

# Norman Akers

- American Indian, Osage, b. 1958 in Fairfax, OK
- 1991 MFA University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; 1983 certificate in Museum Studies, Institute of American Indian Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico; 1982 BFA in painting, Kansas City Art Institute
- Lives and works in Lawrence, KS, where he is an associate professor of painting
- [www.normanakers.com](http://www.normanakers.com)



## Body of Work

Norman Akers combines personal experience with tribal cosmology in his surreal landscape paintings and prints. Akers stated about his process: “the use of different painting styles and layering images in my work becomes a metaphor for the shifts in my own conscious thoughts and emotions...to suggest that there are no clear boundaries between my culture’s past and present beliefs.”

Growing up in the Osage community in rural Fairfax familiarized Akers with the prairie landscape, and he combines references to these real spaces with linear maps, text, animals and other abstracted natural forms in symbolic narratives which comment on displacement, survival and coexistence.

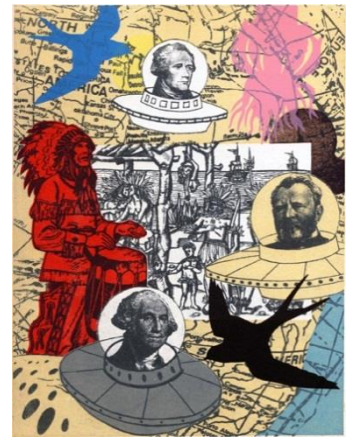
Akers’ works are in numerous collections throughout the nation. He has participated in group shows at galleries and museums both regionally and nationally, including the National Museum of the American Indian at the Smithsonian in Washington DC.



2005 *Which Way?*, Oil on canvas  
Monoprint



2006, *Prairie Transience*, Oil on linen



2011, *New Company*,  
Monoprint

# Harrison Begay

- American Indian, Navajo, b. 1917 in White Cone, AZ, d. 2012
- 1934-40 studied at the Santa Fe Indian School, 1940-1941 studied architecture at Black Mountain College in Asheville, NC
- Lived and worked in Arizona

## Body of Work

With a unique style and Navajo subject matter, Harrison Begay specialized in watercolors and silkscreen prints. Begay (Haskay Yahne Yah - The Wandering Boy) went to government boarding school when he was seven and his mother died. He decided to study art in Santa Fe where an art school was organized in the early 1930s. Dorothy Dunn's instruction was defined by the philosophy of Winnebago painter Angel De Cora which enforced the idea that the cultural expression of Native artists should not be interfered with by European aesthetics and instruction. De Cora and Dunn therefore did not have Native students study subjects such as color theory, perspective, and life drawing. Begay said in an interview, "Having seen some pueblo ceremonial paintings by Fred Kabotie (Hopi), for the first time at the Santa Fe Art Museum, I became interested in painting ... Art teacher, Dorothy Dunn (white woman) was a very good teacher and helped a great deal to promote Indian art, especially paintings. Now there are many good Indian artists, painters, sculptors, silversmiths and others. With the encouragement and help from the Navajo Tribal government, many Navajo artists have established their own studios or shops."

Following art school, Begay attended college in North Carolina and taught Navajo language, and then enlisted in the U.S. Army during World War II. Soon after his discharge and return to Arizona he was able to resume his art career. In the 1960s he again met General Eisenhower at the annual Ceremonials in Gallup, New Mexico. At that time Begay presented General Eisenhower with one of his paintings which is in a permanent collection in Washington, DC. Begay's paintings have greatly influenced generations of artists. His work is in the collections of the Fred R. Jones Museum at the University of Oklahoma; the Smithsonian; McNay Art Museum

in San Antonio; the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; and others.



