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The Indian Fashion Show: Manipulating Representations of Native Attire in Museum Exhibits to Fight Stereotypes in 1942 and 1998

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> *White Americans are inclined to forget how deeply imprinted is the influence of the Indian on our life and culture. Indian names and traditions have been absorbed into our language and folklore. It is interesting to be reminded that the dress and the materials they used also have provided ideas that are still being turned to account in giving distinction to American fashion trends.*
>
> *—Rochester Democrat Chronicle*

> *The exhibition has been a really brilliant success. About 2,000 students from public and private schools have been taken through the show by our staff or their teachers. Costume design students from the Maryland Institute have made sketches of the show. Adults as well as children have been enthusiastic. The receptionist tells me that more persons have asked for booklets or postcards of your exhibition than have made inquiries about any other exhibit held here. She estimates that a total of 25,000 people have seen the Indian show. It is high spot of the year.*
>
> —Belle Boas[1]

For approximately twenty-five years I have been researching how museologists, especially anthropologists, have affected Southwest Native American art through their perceptions of, and interpretive paradigms about, Native peoples. Some theoretical issues I have been interested in are: (1) how and why museologists attempted to relabel and reevaluate ethnographic specimens as ethnic and fine art, (2) how they developed markets for and

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encouraged commodification of art, (3) how they created or tried to manipulate class-specific concepts of taste through displays, lectures, and outreach programs, and (4) the message museologists wanted to convey about quality to the Euro-American public as part of the continuous debates over crafts and material culture versus fine art, prestige, and status. American Indian studies scholars must address the theoretical and behavioral intersections of race, class, gender, and culture in the context of a multicultural United States and do so in ways that conceptualize America as a complex and dynamic culture that has experienced many fads and longer-term polar-value changes over time.[2] We must also document how anthropologists and museologists have tried to fight stereotypes through manipulating and revaluing visual representations, and do so within the parameters of how cultural definitions have fluctuated through time and by place (to prevent presentism). Scholars must also attempt to understand how Native feelings and philosophies about these activities and collection and exhibition techniques have changed since the 1870s, again controlling for time and place and culture. When researching this complex and multifaceted topic, I have been theoretically concerned with both institutional and individual initiatives and the importance of setting, place, and social landscape over time.[3]

My research led me to the Denver Art Museum (DAM) and artist/anthropologist Frederic H. Douglas, who had extensive experience with several of these issues. When I first went to the DAM, I was interested primarily in Douglas's work with René d'Harnoncourt at the 1939 San Francisco World's Fair and their groundbreaking 1941 exhibit at New York City's Museum of Modern Art. Soon, however, I found records for another exhibit, an outreach, performative display designed to educate and influence how middle-class Euro-American women thought about Native Americans. The curator undertook the goal in a new way—through a visualized, empirical display using an ethnological (comparative) analysis of Indian women's attire and fashion (á la *Vogue*) as an interpretive framework. It was called the Indian Fashion Show.[4]

The issues that this museological experiment addressed were complex and intriguing and still as relevant in 1995 or 2007 as they were in 1942: (1) representation and visual stereotypes and how to convince culturally blind people to change their assumptions and perceptions about and behavior toward Native Americans; (2) the direct challenging of ethnocentrism about gender, race, and culture (ethnicity) of the 1940s and 1950s; (3) an intentional focus on aesthetics, race, and class in order to eradicate prejudice and make the world a better place; (4) the creation of taste that broke the borders of modernity by challenging primitive/civilization and tradition/modern polarities; (5) the use of etic versus emic categories and empirical ethnographically derived material culture to argue that culture was superficial and to argue for cross-cultural commonalities; (6) the effect of time, political situation, and place (that is, World War II, decolonization and independence efforts, economic developments, and the cold war) on museum exhibits about indigenous peoples; (7) gender and women's bodies; (8) identity; (9) representation; (10) costume, carnival, and playing Indians; (11) appropriation and cross-cultural borrowing to honor other cultures and feed commercializa-

tion and a voracious fashion industry; (12) authenticity; and (13) purposeful innovation and creativity in museum presentation to educate, entertain, and redefine cultural categories and values.

The list could go on, for with each reading of the information I was collecting, current museological, anthropological, and Native American studies debates loomed large. Douglas's experimental exhibit has proven to be a venue to discuss ethical issues: What happens when sacred clothing is shown in inappropriate situations and worn by individuals who do not have the right to do so? Does the race of the model matter and why? Why is the model's hair and eye color important, almost more important than skin color? Can clothing be made impure by association with a runway fashion show, that is, commerce? Can impure attire still be a cultural heirloom? What voice should Native Americans, as the descendants of the women who made these dresses, have had in the exhibit and the American fashion industry's voracious use of the attire from the 1940s through the 1960s to inspire their own creations? What say should they have had in the development of the interpretive framework of the performance or any exhibit that represents multiple cultures?

And then there was the wealth of museological issues, the most basic of which were: Can an exhibit influence viewer's behavior and attitudes (that is, can an etic, universalizing, and essentializing rhetoric about women help attack pernicious cultural and ethnocentric stereotypes about Native Americans)? Is a performative exhibit better (however *better* is defined) than a static exhibit for the display and understanding of clothing on the human body? Can museum exhibits influence cross-cultural understanding? What theoretical paradigm should be used and who should define it? Should etically defined universal commonalities or emically defined cultural differences be foreshadowed to serve as the rhetorical framework (for example, how do we define beauty for a multicultural audience?) or is a culturally specific, emic framework that emphasizes difference, cultural uniqueness, and separateness most important? What does *educate* really mean? How much responsibility does the viewer have in the process? What display strategies are most successful in addressing such endeavors and how have they changed through time? Again my list grew and grew. The more I looked at the hundreds of letters, scripts, and photographs of the undertaking, the more questions I raised. And always in the back of my mind was the question of time: How would such a time-specific exhibit work today when the emphasis in the Native world seems to focus on cultural particularism and distancing distinctions from, rather than commonalities with, Euro-American culture?

This article deals with this last question. How would the Indian Fashion Show of 1952 go over today? Obviously it would be impossible to restage completely the 1940s experimental exhibit as a performative event; conservators would never allow a multivenue, multiyear outreach presentation to occur again because of the wear and tear on the dresses. And rightly so: the dresses are all one-of-a-kind heirlooms that cannot be replaced. They had sustained a good deal of use during twenty-five years of presentations. Giving slide lectures with colored slides taken during the actual events, combined

with a runway presentation of contemporary Native fashion, was the closest one could come. This I have done several times, including the first on the fiftieth anniversary of Douglas's first showing at the Heard Museum. It was the first time in my career that the audience stopped me continuously during my lecture and someone would shout, "That was my dress!" "I wore that dress." "That was my favorite dress." The same interactive experience has happened at other presentations. Older women remembered the beautiful dresses. The Indian Fashion Show was memorable to those who had modeled and those who had seen it. On every occasion people would sigh that the slides were simply not the same as seeing the actual dress. And they were right.

In 1996 Nancy Blomberg, curator of Native Art at the DAM, and I decided to restage the Indian Fashion Show as a temporary static exhibit that would be accompanied by a scholarly conference on Native American fashion, Indian chic, and a runway show of contemporary Native American haute couture featuring internationally known Haida designer and artist Dorothy Grant; Choctaw designer, weaver, and performance artist Margaret Roach Wheeler; and Osage artist, designer, and professor Wendy Ponca. The runway program, although showcasing the vitality of Native American–produced fashion, was intended to emphasize Douglas's museological point that clothing must be seen in motion on the human body to be understood. Speakers at the accompanying conference, held on 5–6 June 1998, included scholars Margaret Blackman, Phil Deloria, Bea Medicine, Native designer and quilter Nancy Wood (Seminole/Navajo), and artist, fashion design, and educator Lloyd Kiva New (Cherokee). Topics included changing museum interpretations of Native American art, universal versus multiple concepts of aesthetics, cultural appropriation versus cultural borrowing as a recognition of social value, cross-cultural design, being a Native American model in the original presentation, the history of Native American haute couture, being a Native American fashion designer, and an assessment of the Indian Fashion Show and Douglas and his life.[5]

The exhibit was called Fashion Pathways: American Indian Wearable Art and opened on 24 January 1998 and was installed for nine months. It was designed to be a commemorative historical exhibit to honor Douglas's undertaking and showcase the DAM's breathtaking Native American clothing collections, which had not been displayed in total since the last fashion show in 1972. We planned the display as a contextualized, retrospective, pseudo-reenactment to document Douglas's presentations and assess their influence on the US fashion industry and the early development of Native fashion design. Like Douglas (see following text) we held that exhibits should educate and challenge viewers; here the challenge would concentrate on the same stereotypes Douglas addressed and new issues that had surfaced since his time such as intellectual property rights and cultural appropriation. In this sense we directly tackled some questionable parts of the presentation such as appropriateness, lack of Native voice, and authenticity. We conceptualized Fashion Pathways as a representational experiment wherein we provided information for our audience regarding the differences that occurred from labeling each ensemble using Douglas's essentializing, universal, comparative, fashion rhetoric and Native American women's perspectives on each dress. The latter were

labels that we hoped would contain culturally specific perspectives and information that did not assume the universality of women's culture but looked at each dress from each culture's concepts of sartorial beauty. However, we did not limit what each consultant could say or superimpose our desires.

Our experimental methodology was to use a juxtaposed dialogical technique designed to challenge viewers to understand the differences in the two labeling techniques and how what is said about an ensemble affects how viewers look at and understand the art in a museum exhibit. In our case the contrast was between culturally specific meanings of attire based on the words of Native American authorities that spoke to uniqueness and difference and Douglas's labels, which universalized representations of beauty and attire to create commonalities. Were emic or etic labels more informative in an era of cultural particularism? Who would visitors consider the authority figure when the cultural information in each script differed? We also wanted to know what difference a static display that used period (1940s) mannequins with Euro-American features would make in 1998. How would historic props, substituting for 1940s real people, influence visitor reception? Did the hairstyles, hair color, and skin color of the mannequin matter? Also important was setting, venue, and the lack of movement: How would using a haute couture–style fashion runway as a museum stage set influence visitor understandings? In addition, how would keeping the clothing in the museum rather than taking it to the people influence perceptions? How would an unscripted presentation where people could view each dress at will versus a choreographed and linear presentation affect reception? In short, how important is the museological setting to how a curatorial message is advanced and understood? Were visitors' preconceptions of fashion shows so strong and taken for granted in 1990s America that visitors would be able to see past the staging to notice the other messages being advanced?

In this article I discuss the museological display and labeling aspects of the Indian Fashion Show as an innovative (if often rhetorically problematic), successful, and influential performative exhibit and compare it to our less successful, static but intentionally problematized Fashion Pathways exhibit.[6] We did not expect everyone to like our exhibit or to understand it completely; we expected some people to reflect on the exhibit and be uncomfortable. We did expect people to be awestruck by the beauty of the attire. What we encountered was quite different; it was a failed experiment. But in order to understand the 1998 exhibit I must first turn to the 1940s and outline Douglas's performative exhibit program and the problems that displaying clothing entails for museologists.

ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGE OF DISPLAYING NATIVE AMERICAN CLOTHING

Since the first European contacts with Native American and First Nation peoples, Europeans, Canadians, and Euro-Americans have been collecting, displaying, and interpreting Native art in public venues. Since the mid-nineteenth century, one arena for interpretive displays has been museums. Museums, as institutions

dedicated to the collection and public display of tangible items from around the world, have served as grandiose forums for the unrestricted and often ostentatious display of a wealth of indigenous art forms and for the creation of representational meanings that often have had more to do with the cultural (pre)conceptions and the sociopolitical and aesthetic agendas of the curators and their Western (Euro-American, Canadian, and European) audiences than with the original makers and users of the arts. As a result, the way in which art items have been (and are) represented in displays has simultaneously shaped, reified, and legitimized cultural views, including positive and negative stereotypes, and problematized attempts to increase cross-cultural understandings through monologue exhibit labels and lectures and, recently, through interactive dialogue among producers, collectors, curators, educators, viewers, and the peoples whose ancestors made the art on display.[7]

Clothing has long been one multivocal art form used by anthropological curators (and more recently tribal curators) to provide authoritative and evidential understandings about Native cultures. A standard item of ethnographic display, it is usually placed flat in a case as an example of craft production techniques, artistic sensibility, and distinctive cultural styles. It has also been used to symbolize culture areas, foreshadow environmental distinctions (fur-lined parkas in the Arctic region or cotton textiles in the Puebloan Southwest), highlight gender differentiation, or signal ethnic identity as instantaneous visual markers. But these time-honored static displays do not do clothing justice. To understand clothing requires a gendered human body in motion wearing separate pieces of attire that have been combined into a holistic ensemble.[8] It is this total sartorial package that a person's eye views and assesses, categorizes and comprehends. From this rapid visual gaze an individual makes an instantaneous and almost unconscious value judgment about the wearer, which generally tells more about the viewer than the clothed individual and his or her presentation of self, especially in cross-cultural situations.

This rapid assessment is why clothing is so often used as a visual cue and underlying marker for signaling condensed symbolic markers of time, place, and cultural identity in movies, drama, or for special social groups (to distinguish from a mass population and confer a special identity). It is also a key for stereotypes—rigid clusters of overly simplified social/cultural characteristics conjoined into a single, imagined identity or schematic theory used to label a social group and assess members' character, attitudes, and behaviors—and stereotyping behavior. Such generalizing categorical representations offer comfortable, convenient filters to make sense of complexity and are inherent to the act of social categorization and perception. Based on beliefs, assumed knowledge, and untested expectations, they often have moral and judgmental overtones that are generally viewed as derogatory and offensive. Group representational stereotypes are never grounded in holistic descriptions of heterogeneous cultures or social groups but are centered on some initially observed cultural behavior or visual cue as seen in dress, body adornment, hairstyle, or piece of material culture (for instance, a tomahawk). This cue is then interpreted using the stereotyper's frame of reference and meaning structure, homogenized and overgeneralized in an attempt at cultural or social

differentiation from self. Through this process of encoding symbolism and meaning, intergroup differences are minimized and intragroup differences exaggerated using confirmatory bias and routine simplification. Sometimes these judgmental snapshots stem from distortions or misunderstandings about a behavior or attribute seen in an initial cross-cultural or cross-group encounter. Rapid superficial assessments then combine with assumptions, often based on gender, race, age, ethnicity, culture, or "strangeness."

