

Introduction

In 1988, artist and activist Jimmie Durham (b. 1940) wrote, “I feel fairly sure that I could address the entire world if only I had a place to stand. But you (white Americans) have made everything your turf. In every field, on every issue, the ground has already been covered.”¹ He voiced an impasse shared by many indigenous peoples across the Americas in the wake of the American Indian Movement (AIM): colonial nations continued to occupy not only their lands, but the very *ground of their representation*.² Modernity, from this perspective, named a process of displacement and dispossession with no end in sight. Durham’s haunting essay “The Ground Has Been Covered” appeared in *Artforum* around the time he permanently left the United States and created his first major installation in London. Although he initially responded to settler colonialism with postmodern parody from the margins, Durham’s practice abroad doubled back, digging into the past to piece the ground back together.³ Other artists shaped by AIM, such as Kay WalkingStick (b. 1935), Robert Houle (b. 1947), James Luna (b. 1950), and Edgar Heap of Birds (b. 1954), were likewise challenged to reconfigure the terms of indigenous spatial struggles that reached a deadlock in the final decades of the twentieth century.⁴ Consequently they took an unusual approach to accelerating conditions of artistic mobility, setting out to remap the spatial, temporal, and material coordinates of a violently divided earth.

This book is the first to explore lessons from AIM as they were taken up by a generation of artists searching for new places to stand. Upending a frequent assumption that all Native Americans who came to prominence in the 1980s were primarily concerned with identity politics in a national framework, the creative projects I’ve gathered reposition displaced indigenous people, art, and knowledge at the center of an unfinished story of modernity that rightly concerns the entirety of our shared world. My chapters follow artists across the Atlantic and back in time as they retraced the grooves of Native diplomats, scholars, and performers who reversed the paths of Europeans since the earliest moment of contact. The installations, performances, drawings, and

paintings resulting from their journeys creatively occupy European cities as a means of reclaiming ground on both sides. Durham nailed and glued together scraps of stories concerning Algonquian “princess” Pocahontas, who met the king and queen of England in 1616, and Cherokee orator Attakulakula, who negotiated the Treaty of Whitehall in London in 1730 (chapter 1); Luna built a chapel and danced for four days in homage to the Luiseño scholar Pablo Tac, who wrote the first dictionary and history of his people at Mission San Luis Rey de Francia while studying for the priesthood in Rome in 1834 (chapter 2); Heap of Birds erected signposts recalling indigenous travelers with Buffalo Bill Cody’s Wild West Shows in Venice in 1890 (chapter 2); WalkingStick drew and painted the entanglement of Aztec codices and Kokopelli with classical and Renaissance artworks in Italy (chapter 4); Houle manufactured a stage for Maungwudaus and other Ojibwa people who performed alongside George Catlin’s Indian Gallery in Paris in 1846 (chapter 5). Though varied in their materials and means, each of these projects overturns a familiar narrative of colonization in which mobile agents from an “Old World” discover, divide, and dominate a “New World.” Instead of an earth shaped by unilateral occupation, they envision former metropolises long filled with indigenous persons, objects, and meanings. The impasse outlined in “The Ground Has Been Covered” is at once delimited and transformed through their creative retelling of colonial histories from abroad.

These works bolster and broaden AIM-era spatial struggles with historiographical provocations. Collectively they beg the question, how should historians respond when artists encroach on our familiar terrain and expose its limitations? We could subtly police the boundary between creative and scholarly work, praising artistic play while pursuing business as usual. Alternatively, we might welcome mutual influence, inspiration, and collaboration in a shared intellectual space, exploring possibilities for making and writing in tandem. Modeling the latter approach, I have not written a conventional book about contemporary art. Living artists and their artworks are not the sole objects of my study. Instead I have sought to write in dialogue with artists and through the “eyes” of artworks, letting their approaches guide my own detours through the past travels of persons and things. While most chapters unfurl around contemporary projects paired with salient themes, I devote equal room to an extradiegetic unpacking of the histories they invoke. That is to say, I explore adjacent or related objects and stories, complementing and extending the work of living artists in written form. A passage at the center of the book devoted to paintings of Hopi social and ceremonial dances by

artist Fred Kabotie (c. 1900–1986) that were displayed in the U.S. Pavilion of the Venice Biennale in 1932 exemplifies this approach (chapter 3). Through an embodied reading of the latent sound and movement of Kabotie’s dancers, I demonstrate how the work of contemporary artists can prompt imaginative engagements with past materials that had equally complex lives abroad. History is our shared objective—a ground we work to uncover.

