

Sharing Native Stories
with the World



DONATE >>



VISIT OUR WEBSITE

Vision Maker Media E-News - August 2018

August Specials

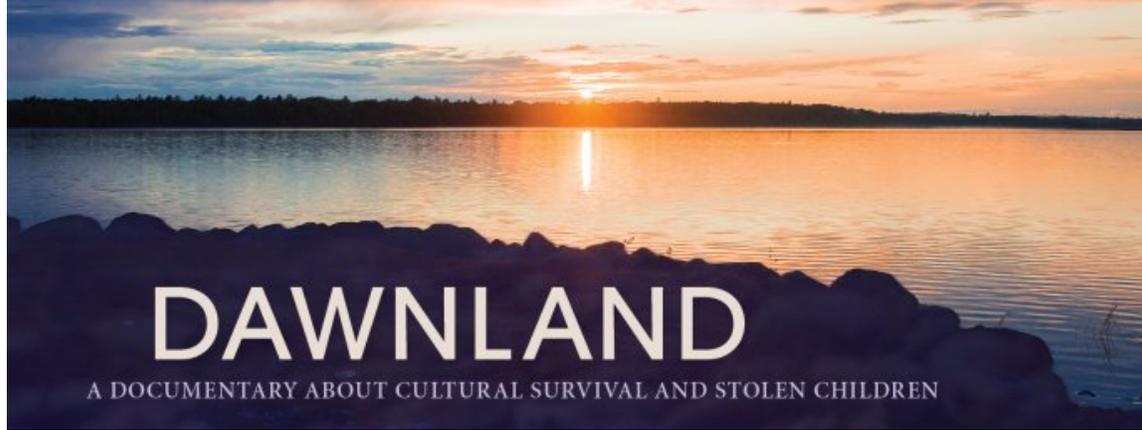
Back to School--Special Savings!



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](#), the largest juried show of Native fine art in the world. Held at the [New Mexico History Museum](#), 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](#).



[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

CHANGING THE NARRATIVE ABOUT NATIVE AMERICANS

A GUIDE FOR ALLIES



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](#)

Filmmaker Opportunities

JOBS

[Communications Director](#)
Montana - Open Until Filled

[Event and Program Manager](#)
Nebraska - Open Until Filled

[NET Satellite Maintenance Engineer](#)
Nebraska - Open Until Filled

[NET Business Development Representative](#)
Nebraska - Open Until Filled

[Business System Analyst](#)
Nebraska - Open Until Filled

FUNDING - (Cont'd)

[Just Films Inquiry](#)
Deadline: Ongoing

[Focus Grant](#)
Deadline: Ongoing

[Documentary Fund](#)
Deadline: Ongoing

FELLOWSHIP/INTERNSHIP
[Plimoth Plantation Internship](#)
Deadline: August 1

[Eiteljorg Museum Fellowship](#)
Deadline: August 15

[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

TRAINING

[Next Gen after School Program](#)

Deadline: August 31

Upcoming Film Screenings

Don't miss a chance to see one of our films when it comes to your area. Tell your friends.

[Dawnland](#)

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

DONATE >>

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

STAY CONNECTED:

