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18th Annual Native Cinema Showcase

**August 14-19 in Santa Fe, New Mexico**

*DAWNLAND* will open the 18th annual Native Cinema Showcase during the week of Aug. 14-19 in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The showcase runs in conjunction with the Southwestern Association for Indian Arts [Santa Fe Indian Market](http://www.santafeindianmarket.org), the largest juried show of Native fine art in the world. Held at the [New Mexico History Museum](http://www.nmhm.org), the showcase will screen more than 50 feature-length and short films representing nine countries and more than 33 Native Nations. The film festival is presented by the [Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian](http://www.nmai.si.edu).
DAWNLAND'S television premiere will be on INDEPENDENT LENS, November 5 on PBS. Other Vision Maker Media films included in the Showcase are TRIBAL JUSTICE, Aug. 15 at 3 p.m. MDT and MORONI FOR PRESIDENT, Aug. 16 at 7 p.m. MDT. For a complete schedule, visit https://newsdesk.si.edu/photos/2018-native-cinema-showcase-1.

How do you change the story about Native Americans?
#NativeTruth

By Mark Trahant
Board of Directors Chair, Vision Maker Media

A world surrounded by media telling stories about Indigenous people that range from invisible to misleading.

We live in a world where we are surrounded by media. Old media. New media. Media that hasn't been invented yet. And all of these streams carry images of Indigenous people that range from invisible to misleading.

And worse yet: It's not just the outside world that consume these images. So do we. Our world, our ideas about ourselves, are so often defined by others. Football teams. Music. Fashion. Movies. Literature. Press accounts. There is a long list. So a major project set out to understand those images, identify them, and come up with a strategy to let the world (and ourselves) experience more of the truth.

First Nations Development Institute and Echo Hawk Consulting released its research in a report, "Reclaiming Native Truth: A Project to Dispel America's Myths and Misconceptions." (A note of disclosure here: I have been a part of the advisory board, a role I took on before joining Indian Country Today.)

The project's goal is a Native-led movement to change the story, what's social scientists call the "master narrative" about the perception and images of Native Americans. The project was funded by a $2.5 million grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and also significant financial contributions from numerous other entities and individuals.

"Some incredible findings were unearthed through this research - many of which had long been experienced and assumed but not proven," said Michael E. Roberts, Tlingit, president & CEO of First Nations. "The findings clearly validate the realities that so many Native people face in their day-to-day interactions in communities. They provide our project, and the larger movement, with a strong foundation upon which to move forward." Crystal Echo
Hawk. Pawnee, president & CEO of Echo Hawk Consulting, said, "This research informed how we could create a new narrative that would be effective in changing misperceptions. We formulated a new narrative, created by renowned Native American artists and storytellers, that proved to change people's understanding of Native people and issues. We are excited to take this new narrative and our research findings and transition into a new phase of this project, harnessing the power of a movement of movements."

What's been learned? A few points from the news release:

- **Discrimination:** Most Americans surveyed significantly understate the degree of discrimination against Native Americans. Only 34 percent of Americans believe that Native people face discrimination. At the same time, myths about the abundance of Indian gaming and free government benefits to Native Americans are widely held and fuel bias across diverse demographics and within institutions.

- **Narratives:** The research found that people have limited personal experience with Native Americans but accept pervasive negative narratives that are erroneously set or reinforced by others, and that proximity shapes some perceptions. For instance, people who live near or work in Indian Country, especially in areas of great poverty, are likely to hold significant bias. Only 56 percent of survey respondents living in close proximity to Native communities believed the U.S. should do more to help Native Americans compared to 64 percent of respondents further removed.

- **Invisibility:** Unsurprisingly, another key finding was that Native Americans are assigned to a romanticized past. However, one of the biggest barriers identified was the invisibility and erasure of Native Americans in all aspects of modern U.S. society. Respondents, including members of Congress and administrative officials, agree that invisibility, stereotypes and narratives set by others do impact policy.

- **Desire for Complete History:** One of the key opportunities uncovered is that, across the research, people are well aware of the inaccurate historical lessons they have learned about Native Americans, and want more accurate education about both historical and contemporary Natives. This was reflected in national polling that indicated that 72 percent believe it is necessary to make significant changes to school curricula on Native American history and culture.