Once established, a representational stereotype's condensing symbolism becomes tenacious and is used to justify subsequent actions toward the stereotyped group, a fact that has been apparent in colonizing situations, group conflicts, business dealings, or justifications for a status quo. Representational stereotypes reflect societal desires, fears, projections, and imaginative speculations, which are more important to people than "facts." As a result, people use stereotypes to rationalize asymmetrical power situations, validate prejudice, or, in extreme cases, to justify hostility, oppression, violence, war, genocide, or religious fanaticism. It is from the authority of museums, with Americans' assumptions of a truthful curator (as opposed to untruthful and manipulating advertisements and propaganda), that some representational stereotypes about Native Americans have gained their societal authority.[9] Many curators are not cognizant of the unintended representational messages in their exhibits. The fact that all female mannequins in a diorama are kneeling with their backs to the viewers while all male mannequins are standing and making eye contact with viewers signals much about assumptions of "proper" gender roles and power in the curator's and exhibit designer's society.

Culturally construed clothing from one culture, society, ethnic group, or community cannot be understood as disembodied pieces of decorated covering using generalized, homogenized, and universalizing symbolic criteria. When attire (that is, separate pieces of clothing seen as a single, holistic ensemble meant to be viewed simultaneously) is produced that references a visualized, gendered, universalized, and culturally defined human body, it shapes viewers' cultural understandings about racialized identity and how clothing should look in order to be considered correct, valuable, appropriate, and authentic. Theoretically, this cultural and psychological process makes clothing ensembles double representational markers that can be used simultaneously, consciously and unconsciously, for the construction of cultural and racial images, categories, and representational stereotypes. We can add discriminatory colonialism to this list. As all people of color living in United States know, racial profiling also works on this basis. Representational stereotyping is used for supposed homeland security at airports where any darker-skinned man wearing the triggering visual image of a headscarf or turban is automatically classified by security staff as a potential terrorist and non-American. The same process occurs when an individual is followed in a border-town store because the clerks assume all Native Americans steal, especially if they are clothed in gang-style attire.[10]

So what do these theorized representational issues mean for museum exhibits about indigenous peoples erected by Euro-Americans working in institutions controlled by Euro-Americans? How has the way that curators

and exhibit designers have addressed the representational problem changed? Have curators fought the way Native American and First Nation peoples have been represented in museums or used museums as tools to combat tenacious representational sartorial stereotypes resulting from Euro-America's intentional cultural blindness? How does one display Native attire?

One internationally respected museologist who understood and wrestled with these theoretical and practical representational issues was Frederic H. Douglas of the DAM.[11] During the 1930s, Douglas experimented with ethnographic exhibition styles, striving to turn static, listless, intellectually stultifying displays of North American Native material culture and art into lively and entertaining educational programs that would engage Native American and Euro-American viewers. He was particularly disappointed with those exhibits that still had row upon row of similar items—a standard nineteenth-century anthropological exhibition technique designed to display evolutionary sequences and cultural or stylistic variation by object type that made viewers' eyes glaze over. Douglas knew that because viewing exhibits was a voluntary activity, he had to capture peoples' attention and hold their gazes for longer than thirty seconds in order to serve any underlying educational agenda.[12] Exhibits had to be interesting and creative, not complacent. Douglas was not enamored with slide lectures, feeling that people needed to see and interact visually and viscerally with art. He insisted on using original materials to illustrate his numerous lectures. Art was made to be used, not to sit in cold, dark storage areas; it was alive and had to breathe through interaction with people. Douglas wanted to take collections out of storage and museums and take art to the people through interesting and innovative outreach programs and in the process broaden the definition of an exhibit.

Douglas asked himself how a museologist could capture people's attention long enough so they would read contextualizing labels in order to learn and grasp alternative perspectives. Douglas's specific agenda was to educate viewers about Native American aesthetics and eliminate long-held prejudicial, representational, and nonvisual stereotypes based on misconceptions (for example, red skin color would rub off and contaminate white skin or that only real Indians wore feathers) and increase cross-cultural understanding, appreciation, and respect. Douglas especially wanted to tackle what he considered a suite of self-reinforcing, distorting, and depersonalizing images held by middle-class Euro-America—specifically, the notion that Native Americans were timeless, ahistorical, primitive, stagnant, and doomed—using real attire as visual evidence for his claims of cultural commonalities rather than dichotomous differences. His solution was an experiment, an animate performative exhibit in constant motion with dialogue. He eliminated the labels and returned to Native American modes of oral transmission. No reading was necessary; the visitor's experience would be highly orchestrated, in a similar way to that in which any good storyteller captures the listener's attention. If well designed and directed to the appropriate audience, staged, live exhibits could convey multiple messages.[13]

Douglas also theorized that exhibits should be reflexively celebratory and simultaneously educate and challenge carefully targeted audiences who were

educatable, make viewers think about themselves, be awe inspiring in the face of exquisite art, and be entertaining. Exhibits should make a difference in the world; they should make political and cultural statements about values and morals. Museologists should experiment, revise, and experiment again until they have found the most effective educational techniques. They should be innovative tactically and build on the targeted viewer's everyday knowledge, rather than on the esoteric understandings of the peoples being discussed in the exhibit, in order for viewers to be reeducated. Douglas's ideas were based on a common pedagogical theory in the late 1930s, but it was difficult to do effectively because museums were trying to talk to everyone and the dumbed-down, one-size-fits-all approach was ineffective.

In an address to the Indian Defense Association, Douglas summarized what he felt to be Euro-American prejudicial ignorance and how museums could fight representational stereotypes through image manipulation.

> It has been an unfortunate habit of ours to think of the American Indian in terms of the past only. Most people associate the word Indian with assaults on covered wagons, with buffalo hunting, the magic of medicine men, and if they give any thought to the present Indian at all they think of him as a poor descendent of a once powerful and colorful race, the glories of which are today preserved only on the dusty shelves of museums of anthropology and in the books of James Fenimore Cooper.[14]

Douglas argued that museums should acknowledge Native American societies for their perseverance in the face of colonialism and celebrate them for their past and present cultural richness. He also held that Native peoples should be seen as heterogeneous groups of actual individuals who differed in their views and artistic abilities, not as examples of generalized homogeneous archetypes. To counter oversimplified Euro-American inventions and imaginative images about Natives, Douglas strove to expose museum visitors to empirical information that had been obtained through anthropological fieldwork, especially the detailed ethnographic and historical particularist perspectives of Americanists such as Franz Boas, John Ewers, Alfred Kroeber, Robert Lowie, Elsie Clews Parsons, and Clark Wissler. Douglas believed that museum educational programs offered opportunities to convey more accurate information but thought that dull, static anthropology exhibits with their emphases on the ethnographic present, on rigid differences between cultures construed primarily for taxonomic purposes, or on reified culture areas all too often simply reinforced the more tenacious representational stereotypes. White America had to unlearn what it had unfortunately been taught in anthropology museums and texts, movies, dime novels, Wild West shows, and primary school. It needed Native American art in action.

To provide animation, Douglas needed a new display technique. He echoed the views of many of his contemporaries in his conviction that engaging visual programs rather than inert exhibits were potent tools for didactic art exhibitions. Douglas decided to address these representational

and display issues through a performative exhibit of clothing, a topic on which he was considered a national authority. His target audience was the hopefully educatable, white, middle-class *genus touristorum Americanorum* (as he used to describe museum visitors).[15] There was a practical reason for this audience focus: affluent Euro-Americans had disposable income and were patriotic. From his numerous letters to friends, it is evident that Douglas considered this important because he was sure that America would join the war in Europe. As a member of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board, Douglas was committed to promoting and encouraging Native American art as America's real art. He searched for venues that would enable him to create an educated buying public who could supply needed cash to help poverty-stricken reservation communities devastated by the Great Depression. Museums could be crucial tools in economic ventures; they could show potential buyers what to purchase. Indigenous attire could serve as design templates for Euro-American fashion (wearable art) but only if he could take the heirloom clothing out of the museum and place it in a setting where people expected to see fashion—that is, on the runway.[16]

Douglas would change American society and celebrate all people's basic humanity, a common goal of secular humanism. The Indian Style Show, as a consciously educational but subliminally challenging reinterpretive display, was designed to promote interracial understanding by dramatically pointing out resemblances between peoples of different races. Douglas hoped to widen people's horizons, to demonstrate that all cultures have aesthetic merit in Euro-Americans terms. He wanted to prove that Euro-Americans should not emphasize slight superficial differences between races and that educated individuals could destroy barriers between peoples by recognizing, confronting, and eliminating stereotypes about Native Americans.[17] He felt that it was women, not men, who could accomplish this necessary goal.

Douglas chose women because he felt that a universal trait, women's common instinctual interest in clothing and their psychological need for sartorial novelty, overrode cultural and racial distinctions. This inherited biological characteristic could be used to fight tenacious stereotypes.

> Women of both Indian and White groups share a deep common interest in fine clothing and have achieved results which in many ways have remarkable similarity in purpose and function if not in actual details of materials used. Like her White sister the Indian woman is well aware of new materials for construction and decoration; and of the most effective use of these materials. Her styles change more slowly than those of our life—[but] in response to the same felt need for something different now and then. She recognizes clearly that different types of garments are indicated for different purposes; that dressing up does something important for a woman's psyche.[18]

The novel, haute couture fashion show would be a visual demonstration of Native American fashion—the best artistry that Douglas could find—and by

extension serve as sartorial equivalencies to Euro-American fashion. He argued that all women were fashionable and had good taste. By extension, all women could be as free of misunderstandings about Native Americans as indigenous women were. (Douglas assumed that all Native Americans were without racial prejudice, and it was not in their character to stereotype.) All Euro-Americans needed was to be taught these lessons using beautiful indigenous clothing. He would take historic Native American and First Nation women's dresses from the DAM's extensive collections and display them at a haute couture fashion show with the ensembles modeled primarily by Euro-American women.[19] Simultaneously, through sartorial movement and carefully crafted narratives, he would empirically but entertainingly demonstrate that most representations about indigenous peoples were incorrect. Ironically, in the process he used and created stereotypes about women.

Presented more than 180 times between 1942 and 1972 and seen by more than three hundred thousand people, Douglas's live exhibit was designed to eliminate racial prejudice by demonstrating that *all* women, regardless of cultural heritage or race, liked and wore beautiful clothes. Douglas hoped that by eradicating stereotypes about Native American women through the transposition of a universalizing gendered discourse, he could create a better America, one that celebrated Native American creativity and women as the holders of good taste and real civilization. Women were capable of recognizing and appreciating humanity's commonalities and overcoming divisive representational stereotypes in ways that men, who were territorial and made war, could not. An unspoken subtext of the presentation was an antiwar argument. Like the Euro-American women who brought civilization to the "savage" Wild West, the women of the 1940s and 1950s would guide America to its next level of civilization, one without racial or social prejudice or representations that glorified conspicuous consumption. To accomplish these lofty goals, Douglas used a totalizing representational fashion rhetoric that transformed the traditional attire into haute couture. This was something his middle-class, white, female audience understood. Douglas spoke the language of his audience—fashion, good taste, and clothes.

The Indian Fashion Show was first shown at the Heard Museum in March 1942, followed by a presentation at the Philbrook Art Institute in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Six more presentations in several sites across the United States were held in the fall of 1942, before Douglas was drafted into the US Air Force. While he served in the South Pacific as a captain in the medical corps, his assistants, Frances Raynolds and Kate Peck Kent, presented the program locally around Denver. Upon Douglas's return he resurrected the presentation and staged it 150 times between 1947 and his death from cancer in 1956. After Douglas's death the successful program continued, sporadically hosted by Royal Hassrick (assistant director of the DAM), Willena Cartwright (Douglas's successor as the curator of Indian art), and later by curator Norman Feder as a program entitled "American Originals." During this period, more Native American women served as models and shows were often given for primarily Native American audiences in urban areas. I have not, however, found any evidence that it was presented on any

FIGURE 1. *Mary Louise Defender modeling Warm Springs Dress on 12 February 1966 at the Indian and Métis Conference in Winnipeg. Narrated by Denver Art Museum curator, Norman Feder. Photo courtesy of the Denver Art Museum.*

reservation (fig. 1). It appears that the last Indian Fashion Show was held at the Houston Fashion Show of the Contemporary Handweavers Convention in April 1972 and was presented by Mabel Morrow who, along with Lloyd Kiva New, taught fashion design at the Indian School in Santa Fe with the DAM attire and dresses of their own design worn by Native American students.[20]

THE INDIAN FASHION SHOW AS A PERFORMATIVE EXHIBIT

Douglas choreographed each presentation as a specialized haute couture runway show using a minimalist setting; he did not want sets or props (images of forests, quantities of pots or baskets, paintings, or a salon setting), music, or anything else to compete with the dresses. He requested a long runway that extended into the audience so viewers could see sartorial details, a raised stage, a double curtain that each model could part, and a high platform on which each model could stand to showcase leggings and moccasins.[21] Because fashion shows meant movement, Douglas envisioned models moving continually, pausing only to pivot or stop when he directed. Naturalness was stressed in walk, rather than the common model's contorted, slinky stride or jerky movements. He also discouraged stereotypical dancing, prancing, and whooping and tried to encourage gracefulness and poise. Models' stances were to be relaxed and the women to remain mute as Douglas recited his prepared scripts interspersed with spontaneous commentary about what was fashionable each year, humorous antidotes, and plays on words. Douglas's wit, bad puns, and catchy phrases made for easy listening, a point he emphasized as crucial for effective education. Script variations allowed Douglas to pace himself based on the poise of the models, his assessment of the audience's knowledge, and the particulars of the venue (that is, a university versus a state fair or country club).

