

## The People. The Land. The Art.

*“It’s crucial that the right information, dialogue and the right paths are being made to create journeys for everyone to walk into. It’s never-ending, but I think we are on the right path.”* Yatika Starr Fields

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**Anita:** A suppression of our history has always been here, so I think it’s really important that people understand, you know, and because they, you know, that’s a safe place to be able to look at a lot of things that are difficult to talk about is the arts, so it’s really important that, yes, that these shows, these exhibits come and people are able to understand who we are.

I’m Anita Fields. I was born in Hominy, Oklahoma and I’m Osage and Creek. I’m in my third year of the Tulsa Artist Fellowship.

**Yatika:** My name is Yatika Starr Fields. I was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma. I’m Osage, Cherokee and Creek and I’m in my third year at the Tulsa Arts Fellowship.

This, this painting came about through a collaboration with the Gilcrease Museum and the Tulsa Artist Fellowship and it was about going into the collections and looking at pieces that inspire you, or proposing a project where you could work with the collections here and my proposal would be to work with something that I’m familiar with and the familiarity of the Native American Church and the ceremonies of the Osage people something that I’m familiar with and grew up with.

For me being an artist. I have the ability to bring those things out again, if I seek to do so and in the proposal that was just it. I wanted to go and look at these items that have those memories, make sketches, take photos of them and then come back to the studio and with my knowledge and understanding of the movement and possessions that they carry, I can convey them back into another atmosphere and another place in time, today, in contemporary times, and give them new life and that is something that I can do. That’s the best I can do for these objects and I think they do appreciate it.

**Anita:** I’m very glad that, you know, I can sit here before this painting that he has done based on, actually just based on his experiences as an Osage person growing up. I was here a few weeks ago doing a tour and, you know, it dawned on me that there’s not much of a difference between the information that Woody Crumbo was providing for people concerning Native American culture, specifically the Native American Church, then Yatika making this expression.

**Yatika:** You know, as I got older, I was able to really appreciate what was in here, you know, like all the Native American Church paintings that are in here to the classical paintings, the Thomas Moran landscapes and everything like that. So, I’m a student of art, you know, and indigenous art, non-indigenous, classical, European, everything and you know there’s all that here and Gilcrease stands out to be one of my favorite museums in Oklahoma because of that, because there’s an appreciation of culture. I think that stands out more so than any other place within it.

**Anita:** You know when you, when you just talk about history here in Oklahoma, I mean I can remember a time when my kids were in school, like the first page of a curriculum would almost be something like “once upon a time there were Indians here” you know, or something like that so there is, you know, a suppression of our history has always has always been here, so I think it’s really important that people understand, you know, and because they, you know, that’s a safe place to be able to look at a lot of things that are difficult to talk about is the arts, so it’s really important that yes, that these shows, these exhibits come and people are able to understand who we are.

**Yatika:** As I get older you know someone else is gonna rise to the occasion that maybe has been influenced by my words as these entry points to do the same, and it’s just a continual cycle that I was taught from my mom and dad, you know, and so I’m doing it, but yet it will keep on happening and, just like that and museums and institutions and scholars and curators, the older ones will cycle out and new ones will come in and these conversations will keep on growing. So, at point as I matured with my art, I saw that this is a kind of a mission that I wanna be a part of in my art and dialogue.

**Anita:** That if you live, you know, in the United States of America, our history is the history here, and so for it to be put on the back burner all of these years or to act like it was, you know, it was not important enough, you know, to be shown or to think of it is just artifacts or to think of it in terms of really I don’t have any other better word but it wasn’t important enough, you know, which just really revealed how people thought about us. So, I think that it’s really exciting, you know, today that it is starting to get the recognition that it has long needed.

**Yatika:** This is Indian land, but it’s now a land where everyone is here, you know, and we have to look at the past and, and kind of move forward from that. But, in a way that everyone can heal, almost, especially the native people, and I think art and institutions like this are main places where that happens. So, it’s crucial that the right information and dialogue and the right paths are being made to create those journeys for everyone to walk into. So, it’s never ending but I think we’re on the right path with that.