THE INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN INDIAN ARTS : LOOKING BACK - LOOKING FORWARD

by

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The Institute of American Indian Arts (I.A.I.A.) here in Santa Fe, a ~~fully accredited~~ junior college offering an Associate of Fine Arts degree, is at a critical juncture in its twenty year history and faces possible dissolution with ramifications reaching far beyond Native American art and artists. Administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs of the U.S. Department of the Interior, I.A.I.A. has gained considerable national and international recognition for its innovative programs supportive of aspiring young Native American artists.

Of the many problems facing the Institute, the most crucial is its current intense battle with the All Indian Pueblo Council, the representative political body in matters concerning the outside world, of the Pueblo Indian people of New Mexico. There are nineteen Pueblos in N.M.; the Hopi of Arizona are considered to be Pueblo by culture, but they are not represented in the A.I.P.C. which has its administrative offices in Albuquerque. The issue concerns A.I.P.C.'s long-standing claim that the campus on which the Institute sits, and the buildings it occupies, belong to it and the Pueblo people it ostensibly represents. (Several Pueblos have essentially pulled out of the A.I.P.C. as being an organization either ideologically no longer representative of their views, or as an unnecessary conduit through which to obtain federal grants and assistance.

The All Indian Pueblo Council's claim further states that the campus and buildings were unjustly taken from the Pueblo people in 1962 when the old Santa Fe Indian Boarding School was closed and the Institute was founded. Regardless of whether or not the claims have solid merit, no one is questioning the near volatile emotional at-

mosphere surrounding the issue.

The A.I.P.C. has had some success in administering (under a contract system with the Bureau of Indian Affairs) another old boarding school in Albuquerque. A.I.P.C. claims, with some justification, that the campus of the Albuquerque Indian School is in a state of dangerous disintegration and should be torn down. It wants to move the students from that school to the Santa Fe campus (equally old but in better condition, generally speaking). The New Mexico Republican Congressional delegation supports the A.I.P.C. for political reasons (the A.I.P.C. endorsed President Reagan in the 1980 campaign), but also because the success of the A.I.P.C. in administering the Albuquerque Indian School by itself is confirmation of the worth of the current non partisan policy of "self-determination" by which Indian education - indeed, all Indian affairs - will eventually be managed entirely by the Indian people themselves.

Weakened for a number of other reasons to be discussed, the Institute of American Indian Arts, with a student body made up of individuals from many different tribes (including Pueblos), appears to be loosing the battle for the campus - if not its very existence. What's gone wrong? What's in the future?

At first glance, to one reared in the sometimes misguided dream-world of the Kennedy era, to one who sat embarrassedly for one long lovely year in the gymnasium of a tiny prairie Indian town in South Dakota wondering what he was suppose to do as a VISTA*, the whole idea of the I.A.I.A. has appeared at times to be a classic Peace Corps type mistake: a perhaps hurried assessment of the state of "Indian art"; an elegantly conceived philosophical prospectus for the future; and, finally, in 1962, the celebrated implantation of an institutional solution to the problem (perceived as decadence) right smack-dab in

*VISTA - the "Domestic Peace Corps" - Volunteers in Service to America

the middle of a grudging, taciturn aboriginal region of ancient aesthetic ideals.

Outwardly, in the Fred-Harvey's-Indian-Detours, All-the-Way-with-the-Santa-Fe, terribly-lucrative-marketplace sense of things, "Indian art" in the late 1950's appeared to have come on hard, decoratively dead, and cliched times. The art students down at the old Sant Fe Indian Boarding School on Cerrillos Road (the setting of much of the story of Indian art from the turn of the century to the present) were, frankly, bored - and their work boring. The magnificent Thirties legacy of the Dorothy Dunn Studio of that S.F. Indian Boarding School, the Studio of the Apache, Allan Houser; the Sioux, Oscar Howe; the Navajo, Harrison Begay and Gerald Nailor; and the Pueblos, Pablita Velarde, Joe H. Herrera, Pop-Chalee, and Patrick Swazo Hinds, had turned sour, dank - odd for the desert, but nonetheless a reality. As Lloyd Kiva New, the marvelously articulate, Chicago Art Institute educated Cherokee said: "My feeling at the time was that that school [the Santa Fe Indian School] was not healthily founded....It tended to feed off of itself - eat itself up so to speak. It no longer had an open-ended creativity base."*

To Lloyd New, the Renaissance man, the Peace Corps man, the solution was simple but grand: think big, think Greek - painting, pageants theater, the imminent emergence of a whole host of articulate Indian writers (there were antecedents to that in the Cherokee world after-all); poets, playwrights, filmmakers. It needed only a place to happen! Lloyd New:

"It seemed to me that what needed to be done was to get an institution that would allow Indian People the same priveleges of open-ended creativity as anyone else, and to me it was really a matter of educational freedom....Much of the richness of Indian culture would be carried forth in the 60's through the arts in much the way it at one time had been carried through the religion."

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* Unless otherwise footnoted, all quotes are from personal interviews conducted by the author.

The Greeks had done it after all! What matter that the Pueblo religion was far from dead (unhappily, not the case in much of the rest of Indian America); the "richness" of Pueblo culture was, and is still, a direct manifestation of the strength of its religion.

But despite some obvious ill omens and local grumbling, the Santa Fe Indian Boarding School was chosen for the new school:

"The plant was being considered for abandonment by the B.I.A., in keeping with a policy shift away from the boarding school concept, and Indian parents' wishes to have their children attend schools closer to their homes. Students in the program at the time of change-over were those who came mainly from the Apache, Navajo, and Ute Reservations--hardship cases of one kind or another--and some sixty Pueblos."[1]

And the dream (perhaps a little naive, perhaps a little too Pan-Indian) came true. In hindsight, Lloyd New observed in 1979:

"The opening was auspicious, for a number of reasons. The Pueblos objected to the purpose to which the school was to be put, and to the fact that it would serve tribes from other areas, despite the fact that the land upon which the school was located, atypically, had been dedicated in trust to the Federal government to serve the educational needs of all Indian tribes; thus giving the Pueblos no prior special teritorial claim to the institution such as that which would have been natural under different circumstances."[2]

There are multiple reasons really - political, economic, philosophical - for the troubled waters that have surrounded the Institute of American Indian Arts from its opening to the present. The problem, for instance, is more complex it turns out than the old grudge many Pueblo Indians do hold against the Institute as someone else's idea shoved down their throats. A point of historical fact, and again typically and ironically Peace-Corpsesque: the Governors of the nineteen Pueblos had actually endorsed the closing of the old school - "thier" boarding school. But the ways of Pueblo thinking and decision making are as incomprehensible, as untranslatable and immutable as the expressions on the faces of the Santo Domingo Pueblo women selling their traditional crafts under the Portal of the

Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe (pictured). These are the same women who, in driving daily past the I.A.I.A. to and from the Pueblo thirty miles to the south, seldom if ever heed the welcoming "Exhibit Open" sign on the museum-gallery there.

And the problem is far more complex, indeed - and certainly more interesting - than the actions of a shabby cabal of a few latter-day, three-piece-suit Pueblo politicos in cahoots with an economically (as against culturally) oriented, Republican New Mexico Congressional delegation. Of this delegation (and of President Reagan and Secretary of the Interior James Watt), Henry Gobin (Tulalip), current outspoken Arts Director of the Institute, says:

"They're totally insensitive to cultural arts. These guys are without spiritual guidance! They're concerned about votes, concerned about payoffs, and solidifying the future for themselves and their children's children. And when it comes to the Third World and the needs of our Indian people, you might just as well kiss that off!"

And the problem goes well beyond the too easily concocted dichotomy of "Traditionalist" Indian artists and craftsmen and their tribally approved and demure decorative motifs versus the sardonic expressions of a pissed off lot of "Modernists" (what art historian J.J.Brody calls "idiosyncratic painters") - malcontents unleashed on a wave of Red Power and the American Indian Movement in the Sixties; the Bill Soza, T.C.Cannon, Delmar Boni, Fritz Scholder legacy. Because, as will be pointed out by Charles Dailey, Director of the I.A.I.A. Museum, both "schools" have coexisted - not always happily - at the Institute, and there has always been a hard-working, creative bunch of artists on a middle ground.

The body of this article is an interview with three key people currently at the Institute. I let them - and others in less lengthy statements - tell the story. I'll let them ponder the future.

But, first, it's necessary to go back a bit; to hopefully bring

this all into focus through a brief historical essay which is told in far greater detail by others*, but which I'll endeavor to paraphrase. It's the story of "Indian art" - for better or worse; and the story is, indeed, fraught with benevolent but misguided non- Indian prescription and outright, economically motivated, manipulation. But it's a tale, too, as frequently punctuated by countering hands-off outcries from well-intentioned but often patronizing individuals and organizations. It's an eighty year old account of the inevitability of culture clash; of changing government philosophy vis-à-vis the "Indian problem"; of accomodation and rejection; and of the big bucks associated with a white-guilt nurtured romanticism and nostalgia (and Indian artists' acceptance or rejection of that). And, lastly, it's an analysis of all the above as it effects the form and content and function of "Indian art."

J.J. Brody, Director of the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology at the University of New Mexico and author of Indian Painters and White Patrons, asks - somewhat clinically - the key questions:

"(1) To what degree is modern American Indian painting an extension of aboriginal pictorial form and content, and to what degree is it a novelty? (2) To what degree is modern American Indian painting an extension of aboriginal pictorial functions, and to what degree an accomodation to postconquest realities?"[3]

To begin with, pre-white man native "art" was primarily functional - didactic, mnemonic, religious-ceremonial. That's not to say that the "artists" didn't enjoy creating it or looking at it after they'd created it. But it wasn't created for the sole purpose of enjoyment; it was not art for art's sake.

"As American Indian societies crumbled under the impact of foreign invasions," Brody explains, "they ceased to produce pictures; there was no longer any reason for them to paint."[4] The religions were eroded; the belief systems decimated. The exception in the

* See Bibliography.

late 19th century was in the Southwest (and this is very important to keep in mind when thinking about the I.A.I.A.'s location), where the Pueblos and Navajo were able, for a number of reasons, to continue, essentially uninterrupted, prehistoric ritual art in a number of modes.

Mainly through the efforts of a small group of concerned traders, anthropologists and museologists - people like J. Lorenzo Hubbell, Fred Harvey, J. Walter Fewkes, Edgar Hewett and Kenneth Chapman, a major crafts revival in weaving and pottery began in the Southwest in the last years of the 19th century. While much of the new work had antecedant elements in a pre-conquest past, new forms and motifs emerged. Early in the 20th century, a cash economy, centered on the crafts revival, gradually grew in importance among the Navajo and Pueblos. It continues today as a multimillion dollar market made the stronger by major annual competitions in crafts throughout the Southwest and the continued tremendous popularity of Indian crafts with the public. The Indian artisans pictured under the Portal in Santa Fe are of this tradition.

Some of the same people involved in the crafts revival were also responsible for the first nonfunctional painting being done by Indians in the Pueblos between 1885 and 1916. Fewkes, working at Hopi, was able to hire a number of local men to produce paintings which would serve as an ethnographically accurate recording of Hopi kachina. He gave the artists crayons, paints, pencils, brushes and paper to work with.

Similarly, in the Rio Grande area, Doctors Edgar L. Hewett and Kenneth Chapman of the School of American Research based in Santa Fe, encouraged the early "secular" painting being done by a number of San Ildefonso Pueblo artists, Crescencio Martínez and Julian Martínez among them.

The work done by them, intended originally to function as an anthropological record of Indian life, is now considered to be the core material from which the "Traditionalist" school of Indian painting emerged. That school continues today, and in simplistic terms, forms one side in the "Traditionalist-Modernist" schism of the contemporary American Indian art scene.

Hewett, unlike Fewkes on the Hopi mesas, was less interested in the anthropological accuracy of the San Ildefonso efforts and more concerned with the emergence of latent artistic talent among Indian people in general. As founder of the Fine Arts Museum in Santa Fe and an early sponsor of such newly emigrated East Coast artists as John Sloan, Robert Henri, and George Bellows among many, Hewett's importance to the overall art picture in the Southwest is enormous.

The impact of such non-Indian patronage in the general renaissance of American Indian art early in this century is a subject of a continuing debate. Some feel that the painting suffered from that patronage. J.J.Brody says:

"It seems likely that changes in form in Rio Grande painting occurred in response to the desires of the patrons. The Santa Fe intellectuals appear to have been perfectly convinced that they were not influencing the painters, that the artists were indeed tapping aboriginal roots, but the evidence indicates otherwise....Fragments of prehistoric murals had been uncovered by the School of American Research in Frijoles Canyon near Santa Fe, and White preconceptions of what Indian art should look like conformed to these."[5]

Jamake Highwater, also an art historian, counters by pointing out:

"Patronage has had an enormous influence on the content and intent of all art, whether the patron was the pope or white tourists. It would seem that what is important is the way in which the artist rises to the shaping demands of his patrons and not whether he exists in an ivory tower where he sings songs to please himself."[6]

The debate is ongoing, often humorous, and full of innocent contradiction. For example, in a 1940 statement published by the New Mexico Association on Indian Affairs, Hewett, intent on helping

defend the pure "traditional style" (water colors on paper which he'd in essence introduced at San Ildefonso some years earlier), stated:

"When we were first encouraging Indians to paint we would ask them if they knew certain ceremonies and wanted to paint them. If they said 'yes' we provided them with the paper and paints, but if any of my staff had dared to tell an Indian how to paint I would have cut his throat."[7]

And, too, it was between 1918 and 1925 that some artistic activity was being allowed to happen at the Santa Fe Indian Boarding School despite government policy forbidding it. Encouraged by an open-minded superintendent, John D. DeHuff, and his wife Elizabeth, two Hopis, Fred Kabotie and Otis Polelonema, and a Zia Pueblo Indian, Velino Shije Herrera, began to paint.

In an interview with Jamake Highwater, Fred Kabotie said:

"I never studied art under anybody. DeHuff just told me that I should go ahead and paint as I wanted to paint...the way I had been painting since 1915. Mrs. DeHuff, she was a very good lady and she talked to a man from Denmark who was the teacher of carpentry at the Indian school and asked him to let me out of class so I could come to her house and paint. So he would let me go and I would sit in a little room in thehouse and, using school paints and common papers, I would paint for many hours."[8]

And as an example of trouble in an earlier time on the same campus that now houses a beleaguered Institute of American Indian Arts, Kabotie tells the sad story of the DeHuff's Waterloo:

"Something bad happened in those days. There was an old lady who was the librarian at the Indian school - she made a report to Washington and told them that Mr. and Mrs. DeHuff were allowing me to paint the things which were true in my life...like the kachinas. So what happened to them was that he was demoted from superintendent to principal, and they were transferred to Riverside, California.... The consul of the Pueblos wrote many times to Washington to ask for the reinstatement of John DeHuff but to no avail. I was the only one allowed to paint. The rest had to try to become white men."[9]

In the Twenties in Oklahoma, there emerged a painting movement similar to that in Santa Fe in its being sponsored by well-intentioned, if romantically-minded, whites who suffered (with their Santa Fe counterparts) from preconceived notions of what "Indian art" should look like. This movement was centered in Anadarko and later, for a

few, in special classes at the University of Oklahoma. From it came the Kiowa Five school of painting which has a continued influence even today. Byron McCurtain, a Kiowa art student currently at the I.A.I.A., makes mention of this group in the interview to follow. Its colorful, bold, figurative style, sometimes stencil-like and overly decorative, overlaps with the development in 1932 of the Studio of Dorothy Dunn at the Santa Fe Indian School.

The startling 1928 Meriam Report of the federal government had recommended that the arts be encouraged among Indian students. This was the beginning of a major reversal in government policy regarding Indians which climaxed in 1934 with the Indian Reorganization Act and the magnificently enlightened era of John Collier as Commissioner of Indian Affairs in the B.I.A.

Miss Dunn (a non-Indian), well-meaning and certainly energetic, nonetheless held those same preconceived ideas as others of Indian art as something instinctive and tribally specific which would well forth if only given the opportunity. The Studio painters, under her direct and firm control always, developed a clean, balanced, decorative style characterized by what Brody calls "good taste." It not infrequently crossed the line into cuteness, and, in fact (though innocently enough), the Bambi-like animals of certain of the Studio artists were inspired by Walt Disney's movie of the same name.

Allan Houser (Chiricahua Apache), now most famous for his sculpture, was then a painting student under Dunn:

"They ran an add in the papers and I saw it up at home, in Oklahoma. I had a friend and the two of us wanted to come down and study with Dorothy Dunn. Well, it really didn't work out as I had wanted it to because I was interested in exploring realistic painting. But when I got to The Studio it was the old Traditional style they wanted from you or none at all. Dorothy Dunn told me that if I was going to do things that are realistic, then you better go on out and take the next bus home. Well, some of the kids did just that.... What Dunn did was this - and I can tell you because I was right here at The Studio when it was beginning. Everyone was encouraged to

search their background for traditional things. That's all she permitted us to do....My only objection to Dorothy Dunn was this: she trained us all the same way. 'You either paint like this, Mr. Houser, or it's not Indian art.' But what the hell, you have to have your owninterpretation of things."[10]

The Studio flourished under Dunn for about five years. She left in 1937, and the arts program, in a less exciting form, continued at the Santa Fe Indian School to W. W. II and beyond. It produced - one might say, in spite of Dunn - a large number of successful artists, at least one of whom, Allan Houser, went on to be an instructor at the Institute of American Indian Arts when it opened in 1962.