Douglas hoped the audience would focus on the spotlighted garments as they moved on attractive female bodies. But the Indian Fashion Show was also a social event, costume party, often a fundraiser, an innovative marketing program, amusing and entertaining stage show, and anthropological review. These characteristics were reflected in the different names that local venues gave the program, often without Douglas's approval: A Century of North

American Fashions, The Indian Style Show, High Fashion by the First American Designers, 500 Years of American Indian Fashions, and even The Fashionable Squaw. The latter title and the hundreds of letters Douglas wrote to venue hosts telling them what not to do (buy black wigs tied in braids or encourage models to emit "war whoops" on stage), his continuous complaints to colleagues about the ignorance of the Euro-American public as expressed in the concerns people had (such as wondering whether the pigment from the red skin could soak into the clothing and come off on the model), and the questions they asked after the first few presentations, led him to limit his initial rather grandiose plans to eradicate dozens of stereotypes and instead address only a few basic issues: (1) there was no such thing as a generic Indian; (2) Indian women did not wear feathers and headbands; (3) Indians were not naked and dirty; (4) Indian women created art and had good taste; (5) Indians were not primitive peoples; (6) indigenous peoples had changing fashion; their clothes were not changeless or fossilized; and (7) Indians were lively contributors to modern Euro-American culture, especially in the realm of fashion, adornment, and good taste.

It was in his latter contention that Douglas was extremely successful, as a voracious fashion industry quickly "borrowed" all the dresses as inspiration for new designs that swept across America in the late 1940s to mid-1950s. But judging by the letters from individuals who commented in newspapers and wrote to Douglas, he and the living art made progress on all the representational issues. Combined with the stunning dresses, it was Douglas's rhetoric and carefully built argument that everyone in the audience heard as they watched the models that made this a successful museological undertaking.

A typical presentation consisted of ten to forty-eight dresses, drawn from a pool of fifty-three "colorful, imaginative and ingenious" ensembles from thirty-five North American indigenous societies; individual pieces were made between 1830 and 1953.[22] Table 1 lists the named and typed ensembles and the order in which they were usually shown in the 1952 long program, which lasted three hours. Douglas altered the programs based on the number of models available in each venue and their heights, weights, and body shapes. Most programs consisted of thirty-six dresses and lasted an hour and a half, generally following the same order. Sometimes there were special orderings: for example, in 1952 the New Mexico Fashion Designers Group of the New Mexican Art Alliance and the Bureau of Indian Affairs' (BIA's) Institute of American Indian Art cosponsored a presentation in Santa Fe. Douglas presented thirty-three dresses, and students of Lloyd Kiva New wore sixteen ensembles they had designed and made.

Douglas began each program with assertions of women's commonalities and social equivalencies, by stressing that "the deep common interest that both Indian and white women share in fine clothing and how they have achieved results which in many ways have remarkable similarity in purpose and function if not in actual details of materials used." He noted that "all of the clothes are of Indian manufacture and none is a replica, a costume for a Wild West Show, or someone's idea as to what an Indian dress ought to be like," and that each was an example of exquisite design and good taste.[23] Authenticity

Table 1
Presentation Order, Long Program for 1952

Dress Order	Culture	Douglas's Functional Types	Douglas's Dress Taxonomy	Material and Major Decoration	Special Features and Date
1	Northern Cheyenne	Work dress or semiformal, modern style	Plains T-shape	Painted deerskin	1880
2	Ponca	Semiformal	Plains T-shape	Quilled deerskin	Late nineteenth century
3	Northern Cheyenne	Old-style formal	Plains T-shape	Deerskin	1865–70
4	Kiowa	Special occasion formal, ceremonial	Plains T-shape	White deerskin	Ghost Dance Society, sacred
5	Oglala Sioux	Old-style formal	Plains T-shape	White deerskin, beaded, eagle feathers	1885; bridal dress of Useful Heart (Brule Sioux)
6	Nez Perce	Formal	Plains T-shape	Beaded blue wool cloth with hats	Early twentieth century
7	Kiowa	Modern formal and for special occasions	Plains T-shape	Beaded deerskin	Late 1930s
8	Chilkat	Work-shirt dress with blanket	Western fore-and-aft apron	Wool shirt with ermine trim	Ca. 1910; man's ceremonial attire
9	Acoma	Old-style formal	Western fore-and-aft apron	Embroidered, woven cotton	Nineteenth century, extremely rare
10	Shoshone	Old-style formal	Plains T-shape	Yellow deerskin	1885–90
11	Kiowa	Afternoon tea dress, adapted style	Plains T-shape	"Red sleeves" wool trade cloth	1948; modern revival
12	Arapaho	Special occasion formal, ceremonial	Plains T-shape	Painted deerskin	Ghost Dance, sacred
13	Southern Cheyenne	Formal, modern style	Plains T-shape	Beaded deerskin	Ca. 1900
14	Iroquois (Seneca)	Formal two-piece, adapted old style	Eastern wraparound	Beaded broadcloth	1936
15	Santee Sioux	Formal	Plains T-shape	Beaded black velvet	1880–85
16	Jicarilla Apache	House dress, sport attire, old style	Modified T-shape	Deerskin	Early twentieth century
17	Kickapoo	Formal, two-piece, modern style	Eastern wraparound	Appliquéd cotton cloth	1948
18	Warm Springs (Tenino)	Formal	Plains T-shape	Deerskin with pony beads	Late nineteenth century
19	Blackfoot	Antique formal	Plains T-shape	Beaded deerskin	1850; sacred, Sun Woman's dress
20	Shoshone	Afternoon dress	Plains T-shape	Beaded blue cloth	1890
21	Southern Cheyenne	Formal, modern style	Plains T-shape	Purple cloth	1948
22	Crow	Formal	Plains T-shape	Beaded red wool	1885
23	Jicarilla Apache	Formal, old style	Modified Plains T-shape	Beaded deerskin with cape	1870s

24	Osage	Formal, modern style	Eastern wraparound	Silk appliquéd wool, two-piece	Twentieth-century Potawatomi blouse
25	Ojibwa	Formal with robe, modified style	Eastern wraparound	Blue broadcloth	1920s
26	Ute	Housedress	Plains T-shape	Red wool	1900
27	Seminole	Everyday dress, modern style	Eastern wraparound, cape top	Two-piece patchwork cotton	1940
28	Tlingit (hat)	Semiformal	Western adaptation	Appliqué wool	1890s; Haida button blanket
29	Sioux	Formal	Plains T-shape	Dentalium shells on blue wool	Early twentieth century
30	Mescalero Apache	Debut	Western fore-and-aft apron	Yellow deerskin	1920s; puberty ceremony dress
31	Crow	Formal, old style	Plains T-shape	Elk tooth, beaded deerskin	Early twentieth century
32	Tolowa/Hupa	Backless and topless formal	Western fore-and-aft apron	Backless, shell-trimmed, elk skin skirt	Late nineteenth century; Yurok necklace as top, Karok hat
33	Western Apache	Housedress or morning dress	Anglo adaptation "camp dress"	Two-piece cotton	1948 (Chiricahua Apache)
34	Taos	Housedress plain; formal with robe	Adapted Plains T-shape	Colored and painted deerskin	1907; with Ute robe
35	Chiricahua Apache	Special occasion, debut	Western fore-and-aft apron	Two-piece, deerskin	1890s
36	Navajo	Antique, old-style work dress	Western fore-and-aft apron	Wool blanket dress	1860s
37	Navajo	Morning or housedress, modern style	Anglo adaptation	Velvet and cotton cloth	1930s
38	Acoma	Formal, old style	Western fore-and-aft apron	Embroidered wool dress and shawl	Early nineteenth century
39	Mississippi Choctaw	Work dress, modern style	Anglo adaptation	Three-piece, appliquéd cotton	1930s
40	Kwakiutl	Rainwear, old style	Western fore-and-aft apron	Cedar bark	Late nineteenth century; Nootka and Haida
41	Hopi	Housedress, old style	Western fore-and-aft apron	Black wool	Early twentieth century
42	Mescalero Apache	Work dress, old style	Western fore-and-aft apron	Deerskin	Late nineteenth century
43	Fox	Formal, modern style	Eastern wraparound adaptation	Two-piece wool with silk appliqué	1940s
44	Naskapi	Sports or hunting costume, old style	Northern slip sleeve	Painted caribou skin	1910–20
45	Acoma	Housedress, modern style	Western fore-and-aft apron, Anglo adaptation	Wool over calico dress and petticoat	1940s
46	Ojibwa	Sundress and housedress, old style	Northern slip sleeve	Deerskin, separate sleeves	Mid-nineteenth century
47	Cherokee	Housedress	Anglo adaptation	Appliquéd cotton	1948
48	Hopi	Special occasion, wedding	Western fore-and-aft apron	White wool	1870s

was stressed repeatedly because Douglas knew many in the audience would be skeptical initially. He needed to convince them that Native American women, similar to themselves, were sophisticated connoisseurs. Viewers would see one-of-a-kind wearable art. They would see only new innovative creations and classical traditions, in short, good fashion.

Next Douglas attacked representational stereotypes after telling his audience that "the average American has a distorted picture of American's first citizens, of their history and geography."[24] Douglas told his listeners he would dispel such thinking by showing them how resourceful Native American women utilized any materials on hand for their garments and adapted clothing to their particular environments. In this way he made the point that, contrary to popular belief, all Native Americans did not dress alike; attire varied by region, environmental zone, and culture; and styles changed through time. Native American women, not Paris or Milan designers, should be America's fashion role models and designers.

Next Douglas assured women that their love of clothing was not misplaced, despite what their husbands might say. "Today, when all the peoples of the world are working for better human understanding, one basis might well be the common love of all women for beautiful clothes."[25] With these statements Douglas established that the Indian Fashion Show was a different type of anthropological lecture, one without objectified, generalized, and idealized "others." Observers would see universality, without the confounding templates of particularistic, homogeneous cultures in juxtaposition, or the dialogical opposition of civilized and primitive societies. In essence, Douglas told his audience that he would consciously make associations, not distinctions. He also asserted that viewers could learn about themselves while learning about Native American women and their fashion; it would be a very personalized meeting between women of different cultures or races, even if everyone was nameless. He also assured his audience that what they would see was authentic, applicable to them, and socially relevant because of the contemporaneous timelessness of modern fashion classics. These were important points, for without the acceptance of his argument and his stance as a tastemaker and debunker of outmoded stereotypes, the audience would not accept his argument that Native American women understood and used fashion or that they should be emulated.

In order to establish equivalencies and allow the audience to work from the known to the unknown, Douglas showed only Native American clothing that he considered worthy of notice and emulation, meaning attire he felt would influence his audience by its sheer breathtaking beauty. After his universalizing introduction, and somewhat in contradistinction to his previous statements, he proceeded to adhere as rigidly as possible to the established formula of a fashion show by telling women to be ready to be amazed, in order to ensure enthusiasm and anticipation.[26]

Ensemble ordering and the commentary followed that of a standard fashion show.[27] A series of sensational dresses was shown first to startle and captivate the audience: these were pieces once worn by statuesque Plains women (Northern Cheyenne, Ponca, Oglala Lakota) who, like Parisian

fashion models, were five foot ten or taller. The first was often a "modern-style" Northern Cheyenne deerskin dress, made about 1880. To establish equivalencies to the audience's attire and acknowledge their fashion sense, Douglas described this beautiful dress in a manner that first typed the dress, posited its centrality in his proposed categorization scheme, and then directed the viewer's eye to the decoration he wanted to emphasize: "The basic T-shape Plains dress of deerskin was a long neck-to-ankle affair with little or no decoration. This work dress of about fifty years ago is lightly beaded and has a touch of painted decoration. This is the Cheyenne version with square-cut sleeves ending in long fringe, both red and yellow paint supplementing the beading, and tin jinglers at the lower corners."[28] Next, Douglas described a dramatic Ponca dress made circa 1865–70 as one worn by "a wealthy matron of 75 years ago, a 'mid-Victorian' style" that was "classically simple, decorated with ribbons, cowrie shells and a silver belt." By the time he brought the next model on stage he had the rapt attention of his audience.

Douglas's program moved on to models who were progressively shorter and ended with the equivalent of a wedding dress, in this case a modern Hopi wedding dress, worn by a five-foot-tall young woman. In his commentary on this dress, Douglas called to mind the fairy-tale ending of haute couture presentations but with an anticonsumerism twist:

> The Hopi bride still appears in this traditional all white dress. This dress, similar to the [Hopi] house dress but of white cotton brocade, was woven by the bridegroom and has a white cotton sash and a huge white cotton blanket robe. The bride wears puttee type boots. The white manta is embroidered on the front in the first year of marriage with a deep band of color by the bridegroom and then worn for ceremonial purposes the rest of the bride's life. So it is not a one-occasion dress as our brides' dresses are. No jewelry was worn with this dress.[29]

In between the first and the last dress Douglas described ensemble after ensemble.[30] He presented his arguments in a series of basic and alternate scripts that focused on clothing construction and technology, the quality of the material, functional use, and style. Image and emotional aesthetics were stressed as the most effective mechanisms to universalize women and through this to argue for the equivalencies of cultures and races. He presented all garments as universally beautiful apparel and only secondarily as Native American attire by using the interplay of concepts that his audience understood: fashion, antiquity, timelessness, modernity, sexual appeal, modesty, status, beauty, prestige, good taste, adaptability, and creativity. He employed basic fashion magazine terminology, which he had gained by reading *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*, as his rhetorical code. He always pointed out the basic material for the dress—cloth (brocade, calico, trade cloth), woven textiles (wool, cotton, grasses, cedar bark), tanned deerskin or elk skin—and its cut or important features of construction, such as the draping techniques of Pueblo dresses: "The basic costume was folded in half cross the width and wrapped around the body so that the fold was on the left side of the body, from the

left armpit down to below the knee, with the upper corners pinned over the right shoulder; and the edges, running down the right side of the body, led together by a cloth belt."[31]

In addition, Douglas discussed the creativity and artistry of cultural and individual decoration, and directed the viewer's eye to what he considered the most important artistic features on each dress: the length and placement of fringe, the color of beadwork, ribbons, or appliqué. Finally, he highlighted transformative accessories: hats, a matching beaded belt, leggings, purses, and moccasins. In all cases he referred to each ensemble as fashion in the Euro-American sense of the term and gave little culturally specific information. As he remarked at the end of his commentary on one "old-style" Oglala Lakota dress, "It is high fashion on the Plains at its best!" Such statements, repetitively and authoritatively spoken, were designed to convince the audience that (1) Native Americans had fashion; (2) Native Americans were continuously modern and contemporary; and (3) Native American cultures creatively and adaptively changed over time in regards to the introduction of new resources. In short, cultures had commonalities, and these commonalities were more important than superficial cultural differences. Gender trumps culture.

