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# Brian Honyouti: Send in the Clowns

Zena Pearlstone

Hopi artist Brian Honyouti's "clown" sculptures can be sentimental or autobiographical but, in general, they stem from his personal and political views and comment on commercialism, big business, greed, overindulgence, and irresponsible and sexual behavior.<sup>1</sup> His carvings emphasize his perceptions of the confluence of the Hopi world and that of dominant America. In looking at Hopi and the outside world, Honyouti says that he is attempting to "Discern commonalities in how all people seem to express certain human traits albeit with somewhat different external manifestations."<sup>2</sup> While some clowns appear occasionally on Hopi ceremonial carvings and often on commercial carvings, in the artworks discussed in this article, as Honyouti draws from the Hopi world, the mainstream culture, and his own life and experiences, he employs the supernaturals with a different intent. This essay explores the meaning of these carvings to Honyouti, to Hopiit (plural of Hopi), and to the buying public, as well as their relationship to *tithu* (singular *tihu*), otherwise known as "dolls," the carved representations of katsinam (Hopi supernaturals).<sup>3</sup>

In the marketplace—a diverse collection of dealers, collectors, curators, and tourists—Honyouti's carvings, which he makes at Paaqavi (Bakavi), Third Mesa, are generally considered "authentically Hopi," yet they do not conform to most other Hopi sculptures.<sup>4</sup> Thus, Honyouti's art promotes a closer examination of the way commodified sculpture is regarded, although terms such as *authentic* may have various meanings in the marketplace and at Hopi, and his art may be evaluated in new ways through gallery and museum exhibitions and in popular and scholarly publications.

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Honyouti, who is recognized by scholars and collectors as one of the Pueblo's most innovative and creative carvers, was born in 1947 at Keams Canyon to Rachel and Clyde Honyouti of Paaqavi, Third Mesa. He started carving in the mid-1960s after graduating from the Arizona High School for the Deaf and Blind (Honyouti's vision is blurred, and he is considered to be legally blind). He left Hopi High School at the beginning of his third year to attend Arizona High School, and in 1972 he received a bachelor of arts degree in anthropology from the University of Arizona. His art was influenced by that of his father, Clyde, who was probably the first Hopi to carve dolls from a single piece of cottonwood root. Like his brothers Ronald and Lauren, Honyouti followed his father in carving most aspects of the "doll" from one block of cottonwood root, including feathers and rattles.<sup>5</sup> His clown sculptures are but one aspect of his oeuvre.

Honyouti often has serious intentions, but his subject matter is seldom heavy-handed. His art with clowns originates from the manner in which Hopiit use humor to solve problems. In brief, the Hopi have four groups of clowns:

a) The *tsutskut* are beings native to Hopi.

b) The pseudo-priests, Kossa or Koyaala (Kwirena and Koshare) execute Paiyakyamu (Paiyatama). These clowns probably came to Hopi with the immigrant Tewa people from the Rio Grande, and are most evident on First Mesa. By the end of the nineteenth century, the formal clown priesthood Paiyakyama was extinct. (Note that names that draw on non-Hopi terminology may be used differently in different Hopi villages.)

c) The *piptuqam* are native to Hopi and have intermediate status between the worldly existence of priests and the spiritual existence of katsinam.

d) Some Hopis believe that the Kooyemsi is the katsina clown from Zuni that fused with the indigenous Tátsiqtö (ball-head). The Kokoyemsim are a different class of beings than the other clowns and have several roles in addition to clowning. Ekkehart Malotki says, "Kokoyemsim are not classified by the Hopi as clowns. They are kachinas who, among other things were once privileged to act as clowns; however, they were allowed to do so only in conjunction with the group of kachinas. . . classified as Taqkatsinam that are defined as manly Katsinam in *Hopi Dictionary/Hopiikwa Lavàytutuveni; A Hopi-English Dictionary of the Third Mesa Dialect*."<sup>6</sup> *Hopi Dictionary* adds that this was in the past: "Long ago only the Kooyemsi kachinas clowned (in accompaniment) to these manly kachinas."<sup>7</sup>

Clowns incorporate many layers of complexity. Some katsinam act like clowns but cannot be considered as such. The masked Kaisale are clowns only for the katsinam. Clowns may be considered sacred or not, may appear masked or unmasked, and at times may appear in "social dances." Confusing for the

outsider is that, in addition, some clowns may appear only at specific villages or mesas; others may look the same as those at other mesas but have different names and/or different functions.<sup>8</sup>

For Louis Albert Hieb, clowns “are the ritual expression of opposition to the sacred conception of the Hopi world view which the ancestral rain god impersonators [katsinam] express.”<sup>9</sup> Mischa Titiev emphasizes the clowns’ close connection to death, as the antithesis of the katsinam’s association with life: “since death is the opposite of life, the clowns act in contrary fashion, and since death means the cessation of life, their behavior has evil connotations.”<sup>10</sup> For Barbara Babcock, “clowns are sacred beings whose existence and behavior are sanctioned in their creation myths, who mediate between spirits and men, and who heal and enable as well as delight.”<sup>11</sup> At Pueblo ceremonies, ritual clowns mock *qahopi* (improper Hopi) behavior in order to induce possible change, or to mirror the world as it is. Drawing on this long Pueblo tradition, the outrageous behavior of Honyouti’s sculpted clowns reflects the conduct of those in the plaza, but he directs their actions and the consequences to an audience that includes non-Hopiit.

Historians and art historians have analyzed the circumstances and issues of indigenous and western artistic intersections for some time.<sup>12</sup> Mary Louise Pratt’s vision of the contact zone, a pivotal and much-used concept, is central to understanding Honyouti’s sculpture. Honyouti himself has commented, “I look at the carvings and myself as from the contact zone.” Pratt defines the term as “the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict.”<sup>13</sup> In a now widely accepted viewpoint, in 1998 Jehanne Teilhet-Fisk suggested that “the concept of colonial ‘contact’ can also be applied to certain art forms in a way that celebrates their ingenuity, rather than their being looked upon as inferior products.”<sup>14</sup>

One phenomenon of the contact zone is transculturation, or “how subordinated or marginal groups *select and invent* from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture.”<sup>15</sup> Unlike the model of acculturation, transculturation allows members of indigenous groups to create their own version of mainstream society. Transculturation is central for understanding Honyouti’s clown sculptures since, as a Hopi, what he selects from the dominant culture is unique. Influence in the contact zone, however, is labyrinthian; it travels in many directions at varying levels and, often subtly, circles back and forth between cultures. This is because it does not treat relations between colonizers and colonized “in terms of separateness . . . but in terms of copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power,” such that the art of indigenous cultures

affects the dominant culture just as indigenous art is also altered through contact.<sup>16</sup> Today, as the scholarly world examines difference and change, rather than superiority and subordination, Teilhet-Fisk's view of changed values in regard to indigenous arts has been shown to be correct. According to Nicholas Thomas, "the crucial point is that indigenous cultures [and often their art] are simultaneously 'traditional' and 'contemporary,'" which is evident in the work of Honyouti being considered here.<sup>17</sup>

## THE ROLE OF THE KOKOYEMSIM (SINGULAR KOOYEMSI)

In Honyouti's contact zone, both ingenuity and the simultaneity of cultural influences are at play in one carving where he pokes gentle fun at the extravaganzas known as Indian markets. Like Indian artists all over the Southwest, in the weeks and months leading up to Santa Fe Indian Market (the largest and most prestigious Indian art market in the country), Hopi carvers spend much of their time working on their *pièces de résistance* for the wealthy collectors and gallery owners who make their annual pilgrimage to Santa Fe. However, the artist portrayed in the carving *Procrastinator* (identified by Honyouti as a self-portrait), rather than working on the carving to wow buyers, has a large cup of coffee, a cigarette, and an ashtray, and is wasting his time playing Tetris games on his Gameboy (fig. 1).

The artist is procrastinating even though he has the *paako* (cottonwood root), all his tools, and a Barton Wright book on katsinam under his feet. With some amusement, Honyouti has noted that this carving received a ribbon at the Santa Fe Indian Market that led to a profitable sale: procrastination pays! Even though some of the other sculptures discussed in this essay were difficult to sell (as observed below), this artwork was a



**FIGURE 1.** *Procrastinator*, 1993, ca. 6.5 × 4 in. (16.5 × 10.2 cm.). Dan E. Wolfus collection, Los Angeles, CA. Photograph by Zena Pearlstone. All Brian Honyouti carvings pictured are cottonwood root with varnish, stain, and oil paints. Depth measurement same as width unless otherwise indicated.

financial success. Honyouti stresses it is always important to remember that “all of the pieces [referred to in this article] live on the commercial plane. They were made to hopefully generate some money. That places these artworks, and that of all carvers who are attempting to sell, in the contact zone.” Hence sculpture intended for the marketplace may be contrasted with the carvings made for ceremonies, but that is a subject for another essay.

