

THEIR ART AND THEIR INFLUENCE

NATIVE AMERICAN ART IN THE CONTEMPORARY ART WORLD

In the early twentieth century it was a commonly held misconception that Native American art had to be traditional and conservative. This style was characterized by the lack of perspective or modeling. By the 1950s, it was clear that there would be no single style that Native American artists would have to adhere to. Oscar Howe became one of the first Native American artists to unapologetically break out of the traditional style that previously marked Native American art. Howe protested the long-established style with his abstract art, a decision often credited with influencing other Native American artists to break out of the tradition as well.

Today, we see the same colorful, abstract, and bold influence in Native American art that Howe utilized. JoAnne Bird, a contemporary Native American artist is a painter and sculptor. Bird specializes in representing traditional Native American themes through a contemporary style. She uses bold, bright colors and unique strokes providing a sense of impressionism mixed with realism. Together, Howe and Bird, their art and their influence, show just how impactful, unique, and modern Native American art can be, shattering misconceptions that have been in place for centuries.