

Art from *Reflecting on Lewis and Clark: Contemporary American Indian Viewpoints* Exhibit

Art courtesy of Maryhill Museum

This exhibit represented art by American Indians and their viewpoints on the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Click on each art to view the author's statements and viewpoints. Following the artists' viewpoints is information about the exhibit.



Celebration Down by the River
Thelissa Red Hawk, artist



1805 Faces Greet Lewis & Clark
Pat Courtney Gold, artist



Ghosts of Celilo Past: The Lone Pine Shaker Village
and The Dalles Dam, 1993
Chuck Williams, artist

Celebration Down by the River

Thelissa Red Hawk, artist



About Art

Acrylic on paper represents artist's lifelong journey across the changing landscape of Eastern Oregon, 2002.

Art courtesy of Maryhill Museum

Artist's Viewpoints

The Columbia River is a river highway that has been used for thousands of years by the native peoples of the Pacific Northwest. I imagine all the beautiful communities of tribes with their families surviving by the habitat of this waterway. When the salmon arrive the tribes up and down on both sides of the river come to fish and celebrate. I have many good memories of my family and the interaction with the river.

In my painting I started with a deep blue and black background to give emphasis on the subject in this composition. I began getting images from the texture of the acrylic even though I had drawn out a plan; it began taking form through my consciousness in allowing it to grow freely. In public school we were trained not to use black color crayons so I used black here.

The evergreens always remind me of my grandparents, our wonderful days picking berries. The aquatic plants like cattails and tules are subtly indicated growing along the riverbank. All this represents safety and useful function for our people and wildlife. I know this place as a wonderful life of our people.

The salmon swim against the grain of the river with no hands or feet and I exclaim, "how powerful is that?" So much of the original earth is being erased by "progress" that it raises concern. Our natural resources are important and I want that to be expressed in my work.

When I began painting the people one person kept facing me and this evolved after trying to make him turn around like everyone else until I realized that this might be the forming of the "friendship" circle dance at a celebration. Everyone is

dressed in their finest. People came from everywhere, tribes bonding, trading, feasting, singing, and dancing. The people in this painting remind me of my family from my grandmother's side. I am familiar with them the most. They represent me as a "river" person. I was raised beside the Umatilla River and my grandparents would often go to Celilo Falls on the Columbia River to fish and trade. I vividly remember my grandmother drying her salmon.

I like to paint sacred landscapes and liberate the spirit that encamps about the site where our ancestor's once walked. In the moment of silence I listen for their presence, that subtle and provocative spirit that romances the blades of bunchgrass and sage among the rocks and trees reflecting in the water.

Aspen are one of my favorite species of trees. They have smooth bark and black eyes and when they collectively grow together they produce this eloquent and exciting mystery that makes me want to be among them. They are a spiritual connection among our people. Salmon and berries have that wonderful brightness and it echoes in the colors I use. I imagine the happiness illuminating from the people comforted with a beautiful full moon's face witnessing the celebration down by the river's edge.

About the Artist

Of Cayuse/WallaWalla and Nez Perce descent, Thelissa was born in Oregon and lived among the timber of Mount Hood. Her family moved to the Umatilla Indian Reservation in 1952. As an adult she moved to Idaho in 1977 and raised a family while starting a bedding plant nursery. After 21 years she moved back to the Umatilla Indian Reservation. In 1997, Thelissa ventured into the realm of her first love, art, by attending workshops held at Crow's Shadow Institute and then earned a B.S. degree in art with a minor in Plant Biology at Eastern Oregon University. Her art work has been exhibited in numerous exhibitions including at City University of New York and won several awards.

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1805 Faces Greet Lewis & Clark

Pat Courtney Gold, artist



About Art

Cattail leaves, dyed raffia, dogbane, Hungarian hemp, 2004.