Honyouti does not present himself as lifelike in this self-portrait; his *Procrastinator* is a Kooyemsi in his role as a clown generally known as a “Mudhead.” Like all the Hopi beings generically referred to as clowns, this personage is not a clown or buffoon in the sense of the English word. “Kokoyemsim . . . are rather beings of great complexity; at Hopi they can perform multiple roles, engage in hilarious antics or play ingenious games. They can also be curers, magicians, dance directors, warriors, messengers or sages.”<sup>18</sup>

Kokoyemsim maintain cultural cohesion and preserve the status quo. They are therefore the ultimate keepers of tradition. Their humor ridicules unseemly actions by showing people as they actually behave, and hopefully people do not just laugh at the Kokoyemsim antics, but also laugh at their own behavior as the clowns reflect it. The “morality lessons” are usually not directed at an individual but rather at a group, or village, or people as a whole. Hieb discusses the clowns as one example of Hopi “anti-structure” in which humor is the distinctive feature: “they are both religious specialist and practical ethicist; as the latter the humor that a Kooyemsi expresses is one strategy for dealing with problematic situations.”<sup>19</sup> Victor Turner defines such examples of anti-structure as situations in which individuals step outside of their structured world and enter a place where freedom and creativity can flourish, and says “man is both a structural and an anti-structural entity who *grows* through anti-structure and *conserves* through structure.”<sup>20</sup> In dealing with problematic situations, the clowns must confront the transformative in the space of anti-structure. Like the clowns he represents, Honyouti is operating in the world of free expression where he has the liberty to take issue with structured views and behavior, both Hopi and American. He tries “to keep certain characteristic essentials of the figures he is representing,” but as an artist in the arena of anti-structure he feels “free to go beyond these essences.”<sup>21</sup>

Honyouti’s *Procrastinator* directly recalls some Kooyemsi functions. We see the individual/Kooyemsi in a fairly common human situation, that is, not addressing the task at hand. Like the Kokoyemsim parodies in ceremonies, this is a funny scene with a serious and universal message, that it is not only Hopiit who suffer from procrastination. Honyouti likes to put Kokoyemsim in human situations because, like humans, they talk and joke with individuals. For Honyouti, along with the other clowns the Kokoyemsim easily lend themselves

to social, cultural, and political observations. In this artwork and others, the commentary refers to Honyouti himself, but portraying himself as a clown may allow him to buffer his feelings, just as life lessons are buffered for individuals and the community through the roleplaying of the Kokoyemsim. The questions posed are complex: does Honyouti see himself as a spokesman for Hopiit, delivering a lesson about appropriate Hopi behavior by representing himself in the guise of a familiar supernatural? Or does he speak only for himself as a Hopi? If he were to portray himself realistically, would that break the connection to "Hopiness" and to carvings that have an established place in the market? But Honyouti observes that the "Hopiness" that many buyers seek is sometimes not seen in his work, and comments that "much of the buying public comes around looking for 'Hopiness' and we [Hopi artists] provide it for them."<sup>22</sup> Such behavior is termed "autoethnography," where indigenous peoples "undertake to represent themselves in ways that *engage with* the colonizer's own terms."<sup>23</sup>

Honyouti may be acting as sardonic spokesman for Hopi people when he places the Barton Wright book *Hopi Kachinas: The Complete Guide to Collecting Kachina Dolls* under the feet of the *Procrastinator* artist.<sup>24</sup> Considered by many non-Puebloans to be the expert on Hopi and Zuni dolls, Wright is the author of thirteen books on katsina carvings and Pueblo material culture. While both Hopi and non-Hopi carvers may refer to Wright's books to make sure that they are carving dolls that are "correct,"<sup>25</sup> Honyouti has demoted non-Hopi information to the role of a footrest, and indeed, as Wright is a Pahaana ("white" person), some Hopiit question the validity of his conclusions.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, the *Procrastinator* artist (Honyouti) is engrossed in playing games from non-Hopi, dominant culture that are keeping him from his Hopi work. As a whole, this carving can be described as an authentic (that is, Hopi) artwork that represents an important Hopi personage engaged in behavior that is perhaps not applauded for a Hopi person, though intended for sale in the non-Hopi world.

The artwork raises further considerations. In carving a doll-size likeness of a Hopi supernatural from cottonwood root, the material traditionally used for *tihu*, Honyouti draws from the Hopi world, and thus the object can easily be read by outsiders as a *tihu*, even though (as discussed below) Honyouti does not consider it one. With certain exceptions, clown representations are made for nonceremonial purposes. Thus, technically this piece would not be a *tihu*, especially since some Hopiit think that Kokoyemsim are not katsinam.<sup>27</sup> Also, Honyouti's *Procrastinator*/Kooyemsi is further removed from Hopi ceremonial activity because the Being is engaged in behavior that would not be represented on the ceremonial objects given to girls and women. But as most non-Hopiit are unaware of the appropriate credentials for *tihu*, diverse groups or individuals can read the meaning differently. Without detailed knowledge of



the Hopi ceremonial world, buyers could easily identify this carving as a *tihu*, and knowledgeable sellers could manipulate meanings for the marketplace.<sup>28</sup>

Analyzing this art object is not a simple task for Hopiit or outsiders. While some Hopiit see all Hopi carved items as authentically Hopi, often many are not sure how to explain the involved, nonceremonial carved objects like those of Honyouti (further discussed below). Anecdotal carvings did not exist in the past, and there are conflicting Hopi opinions as to their meaning and their place in the community, although for Honyouti his clown sculptures “Don’t have any place in the [Hopi] community and are never seen there.”<sup>29</sup> There is also little agreement among Hopiit as to whether these unique depictions should be considered art. Hopiit do not agree on which Hopi products should be considered *tihu* and which art (see below), but usually they do not refer to carvings as art. The term *art* is generally reserved for objects such as paintings, drawings, and stone and metal sculpture that are European-based.<sup>30</sup>

Until 1990 Honyouti organized and ran the Paaqavi School, a volunteer-based, one-room schoolhouse. A carving related to Honyouti’s *Procrastinator* depicts a Kooyemsi as a student sitting at an old wooden desk seemingly reading an algebra text (fig. 2). But on closer observation the viewer sees that hidden inside the algebra book the student is looking at a “naughty” picture of a Kokopölmána, the erotic female counterpart of Kookopölö.



**FIGURE 2.** Kooyemsi Student, ca. 1998, ca. 7 × 4 in. (ca.17.8 × 10.2 cm.). Location unknown. Photograph by Brian Honyouti.



At Powamuya (Bean Dance Ceremony) Kokopölmana may challenge a man to a race or, more likely, will surprise an unsuspecting male, chase him, catch him, fling him to the ground, and imitate copulation. Says Honyouti, "Several times I represent students using little mudheads, making them do something sneaky. Kids seem to think they can get away with these things at school or later in life."<sup>31</sup> If this is a familiar experience for teachers, for Honyouti this is a larger reference to the world of today, in which politicians, athletes, and celebrities increasingly are caught cheating, as discussed below.

The circumstances portrayed by Honyouti may be common both at Hopi and in the world at large, but their representation by Hopi carvers is unusual. Narrative (storytelling) representations did enter Hopi carvings around 1980, but the artworks generally relate to Hopi ceremonies or events. Honyouti's stories are both more idiosyncratic and more universal. He speaks to his experiences as well as ours, and his account is always transcultural as it interweaves aspects of Hopi tradition and specific, Honyouti-selected elements from mainstream culture. As Thomas observes, if they understand the work Honyouti's audiences must comprehend the artist's references to the contemporary world as well as the traditional Hopi (Indian) world.

In Honyouti's hands a Kooyemsi can directly confront social and political issues. In *Preaching Clown* the supernatural is attempting to cut a chair leg with pruning shears (fig. 3). On the chair, soon to topple, stands a different type of clown, referred to as *tsuku* in general parlance but called Oóot at Third Mesa.<sup>32</sup> *Tsutskut* are important figures at Third Mesa, the ones who do not wear "friends" or masks. Judging from the bible in his left hand, this *tsuku* is presumably preaching. That Honyouti has chosen a *tsuku* for the figure of the preacher may emphasize that this *tsuku* illustrates actions and/or words used by those in leadership positions that some people feel are unwarranted, whether at Hopi or in dominant-culture America.

