SFIS still frequently visit the IARC collection.

In 1987, the Native American Travel and Education program was established to bring more Native artists to visit the IARC collection. In the first few years of the program, more than three hundred artists representing more than forty different tribes and pueblos visited the collection (Owen Lewis and Hagan 2007, 143). “There were many ‘ahs’ and ‘ohs,’ and we could see their delight when they found pots that relatives had made long ago” (Owen Lewis and Hagan 2007, 143). In the 1990s, this program developed into the Native American Heritage Program, with a full-time program coordinator. In 1994, IARC received stable funding for the establishment of the Ronald and Susan Dubin Native American Artist Fellowship. The fellowship provides a stipend, studio, and residence on campus. Three additional fellowships have been established since 1994: the Rollin and Mary Ella King Fellowship (2000), the Eric and Barbara Dobkin Fellowship (2001), and the SAR Indigenous Writer-In-Residence Fellowship (2011).

In 1995, artist convocations and the Harvey Branigar internship program were implemented at the IARC. Artist convocations bring artists together for one week to discuss meaning, techniques, or aesthetics of a particular genre of art. The first convocation was about micaceous pottery and brought ten artists from nearby communities. One of the results of the convocation was a book titled *All That Glitters: The Emergence of Native American Micaceous Art Pottery in Northern New Mexico* (SAR Press 1999). The Harvey Branigar internship program offers Native students

hands-on experience in the museum field so they can bring those skills back to their community or cultural center. Today, the Anne Ray Charitable Trust supports two nine-month internship appointments for recent college graduates or emerging museum professionals. One position is open for a Native individual and the other position is open to a non-Native individual. The internships entail learning museum job duties in education and programming, registration, collections management, and research, and the interns are required to present a lecture in the SAR colloquium series.

Overall, the programming and outreach for IARC has resulted in weekly visits to the IARC collection by Native artists and tribal communities. As Jennifer Day, IARC registrar, notes, “I have noticed an uptick in visits from Native community members during the past few years. I assume that this is due at least in part to the extensive outreach efforts made by IARC staff members” (Day e-mail communication 2013). Classes come from as far as New York, and local groups such as the University of New Mexico (UNM) Art History and Anthropology graduate classes, or students from the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) and the Santa Fe Indian School (SFIS) frequently visit the collection.

In the next chapter I describe the historical branchings that led to the museum collaboration movement.



## Chapter 2: Key Stepping Stones

Jim Enote, Zuni tribal member and director of the A:shiwi A:wan Museum and Heritage Center, noted, “You are lucky you are not called a museum; museums carry a lot of baggage” referring to the IARC institutional name (Enote personal interview 2013). Mr. Enote was referring to how museums are perceived by Native people as a result of the colonization process; the common perception is that they store human bones, looted items, old pots—“things that should not be there” (Enote personal interview 2013). Although this perception is still prevalent among Native peoples, over the past three decades, many museums in the U.S. and Canada that house Native American objects have begun to collaborate and communicate with tribal communities in an effort to include Native voices in exhibition design, educational programming, and proper methods of collection storage. I refer to this shift as the *museum collaboration movement*, which has led to a joint decision-making process between museum staff and tribal communities. The Indian Arts Research Center (IARC) is just one of the many institutions that are collaborating with tribal communities.

In this chapter I focus on the history of collaboration in museums, looking at stepping stones such and the interconnectedness of Native activism in the 1970s-1980s, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990, and model institutions such as the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). Further, I will begin to dissect concepts that surround the discourse of this research such as collaboration and the inclusion of Native voices.

### *Precursors to the Museum Collaboration Movement*

Why was the formation of the *museum collaboration movement* valuable?

Historically, museums offered interpretations generated by non-Native people, and the creation of such institutions was directly connected to the colonization process. As noted in Chapter 1, many Native American objects ended up in museums as a result of collecting expeditions by institutions such as the Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE), or looting by collectors, amateur archaeologists, and anthropologists. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the common perception in the mainstream culture was that Native people would eventually disappear, through either literal or cultural genocide via forced assimilation, so their material culture was urgently collected.

As cultural anthropologist Patricia Pierce Erikson has noted, “Native knowledge structures have been marginalized” (2008, 45). The push to include a Native voice in exhibition design, educational programming, and appropriate collections management is a result of the *museum collaboration movement*. This movement helped to correct a long and messy situation, and to address the disrespect shown to tribal communities when the remains of their ancestors and/or funerary objects were removed or stolen by hegemonic and colonial organizations. Addressing these mistakes functions as a form of restorative justice. According to Marge Bruchac, an Abenaki anthropologist, “If we are truly interested in repatriation as a form of restorative justice, if we want to actually return these ancestors and objects to their appropriate places of origin, then we need to reexamine the people, processes, social relations, and knowledges that shaped these collections. Museums have an ethical responsibility to make an honest attempt to fix what was broken by their own actions” (2010, 148). Thus, to understand how museums

traveled to this destination, it is useful to scrutinize stepping stones that have contributed to the movement, such as Native activism, which inspired the passage of the NAGPRA legislation, and model institutions such as NMAI.

### Activism and NAGPRA

The *museum collaboration movement* began in the 1960s & 1970s but has only been prominent for the past three decades. In the 1960s-1970s, social movements challenged notions of power, race, gender, politics, and religion, and they played a powerful role in instigating change. The flow of theories and ideas, the exchange of cultural values, the changing of policies and/or passing of laws serve as prevailing forms of alliance building and activism. In 1968, the American Indian Movement (AIM) was founded in Minneapolis. AIM members built partnerships with tribal communities facing issues such as poverty, police brutality, and housing. They advocated for the protection of sovereignty rights and demanded that the federal government abide by treaties they had signed with tribal nations. In 1978, during a march that became known as the Longest Walk, members of AIM stopped at museums and universities during the five-month walk to Washington and “found the bodies of our ancestors stored in cardboard boxes, plastic bags and paper sacks” (Fine-Dare 2002, 78). In response, in 1980 the activist group American Indians against Desecration (AIAD) was established as a component of the larger AIM movement (Fine-Dare 2002, 78). According to founding director Jan Hammil (Mescalero Apache), AIAD was established to dispute “the archaeological treatment of Indian remains, and the desecration of sacred Indian burial sites” housed in museum collections (Fine-Dare 2002, 78).

Museums housing human remains and important cultural objects served as harsh reminders to Native people because they were directly bound to the colonization process. Moreover, human remains were often classified as “archaeological specimens,” dehumanizing them and signifying Native peoples as frozen in the past. Dickson Mounds in Illinois, for example, displayed the remains of 234 human beings to the public until Native activists put a stop to it in 1990 (Trope and Echo-Hawk 2000, 131). In the mid-1980s, Northern Cheyenne leaders became aware that approximately 18,500 human remains were stored in the various branches of the Smithsonian Institution (Trope and Echo-Hawk 2000, 136). “This discovery served as a catalyst for a concerted national effort by Indian tribes and organizations to obtain legislation to repatriate human remains and cultural artifacts to Indian tribes and descendants of the deceased” (Trope and Echo-Hawk 2000, 136). The Red Power movement also inspired tribal communities to demand the passage of state laws and policies regarding repatriation of human remains and other funerary objects. Prior to the passage of NAGPRA in 1990, California, Kansas, Arizona, Hawaii, and Nebraska passed repatriation statutes (Trope and Echo-Hawk 2000, 135).

Throughout the 1980s, activist groups such as AIAD contributed to the creation of partnerships and dialogue between museums and tribal communities. This signified an immediate change in the ethics of museum management. For example, in 1981, the American Association of Museums issued a statement “regarding ethical standards for the treatment of Native American collections”; in 1986, the National Museum of Natural History (a branch of the Smithsonian) established “an outreach program for Indian communities to encourage research and program design regarding Native American peoples”; and in 1989, the Field Museum of Chicago adopted a policy concerning

repatriating human remains to tribes (Fine-Dare 2002, 104-5, 107). In 1989, the National Museum of the American Indian Act formed a new branch of the Smithsonian Institution. This was the first federal museum specifically mandated to prioritize a Native American voice. The act also stated that all Smithsonian Institution museums should engage in “consultation with Indian tribes and traditional Indian religious leaders to inventory human remains and funerary objects in its possession or control,” specifically to help heal “some of the injustices done to Indian people over the years and providing the promise that one day their ancestors will finally be given a resting place that they so deserve” (Trope and Echo-Hawk 2000, 137-138). The NMAI Act also required at least some of the trustee members of the museum to be Native, and during the planning of the museum, half of the twenty-four board members were Native American (Pierce Erikson 2008, 63).

In Phoenix, the Heard Museum held panel discussions for tribal communities, museum professionals, and social scientists, resulting in a 1990 report titled *Report of the Panel for a National Dialogue on Museum/Native American Relations* (Pierce Erikson 2008, 62). This report is significant because it was one of only a few published documents on the relationship between tribal communities and museum professionals. The report discussed the enormous problem of human remains and funerary objects in museums, how partnerships with tribal communities are very important when it comes to returning these items, and other issues. Native people noted in the discussion that museums often did not respond to their repatriation claims. The report concluded that “Respect for Native human rights is the paramount principle that should govern resolution of the issue when a claim is made by a Native American group” and that

access to objects and documentation should be more readily available to tribal communities (Heard Report 1990; Pierce Erikson 2008, 62).