The historical scope of this book explains why I emphasize “modernisms” over “contemporary art” throughout. I aim to encompass and build on indigenous contributions to an ongoing modernity fully shared with Europeans in the wake of 1492. This book is allied with a framework of “global modernisms” or “multiple modernisms” that scholars have lately used to recover objects, histories, and methods that fall outside a Western cultural canon.⁵ Literary scholar Susan Stanford Friedman defined an especially ambitious version of this drive: “Examining the spatial politics of the conventional periodization of modernism fosters a move from singularities to pluralities of space and time, from exclusivist formulations of modernity and modernism to ones based in global linkages, and from nominal modes of definition to relational ones.”⁶ The interdisciplinary move toward modernisms reflects broad awareness that a familiar narrative of modernity centered on the industrial United States and Europe hinders our grasp of the complex interdependencies and profound inequalities that characterize economic and cultural globalization today. The growth of the contemporary art market and proliferation of mega-exhibitions across Asia, Africa, and Latin America have likewise prompted scholars to reflect on the impoverishment of art history, a discipline struggling to branch from its nineteenth-century European roots.⁷

Visiting the Eighteenth Biennale of Sydney and dOCUMENTA (13) in 2012, I too confronted the limits of my American education as I faced demanding artworks from distant locales.⁸ Yet those same events contained a subtler lesson that motivates my particular approach to modernisms “in the wake of the global turn.”⁹ Both exhibited an unprecedented number of works by indigenous artists living inside the borders of English-speaking, settler colonial nations such as the United States, Canada, and Australia. Many of the works demonstrated fluency in colonial cultural forms that shaped indigenous environments since the earliest moments of contact as well as ties to communities long excluded from representing their own histories to others. Some works referenced ancestral arts that were appropriated and romanticized by non-Native artists and critics but have yet to be acknowledged as agents fashioning a shared modernity. Finding themselves in a situation

of categorical ambivalence, indigenous artists dwelling inside settler colonial contexts are poorly served by modernisms conceived exclusively in terms of spatial expansion.¹⁰ The works in this book ask us to invest in modernisms' s as a methodological and historiographical, rather than merely geographical, challenge.

My use of “modernisms” furthermore moves away from a tendency among scholars to privilege what is new about the current phase of globalization at the expense of continuity with older forms of long-distance entanglement, in particular the European colonization of the Americas. Terry Smith, for one, wrote, “Contemporaneity consists precisely in the acceleration, ubiquity, and constancy of radical disjunctures of perception, of mismatching ways of seeing and valuing the same world, in the actual coincidence of asynchronous temporalities, in the jostling contingency of various cultural and social multiplicities, all thrown together in ways that highlight the fast-growing inequalities within and between them.”¹¹ He argued that globalization after 1989 produced distinct relations of antinomy, which artists around the world are poised to negotiate and transform. In a highly critical account of the same period, T. J. Demos coined the phrase “crisis globalization” to describe an expanded operation of state power that “divides the uninterrupted transmission of goods and capital from the controlled movements of people.” The artists, curators, and art tourists who enjoy itinerancy comprise an elite few on this earth, while a majority of displaced humans are “denied legal rights, social protections, and the freedom of movement.”¹² I extend the historical scope of these insights by intermixing contemporary artworks with older Native American objects and associated worldviews. WalkingStick's drawings, Durham's installations, and Kabotie's paintings reveal that “radical disjunctures of perception” accompanying “controlled movements” occurred in Rome in the sixteenth century, London in the eighteenth century, and Venice in the twentieth century, as constitutive features of the colonization of the Americas. From this perspective, “crisis globalization” has been incubating for a very long time. Following Walter Mignolo, I trace its material and epistemological roots to the world-shaping events of 1492.¹³ Such an expansive view necessarily sacrifices some of the historical detail enabled by traditional periodization. In its place I gain flexibility alongside artists to explore unexpected continuities, echoes, and alliances across time, revitalizing long-standing creative strategies for navigating both painful and privileged forms of mobility to meet contemporary challenges. This book compiles and explores connections between past and present indigenous travelers who have shared and shaped an ongoing mo-