*Sheep Herders*, tempera on paper, 14.5 x 17.75", Gilcrease Museum



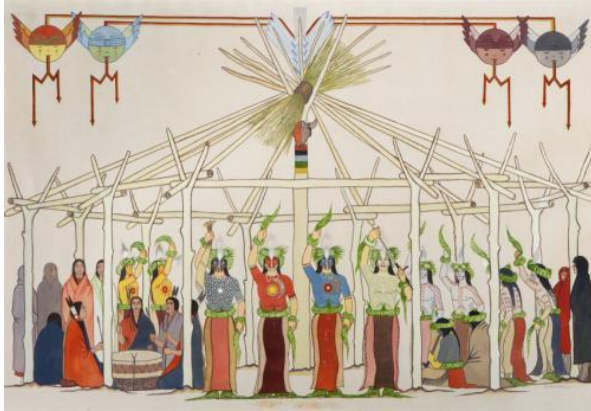
1966, *An Aged Tutor and Young Students*, 1966, casein on board, 21 x 17", Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

# Archie Blackowl

- American Indian, Cheyenne, b. 1911 in Custer County, OK, d. 1992
- attended school at Fort Sill, OK; Haskell Institute, Lawrence, KS; University of Kansas; and the California Art Institute
- lived and worked in Oklahoma

## Body of Work

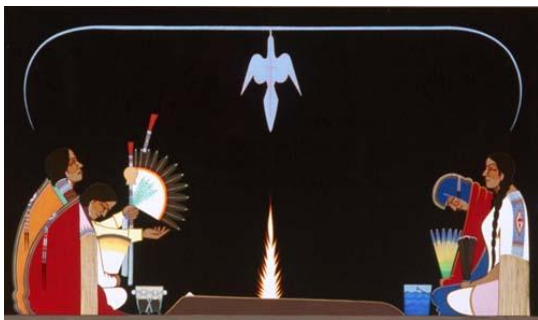
Archie Blackowl (MisTaMooToVa - Flying Hawk) was a teacher, government muralist, civil service employee, Walt Disney Studios employee, industrial painter for the aircraft industry, and artist. After studying mural techniques with Olle Nordmark at Fort Sill, in 1945 he painted a mural at the Philbrook Art Center in Tulsa, OK:



*Cheyenne Burial (Preparatory sketch for mural), watercolor on paper, 7 x 23"*

Encouraged by “Woody” Woodrow Wilson Crumbo, he began to paint seriously in the early 1930s. During his many years as an artist, he maintained his traditional style, portraying accurately the Cheyenne traditions and culture that he experienced.

In this work and many others, Archie Blackowl painted a scene that captures a moment in traditional Southern Plains life. Painted against a black background in a flat style that was popularized at Bacone College, Blackowl depicts a ceremonial scene with two Native American figures on each side of a central fire. Central to the image is the blue peyote bird ascending in flight above the fire. Blackowl uses approximate symmetry and a long curving blue line to guide the viewer's attention to the pair on each side of the fire.



*Prayer for Mother, tempera on paper, 18 x 20" Oklahoma State Arts Council*

# Pop Chalee

- American Indian, Taos Pueblo b. 1906 in Castle Gate, Utah, d. 1993
- Studied at the Indian School in Santa Fe
- Lived and worked in New Mexico, Utah

Pop Chalee's art was influenced by her dreams and Native culture and history. She is best known for her paintings of mystical horses and enchanted forests. Her grandfather used to tell the story about a horse that would fly over the Pueblo at night to make sure all the young kids were kept safe.

Pop Chalee was born Merina Lujan, her father was Taos, and her mother was Swiss. Her Taos grandmother gave her the nickname "Pop Chalee" which means "blue flower." After her parents separated, Pop Chalee and her siblings were sent by their father to the US Indian School in Santa Fe, New Mexico. As a teenager, Pop returned to Utah to live with her mother who was a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Pop left her mother's home at age 16 and married Otis Hopkins, a Mormon craftsman. They had two children and the family moved often between the Taos Pueblo and Salt Lake City. She would later marry her second husband, a Navajo artist and medicine man, named Edward Lee Natay, in 1947. While living in Salt Lake City, Pop began speaking at LDS churches about her experiences as a Native American, inadvertently becoming a representative of her people. Educating a non-Native public about Native life was a continual focus of Pop's life. Pop was also involved in activism in the 1930s on the part of the Taos people to help them attain their full legal and educational rights. Pop did not consider an art career until she was 29; she and her family returned to Santa Fe and she pursued an education in art. As an older student and the only woman student for a time, Pop started her art studies with some difficulty. However, her art teacher, Dorothy Dunn welcomed her with encouragement and patience. After finishing her first year, Pop worked at the Laboratory of Anthropology with Kenneth Chapman documenting designs from the vast collection of pottery. This exposure to Native art techniques and history strengthened her pride in the work of other Native American artists.

