



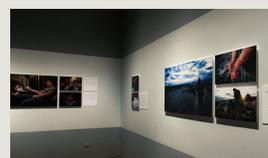
S O C I 4 7



National
Museum of
THE AMERICAN INDIAN



T A I - H S U A N L I N



I. WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF THIS MUSEUM, AND WHAT WAS THE REASON IT WAS PLACED IN THIS COMMUNITY?

The National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) is an active and prominent part of the Smithsonian Institution, one of the largest museum groups in the world. NMAI manages an extensive collection of indigenous artifacts, including items, photographs, archives, and media that cover the entire Western Hemisphere, from the Arctic Circle to Tierra del Fuego.

The National Museum of the American Indian operates three facilities. Since the passage of its authorization act (revised in **1996**) in **1989**, NMAI has been committed to incorporating indigenous voices into the writing and presentation of museums and, through education, inspiration, and empowerment, achieving fairness and social justice for indigenous peoples in the Western Hemisphere.

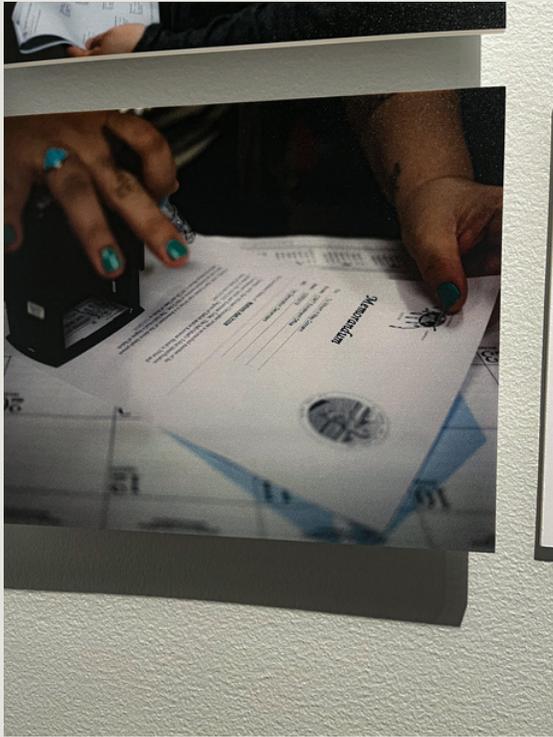
The National Museum of the American Indian seeks to promote a richer shared human experience through a deeper understanding of indigenous peoples and collaboration with them and their allies.



P1. I found that every piece on the ceiling has a very vivid painting

2. WHAT STOOD OUT AS MOST PROMINENT AMONG THE MUSEUM'S EXHIBITS?

WHAT MADE THIS THE CASE FOR YOU?



DEVELOPING STORIES: NATIVE PHOTOGRAPHERS IN THE FIELD

"Developing Stories" is a collection of photo essays by Native photojournalists, each presenting issues that Native Americans still face today, from giving birth to the next generation to life during the COVID-19 pandemic and historical complexities.

The collection offers a glimpse into the stories behind each picture, and through the photos, I can feel as if I am actually in the tribe, listening to their stories. It's impressive that the photographers are Native themselves, as they bring the spirit of tradition and their family stories to the world.

When I visited the museum, this collection was the first section I went to, and I was amazed that it wasn't what I expected. Rather than learning about the history of Native Americans, seeing antiques, clothes, and how they live, these stories introduce the modern life of Native Americans.

The most striking part to me was the collection of different couples' journeys with their unborn babies. I had never heard of "blood quantum," which defines Native American identity by the degree of affiliation to a tribe in their family ancestry. Many Native Americans today face great challenges in choosing partners because of this. In the photos, couples express their concerns about how their blood quantum can affect whether their child will be accepted to the tribe or not. Most of them really want their children to keep learning the tradition from their tribe and be able to carry it to the next generation. The blood quantum limits their right to choose their partners, as marrying someone outside their tribe means no longer belonging to the family. I can hardly believe things like this still happen in the 21st century, but I'm touched by how they are trying hard to preserve their blood and stories. Even after so many generations, they are still proud of being pure Native Americans and want to ensure that their heritage lives on.





P3 Developing Stories: Native Photographers in the Field

3. DO THE STAFF REPRESENT THE TOPIC OR GROUP OF PEOPLE EXHIBITED
IN THE MUSEUM? WHY OR WHY NOT?

As I recall, there was no staff offered to introduce the topics of any exhibitions in the museum; there are many of them, and most of them will walk around and surround me as I read or appreciate the works, which gives me an uncomfortable feeling as an introvert; I preferred to just watch myself, so I really like their audio guide option and other fun activities for me to learn about Native Americans myself.



P4. Maria Hupfield
(Anishinaabe, Wasauksing First Nation, b. 1975)
Jingle Dress, 2002
Paper, graphite, thread 26/9319



4. WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU LEARNED OR WAS CHALLENGING TO YOU ABOUT THIS VISIT?

I definitely learn lots of things that I don't even think I'll know in my life before, and it's been a really amazing chance for me to learn about different cultural backgrounds and get to know them. I think my biggest reflection is the awareness of my own cultural background. Even though I've been studying Chinese and Taiwanese, I've always just known a shallow level of it and not really dug into my father's side's grandparents' background, or even Native Taiwanese.

There are currently **16** types of Native Taiwanese, and there are more than that. I definitely learn a lot of things that I never thought I'd learn in my life, and it's been an incredible opportunity for me to learn about and meet people from various cultural backgrounds. My greatest reflection, I believe, is my understanding of my own cultural heritage.

Despite having studied Chinese and Taiwanese, I've only ever had a cursory understanding of it, never delving into my father's side's grandparents' background or even Native Taiwanese. They are my most unfamiliar population in Taiwan, so I want to challenge myself to learn more about my home country and who I've been living with.