After a powerful decade of dialogue and activism, on November 16, 1990, President George H. W. Bush signed the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) into law. NAGPRA instituted a procedure for institutions that received federal funding to return human remains, associated funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony to lineal descendants or descendant communities. NAGPRA also required museums to formulate summaries of what they had in their collection by 1993, and a complete inventory of items had to be completed by 1995. Jack F. Trope, director of the Association of American Indian Affairs, and Walter R. Echo-Hawk (Pawnee), noted that “NAGPRA is a unique legislation because it is the first time that the federal government and non-Indian institutions must consider what is *sacred* from an Indian perspective” (Trope and Echo-Hawk 2000, 151). Nevertheless, arguments still occur between social scientists and Native people regarding respect for the ancestors versus the importance of science/research. Many social scientists and museum professionals feel that these “specimens” are important for research and therefore should be preserved in museums; Native people see the storage of human remains and cultural objects as disrespectful.

According to museum anthropologist Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh, “NAGPRA is many things to many museum anthropologists. For some, it is a nuisance, a threat, an unfunded mandate, and unfinished business. For others, it is simply irrelevant to their academic aspirations. For still others, it is an exciting opportunity and a means toward historical reparations and *restorative justice*. And for still others, it is a difficult and

awkward compromise (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Nash 2010, 99; emphasis added).

Overall, NAGPRA was important for all museums and research institutions because it prompted dialogue and relationships between museum professionals and tribal communities.

Another significant outcome of the *museum collaboration movement* has been an explosion in the creation of tribally owned museums, with numbers ranging from 120 to 200 depending on one's definition of "tribally owned" (Lonetree 2012, 19). Tribal members have the authority to determine how their culture should be represented or interpreted. These museums may also serve as cultural centers for education and other programs, including language revitalization and teaching younger generations about their culture.

Overall, the *museum collaboration movement* has shifted how the IARC operates as a research institution, in that relationships with tribal nations are now being taken into account. The passage of NAGPRA was the precursor for dialogue and the development of relationships between museums and Native people. Nonetheless, in my experience, numerous museum professionals have emphasized and acknowledged the importance of this knowledge system. "In this post-NAGPRA world, I think museums should build on the relationships established during the initial NAGPRA compliance era — those relationships shouldn't be allowed to wither just because most NAGPRA-subject items have been repatriated (or at least identified)" (Day e-mail communication 2013).

In the next subsection, I provide a brief analysis of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), collaboration, and the inclusion of Native voice to explain

how this institution and these concepts serve as stepping stones to the work the IARC carries out today.

### NMAI

On September 21, 2004, the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) opened, taking the last available spot on the National Mall, right next to the U.S. Capitol. The NMAI is significant because it is the first national museum devoted to, directed, and curated by Native people. The opening festivities consisted of music performances, dances, films, inaugural exhibitions, and a procession of approximately 25,000 Native people representing hundreds of nations. According to Jeff Barehand (Gila River), a law student who attended the opening ceremonies, “It is very heartwarming actually to see this many Indian people here on the mall. Historically, there has always been the hardship versus the federal government so the ability to come back and to be a part of something historic, like this, the opening of the national museum honoring the American Indians . . . it’s a wonderful feeling” (Siegel, 2004). I was there for the opening events because the institution where I previously worked was hosting a temporary exhibition. It became vivid to me during this time that change was happening and the dark clouds between Native peoples and museums were slowly developing into blue skies.

A major component of this change was the leadership of W. Richard West Jr., who was appointed as founding director in 1990, shortly after the NMAI Act was passed. West’s vision for NMAI was to steer away from the static dioramas of Native Americans, often displayed next to extinct mammoths in natural history museums, freezing Native people in time. West’s vision sought out to include Native voices, and this approach often translated to the “museum different” (Hurst Thomas 2011, 15). The “museum different”



approach entailed including Native voices not only in the planning and construction of the building but also in educational programming, collections care, and exhibition design. The NMAI also created a space where knowledge could be shared and exchanged between non-Native and Native scholars. This “new inclusiveness” meant that Native people would participate as scholars and not just as “informants” in the planning of the new museum (Hurst Thomas 2011, 19). The NMAI is also referred to as a “national tribal museum” because it represents living Native cultures from all across the Americas (Jacknis 2008, 31). Overall, the NMAI is a museum dedicated to voices, not objects, unlike what was most commonly seen in past institutional representations.

### *The Significance of Collaboration and the Inclusion of Native Voice*

Collaboration and the inclusion of a Native voice are just a few of the significant qualities that contribute to sustaining strong partnerships. “Collaboration” consists of two or more people, tribes, or organizations working together to accomplish a goal (*Merriam-Webster*, online access 1/31/13). In terms of the NMAI or the IARC, it dictates that conceptualization for the design of an exhibition, for example, is no longer from a Western epistemological framework. Because museums and research institutions serve to educate the public, and collaboration entails a balanced relationship, new forms of knowledge are constantly being produced. Cynthia Chavez Lamar, director of the IARC, notes, “Collaboration is important because it helps create an atmosphere of respect, collegiality, and shared authority. It also helps to share resources.” Furthermore, Sonya Atalay (Anishinabe), museum anthropology scholar and professor asserts, “We, as Native peoples, have many stories to tell. We have a unique way of viewing the world; it is one

that has been severely affected by colonization yet is ever changing and resilient. Bringing Native voice to the foreground to share these experiences and worldviews is a critical part of readjusting the power balance to ensure that Native people control their own heritage, representation, and histories” (2008, 285). Chapters 3 and 4 will outline examples of the IARC collaborative projects and further collaboration discourse resulting from e-mail questionnaires.

People have often asked me what the inclusion of Native voice means. However, defining this concept can be difficult because the definition changes depending on whom you are talking to. The NMAI took a lead role in representing and understanding Native voices, and their inclusion has been referred to as the “lightning rod” that makes the institution unique (McMaster 2011, 87). Moreover, including Native voices has contributed prominently to the shift in institutional identity over the past three decades. The once-static museum exhibits, and the interpretation by non-Native museum professionals, have been replaced by an emphasis on the renewal of voices for future generations.

According to Jennifer Shannon, there was “no consensus about what Native voice is: does it mean Native perspective (and how do you go about accessing that) or does it literally mean the voices of Native peoples (as it was interpreted to be in the inaugural exhibitions, where the text on the walls represented excerpts from recorded interviews and discussion among community curators)?” (Shannon 2008, 233). Duane Champagne (Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa) notes that “the voice of a Native culture is what the culture or tradition wants to say to its people, and in the end to all peoples” (Champagne 2011, 71). According to Gerald McMaster (Plains Cree/Siksika First Nation), the seven

qualities that illustrate Native voice are subject, multivocality, empowerment, authority, representation, perspective, and visuality (McMaster 2011, 90). To summarize the importance of these qualities, McMaster refers to *voice as subject*: Native people are still here and can represent and speak for themselves; *voice as multivocality*: steering away from one dominant voice but including multiple views, multiple voices, but all Native; *voice as empowerment*: Natives are empowering “how we see the world” (92); *voice as authority*: Native people have the authority to regulate everyday duties (exhibition, educational, or research) with museum staff; *voice as representation*: Native people taking charge of how they should be represented; *voice as perspective*: Native voice is offering new knowledge and perspectives; and *voice as visuality*: “encouraging visitors to view each object as expressions of Native thinking” (McMaster 2011, 90-96).

Duane Champagne notes that including Native voices often presents challenges and is constantly changing (2011, 83). Challenges are partly due to the viewers, which are mostly a non-Native audience and for them to connect on these new representations. Additionally, a majority of interpretation up to this point was solely focused on an art historian or aesthetic perspective; objects, not voices. Challenges of incorporating Native voices include considering such questions as: How can a museum professional represent a culture when they are not from that community? How do communities feel when they are not included in the dialogue (for example, exhibition development)? How can we interpret dialogue from multiple perspectives in one community? Another challenge for most institutions is a lack of funding for bringing members of tribal communities to the institution for collaborative projects. Other challenges are faced by institutions that do not have reservations nearby and are unsure of whom they should speak to, or how to begin

the process. From my experience at the IARC, communication is essential, and including Native voices and establishing protocol will be different for each community. It is important to discover what each tribal community wants from the project, and what their expectations are. Overall, including Native voices is a monumental step in the collaboration process, but as Gerald McMaster points out, it can also create challenges.

In the remaining part of this study, I discuss the Indian Arts Research Center (IARC) and its collaborative projects. I will also be highlighting the IARC's powerful voices. Through participant observation as a staff member at the IARC, I can offer an intimate glimpse into the IARC narrative, where stories have often not been examined, or heard. My hope is that readers will see these stories and voices come to light by making evident IARC's identity shift.

### Chapter 3: Response

Many museums and research institutions are currently engaged in collaborative projects, so what is unique about the IARC? This chapter will offer a peek into the collaborative projects in which the IARC has been engaged, which I argue contributed to an institutional identity shift since 2007. The IARC projects are a response to the *museum collaboration movement*, which in turn had a significant effect on how many museums and research institutions operate today.

IARC's mission is still to preserve and promote Native art so local communities can study what their ancestors had made, and to sustain the creation of art for future generations. Now, however, IARC fulfills its mission by collaborating with Native communities. None of the founding members of the IAF organization were Native American, and they did not seek Native input. The 2012 guiding principles are significant because they incorporate the three identity characteristics I illuminated in Chapter 1: foster collaborations, listen and observe, and respect all cultures. These characteristics are embedded in the projects highlighted in this chapter. I argue that the 2012 guiding principles reflect the IARC identity shift.

Five IARC projects will be discussed: Zuni collection reviews; moccasin seminars, artist fellowship outcomes, the *Art, Gender, and Community* book project, and future plans for IARC building expansion. These projects have resulted in strong partnerships with tribal communities, which have fostered dialogue with Native peoples. I will first outline IARC leadership, which is one of the underlying reasons the identity shift has occurred.