By the mid-1940s, her work had received enough national attention that she was commissioned to paint 12 murals for the Albuquerque Municipal Airport, later renamed the Albuquerque International Sunport. Walt Disney was one of her patrons. Many museum collections house Pop's work including the Gilcrease



Museum in Tulsa, OK; the Heard Museum in Phoenix, AZ; and the Millicent Rogers Museum in Taos, NM. Her work was also exhibited throughout the United States, including the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, and the Gallery of Living Artists in New York City.

1928, *Horses Chased by Wolves*, tempera on paper, 9 x 19", Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, OH

# Woodrow Wilson “Woody” Crumbo

- American Indian, Potawatomi b. 1912 in Lexington, Oklahoma, d. 1989
- Studied at the University of Wichita, University of Oklahoma
- Lived and worked in Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas and New Mexico

## Body of Work

Crumbo worked in oil and egg tempera paint, as well as in watercolor, sculpture, stained glass, and silkscreen. He was one of the first Native American artists to fully explore oil painting as a medium, adding dimension to the flat figure style popularized by the Kiowa Five in tempera. Under the guidance of Olle Nordmark, he also learned etching. Crumbo had a Native mother and a French father, who both died when he was young. He attended government schools as a child and received a scholarship to the American Indian Institute in Wichita for his last two years of high school. While at the Institute, he became interested in expressing Native traditions through his art. After college at the age of 21, Crumbo was appointed Director of Indian Art at Bacone College, the only institute of higher learning exclusively for Native Americans. While at Bacone he researched Indian design and revived techniques of silverwork, vegetable dyeing, and weaving. Crumbo explored the traditions and ceremonies of his own tribe as well as those of the Creek, Lakota, and Kiowa nations, and said of his work, “I have always painted with the desire of developing Indian art so that it may be judged on art standards rather on its value as a curio—I am attempting to record Indian customs and legends now, while they are alive, to make them a part of the great American culture before these, too, become lost, only to be fragmentarily pieced together by fact and supposition.”

Also known also as a musician and ceremonial dancer, Crumbo played the cedar wood flute and danced with Thurlow Lieurance’s symphony in Wichita. He worked as a designer with the Douglas Corporation, with the Gilcrease Collection in Tulsa, and from 1960 to 1968 he was curator of the El Paso Museum of Art.

The largest collection of Crumbo’s work, about 175 paintings, is owned by the Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa, although his work has been exhibited in many museums throughout the United States. Permanent collections include the Smithsonian Museum, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, University of Oklahoma, The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Museum of Northern Arizona, Indian Arts and Crafts Board of the U.S. Department of Interior, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.



*Eagle Dancer*, tempera on paper, Gilcrease Museum



1939, *Buffalo Hunt* (color study for mural, East Wall, Recreation Room, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.), gouache on paper, 20 x 26 1/8 in, Smithsonian American Art Museum

# Starr Hardridge

- American Indian, Muskogee/Creek Bird Clan, b. 1974
- 1997 BFA Savannah College of Art & Design, Savannah, GA
- Lives and works in Redding, Connecticut
- [www.starrhardridge.com](http://www.starrhardridge.com)



## Body of Work

Justin Starr Hardridge was raised throughout central Oklahoma. His work uses an assemblage of pointillism and a southeastern woodland beadwork aesthetic. Schooled in traditional disciplines of classical art, his style continues to evolve with an abstracted symbolism. His work is largely inspired by humanity's search for balance within nature, featuring proud staples of traditional Muskogee mythology and culture. After college, he painted murals started painting houses and working in restoration. He continued his education with a one-year residency in the south of France at the Nadai Verdon Atelier of Decorative Arts. Hardridge and his wife, who is an interior decorator, co-founded a decorative painting and design business which they maintain in Connecticut.

Hardridge's 6 x 4 ft. painting *Cultural Baggage* (Venetian plaster and oil enamel on canvas) was featured in a nation-wide touring exhibition called *Return From Exile*, which ended in 2018 at the Museum of the Southeast American Indian, University of North Carolina at Pembroke, after being exhibited at 9 other venues in 5 other states. This show focused on themes of resilience and resistance of the Southeastern American Indian people removed to the Oklahoma territories.