dernity. Collectively, these modernisms map alternatives to the ideologies of expansion, progress, and objectification that implicate colonization and globalization alike. The works and words of this book build a picture of a world that is spatially, temporally, and materially interconnected, or what I call an undivided earth.

Space, Time, Material

As I have already hinted, addressing covered ground entails reformulating the terms of spatial politics that fueled AIM and shaped subsequent artistic practices. Native peoples have long participated in—and been outwardly defined by—struggles to maintain or recover relationships to particular places. In a much-quoted passage from his book *God Is Red* (1972), published at the height of AIM activism, Standing Rock Sioux scholar Vine Deloria Jr. asserted, “American Indians hold their lands—places—as having the highest possible meaning, and all their statements are made with this reference point in mind.”¹⁴ A conception of indigenous agency rooted in land stolen by colonizers fueled the indigenous nationalisms that culminated in activists’ occupation of Alcatraz Island in San Francisco (1969), the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, DC (1972), and Wounded Knee in South Dakota (1973).¹⁵ Although the movement was riven by factionalism and failed to regain much of the territory lost through broken treaties, it radicalized a generation of artists and intellectuals who launched a sustained examination of colonial power relations informed by postmodern and postcolonial theory. Suspicious of succumbing to yet another romantic Indian cliché, many practitioners focused on negative critique, only to find themselves locked in a scenario of unending opposition to authority on the eve of the Columbus Quincentennial. At the same time, accelerating globalization compounded the physical and cultural displacement of indigenous peoples, while foreclosing AIM-generation artists’ celebrated positions as subversive “outsiders.” Select members of the AIM generation were drawn into a symptomatic explosion of art biennials and residencies around the world, populated by itinerant professionals whose “success is measured by the accumulation of frequent flier miles,” to quote a well-known phrase by art historian Miwon Kwon.¹⁶ The implication is that successful artists must traverse the world in order to address it, a paradoxical scenario for Native practitioners who forged their careers protesting violent legacies of dislocation from the margins of modern nations. Does being on the move necessitate moving on?

The works in this book consistently answer no. As artists traveled abroad, they practiced a conceptual shift, away from contested territories and toward entangled histories. But indigenous spatial politics were not relinquished so much as revitalized through this process. The resulting creative projects restore neglected temporal and material dimensions to narrow conceptions of place that have shaped—and, we come to realize, overdetermined—Native representation under conditions of occupation. When severed from a larger complex of indigenous ideas and practices, places and the humans attached to them are rendered particularly susceptible to conquest. As Deloria and others have noted, colonial modernity is filled with images of dynamic, progressive time usurping inert, unchanging place. Mapped along these supposedly universal axes we find Europeans (mobile agents of history) and indigenous peoples (reactionary victims of history), the latter clinging to timeless places until the relentless tide of progress and expansion (colonization, globalization) breaks their grip. Deloria summarized the violent particularity of this understanding: “Western European identity involves the assumption that time proceeds in a linear fashion; further it assumes that at a particular point in the unraveling of this sequence, the peoples of Western Europe became the guardians of the world.”¹⁷ Time appears to be the enemy of place.

