Twisted Path II: Questions of Balance

The *Twisted Path* series of exhibits is the inspiration of accomplished Abenaki artist, Rick Hunt. “Twisted Path,” actually refers to a traditional meandering bead pattern and is used— in the case of this exhibit series— as a metaphor to describe the complex cultural pathways that contemporary Native American artists explore through creative expression. This series focuses on creating Maine-based conversations like those taking place nationally about contemporary issues, as expressed through Native art. The Native artists who are invited to participate in *Twisted Path* are well-known for their artistic talent, activism, and critical commentary regarding social issues relating to sovereignty and the environment.

The “twisted path” metaphor will be interpreted by ten contemporary Native artists in the next installment in the series, *Twisted Path III: Questions of Balance*. In this exhibit, Wabanaki viewpoints will be represented alongside artists from the Pacific Northwest, the Southwest and Canadian Maritimes to unite Native artistic expression about key issues in the environment today. These artists have confirmed their participation:

- Nicholas Galanin (Tlingit)
- Vera Longtoe (Abenaki)
- Gina Brooks (Maliseet)
- Gabriel Frey (Passamaquoddy)
- Shane Perley-Dutcher (Maliseet)
- Shan Goshorn (Cherokee)
- Will Wilson (Diné)
- Patricia Michaels (Taos Pueblo and finalist on *Project Runway*).
- And, Rick Hunt will produce one piece for the exhibition to signify his curatorial role.

Opening in February 2014, *Twisted Path III* will be installed in the main gallery at the Abbe Museum in downtown Bar Harbor and will serve as our lead exhibit through the end of December 2014. The subject being explored through this exhibit is the environment. Native artists will express their emotional and cultural reflections on the status of our planet and museum visitors will experience a variety of provocative expressions --- from the comfort elicited by a familiar sense of place and connections to the land to conflicts inherent in cultural genocide and the pollution of sacred spaces. Each artist will select or create pieces specifically for the exhibit, with an artist statement about what their contributions represent. The art work presented will include: sculpture, painting, photography, mixed media, pottery, textiles, and performance art. For the audience, *Twisted Path III* will not present answers to tough questions about resource use, colonial oppression through environmental control or cultural connections to place, instead, we will create a format for visitors to consider these issues in their own context, and challenge them to create their own solutions.

In keeping with our charge to develop Native voice as the primary voice in our exhibits and programs, Rick Hunt will serve as co-curator with Raney Bench, the Abbe’s former Curator of Education and Julia Clark, Curator of Collections. George Neptune, Museum Educator, has designed a number of public programs to accompany this exhibit, which will be scheduled throughout all of 2014. Our surveys have indicated that Abbe programs and demonstrations serve to enrich the museum visitor experience, helping to create memorable/educational moments.
There are a number of programs set to accompany this exhibit. Included here is a summary of the programs and if you would like a full description, we would be happy to provide this for you.

- A contemporary issues panel discussion on environmental sovereignty with representatives from the four tribes in Maine.
- A public program series will be offered throughout the year and will include: a three part brown bag lunch series, two evening lectures, two art workshops and a three part fall film series with a traditional native meal served at the final double feature film night.
- The Creative Summit.

Creative Summit

Next fall, the Abbe will host a Creative Summit, a multi-day retreat and learning experience for Maine artists and the general public. Over the course of two days, Abbe staff and Twisted Path artists will facilitate sessions, discussions, and hands-on experiences that engage the public with the concepts introduced in the exhibit and the program series. The Summit will also connect Wabanaki artists in Maine with artists across the U.S. to share common experiences, network, and build their own relationships. A portion of the Summit will be dedicated to inspiring school-age artists to create contemporary art that offers ideas, criticisms, and solutions about their communities. This dedicated session will provide children with creative space to learn new skills, make new contacts and build their own network of peers.
Twisted Path III Artist Bios

