

GROUNDED

*Restoring our world
through a Sacred Harmony
with the earth and each other*

A touring exhibition of contemporary artists from
Indigenous American tribes traditionally based
in and around the Great Plains



The Arts Initiative of the Episcopal Church in Wyoming

International Coordinating Partner



“Upon suffering beyond suffering: [We] shall rise again and it shall be a blessing for a sick world. A world filled with broken promises, selfishness, and separations. A world longing for light again. I see a time of Seven Generations when all the colors of mankind will gather under the Sacred Tree of Life and the whole Earth will become one circle again. In that day, there will be those among the Lakota who will carry knowledge and understanding of unity among all living things and the young white ones will come to those of my people and ask for this wisdom. I salute the light within your eyes where the whole Universe dwells. For when you are at that center within you, and I am that place within me, we shall be one.”

- Crazy Horse, Oglala Sioux Chief

“The earth is our mother. What befalls the earth befalls all the [children] of the earth. This we know: the earth does not belong to [humanity], [humanity] belongs to the earth. All things are connected... We do not weave the web of life; we are merely strands in it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. The earth is precious to God and to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its Creator.”

- Chief Seattle, Suquamish and Duwamish Chief

Introduction and Strategic Need

GROUND^ED is an artistic exploration curated by *ArtSpirit*, the arts initiative of Episcopal Church in Wyoming, to inspire our imaginations about our need to be "grounded" in our relationship with all of creation: the earth and its wildlife, each other and ourselves. At this moment in time, it is critical for both our own health and the survival of our planet, that we acknowledge and honor our intricate connection to the earth as our sustainer, to the wisdom of our ancestors, and to humanity's need of each other. Our world itself is calling for restoration, from within and without, for a realignment of a sacred harmony and an awareness of a new balance between ourselves and the earth, and with all of life upon it. GROUND^ED is an exhibition of creative expressions nurturing that sacred connection, towards "groundedness" and more intentional and responsible living.

There is no question that our world is facing an environmental emergency. Foundational to any solution is the critical need to have a healthier relationship with everything on our planet. Bold, courageous and innovative steps are required for our future. In this regard, we have much to learn about our relationship with the earth from indigenous cultures, such as our Native American sisters and brothers, who teach us that environmental care is an integral part of maintaining a sacred balance, and climate change indicates an imbalance that they understand as affecting everyone and everything – geological, physical, emotional and spiritual.

GROUND^ED will bring together an inspiring group of premier contemporary artists from Indigenous American tribes, traditionally based in and around the Great Plains, whose artistic practice is a unique blend of their heritage and creative expression. Their work will serve as a visual representation of the worldview, wisdom and learnings of their forebears which is urgently needed today as we reimagine the way we live in order to heal our world. Grounded in the interconnectedness of the sacred, the natural world, and one another, Native American traditional beliefs see everything on the earth as living in relationship. Their spiritual wisdom is therefore essential toward developing a "sacred harmony" between all peoples and with the earth. This unique contemporary art exhibition seeks to enable them to share their culture, heritage and sacred traditions to help us heal our world and foster wholeness among all peoples.

The Exhibition

GROUND^ED will be a touring contemporary art exhibition. It will also be offered simultaneously online through a virtual gallery.

Wyoming - It will be showcased first in 6 cities of Wyoming (Lander, Casper, Cheyenne, Jackson, Worland and Rock Springs).

United States - Following the Wyoming tour, the plan is for the exhibition to be showcased in 2 other key venues within the US working with the national Episcopal Church.

United Kingdom and Middle East - Following the Wyoming and US exhibitions, the plan is for GROUND^ED to be exhibited in the United Kingdom (i.e. Leicester, London) and the Middle East

(UAE). The organizing curator, Bishop Paul-Gordon Chandler, the Bishop of Wyoming, has had extensive experience in coordinating large-scale exhibitions in the UK, Europe and the Middle East.

The Artists

15 premier contemporary artists have been invited to participate from 8 Indigenous tribes. The invitations were extended based on the artists' previous work and their ability to express the exhibition's theme through the lens of their heritage and cultural worldview.

Each artist are encouraged to submit 2 original artworks created in response to the theme of the exhibition in any still art medium: painting, drawing, collage, photography, digital art, mixed media, etc. They will measure no larger than 3-feet on the longest length. Larger works by an artist are at the discretion of the artistic curator.