Following 1945, Bacone College in Oklahoma emerged as a center of Indian painting pretty much in the earlier Kiowa Five tradition, but with the added support that the Philbrook Art Center in Tulsa began competitions which paid big prize money for the very first time to Indian painters.

At the same time in New Mexico, Brody explains:

"The Santa Fe Indian School continued to produce more Indian painters than any other institution, but they were increasingly less creative and less influential, molded by the formalism of their instructors and the commercial examples set by the older alumni."[11]

The period between the end of the war and 1962 was not without significant Indian artists, but much of the work produced was a predictable continuation of the earlier traditions.

In perhaps one of his most devastating observations on a kind of commercial illustration style of some Indian painting of that post war period and increasingly so today, Brody laments:

"[They've] become an aboriginal contingent of the widespread and long-lived Western regional tradition of American art. Their work is indistinguishable from that of the Anglo romantic-realists [i.e. cowboy artists]."[12]

Brody's comment in itself is a little patronizing; in a negative way, he, like others before him, is caught circumscribing what

he has decided is "Indian Art" to the exlusion of anything else. It's a very tricky business.

Growing despair over the stagnant nature of much of Indian art led finally to the Rockefeller Foundation funded Indian Art Project at the University of Arizona from 1959-62. Indian kids were brought in from across North America to spend summers in an exciting new program designed to let them experiment and explore in different media and styles. The Hopi, Charles Loloma and the Cherokee, Lloyd Kiva New wereCo-directors of that program. Loloma had been a student of New's at the Phoenix Indian School. Together they had befriended Frank Lloyd Wright (then in Scottsdale); and the three of them, Loloma remembers* spent many hours discussing Lloyd New's dream of an Indian arts academy.

Out of the University of Arizona project came ~~a major conference~~ other planning and finally the founding of the Institute in 1962 with Dr. George Boyce as its first Superintendent and Lloyd New as the first Arts Director. The Indian Arts and Crafts Board of the U.S. Dept. of the Interior played an important role from the beginning as a sponsor and friend of the Institute. The school centered on 140 "carefully recruited students."[13] It was initially a high school with some emphasis on post-secondary studio work.

"The progressive philosophy of the new school brought worry to conservatively minded patrons and some Indians who believed that its announced plans to encourage students to experiment in non-traditional areas of artistic development such as sculpture, creative writing, the performing arts, film training, photography, and new forms of painting was somehow wrong.

But, to the studnets who came, and to an enthusiastic faculty, the opening was exciting--for not only would Indian students of special artistic inclinations find a whole institution open to the advancement of their cultural traditions, much like other art schools that served the cultural needs within the major society, but here by example, was a demonstration by the Federal government of a major change in attitude regarding the value of cultural difference."[14]

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* Charles Loloma, personal conversation.

The mistake, as Lloyd New sees it now, was that the Institute had to be run within the preposterously inflexible framework of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. That fact (true of the B.I.A. even in the best of times - the John Collier-Harold Ickes period before W.W.II under F.D.R. and the Stewart Udall period in the Kennedy-Johnson years), combined with the inevitability in a quasi-military organization like the B.I.A. that at least some could-care-less-about-art middle echelon administrators would be "stationed" at the I.A.I.A., resulted in a slow erosion of morale of staff and students and an inconsistency in policy and intent as people came and went.

Compare the following remarkably similar examples of the Bureau's unimaginativeness: In 1932 Dorothy Dunn returned, the enthusiastic missionary, from her studies at the Chicago Art Institute to found the first major government underwritten Indian arts program in U.S. history.

"[She] outlined the proposal to Superintendent Faris of the Santa Fe Indian Boarding School . He was interested, though puzzled as to how the work might be undertaken in the absence of a regular civil service position such as all members of his staff held in their respective fields. After giving some thought to the matter, he said, 'We have a vacancy in one of our fifth grades; if you think you can handle that work in addition to your painting classes, you might write the Washington office at once and apply for that position. Meanwhile, until we see what happens, we do have a small fund for odd labor. Do you want to begin work as a laborer?'"[15]

Similarly, Lloyd New's arrival as first Arts Director at the Institute in 1962 created not a little consternation because the B.I.A. had never had anything called an Arts Director before.

Lloyd New:

"As a new entity, the Institute experienced a period of privilege....[It] didn't last very long and we were finally slotted right back into all the rules and regulations of the bureaucracy of the Bureau of Indian Affairs....The idea was greater than the capacity of the B.I.A. to encompass. It couldn't fit!"

And others observed this gradual erosion after some good initial years. Otellie Loloma (Hopi), a fine arts instructor who

began teaching at the Institute in 1962, says of the early Udall days:

"Everybody was doing something instead of just sitting in their offices. They [the administrators] were out there with us, and there was a very good rapport among the staff members as well as students....When Udall left his position, that's when things started happening: we never had the money [after that].... People started leaving."

Linda Lomahaftewa (Hopi-Choctaw), now a painting instructor, but one of the first students at I.A.I.A. in 1962, observes:

"A lot of it has to do with bureaucracy, and having to deal with a lot of red tape and just trying to get programs [going] too.... I felt I came [to teach in 1976] with exciting ideas, wanting to do things. But you have to go through so much red tape! It's like they drag you down....I think it should be out from under the government....We're restricted in a lot of ways - what we can say and how we go about wanting to do an art program. The government just doesn't understand; they want forms and codes to go by and art isn't like that!"

