

Lets talk about...

FRITZ
SCHOLDER



A Guide for Young People 7 and Up



Welcome to the National Museum of the American Indian

Use this guide to help you explore and learn from the exciting exhibition *Fritz Scholder: Indian/Not Indian*.

How to use this guide

This guide provides parents and children with background information, questions, and suggestions to help focus on a few of the pieces in this exhibit. First, read the biographical information on the back. Then, open the guide and:

find the artwork pictured.

read the background information in this guide.

look at the piece as a whole, and then the colors, texture, and other small details.

talk about what you see and how it makes you think and feel.

compare the piece to others in the exhibit.

NATIONAL
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➤ **find** this painting

➤ **read**

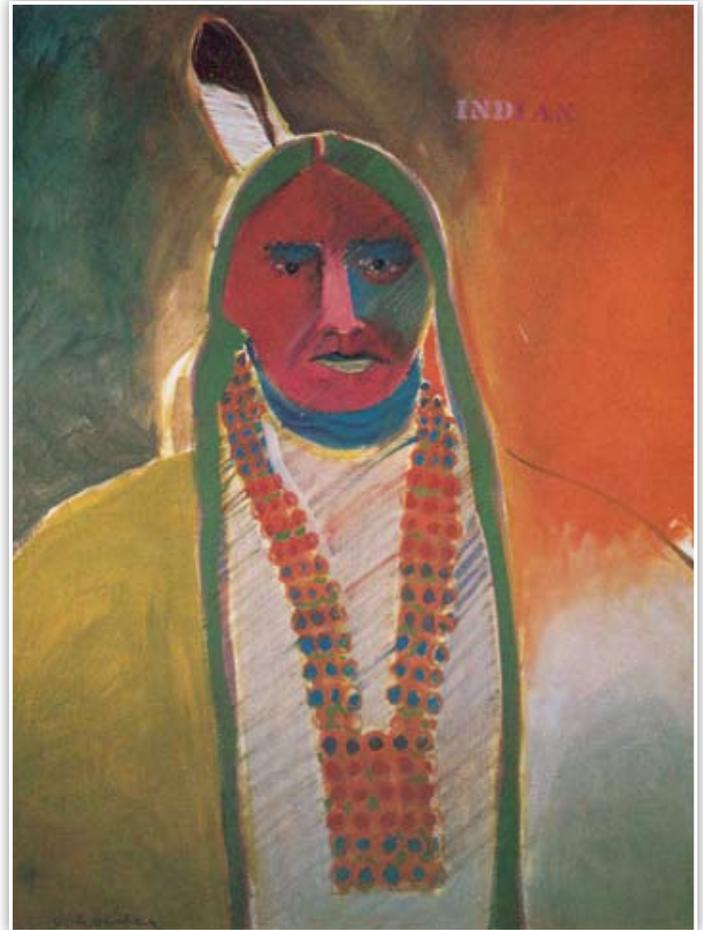
Indian No. 1 is the first painting Scholder did in the Indian series. People were not used to seeing Native Americans painted in this style. Scholder was an abstract expressionist painter, which means that he didn't try to make his subjects look realistic. By painting Indians in a different way from other artists, he hoped to make people look at Native people in a new way.

➤ **look**

- Does this painting look like other pictures you have seen of Native Americans?
- How is it the same?
- How is it different?
- Are the colors in this painting realistic?
- Are they what you would expect to see?
- What word do you see on the painting?

➤ **talk**

- Do you think the person in the painting is someone who lives today or lived in the past? Why?
- Why do you think Scholder put the word Indian on the painting?



Indian No. 1, 1967
Oil on canvas
Collection of Loren and Anne Kieve

➤ **compare**

Try to identify other paintings from the Indian series as you walk through this gallery. Throughout the museum, you will see many other portraits of Indians done by other artists.

- How are they different from Scholder's Indians?

"It's a celebration of the paint as it drips and smears." —Fritz Scholder

➤ **find** this painting

➤ **read**

Fritz Scholder liked to work with more than a paintbrush to create his art. In many of his paintings, you can see drips and smears of paint and areas where paint has been wiped or scraped away to show the background colors.

➤ **look** closely at *White Indian*.

- Can you see where Scholder dripped paint?
- Can you see where he might have scraped away paint?
- What colors are showing through other colors?
- What color do you think he put on the canvas first?

➤ **talk**

- Do you like the way paint is dripped in this painting? Why?
- Imagine the same painting without any drips or smears. Would you like it better?
- Do you think it would be as interesting if it was painted without any drips or smears?
- Why do you think Scholder called this painting *White Indian*?



White Indian, 1997
Acrylic on canvas
Collection of the Estate of Fritz Scholder

➤ **compare**

As you go through the exhibit, try to find other paintings that have drips and smears of paint.

➤ **find** this painting

➤ **read**

This is one of a group of paintings called the American Portrait series. All the figures in this series are alone and mysterious. Many of them have similar details, like things that look like wings.

➤ **look**

- Do you see something that looks like a wing?
- Does the figure have a face?
- Do you think the figure in this painting is human or non-human?
- A man or a woman?
- An Indian or a non-Indian?

➤ **talk**

- If you had to make up a story about it, what would it be?
- Why do you think Scholder painted in series?
- Why would he want to paint the same subject many times?



American Portrait No. 15, 1981
Oil on Canvas

Collection of the National Museum of the American Indian

➤ **compare**

Some of Scholder's sculptures are similar to his paintings. Try to find a sculpture that looks like or reminds you of this painting.

"Color is what makes painting." —Fritz Scholder

➤ **find** this painting

➤ **read**

Scholder was an abstract artist, which means that he did not try to paint things exactly as they are. Scholder created this painting when he lived in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He was inspired by the Southwest landscape with its red rocks, blue skies, pink and purple sunsets, and green trees. This painting gives you an idea of how he saw the landscape of New Mexico.

➤ **look** at the photograph of New Mexico at the bottom of this page.

- Can you see similarities to the painting?
- Can you see some of the same colors?
- Can you see the bands of color?



Photo courtesy of photographer James Gordon, 2004



New Mexico No. 1, 1964
Oil on canvas
Collection of the Estate of Fritz Scholder

➤ **talk**

If you were going to paint a picture of where you live, what colors and shapes would you use? Why?

➤ **compare**

Scholder used the colors of the Southwest over and over again in his work. As you go through the exhibit, try to find the colors used in this work in other paintings.

"All kids draw. I never stopped." —Fritz Scholder

Fritz Scholder said he always knew he wanted to be an artist. He didn't think he would be known as a Native American artist, but that is how people think about him today.

Like many people, Scholder came from a multi-racial family. His paternal grandmother was a member of the Luiseño tribe of California's Mission Indians. Scholder often said he did not consider himself an Indian. He grew up in the Midwest where he attended public schools with mostly white students.

Scholder said that he never wanted to paint Indians, but he became famous for a group of paintings called the Indian series that he created when he moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico. People began to identify him as a Native American artist.

His style was different from what people expected of an Indian artist. He used bright bold colors and distorted images. Some of his work shocked people.

Throughout his life, he painted and sculpted many subjects other than Native Americans, including everything from dogs and cats to skulls, and he continued to say that he was not really Native. People still argue about whether Scholder and his art were Indian or not Indian.



Fritz Scholder in Taos, New Mexico, 1997.
Photo by Meridel Rubenstein