

Artist Statement

Artists are asked to provide a brief statement explaining their interest in the Native American Artist-in-Residence program and how this research and community outreach opportunity could inform and support their work.

Example provided by 2019 Artist Cole Jacobson:

I am a Dakota person born and raised in my home community whose work is heavily influenced by my surroundings and culture. I have been taught many things through our cultural lifeways and I strive to incorporate them into my art. Our relationships with the cosmos and our traditional beliefs are recurrent themes within my works. I also include our history as Native people that shape us to what we are today. I believe it is my job to continue to utilize my platform as an artist to teach these concepts to both native and non-native people.

As a Dakota artist, I am working towards revitalizing our woodland culture. Mdewakanton means “dweller of the spirit lake” in our language, and it refers to our origins out of Lake Mille lacs, in north central Minnesota. Prior to the migration of the Ojibwe and the European settlers, we had a prominent culture of woodland and prairie ancestry. Since our removal and revival, many of our woodland traditions have been forgotten. However, through my own research, I began to understand our distinct style of beadwork, quillwork, moccasins, and more. I am inspired to continue to contribute to the continuation of these woodland Dakota artforms.

Research Proposal

This program relies on usage of the Minnesota Historical Society Collections as well as a regional network for museums for research. It is helpful to familiarize yourself with the collections online to develop an understanding of what our collections house. Learn more by visiting [Collections Online](#). The research proposal should be 600 words minimum and should describe why collections research is important to you and your art form as well as the impact it could have on your community. Do you consider your art form or area of research to be in need of revitalization within your community? Is there a specific design or construction form you are interested in? Outline the cultural areas, art forms and specific time periods, if any, of your research interest.

Describe the nature of your research and how you plan to conduct it. Do you see yourself focusing primarily on object collections research? Will you utilize historic photographs, books, manuscripts, or oral histories in your research? Is there a research collection at another local, regional, or national institution that you wish to access? As part of your research, will you seek out other experts in the art form and/or elders who may have additional knowledge about the art form?

Example:

As Dakota people we have a very distinct way of life that was a mix between Woodland and Prairie cultures. Our bead and quillwork was unique to our people, but we also shared many styles with our neighbors- the Ojibwe, Sauk, and Ho-chunk. I plan to research and study the pucker toe and split toe moccasins. This style is well known among the Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Menominee, but it is also well documented amongst the Dakota. Many Dakota chiefs and other people are wearing this style of moccasin in 19th century photographs as well as in the paintings of Seth Eastman. Since the war between the Dakota and the U.S. government that ended with the mass execution of the 38 and the exile of all Dakota from Minnesota, much of our material culture was lost to us with the last few generations of elders- one of which being "hanpikceka" (pucker toe moccasins). With the revitalization of Dakota culture, mostly the

prairie/plains style of moccasins survived and it is what is mostly known today as the choice footwear for Dakotas. I believe this art form deserves to be brought back amongst the Dakota communities.

The Minnesota Historical Society houses many pairs of Dakota pucker toe moccasins in their collections that are in beautiful condition. Based on my own research, it is my understanding that the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington D.C. has many pairs of Dakota moccasins as well. This specific type of footwear is so rarely attributed to Dakota people that only a few pieces still exist. It will be beneficial to my research to study pucker toe moccasins from other tribal nations so that I may compare and contrast with Dakota examples.

Many examples of Dakota pucker toes use many different types of embellishment from beadwork to quillwork and even silk ribbonwork. Not only would my research be about the construction of these moccasins, but also how they were decorated and the techniques that the artists of their day utilized. I plan to closely research the materials used to create these moccasins, especially how some may differ from utilizing just buckskin to adding velveteen, and what the artists used to back their beadwork/quillwork. It is also important to study exactly how they made their stitches to create the "pucker" look. In addition, I also hope to view more images of Dakota people and their footwear so that I may also study them.

It would be in the best interest of my research to seek out the knowledge of our remaining elders in my home community and other Dakota communities. I hope to also study with prominent Ojibwe moccasin makers so that I may perfect my technique of moccasin making.

Community Project Proposal

Community impact is important to this program and its measurements of success. Describe how you will reach members of your community to share what you've learned through your research. (Will you hold a community workshop? Become a mentor or take on an apprentice, or conversely, become an apprentice?) Explain the need for this project. How will sharing your research enhance the cultural values of your community? Specifically identify the individual, group, or groups you will reach with your community outreach project, as well as any collaborators (nonprofits or tribal departments). Describe what the potential collaborators are willing to contribute to your project (venue, staff time, etc.).

The community-based project will be inspired by collections research of the artist in order to disseminate new knowledge of the art form in the artist's community. Special consideration will be given to projects incorporating deep transfer of cultural knowledge, such as building curricula and organizing community-based youth classes, or the development of a relationship with an apprentice artist. This project is to be completed within three months of the end of the residency.

Example :

Hanpikceka: Dakota Pucker toe Workshop

I will be studying the Dakota pucker toe moccasin collection at MNHS as well as at other institutions. As I become more efficient in moccasin making, I will create a workshop for Dakota communities within Minnesota. I hope to present this same workshop to Dakota communities throughout the Midwest and into Canada. Dakota communities have been tied to our plains culture like our Lakota relatives in the West. However, in the last few years we as Dakota people have been revitalizing our woodlands culture again. Through this residency it is my hope that I will be able to contribute to this revitalization and that it will be beneficial to our communities.

I will start by presenting this workshop with my home community and our Tribal Council. I will reserve the Elders Building for this workshop. It is a simple building with plenty of space including a kitchen and restrooms so people can hold a potluck. The workshop will be for 2-4 hour sessions where individuals can make moccasins for themselves or their families. Because this will be more advanced, I will make it a preference for attendees to be over the age of thirteen, although this won't be a requirement. Supplies will be provided and individuals are more than welcome to bring their own. Individuals will also be given a template and instructions to take home for future moccasins.

I will also meet with and present to the other Dakota communities in Minnesota. Lower Sioux Community has similar facilities and community members have also voiced an interest in this workshop on pucker toe moccasin making. I plan on presenting at the other communities as well, although further networking is still needed to plan for the facilities to be available.

Through the resources provided by the NAAIR program, materials will be provided, mostly brain tanned hides which are preferable in moccasin making. I will showcase examples of moccasins past and present as well as ones I have made. Beyond my residency, it is my hope that I can reach out to other Dakota communities in the Midwest and potentially Canada, where this knowledge may be needed. I have connections through friends and family among many reservations that I know may take interest in these workshops so that we as Dakota people will strengthen our culture and lifeways.