

FRITZ



**indian  
not indian**

# SCHOLDER

LOOKING AT

## FRITZ SCHOLDER

Family Guide for

*Fritz Scholder: Indian/  
Not Indian*

Welcome to the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian! This activity guide is designed for you and your family to use together as you explore the works of Fritz Scholder on display in this exhibition. On view in both our New York [through May 17, 2009] and Washington, D.C. [through August 16, 2009], museums, the exhibition features paintings, prints, and bronze sculptures spanning Scholder's career.

**“In today's world, love, art, and magic are greatly needed.”**

– Fritz Scholder

Fritz Scholder [1937–2005] was one of the most successful and controversial Indian artists of the twentieth century. Scholder was a painter and a sculptor, and he worked with many different materials. His artwork was based on his travels, his interest in other cultures, and his own life. Scholder used bright colors and powerful brushstrokes to depict Indians as they had never before been seen in art. In his use of **COLOR, PORTRAITS**, and **TECHNIQUE**, Scholder challenged what it meant to be an Indian artist. As you walk through this exhibition, use the activities in this guide to learn more about the colors, portraits, and techniques that made Scholder famous.



Smithsonian  
*National Museum of the American Indian*

Above, left to right: *Self Portrait at 28*, 1965. Oil on canvas. Collection of the Estate of Fritz Scholder. *Scholder painting Television Indian*, 1974. Scottsdale, Arizona. Photo by Don Cirillo, courtesy PBS and KAET TV, Phoenix, coordinated by the Roswell Museum and Art Center from its Fritz Scholder Special Collection.

# LET'S TALK ABOUT COLOR! –

*“I enjoy placing one color next to another to see what happens. Color relationships present a challenge and help me to get a painting under way.”*

– Fritz Scholder

Fritz Scholder's works have been described as celebrations of color. The brightness of a color is called that color's **INTENSITY**. A color has full intensity when the artist does not mix it with white or black.



**?** **WHAT** do you notice about the colors that Scholder uses? Are they bright or dull?

**Do you think Scholder mixed his colors with white or black?**

Another way to make colors appear brighter in a painting is to place **COMPLEMENTARY COLORS** [colors found directly opposite each other on the color wheel, such as red and green] side by side.

**🔍** **FIND** a painting in which Scholder put complementary colors next to each other.

**Why do you think he did this?**

Scholder began teaching at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1964. He began using the landscape colors of the American Southwest in his paintings. The colors of the Southwest stayed with him, forming his **PALETTE**.

**🖍** **NAME** some of the colors that are repeated throughout Scholder's work.

**🖍** **FILL IN** the artist's palette with the names of the colors you see in Scholder's paintings.

## KEY WORDS

**INTENSITY:** a color's brightness

**COMPLEMENTARY COLORS:** found opposite each other on the color wheel, such as red and green

**PALETTE:** the different colors an artist uses in his work. An artist's palette is also a surface used to mix paints.

# LET'S TALK ABOUT PORTRAITS!

*“Hopefully, I have helped young Indian painters to feel free to paint as they wish.”*

– Fritz Scholder

Before the Institute of American Indian Arts was founded in 1962, Indian artists were encouraged to paint neat, precise pictures of Native

American community scenes, or of plants and animals. But Fritz Scholder wanted to change this. By painting what they saw around them, he and his students set out to show Indians as real people in the modern world.

Many of Fritz Scholder's works are **PORTRAITS**. A portrait is a work of art that shows a particular person, usually focusing on the face or head and shoulders.