The 15 premier contemporary Indigenous American artists invited to participate include:

Robert Martinez (Northern Arapaho): *paintings/drawings*

John Pepion (Blackfeet): *ledger work*

Ben Pease (Crow): *collage painting*

Brent Lerner (Arapaho/Cheyenne): *paintings*

Don Montelleaux (Oglala Sioux): *ledger*

Carlin Bear Don't Walk (Crow/Northern Cheyenne): *paintings*

Joanne Brings Thunder (Eastern Shoshone): *ledger*

Jackie Sevier (Northern Arapaho): *mixed media*

Jackie Larson Bread (Blackfeet): *beadwork*

Wade Patton (Oglala Lakota): *ledger drawing & beadwork*

Henry Payer (Ho-Chunk): *collage*

Jim Yellowhawk (Itazipco/Cheyenne River Sioux): *mixed media*

Hillary Kempenich (Ashinabee): *painting*

Talissa Abeyta (Eastern Shoshone): *ledger*

Louis Still Smoking (Blackfeet): *painting*

Curatorial Team

ARTISTIC CURATOR – Robert Martinez, *celebrated Northern Arapaho Artist, and Founder of Creative Indigenous Collective and Northern Arapaho Artists Society*

Robert Martinez is a celebrated Northern Arapaho artist who was born in Wyoming on the Wind River Reservation. A member of the Northern Arapaho tribe, he attended the Rocky Mountain College of Art & Design (RMCAD) and graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts specializing in Painting & Drawing and minoring in sculpture. At the age 19, he became the Youngest Native American to graduate from RMCAD at that time.

His native heritage remains a constant inspiration and source of ideas for his art. The past and present resonate strongly in his home state of Wyoming and those historical and contemporary chords echo throughout his pieces. Much of Robert's current work uses the

historical imagery, myths and stories of both the West and Arapaho Culture combined with modern themes to create images that make a statement on the issues of today. Using intense vibrant color and contrasting shades of light and dark, he paints and draws striking forms that are confronting and engage the viewer.

His paintings and drawings have been shown across the USA and have garnered noted acclaim. His work is included in the permanent collections of the Red Cloud Heritage Museum, The Brinton Museum, The Plains Indian Museum at the Cody Center of the West, and the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian.

A strong supporter of Education and of the Arts, Robert is the Founder of Creative Indigenous Collective and Northern Arapaho Artists Society, and is committed to helping and mentoring emerging artists on his reservation in Wyoming and the western region.

For more information, see: www.martinezartdesign.com

ORGANIZING CURATOR

The Rt. Rev. Paul-Gordon Chandler, *Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Wyoming & Founder of CARAVAN, a global arts initiative*

The Rt. Rev. Paul-Gordon Chandler is the Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Wyoming. He grew up in Senegal, West Africa, and has lived and worked extensively around the world in senior leadership roles within publishing, the arts, relief and development and The Episcopal Church. An author, art curator, social entrepreneur and an authority on the Middle East and Africa, he is passionate about using the arts to further our global quest for a more harmonious future, both with each other and with the earth.

He is Founder of CARAVAN, an international arts non-profit/NGO, recognized as a leader in using the arts to transform our world. He has organized and curated major art exhibitions around the world, in sacred spaces such as St. Paul's Cathedral in London and National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. and at notable art venues like the National Gallery of Fine Arts in Amman, Jordan, the American University Museum in Washington, D.C., Vanderbilt University Fine Arts Gallery, Museum of Modern Art in Cairo, Egypt, as well as at reverential memorial sites like Ground Zero in New York. For more information, see:

www.paulgordonchandler.com.

Associated Programs

The exhibition serves as catalyst for each host exhibition venue to develop a variety of events and programs tailored to the specific needs of their community to stimulate discussion, dialogue and education around the exhibition's theme, toward promoting further understanding and widening the engagement with the exhibition: opening night events, curator and artist talks, forums, panel conversations, lectures, workshops, musical concerts, sacred drumming, literary readings, film screenings, dance performances, drama, and educational activities, etc.

Key Partners

Art exhibition spaces in Wyoming, US, UK and Middle East
Creative Indigenous Collective
Northern Arapaho Artists Society
Wyoming Humanities Council
Wyoming Arts Council
CARAVAN Arts
The Episcopal Church in Wyoming
The Foundation for the Episcopal Church in Wyoming

Catalog – A “Discussion & Dialogue” Publication

The exhibition will come with a four-color catalog designed as an educational resource for reflection, discussion and dialogue on the message of the exhibition. The publication includes information on the distinct Native American worldview of a “sacred harmony” with the earth and all that lives upon it. All of the artwork will be included in the publication, together with the artists’ statements for each work.

Organizer



ArtSpirit is the arts initiative of the Episcopal Church in Wyoming, which sees and values artistic creativity in its many forms as a force for transformation, toward healing our world and creatively fostering peace, harmony, wholeness and health in all its forms, both with each other and with the earth. *ArtSpirit* explores and nurtures the relationship between spirituality and the arts, by developing, curating, coordinating and hosting artistic initiatives to stimulate discussion, dialogue and education, as well as spiritual exploration (such as exhibitions, festivals, concerts, screenings, readings, dances and numerous associated art events including symposiums, forums and talks).

Int’l Coordinating Partner

CARAVAN – *Transformation through the Arts*

CARAVAN, an international arts NGO/non-profit, is recognized as a global leader in using the arts to further our global quest for a more harmonious future, both with each other and with the earth. CARAVAN's mission is based on the belief that the arts can be one of the most effective mediums to heal our world and to creatively foster peace, harmony, wholeness and health in all its forms. For more information on CARAVAN, see: www.oncaravan.org