Henry Gobin, who'd been a classmate of Linda's when the Institute opened, returned from San Francisco to teach in 1971:

"I felt I'd walked into a mess. The place, as far as I was concerned, was in a state of lurch. There was division on the campus. I felt they had an unrealistic approach to an educational philosophy and standards....It didn't know what was going on in the art world in L.A., San Francisco, and New York. We were a safe, little, romanticized institution....It <u>wasn't</u> preparing these kids to go [to those cities] and maintain themselves."

Allan Houser, who retired from active teaching at the Institute in the late 1970's, tempers his criticism somewhat. When asked if he thought the government could run an art school, he answered: "I think it can, providing you get the right people in the head office. Some people don't belong there!" But when asked what he felt the biggest single problem at the Institute had been, Houser answered: "Administration."

Ralph Pardington, a non-Indian who has taught ceramics at I.A.I.A. from its beginning, agrees:

"The worse thing was a period of three years [late 60's] that we went through where we had a big turnover of people. We had no director!...Then it [the B.I.A.] <u>really</u> rolled us by bring in political

hatchet men...all in here for 120 day appointments. They were brought from somewhere else. They didn't give a ~~shit~~ damn. They were given some rules to hang us, and they'd do as much of it as they could. And then they'd bring in the next guy and he'd proceed to hang us some more! And that's really why we're in the position we're in....The government was trying to cut back; I think they would have rather closed us....

[Supposedly it's not legal to have anybody on temporary appointment for more than one year. But we were all on it for five! The first arts staff were temporary employees.] It was an experimental idea and everybody said, 'Yeah, go with it!' But nobody ever went down the line and asked, 'Well, if we're going with it, what does this, this and this mean?'"

The board of regents (the Native American Council of Regents) of the I.A.I.A. has played an interesting - but essentially inefficacious - role in the history of the Institute. Not organized until 1972, ten years after the founding of the Institute, its membership to (the Council was designed to be an advisory body with some clout,) be made up of Native American representatives from each of the indigenous cultural regions of the United States - the Great Plains, the Eastern Woodlands, the Southwest, and so on, each appointed by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs of the B.I.A.

Karita Coffey (Comanche), a ceramist who went to the Institute as a student in the early sixties and who later was appointed to the Council, describes that group's impotence:

"It just fizzled out!...The board was never that well-defined.... With the B.I.A., it's pretty hard to have any kind of decision-making authority....As people resigned from the board, they were not replaced ...like Alaska at one time and other regions, they were never replaced and that weakened it and weakened our ties to the community!... It got to be <u>really</u> frustrating after awhile; it's like you couldn't do anything! You had no authority; there was no money any more...and that was because of politics!...The Bureau was turning on us; that did a lot to destroy the board. It left us powerless."

Despite that, Coffey - and many others - feel that if the Institute could be given some sort of autonomy (i.e. as a functioning entity <u>outside</u> the B.I.A.), the Council of Regents would surely play an important role in the school's rebirth.

As with many of the Kennedy-Johnson social programs, so too did the Institute of American Indian Arts attract worldwide attention. Millard "Skip" Holbrook, since 1962 an instructor in jewelry at I.A.I.A., describes those earlier days:

"The State Department at one time was sending exhibits around the world from here, and they were bringing people in from all over the country. And Third World people particularly were brought in here and shown what the U.S. government was doing as far as a minority group was concerned, and it had a great impact. I think the potential for that is still very much with us because we're dealing with the Third World more all the time.... It made a big impression with people from Africa, New Zealand, Asian countries, from all over. People would come in and say, 'You mean the government is doing this! Spin-off programs, consequently, have been started in other Third World countries patterned after this place."

Some of the restlessness on campus in the late sixties and early to mid-seventies related, no doubt, to the general restlessness in the larger Indian world. The Red Power era had arrived whether everyone agreed with it or not (and there were always a good number of Indians who didn't agree with it, particularly in the conservative regions of the Southwest). The American Indian Movement as a specific manifestation of the general movement established itself to a degree on the campus of I.A.I.A., and among the students, there was some polarization between those who sided with the tactics of A.I.M. and those who didn't.

Much of the painting at the time certainly reflected the militancy of the Alcatraz occupation, the Pit River fishing rights issue, Wounded Knee, and other political concerns. Bill Soza War Soldier, Cahuilla-Apache, was one of the activists. He attended the I.A.I.A. from 1964-69 and went on to become involved at Alcatraz, the takeover of the B.I.A. offices in Washington, D.C., the Mount Rushmore occupation, Black Mesa and other deomonstrations, and was eventually jailed on a number of federal charges. "Through my

art I say what is inside of me and direct it at the U.S. Government and fear no reprisal because it is my art."[16]

Of A.I.M., the open-minded patriarch of Indian sculptors, Allan Houser says:

"I think it's one of the greatest things that ever happened.... From that we're where we are today. Now people are speaking up, Indians are speaking up, and they're not letting things just ride as they were....Being under the government, they were afraid to say anything. And they were just like hired people - afraid to say anything to defend themselves."

But there are differing opinions over the relative success of A.I.M. to gain a stronghold on the campus. Otellie Loloma:

"They [A.I.M.] had a meeting over at the old gym. Russell Means was there, and they were trying to encourage the students to demand all the things they could. But they didn't have much real success with the students, because I think the students, by then, realized what they were getting themselves into."

Ralph Pardington:

"We had a very strong Indian movement....As instructors during that time, I think some of us felt a little more anti-white feeling ....[But]once the Indian people pick you up...you're not an Anglo as they hate the Anglo, you become [rather] sort of a half-brother or half-sister."

The presence of the American Indian Movement (or its ideals) on campus combined with internal haggling (much of it actually characteristic of any healthy art school functioning on a full head of creative steam, particularly in a decade of strong social movement), nevertheless, must have given the less empathetic, and certainly less artistic, bureaucrats - Indian and non-Indian - in the B.I.A. offices in Albuquerque and D.C. the jitters. How, after all, could a bureau of the federal government support an Indian school which was becoming famous for powerfully expressive paintings of truculent Indians wrapped iconoclastically in American flags!?