 **LOOK.** As you walk through the exhibition, look at the paintings.

**How many figures do you see in each painting?**

**Do Scholder's portraits focus on the face? If not, what do they focus on?**

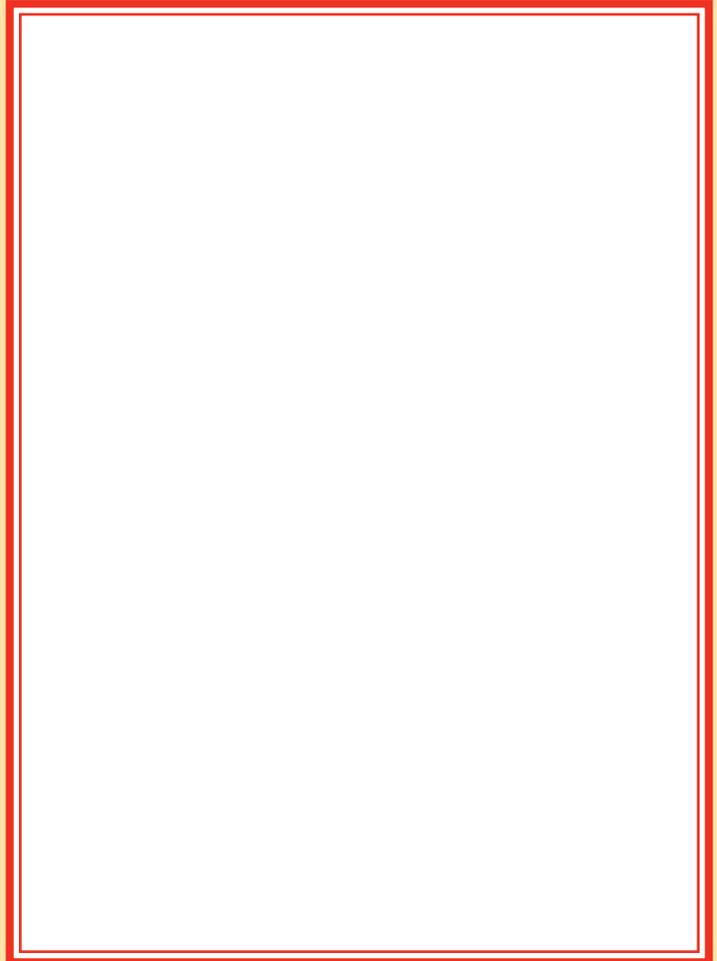
Every year, often on his birthday, Scholder painted a **SELF-PORTRAIT**. A self-portrait is a work of art in which the artist uses himself as the subject.

 **FIND** one of Scholder's self-portraits.

**Why do you think artists create self-portraits?**

**What details did Scholder include in the painting? His glasses? A pet? Books?**

**Why do you think details are important in portraits? -**



 **MAKE** your own self-portrait.

**Think about what details you want to include. A hat? A pet? A favorite food?**

**Do you want to put anything in the background? Think of details that express you.**

## KEY WORDS

**PORTRAIT:** a work of art showing at least one person

**SELF-PORTRAIT:** a work of art in which the artist uses him- or herself as the subject

# LET'S TALK ABOUT TECHNIQUE!

“Paint drips, it smears, it smudges, it has great color, it flows in many different ways depending on its canvas or [the] paper that you’re painting on.”

– Fritz Scholder

Fritz Scholder liked to have fun while he was painting. He would experiment with the paint, making it drip, flow, and smear.



*American Portrait, No. 46,*  
1982.  
Oil on canvas.  
Collection of the Estate  
of Fritz Scholder -

**LOOK** closely at one of Scholder’s paintings.

Is the paint smooth or thick? Does it have **TEXTURE**? How do you think Scholder created that texture?

Can you find a painting that uses dripping paint? How do these touches show motion and action?

One of Scholder’s favorite **TECHNIQUES** was to show different layers of paint.

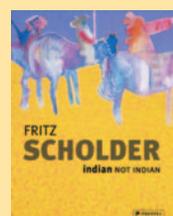
**LOOK** carefully at the outlines of Scholder’s figures.

Can you see the color of the paint underneath the top layer? Where else on the canvas do you see this color?



*American Indian,*  
1970s.  
Oil on canvas.  
Fred Jones Jr. Museum  
of Art, The University  
of Oklahoma, Norman.  
Purchase, Richard  
H. and Adeline J.  
Fleischaker Collection,  
1996. 1996.017.132

To find out more, visit our website:  
[www.AmericanIndian.si.edu/exhibitions/scholder](http://www.AmericanIndian.si.edu/exhibitions/scholder)



And read the book:  
*Fritz Scholder: Indian/Not Indian*

Edited by Lowery Stokes Sims with Truman T. Lowe [Ho-Chunk] and Paul Chaat Smith [Comanche]. Published by the National Museum of the AmericanIndian in association with Prestel Publishing

## KEY WORDS

**TEXTURE:** the appearance and feel of the surface of something. Ways to create texture include dripping, smearing, and rubbing.

**TECHNIQUE:** the way an artist uses the materials to create a work of art -