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## Fritz Scholder: Paintings 1968–1980

June 27–August 9, 2024



*Dying Indian*, 1968, oil on canvas, 27 x 40 inches

Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to announce *Fritz Scholder: Paintings, 1968–1980*. The exhibition is Fritz Scholder's first with the gallery, and is also the most significant solo presentation of the artist's work in New York City since his 2008–2009 retrospective *Fritz Scholder: Indian/Not Indian* at the National Museum of the American Indian. Opening Thursday, June 27, 2024, the current exhibition will feature the controversial series of paintings that the artist began in the late 1960s—groundbreaking depictions of alcoholism, poverty, and the cultural subjugation of Native Americans that brought the artist both lifelong notoriety and fame.

The ostensible purpose of the series was to combat clichéd depictions of Native Americans confined to a romantic past. The visceral and at times brutal depictions, however, provoked criticism not just from the public at large, but from Native Americans as well. Scholder's portraits offered unflinching glimpses at historical colonial violence, contemporaneous social problems, and commonly held stereotypes.

While it became his most iconic series, he came to it reluctantly. Scholder was of French, English, and German descent, and was an enrolled member of the Luiseño tribe, but maintained that he was a painter before anything else. The works show a painter's interest in color, form, and paint handling. In *Dying Indian* (1968), Scholder deploys painterly distortions

characteristic of Willem de Kooning. The aggressive strokes and dripping paint merge with their deformed and bloody subject. The artist initially vowed to avoid depicting Native Americans in his art altogether. This vow, however, was quickly broken. "I realized that someone needed to paint the Indian differently," he said, "to paint the Indian real, not red."

In *Dream Indian #2* (1980), cryptic shadows pulsate with the same lurid purple that was frequently used by Francis Bacon. In his *Massacre at Wounded Knee* paintings (1970), paint and form once again merge as the devastating force of a bullet deforms the figures into abstraction.

The works were immediately recognized for their transformative assertions regarding Native stereotypes and popular depictions. The controversy was not altogether unwelcome to Scholder either, who appreciated strong reactions to his work. "I don't care if they react negatively or positively," he said, "as long as they react." But a tension remained between the artist, focused on materiality, paint, and technique, and his subject, rife with its political meaning that threatened to dominate perceptions of the work. However complex and contradictory, Scholder's approach was foundational for the generation of Native American artists that followed.

Scholder has been the recipient of countless grants and awards, including: a New Mexico Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts (1983); the lifetime Societaire of the Salon d'Automne (1984, Paris); the Golden Plate Award from the American Academy of Achievement (1985); a Humanitarian Award from the 14th Norsk Hostfest (1991); a Visionary Award from the Institute of American Indian Arts (1996); and an Arizona Governor's Award (2002). He received fellowships from the Whitney Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, and Ford Foundation, among others. In 2009, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger inducted Scholder posthumously into the California Hall of Fame. In 2008, the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian (Washington D.C.) mounted a career retrospective of his work, *Indian/Not Indian*, that traveled to the NMAI's George Gustav Heye Center in New York. In 2015, the Denver Art Museum opened the major traveling exhibition *Super Indian: Fritz Scholder, 1967-1980*, which traveled to the Phoenix Art Museum and the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art (Overland Park, Kansas) through 2016. Scholder has been the subject of over a dozen books and three public television documentaries.

The artist received a bachelor's degree from California State University, Sacramento, and a master's from the University of Arizona. He was awarded five honorary degrees from Ripon College, University of Arizona, Concordia College, the College of Santa Fe, and the University of Wisconsin, Superior. His work is featured in numerous international public collections, including: the Museum of Modern Art; the Bibliotheque Nationale (Paris); the Los Angeles County Museum; the Walker Art Center (Minneapolis); the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and the Milwaukee Art Museum, among others.

Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to represent the estate of Fritz Scholder in association with LewAllen Galleries, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

*Fritz Scholder: Paintings, 1968–1980* will be on view at Garth Greenan Gallery, 545 West 20th Street (between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues), through Friday, August 9th, 2024. The gallery is open Monday through Fri, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For more information, please contact the gallery at (212) 929-1351, or email [info@garthgreenan.com](mailto:info@garthgreenan.com).

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*Dying Indian*, 1968  
Acrylic on canvas  
27 x 40 inches



*Indian with Bird Head Dress*, 1972  
Acrylic on canvas  
40 x 30 inches



*Sitting Indian*, 1972  
Acrylic on canvas  
80 x 68 inches



*Dream Indian #2*, 1980  
Oil on canvas  
80 x 68 inches



*Drunk Indian #1*, 1972  
Acrylic on canvas  
40 x 30 inches



*Portrait*, 1896, 1976  
Oil and acrylic on canvas  
40 x 30 inches



*Dartmouth Portrait #3*, 1973  
Oil on canvas  
40 x 30 inches



*Indian with Blue Aura*, 1967  
Acrylic on canvas  
40 x 30 inches



*Indian with Umbrella*, 1972  
Acrylic on canvas  
80 x 68 inches



*Massacre at Wounded Knee I*, 1970  
Oil on canvas  
70 x 58 inches

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*Massacre at Wounded Knee II, 1970*

Oil on canvas  
60 x 46 inches



*Indian Cowboy and Horse, 1979*

Acrylic on canvas  
80 x 63 inches



*Back from the Indian School, 1973*

Oil on canvas  
80 x 68 inches



*Indian on Red Horse, 1969*

Acrylic on canvas  
47 x 47 inches



*Indian and Buffalo (After Catlin), 1975*

Acrylic on canvas  
54 x 68 inches