An emphasis on change resulting from European/American contact, subsequent trade in raw and prestige materials, and adaptation to ensure the continuation of tradition was Douglas's main description point of several ensembles and became an instance when generic, timeless Indianness was distinguished from 1950s middle-class white, Euro-America. The rhetoric also emphasized the importance of cultural borrowing, not construed as colonial appropriation by Indians, but as intelligent use of materials and fashion ideas that were appropriately reinterpreted. This was especially evident in Douglas's scripts for dress number fourteen, the old-style Iroquois beaded two-piece cloth formal (a Seneca-made reproduction of an 1825 dress, the Indian Arts and Crafts Board, 1930s, New York).

> Imported French broadcloth and wool is chosen for this two-piece dress designed for a society leader of about 1830. There is a beaded navy blue wrap-around skirt and a long red over-blouse or red calico jacket trimmed with beaded edging, ribbon and silver (brooches) ornaments. The wool skirt had a striking beaded design along the hemline and up one side, embroidered in the lacy white beadwork favored by this tribe. Loose cloth leggings with a lacy white beaded border, beaded skin moccasins, a string of real wampum, and a beaded over-the-shoulder bag complete the ensemble![32]

For other dresses Douglas noted that innovative Native American women obtained and used rare and valued resources to accentuate their dresses. Such descriptions were intended to emulate New York City designers and illustrate how Native Americans adorned themselves with valuable exotic materials: velvet, silk ribbons, beads, shells, and silver jewelry. Yet there was a contradictory assertion embedded in these scripts. Douglas wanted to implant the idea that if Native American women could borrow from each other and from

Europeans and Euro-Americans, his audience could borrow Native American ideas for their own fashion. To Douglas the success of his performative exhibit could be measured by whether the US fashion industry began producing fashionable dresses based on the show and Euro-American women wore them, thus honoring Native American women. It would mean his message was being heard. And it was. By 1944 the dresses in the Indian Fashion Show were being adapted by a number of designers in New York City, Houston, California, and Toronto. The trend continued through the late 1950s.

Despite telling his audience the "name" of the ensemble—which was generally Douglas's tribal identification of the dress, not the accessories—his scripts were ethnographically minimalist and never referred to the aesthetic criteria or cultural paradigms of the original makers and users of the attire. He did not utilize emic ethnographic perspectives or indigenous aesthetic paradigms, nor did he provide any information on culturally specific perspectives or Native American women's views of their attire. The dresses were decontextualized yet universalized by this approach. Thus Douglas named a color but never mentioned what the color symbolized to the maker. Instead he espoused a common artistic frame of reference which assumed that everyone saw a color in the same light and that culturally specific references were superficial. For example, when describing an old-style Shoshone yellow deerskin formal (made about 1885–90 in Wyoming), he noted that "there are intricate blue-beaded bands on the bodice that effectively contrast with the yellow skin. The skin is dyed almost a golden yellow using native yellow ochre and metal brooches on the thighs accent its simplicity. The unusual fringing made the dress exquisitely dainty and feminine." [33] Douglas felt this art-history approach allowed the dresses to speak for themselves and allowed viewers to draw their own conclusions from the visual evidence.

One problem with this approach was that the entire ensemble was not made by the Shoshone nor was the ensemble, as shown, something that would have occurred in reality. For the Shoshone ensemble a Blackfoot yellow-beaded belt was added without attribution. Similarly, ensemble number four, the Northern Cheyenne dress, had Assiniboine men's beaded moccasins and a Sioux belt. Each ensemble actually contained attire from more than one culture, in part because the museum's collections were incomplete. Men's moccasins accounted for about half of the footwear used because Euro-American women's feet were too big. When Douglas mixed and matched accessories or footwear he always used items from the closest tribe and rationalized the inappropriate use when someone questioned him by averring that the two groups probably traded with each other. He never admitted to anyone he was using male attire because that would have undermined one of his central contentions, that attire is gender specific. His decision was based on necessity. There were not enough moccasins of different sizes in the DAM to make ethnographic authenticity work at the ensemble level.[34] Douglas got around this issue by never naming the cultural origins of footwear or leggings. The only time he would name a piece of clothing from a second culture was for a piece of jewelry—because owning ethnic jewelry was common in the fashion world and was an indication of social capital and wealth.

Douglas occasionally provided information on the age (the actual or hypothesized construction date) and, more rarely, the individualized history of a dress. The most specific ethnographic information was reserved for sacred attire to be worn by women with special statuses in certain rituals; today it goes without saying that none of these dresses should have been presented in the Indian Fashion Show.[35] All are dresses that have been or are in the process of being repatriated under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), clearly recognized today as items of sacred and cultural patrimony that should never have been collected in the first place. Douglas's scripts for these dresses now appear inappropriate, if not extremely insensitive. For example, for dress number four, the Kiowa Ghost Dance Society white deerskin dress (special-occasion formal wear, ceremonial costume, early-twentieth-century Oklahoma), he said that

> The Kiowa Ghost Dance Society Ceremonial dress is made like the Plains basic T-shaped dress with long wing sleeves. The wonderful dress is made of pure white deerskin with small painted designs, particularly on the bodice and shoulders. With its tasteful simplicity and superb draping of sleeves and skirt it represents the best in Indian high fashion. There are also high, soft, yellow, skin boots and a silver belt, from which hangs an awl case, to complete the costume. The dress was worn by the woman leader of the Ghost Dance society. The stripes on the moccasins and leggings indicate the women's belief. It is of matchless taste and now rare.[36]

Douglas's concentration on dress construction, with only a nod to the cultural symbolic importance of designs, highlights important clues as to how Douglas conceptualized attire. He used a combination of two categorization schemes. The first was based on his examination of museum collections: Douglas was very interested in constructing stylistic and manufacturing taxonomies that could be used to identify and classify objects. He declared that Native Americans made four basic dress types in different parts of the country: Plains T-shaped or long skin dresses, Western fore-and-aft aprons, Eastern wraparound skirts, and Northern slip-and-sleeve garments. He wanted the audience to gain a comprehensive picture of Native American women's clothing styles and how they reflected a culture-area approach, culture climaxes, and transition zones where people residing on style borders influenced each other (for instance, the Jicarilla Apache, the Ute, or modern Ojibwa). Although Douglas's scheme concentrated on the most representative cuts for each area, he always used examples that he considered each type's highest artistic development. He wanted people to see the best because this reflected good taste. [37]

Douglas's emic categorization emphasized the idea that most Native American dresses were variants on a few main design ideas that could be designated American classical traditions individualized by culture and personal preference. This was a notion common in the US fashion industry because it helped promote seasonal and yearly trends. This was an important element in Douglas's argument, for he wanted to demonstrate that Native

American clothing could be used as a source of contemporary fashion. To do this he emphasized construction similarities and functional use in a second, etic classification that was grounded in his commonsense understanding of middle-class Euro-American women's clothing types and what women expected to see in a fashion show.

The gendered, functional typology stressed the occasions on which dresses would be properly worn as reflected in idealized women's roles discussed in women's fashion magazines. It also played on the idea that the properly dressed woman donned different attire to perform different tasks, an idea that has faded somewhat but is still alive today in the categories of "Sunday best," work clothes, gym clothes, dress-down day at work attire, and evening wear. Accordingly, the Native American dresses were labeled party wear; work or housedresses; morning, afternoon, or tea dresses; play dresses; formals; and semiformals.

The majority of dresses were labeled formals or semiformals, as can be seen in Table 1, reflecting their status as attire that was reserved for special occasions, which in Euro-America meant attire that was coordinated and more formal than everyday dress. With the exception of the special occasion dresses reserved for "religious services" narrowly defined (for example, the Ghost Dance dresses), Native women would never have used the dresses in the manner that Douglas proposed. Douglas knew this; his equivalizing categories were a satirical critique of his society and contained playful patronizing. As a man he knew what women were doing wrong; women and the fashion industry had gone too far. Although on the surface it is intriguing, ludicrous, or comical to think of a Kiowa woman wearing her dress for afternoon tea or a Mescalero Apache young woman wearing her puberty dress to a debutante party or a high school prom, Douglas nevertheless made his point about adaptability and functional differentiation.[38]

Although there were no casuals, shorts, lingerie, or swimsuits in the presentation, there was the equivalent of Coco Chanel's "classic little black dress," in this case a traditional Hopi woven dark-wool dress, "fastened at one shoulder, creating an off the shoulder look and an interesting bodice." There was also a "sun dress" illustrated by an Ojibwa/Chippewa dress, mid-calf length with detachable sleeves, which served as the model for California and Florida designers who transformed it into the popular 1950s sundresses, and attire to wear for hunting or sports events to help cheer on the men (see the Naskapi ensemble; fig. 2). Finally, there were work or housedresses (an old-style Jicarilla Apache deerskin dress, a Seminole dress, and a modern Cherokee dress). Douglas's idea of a housedress reminds one of the June Cleaver character in the *Leave It To Beaver* television series who dressed in a shirtwaist dress, heels, stockings, and pearls to clean the house. Douglas's social equivalences were always presented slightly tongue in cheek to reflect an assessment of the idealized roles of moneyed women seen in popular culture.

Douglas felt his two taxonomies were logical because of his underlying conceptions of women: "Provided she is not reduced to ultimate poverty, no Indian woman will go to a social function in a work dress, or vice versa."[39] To illustrate this contention he used several ensembles to illustrate how a housedress was transformed into a formal through accessories and ornamentation.

FIGURE 2. *Frederic Douglas commenting on Naskapi dress at December 1953 presentation at Bryn Mawr College. Women seated in background from left to right are wearing Hupa, Nez Perce, and Iroquois ensembles. Photo by Theodore B. Hetzel; courtesy of the Denver Art Museum.*

For the Fox modern formal, silver brooches were added to the blue blouse and a festive yarn sash donned; for one Ojibwa ensemble, "a peaked cap, painted in geometric designs converted the housedress to a [dress] for 'street' or 'semiformal' wear. For formal wear the final touch was a fur stole." The dresses became the equivalent of the "basic dress" of European fashion designers, but one that could serve as attire for new social functions if worn or decorated in differing ways. Douglas repeatedly demonstrated how a basic dress was converted into formal wear by stressing creative accessorizing that basically showed the value of time-honored fashionableness rather than fads for the sake of novelty. In this way, Douglas's secondary agenda in the Indian Fashion Show slowly emerged as he proceeded—showing conspicuous consumption as an American trap. Although using fashion's concepts and playing with its sartorial rhetoric, he was ambivalent about fashion, feeling that Euro-American women spent too much money on dresses they did not really need simply to be up-to-date or to fulfill their psychological need for novelty. Douglas argued that all Native American women were free from the dictates of fashion by emphasizing adaptability, economy, and the value of classical traditions.

For the finale Douglas assembled all the models on stage to demonstrate the beauty of the Native American world. He stated that he hoped viewers had seen that all women were women the world around, and all had the same strengths and fashion problems: a love of personal adornment, a continuous need for new styles, and good taste. All women had the same loves and hates, struggles and ambitions. Culture was superficial and irrelevant. He hoped the audience had understood that Native Americans were no different than themselves and should be treated the same. He then closed with a discussion of fashion and asked the audience if they or the Native Americans were free with regard to fashion. "We are slaves to the French and other designers. We are also slaves to our neighbors because we try to dress like the Jones's." He argued, "We do not like it but we diet and exercise, buy expensive undergarments in order to impress others."[40] Fashion dictates.

In this summation Douglas included a final moral message about conspicuous consumption, culturally meaningful distinctions, and a critique of Euro-American society.

> Our idea of fashion is different from the Indian folk—theirs is to keep a dress that will always be as beautiful as when it was made—ours is to make something that will have entirely different lines so that people will feel ashamed to appear in a year-old style. This forces them to spend a lot of money for a new wardrobe. This in turns shows others that women have money. For Indians this status comes in their ability to demonstrate that they can weave a piece of cloth, embroider it and look festive in it.[41]

By this statement, Douglas argued one last time that the persistence of the beauty was readily evident as well as the endurance that good household management and a respect for classic traditions engendered. Good taste was timeless; good fashion resulted from slowly altering tradition, not continuously crafting novelty.

After this critique, Douglas summarized his main points about cross-cultural understanding and the eradication of ethnic/cultural misrepresentations: (1) gender was more basic than race or culture; (2) specific fashions are situation (time), not culture, dependent; (3) fashion is not the exclusive possession of elites but a right of all women; and (4) by following Native American women's sensibilities and values Euro-American women would improve American life, eliminating prejudice and the ills of conspicuous consumption. Douglas felt that he had demonstrated that "high fashion had always existed and that women are women the world around."[42] He also felt he had shown his audience how to appreciate each garment for its individual beauty using universalized Euro-American–based criteria and how to appreciate fashionable Native American women as artists who chose attire as a means of expression. He had not shown them how to recognize and appreciate the garments from individual cultural perspectives using Native American criteria for beauty, good taste, and appropriateness. From all accounts it was a very successful visual presentation. Could the same message be conveyed today using a static exhibit?