### *IARC Staff Leadership*

In 2007, the School for Advanced Research (SAR) celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and called for *new directions* to reflect the broadening scope of academic disciplines and worldwide research it had been fostering. In that same year, Cynthia Chavez Lamar was hired as the first Native American director at the Indian Arts Research Center (IARC). Cynthia Chavez Lamar is from San Felipe Pueblo on her father's side and Hopi/Tewa and Navajo on her mother's side. Chavez Lamar was the associate curator at the grand opening of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in 2004 for the collaborative exhibition, "Our Lives: Contemporary Lives and Identities." She is also the former museum director at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque. With her experience of working with tribal communities on collaborative projects, Chavez Lamar fosters dialogue and develops strong partnerships with communities. She notes, "There was a mission at the National Museum of the American Indian based on collaboration, cooperation, and consultation. The vision was about working directly with Native communities, and it was probably one of the first times where I felt everyone was on the same page, ethically. I took a lot of what I learned and put it into every job I've had since" (Leigh Hagan 2010, 32).

With Chavez Lamar's guidance, the IARC has moved in the direction of greater involvement with local communities in which joint decisions are made between the IARC and tribal communities. These collaborative projects have resulted in the inclusion of a Native voice in IARC's publications, research, collections care, and decisions about documentation of the collection. Since the IARC was managed by non-Native people in the past, and Native input was not consistently included, this shift is significant in

creating and maintaining partnerships with tribal communities. Further, decisions about whether (and what) to publish, research, or loan objects in the collections generally were not through a shared-process before Chavez Lamar's arrival. Because decisions were made by non-Native staff without consulting with tribal communities, concerns relating to respect and cultural sensitivities were undoubtedly overlooked. Because of the successful collaborative projects that were introduced and directed by Chavez Lamar, her guidance has played a significant role in IARC's identity shift.

Additionally, under the direction of Chavez Lamar are dedicated staff members who work together as a team to implement these projects. I argue that this team effort has contributed to the success of the collaborative projects and is an additional factor in the institutional identity shift. The fact that half of the IARC staff are Native undoubtedly helped to change the relationship between IARC and tribal communities. As Jennifer Day, IARC registrar, states, "Several staff members at IARC are now Native people or have strong ties to local Native communities. I believe this fact speaks volumes to Native community members who are accustomed to seeing many institutions with Native objects being run largely by non-Native people. The fact that IARC currently has a director who is also a Native person is something that I believe gives IARC a certain sense of credibility that it perhaps did not previously possess. That is not at all to say that previous directors didn't do a good job or that they were not sincere in their work; however, having a Native director provides the institution with a cultural perspective that previous non-Native directors simply were not in a position to provide" (Day e-mail communication 2013).

In the next subsection, I highlight a short discourse on objects to signify the importance of IARC's collaborative projects which will be discussed in more detail below.

### *Objects: Categorization and Perspectives*

Since scholars come from all over the world to do research at the IARC, I think it is important to briefly discuss object cataloging and Native perspectives on this process to demonstrate the importance of collaborative projects.

How objects are categorized or interpreted has been a popular topic of discourse in the museum field, especially in response to the *museum collaboration movement*. In professional museum cataloging and interpretation, universal terms for art genres or classifications such as "Ceramics" or "Paintings" are used (as in the IARC catalogue, referred to hereafter as *The Museum System* 2012). Moreover, in museums, "research and practice are fully steeped in Western ways of knowing, naming, ordering, analyzing and understanding the world" (Atalay 2008, 267). Because the IARC is a research institution, it is important for documentation about the collection to be accurate. By working with communities, the IARC staff is correcting misinformation and collecting new information to update the catalogue.

Museum scholar Rebecca Hernandez (Mescalero Apache/Mexican-American) has shown that putting Native objects into non-Native categories and misidentifying them "contributes to a prevailing ignorance of the complexities of Native cultures and lifeways" (Hernandez 2007, 121). She hopes her research will serve as a tool for museum professionals working with Native objects, specifically with regard to accurately depicting the meaning of objects. Hernandez emphasizes that objects serve as notions of



identity about oneself or one's community (Hernandez 2007, 137). She states, "What is an Indian object, who is Indian, and how much Indian he or she is—in other words, how authentic or legitimate the artist is—are crucial factors in determining how objects are evaluated" (Hernandez 2007, 121).

Furthermore, labeling objects is part of formulating an object's identity, and the overall institutional identity. This is one of the reasons why the IARC has been engaged with tribal communities. As Jennifer Day asserts, "Museums should take the opportunity to approach source communities about getting additional information about the items in their collections so they can come to a better understanding about culturally-appropriate care and interpretation of those items. Anthropological and art historical viewpoints on objects needn't be dismissed, but they should be integrated into a larger overall view of them that also takes into equal consideration input from source communities. In this way, museums can better steward objects and inform the public about them in a more comprehensive manner, while at the same time building lasting relationships with source communities that can be to the mutual benefit of both" (Day e-mail communication 2013). Overall, the IARC wants to ensure that it is not publishing images, putting objects on loan, or making objects available for research inappropriately.

Two different perspectives on objects have been illuminated as a response to the *museum collaboration movement*. On the one hand, art historians, curators, and anthropologists commonly view objects as art, or something to hang on their wall or to put in a glass exhibit case. Many of these objects are only seen aesthetically, or as commodities for the market. On the other hand, Native people view objects as being alive or as living beings. The meaning and use of objects is embedded in their culture and

identity. Joe Horse Capture, associate curator at the Minneapolis Institute of the Arts, noted “that he was uncomfortable with the use of the word *object*. He explained that the more that word is used, the more an item becomes an object and the less it is seen as what it is—a part of everyday life. For American Indian people, the item is seen as part of the culture from which it comes and is inseparable from it” (Ogden 2007, 278).

Objects can often prompt narratives when tribal communities visit museum or research collections, and they can revitalize knowledge and ideas from past cultural traditions that may not be in use anymore. Objects serve as the historical record for communities. Faith Bad Bear notes, “Our cultural items from the past are important. They tell us why things were done back then” (Ogden 2004, 82). Kathryn “Jody” Beaulieu from the Red Lake Band of the Chippewa states, “Objects assist in having memories flourish. Elders see objects, and then stories flow from them, and younger Indians learn” (Ogden 2007, 279).

The IARC also has numerous objects that entered the collection with very little information, or the available documentation may be inaccurate. Correcting these problems is one of the reasons for initiating the collaborative projects described next.

### *IARC Collaborative Projects*

Are there protocols for institutions engaging in collaborative work? Just as there is more than one Native voice, there is more than one path for collaborative projects with communities. Each institution will establish their own protocols, which will vary from every tribal community and collaborative project.

Anne Ray Charitable Trust has generously supported all but one of the collaborative projects discussed below. The organization also currently supports the IARC lecture series and nine-month appointments for two Anne Ray interns, and the SAR Anne Ray Resident Scholar Fellowship. SAR was named a beneficiary in 2006 upon the death of Margaret Anne Cargill, who was Anne Ray's daughter. Each year, SAR submits grants to the agency outlining projects to be accomplished.

### Zuni Collection Reviews

In 2009, Cynthia Chavez Lamar contacted the Zuni tribe regarding a collection of seventy-eight pots labeled the "Pseudo-Ceremonial Pottery Collection" in the IARC database (The Museum System, 2012). At the time, it was not known whether any pots identified in this category were ceremonial or if all of them were pseudo-ceremonial, made to be appear like, and sold as, authentic Zuni items. A long-term *collection review* was begun to systematically assess Zuni records and objects, and the Zuni Tribe designated two cultural advisers: Jim Enote, director of the A:shiwi A:wan Museum and Heritage Center, and Octavius Seowtewa, a member of the Zuni Cultural Resources Advisory Team and head medicine man for the Zuni Tribe.

From the beginning, it was decided to call these visits *collection reviews*. So how are collection reviews different than a consultation visit? Mr. Enote was very specific about not calling these consultation visits but referring to them as collection reviews because we were updating information on Zuni objects in our collection records. Additionally, consultations are most commonly associated with NAGPRA-related visits. Mr. Enote expressed his interest in correcting information that had been supplied by

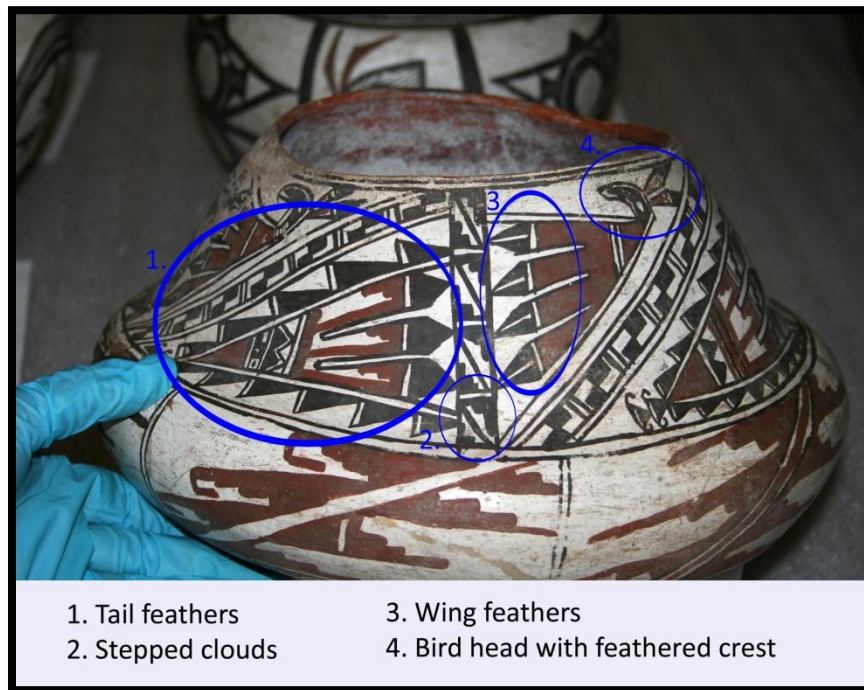
collectors or museum staff. He asserted that 90% of museum records are usually wrong (Elliff 2009). Hence, as a research institution, it is important for IARC staff to ensure that accurate information is provided to researchers.

