

# GROUNDED

*Restoring our world  
through a Sacred Harmony  
with the earth and each other*

A touring exhibition of 15 contemporary artists from  
Indigenous American tribes traditionally based  
in and around the Great Plains



The Arts Initiative of the Episcopal Church in Wyoming

International Partner



*“Upon suffering beyond suffering: [We] shall rise again and it shall be a blessing for a sick world. A world filled with broken promises, selfishness, and separations. A world longing for light again. I see a time of Seven Generations when all the colors of mankind will gather under the Sacred Tree of Life and the whole Earth will become one circle again. In that day, there will be those among the Lakota who will carry knowledge and understanding of unity among all living things and the young white ones will come to those of my people and ask for this wisdom. I salute the light within your eyes where the whole Universe dwells. For when you are at that center within you, and I am that place within me, we shall be one.”*

**- Crazy Horse, Oglala Sioux Chief**

*"The earth is our mother. What befalls the earth befalls all the [children] of the earth. This we know: the earth does not belong to [humanity], [humanity] belongs to the earth. All things are connected... We do not weave the web of life; we are merely strands in it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. The earth is precious to God and to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its Creator."*

**- Chief Seattle, Suquamish and Duwamish Chief**

## **Introduction and Strategic Need**

GROUNDDED is an artistic exploration co-organized with *ArtSpirit*, the arts initiative of Episcopal Church in Wyoming, to inspire our imaginations about our need to be "grounded" in our relationship with all of creation: the earth and its wildlife, each other and ourselves. At this moment in time, it is critical for both our own health and the survival of our planet, that we acknowledge and honor our intricate connection to the earth as our sustainer, to the wisdom of our ancestors, and to humanity's need of each other. Our world itself is calling for restoration, from within and without, for a realignment of a sacred harmony and an awareness of a new balance between ourselves and the earth, and with all of life upon it. GROUNDDED is an exhibition of creative expressions nurturing that sacred connection, towards "groundedness" and more intentional and responsible living.

There is no question that our world is facing a multi-faceted crisis, and foundational to any solution is the critical need to have a healthier relationship with everything on our planet. In this regard, we have much to learn about from the Indigenous cultures of our Native American sisters and brothers, who teach us about maintaining a sacred balance with the earth and all that is upon it. Seeing the interconnectedness of all things, they understand today's environmental and humanitarian crises as affecting everyone and everything - geologically, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

GROUNDDED brings together an inspiring group of 15 premier and emerging contemporary artists from Indigenous American tribes traditionally based in and around the Great Plains, whose artistic practice is a unique blend of their heritage and creative expression. Their work serve as a visual representation of the worldview, wisdom and learnings of their forebears which is urgently needed today as we reimagine the way we live in order to heal our world. Grounded in the interconnectedness of the sacred, the natural world, and one another, Native American traditional beliefs see everything on the earth as living in relationship. Their spiritual wisdom is therefore essential toward developing a "sacred harmony" between all peoples and with the earth. This unique contemporary art exhibition seeks to enable them to share their culture, heritage and sacred traditions to help us restore our world and foster wholeness among all peoples.

## **The Exhibition**

GROUNDDED is a multi-year global touring contemporary art exhibition. It is also offered simultaneously online through a virtual gallery.

2022-2023 - Wyoming - 6 cities of Wyoming (Lander, Casper, Cheyenne, Jackson, Worland and Rock Springs).

2024 - United States - 2 venues in the USA, including in Washington, D.C.

2024-2025-United Kingdom and Middle East – the United Kingdom (i.e. Leicester and London) and the Middle East.

## The Artists

15 premier and emerging contemporary artists have been invited to participate from 8 Indigenous tribes traditionally based in and around the Great Plains region of the USA. The invitations were extended based on the artists' previous work and their ability to express the exhibition's theme through the lens of their heritage and cultural worldview.

Each artist has submitted 2 original artworks related to the theme of the exhibition in a still art medium: painting, drawing, collage, photography, digital art, mixed media, etc. They measure no larger than 3-feet on the longest length.

The 15 premier and emerging contemporary Indigenous American artists participate are:

**Ben Pease** (Apsáalooke-Crow)

**Brent Lerner** (Arapaho/Cheyenne)

**Carlin Bear Don't Walk** (Apsáalooke-Crow/Northern Cheyenne)

**Donald Montileaux**, (Oglala Sioux)

**Henry Payer** (Ho-Chunk)

**Hillary Kempenich** (Anishinaabe)

**Jackie Larson Bread** (Blackfeet)

**Jackie Sevier** (Northern Arapaho)

**Jim Yellowhawk** (Itazipco/Cheyenne River Sioux)

**Joanne Brings Thunder** (Eastern Shoshone)

**John Pepion** (Blackfeet)

**Louis Still Smoking** (Blackfeet)

**Robert Martinez** (Northern Arapaho)

**Talissa Abeyta** (Eastern Shoshone)

**Wade Patton** (Oglala Lakota)

## Curatorial Team

**ARTISTIC CURATOR – Robert Martinez**, *celebrated Northern Arapaho Artist, and Founder of Creative Indigenous Collective and Northern Arapaho Artists Society*

**Robert Martinez** is a celebrated Northern Arapaho artist who was born in Wyoming on the Wind River Reservation. A member of the Northern Arapaho tribe, he attended the Rocky Mountain College of Art & Design (RMCAD) and graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts specializing in Painting & Drawing and minoring in sculpture. At the age 19, he became the Youngest Native American to graduate from RMCAD at that time.