> *The idea of a Native American fashion show and wearable art is great. I do feel the beauty of Native Americans [is] best portrayed [in] their clothing. I'd like to see a contemporary version with the women modeling their own clothes (art) and the telling about their process and the meaning of the materials, symbols, etc. This is a fantastic concept and should be expanded and continued.*
>
> —Visitor to Fashion Pathways exhibit

> *I think that there shouldn't be white people modeling Native American culture, there should be Indian people modeling them instead of white people. All the manikins* [sic] *should be Native American so they could get the experience of what they really looked like instead of Blonds, Brunettes, or Red Heads. Ohh—one more thing, their* [sic] *were hardly any of this gay shit here and this gallery should be run by Indians not white* hoes.
>
> —Native visitor to Fashion Pathways exhibit[43]

FASHION PATHWAYS: AMERICAN INDIAN WEARABLE ART, 1998

Fashion Pathways took me and curator Nancy Blomberg two years to plan. During that period we had to obtain funding for the project and consult extensively with Native scholars from each of the more than fifty cultures represented in Douglas's program. It was designed for display in the museum's special-exhibit gallery on the first floor away from the main North American galleries on the second and third floors of the DAM. This was intentional; we did not want the paradigmatic culture-area approach of the main Native American ethnological galleries to interfere with the exhibit. As noted earlier in the article, we wanted to restage as much of Douglas's program as we could while using the basic confines of a static exhibit, focus on the dresses as Douglas had, and use supplemental wall panels to contextualize and historicize the Indian Fashion Show presentations. Information on these panels included an initial contextualizing label that included information on the exhibit and how we would like visitors to proceed; a panel on why the program was undertaken and the nature of representational stereotypes Douglas had fought, illustrated by large movie posters from the Denver Public Library; a panel on Douglas's life and the nature of the clothing collections in the DAM; and large photographs of Douglas explaining the beauty of the dresses from actual presentations. The photographs were placed at the end of a centered runway in order to draw the visitors' gaze in the hope that they would imagine a presentation in progress. There were also examples of invitations, advertisements, and visitors' letters interspersed with photographs from actual presentations. We ended with two panel units on the effects of the performance exhibit: the first showed how the US fashion industry utilized the Native American dresses and produced adaptations in the late 1940s and 1950s; the second was devoted to the artistic and educational work of Lloyd Kiva New and the beginnings of Native American fashion design and haute couture and its rich successes. It also included rare examples of New's textiles and purses, which had never been displayed. The central runway was supplemented by a TV kiosk that continuously ran a five-minute silent film from a 1942 program shown at the Philbrook Museum in Tulsa, the only actual film documentation we were able to locate. For those dresses that were already on permanent display, we developed a treasure-hunt handout to encourage visitors to find these dresses. Jan Jacobs, curator of education, developed an educational unit on attire for children. Along with the stories she told about Osage clothing and her family dressmakers on gallery tours, her lectures were one of the most successful parts of Fashion Pathways.

Which dresses to feature and how and where to display them were issues that required extensive conversations with conservators and Native consultants. We did not display any dress that Native scholars stated should not be shown, any dress that we already had identified as inappropriate for a fashion show because it was not to be worn by anyone who did not have the right, such as the powerful Kiowa and Arapaho Ghost Dance dresses and one Blackfoot dress, or any dresses, accessories, or footwear that were slated for NAGPRA discussions, like one of the Acoma dresses and the Taos/Ute robe.

Each ensemble was vetted through the museum's Native advisory board. Native authorities had veto power in terms of display of accessories as well. This meant that, in a few cases, we altered Douglas's ensembles to make them more culturally appropriate and acceptable. When we did this, we explained the alteration in a special exhibit label.

In general, however, there were fewer requests for elimination and alteration than we had expected, and in the case of the Tolowa-Karuk ensemble, our two Native consultants wanted it shown so they could talk about what it symbolized spiritually. Eighty-eight-year-old elder Dorothy Lopez Frye Williams (Howonquet-Tolowa), from Elk Valley Rancheria, described how it felt to dance in such a dress seventy-five years ago.

> The last time I danced I was thirteen. I had necklaces from my earlobes down to over my shoulders. You couldn't even poke a toothpick through to my skin. My chest, arms, back, and throat were all covered with my two grandmothers' necklaces. They must have weighted a hundred pounds. But, oh, it was an honor to wear the dresses and aprons in the ceremony. I stood all night long with the Creator's help. It was serious prayer time; we wore those sacred things for the Creator, saying thank you for our world—its gifts—and praying for balance.

Holly Hensher (Karok) spoke of a different issue. After discussing the Yurok, Karuk, and Hupa use of foreign materials (trade beads, thimbles, and cloth) when they were new and fascinating (in terms similar to what Douglas had used to describe the Iroquois dress), Hensher noted that her people were again making dresses using traditional materials. The dress displayed was needed at her home as a template and to reinvigorate it as a living entity. "My true wish is that old dresses like these could go home and dance again. I feel they were made to be used."[44]

We also eliminated fragile ensembles. The Northwest Coast cedar bark attire (Kwakiutl) was now too brittle to place on a mannequin. A past curator had basically destroyed one Navajo velvet blouse when he removed the silver buttons for use in another display. This man, unfortunately, had not considered Indian Arts and Crafts Board–produced dresses to be aesthetically authentic and had not taken proper care of those dresses that Douglas had used in the Indian Fashion Show. In some cases he had discarded or deaccessioned items used in the Indian Fashion Show, offered them for sale to collectors, or given them to other museums. A few other pieces, especially accessories and footwear, no longer in the collections had been Douglas's personal property or had been loaned from the Indian Arts and Crafts Board or friends; most could not be located. Rather than spend two additional years trying to track these pieces down, we decided to use only those items still in the museum's permanent collections that could result in a complete ensemble.

As a result of these decisions only thirty of the fifty-three dresses could be shown. This was a reasonable number of ensembles from which to choose because the space allowed us to highlight ten ensembles. Other

dresses remained on permanent display (fig. 3), and we transformed them into the ensembles. We also included new items and ensembles: a US-haute couture ski suit adapted from a Seminole dress designed by E. Picard that had been used in the 1941 exhibit at New York's Museum of Modern Art and the textiles and handbags produced by Lloyd Kiva New.

Staging was always a critical issue (fig. 4). We needed to create a setting as close to a typical fashion show as possible as the centerpiece of the exhibit so visitors could imagine they were seeing a real runway presentation in an elite venue. The museum's expert exhibit designers built a raised, flowing stage that looked like a runway with a larger-than-life-size photograph of Douglas commenting on an ensemble modeled by a University of Washington coed in 1954 at the end. This runway was flanked on one side by chairs on which visitors could sit and view the dresses. The Neiman Marcus Company loaned us a dozen 1940s mannequins with period wigs they had found in a basement and helped us place the figurines in typical fashion-show poses. They and the conservators dressed each central mannequin and positioned them so that the viewer's eye moved from left to right. Like Douglas, we started with the first dress in the program that we could safely use, a Cheyenne dress with a magnificent blue-beaded yoke, and ended with a black Hopi dress.

Each posed mannequin (and any attire that was in the permanent exhibits) was accompanied by two large color-coded labels and one smaller label placed on the stage

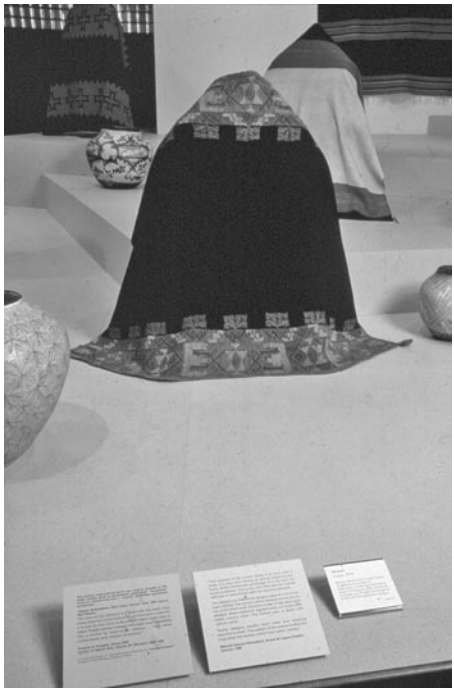

FIGURE 3. *Acoma mantle/robe in permanent exhibit on Southwest culture area transformed into part of the Fashion Pathways exhibit. Photo courtesy of the Denver Art Museum.*

FIGURE 4. *Main runway, Fashion Pathways exhibit, Denver Art Museum 1998. From left to right are the Cheyenne dress (eight dresses), old-style, and twentieth-century Navajo dresses. Note the label explaining the dual-label system, which was moved from the end of the runway, and the two labels at the foot of each mannequin. At the end and to the side are the supplementary panels. Photo courtesy of the Denver Art Museum.*

well below eye level so as not to interfere with the viewer's gaze of the entire ensemble. The small white label contained basic curatorial information on each piece of attire in the ensemble. The larger yellow label contained Douglas's script, while immediately to the right, on blue paper, was the corresponding script by our Native American consultants. Viewers were told in a large label using a Socratic format, placed at the beginning of the runway, what they would encounter as they walked up to the first ensemble. We asked them to read the two larger labels and think about what they learned from each, how label copy affected how they would view and respond to each dress. We then asked people to jot down their thoughts in a visitor's guide at the end of the exhibit if they wished.

Each Native cultural consultant produced a paragraph to one-page script describing an ensemble in his or her own terms and related why it was beautiful and how the concepts of beauty should be interpreted using their culture's epistemological concepts of dress, gender, and beauty. After discussing the project by telephone, we sent each consultant photographs and Douglas's accompanying scripts for the apparel from their cultures and asked if the attire was "authentic" (however the Native scholar defined it), what was incorrect or correct in the script, and how it should be described for an audience of Euro-American, middle-class women to enable them to comprehend and understand its importance.

The result was a rich variety of scripts that reiterated many points Douglas had raised and provided information that was culture and time specific (that is, dealt with NAGPRA). All consultants spoke to the significance of the attire to the women (and men) of their culture; many spoke of their concepts of beauty and thoughts about the creation and wearing of clothing, often as markers of their cultural, familial, clan, or individual identity. Some mentioned the spiritual origins of the dress style and how it was obtained from the Creator, thereby providing information that would have been related to women as they came of age. For example, Michael Darrow (Chiricahua Apache) wrote about how the girl's puberty dress, worn at the Sunrise Ceremonial Dance, was a gift of their sacred deities: "The style of this dress is from *'Isdzánádleeshé*, the sacred woman who is the mother of our people and who is known for her wisdom and power. The designs on the dress represent the powers of the world . . . the jingling of raindrops, sunbeams streaming down, clouds, mountains, and lightning. The dress gives the wearer a sense of strength and of place."[45]

Many mentioned their personal feelings when looking at the dress, especially their pride when wearing similar attire. Navajo Tamara S. Nez said, "I feel very special [when I wear my traditional dress]. I am very proud of the clothes that I'm wearing. It makes me proud and strong, and I am glad to be a Navajo." Several remarked on how a dress was a cultural identifier and how it, in turn, makes them who they are. We quoted Navajo historian Ruth Roessel when displaying a Navajo velveteen blouse and full skirt from the 1930s: "We are strong by the way we dress. We identify ourselves as Navajo women, from our ancestors who were called *Asdzání*, which means, 'one sits down and has her skirt laid out beautifully.'"[46] Like Douglas, these cultural experts focused

on beadwork, the amount and type of decoration on the dress, and how such indicators tell people at a glance that the wearer is from a specific society. Others talked about social significance, what a dress said about the prestige and honor of the wearer, and how clan information is included in designs often with remarkable artistry, expertise, and loving care. For Shannon Pelot Valerio (Choctaw) the act of creating identity with pride was essential: "For us, clothing is very important. You are supposed to make your own clothing, so each person will take great care in the production of her dresses. Both my mother and grandmother were seamstresses and have taught me the importance of the quality of workmanship that goes into your own clothing." Finally some spoke of practical issues, how the dresses were adaptively designed for specific climates—the Inuit parka for warmth or the heavy Seminole patchwork skirts to protect against mosquitoes.

Several wrote about the problems of addressing the ensemble as a whole if it contained culturally mixed pieces because we had prompted consultants to look for "accuracy errors." Although everyone thought the ensembles all looked nice, a few—but not as many as we had expected—wrote how an ensemble looked "wrong" because it had been put together in ways that never would have occurred naturally. These individuals then wrote about what would be appropriate and what culturally correct attire would look like. Consultants from Plains tribes quickly focused on footwear that was "not right" often because designs on moccasins and leggings were gender specific.

Beauty and pride were dominant themes. Some of the beauty the Native consultants mentioned came from the dresses' inherent visual loveliness conveyed as a simple statement of fact. For example, Lillie Fobb (Oklahoma Seminole, Bird Clan) said of the Seminole dress: "I think this outfit is really nice." Others conveyed a multivocal concept of beauty tied to spiritual concepts. A few spoke specifically in terms of gender and ornamentation in ways that mirrored Douglas's arguments. When commenting on the Cheyenne shell dress, Montoya A. Whiteman (Cheyenne/Arapaho) discussed women's love of experimentation in order to create beauty in a holistic rhetorical statement designed to educate.

> Using shells to ornament clothing was one form of expression for the Cheyenne artisan. Cheyenne women have always loved beauty and uniqueness and they loved to experiment with variations of medium whether it was porcupine quills, trade beads, elk teeth, shells, coins, or in contemporary terms appliqué. The Cheyenne people continue to recognize their strong artistic traditions by integrating their symbols into beadwork, dress design, footwear, and accessories. This cultural symbolism and continuity also is represented in the use of color, particularly in the use of rainbow color, which has a deeply rooted sacred view of life that embraces hope. Cheyenne worldview is based upon the hope that their ways of life and its beauty will be preserved in their ceremonial garments, as well as in their social attire, which represents the beauty and uniqueness of their ways as people.

For several, seeing a dress from their culture was a bittersweet experience. One woman stated that she was nearly forty years old before she had seen an actual old-style dress of her people. Another said she had to go to a museum hundreds of miles away from her community and see pieces of attire in a drawer. Commenting on a Santee Sioux dress, Doris Goodteacher (Santee/Yankton Sioux) remarked, "This is an exquisite dress. I did not see this dress worn because Christianity dominated our small tribe and cultural traditions were not allowed to be part of our lives. It is sad that I, along with many others in our community, did not have the opportunity to experience the full richness of our Indian culture. Even the knowledge of crafting the dress is gone. I think that is a tremendous loss."