The IARC staff and Zuni cultural advisers had several goals for the collection reviews. First, the entire collection of approximately 1,100 Zuni items would be systematically reviewed. Two visits would be made per fiscal year, and each collection review would last approximately two days. Second, working together to include the interpretation from the Zuni cultural advisers was paramount in adding layers of documentation and correcting inaccurate information in our records. During the two-day period, the team would usually review more than 100 objects, and by the end of each day, although staff members' hands may have been cramped from writing so many notes, their minds were enriched with new knowledge. In this rewarding process we would learn, for example, that although we had a record indicating that a pot was from the "Rain Klan," our Zuni cultural advisers indicated that a Rain Clan does not even exist at Zuni. Additionally, we strived to record both the English and the Zuni object name for our records. For example, a small collection of Zuni wooden carvings was recorded as *katsinas* (a Hopi term) in our database. During these reviews, we changed the item name to *kokko*, which is the appropriate Zuni term, and the specific Zuni name of each *kokko* was added, such as Ciwolo (in English, "Buffalo"). We also acquired detailed notes and a video narrative about IAF.1, the first pot in the collection. This was very important since docents like to point out to visitors that it was the pot that broke at the dinner party and prompted the creation of the IAF organization. Figure 3.2 indicates the design elements that the cultural advisors identified on the IAF.1 jar. Such documents are attached to the

individual item record, making a permanent record of the information that was gathered during the *collection reviews*.



**Figure 3.1:** Overview of set-up of Zuni collection review with original cataloging sheets to take notes on.  
*Courtesy of the Indian Arts Research Center, School for Advanced Research*



**Figure 3.2:** Example of upper portion of designs from the first pot in IARC collection (IAF.1) and notes by Enote and Seowtewa.  
*Created and photographed by Jennifer Day, courtesy of the Indian Arts Research Center, School for Advanced Research*

In the first collection review in 2009, we examined the questionable “Pseudo-Ceremonial Pottery Collection” for which the initial contact was made. After reviewing all seventy-eight pieces, our advisors determined that a majority of them were definitely pseudo-ceremonial. Some of the pots were even *made to look old*, so you could also call them pseudo-historic. The pseudo-historic pots were often sold to tourists as older pieces, and our collection records indicated a much older date than when the piece was probably actually made. Some of these *made to look old* pots also had perfectly sanded marks around the base to indicate use and wear. However, we learned that if these pots were actually sitting on sandstone floors, they would more likely have uneven chipping at the base instead of a perfectly sanded bottom. One distinct example from this collection (IAF.1280) can be viewed on the SAR website through the online exhibition: *Familiar Webs: An Exploration of Collecting Practices at the Indian Arts Research Center and Beyond* ([sarweb.org/?bell\\_exhibit\\_pseudo\\_ceremonial\\_pots\\_and\\_zuni\\_collections](http://sarweb.org/?bell_exhibit_pseudo_ceremonial_pots_and_zuni_collections)). Our cultural advisors indicated that this particular bowl is supposed to look like a ceremonial water medicine bowl. Although it does have four stepped cloud openings, according to both cultural advisers there should be no clay embellishments on the exterior or interior of the bowl. (How could you get a ladle into the bowl given the enormous frog attachment inside?) Also, Zuni potters do paint water snakes/serpents or kolowisi on their bowls like the one seen in the center of the online image, but it would not have had embellishments on the exterior of bowl (with the head of kolowisi sticking out), and the snake would not have a rattle on its tail; a typical water medicine bowl would not be bulbous on the outside and have a hip; the tadpoles are typical Zuni designs but their mouths would not be wide open; and the main figure on the exterior of bowl represents a

frog which is accurately depicted (Elliff 2008). When researchers come to look at ceramics in this collection, we can now include our cultural advisors' voices about the pseudo-collection, which demonstrates the importance of this long-term collaborative project.

Other inaccuracies corrected by the *collection reviews* were related to a collection of 400 carved stone animal figures. Provided below is an abbreviated version of a conversation with our Zuni cultural advisors about the difference between a carving and fetish. A video narrative of the conversation (recorded and edited by Gloria Bell, 2011 Anne Ray intern) can also be found on SAR's website.

Jim Enote: What a lot of people are calling fetishes, are . . . I think we would prefer to be called carving. A fetish is something that a medicine man or hunter or somebody has really blessed. . . .

Octavius Seowtewa: It is given to a hunter or individual for protection. The only people that can do that would be the medicine man . . . and the only animals that would be considered a fetish would be the six-directional animals. . . . that would be the mountain lion, the bear, badger, wolf, eagle, and the smallest, the shrew is still considered a protection animal, so only those six animals would be considered fetishes. . . . you would not consider a butterfly, a turtle, dragonfly as fetishes because they are not the medicine animals.

Jim Enote: So, a carving then, would be one just made for sale.

Octavius Seowtewa: Yeah, right.

Jim Enote: So, a butterfly or a dragonfly, or a turtle, or sometimes we see whales and dolphins, ravens . . . things like that, we would say those are carvings because they are not true fetishes.

Jim Enote: Of course, I think today so many people are connected to this term "fetishes" to all of these kinds of carvings that are sold in the stores. . . . So in museums or other collections, we would prefer to see them called "carvings."

Octavius Seowtewa: That would be the right term.

Jim Enote: So, true fetishes, what would they look like?

Octavius Seowtewa: It would have a true arrowhead on there (as opposed to fake ones), and have the sinew, real sinew around it. . . .  
([sarweb.org/?bell\\_exhibit\\_pseudo\\_ceremonial\\_pots\\_and\\_zuni\\_collections](http://sarweb.org/?bell_exhibit_pseudo_ceremonial_pots_and_zuni_collections))

The third goal of the collaborative project was to establish protocols that would assist the staff to facilitate research visits, image requests, and/or collections care more efficiently and appropriately by including the recommendations made by our cultural advisors. This systematic approach is fundamental to ensuring that each object is respected according to the tribe's wishes. These protocols include instructions on how objects should be handled (for example, by Native vs. non-Native or men vs. women); how objects should be stored (for example, in their current location or in a separate room or cabinet). We also documented whether an object can be made available for research, photography, or publication. IARC staff took detailed notes because access to or photography of certain objects may be restricted to Zuni tribal members and not allowed to outside researchers. A researcher would have to provide the IARC staff with written permission from the designated Zuni cultural advisors to view a restricted piece. The information is updated into the IARC collections management database, *The Museum System* (TMS), which adds layers of documentation to the history of each piece.

As of March 2013, IARC staff and the Zuni cultural advisors completed their tenth *collection review*. The physical review of the objects was completed in 2012; subsequent visits have focused on double-checking information to ensure that it is correct. Furthermore, the IARC staff is currently working to publish their collection online. This process involves updating collection records and taking new, professional-quality photographs. Because of the successful *collection reviews*, the Zuni records will be the first to go online. As data gets entered into the TMS database, IARC staff reviews



their notes to see what needs to be clarified, or what questions should be addressed by the cultural advisors. Thus, before items go online, the information that is provided will include Zuni interpretation or Zuni voices.

The final goal of the project has been to create a strong partnership between IARC and the Zuni Tribe via open communication and collaboration. The Zuni collection reviews are actually part of a larger collaborative project in which Mr. Enote is compiling a database at the A:shiwi A:wan Museum and Heritage Center with records of Zuni objects in other museums. The IARC Zuni records will eventually be incorporated into this database and will be made accessible to Zuni community members, and the layers of documentation will continue. Tribal members will be able to add information such as an artist's name, for example, if a community member recognizes a design from an image in the database that is only seen and known in a particular family's work. Community-based information will then be shared with the museums that hold the objects. In this way, *collection reviews* can be a constant exchange of information between the IARC and Zuni tribal members.

As the collections manager at the IARC, I am in charge of collections care, and one of the most important aspects of this project is learning how to treat the objects with respect, according to the tribe's wishes. The duties of my job include regarding the objects as living beings and making sure they are given the appropriate care. Prior to the *museum collaboration movement*, museum professionals were typically not engaged in close partnerships with tribal communities and would not have been aware of this aspect of collections management. To me, this is a positive change for both museums and Native people. Overall, the IARC staff and the Zuni Tribe have demonstrated effective

collaboration and engaged in valuable learning experiences through the *collection reviews*.

### Moccasin Seminars

In February 2009, six moccasin makers were brought together for a seminar at the IARC to help upgrade documentation about the approximately fifty pairs of moccasins in the IARC collection. This project was also created and directed by Cynthia Chavez Lamar. The participants were Edwin Herrera (Cochiti Pueblo), Will Tsosie Jr. (Navajo), Herb Stevens (San Carlos Apache), John Garcia (Santa Clara Pueblo), Pat Tenorio (Santo Domingo Pueblo), and Gary Roybal (San Ildefonso Pueblo).

During the first seminar, the participants examined the moccasins in the IARC collection, identifying moccasins made of commercial hide versus brain-tanned hide; women's versus men's moccasins; and different techniques, how to fold certain pairs, or different styles, such as "side buttons" or "high wraps" (Elliff 2009). The participants discussed the fact that few moccasin makers are creating this essential footwear by hand anymore, and that it is crucial to teach the younger generations so this craft is not lost. They also noted that learning the craft not only includes learning the skill, it also embodies the cultural values, language, and one's identity in a community. The moccasin makers were happy to network and learn from each other as well. For the IARC, updating the records to include additional cataloging notes on moccasins was paramount due to our institutional identity as a research collection and the need to provide accurate information.

Two additional seminars were hosted at the IARC in 2010 and 2011 to make plans for a traveling banner exhibit that would feature moccasins of the Southwest.