**Vera Longtoe Sheehan**

Vera Longtoe Sheehan is an indigenous Vermont artist who has lectured and exhibited her work both nationally and internationally. She preserves the tradition of her ancestors, the last known Native American family in northern New England making twined, plant-fiber creations. Her father taught her the proper ways to harvest and process plants to make cordage, and then to use that cordage to make her distinctive twined bags, baskets and textiles. Today Vera combines family tradition with knowledge of Wabanaki culture to create her one-of-a-kind twined art that is both contemporary and ancient at the same time. Each innovative handmade object takes hours, days, weeks or even months of complex weaving and knotting to complete. Vera is committed to teaching her two children to twine, so that this endangered art form endures. For almost twenty years, Vera has combined her indigenous Vermont heritage, her knowledge of regional history, and a passion for artistic creation, in offering programs for schools and museums. Her twined bags, baskets and textiles reside in museum and private collections and can be seen in films and literature.

**Gina Brooks**

Gina Brooks is a Maliseet from St. Mary’s First Nation (in New Brunswick, Canada), and resides at Pleasant Point, Maine. She considers herself an artist informed by Wabanaki traditional knowledge. Her art includes brown ash basketry, porcupine quill and birch bark basketry, carving, and print making. Her original prints include acrylic and ink, and lithographs, monotypes, and copper etch plating. She is currently completing her bachelor’s degree in Native Studies at St. Thomas University, Fredericton, NB.

Her basketry and print art has been commissioned by private art collectors and aboriginal organizations from across Canada. Her work was exhibited in 2011 in a group exhibit at the Charlotte Street Arts Center in Fredericton, NB, Sudbury Nature Center in St. Andrews, NB (Weaving Traditions), and is featured in the New Brunswick Museum’s Wabanaki contemporary art collection in St. John, NB.

**Rick Hunt**

Rick Hunt, (B:1955, Littleton, New Hampshire), studied with internationally known artist Kenneth Westhaver, privately and at Franconia College as a teen before attending Massachusetts College of Art in the early 1980’s. His art has been shown in galleries and museums, published in books and magazines, and is featured in private collections worldwide. Rick and his wife, Carolyn Hunt, are the performing storyteller duo known as “Laughing Couple,” traveling all over New England, New York, and New Jersey and performing in schools, colleges, and museums. They can be seen at cultural events, powwows, and at events such as Burlington, Vermont First Night. Laughing Couple has even had the honor of sharing a stage with the Vermont Symphony Orchestra.

**Nicholas Galanin**

Born in Sitka, Alaska, Nicholas Galanin has struck an intriguing balance between his origins and the course of his practice. Having trained in “traditional” as well as “contemporary” approaches to art, he pursues them both in parallel paths. His stunning bodies of work simultaneously preserve his culture and explore new perceptual territory. Galanin studied at the London Guildhall University, where he received a Bachelor’s of Fine Arts with honors in Jewelry Design and Silversmithing and at Massey University in New Zealand, earning a Master’s degree in Indigenous Visual Arts. Valuing his culture as highly as his individuality, Galanin has created an unusual path for himself. He deftly navigates “the politics of cultural representation”, as he balances both ends of the aesthetic.
spectrum. With a fiercely independent spirit, Galanin has found the best of both worlds and has given them back to his audience in stunning form.

**Shane Perley-Dutcher**

Shane Perley-Dutcher is a Wolastoq (Maliseet) Silversmith from the Nekootkook (Tobique) First Nation in New Brunswick, Canada. In 2000, he graduated with honors and distinction from the New Brunswick College of Craft and design jewelry manufacturing/metal arts program. Shane draws inspiration from the design evolution of the Wolastoq (Maliseet) People. He believes that he has been gifted with a creative spirit and strives, through his work, to inspire a deeper appreciation of Aboriginal culture.