Native studies scholars have critiqued the parameters of this cosmology, recognizing the degree to which it has corralled indigenous claims to land, identity, and political sovereignty in a divisive framework patterned after colonial nationalisms. As I explore in greater depth in chapter 1, AIM nationalists tended to define Native self-determination within available Western legal-political institutions, including the appropriation of a European notion of sovereignty to support nation-to-nation agreements.¹⁸ In a feminist critique of such efforts, Shari M. Huhndorf described “an inherently limited, contradictory mode of anticolonial resistance” that “implicitly grant[s] authority and legitimacy to [patriarchal] colonial nation-states.”¹⁹ Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred elaborated, “It isn’t enough just to regain political space; we need to fill it up with indigenous content if it is going to mean anything to our people.”²⁰ Beyond challenging the limitations of Native nationalisms, a number of scholars have heeded Alfred’s call to articulate alternative formulations of agency and self-determination. Huhndorf, Jolene Rickard, Robert Warrior, Chad Allen, and others have harnessed the language of “indigenous transnationalism,” “global indigeneity,” and even “trans-indigenous” to counter the entrenched Eurocentrism of the modern nation-state construct with Native

frames of reference.²¹ The strongest accounts invest these terms with anti-essentialist relational values, focusing especially on contemporary literature and arts that transgress the borders of reservations inside the United States and Canada and forge alliances with others around the world. Heeding Alfred's provocation in the realm of contemporary art, Rickard called for an "expressive imaginary of visual [and intellectual] sovereignty" that looks past a U.S. legal interpretation to embody "our philosophical, political, and renewal strategies."²² She foregrounded "an understanding of power in Indigenous cultures" in which "the interconnectedness . . . of all life is sacred and key to human freedom and survival."²³ A similar conviction that Native agency is bolstered by alliances (between persons, things, times, and places) rather than divisions (between races, nations, cultures, and periods) is common to the artistic projects discussed in this book.

Still, recent efforts to alter the terms of indigenous engagement with national and global processes have tended to steer clear of the methodological minefield of history. Reflecting on the trauma of colonization, Chiricahua Apache scholar Nancy Marie Mithlo, curator of numerous contemporary Native art initiatives at the Venice Biennale, wrote, "Our history is dangerous."²⁴ I find that it is equally perilous to reserve agency for the living. The capacity of "global indigeneity," "trans-indigenous," and other spatial concepts and practices to bolster "survivance" (Anishinaabe writer Gerald Vizenor's enigmatic term combining survival and resistance) remains limited so long as they are aimed exclusively at the present and future.²⁵ Divisive concepts of territory and identity may be challenged, but historical teleology is quietly affirmed. Native cultural producers appear as belated arrivals on a global stage, caught in the undertow of transnational capital flows eroding the power of nation-states, while the past remains colonized. In contrast, the artistic practices I examine in this book unearth, in Philip Deloria's terms, "the multiplicity of Native histories, each of which poses political and epistemological challenges to the Western tradition of history-telling itself."²⁶ They integrate creative and culturally inflected conceptions of time, place, and material, producing coordinates that are coeval with, yet irreducible to, the colonial cosmology and attendant nationalisms I have outlined.²⁷ Transnationalism, implying the crossing of national borders, is inadequate to address this crucial temporal dimension, as more than half of the studies in this book point to times before nation-states divided the Americas. Through the restoration of a deep historical dimension, indigenous relationships to earth are rendered assertive

(rather than defensive), dynamic (rather than static), and multiple (rather than exclusive). We begin to see how, in the words of Luna, “every place is a Native place”—from the La Jolla Reservation to the canals of Venice.²⁸

To space and time I add a third, enabling term: material. As indigenous objects circulated through Europe and other far-flung locales in the wake of 1492, they significantly extended the reach of Native peoples who could not, or chose not to, travel in the flesh. It is most often through an engagement with lively materials that AIM-generation artists summon a relationship to otherwise distant peoples, places, and pasts. Insofar as they tamper with the taxonomic logic governing transatlantic collections, they appear to share what Hal Foster has termed “an archival impulse” with many creative contemporaries, defined by a feverish desire to connect things that were “frightfully disconnected in the first place” in tension with suspicion of longing for the totality that archival systems seem to promise.²⁹ However, the projects in this book present conceptual challenges to assumptions about materiality shaping this trend. As I use the term, the archive has become “ubiquitous and . . . capacious—encompassing the collection, the inventory, the library, the museum, and even the corpus of our scholarly projects.”³⁰ Artists and scholars alike have critiqued the archive as the “condition of reality for statements” about history, charged with delimiting and classifying the remains of the past, often in the service of an imperial state.³¹ In the words of Diana Taylor, the archive “sustains power” because it “works across distance, over time and space . . . [and] succeeds in separating the source of ‘knowledge’ from the knower.”³² Tending toward objectivity and objectification, the archive appears to present a formidable challenge to the agency of any single human storyteller. Correspondingly, accounts of artistic intervention have tended to bifurcate along a hard line between live subjects and dead (and deadening) materials: on the one hand, a retreat to “flesh” through a repertoire of performance modalities; on the other, tampering with archival “bone” through strategies of deconstruction and/or the creation of “counter-archives.”³³

For artists of the AIM generation, this is deeply familiar terrain. “If there are any people on earth whose lives are more tangled up with museums than we are, God help them,” wrote Comanche cultural critic Paul Chaat Smith.³⁴ As I elaborate in chapter 1, Durham and Luna especially developed a strand of institutional critique in the 1980s, creating parodic installations and performances that registered their deep skepticism toward colonial collections that objectify and dispossess indigenous cultures. Their attitude has roots in AIM, for example, the activists’ 1969 proposal for a museum on Alcatraz Island

that “will present some of the things the white man has given to the Indians in return for the land and life he took: disease, alcohol, poverty, and cultural decimation (as symbolized by old tin cans, barbed wire, rubber tires, plastic containers, etc.).”³⁵ Just as activists relinquished pieces of their own histories when they ransacked Bureau of Indian Affairs headquarters in Washington, DC, in 1972, burning documents and destroying Native American objects, postmodern artistic critiques too quickly left the past for dead. Informed by faltering precedents, the projects I describe in this book refuse to accept a foundational divide between the “hard stuff” of history and a fleshly, mutable present. Instead they activate the sociability of select materials, often with recourse to indigenous epistemologies, whether enduring or creatively recovered. When Luna integrated Tac’s writing into the tactile surfaces of blankets and baskets, Durham hammered together British colonial documents and refuse from the London streets to construct an eloquent Cherokee orator, or Houle translated a sketch of Ojibwa performers by Eugène Delacroix into a stage set for tableaux vivants, they treated European collections as resonant sites of encounter between the agencies of past and present subjects and objects. In other words, their projects make the transcultural and transmutable dimensions of the archive palpable to visitors, encouraging a mutually enlivening relationship to unfold. What is produced is neither another hardened structure nor a privileging of the live subject, so much as an invitation to engage with the latent performative dimensions of histories not yet stilled.³⁶

By drawing on indigenous precepts regarding the agency and sociability of things, AIM-generation artists finally circumvent the deconstructive impulses that dominated cultural theory and practice in the late twentieth century. As I explore in greater detail in chapter 1, the varied discourses of postmodernism and postcolonialism engendered useful critiques of racism and colonialism, but too often celebrated marginality and valorized contemporary subjects at the expense of historical agents. Furthermore, an anthropocentric focus on people and texts overlooked relationships between humans and other-than-human persons central to many indigenous philosophies.³⁷ At key points in this book, I consider the conflicted relationship between AIM-generation practices and the recently popular, interdisciplinary trend of “new materialisms,” in which scholars theorize the vibrancy of matter denied through modern, rationalist divisions of culture and nature, human and nonhuman.³⁸ When Houle invited visitors to “offer their hands” to paintings of Ojibwa performers who died of smallpox (chapter 5) or when Durham mobilized the latent capacities of stones as sculptors (epilogue), they participated in the continuity or regeneration of

very old materialisms, building a picture of European “centers” long filled with indigenous meanings.

Europe

While “Europe” looms large in this project, I hope that the power of the term will dissipate across the pages of this book. I use it to signal both more and less than a geographical boundary and a political territory. In writing about indigenous modernisms, I am wary of a tendency in some postcolonial literature to construct a singular, monolithic Europe as a foil.³⁹ Countering stereotypes with stereotypes locks Native peoples into a binary, oppositional relationship to Europeans, inadvertently reifying the authority of colonizers over the terms of indigenous representation. A more useful variant is Gilane Tawadros’s description of “Europe as an unsettled and fluctuating political, economic, and cultural entity whose past, present, and future can no longer be seen as settled and secure, nestling in the comfort of invented traditions and imagined communities.”⁴⁰ This is a Europe constituted through colonization, in which Native Americans persist as an unstable “central margin” instead of a mythical outside.⁴¹ It follows that Europe has long been vulnerable to indigenous tampering.