Cynthia Chavez Lamar worked with the moccasin makers on the interpretation of the exhibit text and what images or photographs should be used. The exhibit, titled *To Feel the Earth: Moccasins in the Southwest*, it is on display (until the end of March 2013) at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center (IPCC) in Albuquerque. Ideally, the ten banners in this exhibit are meant to travel to tribal community spaces, such as cultural centers, libraries, or tribal offices. The exhibit presents a historical background of moccasins, their use and importance in tribal communities, styles and techniques, the need to preserve this artistic craft for younger generations, and explains why moccasins are not worn everyday but rather for special occasions.



**Figure 3.3:** Overview of Moccasin Banner Exhibit on display at IPCC, March 2013  
*Photograph by Amy Johnson, courtesy of the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center*

Since the IARC is not an exhibiting institution, this project adds a new level of including Native voices and reaching out to communities. (All previous IARC exhibits have been solely published online.) In the banner text, readers are asked questions to help spark a dialogue for cultural revitalization in their communities: “What is the word for

shoes or moccasins in your language? Are there stories about moccasins or other footwear in your community?” (IPCC visit 2012). Other voices highlighted in the exhibit include that of John Garcia from Santa Clara Pueblo: “This is an art that cannot be lost because everything revolves around moccasins—our dances, our songs, our ceremonies. They require the use of moccasins” (IPCC visit 2012). Pat Tenorio from Santo Domingo Pueblo asserted, “Our elders teach us what is important in our culture and traditions. They always tell us to never forget the culture—what we have and what we are as Natives. Making moccasins and wearing moccasins is what Natives are” (IPCC visit 2012).

Another component of this project was a short documentary created by Red Ant Films in collaboration with Cynthia Chavez Lamar, which plays continuously as part of the banner exhibit. Red Ant Films, owned and managed by Melissa Henry (Navajo) and her husband/producer Alfredo Perez, has won many awards, and the IARC was happy to be a part of this project. Melissa Henry is currently the 2013 Eric and Barbara Dobkin Native Artist Fellow. The nine-minute documentary, also titled *To Feel the Earth: Moccasins in the Southwest*, highlights the discourse on moccasins in the Southwest, capturing the voices of the moccasin makers, scholars, and tribal community members. It examines the themes of the exhibit text, such as the use of moccasins today, contemporary fashion, dance, techniques and style, and history.

Overall, the collaborative seminars are another component of IARC’s identity shift. Including the voices of the moccasin makers and creating strong partnerships through collaboration, listening, and respect serve as powerful examples of successful collaborative projects.

### Native Artist Fellowships

The IARC has four Native artist fellowships per year: the Ron and Susan Dubin Fellowship (June 15-August 15); the Rollin and Mary Ella King Fellowship (September 1-December 1); the SAR Indigenous Writer-In-Residence Fellowship (January 3-February 21); and the Eric and Barbara Dobkin Fellowship (March 1-May 31). Artists are provided a residence on the SAR campus, a monthly stipend, and a studio. The fellowships are designed to provide a space for the artist to advance their artwork, or to discover or revitalize their creative processes. Plans are currently underway for the construction of an additional artist studio so more than one Native artist can be in residence at a time.

In 2012, I created a short video for a Visual Culture seminar under the direction of filmmaker/UNM Professor Beverly Singer. In this short film, I gave objects a voice by conducting “interviews” with a micaceous cooking jar, a Navajo squash blossom necklace, and a contemporary painting. In many ways, objects have voices because they spark narratives, they help revitalize art forms or styles when artists come to research them, and they are also a major component of the overall IARC identity. In this subsection, I present a few examples of another component of collaborative projects, the utilization of the IARC collection by artists. This component can entail a relationship between objects and the artists, or between contemporary artists and artists represented in the collection.

Ulysses Reid, 2009 Ronald and Susan Dubin Native Artist Fellow, is a potter from Zia Pueblo. In the 1970s, the IARC acquired approximately 180 paintings by his grandfather, Andres Galvan. Many of these paintings were sketches of pottery designs

from nearby pueblos that were created between the 1930s and 1950s (Figure 3.4).

Ulysses studied his grandfather's paintings for inspiration in his own pottery. While many of the designs could be seen on pottery in the IARC collection, other drawings depicted designs that Ulysses had never seen on pottery. According to Elysia Poon, IARC program coordinator, "His style is kind of unique. To have someone come in and say, 'I want to bring these to life,' to have them move from 2-D to 3-D form—what other reason do we have to be here? It's traditional but innovative at the same time. He is using traditional design, but he makes it his own" (Roberts 2009).



**Figure 3.4:** SAR.1979-7-72, one of the Andres Galvan paintings Ulysses used to create his bowl  
*Photo courtesy of the Indian Arts Research Center, School for Advanced Research*

During his residency, Ulysses created a bowl implementing designs from several of his grandfather's sketches, which included adapting styles from these paintings while also creating designs uniquely his own. The project is an example on how artists utilize the collection, and it also demonstrates a collaborative outcome in the creation of the bowl Ulysses made during his residency. In a sense, it illustrates a collaborative project between Ulysses and the paintings, but overall, the collaborative project is between Ulysses and his grandfather, Andres Galvan.

Marla Allison, 2010 Eric and Barbara Dobkin Artist Fellow, is a painter from Laguna Pueblo. Marla sketched pottery designs that were in her family's collection and she also drew designs from the IARC collection while in residency. The outcome was a four-painting set, known as a tetrptych, of her home on Mesita Mesa, incorporating these pottery designs. The painting, seen below, is titled *Path of Life* and was a result of Allison's research on pottery in the IARC collection (Figure 3.5).



**Figure 3.5:** SAR.2010-4-1A-D: Marla Allison's "Path of Life"  
 Photograph by Addison Doty, courtesy of the Indian Arts Research Center, School for Advanced Research

In a video interview conducted by Teresa Montoya (Diné), 2010-2011 Anne Ray intern, Marla comments about the *Path of Life* painting set she donated to the IARC:

I found a lot of influence from the pottery here, this is one that is in the sketchbook here (*pointing to a Laguna jar and her sketchbook*)—I really tried to understand the designs, it is all up to the artist, like paintings or anything else—the design work is all their own, so we—as far as people researching or trying to understand what the designs mean—can find certain influence, but as far as myself I tried to find what I could understand with it, and being the artist sketching, I tried to understand what the artist was doing when they were applying the paint to the pottery. . . . This work, this piece in particular (*pointing to Laguna jar*), was one that I used in the painting that I donated to SAR. . . . From the middle to the right side, that shows my evolution as far as understanding design tradition and moving it towards what I have researched. . . . So this painting in a way is its own, I guess, metamorphosis or evolution . . . adaption on design work. . . . ([sarweb.org/?montoya\\_exhibit\\_contemporary\\_artistic\\_trade\\_allison](http://sarweb.org/?montoya_exhibit_contemporary_artistic_trade_allison)).

Marla's research on pottery designs in the IARC collection contributed to the creation of her painting set, or tetrptych. She was trying to connect with the pottery, the designs, or what the artist was thinking while painting the pots. This demonstrates another example of an artist collaborating with pots and past potters in the IARC collection.

### Art, Gender, and Community

In November 2007, six Native women artists participated in an SAR seminar titled *Art, Gender, and Community*: Gloria J. Emerson (Diné), Sherry Farrell Racette (Timiskaming First Nations/Irish), Erica Lord (Athabaskan/Inupiaq), Felice Lucero (San Felipe Pueblo), Eliza Naranjo Morse (Santa Clara Pueblo), and Diane Reyna (Taos Pueblo/Ohkay Owingeh). Most of them had been previous artist fellows at SAR, and discussions emerged on the "role of women as Native and Artist" (Chavez Lamar, Farrell Racette, Evans 2010, 2). Chavez Lamar notes that "on the first day, the artists immediately talked about the limits placed on women's creative expression and the breakdown of Native communities due to substance abuse, health ailments, and loss of elders and knowledge. Although seemingly incongruous, these topics converged when the women began to discuss the insecurities produced by threats to cultural survival" (Chavez Lamar, Farrell Racette, Evans 2010, 2).

In February 2008, the artists gathered for another seminar titled "Creative Reflections of Enduring Women" (Chavez Lamar, Farrell Racette, Evans 2010, 5). The participants from the first seminar invited five additional artists: Heidi K. Brandow (Navajo/Native Hawaiian), Lara Evans (Cherokee), Shannon Letandre (Anishinaabe/Cree), TahNibaa Naat'aanii (Diné), and Dyani Reynolds-Whitehawk



(Sicangu Lakota/German/Welsh). In this seminar, a recap of the first gathering was provided, and the participants continued to discuss aspects of their identity as Native women artists. For the final seminar in June 2008 the artists brought some of their artwork for an exhibition and held panel discussions.

The seminars created a space for the artists to discuss issues they face as Native women artists. They also provided a place to share or critique ideas about their own artwork. One outcome of the seminars was a book published by the SAR Press in 2010 titled *Art in Our Lives: Native Women Artists in Dialogue*, one of a very few publications about Native women artists. The book includes the voices of the eleven Native artists. Furthermore, the seminars and book project demonstrate another model for collaborative projects.

#### Expansion: Looking Ahead

In December 2012, I had the opportunity to be a part of a site visit at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in Washington, D.C. The purpose of the trip was to brainstorm ideas for IARC expansion. As mentioned in Chapter 1, in 2012 SAR purchased an additional 7.4 acres west of the current property with the intention of building an additional IARC collection facility. There is no set timeframe for the expansion, but we wanted to talk with NMAI staff since the design of their facilities also incorporated Native voices. As we toured the Cultural Resource Center (CRC) and the NMAI museum, we met and spoke with staff about the collaborative work at the museum and collection storage facility—what worked, and what did not—and they made some good suggestions. The NMAI planning team looked for “commonalities” since they would be representing all Native peoples of the Americas (Ostrowitz 2008, 84). This

meant they took into consideration aspects such as orientation (with the entrance door to the east); shape (a circular theme); the Native landscape and garden; and the curvilinear nature of the building (to represent wind). In the near future, IARC will be working with local Southwest tribal communities to include their voices in the building design and collection storage. Additional trips are planned to the Museum of Northern Arizona in Flagstaff and the University of British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver. This is just another way IARC is moving forward to include Native voices and to create "a sense of place" for the local communities (Ostrowitz 2008, 99).