His native heritage remains a constant inspiration and source of ideas for his art. The past and present resonate strongly in his home state of Wyoming and those historical and contemporary chords echo throughout his pieces. Much of Robert's current work uses the historical imagery, myths and stories of both the West and Arapaho Culture combined with modern themes to create images that make a statement on the issues of today. Using intense

vibrant color and contrasting shades of light and dark, he paints and draws striking forms that are confronting and engage the viewer.

His paintings and drawings have been shown across the USA and have garnered noted acclaim. His work is included in the permanent collections of the Red Cloud Heritage Museum, The Brinton Museum, The Plains Indian Museum at the Cody Center of the West, and the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian.

A strong supporter of Education and of the Arts, Robert is the Founder of Creative Indigenous Collective and Northern Arapaho Artists Society, and is committed to helping and mentoring emerging artists on his reservation in Wyoming and the western region.

For more information, see: [www.martinezartdesign.com](http://www.martinezartdesign.com)

## **ORGANIZING CURATOR**

**The Rt. Rev. Paul-Gordon Chandler**, *Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Wyoming & Founder of CARAVAN, a global arts initiative*

**The Rt. Rev. Paul-Gordon Chandler** is the Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Wyoming. He grew up in Senegal, West Africa, and has lived and worked extensively around the world in senior leadership roles within publishing, the arts, relief and development and The Episcopal Church. An author, art curator, social entrepreneur and an authority on the Middle East and Africa, he is passionate about using the arts to further our global quest for a more harmonious future, both with each other and with the earth.

He is Founder of CARAVAN, an international arts non-profit/NGO, recognized as a leader in using the arts to transform our world. He has organized and curated major art exhibitions around the world, in sacred spaces such as St. Paul's Cathedral in London and National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. and at notable art venues like the National Gallery of Fine Arts in Amman, Jordan, the American University Museum in Washington, D.C., Vanderbilt University Fine Arts Gallery, Museum of Modern Art in Cairo, Egypt, as well as at reverential memorial sites like Ground Zero in New York. For more information, see: [www.paulgordonchandler.com](http://www.paulgordonchandler.com).

## **Associated Programs**

The exhibition serves as catalyst for each host exhibition venue to develop a variety of events and programs tailored to the specific needs of their community to stimulate discussion, dialogue and education around the exhibition's theme, toward promoting further understanding and widening the engagement with the exhibition: opening night events, curator and artist talks, forums, panel conversations, lectures, workshops, musical concerts, sacred drumming, literary readings, film screenings, dance performances, drama, and educational activities, etc.

## Key Partners

Art exhibition spaces in Wyoming, US, UK and Middle East  
Creative Indigenous Collective  
Northern Arapaho Artists Society  
Wyoming Humanities Council  
Wyoming Arts Council  
CARAVAN Arts  
The Episcopal Church in Wyoming  
The Foundation for the Episcopal Church in Wyoming

## Catalog – A “Discussion & Dialogue” Publication

The exhibition comes with a four-color catalog designed as an educational resource for reflection, discussion and dialogue on the message of the exhibition, highlighting the distinct Native American worldview of a “sacred harmony” with the earth and all that lives upon it. All of the artwork is included in the publication, together with the artists’ statements for each work.

### Organizer



*ArtSpirit* is the arts initiative of the Episcopal Church in Wyoming, which sees and values artistic creativity in its many forms as a force for transformation, toward healing our world and creatively fostering peace, harmony, wholeness and health in all its forms, both with each other and with the earth. *ArtSpirit* explores and nurtures the relationship between spirituality and the arts, by developing, curating, coordinating and hosting artistic initiatives to stimulate discussion, dialogue and education, as well as spiritual exploration (such as exhibitions, festivals, concerts, screenings, readings, dances and numerous associated art events including symposiums, forums and talks).

### Int’l Coordinating Partner

**CARAVAN** – *Transformation through the Arts*



CARAVAN, an international arts NGO/non-profit, is recognized as a global leader in using the arts to further our global quest for a more harmonious future, both with each other and with the earth. CARAVAN's mission is based on the belief that the arts can be one of the most effective mediums to heal our world and to creatively foster peace, harmony, wholeness and health in all its forms. For more information on CARAVAN, see: [www.oncaravan.org](http://www.oncaravan.org)