Continuum
The Eiteljorg Museum presents its 2019 Art Fellowship exhibition.

Every other year, the Eiteljorg Museum announces a new group of artists for its Contemporary Art Fellowship, which awards fellows $25,000 each to pursue their passions, completely unrestricted. Each of the artists are movers and shakers, making waves in the contemporary Native art sphere and making personal, political and societal impacts through their artwork. An exhibition featuring the works of the five 2019 Art Fellowship artists—Matthew Alan Kirk, Dyani White Hawk, Hannah Class, Demian DinéYahii and invited artist Rita Letendre—is on view at the museum from November 16 to February 2 of next year. Titled  Barring the Line: The Eiteljorg Contemporary Art Fellowship 2019, the show highlights paintings, drawings, mixed media and installations.

The title of the exhibition is laden with profound meaning, and the Eiteljorg show is one of many discussions going on regarding contemporary Native American art. "The line that separates contemporary Native art from customary Native art does not exist. The work of contemporary Native artists today is a continuum of Native expression. It does not solely exist in the Native world or mainstream art community. Native contemporary art cannot be judged by whether there is a recognizably Native design or form integrated into the art," says Jennifer Compolo McNutt, Eiteljorg Museum curator of contemporary art, who curated the exhibition alongside Dorene Red Cloud, assistant curator of Native American art. McNutt expounds on the idea behind the exhibition: "We were having a discussion about how polarized our society is in terms of politics...on the one hand we're being inclusive on gender identification, LGBTQ marriages...and then we have the other side where nobody wants anybody to come into the country anymore."

She continues, "This is a really interesting group of artists. Rita Letendre is like Canadian royalty...very prolific, she made huge public art." Kirk, McNutt explains, is a self-taught creator who paints on sheet rock, creating tiny, intricately woven lines reminiscent of road map, Navajo rugs or cityscapes. And at times, his work seems to transcend all of that, becoming something entirely its own. Multidisciplinary artist Class creates ethereal sculptural installations that are suspended in midair, which reference time, place, elements or bodies of water. "Demian
does installations, and he's pretty political...he's pretty upfront about how he feels about things," McNutt says of Portland artist Diné/Yazhi. And finally, there's Lakota artist White Hawk. "She's so interesting in the way she paints," says McNutt, explaining that White Hawk layers her paint in a way that feels like bead or quillwork. "It's based on customary work and her cultural knowledge, but it's also translated into a contemporary space. It's fabulous and meticulous and it takes forever, so it's a really nice translation...She's a great way to introduce people who are not used to contemporary Native art."

The Eiteljorg Museum's fellowship has served for years as a powerful way to shine light on contemporary Native art, developing relationships, publications, exhibitions and collection resources that continue important discussions about what constitutes Native art and where it's headed from here. "It's always going to be Native art," says McNutt. "If a Native artist created it, it's Native."

**November 16, 2019 - February 2, 2020**

**Blurring the Line: The Eiteljorg Contemporary Art Fellowship 2019**

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