A.I.M. and the Red Power movement in general, emanated from centers of urban Indian unrest - places like Minneapolis' Southside

and Franklin Avenue districts. Many of its leaders, articulate and angry, were men who had been raised or wound up in the cross-cultural kind of hodgepodge characteristic of urban Indian ghettos and environs. Like many revolutionaries, they had by an early age done time in prison - or would do so (as in Soza's case) as a result of their movement activities. And to the Pueblo Indian people in the Rio Grande Valley, the possible presence of A.I.M. on the I.A.I.A. campus, real or imagined, no doubt added to the general apprehension they felt about "that art school!" "Their school" had not only been rested from them, but it was being taken over in turn by crazed revolutionaries - a breed of tribally indistinct Indian artists whose ideas they couldn't comprehend. Their own expressive, but rather quiet art has always been learned in the Pueblo itself, not in a school. There was, therefore, in their perhaps misguided opinion, no need for anything like an institute for Indian art with strange new materials, massive abstract canvases, Indian rock bands, avant-garde theater, et al. Or if there was to be a school, let it be in the tried and true Dunn tradition, and let the school be run by themselves!

Santo Domingo Pueblo, of the Keresan language group south of Santa Fe, figures heavily, curiously enough, in the story of "Indian art." It is one of the several extremely conservative (at times reactionary) Pueblos which has adamantly, and justly so, fought encroachment of any kind on its land or world view. Santo Domingo makes strong statements when stepped on. And it is the Pueblo, you may recall, where Dunn was a school teacher for a number of years before moving to Santa Fe. Be that as it may, a number of fine artists, Larry and Harold Littlebird and Manuelita Lovato, to mention just three, of the "contemporary" school have emerged from Santo Domingo in recent years. These are people who've had to tread the

thin line between tribally acceptable modes of expression and individual exploration. Manuelita Lovato, instructor in the Museum Training Program at I.A.I.A. for over ten years, considers herself to be the first woman professional to break from the ancient constictions placed on women (and in different ways, men) by the tribe. Nor has it been easy for her to be so conspicuously on the other side in the current battle between the All Indian Pueblo Council, ostensibly representative of all Pueblo people, and the Institute. The present chairman of the A.I.P.C., ironically enough, is himself a part Santo Domingo Indian.

Manuelita talks of being caught between the two worlds:

"In a way, it's very hard....A lot of Pueblo people are supportive of the Institute, but a lot of them are not aware of what's happening here, and they're surprised at what's going on."

Of her own work:

"Some of them will come up; some of them you can tell that that's just something they want to get out of their system. They'll say, 'Gee, what's this suppose to be!' And you've got to be really nice about the concern that's coming from different people - try to explain to them since they do have a problem understanding what it is. You explain: 'I'm a different person. I'm not a traditional potter, and I'd rather do contemporary type of work, and this is my thing. So I'm willing to explain to you what it is....And you talk about the work, and they finally understand. And they begin to realize that there is something that's gone into that piece, and what it really meant!"

Concerning the effort of the A.I.P.C. to regain the Santa Fe Indian School campus:

"They made a mistake. They pulled all the Pueblo people from this school [the old Santa Fe Indian Boarding School] and put them in public schools. And now they're trying to go backwards - trying to rebuild the school here where we could be going forward not backwards."

There are many Pueblo people who have dissented from the A.I.P.C. stance and spoken in favor of the Institute's continued existence in Santa Fe. One of these is Governor Lewis of Zuni Pueblo, a traditionally very powerful but remarkably forward-looking Pueblo to the west on the Arizona border. Governor Robert Lewis:

"We're proud of the Institute... it should remain what it is.... We don't like the idea of I.A.I.A. being kicked around like a football without any planning!... It should not just be cast aside!...

I feel for these young people. All of us do. They tried so hard to prevent what's happening; they were earnest and sincere about it....They've got the feeling now that nobody cares and that's bad!...They're not going to feel comfortable at the College of Santa Fe no matter how nice those people are over there....They have a definite sense of pride; a definite sense of what they want to be!"

And closer to Santa Fe, Gary Roybal, Director of the recently opened and highly successful San Ildefonso Pueblo Museum is a graduate of the Museum Training Program of the I.A.I.A. Gary is the son, interestingly enough, of J.D. Roybal, a famous early painter of San Ildefonso who graduated from the Studio of Dorothy Dunn (the Santa Fe Indian Boarding School). Gary's great uncle, Awa Tsireh (Alfonso Roybal) was a seminal figure in the earliest group of artists to emerge from San Ildefonso under the guidance of Chapman and Hewett. Gary saw the Institute as an accessible resource on his own doorstep. Charged by the Pueblo with developing a Pueblo museum, he enrolled at I.A.I.A.

"I'd heard things when I was in high school about I.A.I.A. and the things that had gone on in the 60's...heresay....[But] I wasn't biased towards the Institute. I was there to do a job, to learn museum programs, theories, problems, functions, everything. I was there for a purpose, sent by the Council from here to start a museum....The school provided me with a basic background. The instructors I had were very, very good....There was a personal contact you don't have in some places. And they're there now for me for technical assistance....The people I met through that program are very interested in <u>you</u> personally and will go out of their way to help you out."

Gary sees the Institute's Museum collection as a major source of material for exhibits and programs. He hopes the collection will be kept in Santa Fe intact.

And there were four Pueblo students in this year's I.A.I.A. graduating class of twenty-seven: one from Hopi, a Tesuque, and -

low and behold! - two Santo Domingo Pueblo youths, Joseph Aguilar and Roderick Tenorio.

Mark Swazo-Hinds (Tesuque Pueblo), a 1981 graduate and student representative to the Institute's ~~Board~~ Council of Regents:

"Problems don't really bother me - the things with A.I.P.C. don't really bother me either....I have my own balance with the people at home - taking part in dancing and participating. That's one aspect of my life. Sculpting is an aspect as are silversmithing and painting; I've touched on a lot of things...my work comes from my heart....I've painted with watercolors - done traditional style painting, but I've gone from that and developed my own style. And the people recognize that, and I feel comfortable with what I've done."