The images portray animals and people that Lewis and Clark noted in their journals. The faces represent images from a Sally Bag collected by them in 1805 near Maryhill, Washington. Traditional designs handed down include: condors, Native People wearing cedar hats, geese, children, dogs, and sturgeon. The nest-shape of the basket commemorates the re-introduction of condors to this area.

Art courtesy of Maryhill Museum

About the Artist

Fiber artist Pat Courtney Gold combines traditional techniques with non-traditional materials in both two and three-dimensional forms. She is a Wasco Native. Her ancestors lived along the Columbia River for more than 12,000 years. Pat earned a B.A. in Mathematics/Physics from Whitman College; taught mathematics and worked as a computer specialist before devoting herself to creating art and lecturing on Plateau Tribal Art.

A recipient of the 2000/01 Governor Arts Award, Pat Gold was invited by the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian to help curate an exhibition of basketry that opened in the fall of 2003. Her work is in the collections of several Oregon and regional museums including the Museum at Warm Springs, Hallie Ford Museum, High Desert Museum, Maryhill Museum of Art, Oregon History Center, Portland Art Museum, Seattle Art Museum, and the Maxwell Museum in Albuquerque. Gold's work has also been exhibited nationally at the Perry Galleries, Alexandria, VA; Lew Allen Gallery, Santa Fe, NM; Smithsonian Museum, NY; Maxwell Museum, Albuquerque, NM; Schoolhouse Gallery, Damariscotta, ME and internationally at the British Museum, London, England and at the Hei Tiki Gallery, Rotorua, New Zealand. Gold's art and work to preserve traditional basket twining techniques were honored by a 2002 Community Spirit Art Award from the First People's Fund.

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Ghosts of Celilo Past: The Lone Pine Shaker Village and The Dalles Dam, 1993

Chuck Williams, artist



About Art

This image expresses the silent roar of Timm (Celilo Falls) and the drowned memories of the petroglyph faces.

Art courtesy of Maryhill Museum

Lewis and Clark's Viewpoints

Lewis and Clark described Timm (Celilo Falls) in their journals. Celilo Falls and hundreds of petroglyphs are now flooded by The Dalles dam.

30 October 1805, Clark.

"...this day we Saw Some fiew of the large buzzard Capt. Lewis Shot at one, those Buzzards are much larger than any other of ther Spece or the largest Eagle white under part of their wings & c."

25 March 1806, Lewis.

"...we arrived at a Cathlahmah fishing cam of one lodge...they had ten or douzen very fine sturgeon which had not been long taken..."

About the Artist

A native Oregonian, Chuck Williams is descended from a chief that signed the 1855 Grand Ronde Treaty. He earned a B.A. degree in art from Sonoma State University, California. He has served in the Peace Corps and VISTA and co-founded the Columbia Gorge Coalition and the Salmon Corps. He has written three books and had several articles and photographs published in such periodicals as *Audubon Magazine*, *Wana Chinook Tymoo*, *Native Peoples Magazine*, *Sierra*, *Not Man Apart*, and *High Country News*. His photographs have been exhibited in numerous galleries including at the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center, Yakama Nation Cultural Center, Museum at Warm Springs, and at the High Desert Museum. He has had solo exhibits at the Yakama Nation Museum, Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center, Columbia Art Gallery, and Portland State University.

“My primary artistic outlet used to be painting. I took up photography seriously in the early 1970s. My background and interest in painting strongly influenced my photographic work and is a reason why I now use color film almost exclusively. In the late 1980s, I was publications editor for the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, for the Yakama, Warm Springs, Umatilla and Nez Perce tribes. I was rarely comfortable taking photographs of people, feeling that I was intruding into their lives. But the tribes insisted that I take pictures of tribal officials and important events. Despite my initial reluctance, I began to really enjoy photographing powwows and other celebrations and now the majority of my photography is of people. I’m a Cascade Indian from the Columbia River Gorge and an enrolled member of the Confederated Grand Ronde Tribes. Edward Curtis, the famous photographer of Native Americans, photographed and interviewed my father’s family near the Wind River. My mother is from an Oregon pioneer family and this photographing of the conflict of the two cultures is of special interest to me.”