In order to devote as much space as possible to the integral indigenous agents of this relationship, I borrow from existing scholarship on European perceptions of Native Americans, especially Vanita Seth’s attention to the differences between Renaissance, Classical, and nineteenth-century modes of representing “Indians.”⁴² I likewise build on a small literature devoted to indigenous travelers in Europe, especially Norman K. Denzin’s experimental *Indians on Display*, Christian Feest’s essay collection *Indians and Europe*, Kate Flint’s *The Transatlantic Indian*, and Jace Weaver’s *The Red Atlantic*.⁴³ I am indebted to the background and analyses they offer regarding Native Americans who crossed the Atlantic as early as 1009 AD, augmenting the case studies of this book. Allied scholarship notwithstanding, traveling Indians can easily appear as aberrations within a conventional narrative of transatlantic modernity, incommensurate with images of traditional, emplaced, communal Natives usurped by colonizers. Attakulakula was an unusually gifted orator, Maungwudaus an enterprising rebel, Tac an adept linguist, WalkingStick the only Cherokee hired by Cornell University to teach art in Rome, Durham the first artist of Native heritage to garner accolades on the art biennial circuit, and so on. Taken individually, the seemingly exceptional cases of this book may well

leave colonial divisions between static indigenes and mobile Europeans intact. Yet, as Philip Deloria noted in his study of turn-of-the-twentieth-century “Indians in Unexpected Places,” expectations are rooted in biases as often as facts: “There were and are significant numbers of Indian anomalies, enough that we must rethink familiar categories. . . . Taken together, it seems to me, the cumulative experiences of such anomalous Indians point . . . toward a reimagining of the contours of modernity itself.”⁴⁴ What better site to rethink the shape of modernity than through “significant numbers of Indian anomalies” in London, Paris, Venice, and Rome—cities that fostered the colonization of the Americas and the recording of its history?

Once we conceive of a Europe that includes indigenous interdependencies, contemporary artists who travel to former metropolises cannot be considered exiles from the United States and Canada, as some commentators have claimed.⁴⁵ Rather, their activities abroad knit relatively young nations, naturalized units of a contemporary geopolitical order, back inside a larger complex of European ideas and practices. Durham succinctly illustrated this gesture when he declared, “Americans are the best Europeans” and “The US is not here, within these specific lands. . . . It has brought Europe to the ‘New World,’ where it sits a few inches off the savage, dangerous ground.”⁴⁶ As Native travelers reverse the path of colonizers across the Atlantic, they enact the coeval and contested nature of the ground on either side. By invoking a long view of such activity, the effects of AIM-generation artists’ projects are doubled: they at once “provincialize Europe,” delimiting the cultural and historical specificity of colonial regimes of knowledge, and make room for hitherto marginalized accounts—the modernisms I unpack throughout this book—to flourish in our present understanding.⁴⁷ Both critical and affirmative measures are implied by Durham’s formulation “Europe is an Indian project.”⁴⁸

The Chapters

Despite growing scholarly interest in contemporary Native American art, no study to date has traced the profound impact of AIM on subsequent aesthetic practices. Chapter 1, “‘The Word for World and the Word for History Are the Same’: Jimmie Durham, the American Indian Movement, and Spatial Thinking,” begins this work by integrating Durham’s tenure as the director of the International Indian Treaty Council during AIM in the 1970s with his formative practice in New York City during the 1980s. I lay the ground for remaining chapters by examining the philosophical dimensions of the

spatial politics that motivated a generation of activists and artists. Along the way, I dispel any assumption that key figures from the AIM generation have pursued a linear trajectory from identity politics inside the United States to a postidentity condition abroad. Instead, Durham and select peers set out to transform struggles over the definition and ownership of space through artistic practice. From the beginning their efforts to recenter a vast story of modernity on displaced indigenous subjects and knowledge exceeded the “frameworks of identity” that persist in framing our view of much 1980s art today.⁴⁹ Commentators soon associated Durham’s early assemblages of painted animal bones and automobile parts with the trickster, a mischievous hero appropriated from indigenous cultures to serve the ends of postmodern critique. While promising to rehabilitate painful conditions of marginality, the trickster of late twentieth-century art criticism dangerously resembled the exilic subject of European modernism who transformed loss into “a potent, even enriching motif.”⁵⁰ She succumbed to a romantic cliché while consigning Native peoples to displacement without end. In the essay quoted at the outset of this book, Durham voiced an impasse for indigenous subjects that extended from lost lands to the very terms of their representation. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of his little-known installation in London in 1988, *Mataoka Ale Attakulakula Anel Guledisgo Hnihi (Pocabontas and the Little Carpenter in London)*, which answers the limitations of the postmodern trickster with an expansive definition of history as world anchored in Cherokee language and carpentry.⁵¹

Mataoka Ale Attakulakula Anel Guledisgo Hnihi inaugurates the historiographical turn to which I devote the remainder of the book. Chapter 2, “Now That We Are Christians We Dance for Ceremony’: James Luna, Performing Props, and Sacred Space,” opens with a suite of three installations and a performance, collectively titled *Emendatio*, exhibited at the Venice Biennale in 2005. In it Luna reconstituted the archive of Pablo Tac (1822–41), a Quechuanism (Luiseño) scholar who wrote the first dictionary and history of his people under missionary rule in New Spain, while studying for the priesthood in Rome. At first glance, Tac’s mastery of writing abroad suggests his assimilation into a European episteme and corresponding loss of embodied Native knowledge. But when Luna embedded Tac’s words among the material culture of a multisensory chapel and danced for four days in a nearby courtyard in Venice, he made palpable the ways in which colonial conversions filled European languages, objects, and spaces with indigenous meanings. Departing from prevailing accounts of an archival impulse in contemporary art, my analysis emphasizes the fluidity of exchanges between human bodies and

sensuous materials—what I call “performing props”—that equally populate Luna’s performances and installations. *Emendatio* reintegrates a colonial binary of “archive and repertoire” and related Christian dogma separating “spirit and letter” into an expansive framework of undivided earth that preoccupies me for the remaining chapters.⁵²

Luna’s work culminated a decade of curatorial efforts in the United States and Canada to enhance the visibility of Native artists at the Venice Biennale, the oldest and some say most prestigious art exhibition in the world. *Emendatio*’s emphasis on neglected sacred and sensorial dimensions of modernity transcends the competitive nationalisms linking the mega-exhibition to nineteenth-century colonial world fairs. In chapter 3, “They Sent Me Way Out in the Foreign Country and Told Me to Forget It’: Fred Kabotie, Dance Memories, and the 1932 U.S. Pavilion of the Venice Biennale,” I overturn a truism that Native American artists have never exhibited in the nation’s proud neoclassical galleries.⁵³ Archival photographs and letters reveal that the pavilion held indigenous pottery, silverwork, textiles, and gouache paintings, just two years after it was built. But when U.S. organizers determined that the display failed to communicate a nationalist agenda, it was excised from the history of transatlantic modernism. I reclaim this covered ground by looking closely at the exhibited work of Kabotie. Among Pueblo peers, he painted social and ceremonial dances from memory as government-imposed education and widespread bans on ritual practices aimed to transform Native bodies into productive labor for the U.S. economy in the first decades of the twentieth century. Kabotie’s early works, as well as the words he repeated about them later in his life, reveal a persistent concern with maintaining Hopi sensibilities amid displacement, thereby allying them with the contemporary artworks discussed throughout this book. I argue that his diagrammatic approach, inspired by recollections of indigenous dance and exposure to European musical notation, enabled the painting to withstand gaps in time as well as space. Recontextualized among the AIM generation’s recent work abroad, Kabotie’s dancers join *Emendatio* in facilitating embodied connections beyond a framework of colonial nationalism.