Greg Cajete (Santa Clara Pueblo), has been a science instructor in the Liberal Arts Program at the Institute for nearly seven years. Through a holistic approach, Greg relates the life science to art in courses like Indian Herbology and Artistic Anatomy that are very popular among the I.A.I.A. students. He feels that more effort could have been made by the Institute to relate to the surrounding Pueblo people, and points to Charles Dailey's Museum Training Program as an example of a successful effort in that regard:

"Early on he [Dailey] did make some excellent attempts to incorporate a lot of the Pueblo communities in a variety of activities, through shows here on campus but also in helping them set up training programs for select students and cultural centers that you see now in some of the Pueblos....It shows that there were a lot of people out there that could have been reached if the same attitude had been taken by other programs and areas in the Institute about ten years back."

Greg, nonetheless, acknowledges the tremendous positive impact I.A.I.A. has had on the work of young Pueblo artists whether they attended the Institute or not:

"The innovations of design andtechnique especially, <u>definitely</u> are there among young Pueblo artists. And those innovations came primarily from exposure to the Institute. Even Pueblo students who have come here and not graduated from the A.F.A. program have, nevertheless, picked up many things....

Pueblo Indian art is changing, and will continue to change... that's the way art works; that's the way human nature works. And that's the way things evolve."

It would seem, then, that there is a need for the Institute among the Pueblo people, particularly for younger Pueblos whose potential for mobility has increased and whose world views, subsequently, will be shaped by the eclectic bombardment - unavoidable - of multicultural impressions.

Speaking to the value of an open arts educational program and the Pueblos' opposition to it, Allan Houser says:

"[Certain Pueblo people, unfortunately] have come in and sworn that they didn't need anything other than what they could teach their own students, the real traditions of the Pueblos....But there are a lot of other young Indian people who want to pursue art. And this is the only place to get it. They can go to an expensive art school, but most Indians don't have that kind of money. So this is one of the things I object to....

I always gave my students the opportunity of being as exploring and creative as they could possibly be....I showed them the importance of developing something that is new and how exciting it is to see something new developing out of your own mind and hands."

When asked what it took to bridge the gap between the Pueblo Traditionalist way of looking at art and the contemporary art styles, Houser said, wearily - almost wistfully, as if he'd had to try and explain all of this before many times:

"Being a little open-minded, and respecting what somebody else is trying to do and not just shuting them off without even thinking or investigating and seeing what's happening. I think that's it, just that. They're just closed-minded, won't let it seep in....

[They have] a strong feeling...that there's just one way to do art and that's Indian style [the Studio style] and if you don't do it that way, it's not Indian and it's not worthy of being made by one."

Be that as it may, there is strong and continued oppostion by Pueblo people with power to the continuation of the I.A.I.A. in their territory. And whether that opposition manifests from ignorance, or a real (and historically justifiable) fear of the consequences of cultural intrusion, or political and economic motives, it's there and won't go away. And, in this regard, it does appear now in hindsight (that old Peace Corps hindsight) that there was a naive assumption on the part of the early, more highly acculturated

and (in their minds) far-sighted men and women who with a good deal of fanfare established an Institute in a powerfully traditionalist region of Indian America. J. J. Brody astutely observed:

"Replacement of that art department [of the old Santa Fe Indian Boarding School] by the Institute had a shock value far greater than establishment of the Institute at any other site would have had. Franciscans in the Southwest had practiced the principle of superposition, building their mission altars deliberately over Pueblo kivas to symbolize the triumph of the church. Establishment of the Institute in the very buildings that had housed the Studio had much the same symbolic value and, whether deliberate or not, alienated some of the conservative supporters of Indian painting and further charged the highly emotional debate."[17]

Throughout the history of the Institute, there has been a stated emphasis on the right of the individual arts student to deal artistically with <u>anything</u> in whatever way seems appropriate. That fact was what made it so different from the earlier experiments such as the Dunn Studio. The idea, in other words, is that there's nothing (in theory) compelling a painting student to deal objectively with <u>just</u> Indian motifs to the exclusion of other pictorial images; or just Indian-ness to the exclusion of other subjective experience. That student, if he wanted to, could paint <u>Italian street scenes</u> from the point of view of an <u>Irishman</u> (the latter, of course, is impossible; but my point is made, I hope). And yet, to an almost overwhelming degree, it seems to me, it's <u>Indian-ness</u> and <u>Indian objects</u> that are dealt with in all of the arts at the Institute - almost to the point of obsession.

Beyond the obvious attributes of a Native American arts school for the reasons lucidly discussed by Lloyd New and others in their early philosophical discussions and prospectuses, this preoccupation with self-identity, with one's Indian-ness or Native-ness, may

constitute a heretofore undiscussed flaw in an otherwise magnificent concept. The arts' faculty struggles with it; and some of the students have felt pressure put on them to "go Indian". Linda Lucero (Taos Pueblo), graphic arts instructor:

"I've seen too many thousand year old Indians with fifty million wrinkles on their faces, and I've said that to my classes; I said, 'I've seen a hundred of these like that. If you're going to do something Indian, be original about it! Think about it! But the public is perpetuating this thing; the public doesn't want to just buy art for art's sake, it wants to buy it because it's Indian and may have some kind of investment value in the future."

Economic reality compels many of the students to search for outlets for their work. Minimal success early on for a student is not that hard to attain, particularly in the Southwest market. This is not the case, of course, among the general non-Indian population of artists. It's really a separate reality: to the outsider looking in it appears unreal; but to the Indian, there's nothing unreal about it - it's just a commercially lucrative reality.