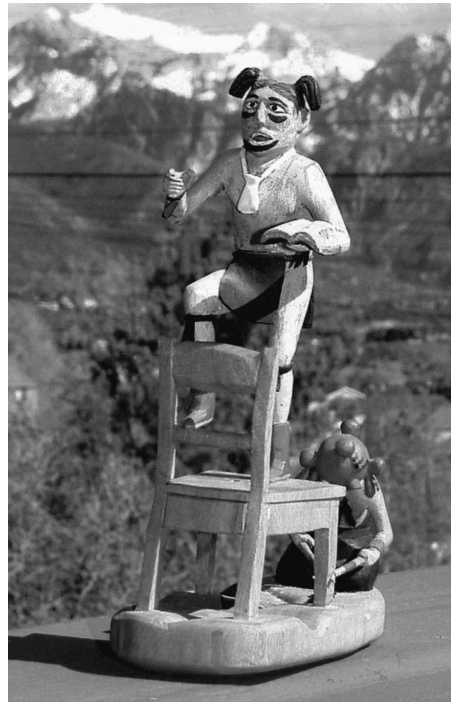


FIGURE 3. Preaching Clown, 1984, ca. 12.5 × 5 in. (ca. 31.8 × 12.7 cm.). Gerry Haller collection, Salt Lake City, UT. Photograph by Gerry Haller.

By representing a preacher, Honyouti echoes clown performances that have been used to mock Christian traditions and personages. Don C. Talayesva, a clown chief, recounts his experiences:

A clown could do or say almost anything and get away with it because his duty was sacred. Therefore we teased and joked the Christians in our clown work. Once during a dance in Bakabi a clown draped a bedsheet around his body, climbed to the housetop, and announced that he was Jesus Christ who had returned to judge the world. He said that it was the last chance to be saved, then let down a rope and invited the righteous to climb up to heaven. One clown accepted the invitation, seized the rope, and was struggling up when "Jesus" took a good look at him, shook his head, and let him drop back into hell. It was also a good clown trick to put on spectacles and a longtail coat, fold a piece of cardboard to represent a Bible and hymnal, and stride pompously into the plaza to sing hymns and preach a sermon on hell fire.<sup>33</sup>

When Honyouti carved *Preaching Clown* in the 1980s he called it the "Ronald Reagan doll," but it does not depict Reagan. According to Honyouti:

Reagan served as the impetus rather than the inspiration. He and the War with the Evil Empire [an expression first used by Reagan in 1983 to refer to the Soviet Union] are a larger comment on aggressively advocating one's ideology many times at the expense of the non-dominant people/culture. Too often this is done by politicians and preachers.<sup>34</sup>

Honyouti has created an allegorical figure in *Preaching Clown*, one that makes a universal statement but is still connected to the Hopi world of clowning and carving. Thus, the intent of this carving may be read differently by Hopiit, other Indians, and the buying public, and may develop new meanings for the artist as the carving is recontextualized: "it is in the nature of a symbol to bear more than one meaning, even in a particular social context."<sup>35</sup>

After Honyouti completes a carving, he reflects on and reconsiders the "significance of the carving as their implication expands and becomes layered, with the passage of time and new information." In *Preaching Clown* the little Kooyemsi is so fed up with the preacher that he is going to cut his support; Honyouti carved this piece after overhearing a colleague mention that his stock market investments surged following the Grenada invasion of 1983. He sees it as a "comment on pomposity and 'preachiness,'" but says he "Felt more kindly toward Reagan after learning that he, despite his advisors, refused to invade Panama during the Panama Canal issue because he feared for the lives of Americans and Panamanians."<sup>36</sup> The social life of these things continues for the artist after their completion or sale.<sup>37</sup>

Thus, Honyouti would agree with Thomas's ideas about recontextualization, such as Thomas's statement that "although certain influential theorists of material culture have stressed the objectivity of the object, I can only recognize the reverse: the mutability of things in recontextualization . . . [examining an object] is thus never more or less than a succession of . . . recontextualizations." Thomas further notes the importance of "peculiarly personal value" that is separate from "the systemic dynamics of transactions."<sup>38</sup> In a statement that similarly resonates with Honyouti's carvings and his thinking, Hieb specifically speaks about the temporal aspects of clowning: "Hopiit refuse to separate the remembered past from its ethical meaning for the present, and in the clown ceremony past and present [or traditional and contemporary] are brought together in the communal judgment of laughter."<sup>39</sup> Inasmuch as these carvings are symbols, Honyouti finds the connotations continually echoed in the many areas of the worlds in which he lives.

Honyouti intends these works to be metaphors for events and persons not immediately evident in the artworks. Over time Honyouti saw *The Preacher* as "more indicative of the self-importance of the likes of George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, Rush Limbaugh, Alex Jones, and some Hopi politicians."<sup>40</sup> Sometimes he thinks it relates to himself. In the future he may append further meanings or situations. Some readers may see the added meaning as straying from the "Hopiness" of the object, as they understand the Hopi, but Honyouti never intended to stay in the realm of Hopi culture. He has explained to me that because of his poor eyesight he sees differently than most people and that "seeing can take place in his mind." He mentally associates what he hears with what he represents, or has represented, in sculpture, and this constantly updated aural information about current politics and social ideas become attached to his work. He follows ongoing events on National Public Radio, and on television through CNBC, CNN, Jon Stewart's *The Daily Show*, and the *Colbert Report*. He regularly reads numerous magazines including *Smithsonian*, *National Geographic*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Discover*, and is an eclectic book reader. What interests him is the "back and forth 'dialogue' between the carving and the external input." He rarely absorbs information and then creates a carving "to fit." Rather, he says, whatever the intent of his present artwork, it "provides a context or lens through which I 'hear' or 'see' both the internal [Hopi] and the external [beyond the 'rez'] sociocultural conditions."<sup>41</sup>

To some, his internal associations may seem tenuous, but to Honyouti they seem to be clearer than strictly visual information. He relies on aural data, but he also feels that he sees in ways that others do not. According to him, he "sees contrasts in light and color more clearly than borders and outlines" and relates to the Japanese aesthetic of shadows as described by Jun'ichiro Tanizaki (*In*

*Praise of Shadows*).<sup>42</sup> “This [Tanizaki] essay,” he says, “unexpectedly articulated for me so much about the way I actually see and think.”<sup>43</sup>

Today *Preaching Clown* also speaks to Honyouti of Hopi politicians who are overly assertive about their religious views, especially those who try to bring Christian concepts into Hopi government and belittle the separation of church and state. He feels the same way about bringing Hopi religious matters into the tribal council proceedings that follow Pahaana legal procedures: “Hopi religion is associated with kiva procedures and these have little relevance for the tribal council.”<sup>44</sup> Honyouti here appears to have foreshadowed present-day Washington, DC and particularly the group known as “The Family,” conservative politicians who interweave politics and religion as one aspect of their ongoing and hoped-for christianizing of America.<sup>45</sup> This carving, like many of the others, speaks to the complexity of Honyouti’s work. The symbolism and narrative come from many aspects of his transcultural world, but some or much of it may be evident only to him.

#### THE ROLE OF THE KOYAALAM (SINGULAR KOYAALA)

A Koyaala (Koshare) in *Fouled Out Pout* sitting on his basketball (fig. 4) further addresses Honyouti’s critical views about self-importance.

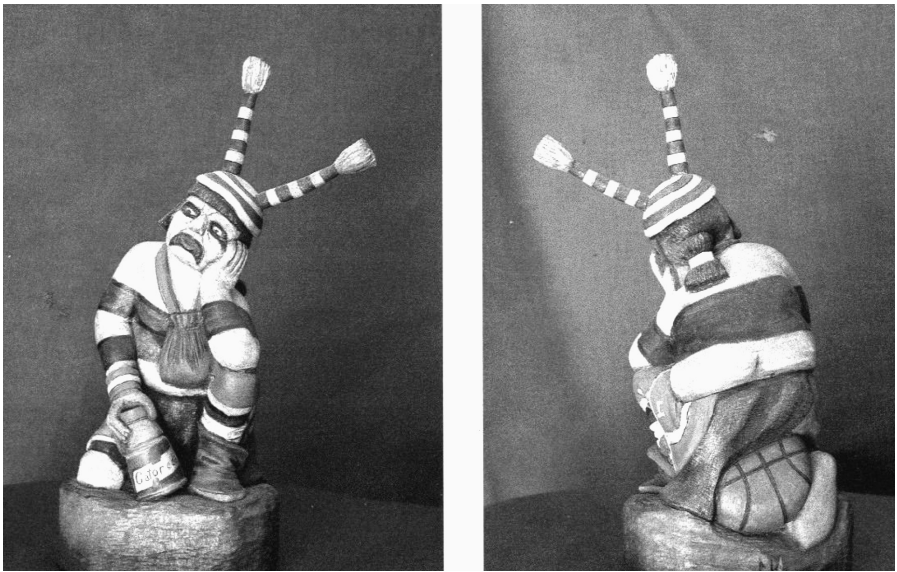


FIGURE 4. *Fouled Out Pout*, early 1999, ca. 9.75 × 4 in. (ca. 24.8 × 16.5 cm.). Ron and Mary Ann Pecina collection, Pittsburgh, PA. Photograph by Ron Pecina.