Current issues also inform his work. Hardridge's 2016 painting *Black Snake* plays on the Lakota prophecy of a black snake that is the bringer of end times. Hardridge rendered this snake, cut into many sections, as a symbol of the need to not only stop the Dakota Access Pipeline, but also to challenge our dependency on fossil fuels. Hardridge told *Hyperallergic*, "Standing Rock is important because it is symbolic of humanity coming together to protect a fragile ecosystem which all lives depend on for survival. It is especially important for me not only as an Indigenous person, but as an artist as well, to reflect current events and happenings that are going on now."

Hardridge's art is featured in Exhibit C, a Chickasaw Nation art gallery in Oklahoma City and the Blue Rain Gallery in Santa Fe, NM. He has shown his art in the Santa Fe Indian Art Market, Red Earth Festival, Five Civilized Tribes Juried Exhibition and more. His work is in the Five Civilized Tribes Museum permanent collection, as well as other private collections throughout the country.

*Black Snake*, 10" x 20"



# Valjean Hessing

- American Indian, Choctaw, b. 1934 in Tulsa, OK, d. 2006
- Lived in Oklahoma
- attend Mary Hardin–Baylor College in Belton, TX; in 1954-55 studied at the University of Tulsa; continued her study of art and in 1962, taught herself the Bacone “Flatstyle”

## Body of Work

Valjean McCarty Hessing was a Choctaw artist who produced works in what is known as the Bacone school style, “Flatstyle” or simply the Bacone style. The regionally specific style of painting is similar in certain ways to the Studio and Southern Plains styles. Hessing began her career during a time when very few Native women were painting but she managed to win scholarships and awards at a very young age. Hessing translated history and legends into traditional, narrative art with a linear style. She was extremely deliberate and took as long as three weeks to complete a painting. Her work combines spirituality, simplicity and harmony with nature. One common subject was depictions of hardships her people endured during their forced removal to Oklahoma on the Choctaw Trail of Tears.

Her works are included in many prominent public and private collections around the country, including the Heard Museum of Phoenix, AZ; the Philbrook Museum of Art in Tulsa, OK; the Southern Plains Indian Museum in Anadarko, OK; and the Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian of Santa Fe, NM, among others. In 2008 the Institute of American Indian Art presented a solo exhibition of her work. She was included in the 2020-2021 group exhibition “Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists,” at the Philbrook Museum, Minneapolis Institute of Art, Frist Art Museum in Nashville, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum’s Renwick Gallery. Hessing was designated a Master Artist by the Five Civilized Tribes Museum in 1976.



1966 *Choctaw Removal*, watercolor, Philbrook Museum Collection

# Ruthe Blalock Jones

- American Indian, Shawnee-Delaware-Peoria, b. 1939 in Claremore, Oklahoma
- 1989 MA Northeastern State University, Tahlequah; 1972 BFA University of Tulsa; 1970 AA Bacone College
- [www.rutheblalockejones.com](http://www.rutheblalockejones.com)



## Body of Work

Jones has worked in a variety of media, including oil, acrylic, watercolor, and pen and ink, and her works focus on the traditional American Indian ceremonial and social events. They are recorded in paintings, drawings, limited edition prints in linoleum block, woodcut, and serigraphs. She generally adheres to a traditional two-dimensional "flat" style, with images placed in negative space or blank background. Flatstyle painting is a distinctive approach to Native American imagery that emerged at Bacone College in the early 20th century. She said in a 2011 interview with the Oklahoman news, "Most of the young people no longer paint in that style, and most of them have kind of considered it cliché ... but it's part of the history. It's how Oklahoma Indian artists came to be established. All of the Indian artists are on the shoulders of those early people who practiced this style which comes out of the ledge style, then (was popularized) with the Kiowa Five at the University of Oklahoma and Dr. (Oscar) Jacobson." Jones' paintings' subjects derive from her personal experiences, and she concentrates on painting Indian women in dance attire. She often places them in one of various ceremonial or spiritual contexts, such as powwows, stomp dances, and meetings of the Native American Church.