Allan Houser tells the story of a young Indian artist who came back to him after several years struggling on the West Coast. The young Indian artist said: "I'm not making it. What's wrong?" Well, the problem in a nutshell, was that he wasn't dealing obviously enough (thematically enough) with Indians in his sculpture, and Allan told him so. Adjusting - not prostituting, not compromising - but adjusting to that reality, the young artist began to find a little more Indian in his stone. The result was that within a short time he was able to feed himself and his family.

This, then would seem to say that in an ethnic art school (the Institute of American Indian Arts), there is an unstated constraint placed on the student to explore only the wide - but at the same time also, perhaps, narrow - realm of one's whatever-ness.

For the students (and there have always been some) who've come to I.A.I.A. with very little understanding of what it means to be an Indian - perhaps, for example, because they grew up outside an Indian community - the very basic first task is one of simply accepting the reality of who they are. But for all students maybe, it becomes, in a sense, less an institute of art, perhaps, and more an institute of consciousness raising to (or consciouness maintenance of) an ethnic identity; and this, in turn, may mean that, while a comfortable atmosphere prevails in which everyone is Indian (by an admissions rule), less is actually achieved relative to other art schools where there's a mix of students from many ethnic and racial backgrounds.

It's a delicate - and admittedly dangerous - topic of discussion; but it needs, nevertheless, to be a topic more seriously dealt with by Indians (Native Americans) in the future planning of their art school.

The less philosophical but more immediately important questions, however, are raised by Lloyd Kiva New, still the renaissance man in search of fuller Native American representation among the world's great cultures:

"I don't think the Pueblo issue is a major issue. My concern about the Institute is that it is a concept that deserves a fair shake. It hasn't had it. The question is will it get it?...

Is the Institute a concept that's had its day? Or does it deserve a new day? And, if so, what's the making of that new day? I have to feel that it is entitled to that...

I feel a great hope that something is going to happen. The idea is too viable....Indians can do these things, and they will do these things. If this institution dies, a new one is going to come along. A new leadership...will be shaping. They are probably shaping now!"

The Institute moved almost all of its programs to the

in the fall semester, 1981.

College of Santa Fe campus ^ C.S.F., located about a mile from the Institute, is a Christian Brothers owned, four year liberal arts college which has had some successful arts programs of its own, especially theater.

There are mixed emotions concerning the move among students and faculty alike, but the prevailing attitude now seems to be one that says: "If they (the All Indian Pueblo Council) wants it that bad, they can have it!"

Many of the faculty see it as a chance to start over; they've seen the arts facilities on the I.A.I.A. campus as inadequate anyway. Perhaps, they reason, the move will mean the inception of planning for a brand new campus for the Institute with only a brief, irksome interim period of anonymity at the College of Santa Fe.

Others are not that optimistic though. Doug Coffin (Potawatomi-Creek), who taught sculpture at the College of Santa Fe before joining the faculty at the Institute, feels that given the financial problems the Christian Brothers have had in running their college, the move's a bit like going from one sinking ship to another sinking ship!

"Skip" Holbrook is even less certain:

"I think it stinks! I think it's death for the place. Nobody's signed a conract saying, yeah, we're going to put you in a new location; we're going to give you funding. And unless you see that! - if it's not written, it's not going to happen. I think it's probably a manouever to kind of string it out; let the support for the place cool off. And it's also a chance to let things slide a little more and make the place look worse so you have less fight when you come to axing it!"

There are a number of plans under consideration in the U.s. Congress for a resuscitation of the Institute of American Indian Arts in one form or another, but as of the present, it sits wounded - perhaps mortally - in some old WWII army barracks on someone else's campus.

Concerning a possible new Institute, a new school for Native American artists...

"There should be a lot of people involved. The magnetism of having a ground-breaking ceremony; can you imagine having medicine men, not only from all thePueblos, but the Navajos, every tribe in the U.S.! Just to come! Just to prepare for it - just for the ground-breaking ceremonies, it'd take a year of work!...

To have everybody come, and to put their things into the earth and say: 'You people have a concept, and you want to carry it on from generation to generation. This is what it will be - this is what it is!'"

- Mark Swazo-Hinds (Tesuque Pueblo),
1981 graduate of the I.A.I.A.

Footnotes:

[1]Lloyd New, "Institute of American Indian Arts: Cultural Difference as the Basis for Creative Education," Native American Arts 1 (1968): 8.

[2]Lloyd New, "The Institute of American Indian Arts:Some of its Goals, Problems, and Successes," n.p., Spring 1979. (Available in xeroxed form from author, Santa Fe.)

[3]J.J.Brody, Indian Painters & White Patrons (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1971), p.xv.

[4]Ibid., p. 45.

[5]Ibid., p. 114.

[6]Jamake Highwater, Song from the Earth: American Indian Painting (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1976), p.59.

[7]Edgar L. Hewett, Untitledpublication of the New Mexico Association on Indian Affairs, Santa Fe, July 5, 1940.(Mimeographed. Available in Vertical Files of the Santa Fe Public Library.)

[8]Highwater, Song from the Earth: American Indian Painting, p. 142.

[9]Ibid., p. 140.

[10]Ibid., p. 149.

[11]Brody, Indian Painters & White Patrons, p. 160.

[12]Ibid., p. 185.

[13]New, "The Institute of American Indian Arts: Some of its Goals, Problems, and Successes."

[14]Ibid.

[15]Brody, Indian Painters & White Patrons, p. 128.

[16]Jamake Highwater, The Sweet Grass Lives On: Fifty Contemporary North American Indian Artists (New York: Lippincott & Crowell, Publishers, 1980), p. 182.

[17]Brody, Indian Painters & White Patrons, p. 196.

(Note: all interviews conducted in Santa Fe, June 1981 except those with Hank Gobin - conducted in Taos, May 1981; Gary Roybal - conducted at San Ildefonso Pueblo, June 1981; Governor Robert Lewis, Zuni Pueblo - Conducted at Zuni Pueblo, July 1981.)

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