The Koyaalam are clowns who came to Hopi from the Rio Grande Pueblos and appear at Third Mesa as dancers, unmasked in social dances and masked in katsina dances. According to Wright, Koyaalam, unlike Kokoyemsim, are “the fathers of the kachinas, the purveyors of village mores, and the keepers of tradition,”<sup>46</sup> “while Hieb observes, “as a Hopi clown the *koyala* is not a priest clown but may appear as a pseudo-priest and clown as do the *o’ot* in kachina dances.”<sup>47</sup> As with other clowns, they are concerned with illuminating unacceptable behavior.

Honyouti embraces the latter role of Koyaalam in *Fouled Out Pout*. This Koyaala has fouled out, and pouting and clutching his Gatorade, he now takes the ball and sits on it, in a “if you foul me out, you can’t play with my ball!” scenario. The orange and white jersey alludes to a basketball team that Honyouti’s brothers had called the Paaqavi Bandits. The pouter reflects clown selfishness commonly performed during ceremonies. When the clowns are “discovering” the katsinam, “they fight over them and rush back and forth. They say, “This is mine, this is mine’ and thus manifest or exhibit a selfishness which is childish. . . . They are greedy and try to get as many as they can for themselves.”<sup>48</sup> Again, for Honyouti the implications of this behavior go beyond Paaqavi and Hopi, extending to the:

Many politicians around the globe who seem to publicly exhibit this kind of selfish, childish emotion. At the beginning of the Iraq war, when George W. Bush was trying to form his coalition, there was the feeling that “if you don’t play with me I won’t give you any money or aid or sell you any more guns.” Although pouting is seen as immature, it seems to follow us throughout our lives and is evident in much political behavior. I am thinking of incidents like, “You don’t have Nixon to kick around anymore” and Sarah Palin’s incoherent, angry speech when she withdrew from the Alaska governorship.<sup>49</sup>

Honyouti feels that all of them are basically saying, “you can’t play with ME.”

Through the versatility of clowns and their blurring of cultural boundaries, Honyouti can reference human dispositions in his own cultural context as well as universally. The clowns may permit access to his sculpture by non-Hopiit observers who, according to Honyouti, “may not understand certain ritualistic aspects of clowns but do understand the poutiness of Bush.”<sup>50</sup>

A lighthearted, humorous nod to sports in his carving *Joe DiMaggio* has a different tone (fig. 5).

The commissioning buyer asked for a carving of the baseball great, and Honyouti configured DiMaggio as a Koyaala with his horns emerging from his cap. Tucked into the rear of DiMaggio’s belt is an image of Marilyn Monroe with bright blonde hair. Monroe’s image hanging from the belt mirrors the clown chief, who carries a Pahaana doll in the back of his breechcloth when

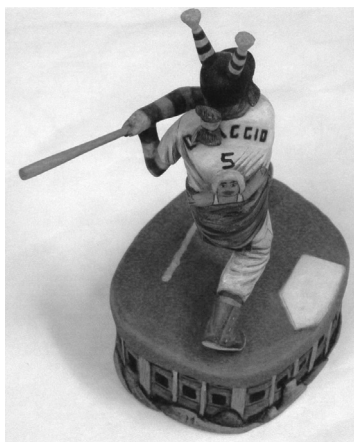


he first enters the plaza. Honyouti represents the stadium around the bottom and, completing the baseball experience, the base pictures a glass of beer and a hot dog. Honyouti sees this as “an iconic composite of America: baseball, DiMaggio, Yankee Stadium, plus *the American sex symbol*.” For good measure he includes the Koyaala, a Tewa clown, who is seen by many non-Hopiit as *the Hopi clown*.

Through a Koyaala who stuffs himself with food—pizza—in a complex carving he made around 1990 (*Clown With Pizza*), Honyouti speaks to both Hopi and worldwide self-indulgence and greed (fig. 6).



**FIGURE 6.** *Clown with Pizza*, ca. 2004, 18.5 × 7 in. (47 × 17.8 cm.). Stanley and Marlene Scholsohn collection, Scottsdale, AZ and Woodbridge, CT. Photograph by Zena Pearlstone.



**FIGURE 5.** *Joe Di Maggio*, 1985–1990, 14 × 5 × 6 in. (35.6 × 12.7 × 15.2 cm.). Elaine and Hal Sterling collection, South Orange, NJ. Image based on a painting by Andy Jurinko, in turn based on a 1949 photograph in *Eyewitness: 150 Years of Photojournalism* by Richard Lacayo and George Russell (New York: Time Books, Inc., 1995): 85. Photograph by Brian Honyouti.

Honyouti feels Hopiit “refuse to see the compulsiveness of food, drugs, money, alcohol, power, and sex. Or to recognize that addiction is hard to shake.”<sup>51</sup> Honyouti deliberately places the bottom figures—the Ogres (Tsaaveyo and Soòyokwuùti [Ogre Woman]) and Great Horned Owl (Mongwu)—out of context: that is, they do not represent a particular ceremony and as a group have no ritual context. According to Honyouti, the clown on top “is oblivious to this lack of ceremonial cohesion and, in fact, to the figures in general. He is unaware of anyone but himself as he is busy feeding on his weaknesses and vulnerability unencumbered by self-examination or any thought processes.”<sup>52</sup> What the figures at the bottom do have in common is that they are among

the beings that punish or threaten clowns or individuals for their misbehavior (including children) in an attempt to rehabilitate them. Severe reprimands like this are rare at Hopi—reminders, suggestions, and hints are more common. Probing, serious art works such as this appear to be Honyouti's strategy for dealing with unruly situations just as clowns deal with them in ceremonies.

Further observations on greed are depicted in two carvings of Koyaala with watermelons as examples of gluttony (a common scenario in commercial art). One Koyaala buries his face in the fruit and the other stands on a mound of rinds (figs. 7 and 8). The first, *Face in Watermelon*, is overindulging; the other, *Clown with Stomach-Ache*, has overindulged and holds a glass of Alka-Seltzer to remedy his surfeit.

This display of gluttonous behavior is an integral aspect of clown performances. The clowns greedily try to consume as much as they can: "when the



**FIGURE 7.** *Face in Watermelon*, ca. 2009, ca. 13 × 4 in. (33 × 10.2 cm.). Heard Museum Store, Phoenix, AZ. Photograph by Jewel Clark.



**FIGURE 8.** *Clown with Stomach-Ache*, ca. 2009, 14 × 4 in. (35.6 × 10.2 cm.). Heard Museum Store, Phoenix, AZ. Photograph by Jewel Clark.



man chosen to be the leader of the clowns went to get men to serve with him he would say 'I pick you to go to the plaza and eat.'<sup>53</sup> Honyouti observes that when you are greedy

You have less control and tend not to see anything beyond yourself and your obsessions, or with reference to Hopi and America-at-large, beyond the past and present political turmoil and the recent activities on Wall Street. These clowns have eaten up all the flesh—that is, the good or useful parts—and are left with the refuse such as home foreclosures, unemployment, bank failures and political factionalism, distrust, and frustration. While inside the melon [*Face in Watermelon*], the clown feels nothing but his pursuit of satisfaction. At both Hopi and the national stage, I see the obvious greed for political and financial control.<sup>54</sup>

In his multilayered existence, Honyouti is aware of the present troubles of people at Hopi and elsewhere.

These Koyaalam with watermelons are also allusions to the art of his fellow Hopi carver Neil David Sr. and other Hopi artists who have capitalized on images of Koyaala with watermelons. Honyouti finds it amusing that while David has “imprinted Hopi clowns with watermelons in the public mind, when the summer clown dances occur watermelons at Hopi are not yet mature. The melons have to be Safeway [supermarket] melons.” The two artworks are Honyouti’s “satirical look at Hopi artists who have overdone clowns-with-watermelons to such an extent that they are now expected by the buying public.”<sup>55</sup> At this writing, both of these carvings remain for sale at the Heard Museum gift shop in Phoenix. Bruce McGee, director of retail sales, told Honyouti that the sculptures elicit many comments but, to date, there have been no buyers. Honyouti believes that the buying public does not see his renderings of clowns-with-watermelons as quintessentially Hopi.

For artists, the consequences of the contact zone may be most apparent in the marketplace where Indian art and Euro-American buyers come together. In two carvings (*Ready to Purchase* and *Will He Buy?*) Honyouti turns his lens on two opposing interactions. While the carvings were not made at the same time and not meant for comparison initially, Honyouti points out that in both works the artist/Koyaala “is in a praying/begging pose saying, please buy me, the carver needs money.” One, *Ready to Purchase* (fig. 9), indicates a positive encounter. The buyer, as Kooyemsi, has already purchased a framed landscape painting, which is sitting on the floor, and he is about to purchase the Koyaala carving. He has his checkbook on the desk and his pen poised to endorse a check to the artist. The other, *Will He Buy?* (fig. 10), seemingly does not point to a reward, because here the buyer has his pen pointing up in a non-working position, and his checkbook is still in his back pocket (not seen in this view).



**FIGURE 9.** Ready to Purchase, 1999-2000, 8 × 4.75 in. (20.3 × 12.1 cm.). Kitty and Brian Wood collection, Santa Fe, NM. Photograph by Brian Wood.



**FIGURE 10.** Will He Buy? 2010, ca. 10 × 4 in (ca. 25.4 × 10.2 cm.). James Barajas collection, Phoenix, AZ. Photograph by Jewel Clark.

In this unpleasant situation Honyouti depicts an individual rather than a supernatural, perhaps removing the situation from Hopi.

These two works recall one by Santa Clara artist Nora Naranjo-Morse (*Mud Woman's First Encounter with the World of Money and Business*).<sup>56</sup> Although Naranjo-Morse's *Mud Woman* represents the artist, and Honyouti's two artworks portray the potential buyers, both have sales in mind, and both hold up Koyaalam for sale. The two artists agree that selling can be an unsettling process, and they illustrate this through *Mud Woman* and *Mudhead* learning about the world of business.

Slow sales do not generally change Honyouti's carving choices although he believes that if he "made dolls with more 'Hopiness' his work would sell better." He prefers to promote his work when he is with the buyer or potential buyer, feeling that he can better "psych out the person and point out the features that will appeal to him or her. If I'm working with a middle man who doesn't understand the sculpture this creates a barrier." Despite feeling that "you continue to sell any way you can," he has not sold to dealers or at markets for the last few years.<sup>57</sup> Today he sells mainly to collectors who know him and

know Hopi and thus basically understand his artworks. Honyouti speaks of carvings that are “meant for a particular person,” although he may not come to this realization until the sculpture is completed. This is the case with collectors but also, he says, “I use this criteria when making dolls for ceremonies because I know the recipient.”<sup>58</sup>

## BRIAN HONYOUTI AND FAMILY

At times, Honyouti’s conflation of his Hopi past and his musings in the present are contained in his own world. Clyde Honyouti was a major influence on his son, and Brian paid homage to his father in a personal and poignant carving he calls *The Composer* (fig. 11).



**FIGURE 11.** *The Composer*, 1990, ca. 6 × 4 in. (ca.15.2 × 10.2 cm.). Dan E. Wolfus collection, Los Angeles, CA. Photograph by Zena Pearlstone.

Clyde, who constantly sang katsina songs and composed them for dances, had a toy rocking chair and intended to make a Kooyemsi to sit in it. Brian kept the rocker after Clyde died, but the little chair was shattered in a fall. In 1990 Brian revived Clyde’s vision and made this carving with his dad in mind. To the right of the figure is a large drum; on top is a pencil with some blank sheet music. A rattle hangs from the back of the chair. Brian sees the

Clyde/Kooyemsi figure as “thinking of words to a tune, possibly humming a melody, or asleep dreaming of a scene that might inspire a song.” Brian may be speaking to the parent/child associations in each of us.

While Honyouti honors his father, he is often critical of himself and, given his introspective and sharp analytic qualities, it is not surprising that in addition to *Procrastinator*, described above, he has produced several other autobiographical works. Representing himself as *both* a clown (a figure from his Hopi world) and as a participant in the dominant culture of commerce (in that Pahaanam are the main purchasers of his work) permits Honyouti to comment on “the selling of the Indian” while simultaneously participating in the manipulation of the image.<sup>59</sup>

Honyouti acknowledges his complex role in the marketplace in one carving titled *What Should I Make?*, a self-portrait of Honyouti as a *piptuqa* (fig. 12). Ekkehart Malotki translates *piptuqam* (plural of *piptuqa*) as “the ones who keep coming.”<sup>60</sup> The *piptuqa* is a “kachina skit actor, one who visits the Hopi clowns in the plaza during a kachina performance to carry out a farcical morality play. . . . The kachina skit actors are the clowns’ instruments (for the staging of their [often multilayered] skits. Hopi men and women, young and old, or Hopis who live on or off the reservation do not perceive all the skits of *piptuqam* in the same way.”<sup>61</sup> The *piptuqam* can come in any form, but they are usually white-faced. This *piptuqa* has the pale face, with a large inverted red “V” across the nose and cheeks, and sheep’s wool for hair.<sup>62</sup>

Honyouti may feel that he too is at times a skit actor. The carving is a self-portrait but one specific to the moment, as in a play. He shows the *piptuqa* in the clothes he himself was wearing when he did the carving, a dremel tool on the table, a wood burner in the hole in front, his Phoenix Suns coffee cup. The calendar, open to *Kyaamuya* (December), can only tell trickster time—there are no days or numbers, only phases of the moon. Honyouti is



FIGURE 12. *What Should I Make?* ca. 2000, ca. 7 × 5 in. (ca.17.8 × 12.7 cm.). Steve and Gloria Cowgill collection, formerly in Taos, NM, present location unknown. Photograph by Zena Pearlstone.

thinking about what he should be making for sale, “reflecting about what I should do next,” but deciding in trickster mode.

He is commenting on commercialism, a topic of concern at Hopi, particularly concerning carvings of supernaturals; some Hopiit continue to find any commercial representation of katsinam objectionable. Since he is selling himself as a *tihu* or a doll, Honyouti has become the object of the exchange, and viewers can ask if *What Should I Make?* is foregrounding the art, or the commerce. As Honyouti says, “You can buy this as me thinking about the dilemma.” Honyouti would never question his or anyone else’s right to make art for commercial purposes, but other more traditionally oriented Hopiit might. This artwork has as much to do with the effect of the outside world on the Indian as it does with the portrayal of Hopi culture. In the Southwest, where tourism and commerce in Indian-made wares are prominent features of local culture, a number of artists acknowledge their interactions with the buying public.<sup>63</sup> The various ways that a contact-zone viewer comprehends Hopi commercial carvings could influence readings of this artwork.

In *Smoking Kwikwilyaqa* (fig. 13), Honyouti plays on the artist’s role as creator. Here he puts *Mocking Katsina*, Kwikwilyaqa “Striped Nose” in his (Honyouti’s) own living environment. Kwikwilyaqa frequently appears at Powamuyu and is not a clown, but a katsina whose actions are inherently amusing. He imitates or mimics anyone who is near him, despite their desperate attempts to get rid of him.<sup>64</sup>

Honyouti says, “this came to me when I needed an idea. Since I don’t usually have access to a car, I have to walk over to the post office every day, and I was just coming home one day with my grocery bag when I said, I’ll just make the doll imitating me. As I call it, imitating the Creator.” This Kwikwilyaqa/Honyouti is seen



**FIGURE 13.** *Smoking Kwikwilyaqa*, 2001, ca. 11 × 4 in. (27.9 × 10.2. cm.). Don Watson collection, Rio Rancho, NM. Photograph by Zena Pearlstone.

walking between Hotvela and Paaqavi, two Third Mesa villages, as Honyouti does every day (due to his poor eyesight he is not able to drive and this daily trip is important to his world). Around the base of the carving he represents some of the scenes he sees in this limited space: the view from his sister Joyce's kitchen (next door to his workshop), his brother Ronald's trailer, the post office and Hotvela store, and the dirt road he walks along that leads out of Hotvela. As previously mentioned, despite his visual weakness, he feels that he sees things that others do not, and he says that because he walks this route every day, "I see things that others don't, like the trash that collects." Every day on his walk he collects a bag of trash for disposal.<sup>65</sup>

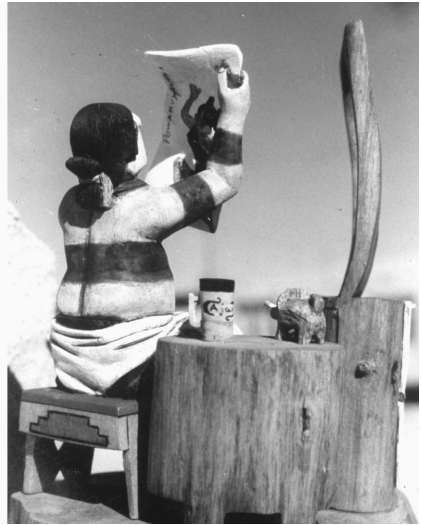
In a further self-reference in *Smoking Kwikwilyaqa*, Honyouti plays on the tubular mouth of the supernatural as an invitation to have a cigarette. The figure is wearing a T-shirt given to him by his daughter Angela. The image on the shirt is a Gary Larsen cartoon of dinosaurs smoking, with the caption "The real reason dinosaurs became extinct." Honyouti's dry humor is refreshing as it confronts issues of tourism and commercialism head on. As the carving alludes to Honyouti himself as a smoker and as a *tihu*, he ruminates about the message being sent. What is being sold, he asks—am I selling myself as a creator, selling a *tihu*, selling myself as a *tihu*, selling "Hopiness" or Indianness? Perhaps he is selling irony to the sophisticated buyer. Honyouti taps into the many global aspects of indigenous tourism and commerce that scholars have examined as well as the questions that these studies raise.