The collaborative projects outlined above have resulted in new voices and partnerships. They also embody the new identity characteristics included in the 2012 guiding principles: fostering collaborations, listening and observing, and respecting all cultures, which reflect the IARC identity shift. In response to the *museum collaboration movement*, many institutions have incorporated Native voices in the exhibition design or collections care. With a staff of six, and expert knowledge from numerous consultants, advisors, participants, and resident fellows and artists, the outcomes from these collaborative projects at IARC have been shown in this chapter to be quite diverse and unique.

### *What's Next?*

This study has focused on the identity shift of the IARC and the important collaborative projects by including Native voices. I also want to illuminate the voices of staff, artists, and cultural advisers who have been involved in these projects. I sent out e-mail questionnaires to ten participants. The questionnaires function as short narratives to create a discourse of voices that surround the IARC. What is the *vibe* at the IARC? Why

do people keep coming back? Is it unique as a research institution? Why is collaboration important today? In the next chapter I analyze the responses to the e-mail questionnaires, and I also draw attention to Gerald Vizenor's concept of *survivance* to bring more discourse and voices to light.

## Chapter 4: The Power of Voice(s)

Why is it important for me to highlight voices in this study? As a staff member at the IARC and as a graduate student who is an advocate for collaborative methodological frameworks, I felt that the IARC narrative should not be told from one perspective. It was imperative for me to capture a dialogue of voices from staff, Native artists, and cultural advisers who have been involved in projects at the IARC. Much like scholars Noenoe K. Silva, author of *Aloha Betrayed*, and Maylei Blackwell, author of *¡Chicana Power!*, I wanted to create a space for voices that have otherwise been unheard. Voices serve as a powerful tool for storytelling. Therefore, I chose to conduct e-mail questionnaires with five questions to capture short narratives about the IARC.

This chapter illuminates the voices from the e-mail questionnaires to aid in adding layers of perspectives about the IARC. I delineate the responses primarily by the following themes: (1) collaboration, (2) a sense of belonging, (3) Gerald Vizenor's concept of survivance, and (4) knowledge.

### *The E-mail Questionnaires*

As a staff member at the IARC, I often overhear comments from tribal communities or Native artists about the IARC. In my research I wanted to delve beneath the surface and dissect exactly what is going on here. I sent e-mail questionnaires to four IARC staff, three Native artists, and three cultural advisers who have been involved in IARC collaborative projects. Each participant had five questions to answer; three of the questions were the same for everyone. I sent out ten questionnaires and received eight back.

The consent form participants signed before completing the questionnaire gave the option of allowing their name to be published or remaining anonymous. Participants

who chose to remain anonymous will be labeled *Erin Smith* or *Lee Doe* to protect their identities. Following are the questions (and the targeted recipients):

- Historically, museums or institutions housing Native American objects have been created and interpreted by non-Native people. In your experience as an IARC staff member/artist/cultural advisor, do you think the IARC's identity has shifted due to successful collaborative projects with tribal communities? Why or why not? And, why do you think collaboration is important today? (*Staff, Artists, Cultural Advisers*)
- Do you feel that the IARC is a welcoming institution for Native artists and tribal community members? Why or why not? (*Staff, Artists, and Cultural Advisers*)
- Do you feel the inclusion of Native voice\* is absent at the IARC or is there a sense of presence? Why or why not? (*Staff, Artists, and Cultural Advisers*)  
\*the inclusion of Native voice is a shared authority or joint-decision making process between staff and tribal communities regarding decisions made about interpretation and management of collections such as in exhibitions, loans, storage, image or research requests, and/or storage/handling of objects.
- What intrigued you about working at the IARC? What skills or knowledge do you think tribal visitors bring back to their community? Why do you think tribal communities keep coming back to the IARC? (*Staff Only*)
- With the IARC identified as a research institution, do you think it is a unique place in regards to how staff works with tribal communities? As opposed to museums? How do your job duties focus on sustaining strong partnerships with tribal communities? (*Staff Only*)
- Why did you visit or how did you learn about the IARC? What intrigued you about the research collection? What skills or knowledge did you bring back to your tribal community? Why do you keep coming back to the IARC? (*Artists and Cultural Advisers Only*)
- Do concepts of tradition or authenticity influence or define your artwork? After visiting the IARC, did that change the way you interpret or how you create your artwork? (*Artists and Cultural Advisers Only*)

### *Collaboration*

In Chapter 2, I briefly unpacked the concept of collaboration. It is imperative here to examine collective voices on the IARC's identity shift regarding collaboration. All of

the participants were asked the first question (above) because I wanted to examine a dialogue from multiple perspectives on the relationship between communities and the IARC, and whether participants felt that collaborative progress has been made. I use short narratives to aid in adding layers to IARC's story.

Marla Allison (Laguna Pueblo), 2010 Eric and Barbara Dobkin Native Artist Fellow, noted, "In my own experience in working with IARC's collection, I believe that success is ongoing with the collaboration of artists and communities, it is important beyond any other work. The artists of varied communities that can add the knowledge of research, tribal significance, and cultural background give the pieces of art in the collection validity and structure. The art collection of IARC needs to be questioned and researched constantly to add a more thorough definition and background, which is also a historic marker of the people that created the works of art" (Allison e-mail communication 2013).

William B. Tsosie Jr. (Navajo), a moccasin seminar participant, remarked, "My impressions have been that objects are living beings. The success of having collaboration is a wonderful means of access that many Native people feel they do not have. I know I feel that way. Most of my life I have been told who I am by non-Native people. I am very thankful that someone outside my culture had the foresight to collect and store a treasure of objects for me to wonder about. So as in all things, there is good and bad in everything. All tribal communities are reclaiming their culture and history by access to their objects" (Tsosie, Jr. e-mail communication 2013).

Erin Smith asserted, "I do feel that the IARC has changed. My understanding of the IARC's history was that it was established by non-Natives with the idea of preserving

Native American art skills. While this has helped to propel artists in the past, it stifled the artistic expression of artists who wanted to go beyond the classic realm of ‘Native American art.’ The IARC has gone from telling Native artists what art they should be making to that of allowing Native artists to explore their own creativity without having to remain locked within the rigid boundaries of popular perception of what a Native artist is supposed to be. All of this is very empowering for Native Americans, especially in light of the fact that the IARC was not founded on anything other than preserving traditional art forms and was more in a position to dictate to Native communities and shape Native art rather than assist those communities. This is a sign of the modern times in which Native communities have become much more empowered” (Smith e-mail communication 2013).

Lee Doe commented, “I think IARC has begun the shift toward collaboratively working with Native people and communities to interpret the collections. This has resulted in what I believe to be a positive mixture of Native and non-Native voices expressed in the collection. Because the collaborative way in which we work is fairly new by museum standards, I don’t think we can gauge success quite yet. There are still some things to iron out, as we recognize that there are multiple voices (even within a tribal community itself) and that these voices sometimes, even often, contradict each other or change opinion over time. How to accommodate these constantly shifting voices within any institution, I think, is still to be decided. I believe that the IARC has shifted its identity to something that is much more friendly to tribal communities. We have worked hard to make Native people feel more comfortable in the vaults and to express that the collections are for them to utilize as both a teaching and learning tool. Our collaborative

projects in addition to our public outreach have been key to making this happen.

Collaboration, Native or non-Native is of utmost importance” (Doe e-mail communication 2013).

Overall, after reading the short narratives, one question comes to mind: How do we measure success for collaborative projects? I argue that the collaborative projects the IARC has implemented have been successful. However, judging success in collaborative projects is ongoing and incorporates multiple voices, which factors into how we evaluate them. As noted in Chapter 3, each collaborative project will be different, and each community and its members will not follow identical paths. Nevertheless, all of the participants did demonstrate that change or progress has been made at the IARC, which reinforces my argument about IARC’s identity shift.

### *A Sense of Belonging*

I chose the second question because I have overheard previous SAR Native scholars or artists say that SAR has not been a welcoming institution for Native peoples. However, since I have begun working at the IARC, I consistently hear comments about how welcoming the IARC is. Nonetheless, the negative discourse on SAR gets passed on to the IARC, even though it is in many ways a separate entity.

All of the participants in my e-mail sample agreed that IARC is a welcoming institution. William B. Tsosie Jr. (Navajo) noted, “Yes, I feel that the IARC is a welcoming institution for Native people. Why? It was not long ago that access to collections did not exist. Many artists and tribal community members at times will be at odds with each other. But, it is important to acknowledge all and give respect to all. It would be sad to see access taken away again. An artist and tribal community members



may have different ideas on what is important for the people” (Tsosie, Jr. e-mail communication 2013).

Lee Doe commented “I believe that IARC is a welcoming institution for Native artists and tribal community members because staff consistently tries to accommodate requests for visits and research as quickly and easily as possible. Because of SAR’s history of being rather closed-off, I do think that we still have a long way to go before tribal communities across the board are aware of what we have to offer” (Doe e-mail communication 2013).

