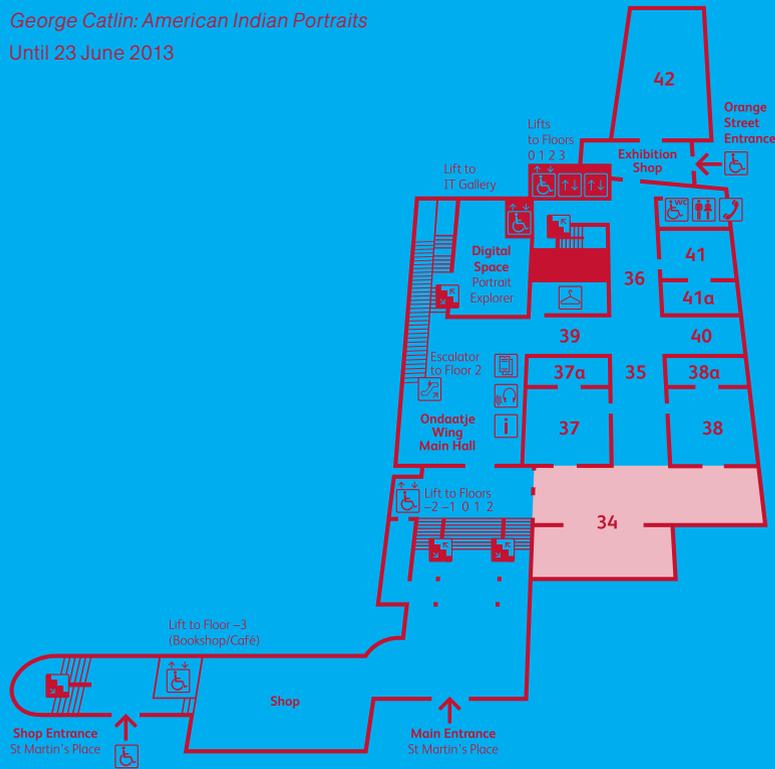


LATE SHIFT

EDGAR HEAP OF BIRDS

HOW
DO
WE
SEE
EACH
OTHER

George Catlin: American Indian Portraits
Until 23 June 2013



LATE SHIFT

This booklet has been created in response to *Late Shift Extra: Edgar Heap of Birds*, a late night event at the National Portrait Gallery on 17 May 2013. Inspired by the exhibition *George Catlin: American Indian Portraits*, conceptual artist Edgar Heap of Birds asks the question HOW DO WE SEE EACH OTHER?

Hock E Aye Vi Edgar Heap of Birds is an artist from the Cheyenne and Arapaho Nations of Oklahoma. His work explores language, memory and history. Heap of Birds introduces his practice and discusses the issues he explores in his art.



Edgar Heap of Birds at his Oklahoma City studio in 2012.

My work explores the relationship between Native American memory and non-Native historical accounts. I'm interested in the connections between indigenous peoples across the world, examining the past and taking a fresh look today at issues of social justice.

I create public art messages, installations, large scale drawings, paintings and prints. I often work with words, using quick simple language to engage people. The first point is a puncture, you want to prick them, get inside their head and start them wondering...



Painting from the *Neuf* series (Cheyenne for the number four)

by Edgar Heap of Birds

Acrylic on canvas, 1998

My works with words reflect my own internal discussion. By contrast, my paintings in the Neuf series offer a broader perspective. They come out of our reservation on the Cheyenne and Arapaho Nations where I lived for ten years. The paintings are inspired by the cedar tree family and canyon lands. These works are about sovereignty and landscape, and they speak to the issues of homeland and beauty.



Wheel
 by Edgar Heap of Birds
 Porcelain and steel, medicine wheel, 2005

Wheel is my monumental permanent public art installation at the Denver Art Museum, inspired by the Wyoming Big Horn Medicine Wheel. It is a circle of trees made from porcelain baked on steel. They are placed in a way which honours the stars, the summer solstice and the equinox. There is a political discourse too. It is sited on the former Cheyenne and Arapaho reservation which was bound by the Fort Laramie Treaty of Colorado. Colorado was the location of massacres by the US government. This work reclaims this fifty foot circle of land.



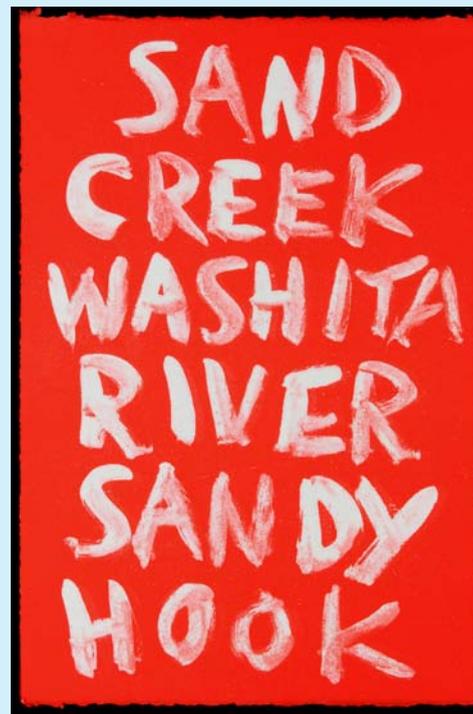
Native Host, St. Croix, US Virgin Islands
 by Edgar Heap of Birds
 Sign panel, 2010

Since 1988 I have been making the Native Host series across North America. It speaks to the way that Natives and non-Natives perceive each other. The text is reversed, so that people see the past in a different way. This particular piece honours the Taino tribe in the Virgin Islands. The people arriving on the cruise ship may think they are in Paradise, but this is an area which was decimated by warfare, disease and slavery.



Plexiglass printing plate for *For Dineh Kayenta Grand Pa*, 2013, at Josephine Press, Los Angeles.

For my print work, I start by making drawings of six word passages in marker pen. I'm thinking of ideas for these all the time. I archive the drawings and then pick out about thirty to take to the printers in LA or Santa Fe. At the printers, I draw the words backwards with clear liquid on glass. The liquid resists the water based ink, leaving the white words. I make a print on high quality rag paper to create the finished fine art monoprint.



For Our Children
by Edgar Heap of Birds
Monoprint, 2013

This work connects three massacres in which children were killed. At Sand Creek in 1864, Colonel Chivington and the Colorado Territory Militia massacred Native tribes. Four years later, Colonel Custer's cavalry attacked a Cheyenne and Arapaho winter encampment in Oklahoma Indian Territory. In 2012, there was a shooting in a school in Sandy Hook, Newtown, Connecticut. The latter is much grieved, but the others are not seen to be much of a loss. I make the connections, showing how we should grieve for losing all of our children and suffer together.

BIOGRAPHY



Edgar and son Wougim Heap of Birds with recent mono prints in the exhibition *Nuance of Sky* at Pomona College Museum of Art, California, in 2013.

Edgar Heap of Birds studied at Temple University (MFA), the University of Kansas (BFA), and the Royal College of Art, London. He holds an honorary PhD from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Boston. Edgar has exhibited worldwide including at The Museum of Modern Art and Documenta. In 2007, he represented the Smithsonian Institution at the 52nd Venice Biennale with *Most Serene Republics*, a major public art project. Professor Heap of Birds teaches Native American Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Oklahoma and has been a professor for twenty-five years. He lectures and exhibits across the globe.

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Until 23 June 2013

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