## POPULAR CULTURE

At times Honyouti's life observations play on American popular culture. Although not done as a pair, two carvings of a Koyaala (*Contemplating Possibilities*) and a Kokopölmána (*Date Preparation*) can be seen as popular culture commentary in that both figures are getting ready for a big date, and both display or suggest sexuality (figs. 14 and 15). The behavior of the Koyaala is easily understood in the Pahaana world via the Playboy-like centerfold, here a Kokopölmána. Perhaps anticipating a rendezvous, this Koyaala sits readying himself in front of an invisible mirror. His reflection corresponds to the view of the spectator. In order to primp, he has removed his horned cap.

The Kokopölmána too is grooming in front of a mirror. A picture of her "boyfriend" is to her right, probably a Kookopölo, her male counterpart. Somiviki, a sweet treat made with blue cornmeal, sugar, and ashes, are near her right foot and on her desk. She would normally carry somiviki inside the top of her dress to reward her victims. She is always on the prowl for sexual encounters, but wary males try to avoid her.





**FIGURE 14.** *Contemplating Possibilities*, ca. 2009, ca. 10 × 5 in. (ca.25.4 × 12.7 cm.). Location unknown. Photograph by Brian Honyouti.



**FIGURE 15.** *Date Preparation*, 2009, 6.25 × 5.5 in. (15.9x14 cm.). Kitty and Brian Wood collection, Santa Fe, NM. Photograph by Brian Wood.



These promiscuous-oriented artworks often sell well. Perhaps the appeal is the reference to the sexuality of a fairly closed society and the arresting transcultural elements that Honyouti selects. For some Hopiit and some followers of Hopi culture, these figures may call to mind the serious ritual sexual performances of clowns and the sexual themes of much Hopi clowning, but Honyouti simply intends to project a juvenile vicariousness with his references to lustful desire: "They were just silly funny pieces. A lot of clowning is funny and sometimes rather superficial—just for laughs."<sup>66</sup> The hearts around the base perhaps reference the frivolous, as well as commercial, nature of Valentine's Day. In his just-for-fun view, Honyouti concurs with the opinions of both Titiev, who wrote in 1972 that "so far as Hopi clowning goes, scholars tend to overemphasize its ritualistic value and to neglect the dramatic element of sheer comedy for the sake of provoking laughter," and Hieb, who notes, "not all clown behavior is concerned to make an explicit ethical point. Some is simply humorous, a contrast to the seriousness of the katsina ceremony."<sup>67</sup>

## HOPI SCULPTURE IN THE MARKETPLACE

In comparison to Honyouti's more serious artworks, the buying public that is accustomed to carvings representing Katsinam sees some of Honyouti's clown sculpture as too secular. As mentioned, some want more spiritual, mystical representations, something "more Hopi." It is notable that Honyouti has had difficulty selling some of the "political" and individual carvings that consumers see as too far from "Indianness," even if Honyouti tries not to make his political views too obvious. But these artworks interest Honyouti most. When not directed by either ceremonial or economic forces, he is an artist driven by ideas from many aspects of the contemporary world, producing artworks that emerge from the nest of tradition. He emphasizes that some of his pieces approach parody or satire and may be amusing, but they are his own private and political statements. He has taken what Babcock calls "the sociocultural self-commentary" of ritual clowning to another level. Unfortunately, our emphasis on clowning as childlike and unserious, and on the primitive as simple, has generally precluded our seeing ritual clowning as a sophisticated form of sociocultural self-commentary, as irony writ large. . . . for literate Hopi, as well as for their ancestors, clowning is a most significant form of sociocultural commentary.<sup>68</sup>

Honyouti has transferred this commentary from ceremonies to artworks. In the carvings presented in this essay, the religious significance of the figures that he depicts is not, in general, the primary focus of the carvings; the context often indicates his intentions. "Many will view this as sacrilege," he says; "I may be iconoclastic but hopefully not heretical."<sup>69</sup>

Seen in the historical context of Hopi carvings, Honyouti's clown sculptures knit together politics, social commentary, his feelings, and autobiographical elements, adding pluralities of meaning to the already complex arena of contemporary Hopi carvings. The works go well beyond the expectations of both Hopiit and outsiders, and they address many audiences. He tells stories about the events he experiences and uses everyday scenes as a medium of parody. In his transcultured world he weaves unexpected mainstream events into his carvings. Some may note perhaps an exposition of sensitive issues such as the "Americanization of the Hopiit" that some Hopiit do not acknowledge. Mainstream politics and social behavior are not the only "Americanized" Hopi activities. At Hopi, dominant culture holidays, clothing, electronic gadgetry, and food are readily apparent.

The history of *tithu* carving underscores the unparalleled nature of Honyouti sculptures. The first documented *tithu* date to the mid-nineteenth century and were made only for ritual purposes. Those used in ceremonies continue to be Hopi-made and to represent the Hopi supernaturals. The carvings are made from cottonwood root and are given by the Katsinam, who visit the Hopi mesas for about half of the year, to infants, young girls, brides, and adult women at specific rituals. Hopi Alph Secakuku describes them as "personifications of the katsina spirits, originally created by the katsinam in their physical embodiment."<sup>70</sup> Uninitiated Hopi children believe that these carvings are gifts from the supernaturals and cannot know that they are produced by humans.

Some Hopiit began selling *tithu* in the late nineteenth century, and by the early decades of the twentieth century carvings of the supernaturals were being made exclusively for sale. As the commodification continued throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, the carved images were, as I have written previously, "transformed into new visual and formal configurations as [Hopi] artists respond[ed] to a growing international market. Over time the archetypal, staid, geometric figurines [were] reborn as brightly colored monuments to activity and originality."<sup>71</sup> Certain classes of carvings have strayed so far from what is considered traditional that a schism developed at Hopi in the closing decades of the twentieth century as to which carvings should and should not be termed *tithu*.

Many Hopiit, like Leigh J. Kuwanwisiwma<sup>72</sup> and Clark Tenakhongva,<sup>73</sup> believe that all carvings made by a Hopi are *tithu*, but Secakuku does not. Secakuku thinks there are four categories of carvings that he calls old style (simply carved), traditional (more elaborate than old style, but still not "life-like"), one piece, and sculpture. Secakuku sees the first three, whether made for ceremonies or for sale, as *tithu* but not the fourth.<sup>74</sup> Many Hopiit who want to embrace the belief that all Hopi carvings are *tithu* are having difficulty finding a place for the evermore-elaborate action figures (Secakuku's "sculpture"

category) that are outside of their cultural/religious comfort zone.<sup>75</sup> Honyouti has moved away from these classifications.

He solves the dilemma of categorization semantically. While in general parlance the terms “doll” and “*tihu*” are considered synonymous, Honyouti sees a difference. He agrees with Washburn and Sekaquaptewa, that “*tihu* should refer to those katsina-figure carvings that are given as gifts to uninitiated girls and new brides during Bean and Home Dances,”<sup>76</sup> although he is aware of the opinions noted above that “all carvings in full figure no matter their intent now seem to be *tihu*.” For Honyouti, whatever the style of the carving, the aim is central: “If there is an intent that a ceremonial figure is for a particular individual, then it is a *tihu*. I feel that the intent, the thoughts, hopes, and prayers for a particular and special female, validates any carving for Hopi religion.<sup>77</sup> The hopes of a girl’s growth, maturation and eventual motherhood— the propagation of life— underlie the *tihu*-giving.”

His more secular and politically oriented carvings, Honyouti categorizes as “dolls,” and sees them as a way of communicating his perceptions. This observation, he notes, “is not only about Hopi as I’ve absorbed the culture from my father and grandfather, but it also involves a view of the surrounding social/cultural environment of which we are inherently a part.” As mentioned, Honyouti does not see his clown carvings as part of the Hopi world; few Hopiit have seen these works. In this commodified world Honyouti’s sales are directed at the non-Hopi buyer. “I find it ironic that the work comes from Hopi and is, in part, about Hopiit, but that most Hopiit do not know about it.”<sup>78</sup> To date no Hopi has publicly commented on Honyouti’s clown carvings and how they see their place among *tihu*, but much confusion could be resolved with the adoption of Honyouti’s terminology.

Personal and political ideas such as those expressed by Honyouti are rare. It is difficult to find parallels to Honyouti’s dolls among other Hopi artists, as most tend to be conservative in their subject choice no matter how modern their presentations. Hopi artists like Neil David Sr. and his sons create large numbers of *kooyala* engaged in mischievous and dominant-culture behaviors, but these carvings are not intended to make social or political statements.<sup>79</sup> There are secular carvings by Hopiit that draw on folk characters like field mice or sacred signs like white buffalo,<sup>80</sup> and at times, for the tourist trade, popular culture figures like Mickey Mouse and Snoopy appear. Artists have, on occasion, carved figures of individuals as gifts, but others consider it sacrilegious to represent people in the form of *tihu*. Hopi self-portraits in wood or root are rare, and those of which I am aware adhere to traditional Hopi subject matter.<sup>81</sup> It used to be common to try to separate artists into camps dependent upon their origins. Arnold Rubin makes a distinction between the twentieth-century Western artist, whose efforts are “introspective, self-reflective and

highly individual,” and the non-western artist, whose efforts “serve the community as a whole.”<sup>82</sup> The concept of an art form driven by individual creativity rather than ceremonial tradition was more common to Europeans and Euro-Americans than indigenous peoples. With today’s interactions, however, the distinction often no longer holds. For Honyouti, the worlds in which he lives come together in the dolls that he carves because the flexibility of clown figures allows the convergence of what were once separate trajectories.