Others spoke of the importance of traditional clothing today in terms of cultural preservation and maintaining distinctive cultural identities. Albert Wing (Nez Perce) spoke of the respect he feels whenever he sees traditional clothing: "I know that a lot of time, energy, and love went into the making of their clothing." He also mentioned that special attire is a gift from mothers and aunts, part of his communitas with his relatives. "Because each part of my traditional regalia was handcrafted by myself or a relative, there is a sense of pride and belonging that overcomes me when I am wearing them."

Almost all cultural specialists spoke similarly about how the dresses they possessed were treasured heirlooms and how necessary they were today. According to Bessie Smith, (Navajo, Hashk'ąą hadzohí clan), the two Navajo ensembles "are our special clothes. They have value to us and have meaningful associations. The clothes signify modesty and respect for self. Even though I live far away from home, I feel connected when I wear my traditional clothes. I feel that many of our people have lost pride in their traditional clothes. Wearing the traditional clothes shows that we take pride in our traditional dress and keeps our culture alive. If we don't wear these clothes someone else can take it and exploit it." Consultants also mentioned that the cultural stories and songs that went with proper dress construction was critical. One Ute consultant reminded visitors that "Ute people are very proud of what they do for their families. We give thanks to our Grandmothers and Mothers who specially do the sewing in our homes. Songs are sung among the Ute ladies when they sew. This dress is special to a young Ute girl who wears this dress. She gives thanks to her Mother or Grandmother and to Mother Earth."

Some consultants discussed how the dresses had changed through time. Hopi Gail Tsikewa noted that the manta used to be worn by all women daily, but today it and the woven belt are worn only during a ceremony. At other times, women wore the same manufactured clothing as everyone else in America. Consultants made such associations specifically when they or one of their relatives had worn a dress similar to the one on display. This added a voice of authority to their scripts and the commingling of tradition and modernity.

A few Native consultants thought in terms of contemporary fashion and what people wore every day. One Lakota Sioux woman who asked that her name not be used said,

> I see the dress not so much through traditional eyes, but through those of someone interested in fashion. What grabs me about this dress is not the stunning blue beadwork as much as the fringe, which reveals the dress to be made of [tanned] skin. One imagines the audience having differing reactions—some appreciating the softness and the whiteness of the leather; others mildly discomfited at the thought of wearing something like this (a skin, after all, is different from a fur). And the fringe is really important in both those reactions. It says "primitivism," even in the midst of modern fashion. And that primitivism is something that viewers both feared and wanted to have for themselves.

Similarly one of our featured Native American designers, Margaret Roach Wheeler (Chickasaw/Choctaw), talked about changes in materials while preserving the basic cut and silhouette in fashion terms similar to those Douglas used. She also mentioned that "Frederic Douglas's Fashion Shows also touched my life—I still have my 'squaw dress' that my mother made for me in 1955."

About half the time the Native consultants pointed out what was most important symbolically about a dress and why. This was especially true for women speaking about apparel from the Northwest Coast area. For example, Elizabeth Cheney (Tlingit/Haida) had the following thoughts about a dress Douglas categorized as a "Tlingit appliqué wool dress in a modern semiformal style made in the 1890s" even though he knew he was stretching categories because he was describing the dress as a blanket. "When I see traditional dresses, I immediately do a mental search about the family crest being shown. I note the family of the person wearing it, if I may or may not be related. The design on this blanket is a beaver within a beaver. The buttons are either mother of pearl or abalone. 'Red' signifies the blood of family, of a person. The buttons signify bones, ancestors, and history. The black signifies the unknown, what surrounds us as people. There are no buttons along the bottom because this is a Dancing Blanket and it dances better, more freely and flowing, without buttons on the bottom." Other social criteria were singled out for special mention. For example, Leslie Kabotie (Crow) wrote that elk teeth were highly prized commodities in her community. "The elk-tooth dress is the most valuable dress a Crow woman can own, connoting her wealth and prominence in the community. Wealth in this instance is defined by the woman's dress, which shows evidence of her husband's hunting prowess—his ability to care and provide for her and her family." She also explained how one could tell age and social status from the dress: "A young woman's dress may only have the upper portion of the dress covered, whereas an older matriarch's dress may have teeth covering the entire dress down to the hem. These fully covered dresses have several hundred teeth on them, causing the dress to weigh upwards of ten pounds." Like Douglas, Kabotie also explained how contemporary dresses had adapted with changes in raw materials. "In contemporary times, synthetic elk-teeth or white shells have come to be more commonly used to adorn women's dresses in the elk-tooth design."

Each individual personalized the attire in ways that Douglas's essentializing script and his attempts to make all clothing universal, transnational, and accessible to all, could not. Although no one came out and condemned what Douglas or we had done, several individuals commented politely that when Native American apparel is worn by indigenous people it is special, thereby providing a quiet or oblique critique of the entire presentation and non-Natives playing Indian. This was done in culturally specific ways. Just as one would talk about, not at, a wayward individual by providing an educational lesson on the way things should be done, so did our consultants: "Traditional regalia is wonderful, powerful, and spiritual—especially if worn by tribal people. When I wear my traditional dress I feel connected to my tribe, my clan, my family, my traditions, and I remember where I come from, and feel blessed. I can feel the spirits of my ancestors" (Celeste Worl, Tlingit, Eagle, Thunderbird, and Child of Coho clans). Other individuals thought there was no difference between women of different cultures, races, or hair color or that modern times necessitated sharing. One Ute woman, who requested that her name be withheld, while discussing a dress that a young woman would have worn to public events when of courting age, said "My Ute people are a very proud tribe and it's good to share our costumes and traditional ways with all people. It is a modern time today and we should not be offended by who wears what of the Ute's clothing."

Interestingly, only one individual specifically mentioned anything about stereotypes or the need to fight depersonalizing or marginalizing ones or even Douglas's creation of romanticized images based on supposedly universalized gender traits. "I have never been able to reconcile the picture acquired in my childhood, of the Naskapi as 'wild Indians' with these exquisite garments. I remember my mother and my aunts sewing in the evenings in the dim light of kerosene lamps and I wonder in what conditions these beautiful works of art were created and I wonder about the people who created them and I think they must have been not 'wild,' but civilized beyond any understanding we have of them" (Jean Beacker, Innu). Douglas's fight to change middle-class, white America by undermining stereotypes was not of central interest to our cultural consultants. Providing information about origin stories for dress styles, how dresses were gifts of the Creator, and brief hints at cultural and social meanings, and providing contextualizing epistemologies and culturally and individual concepts of value were obviously important to many consultants. They also spoke to the idealized qualities of a woman. "A Cheyenne woman wearing this dress would have exuded the qualities of a fine Cheyenne woman; qualities such as courage, strength, skillfulness, creativity, perseverance, and decisiveness" (Montoya A. Whitman, Cheyenne/Arapaho).

Several consultants focused on the cultural inconsistencies in Douglas's ensembles. They pointed out these errors and told viewers what an accurate ensemble would have looked like. For example, Jan Jacobs, Osage (Deer Clan) described the Osage ensemble, one of the most problematic:

> This woman is wearing her belt much too low—probably to show off the finger weaving. Normally, the blouse would cover the belt except for the streamers that hand down from the waist in back. The wearer

> knows the belt is special even though no one sees it. The blouse is beautiful, but it is Potawatomi, not Osage. The Osage reserved floral designs for embroidery and beadwork. For Ribbonwork, they used geometric designs like those of the vertical strips on the left of the skirt. As an Osage, I am always aware of the things I have been taught about my people and their customs, and I would not want to offend my tribe or any other by mixing and matching tribal clothing styles.
>
> My mother, Georgeann Robinson, did Ribbonwork almost every day of her life. She sold most of it to other Osage for dance clothing, but she also created contemporary fashions featuring Ribbonwork. Mrs. Dewey Bartlett, the wife of an Oklahoma governor, once ordered a dress with Osage Ribbonwork from my mother to wear to President Nixon's Inaugural Ball. Mrs. Bartlett wanted to wear something that made a statement about her home state.

Placed next to this personalized script that conveys the proper cultural identification of the blouse, respectful use, proper placement of accessories, essential facts about Osage Ribbonwork, the events at which an Osage blouse was worn, and the pride of the speaker in her mother's art, was Douglas's script for this dress, number 25, the "Osage Silk Appliqué Wool Formal. Two-piece. Modern, 20th century. Oklahoma: A wrap-around broadcloth skirt worn with a velvet-beaded blouse and a large shawl of broadcloth is the standard formal dress of the Osage today. Both the skirt and shawl have quantities of colorful silk appliqué in the large floral bead-like design favored by the tribe. Appliqué can be seen on the skirt as horizontal bands made by the two colored selvages and a vertical appliqué design in ribbon. The sash of braided wool with interwoven beads is worn tied in the back with ends forming something like a bustle." For visitors who took the time and effort to read these labels, the differences and similarities between a fashion etic label and an emic label would be starkly apparent.

At least that was the plan and the arrangement we worked under until about a week before the exhibit was set to open. It was then that the museum's administration decided to use the gallery for another exhibit. I was teaching in Tucson and could not help with the last-minute changes this necessitated. The exhibit designers and Nancy Blomberg quickly redesigned the exhibit and placed it in the large open space in the center of the permanent exhibits devoted to the Plains, Plateau, and Southwest culture areas. This meant that people could enter the exhibit from four open doorways, and we could no longer guide or encourage a visitor flow pattern to ensure that visitors would (hopefully) read the open contextualizing label and the label that explained the tri-labels for each ensemble. The redesign was the only feasible choice for the exhibit space, and the designers and curatorial staff made a Herculean effort. What they produced was beautiful and captured visitors' attention. It definitely drew people into the room and elicited exclamations of awe as they saw the superbly pedestalled dresses on the central runway, but it affected visitors' reactions to the exhibit, their understanding of our purpose, and our experimental research design.

The exhibit that visitors saw was cramped and hard to distinguish from the permanent exhibit; it had a bad flow pattern that left many visitors confused. They did not know where to start or end and hence missed the crucial contextualizing main labels, including what the exhibit was about and why there were multiple labels. One could not follow our preferred path from a contextualized beginning to a contemporary conclusion without moving in and out of the culture-area exhibits. To correct some of the problems, Nancy and the designers focused their attention on the clothing in the spacious permanent exhibits and placed several ensembles and some of the Euro-American–designed adaptations within the spaces; the Seminole-inspired ski ensemble that had been used at the 1941 MOMA exhibit was placed next to the Seminole dresses used in the fashion show. This was an improvement over the original design because it allowed visitors to see how the Native American dress had been adapted and how Native American clothing was easily transformed into mainstream fashion. But our experimental research design was now rendered useless. There was no use even trying to administer surveys or talk to a random sample of the patrons. However, we still hoped a few people would read the dual exhibit labels and think about the issues posed.

A FEW MUSEOLOGICAL ISSUES

The two exhibits raise a number of ongoing museological issues, ones to which there have never been definitive answers and ones that will challenge both Native and Euro-American curators and exhibit designers in the future. The first is visitor orientation. One main problem with Fashion Pathways was that visitors did not see the opening panel. It was now located to the side of the central runway and was turned sideways from the first ensemble. Many people also did not read the central runway label, which read: "The Denver Art Museum's original Fashion Shows were presented some 50 years ago. Since that time, exhibition and museum practices have changed. If the DAM were to do a new version of the Fashion Show, the content and message would be different. Today, we ask Indian people to help determine what is important about an object. There are two sets of labels at the foot of each mannequin so you can compare these two approaches. Please feel free to write your comments in the comment notebook after viewing and reflecting on this exhibit."[47] I watched visitors for a couple days in order to see how much the altered visitor-flow pattern affected how people actually viewed the exhibit. They overwhelmingly missed seeing this opening statement until after they had looked at all the dresses and most of the other panels. This meant that people did not know that the exhibit was intentionally designed to be both commemorative and controversial, to raise awareness about critical representational issues.

Visitors went directly to the first dress on the end of the runway, the stunning Cheyenne blue-beaded tanned deerskin dress made between 1865 and 1870. I know I did, and because of its exquisite beauty I drew in a sharp intake of breath when I first beheld the exhibit. Then my gaze turned toward the mannequin on which the dress was draped. It had platinum blonde hair and I thought to myself, "she looks just like Marilyn Monroe." Nancy had

noticed it too, as did a group of Lakota delegates on a NAGPRA review later that day. They laughed and asked to rename the mannequin "Norma Sioux." Then they talked about celebrities playing Indian, a humorous critique of the entire undertaking, and a good joke on us. These men liked the exhibit but also noted it was for women, not men. Later Nancy and I changed the wig on Norma Sioux to a dark brown one; the mannequin still looked like Monroe, but it was a bit subtler.

I noticed that almost all visitors came directly to this dress when they entered the gallery, then moved around the runway and in and out of the permanent exhibits in a counterclockwise or clockwise direction, depending on which door they used to enter the gallery. Then they looked at the panels facing the runway, especially if the panels sported large photographs. About one third of the visitors looked at the reverse panels if they faced a blank wall. Label reading was minimal as expected; the average visitor only spends about ten to thirty seconds reading label copy, which is why it is intentionally short and filled with short, declarative sentences. With a static exhibit situated in the midst of another exhibit, we did not have the rapt attention of audiences, and the time spent reading was closer to ten seconds. People looked for a cultural ID but then returned quickly to the dress. Their impact and beauty was simply too compelling, and people experienced an emotional reaction to the dresses (or in some cases the period mannequins) using their own aesthetic criteria. Douglas had been right on this count. From a museological standpoint, to capture people's undivided attention so that they actually see the dresses as they should be seen on a human body required a performative, moving exhibit. For our exhibit, an audio commentary by Native American narrators about each dress would have helped. One thing Fashion Pathways reinforced was our original conviction never to place a temporary exhibit in the center of a permanent exhibit gallery. Although the postmodern pastiche effect can be intriguing, the different messages are simply too confusing.