**Shan Goshorn**

Eastern Band Cherokee artist Shan Goshorn has lived in Tulsa since 1981. Her multi-media work has been exhibited extensively in the US and Canada and is in prestigious collections such as the National Museum of the American Indian, Gilcrease Museum, Institute of American Indian Arts, CN Gorman Museum, Minneapolis Institute of Art, Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art and The Museum of the Cherokee Indian. She has been awarded top honors such as Best of Show at 2013 FIBERWORKS, Best of Class at both 2013 Heard Museum Indian Fair and 2012 Cherokee Art Market, Innovation Award at SWAIA 2012 Indian Market and Grand Prize at 2011 Red Earth Indian Art Exhibition. Goshorn’s painted photographs (many of which address stereotypes and racism) have toured Italy with the Fratelli Alinari “Go West” Collection, and have been exhibited in venues including York, England’s Impression Gallery; NYC’s American Indian Community House Gallery, the Wheelwright Museum, the Franco-American Institute in Rennes, France, the International Arts Alive Festival in Johannesburg, South Africa, and “BIRD 2005” in Beijing, China. In 2006 and again in 2009, she was one of 25 international, indigenous artists asked to present work at the conference Our People, Our Land, Our Images and Visual Sovereignty hosted by the CN Gorman Museum at the University of CA at Davis.

Shan has served on the Board of Directors of the American Indian Heritage and of NIPA (Native Indian/Inuit Photographer’s Association, Canada), and has been appointed to serve on the Greater Tulsa Indian Affairs Commission of Tulsa. She has also served on the Second Circle Advisory Board of the national native arts network ATLATL and as a consultant to the Philbrook Museum of Art for their touring basketry exhibition, Woven World. Presently, she is serving in an advisory position for the Tulsa City/County Library for their American Indian Collection, including the American Indian Festival of Words native author award.

Shan Goshorn is the recipient of 2013 Eiteljorg Contemporary Art Fellowship, the 2013 SWAIA Discovery Fellowship and the 2013 Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship. She has supported herself exclusively with her art for over 25 years through the Shan Goshorn Studio.

**Will Wilson**

Will Wilson was born in San Francisco and moved permanently to the Navajo Reservation at the age of 10. He attended the Bureau of Indian Affair's Tuba City Boarding School from 1978 to 1983. He holds a bachelor's degree in art history and studio art and a master's of fine art in photography. Wilson has worked in a variety of media and has produced large-scale multi-media installations that incorporate photography and sculpture, monumental art pieces and intimate photo essays.

In addition to his profession as an artist and photographer, he is also an arts educator and community organizer. Wilson has taught sculpture at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, N.M., and he served two years as a photojournalist in Central America for the Associated Press.
He currently resides in Tucson, Ariz., where he is the co-director of the Barrio Anita Community Mural Project (BAMP), the largest public art commission in Tucson's history. Wilson is also a Visiting Professor of Photography at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

Most recently Wilson's work provides a glimpse into the complex contemporary negotiation with a land we have become alienated from, our dis-ease in understanding who we are, and possible paths for healing.


"In my work, there are stories that I grew up with, stories bringing together the cultural weave from which I come. These stories are personal to me as an individual and as a member/citizen of a people, therefore they must be presented and received with respect," Wilson says. "I want my work to strengthen Indians with examples of resistance, and the possibilities of controlling one's own representation."

Patricia Michaels

Patricia Michaels is a traditional native woman who is a style-maker at the forefront of modern fashion design and aesthetics. She creates boldly hip designs with a quality of timeless elegance. Michaels spent her youth between Santa Fe, where her parents operated their art gallery, and Taos Pueblo. In 1985 she apprenticed with the Santa Fe Opera's costume designer, and then went on to the Institute of American Indian Arts where she studied graphic design, jewelry and traditional techniques. In 2001, after working in Chicago at the Field Museum and an art gallery, she apprenticed with a tailor in Milan, Italy. Michaels later brought her son and daughter with her to New York where she worked in the city’s garment district. After two years there, Michaels developed her own collection, becoming the first Native American to feature a label at the prestigious New York Fashion Week. Michaels competed in the 2013 season 11 of the popular show Project Runway, finishing as runner up and a fan favorite. Now based back home in Taos, Patricia exhibits her work in museums and at fashion weeks in New York and Santa Fe, and her innovative designs have garnered top honors at Santa Fe Indian Market.