

## 2 Art Gallery Shows to Explore From Home

*Galleries and museums are getting creative about presenting work online during the coronavirus crisis. Here are two shows worth viewing virtually.*

BY WILL HEINRICH MAY 13, 2020



James Luna's photo triptych "Half Indian/Half Mexican," from 1991, in the exhibition "Take a Picture With a Real Indian." Estate of James Luna and Garth Greenan Gallery

### James Luna

James Luna inaugurated his piece "Take a Picture With a Real Indian" in downtown New York nearly 30 years ago. As the title suggests, Luna, a member of California's Luiseño tribe, simply offered himself to passers-by for souvenir photos. Later he would repeat the performance in a Washington Metro station, and in galleries, sometimes dressing for the occasion in "Indian" outfits, sometimes not, and always getting plenty of takers. The current show at Garth Greenan includes video and photography of these performances, a few life-size cardboard cutouts of Luna, and a handful of other works.

It's shocking, if hardly surprising, that he found people so ready to treat another human being as a tourist attraction in 1991. It highlights the limited visibility Native peoples have in popular American culture, and despite the humiliation he described feeling as he did it, you could read Luna's performance as a backhanded assertion of his own individuality. (The same goes for the photo triptychs "Half Indian/Half Mexican," in which the artist, who also had Mexican ancestry, modeled hairstyles associated with his own different ethnicities.)

But it also illuminated the difficulty we have connecting, how many misapprehensions can lie between people standing right next to each other. And for that reason, revisiting the piece virtually, two years after the artist's death, during a time of social distancing, isolation, and resurgent white supremacy, feels especially poignant.