Jones began her art career at age ten, as a student of Oklahoma artist Charles Banks Wilson. At age thirteen she entered the Philbrook Indian Annual show, her first competition, winning an honorable mention. She has exhibited at venues around the world, including the Fogg Art Museum of Harvard University. The artist's works reside in the collections of major American museums, including the Heard Museum in Phoenix, the Gilcrease Museum and the Philbrook Museum of Art in Tulsa, the Eiteljorg Museum in Indianapolis, and the Museum of the American

Indian (Heye Foundation) in New York. Other institutions include Bacone College, the Southern Plains Indian Museum in Anadarko, the U.S. Department of the Interior in Washington, D.C., and the University of Tulsa. She was celebrated as the 2011 Red Earth Honored One during the 25th Annual Red Earth Native American Cultural Festival.



1967, *Delaware Misi'ng Dancer*, paperboard, gouache/opaque watercolors, 41 x 51 cm, Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian



*Medicine Woman*, gouache on poster board, 23 x 20" Gilcrease Museum



# Michael Kabotie

- American Indian, Hopi, b. 1942-d. 2009
- Studied engineering at the University of Arizona; 1961 graduated from Haskell Indian School, which was a high school at the time - now Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, KS

## Body of Work

Michael Kabotie is known for petroglyph-geometric painting, murals, and jewelry making. He was also a poet and philosopher who taught jewelry making at Idyllwild Arts for 26 years. Fred Kabotie (d. 1986), Michael's father, was a well known painter and master jewelry maker; he was one of the first Pueblo artists to depict village scenes and ceremonial activities and won a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1945. He had studied painting at the Santa Fe Indian School, a regional boarding school he was forced to attend, and, in addition to pursuing his career as a full-time teacher, Fred found time to establish the Hopi Cultural Center and the Hopi Silvercraft Guild where he taught silver design to students including his son Michael. Michael Kabotie launched his own art career in 1966 with a solo show at the Heard Museum in Phoenix. In 1967, he underwent his Hopi manhood initiation into the Wuwutsim Society and was given the Hopi name, Lomawywesa, which means, "walking in harmony." Kabotie enjoyed bringing together his own Hopi traditions with those of other world cultures, and often collaborated with archaeologists and artists to explore the synergistic connections among spiritual archetypes far flung in time and space. In 1973 he co-founded Artist Hopid, an art collective with individuals seeking to educate all people about Hopi spiritual and cultural value using modern art forms and indigenous symbolism. The group was especially influenced by the early 20th century excavation of the kiva murals at Awatovi, Antelope Mesa, AZ (c. 1400). These murals were found in many rooms on layers of plaster, and imagery included architecture and landscape, weather symbols, warrior figures, personified vegetation and animals.

Michael Kabotie's work is in the collections of the Museum of Northern Arizona, British Museum in London, and the Gallery Calumet- Neuzzinger in Germany. He created murals at Sunset Crater near Flagstaff and at the Museum of Northern Arizona. For the Heard Museum he created a gate designed to look like a piece of overlay jewelry. His book of poetry *Migration Tears: Poems About Transitions* was published by UCLA in 1987.



Study for Sunset Crater Mural, 2004

# Dan Namingha

- American Indian, Hopi-Tewa, b. 1950 in Keams Canyon, AZ
- 2009 Honorary Doctorate, Institute of American Indian Arts, Santa Fe, NM; studied at the University of Kansas in Lawrence; Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, and the American Academy of Art in Chicago
- Lives and works in Santa Fe, NM
- [www.namingha.com](http://www.namingha.com)



## Body of Work

Namingha has been a painter and a sculptor for the last 40 years, and he is one of the most acclaimed Native American artists working today. His sons Arlo and Michael are also artists, Dextra Quotskuyva is his father, Nampeyo was his great-great-grandmother. Namingha paints and sculpts images of his homeland and the Hopi people. His works allow viewers a guarded glimpse of his sacred traditions such as the spirit messengers or kachinas, which represent blessings, ancestors and cloud people. He is fascinated with dualities and the point where they meet - physical and metaphysical, night and day, dark and light, life and death, human and divine - and with recurring themes of katsinas, First Mesa, and the Hopi migration story. Namingha constantly challenges himself to try new styles, representation, abstraction, and minimalism. He stated: "Through a process of fragmentation and assembly I visually condense my subject matter to convey the greatest artistry with minimal elements." Landscapes and ancient Hopi symbols, ancestors from his homeland, spirit messengers, katsinas carrying blessings, cloud people, and other abstracted spiritual imagery take form among his signature surface textures. I see myself as a kind of bridge between worlds," he reflects, "trying to find that center line of balance. It's not always easy, but I don't think it's easy for any human being."