Douglas's live performance lecture with visitors sitting quietly in their seats facing a stage had the display edge on Fashion Pathways in terms of orientation, visitor flow, and ensuring that his central message was heard. Spoken labels guaranteed that people heard; whether they listened and comprehended is a different issue. But Douglas had his audience's undivided attention; we did not. And, as Douglas argued, clothes without the movement of the human body were not as compelling and not as able to convey educational messages. A performative exhibit with a captive audience solved this museological problem but not the issue of who, in terms of culture and race, should have or has the right to wear the dresses.

That people developed their own free-flowing viewing pattern is not to say that most people did not like the exhibit. One even thought it was beautifully mounted. A young woman wrote in our visitor comment book, "I thought the stuff was very interesting. It was fun to look at it." One Native American woman from California said, "Thank you for a wonderful look at respect for traditional values and adapting to progress. Excellent presentation!" Others used adjectives such as very nice, creative, OK, interesting, cool, very modern, terrific, fantastic, and G-r-r-reat! At the other extreme were visitors who

detested the exhibit because it did not deal with what they had come to see ("I hate it. Show some weapons.") or because they thought we did not have the right to erect (or resurrect) it and called us vile names, as evidenced in the quotes provided earlier. There were several other comments from both Native Americans and Euro-Americans that used similar language and accused us of having no respect for Indians (the general term used). As for those who felt the exhibit was good, these individuals brought their experiences with and reactions to past museological enterprises with them, and this set the tone for their reactions. Some concluded that the museum did not have input from Native Americans because if it had the exhibit would never have been staged. These visitors accused us of promoting cultural misappropriation. For example, one highly articulate and thoughtful Cherokee woman from Oklahoma wrote us later and stated:

> This is one of the most derogatory and negative exhibits on Indian Americans that I have ever had the displeasure of viewing. I understand the context in which you are exhibiting the clothing. However, this was a gross slap in the face to Indian women in the forties when it was originally done and now again in the nineties. . . . I urge you to rethink this exhibit. When I see things like this I can't help but think what if my child was with me? How would I feel about a major art museum paying "homage" to a fashion show that was at the very least racist and at its [most] grotesque the appropriation of an entire ethnic culture? I ask you this, how many Indian American people work for this museum? How many American Indian curators do you have on staff here? How many American Indians helped to curate this exhibit?[48]

This woman made assumptions about the museum based on this exhibit and exhibits she had seen in the past. She had no trust that we as Euro-Americans had respect for Native Americans and appeared to assume that we never could. She had a valid point, one that we discussed repeatedly with our Native cultural experts and the two Native American curators on staff. But there was no way to display these conversations unless we had made a video of all our interactions and made this available for display. We thought that we had taken care of this in our main exhibit panel, which listed all the cultural experts who worked on this display, and the panels that honored Lloyd Kiva New and discussed the future of Native haute couture. Unfortunately, this woman will always have a negative view of the DAM. Even if she had seen these units, they may not have changed her mind. Flawed exhibit designs can be very detrimental and even the best-intentioned exhibits will offend people, especially individuals who think museums will always be colonial institutions. Art museums generally do not see themselves as places of debate but as places of homogenized "truth" and uncontroversial good taste that is rarely challenged. To call into question some art museums' basic premises about how art should be viewed and their functions as locales in which individuals can walk in quiet contemplation and soak up beauty through visual osmosis through our

debate was often not seen by patrons as appropriate. Although art museums occasionally pursue challenging exhibits in a university setting, it is frowned on in a city's major tourist attraction, just as it is not acceptable in a national museum. These are basic museological issues that will not go away in the future and will probably become worse as funding declines or is controlled by individuals with agendas other than making people think and question.

As a result of missing the main labels, or because most people saw our intellectual representational and presentational problem as not something worth commenting on, only a few people spoke to the contrasting information in the dual label sets. Only half a dozen of those who took the time to write in the guest book and had understood the experiment mentioned it in their comments. For example, "A thought-provoking combination of beautiful, artistic objects and clothes with a rather uncomfortable view of too-recent attitudes and language from the dominant culture—effective." Most found the Native authorities' scripts more interesting and informative, but some still said they had a favorite dress and would like a copy for themselves. The urge to look beautiful is incredibly strong, as Douglas had correctly surmised. All agreed that the dresses were gorgeous; however, only one or two individuals mentioned that the display had any effect on their images of Native Americans or commented on the stereotypes being fought, although some stated stereotypes in their comments. One woman from Aurora, Colorado, wrote about cultural diversity: "I am happy to see that the mannequins are diversified. Our true tradition of America is represented here and acknowledgement that the Indians from all tribes live on in the new generations and through this are not ashamed to acknowledge their heritage. The doors are open and its shows, communication has started always through art."

More work still needs to be done to fight tenacious visual representations but doing it in a fashion show setting is not the most effective locale. The beauty of the dresses is so strong, and the setting of an art museum with its overwhelming message that art is for everyone regardless of its origins and that one interpretive paradigm is sufficient for appreciation was too strong. The fact that Douglas took the fashion show out of the museum setting and disassociated it from all the institution's popular connotations was what made the Indian Fashion Show effective and what mired Fashion Pathways. The actual runway show by contemporary Native fashion designers, for a similar reason, was a much more effective setting and the highlight of our entire initiative. It was also a commercial event and designers sold many ensembles that night.

The simple association with a museum for some types of exhibits is therefore an important museological issue. In this instance, popular culture and popular expectations held sway. Fashionable attire was the key focus for viewers; no one questioned that Native Americans had fashion as had happened in Douglas's day or that tradition by definition was not compatible with the modernity of fashion. What we had not anticipated was lesser interest in Native Americans, their cultural identities, and their specific concepts of beauty and value. The fashion show setting and its associations overrode the educational museological associations or the ethnographic information. The implications of Native American attire as the inspirational

source for the US fashion industry held sway. Some viewers, who recognized the implicit and explicit multivocality of the entire exhibit, questioned why we were problematizing or raising issues. One woman wrote, "Why make this a racial issue? Fashion designers have always looked to ethnic cloths for inspiration." Conversely, another visitor stated a more common contention, "I think that it was wrong to use Native American clothing for profit." For them commodification of art was simply wrong, as was by implication, appropriation without compensation. The exhibit raised a contemporary intellectual property right issue.[49]

The most common comments had to do with the exhibit design and the use of period, white mannequins to model the attire. This was also a central problem in Douglas's time. To many visitors it was simply wrong or ineffective, and it made them feel uncomfortable. We had expected this and hoped that it would generate comment; instead it made some individuals so uncomfortable that they left the exhibit. Several people stated that clothing should be worn only by the race or ethnic group of the maker—it was not a transcultural or global commodity: "Indians look a lot better in Indian clothes and models look good in modeling clothes." One older gentleman commented that he really liked the exhibit and enjoyed looking at Indian things and would like to own them himself, but then said, "You should get some Indian-looking models." Racial purity more than ethnic purity was the concern. Another woman said that it would be acceptable for white mannequins to be used for contemporary fashion, but she did not agree with our decision to display traditional clothing. "It would be better hanging on coat hangers." According to another woman, who stated that she was a professional from Mexico, "The Indian Fashion Show costumes are beautiful but the models who wore them—shocking! The Indian women who wore those clothes were dark-haired, had bosoms, were dignified. No blondes!!! Please."

Some people focused on those phenotypic features that are key components of the generic Indian stereotype and chided us about skin and hair color and concluded that we were curators who needed to be told some basic truths: "Indians didn't have red hair—so why dress white people in Indian's clothes," said one woman from New York City. Note the past tense in this statement and the extension to racial purity that stems from it. Such statements meant that our credibility and assumed authority as being knowledgeable about Indian cultures, dress, and attire was continually questioned and undermined. By not using phenotypic representational stereotypes and even calling them into question in the main labels, visitors concluded that we were showing our ignorance. For everyone knows only certain representational images are correct and not to be challenged.

This is a museological challenge that unfortunately may always be a problem, but it is one that we all must continue to fight. As Douglas knew, but never articulated, America is a society expressing cultural blindness. Like all politically and economically dominant groups in nation-states, Euro-Americans exhibited what Edward H. Spicer has termed *cultural blindness*—the self-induced inability of politically dominant peoples to see subordinate nations, ethnic minorities, and disenfranchised peoples in ordinary focus.[50]

Due to cultural blindness the majority view minorities through ethnocentric lenses as contrasts to themselves, inventing and recycling popular images to serve the societal needs of each generation. Based on myths, misconceptions, and false assumptions, these contrasts generally have been used to highlight minority-group deficiencies, romanticize their strengths, and rationalize actions against them. Cultural blindness has denied subject groups distinctive cultures, histories, and ultimately their humanity, while fashioning them into idealized types.

A static fashion show exhibit is not the best museological setting to fight visual representations stemming from cultural blindness, and I would not recommend it. Live fashion shows are more effective, just as Frederic Douglas knew. The Indian Fashion Show was an extremely successful undertaking in the Euro-American world. After a presentation at the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts in 1954, venue hostess Mary Bywaters wrote to Douglas and said, "You have no idea how many compliments we've had on your show!"[51] But Douglas knew that. Even after the first presentation he jokingly told a colleague: "Style show was a success in Phoenix. We had about 600 in the audience and all were positively dazzled by the surprising beauty of the costumes. There have been so many requests for other showings that I feel inspired to quit the museum business and make myself into the Ziegfeld of the Red Man!"[52] But this was a difficult undertaking as one visitor to Fashion Pathways noted: "Douglas did the right thing for the time. It is easy to cry 'racism,' 'exploitation,' and the like now in the relatively more cross-cultural, open-minded environment of the '90s. He wanted to introduce Native American culture to a difficult audience with a different mind-set. Sometimes to appreciate the differences of a culture, we must first be introduced to the similarities. The use of Anglo models and fashion runway terminology accomplished this end."

How would such a time-specific exhibit go over today when the Native world seems to focus on cultural particularism and distancing distinctions from, rather than commonalities with, Euro-American culture? It had mixed reviews from both Euro-Americans and Native Americans. It generated the same types of reviews that Douglas encountered and was most successful in making an argument that fashion is a worldwide expression of women, fashions change in capitalistic and noncapitalistic societies, and people utilize design inspiration from a multitude of sources. Whether they should do this or not is an issue that will be debated now and in the future. Other museological issues are as complex and as compelling in 1995 and today as they were in 1942 and stem from the same concerns, even if some of the terms have changed and some of the issues evolved. How can we display clothing cross-culturally or transnationally with respect and still educate and show how they are meant to be seen? There is no right answer, but we need to keep experimenting.

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NOTES

1. Opening quotes: (1) Anonymous Reporter, "Indian Fashion Hints," *Rochester Democrat Chronicle*, 2 March 1950; (2) Belle Boas, curator of education, Baltimore Museum of Art, to Frederic Douglas, 27 November 1950.

2. This is a self-evident assertion familiar to any one who looks at modern advertising, songs, architectural cycles, fashion, views about women in the work place, and even US policy about American Indians. The cases are so numerous that dialectical changes, as both short-term fads and longer-term changes, can be seen as a central feature of American society, in part based on a democratic process for a representational form of government and because America as a society values change.

3. See Nancy J. Parezo, "Cushing as Part of the Team: The Collecting Activities of the Smithsonian Institution at Zuni," *American Ethnologist* 12, no. 4 (1985): 763–74; Parezo, "The Formation of Ethnographic Collections: The Smithsonian Institution in the American Southwest," in vol. 10 of *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory*, ed. Michael Schiffer (Orlando, FL: Academic Press, 1987), 1–47; Parezo, "The Formation of Anthropological Archival Records," in *Learning from Things: Method and Theory of Material Culture Studies*, ed. W. David Kingery (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996), 145–72; Nancy J. Parezo and Don D. Fowler, *Anthropology Goes to the Fair: The 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, in press); Nancy J. Parezo and John W. Troutman, "The 'Shy' Cocopa Go to the Fair," in *Selling the Indian: Commercializing and Appropriating American Indian Cultures*, eds. Carter Jones Meyer and Diana Royer (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001), 3–43; John Troutman and Nancy J. Parezo, "'The Overlord of the Savage World': The Authority of Anthropology and the Media at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition," *Museum Anthropology* 22, no. 2 (1998): 17–34.

4. An outreach program is one that is staged outside the museum building. They can be oral presentations, small traveling exhibits, research projects at school, in short, anything that takes the collections to the audience rather than requiring the viewer to go to the museum. They have been designed to reach individuals who would

not usually go to museums and to reinforce museum attendance. Thematic traveling trunks for schools are a good example. For other articles on the Indian Fashion Show see Nancy J. Parezo, "The Indian Fashion Show," in *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds*, eds. Ruth Phillips and Christopher Steiner (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 243–63; "Exposition de Vêtements de Femmes des Premières Nations: L'Indian Style Show du Denver Art Museum," [in French] *Anthropologie et Sociétés* 28, no. 2 (2004): 41–62. Also available online at http://www.erudit.org/revue/as (accessed 2 May 2007).

5. In addition to Douglas, the exhibit and conference were dedicated to new, contemporary Native designers and all Native women who have produced wearable art. We were honored when all of Douglas's children and grandchildren attended and spoke about their memories. See Nancy J. Parezo and Nancy J. Blomberg, "Indian Chic: The Denver Art Museum's *Indian Style Show*," *American Indian Art Magazine* 23, no. 1 (1997): 44–55.

6. Douglas's successes were manifold and amply documented in DAM files. They included Native American design influences on US fashion during the 1940s and 1950s, the development of Native American fashion shows and the fashion design program at the Institute of American Indian Art (IAIA), the development of indigenous-sponsored and -run fashion shows and beauty pageants, and the sponsorship of Native American artists, such as Lloyd Kiva New who later developed clothing design as a field of study at IAIA.