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Reflecting on Lewis and Clark: Contemporary American Indian Viewpoints

Exhibit at the Maryhill Museum, Washington State

Curator Pat Courtney Gold's Statement on the Exhibit:

This exhibit is special in a number of ways. Maryhill Museum is located in the middle of the Columbia River Nations and my ancestral home. These Nations were here for more than 10,000 years when Lewis and Clark first met them in 1805–06. Maryhill Museum is also special to me because it is the first museum that I visited as a child, and I fell in love with the beautiful Waso baskets in its collections.

Maryhill staff asked me to be the guest curator, and I am proud to be a part of this unique exhibit. During the Lewis and Clark commemoration period, this exhibit provides an opportunity for Columbia River artists to express their viewpoints on Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery. This exhibit honors all the Columbia River People.

Honoring Memory: Columbia River Makers by artist Elizabeth Woody

For many members of the Columbia River Basin tribes, making art is a way to contact ancestors, understand the environment, and ensure the future. Through the making of fine things we visit the same places, learn similar skills, and acquire knowledge of those before us and prepare the way for those to come. Lewis and Clark and the Chinook tribe are synonymous in the commemoration. The Chinook, for example, will remain Chinook, whether the federal government recognizes them and admit to a grave mistake in bureaucracy, as long as they remember their history, their lands, and culture. They will remain Chinook despite the loss of their material history, as long as they are makers and continue creation. They will exist with or without Lewis and Clark. It is our way, to share, and to keep ourselves together by celebrations.

Then and now, tribal peoples know one another through the items of trade, and through the exchanges of matrimony, and the handing down of traditions. Maynard White Owl's grandmothers told him to share their teachings, and not be stingy. It is our way, to share, and to keep ourselves together by celebrations. We will only vanish through the lack of attention and devotion to our traditions and generations.

The basket twinning and technology ensures we will have beautiful houses for our little sisters, the roots and berries. The gathering by the basket weavers is really attention to the life and geography of the plant materials. It is a science informed by millennia of first hand experience. The plants have their own lives and a task given them for their way of being. On the men's side, the weaving of nets, and the making of tools are the means in which they tend to the plentitude our land provides from the rivers to the mountains. It is our way of staying in touch and knowing the right time to make and express our gratitude to the land, sacred foods, and the life around us. The Arts is how we love and reflect upon brilliance.

When Lewis and Clark passed through with the help of a tenacious Native woman, they met with mind-boggling diversity. The tribal languages and knowledge embedded in each native tongue reflected the multitude of salmon that fed all. The people, wolves, bears, eagles, and the land all fed upon their flesh and bones. The biodiversity of forests here is unrivaled by any other place on earth, even the tropical rainforests. The arid landscape of plateaus and plains ran with buffalo and antelope, the hillsides had condor, and big horn sheep. Celilo Falls, the heaviest trading center of the continental routes, was continuously inhabited for over 12,000 years. Such things are no longer seen. We can see them in our heirlooms as we study them in prestigious and rare collections.

At the ocean there were sea otter, filled estuaries and kelp forests that counterbalanced the land. No one starved or lacked for materials with the beautiful cedar for canoes, clothes, and houses. This is our memory. In trade we developed specialties, such as horses like the Appaloosa. We knew that each skill made life easier and provided time to reflect, be with our loved ones, and conduct one's spiritual development. In many ways this understanding of beauty and wealth is more appropriate for today as we live with the depletion of our resources that are altered and made rare. If we tend to our materials today, and teach through our art, there is a renaissance of the plentiful, the bounty, and the wealth. We make our society stronger. My grandmother told me when I learned how to tan hides, Good, if you learn these teaching and be a maker, we will never be poor.

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