Biennials are only the latest staging ground for a modern conception of difference that has long framed encounters between indigenous and European art heritages. The dividing line within art history relates to the development of the discipline alongside racial biology and anthropological definitions of kinship in the nineteenth century. In chapter 4, “Dance Is the One Activity That I Know of When Virtual Strangers Can Embrace’: Kay Walking-

Stick, Creative Kinship, and Art History's Tangled Legs," I argue that WalkingStick's artistic practice refuses a logic of difference that lingered in late twentieth-century debates about modernist primitivism, the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990, and the Columbus Quincentennial, by forging affective bonds with white artistic predecessors. Her encounters with worldly Renaissance collections prompt me to consider similitude as an alternative relational model. For roughly the first century of conquest, Europeans enveloped Native Americans, plants, and animals into a global family of resemblances, rather than positing their essential differences. Indigenous artists likewise bent likeness to the ends of survival.⁵⁴ In copious sketchbooks made during repeated trips to Rome between 1999 and 2012, WalkingStick drew classical fauns and amphorae, scenes of Christ's transfiguration, and Aztec stones, feathers, and codices from Italian collections into sensuous, loving proximity. She then invited figures repurposed from her sketchbooks to dance across the scuffed surfaces of works on paper. The androgynous, racially indeterminate legs of WalkingStick's dancers, entwined in vines borrowed from Etruscan mosaics, claim belonging to a vast history of art, or what I call "creative kinship."

While WalkingStick's fertile, transformational figures enlarge modernism's family tree, Houle's mixed-media works revisit the entwined lineages of ethnography and abstraction to tell a survival story. In chapter 5, "They Advanced to the Portraits of Their Friends and Offered Them Their Hands': Robert Houle, Ojibwa Tableaux Vivants, and Transcultural Materialism," I consider the capacity of paintings to counter objectification, disease, and death that infuse the history of indigenous performers in Europe. Houle's installation, *Paris/Ojibwa*, first exhibited at the Canadian Cultural Center in Paris in 2010, revisits Ojibwa men, women, and children who performed *tableaux vivants*, or living pictures, in European cities from 1845 to 1846. As they restaged painted scenes of Native life on view in American artist and businessman George Catlin's traveling Indian Gallery, they were in turn sketched and painted by Catlin, Eugène Delacroix, and others, generating an unsettling chain of bodies-turned-pictures-turned-bodies-turned-pictures. Houle designed *Paris/Ojibwa* as a stage on which abstracted portraits of Ojibwa performers, based on spare sketches by Delacroix, are poised to perform again. Addressing Bruno Latour's influential text *We Have Never Been Modern*, I consider the relationship between tableaux vivants and his theorization of "quasi-objects" that contaminated modern categories of human and non-human. *Paris/Ojibwa* goes further, inviting us to see how the popular transatlantic parlor game incorporated Ojibwa understandings of the potential live-

liness of images and objects. When wedded to complex indigenous notions of personhood, tableaux vivants reversed Catlin's ethnographic ambitions to preserve "disappearing" cultures: instead of turning living Natives into static images, they made way for the reanimation of pictures. Houle's engagement with the Ojibwa archive prompts us to discard the "new" of the "new materialisms" that have lately compelled scholars across disciplines and broaden the European "we" discussed by Latour. Inviting visitors to participate in an indigenous view of a shared modernity, *Paris/Ojibwa* restores sociability to the archive of nineteenth-century performers and models transcultural materialism in the center of Paris.

I return to Durham's practice in the epilogue, "Traveling with Stones," to consider rocks sprung to life following his relocation to Europe in 1994. A chunk of mineral matter masks the artist's visage, pebbles dent the front of a refrigerator, rocks scatter across the floor of a museum gift store, and massive boulders ground celebrated symbols of modern mobility and progress, the car and the airplane.⁵⁵ Often substrate replaces Durham as sculptor, assuming powers to act, narrate, and form alliances with humans. As stones accumulate in the wake of the artist's far-flung travels, they conjure pre- and postcontact piles of rocks that indigenous peoples configured at crossroads in the Americas to protect and orient travelers. Acting as wayfinders for displaced humans across centuries and oceans, Durham's stones point toward a multiplicity of places to stand.