7. See also Suzanne Baizerman, Joanne B. Eicher, and Catherine Cerny, "Eurocentrism in the Study of Ethnic Dress," *Dress* 20 (1993): 19–32; Emma Barker, ed., *Contemporary Cultures of Display* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); Kay Corinth, *Fashion Showmanship* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1970); Elizabeth Hallam and Brian V. Street, eds., *Cultural Encounters: Representing "Otherness"* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000); Andrew McClellan, ed., *Art and Its Publics: Museum Studies at the Millennium* (Malden, MA: Oxford and Blackwell Publications, 2003); Bruce Ziff and Pratima V. Rao, eds., *Borrowed Power: Essays on Cultural Appropriation* (New Brunswick, NJ : Rutgers University Press, 1997).

8. Ruth Barnes and Joanne B. Eicher, eds., *Dress and Gender: Making and Meaning in Cultural Contexts* (New York: Berg, 1992); Justine M. Cordwell and Ronald A. Schwartz, eds., *The Fabrics of Culture: The Anthropology of Clothing and Adornment* (The Hague: Mouton, 1979); Caroline Evans and Minna Thornton, *Women and Fashion: A New Look* (London and New York: Quartet, 1989).

9. Parezo, "Exposition de Vêtements de Femmes des Premières Nations," 41–62; Parezo, "Stereotypes," in vol. 5 of *Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology*, ed. H. James Birx (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2006), 2127–28; Parezo, "Stereotypes: Persistent Cultural Blindness," *Red Ink* 9, no. 2/10, no. 1 (2001): 41–55.

10. The current issues regarding school mascots and the Disney movies about Pocahontas with their visual sartorial cues are excellent examples of this process.

11. Information on Douglas and his life was obtained from interviews with his children and colleagues as well as from F. Martin Brown, "Frederic H. Douglas—A Personal Sketch," *Southwestern Lore* 32, no. 1 (1957): 60–63; Anonymous, "Frederic H. Douglas," *Southwestern Lore* 32, no. 1 (1957): 59, 64–67. Douglas's extensive research on textiles, embroidery, and clothing was published in the *Denver Art Museum Leaflet Series*. Douglas was also concerned about promoting Native American art (especially

women's) and revaluating it from the realm of craft, material culture, and ethnographic specimen into the realm of fine art. Douglas was one of the country's foremost museologists and one of the first individuals to combine training in anthropology and art history with studio art. Douglas was also critical of the exclusive valuing of indigenous and ethnic material culture as ethnographic specimens and worked with a number of Native artists (often providing them with critical financial support to help advance their careers) to promote the display and valuation of their work as unmarked fine art. Douglas had a passion for collecting objects with aesthetic quality that reflected both Euro-American principles of connoisseurship and Native American standards as reflected by specific cultures, such as his large collection of Navajo textiles and Hopi baskets. See Nancy J. Parezo, "Art and Material Culture: Creating Value and Sharing Beauty," in *Blackwell Companion to Native American History, A Companion to American Indian History*, eds. Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publications, 2002), 209–33.

12. Frederic H. Douglas, "Indian Exhibit," *Clearing House for Southwestern Museums Newsletter*, no. 4 (1938): 13–14; Douglas, "Labeling of Indian Exhibits at the San Francisco Fair," *Clearing House for Southwestern Museums Newsletter*, no. 14 (1939): 42–43; Douglas, "Methods of Displaying Indian Material at the Federal Exhibit of the San Francisco Fair," *Clearing House for Southwestern Museums Newsletter*, no. 11 (1939): 31–33; Douglas, "Some Thoughts on Museum Display," *Southwestern Lore* 8, no. 3 (1942): 30–33. The amount of time visitors take to look at specific exhibits has shrunk over the years.

13. Frederic H. Douglas, "Mistaken Ideas about Indians," *Denver Art Museum Leaflet Series*, no. 112, (1951). For good books on the types of stereotypes Douglas wanted to fight see Sierra S. Adare, *"Indian" Stereotypes in TV Science Fiction: First Nations' Voices Speak Out* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005); Robert F. Berkhofer Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978); Sarah J. Blackstone, *Buckskins, Bullets and Business: A History of Buffalo Bill's Wild West* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986); John Coward, *The Newspaper Indian: Native American Identity in the Press, 1820–1890* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999); M. Annette Jaimes, ed., *Fantasies of the Master Race: Literature, Cinema and the Colonialization of America Indians* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1992); Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); P. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Topeka: University of Kansas Press, 2004); Rayna Green, "The Pocahontas Perplex: The Image of Indian Women in American Culture," *Massachusetts Review* 16 (1975): 698–714; Arlene B. Hirschfelder, Paulette Fairbanks Molin, and Yvonne Wakim, *American Indian Stereotypes in the World of Children: A Reader and Bibliography* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1999); Jacquelyn Kilpatrick, *Celluloid Indians: Native Americans and Film* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999); L. G. Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883–1933* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996); John E. O'Connor, *The Hollywood Indian: Stereotypes of Native Americans in Films* (Trenton: New Jersey State Museum, 1980).

14. Frederic H. Douglas, Speech to the Indian Defense Association at the San Francisco Stock Exchange Club, 27 September (no year given). National Archives: record group 435, box 24. The speech was probably delivered in 1939 because Douglas was giving numerous speeches in San Francisco as he worked on the Indian Arts and Crafts Board exhibit for the international world's fair.

15. Frederic H. Douglas to Arthur Woodward, 10 April 1941, Douglas correspondence files, Department of Native Art, DAM.

16. Frederic H. Douglas, "Ten Commandments for Museum Exhibitors," *Clearing House for Southwestern Museums Newsletter*, no. 112 (1949): 380–81; Douglas, "Material Culture Dusted Off and Glamorized," *Clearing House for Southwestern Museums Newsletter*, no. 115 (1949): 389–90.

17. Similar ideas about women's psychological makeup were being voiced in psychology at the time. See Knight Dunlap, "The Development and Function of Clothing," *Journal of General Psychology* 1 (1928): 64–78; J. C. Flugel, *The Psychology of Clothes* (London: International Psychoanalytical Library, 1950); Jane Gaines, "Costume and Narrative: How Dress Tells the Woman's Story," in *Fabrications: Costume and the Female Body*, eds. Jane Gaines and Charlotte Herzog (New York: Routledge 1990), 180–211; Gaines, "Introduction: Fabricating the Female Body," in *Fabrications*, 1–38.

18. Frederic H. Douglas, two-page flier describing collections and activities of the departmental activities, n.d., DAM. Unless otherwise noted, information is from the files on the Indian Fashion Show in the Department of Native Art, DAM. Some psychologists were positing the idea of a correlation among psychology, women, and clothing. See Flugel, *The Psychology of Clothes*. More contemporary approaches look at the relationship between gendered, racial, and ethnic identity and clothing, fashion, and style.

19. Douglas initially intended to use only Native American women as models, but this soon became impossible because of where the venues were located (there were not enough Indians in Orlando, FL) and the fact that many young Native American women refused due to what Douglas considered shyness and not wanting to call attention to themselves. They froze on stage.

20. Judy Lunn, "Weaving a Spell," *The Houston Post*, 9 April 1972.

21. Frederic H. Douglas to Kate Peck Kent and Francis R. Raynold, 27 February 1945; Frederic H. Douglas to Mrs. John Tossberg, 2 March 1947, staff correspondence files, Department of Native Art, DAM.

22. The cultural affiliation of the main part of the garment—dress, skirt, or blouse—rather than accessories, footwear, or leggings was used to identify each ensemble. When basic pieces from two neighboring cultures were combined Douglas generally chose one group to label and classify it. Thus attire from fifty-nine groups was actually displayed in the program, but Douglas did not provide this information to his audience. Information for Table 1 was compiled from Indian Fashion Show files, esp. Frederic H. Douglas, program notes and script for "The Museum of Man, Indian Fashion Show," 24 September 1952, departmental catalog and accession files, Department of Native Art, DAM.

23. Douglas's quotations in the next section are from program notes and scripts for presentations. These were all found in Indian Fashion Show files, Department of Native Art, DAM. Second quote from Douglas (n.d.), "Indian Style Show Data Sheet" (a form with instructions sent to host institutions), Department of Native Art, DAM. One of the anonymous reviewers of this article asked that all the scripts be presented. This will be done in an upcoming book.

24. Douglas quoted in Anonymous, "Superlative Simplicity of Line and Design," *The Pueblo Star-Journal*, 29 October 1948.

25. Douglas quoted in Ruth Meyerson, "Hunterites Model Indian Fashions," *The*

Hunter Row 3, no. 10, (1949): 1, 6 (quote on p. 1).

26. Douglas simultaneously tried to visualize the unique and unexpected to "make the kick of the radically different clothes come from the contrast of them to the usual kinds of women's wear." Frederic Douglas to Eula Murphy, 2 February 1942, Indian Fashion Show files, Department of Native Art, DAM.

27. Frederic Douglas to Mrs. John Tossberg, 2 March 1947, Indian Fashion Show files, Department of Native Art, DAM.

28. All scripts are from a file designated "Fashion Show Scripts," Department of Native Art, DAM.

29. Frederic H. Douglas, program notes and script for "The Museum of Man, Indian Fashion Show," 24 September 1951, Department of Native Art, DAM.

30. According to his 1939 driver's license, which is in the DAM files, Douglas was 6 feet 4 inches tall and weighed 195 pounds. All my interviews with models and the hundreds of letters in the DAM files revealed that people were captivated with the presentation and remembered dresses, including details of decoration, fifty years later.

31. Frederic H. Douglas, "Basic Types of Indian Women's Costumes," *Denver Art Museum Leaflet Series*, no. 108 (1950): 31. Like all people working in the fashion and art industries in the 1940s and 1950s Douglas called any dress in an ensemble a *costume*. The term did not carry the negative denotations of costume as being attire that was worn only for the stage, in a movie, or as a Halloween costume—as many Native American activists have asserted since the early 1990s—for Douglas. The general public used costume and attire interchangeably with clothing during the period, and there is no evidence that anyone found the word objectionable.

32. Frederic H. Douglas, "Indian Women's Clothing: Fashion and Function," *Denver Art Museum Leaflet Series*, no. 109 (1951): 35; Douglas, program notes and script for "The Museum of Man, Indian Fashion Show," 24 September 1951, Department of Native Art, DAM. Douglas used *costume* in its most generic sense as the equivalent of dress or attire.

33. Douglas, program notes and script; Douglas quoted in Anonymous, "Superlative Simplicity of Line and Design"; Indian Fashion Show venue files, Department of Native Art, DAM.

34. From a practical standpoint, Douglas never knew what types of models he would have and how big their feet would be; he had to be flexible. Nevertheless, Douglas was very concerned that the footwear would undermine his claims of authenticity when he first conceptualized the Indian Fashion Show and constructed the outfits. He later rationalized the necessity by the fact that every piece was of Indian manufacture and therefore authentic. In order to overcome the footwear problem, he had people in several tribes produce a suite of different-sized moccasins for the program, working through the Indian Arts and Crafts Board.

35. Bea Medicine, who modeled in a presentation at the University of Washington as an undergraduate coed, told me that she talked to Douglas about some inappropriateness but that he was so engaged in the presentation by 1951 that he would not listen. She also stated that being in the show was one of the reasons she went into anthropology (personal communication, 1997).

36. Douglas, "Indian Women's Clothing: Fashion and Function," 36.

37. Douglas, "Basic Types of Indian Women's Costumes." For a more contemporary typology based on the same type of essentializing argument see Joanne B. Eicher

and Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins, "Definition and Classification of Dress: Implications for Analysis of Gender Roles," in *Dress and Gender: Making and Meaning in Cultural Contexts*, eds. Ruth Barnes and Joanne B. Eicher (New York: Berg, 1992), 8–28.

38. More recently, Philip J. Deloria has made similar points in his work and has analyzed the implication of such notions as authenticity and play (Deloria, *Playing Indian* and *Indians in Unexpected Places*).

39. Douglas, "Indian Women's Clothing: Fashion and Function," 35.

40. Frederic H. Douglas, program notes and script for Second Annual Tucson Festival, "One Hundred Years of Indian Fashions," 16 April 1952.

41. Ibid.

42. Frederic H. Douglas, "An Indian Fashion Show," *Clearing House for Southwestern Museums Newsletter*, no. 49 (1942): 177–78.

43. Extracts: (1) unidentified Euro-American visitor to Fashion Pathways exhibit, visitor comment book, 1998; (2) unidentified Native visitor to Fashion Pathways exhibit, visitor comment book (emphasis in original), 1998.

44. Douglas's script for this dress discussed how it was the first backless formal and that contemporary designers of the 1930s were mimicking the first Native California designers. The consultants found the script amusing. Each Native consultant was asked if and how they would like to be identified, and most chose to be publicly named and identified by tribal nation and clan, if appropriate.

45. All quotes in this section were written in 1996, 1997, or 1998 specifically for the exhibit and for any publications stemming from it. All are on file in the Department of Anthropology, DAM.

46. Ruth Roessel, *Women in Navajo Society* (Tsaile, AZ: Navajo Community College, 1981), 5.

47. If I had the opportunity I would have rewritten this label because in retrospect it appears condescending. The intention was to show that orientations and who is considered an authority have changed over the past fifty years. Unfortunately, regardless of whether we had spelled out in large label copy the background information conveyed in this article, it was evident from several visitors' comments that a few Native Americans would simply not have believed us because we are Euro-American curators, and they felt that our motives are always questionable.

48. Several European and Euro-American professional anthropologists wrote us and said basically the same thing.

49. Many people made general statements about the permanent exhibit, mentioning what they like and what they would like to see (e.g., "to offer better respect for the many Indian tribes, I suggest a wall of names by areas or states"). Many of these are excellent suggestions and will be considered as the DAM plans new permanent Native American exhibits.

50. Edward H. Spicer, "The Nations of a State," in *American Indian Persistence and Resurgence*, ed. Karl Kroeber (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 27–49, quote on p. 38.

51. Mary Bywaters, Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, to Frederic Douglas, 12 October 1954, Indian Fashion Show correspondence file, Department of Native Art, DAM.

52. Frederic Douglas to Katharine Bartlett, 4 March 1942, Museum of Northern Arizona correspondence, 1938–56 files, Department of Native Art, DAM.