Honyouti forces us to contemplate the complexities of the modern art market as it relates to Native American art. He makes us think anew about the constantly changing interactions in the contact zone and what is “traditional” and “authentic” Indian art. What makes his work arresting and unusual is the ability to turn Hopi circumstances and ideas to the observation and interpretation of universal actions: he sends in the clowns to continue their work.

### *Acknowledgments*

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### NOTES

1. I have tried to provide enough information in the text for the reader to understand Honyouti’s clown references. A full explanation of the *tsukulalwa* (clowning in which one type of ritual clown, who is a religious specialist, plays a major role) is beyond the scope of this short paper, as is an explanation of the complex Hopi understanding of humor.

2. Quotations and information from Brian Honyouti are derived from conversations, phone calls, and emails with the author from 2002 to 2012 as noted. All quotations are the words of Honyouti.

3. There is some disagreement as to the translation of *katsina*. In the literature *katsinam* are commonly referred to as “supernaturals” or “spirits,” as I do in this article. Malotki, in “Language as a Key to Cultural Understanding,” 52, explains why he thinks they should be called gods, but Honyouti thinks Christianity may have influenced this terminology.

In the contemporary world, there is more divergence when interpreting the term “*tibu*.” Most scholars define the figures as carvings representing *katsinam* that are given to young girls and brides at ceremonies but, as discussed later in this article, not all Hopis agree as to the meaning of the term (see Zena Pearlstone, *Katsina: Commodified and Appropriated Images of Hopi Supernaturals* (Los Angeles: Fowler Museum of Cultural History, 2001): 47–48, 54–55, 167). Some Hopi do not deem all carved dolls as *tibu*, but others believe that anything carved by a Hopi is a *tibu*. By this latter definition, the Honyouti carvings considered here are *tibu*, even though they do not usually represent *katsinam* and they are not intended to be used during ceremonies. Dorothy Washburn and Emory Sekaquaptewa, “Classic Hopi and Zuni Kachina Figures,” *Museum Anthropology Review* 1, no. 1 (2007): 73, feel that the word *kachina*, an Anglo spelling for a Hopi supernatural, is “probably best limited to figures carved to resemble the *katsinas* that are made for sale to non-Hopi.” However,

the loose use of *kachina* both at Hopi and elsewhere is not limited to these commercial carvings. *Hopi Dictionary*, 1998, 591, defines *tibu* simply as “kachina doll.” (This is the second meaning of the term; the first is “child.”) At Hopi, “the *tibu*/doll/*kachina*/*katsina* dilemma is not much of a concern,” says Honyouti; “people use *tibu* or doll to refer generically to any carving.”

4. Whenever possible, the spelling of Hopi words follows that in *Hopi Dictionary*, 2008, but Hopi words in quoted material are as spelled by the author.

5. Further information on the Honyoutis can be found in Helga Teiwes, *Kachina Dolls: The Art of Hopi Carvers* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1991), 85–92.

6. “Language as a Key to Cultural Understanding: New Interpretations of Central Hopi Concepts,” *Baessler-Archiv*, Neue Folge, 39 (1991): 55.

7. The Hopi Dictionary Project, Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology, University of Arizona, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998), 579.

8. See Mischa Titiev, “Some Aspects of Clowning Among the Hopi Indians,” in *Themes in Culture: Essays in Honor of Morris E. Opler*, ed. Mario D. Zamora, J. Michael Mahar, Henry Orenstein (Quezon City, Philippines: Kayumanggi Publishers, 1971); Louis Albert Hieb, *The Hopi Ritual Clown: Life as it Should Not Be* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1972); Barton Wright, *Clowns of the Hopi: Tradition Keepers and Delight Makers* (Flagstaff: Northland Publishing, 1994). Hieb, in “The Hopi Clown Ceremony (*Tsukulalwa*),” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 32, no. 4 (2008): 112–13 notes, “Humor—especially in the *tsukulalwa*—is enormously complex. It often derives not so much from the subject matter as from how the subject matter is presented.”

9. Hieb, *The Hopi Ritual Clown*, 245.

10. Mischa Titiev, *The Hopi Indians of Old Oraibi: Change and Continuity* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972), 240. See also 203.

11. Barbara A. Babcock, “Arrange Me into Disorder: Fragments and Reflections on Ritual Clowning,” in *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals Toward a Theory of Cultural Performance*, ed. John J. MacAloon (Philadelphia: A Publication of the Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1984), 112, 120. Babcock’s essay is a thoughtful and enlightening exposition of global views on ritual clowning.

12. See, for example, Néstor García Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1995); James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1991); *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds*, ed. Ruth B. Phillips and Christopher B. Steiner (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1999).

13. Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).

14. Jehanne Teilhet-Fisk, “Introduction to the Contact Zone,” in *Dimensions of Native America: The Contact Zone*, ed. Jehanne Teilhet-Fisk and Robin Franklin Nigh (Tallahassee: Museum of Fine Arts at Florida State University, 1998), 12–16.

15. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 6 (emphasis added).

16. *Ibid.*, 7. *Transculturation* is a term coined in the 1940s by Cuban sociologist Fernando Ortiz (*Contrapunto Cubano del tabaco y el azúcar* [Havana: Jesús Montero, 1940]; *Cuban Counterpoint, Tobacco and Sugar* [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947]). Transculturation merges the concepts of acculturation (acquiring another culture) and deculturation (losing a previous culture).

17. Nicholas Thomas, *Possessions: Indigenous Art/Colonial Culture* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 16–17; and Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism’s Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994). Similarly, Armin W. Geertz, *The Invention of Prophecy*:

*Continuity and Meaning in Hopi Indian Religion* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1994), 324, 338, argues that tradition is both change and continuity and that “the importance and meaning of Hopi prophecy . . . [is to be found] in its functions as mechanisms for incorporating contemporary affairs into the framework of traditional religious values.”

18. Wright, *Clowns of the Hopi*, 68. See Hieb, *The Hopi Ritual Clown*, 45, for a discussion of the symbolism of mud and dirt.

19. Hieb, *The Hopi Ritual Clown*, 249–250. See Malotki, *Language as a Key*, 66-70, on Hopi humor.

20. Victor Turner “Metaphors of Anti-structure in Religious Culture,” in *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1974), 272–299. See also Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine, 1969).

21. Email from Honyouti to author, April 3, 2010.

22. Email from Honyouti to author, October 9, 2011.

23. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 7.

24. Barton Wright, *Hopi Kachinas: The Complete Guide to Collecting Kachina Dolls* (Flagstaff: Northland Press, 1977).

25. See Zena Pearlstone, “Tsakurshovi: The Little Shop That Did,” *American Indian Art Magazine* 32, no. 1 (2006): 63, 92 n14 and Pearlstone, *Katsina*, 94.

26. Pahaana: Literally, anyone of European extraction other than those identified as Spanish/Mexican or Mormon. *Hopi Dictionary*, 378.

27. But note: “All clowns except the pseudo-priest *tsuku* have spirit counterparts, a *kachina* form. Because they are spirits (*kachinas*) they may be given material representation in the form of masked dancers (*kachinum*) or as *kachina* dolls *kachin tibu*.” Hieb, *The Hopi Ritual Clown*, 141.

28. I am not implying that this is a unique circumstance. Meaning is often manipulated for Native Southwestern commoditized items. See Pearlstone, *Katsina*, and “Hopi Doll Look-Alikes: An Extended Definition of Inauthenticity,” *American Indian Quarterly* 35, no. 4 (2011): 579–608.

29. Email from Honyouti to author, October 18, 2011.

30. Over time other items, such as some jewelry and pottery, have entered the “art” category.

31. Interview with Honyouti at Paaquavi, Third Mesa, Hopi, March 28, 2009.

32. “The *o-ot* . . . is the principal figure in the clown drama as it is seen today. So common is this type of clown that it is generally called *tsuku*, clown, rather than *o-ot*. The name *tsuku* derives from the *tsuka*, the mud . . . which is smeared over the bodies of the clowns.” Hieb, *The Hopi Ritual Clown*, 130. It is notable that Honyouti, a Third Mesa resident, is not familiar with the term “*O’ot*.”

33. Leo W. Simmons, ed., *Sun Chief: The Autobiography of a Hopi Indian* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1942), 280. Hieb, *The Hopi Ritual Clown*, 196–98, notes that “hippies” and “long-haired, bearded Anglos” would be singled out and identified by the remark “There’s Jesus.”