Researchers working with Reclaiming Native Truth found that most Americans -- 78 percent -- are interested in learning more about Native American cultures. And, strong majorities support Native American positions on most issues - mascots excepted - without even hearing the narratives.

"One of the most significant outcomes of the project related to developing and testing a new strength-based narrative that incorporated messaging related to values, history and the visibility of Native peoples," the news release said. "The narrative was tested through an online survey conducted between April 27 and May 1, 2018, with 2,000 Americans over age 18. Majorities of Americans support the new narrative and find it credible. A 65 percent majority say they would be willing - 31 percent very willing - to share these ideas with others. More issue-specific narrative messages written around key issues - mascots, the Indian Child Welfare Act, tribal sovereignty and pop culture depictions of Native Americans - find similar validation."

"We are encouraged by the findings of the research and narrative message testing
in this first phase,” said Vicky Stott, Program Officer at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. "As a philanthropic partner to the project, we are committed to telling more authentic and complete stories about who we are as interconnected people living in America. This work has the potential to transform the way we understand and relate to one another and, ultimately, co-create a new story about our shared humanity."

What’s next?

Reclaiming Native Truth has published its detailed report and a messaging guide.

"The project provided us the critical opportunity to begin to assemble an incredible team of not only researchers, but other experts and thought leaders across Indian Country, and both Native and non-Native allies and professionals in the media, the arts, entertainment, politics and education, as well as others who have worked on successful racial narrative change projects," noted Echo Hawk. "We have the new research foundation built, a cadre of willing and able experts at the ready, and we have the desire and ability to move this project into the next phases where we can begin to shift the narrative."

"We have also sought and received input and feedback at every step in the project, from more than 180 stakeholders, including an incredible swath of Indian Country that came together in a new and different way to support these efforts," Roberts said. "Their voices are reflected in this project and we are all committed to work together going forward. Native Americans and tribes have faced discrimination and bias at every level of society, institutionally, and within government. They have been held back from reaching their full potential by the negative stereotypes, damaging misperceptions and lack of awareness that prevail within education, the media, entertainment, popular culture, and among thought leaders. Changing that begins now."

The power of a master narrative is hard to understate. One way to think about these stories is they are human software, a built in operating system, that tells each of us what's right, what's fair, and how we all fit into a larger story.

And that story cannot just be one that we consume. It's a revision, a old story told anew, that must come from Native people. The Native truths.

Mark Trahant is editor of Indian Country Today. He is a member of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes. His email is mtrahant@IndianCountryToday.com Follow him on Twitter - @TrahantReports

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Filmmaker Opportunities

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Radio Announcer
Nebraska - Open Until Filled

Fill-In Host/Announcers for OPB Radio
Oregon - Open Until Filled

Environmental Journalist
Great Lakes Region - Open Until Filled

FUNDING
First Nations Native Arts Initiative
Deadline: August 30

IDA Enterprise Documentary Fund
Deadline: September 1

IDA Pare Lorentz Documentary Fund
Deadline: September 1

Native Voices Rising Grant
Deadline: Ongoing

POV Artist Emergency Fund
Deadline: Ongoing

FILM FESTIVALS
Wasatch Mountain Film Festival Call for Submissions
Deadline: August 31

Big Sky Documentary Film Festival Call for Entries
Deadline: September 3

LA Skins Film Festival Call for Entries
Deadline: September 10

Truly CA Call for Entries
Deadline: November 1

50 Film Festivals Worth the Entry Fee
Deadline: 2018

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Deadline: August 31

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Woods Hole Film Festival
Woods Hole, MA - August 4

Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian 2018 Native Cinema Showcase
Santa Fe, NM - August 14

Lake of Betrayal
RALLY 2018 National Land Conservation Conference
Pittsburgh, PA - October 10

Moroni for President
Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian 2018 Native Cinema Showcase
Santa Fe, NM - August 16

Ohiyesa: The Soul of an Indian
Dakota County Library Inver Glen
Inter Grove Heights, MN - October 9

Augsburg Native American Film Series
Minneapolis, MN - November 14

Tribal Justice
Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian 2018 Native Cinema Showcase
Santa Fe, NM - August 15

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