According to Chavez Lamar, “If a person has been in contact with someone from IARC, and it was a positive experience, they will likely feel welcomed even before they arrive. If they have not had much interaction with any IARC staff before visiting, they may be a bit unsure about how their visit will transpire, but once they arrive they will experience a welcoming environment” (Chavez Lamar e-mail communication 2013). Sylvanus Paul (Diné), collections assistant at the IARC, stated, “Feedback from many Native American visitors have highly expressed the welcoming atmosphere of IARC. Artists have shared how wonderful the staff has been in assistance with their research visit. IARC has developed a positive relationship with Native communities that bring re-visits” (Paul e-mail communication 2013).

Based on my analysis of the responses, the IARC creates a positive experience, a welcoming environment, and *a sense of belonging*. Historically, relationships between museum professionals and Native peoples were not as open and museums were not as accessible to tribal communities. The IARC creates *a sense of belonging*, which is also based on numerous comments by participants expressing the consistently friendly

accommodation by IARC staff on visits to the collection. Other comments suggested the negative perceptions of SAR. Hopefully, attitudes will change when more tribal communities become aware of the IARC collection, programs, and accommodating environment. Because the IARC is the center of this study, there was not enough time to unpack the negative perceptions of SAR. This is something that definitely needs to be explored, possibly by dissecting the creation and management of SAR Native scholar programs as a starting point.

### *Survivance*

I was keen on asking the third question listed above to determine whether the participants think an identity shift has occurred due to the inclusion of Native voice. I argue that the inclusion of Native voice in collaborative projects signifies a joint decision-making process, and also serves as a form of survivance.

Before I provide examples to back up my survivance argument, I first dig deeper into the concept. Anishinaabe scholar Gerald Vizenor redefined the concept, and it has exploded in the Native American studies field primarily over the past fifteen years. He notes, “survivance is more than survival, more than endurance or mere response, the stories of survivance are an active presence” (Vizenor 1998, 15). As Vizenor has pointed out, depending on the language being used, this concept has different interpretations. Nonetheless, survivance originates from the concept of *survival*, and the *-ance* suffix indicates an action. Thus, “survivance is the action, condition, quality, and sentiments of the verb *survive*, ‘to remain alive or in existence’” (Vizenor 2008, 19). One of Gerald Vizenor’s remarkable quotes that continuously resonates with me in this project is from his “Aesthetics of Survivance” essay: “survivance is the continuance of stories, not a

mere reaction, however pertinent. Survivance is greater than the right of a survivable name” (Vizenor 2008, 1 and 2009, 85). As I have documented, the visits of tribal representatives and artists to the IARC collection have sparked a depth of knowledge and stories are continuing through tribal communities and artists visiting the IARC collection.

The discourse of survivance has also been appearing in the museum collaboration field more frequently in the past decade. Vizenor’s contributions have left a tremendous footprint across academic disciplines, and recently, they have laid the groundwork for structuring how museums are working with tribal communities. For example, upon the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in 2004, former director W. Richard West Jr. stated, “the museum, the last that would be built on the Washington Mall, would stand as a tribute to the tribal survivance” (Lizut Helstern 2010, 231). Linda Lizut Helstern asserts, “the term precisely connotes the cultural vitality and continuance that would, according to West, be showcased in the new museum” (2010, 231).

American Studies professor and museum scholar Amy Lonetree (Ho-Chunk) argues in her recent publication, *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*, that museums can be sites for nation building; to advance the healing process; and to revive aspects of culture and language for Native people through exhibitions and programming (2012, 171). Lonetree states that “decolonizing goes beyond survivance,” as we are past the ‘*we are still here*’ notion that is commonly displayed in exhibits today (2012, 174). She asserts, “Without question, survivance is a powerful and affirmative message to communicate in the face of the American master narrative that depends on our erasure and silence. There is no denying our continuance.

But if museums are to serve as sites of decolonization and are to follow Indigenous community-based practices, I believe we need to speak the hard truths of our history as well” (Lonetree 2012, 174).

The responses from the participants to the third question generally demonstrate that the Native voice is included in most IARC projects. For example, William B. Tsosie Jr. stated, “I think with IARC the inclusion is now required and present for the most to all Native People. I would hope in the future that inclusion will continue. I know some tribal groups are very vocal about what should and should not be viewed by others. I know it is hard to accommodate all but it is important to remember the context of the inclusion” (Tsosie, Jr. e-mail communication 2013).

Lee Doe noted, “I definitely feel that the inclusion of the Native voice at the IARC is very much present due not only to the collaborative nature of our projects but also the high numbers of Native peoples visiting our institution” (Doe e-mail communication 2013). According to Erin Smith, “I do believe that there is a great attempt by the IARC to include tribal communities in decisions and programs. I know that community members are invited to examine and correct old document records and to give direction in the proper caretaking of objects in accord with tribal traditions. Communities can decide what can remain in public knowledge, but also what is considered private intellectual property and should not be open to research. The IARC takes its responsibilities as caregivers of tribal collections and knowledge seriously and do not cater to the desires of outside non-Native groups at the expense of the wishes of tribal communities” (Smith e-mail communication 2013).

However, Sylvanus Paul noted in response to the inclusion of Native voice, “Yes and no. Yes in the fact the surrounding Pueblo communities take full advantage of the collection for artistic and educational value. The representation of all the artistic art from around the Southwest can’t take the same opportunity as easily, because of their homeland location. The distance between Diné communities from Utah, Colorado, and certain parts of Arizona prevents a lot of educational and cultural visits. I deeply wish the IARC could hear more from the Mojave people about the items from their culture. Not every tribe can be at IARC, but in time, it can change” (Paul e-mail communication 2013).

Paul brought up a good point because the location of the IARC is not convenient to all Southwest communities represented in the collection. Nonetheless, visits are scheduled with Navajo artists and communities as well. For example, the Ned A. Hatathli Cultural Center at Diné College, a textile documentation seminar, and Navajo weaving classes are just a few examples of visits by Diné communities.

Jim Enote, director of the A:shiwi A:wan Museum and Heritage Center, points out that voice is definitely present in the Zuni collection review project. However, he comments, “So, the voice for the majority of the pieces here, they don’t have Native voice or source community voice. But, IARC is taking a really committed role from what I can tell, to start doing something about that, correcting that, and bringing in the source communities voice. And in a way, that has never been done before in any museum that we [meaning himself and Octavius Seowtewa] have ever been to” (Enote personal interview 2013). Although IARC is committed to including voices for each project it works on, whether seminars, book projects, collection reviews, or image and

loan requests; it will take time to incorporate source-community voices for the 12,000 objects that comprise the collection.

For me, the inclusion of Native voice(s) at the Indian Arts Research Center signifies a presence, a future, and not just the past. The inclusion of a Native voice serves as a form of survivance; the continuance of stories; and connotes a rebirth of institutional identity. “Native presence is the voice, natural sound, and a trace in the book, but not silence, as silence is aesthetic, endorsed outside nature and the trace of seasons to words” (Vizenor 1998, 64). Today, the IARC research collection appears vibrant, living, . . . breathing.

### *Knowledge*

All IARC staff, Native artists, and cultural advisers were asked similar questions about what intrigued them about working or visiting the IARC, and more importantly, about the knowledge and skills gained by visiting the collection.

Chavez Lamar outlined that the IARC “seemed to be a place where art and academia intersected, which was right up my alley. Native visitors likely bring back general information about SAR and IARC resources, and let others know that they had a positive experience, and that there is a great collection of Native art at IARC. They keep coming back because of their positive experiences, much of which has to do with the IARC staff” (Chavez Lamar e-mail communication 2013).

Lee Doe noted, “What intrigued me about working at the IARC was the opportunity to work with a constant stream of contemporary Native artists and to share our collection in a hands-on manner with community members. I think that tribal communities keep coming back to the IARC because of the relative ease of accessing the

collections, its comprehensive scope in the Southwest, and the friendly and accommodating staff. The skills and knowledge that tribal visits bring back to their community include: older techniques that might be in little use or even lost; inspiration to artists for new projects; how to navigate working within a museum setting; pride in culture/family; and historical and cultural knowledge as shared by what's in the IARC records (due to collaborative visits, scholarly visits, etc.), guides, or more often, other community members present during the visit" (Doe e-mail communication 2013).

Jennifer Day noted, "One of the things that intrigued me about working at IARC was the fact that it is a research center rather than an exhibiting institution. I am not aware of any other collection that functions in quite the same way. The fact that my time would be spent primarily on updating and improving collection records, rather than processing incoming exhibition loans, was something that greatly appealed to me when I applied for the job. I was also excited to work at an institution that was attempting to build stronger relationships with source communities for the improved care and interpretation of the collection items" (Day e-mail communication 2013).

Marla Allison explained, "After my fellowship, which seemed to pass too quickly, I returned home to share my knowledge with my little brother who was starting to design pottery at the time. I also include some of the designs from the pottery research in my paintings that are seen by people far and wide during lectures and art shows. I would also like to return just to get more inspiration from the other art there and feel the great strength of beauty they give off. It's quite an amazing feeling while there" (Allison e-mail communication 2013).

William B. Tsosie said, “I have known about IARC for a long time. I have artwork that is part of the IARC collection. . . . I was intrigued with the potential to reserve the objects and art to the future. It also intrigues me of the potential for teaching and study by Native People. The skills and knowledge are many but the opportunity to access a forum [the Moccasin Seminars] where I was able to meet other Native People were the highlights of my visits. I love to see new facets and perspectives expressed by modern Native People” (Tsosie, Jr. e-mail communication 2013).

Erin Smith emphasized, “I first learned of the IARC not as an artist, but as an employee of the National Park Service. As part of a program for employing local Native youth, we were encouraged to attend collaboration meetings between Native American communities and the federal government as well as exploring programs that maintained local tribal collections. We would not have visited such places if they were not looked upon favorably by our tribal communities” (Smith e-mail communication 2013).