34. Interview with Honyouti at Paaquavi, Third Mesa, Hopi, March 27, 2009.

35. Brian Spooner, “Weavers and Dealers: The Authenticity of an Oriental Carpet,” in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 200.

36. Interview with Honyouti at Paaquavii, Third Mesa, Hopi, March 27, 2009.

37. A reference to Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things*.

38. Thomas, *Entangled Objects*, 28–30.

39. Hieb, *The Hopi Clown Ceremony*, 119.

40. Interview with Honyouti at Paaquavi, Third Mesa, Hopi, March 27, 2009.

41. Email from Honyouti to author, February 28, 2012.

42. Jun’ichiro Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows* (New Haven CT: Leete’s Island Books, 1977).



43. Email from Honyouti to author, June 26, 2012.
  44. Interview with Honyouti at Paaquavi, Third Mesa, Hopi, March 27, 2009.
  45. Jeff Sharlet, *The Family: The Secret Fundamentalism at the Heart of American Power* (Harper Perennial, 2009).
  46. Wright, *The Hopi Clowns*, 35.
  47. Hieb, *The Hopi Ritual Clown*, 136.
  48. *Ibid.*, 172.
  49. Interview with Honyouti at Paaquavi, Third Mesa, Hopi, March 27, 2009.
  50. Interview with Honyouti at Paaquavi, Third Mesa, Hopi, March 27, 2009.
  51. Hieb notes Hopi skits concerning alcoholism in *The Hopi Ritual Clown*, 189–90.
  52. Email from Honyouti to author, May 10, 2010.
  53. Titiev, “Some Aspects of Clowning,” 330. See also Simmons, *Sun Chief*, 186.
  54. Email from Honyouti to author, November 16, 2011.
  55. Email from Honyouti to author, November 16, 2011.
  56. Nora Naranjo-Morse, *Mud Woman: Poems From the Clay* (Tucson and London: The University of Arizona Press, 1992), 34–37.
  57. Email from Honyouti to author, February 28, 2012
  58. Email from Honyouti to author, February 19, 2012. Honyouti has been carving for almost fifty years and there have been changes in his target audience. In the late 1970s he worked with Bruce McGee, then at Keams Canyon, to reach buyers. In general, he stopped selling at Hopi when McGee left, although he has occasionally sold to the shops owned by Alph Secakuku on Second Mesa and by Von Monongya on Third Mesa. For some time he worked with high-scale galleries such as Garland’s Navajo Rugs in Sedona, Arizona; Adobe Gallery in Albuquerque, New Mexico; Adobe East Gallery in Millburn, New Jersey; and Grey Dog Trading Company in Tucson, Arizona (see Teiwes, *Kachina Dolls*, 91). He also sold at Indian markets and fairs. Today his commercial sales may be commissions or he may offer his work to specific dealers and collectors. He continues to carve dolls for ceremonies.
  59. The literature on tourism and the commodification of indigenous arts is extensive, and a complete list is beyond the scope of this essay. On the selling of the Indian, see, for example, Carter Jones Meyer and Diana Royer, eds., *Selling the Indian: Commercializing and Appropriating American Indian Cultures* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001).
- For writings on Hopi see: Frederick J. Dockstader, *The Kachina and the White Man: The Influences of White Culture on the Hopi Kachina Cult* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985); Peter M. Whiteley, “The End of Anthropology (at Hopi):,” *Journal of the Southwest* 35, no. 2 (1993): 125–57; Ekkehart Malotki, *Kokopelli: The Making of an Icon* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2000); Zena Pearlstone, “Mail-Order ‘Katsinam’ and the Issue of Authenticity,” *Journal of the Southwest* 42, no. 4, (2000): 801–32, as well as the citations in footnotes 19 and 53; Pearlstone, *Katsina*; Pearlstone, “Hopi Doll Look-Alikes.”
- For tourism and commodification in the Southwest see for example: Barbara A. Babcock and Joseph C. Wilder, eds., “Inventing the Southwest: Region as Commodity,” *Journal of the Southwest* 32, no. 4 (1990), special issue; Nancy J. Parezo, *Navajo Sandpainting: From Religious Act to Commercial Art* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991); Curtis M. Hinsley, “Collecting Cultures and Cultures of Collecting: The Lure of the American Southwest, 1880–1915,” *Museum Anthropology* 16, no. 1 (1992): 12–20; Barbara A. Babcock, “Bearers of Value, Vessels of Desire: The Reproduction of the Reproduction of Pueblo Culture,” *Museum Anthropology* 17, no. 3 (1993): 43–57, special issue, “Museums and Tourism,” ed., Edward M. Bruner; Richard Francaviglia and David Narrett, eds., *Essays on the Changing Images of the Southwest* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1994), 105–26; Scott Norris, ed., *Discovered Country: Tourism and Survival in the American West* (Albuquerque: Stone Ladder Press, 1994); Kathleen L. Howard and Diana F. Pardue, *Inventing the*



*Southwest: The Fred Harvey Company and Native American Art* (Northland Publishing, Flagstaff, AZ and the Heard Museum, Phoenix, AZ, 1996); Leah Dilworth, *Imagining Indians in the Southwest: Persistent Visions of a Primitive Past* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996); Molly H. Mullin, *Culture in the Marketplace: Gender, Art, and Value in the American Southwest* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001). Hal K. Rothman, ed., *The Culture of Tourism, the Tourism of Culture: Selling the Past to the Present in the American Southwest* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003).

60. Ekkehart Malotki, "Language as a Key to Cultural Understanding," 54.

61. *Hopi Dictionary*, 414. Hieb, "The Hopi Clown Ceremony," 113.

62. This carving has some characteristics of the katsina Hòò'e. Honyouti says, "While painting I inadvertently included an inverted red "V" on its face. Instead of shaving and sanding it off I decided to just let the mistake remain." This "error" was perpetuated (also inadvertently) in Zena Pearlstone and Allan J. Ryan, *About Face: Self Portraits by Native American, First Nations, and Inuit Artists* (Santa Fe: Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian, 2006), 11 and figure 9.

63. See Pearlstone and Ryan, *About Face*, 11. Examples of contact-zone art include Nora Naranjo-Morsé's *Mud Woman's First Encounter with the World of Money and Business*, discussed in this essay, and Roxanne Swentzell's *Making Babies for Indian Market* (Brooklyn Museum, accession number 2004:80).

64. Wright, *Clowns of the Hopi*, 7. See also Hieb, "The Hopi Clown Ceremony," 13. See Malotki, "Language as a Key to Cultural Understanding," 56, for the complexities and misunderstandings inherent in the name Kwikwilyaq.

65. Email from Honyouti to author, November 30, 2009.

66. Email from Honyouti to author, October 8, 2011.

67. Titiev, *The Hopi Indians of Old Oraibi*, 255; Hieb, *The Hopi Clown Ceremony*, 112.

68. Babcock, "Arrange Me into Disorder," 107, 116.

69. Telephone conversation between Honyouti and author, March 22, 2010.

70. Alph Secakuku, *Following the Sun and Moon: Hopi Kachina Tradition* (Flagstaff: Northland Publishing, 1995), 4.

71. Pearlstone, *Katsina*, 47. See Pearlstone, *Katsina*, 47–62, and Barton Wright, "The Drift from Tradition," in Pearlstone, *Katsina*, 146–57.

72. Leigh J. Kuwanwiswima, personal communication, 1997.

73. Pearlstone, *Katsina*, 167.

74. Alph Secakuku, "Authentic Hopi Katsina Dolls," in Pearlstone, *Katsina*, 162–65.

75. Some Hopi scholars have more readily secularized complex contemporary Hopi figures than the Hopiit themselves, perhaps because secularization of art is for them a more familiar circumstance. See Pearlstone, *Katsina*, 56–7.

76. Washburn and Sekaquaptewa, "Classic Hopi and Zuni Kachina Figures," 73.

77. Hopi Ramson Lomatewama also speaks of the primary importance of intention. The process of initiation and gaining knowledge gives one the "privilege to do certain things, one has the license to carve." But once he has the benefits of "the ritual culmination" he feels these can be transferred to "nontraditional art forms such as Katsinam in stained glass." His intention, given his credentials, is to "uplift someone's spirits" no matter the media with which he is working. Pearlstone, *Katsina*, 131.

78. Email from Honyouti to author, October 18, 2011.

79. Author telephone conversation with Neil David, Sr., November 5, 2011.

80. Tom Wallis, "A Bridge Across the Centuries," *Native Peoples* 5, no. 3 (1992): 49.

81. For examples of self-portraits by Native North American Indians, including two painted examples by Neil David Sr., see Pearlstone and Ryan, *About Face*.

82. Arnold Rubin, *Art as Technology: The Arts of Africa, Oceania, Native America, Southern California*, ed. Zena Pearlstone (Beverly Hills: Hillcrest Press, 1989), 18.