Established in 1990, Niman Fine Arts represents the art of Dan Namingha and his sons Michael and Arlo. Dan had his first solo museum exhibition at the Museum of Northern Arizona in 1977. His work was the subject of a major exhibition, *Dan Namingha: Reflections on the Natural Way* in 2001-2002 at the Reading Public Museum. Solo exhibitions have also included the Museum of Northern Arizona, the Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa, California; and at the California Academy of Sciences at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. Sponsored by the United States Information Agency, he exhibited internationally. The Fogg Art Museum in Cambridge, Massachusetts exhibited his work in 1994 and presented him with a



tribute for his outstanding contribution to American art. He was selected by the Smithsonian Institution in 1996 to create a commemorative lithograph to celebrate their 150th anniversary. 1996, *Hopi Eagle*

*Dance*, 17-color Lithograph, signed edition of 150, 29 x 23"

2000, *Passage of Symbolism #13*, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 120" Reading Public Museum, PA

# Fritz Scholder

- American, b. 1937 in Breckenridge, Minnesota, d. 2005
- 1964 MFA University of Arizona, Tucson; 1960 BA Sacramento State College
- [www.fritzschoolder.com](http://www.fritzschoolder.com)

## Body of Work

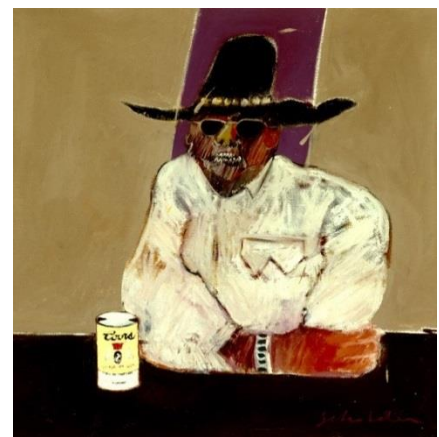
Fritz Scholder was one-quarter Luiseño, a California Mission tribe, but he grew up in the American Midwest without identifying himself as an American Indian. What set him apart from his predominantly white peers in public school was his desire to be an artist. As a high school student he lived in Pierre, South Dakota, and in the summer of 1955, Scholder attended the Mid-West Art and Music Camp at the University of Kansas. In 1956, Scholder graduated from Ashland High School in Wisconsin and took his freshman year at Wisconsin State University in Superior. In 1957, Scholder moved with his family to Sacramento, California where he studied and exhibited with pop artist Wayne Thiebaud. Scholder soon had a solo exhibition at the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento. His work was being shown throughout the region. He met Cherokee designer, Lloyd Kiva New and studied with Hopi jeweler, Charles Loloma. After receiving a John Hay Whitney Fellowship, Scholder moved to Tucson and became a graduate assistant in the Fine Arts Department. After graduating, in 1964 Scholder accepted the position of instructor in Advanced Painting and Contemporary Art History at the newly formed Institute of American Indians Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and he taught there until 1969. He was considered a major influence for a generation of American Indian artists.

Scholder always worked in series of paintings. In 1967, his new series on the American Indian, depicting the "real Indian," became an immediate controversy. Scholder was the first to paint American Indians with American flags, beer cans, and cats. His target was the loaded national cliché and guilt of the dominant culture. Scholder did not grow up as an American Indian and his unique perspective could not be denied.

His first exhibition of photographs was shown at the Heard Museum in Phoenix in 1978, and a book *Indian Kitsch* was published by Northland Press. A miniature book of Scholder's poetry was produced by Stinehour Press in 1979. In 1980, Scholder was guest artist at the Oklahoma Art Institute, which resulted in a 1982 PBS film documentary *American Portrait*. In 2008, the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian organized two exhibitions— one in New York and one in Washington, DC — both called *Fritz Scholder: Indian/Not Indian*. That same year in Santa Fe, the IAIA Museum organized an exhibition titled *Fritz Scholder: An Intimate Look*.



1968, *Monster Indian*



1969, *Indian with Beer Can*