Overall, the interest or knowledge gained by working with or visiting the IARC collection is diverse. Commonalities include the appeal of working with scholars, artists, or tribal communities, techniques and styles that are revitalized, and teaching knowledge to younger generations. Most importantly, the IARC collaborative projects or public outreach programs are ongoing. If the IARC remained static, I believe only small numbers of Native peoples would be visiting the collection today. As William B. Tsosie, Jr. asserted, “I keep coming back to the IARC because it is always evolving and changing like a *living being*” (Tsosie, Jr. e-mail communication 2013; emphasis added).



### **Conclusion: A Unique Institution?**

Numerous museums and research institutions housing Native American art collections are currently engaged in collaborative projects, so is the IARC really a unique institution? The staff member responses to the fifth question posed in the questionnaire and listed in Chapter 4 were diverse; some mentioned that the IARC is not unique because other museums already engage in collaborative projects or that the IARC is not a museum but a research facility, and this factor alone embodies the unique quality. Nevertheless, most staff participants felt that the IARC has done an exceptional job working with communities, and that this quality itself contributes to its uniqueness.

I think it is important to conclude with some of the voices from the questionnaire narratives regarding the focus of the staff on sustaining strong partnerships with tribal communities. Lee Doe emphasized, “I do not think that the IARC is unique in regards to how staff work with tribal communities in comparison to museums as a whole, but I do think that the staff does a good job in working with tribal communities. I think that the IARC does do a better job working with outside communities than many museums, however. My job duties focus on sustaining strong partnerships with tribal communities through community outreach outside the SAR campus and conducting collections visits and tours at the IARC” (Doe e-mail communication 2013).

According to Jennifer Day, “Yes, I believe the IARC is a unique place that is different from most museums. Most museums must have a large portion of their staff time dedicated to creating, installing, and maintaining exhibitions. Since exhibiting isn’t part of the IARC’s mission, staff has more time available for consulting and collaborating with tribal communities for the purpose of improving or adapting our collections storage,

records management, and interpretative practices. I believe that with research (in all of its many expressions) as part of the core mission of the institution, and pressure off as far as producing exhibitions, staff has a unique environment in which to bring principles of collaboration with tribal communities to their everyday work and translate that into work products and interactions that might be more difficult to bring about in a regular museum setting” (Day e-mail communication 2013).

As Sylvanus Paul acknowledged, “Yes. The amount of time and work the IARC staff members give to create an educational visit for Native artists and communities is very rare from my experience. The attention to the preparation and resource made available for research visits is highly a focus point than other institutions that reserve resources for exhibit and tour purposes” (Paul e-mail communication 2013).

Cynthia Chavez Lamar commented, “I would not identify IARC as a wholly unique institution because there are other places that steward Native art collections that endeavor to work collaboratively with Native peoples. There are also others that have been doing so for much longer than IARC. However, I think IARC is unique in that it has much support from its leadership body to engage with tribes in a culturally appropriate and sensitive manner, in addition to having an IARC staff that are also on board with working with tribes in this way. It’s a team effort. As the IARC director, I had to take the lead in demonstrating and communicating how IARC staff will work with Native peoples, and communicate how we, as staff, would incorporate Native peoples’ perspectives and opinions into the work that we do. Creating an atmosphere of respect, collegiality, and shared authority helps create a strong foundation for any kind of

relationship with others, including Native peoples” (Chavez Lamar e-mail communication 2013).

I also think that the IARC is a unique institution due to the welcoming environment and dedicated IARC staff. According to Jim Enote, experiencing a feeling of welcoming at the IARC can entail qualities such as: (1) food, (2) language, (3) comfort and the attention staff takes working with cultural representatives, and (4) the open-storage vault environment. He notes that “even little things like having the bottled water as we come in—having 10 minutes, that comfortable space of eating and drinking coffee. That is a shared human experience. It already begins to bring some sort of balance and equality to our relationship. Sharing food is always a way to bring balance and equality. That is a small thing but I would also look forward to it as a nice start to the day. That is welcoming” (Enote personal interview 2013).

Second, instead of using only standard museum language, IARC is careful to privilege Native languages and classification. “Welcoming is also the kind of language that we use. We work around English and Zuni—and that is a form of welcoming too” (Enote personal interview 2013).

Third, the attention placed on little things like having chairs available or working closely with cultural representatives during the visits. Enote asserts, “There is also the attention that you take to working with us, like you would with working with family or friends. It is very welcoming” (Enote personal interview 2013). At other institutions, objects get pulled from the shelves and the museum staff will leave them alone for a couple of hours, sometimes not even taking notes. He says that does not make him feel very welcomed.

Fourth, the open-storage vaults create a comfortable, “warm-home like setting” (Enote personal interview 2013). Traditional museum storage usually consists of enclosed cabinets or “staid, cold-walled, cinder-block basement” environments (Enote personal interview 2013). In the IARC vaults, most of the objects are out in the open, easily viewable, accessible, and they are not hidden in dark spaces. During the Zuni collection reviews, for example, we examine the cataloging data sheets or objects at the main tables in the vaults, which are surrounded by hundreds of pots. Enote emphasizes, “Here, when I come in, I feel like there are the hands, the faces, the spirit of all the makers of these pieces, are here. They are all sort of talking. There are groups over here, they are laughing, they have something going on. It is difficult for me to explain. But they all having something that is happening there, they are still having conversations, and they still have their spirit going on. So, when I come in, I feel like they are saying, ‘come on in’. And I come in, among friends. Some people might think they are inanimate. Inanimate or without life. But I definitely feel the life here” (Enote personal interview 2013).

#### *Avenues Not Explored in this Research Project*

First, I chose to leave out an examination of tradition and authenticity from the e-mail questionnaires since the center of this paper was on collaborative projects. These concepts are identity qualities on the formation of the PPF and IAF organization, and would fit into the discourse of artists fellowships better.

Second, due to the timeframe of this project, the analysis did not include voices from previous staff of the IARC. This would have made for a stronger examination. If time permitted, I would have sought out previous IARC staff members to participate in

the e-mail questionnaires and compare their responses with the current results. The focus for my project was to concentrate on projects since 2007. Although many tribal members and representatives of tribal communities (perhaps in the hundreds) visited the IARC in the preceding thirty years, the archival record reveals few projects where Native voices were included. For example, several books were published on the IARC collection without consulting with tribal communities to ensure the images were appropriate for publication. There is also little indication of consultation regarding maintenance and care of the collection.

Third, an examination and comparison of mission statements from other institutions housing Native American art would have been an interesting adjunct to this project.

Fourth, I could have unpacked the unwelcoming perception more closely by conducting a questionnaire, possibly through *SurveyMonkey*, with Native scholars, artists, or communities that have previously been affiliated with SAR/IARC. The same survey could be sent to Native artists or tribal communities who have heard of the IARC but have never visited, asking why that might be.

### *Closing Thoughts*

Overall, this study has traveled down many paths. In sum, I argued that the IARC's identity shifted since 2007 to an institution that has emphasized collaborative projects and the inclusion of Native voice in the management of the collection. This identity shift is also due to the new leadership, the dedicated IARC team effort, knowledge from tribal communities, the welcoming environment, the fact that the IARC

is a research institution and not a museum, and it is reflected in the 2012 guiding principles. Further, I argue, all of the above qualities make the institution unique. Prior to 2008 there appears to have been a different outlook on the collection, and often times, cultural sensitivities regarding the care, display, and publication of objects were unsought or were overlooked. The identity characteristics outlined in the 2012 guiding principles now emphasize staff responsibilities to foster collaborations, to listen and observe, and to respect all cultures. These qualities were never embedded in previous IARC mission statements. This marks a significant stepping stone for the IARC. That is why I am passionate about this study. Most of the publications about the collection have focused on the aesthetics or historical provenance of objects in the collection. This research described collaborative projects that embody the IARC institutional identity; and it also captured the power of voice (s). Creating this space for voices was paramount because many voices would have otherwise been unheard. Moreover, this joint-decision making process between staff and communities contributes to maintaining strong relationships with Native peoples.

Through the collaborative projects outlined in this thesis, the IARC can also serve as a model for other institutions with Native American art collections. How can the IARC serve as a model for working with source communities? That is beyond the scope of this research, but ideas might include a video documentary of the process, or methods of training staff who are new to the collaboration procedures. Additionally, each institution will create their own protocols, which will vary with every tribal community and collaborative project. Jim Enote notes, “People that are going to be reviewers, almost need to have some training, or some principles to work with . . . it could be another

project like ‘How to be a good reviewer.’ The model could not fit for everyone but I think in general, there should be some sort of guidelines for reviewers. That would be an interesting cool project. And since it is the Indian Arts Research Center, and collaborating with communities, maybe that is something we can do together” (Enote personal interview 2013).

I also feel the IARC provides a space for tribal communities to tell stories, share knowledge, or to study the collection for artistic inspiration. Overall, the IARC functions as a communal research space for tribal communities. Additionally, the IARC contributes to the museum collaboration narrative. It breaks the master narrative of museums as static institutions historically managed by non-Native people and not including Native voices.

Is the IARC story complete? No, stories will continue, and collaboration is an ongoing process. As Amy Lonetree notes, “We must not allow these narratives of collaboration to become too tidy or celebratory, or we could become complacent” (2012, 22). Then how can we measure success based on IARC’s collaborative projects? For me, success is the positive feedback and changing attitudes of Native artists and tribal communities. Success consists of an IARC staff team effort, knowledge from tribal communities and cultural advisers, a welcoming environment, and identity characteristics codified in the IARC guiding principles. Success from these projects also serves as a form of survivance.

To end with an important quote on the power of voice (s), as Jim Enote asserts, “So, yes, there is definitely a move to have a strong voice here. So, I cannot say that all of IARC has Native source community voice but the IARC is becoming a leader in shaping

the field in representing how to do, how to include the voice in the most effective, efficient, and resilient way” (Enote personal interview 2013).



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