

LOUD!

"Your silence will not protect you." - Audre Lorde

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY IS ON THE SECOND MONDAY IN OCTOBER

MIGHTY SPIRITS

By Edwin Roman, LGBTQI+ Resource Room Advisor

The largest group of Indigenous people north of Mexico are the Ojibwe. It is from them that we get the expression "niizh manidoowag," which translated into English means "Two-Spirit," and refers to a person who embodies both feminine and masculine spirits. Today, Two-Spirit people use the term to describe fluid gender identities. Historically, Two-Spirit people held important social and spiritual roles in their respective Indigenous communities prior to the European colonization of the Americas.

The Indigenous peoples of the Americas have endured a devastating history of genocide that can be documented in written policy that involved crushing geopolitical and biopolitical methods of control such as the taking of land (the Lenape and Siwanoy peoples once resided in the Bronx), criminalizing Indigenous languages, and the suppression of culture. These policies are consistent with the ten stages of genocide. According to Dr. Gregory Smithers, professor of American history at Virginia Commonwealth University and author of the book, *Reclaiming Two-Spirits: Sexuality, Spiritual Renewal and Sovereignty in Native America*, Europeans targeted Two-Spirit people immediately and started with disparaging language that stemmed from how Europeans misinterpreted gender fluidity and sexual expression. Consequently, this cultivated an inaccurate record that scholars have used to write history.

European colonizers believed in rigid gender roles and eventually perpetrated genocidal violence on Two-Spirit people. Smithers notes that the colonizers recognized the important roles they played as trusted elders who also served as healers, educators, storytellers, and knowledge keepers. Colonizers vehemently worked to destroy a key association in the cultural, social, and linguistic knowledge of almost 200 Indigenous communities. Substantial amounts of knowledge

have been lost. However, Indigenous people have remained strong, creative, and devoted to reconstructing their cultures.

Curiously, European heteropatriarchal notions have been internalized in some Indigenous communities and this has led to a suppression of Two-Spirit narratives as well as the continued oppression of women who once held powerful positions (Indigenous nations were gynocratic, or woman-centric). Many Indigenous Two-Spirit scholars are critical of western Queer Theory due to its essentialist beliefs and have emphasized that a combination of Queer Theory and Native American Studies is a beneficial connection for decolonizing

Indigenous understanding of gender and sexuality.



**TWO-SPIRIT PEOPLE HAVE PREVAILED
AND ARE CURRENTLY REGAINING
AND CREATING THEIR HISTORY**

Two-Spirit people have prevailed and are currently regaining and creating their history. Elders in Indigenous communities have helped keep Two-Spirit traditions alive often by keeping them secretive while being creative and expressing new cultural expressions. Through their own writings, songs, stories, art, and ceremony, Two-Spirit people continue to reclaim and renew their place in Native communities. Smithers notes that their history isn't just in the many flawed written documents, but can be found in dance, art, and storytelling.

The Ten Stages of Genocide

- 1. Classification** – The differences between people are not respected. There's a division of 'us' and 'them' which can be carried out using stereotypes or excluding people who are perceived to be different.
- 2. Symbolization** – This is a visual manifestation of hatred.
- 3. Discrimination** – The dominant group denies civil rights or even citizenship to identified groups.
- 4. Dehumanization** – Those perceived as 'different' are treat-

Continued on the next page.

ed with no form of human rights or personal dignity.

5. Organization – Genocides are always planned. Regimes of hatred often train those who go on to carry out the destruction of a people.

6. Polarization – Propaganda begins to be spread by hate groups.

7. Preparation – Perpetrators plan the genocide. They create fear of the victim group, building up armies and weapons.

8. Persecution – Victims are identified because of their ethnicity or religion and death lists are drawn up. People are sometimes segregated, deported or starved and property is often expropriated. Genocidal massacres begin.

9. Extermination – The hate group murders their identified victims in a deliberate and systematic campaign of violence. Millions of lives have been destroyed or changed beyond recognition through genocide.

10. Denial – The perpetrators or later generations deny the existence of any crime.

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WE:WA, 19TH CENTURY TWO SPIRIT ARTISAN

By Edwin Roman, LGBTQI+ Resource Room Advisor

Puebloans (or Pueblo Peoples) are the Indigenous peoples who have lived in what is today known as the Southwestern United States and Northern Mexico for over a millennium. Near the end of the 19th century, interest grew in their centuries-old arts and cultures. Potters from several pueblos developed creative vessel shapes and designs by adapting and enhancing the methods of their ancestors. The symbolic forms communicated each community's historic distinctiveness. During this time, the late We:wa (there are several spellings of the name) was a Zuni, Two-Spirit (though the Zuni tribe has long-used the word *lamana* to refer to a third gender) artisan who played a vital role in the recognition of Indigenous arts as fine art and was an amazing advocate of Indigenous rights.

Born in 1849 in Zuni Pueblo (present day New Mexico), the late We:wa began training at a young age in pottery. They also led community mediation and became well-known as a revered community leader and an accomplished artist renowned for their skill with color and patterns. The late We:wa learned English in order to facilitate communication with European colonists and to advocate for the protection of Zuni rights and culture. They were one of the first Zuni artisans to sell their work to non-Indigenous buyers. Essential to the establishment of a cultural exchange was their friendship with anthropologist Matilda Coxe Stevenson.

The late We:wa traveled to Washington D.C. in the 1880s to advocate for their people. They shared information about Zuni culture and even met President Grover Cleveland. During this trip and beyond, the late We:wa worked to educate colonial Americans, combatting stereotypes and advocating for Indigenous rights.

The bowl pictured below, which can be viewed at the Art Institute of Chicago, was created by the late We:wa and features a large,



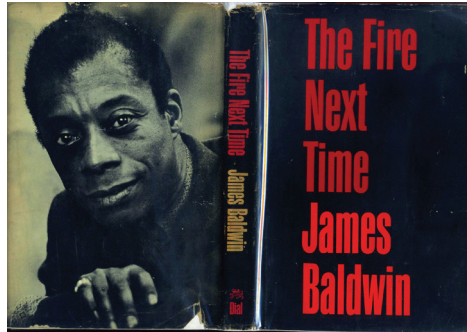
X-shaped symbol that is a reference to the four sacred directions of the Zuni world. The red, hooked motifs between the arms represent pahos, prayer sticks with attached feathers that were placed at sacred locations to appeal for rain.

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- RAINBOW READING ROOM -



with Edwin Roman

THE FIRE NEXT TIME by JAMES BALDWIN

"There is less Baldwin in schools because he is a gateway drug of thought and more and more of our children are being taught not to think." -Trevor Baldwin, Nephew of James Baldwin, in 2014

August 2, 2024, marked the centennial of the birth of the writer James Baldwin. He was born in Harlem and was raised by his mother and stepfather David Baldwin, a Baptist preacher whom he described as exceptionally strict. The eldest of nine children, he took the responsibility of being a big brother seriously and protected and cared for his younger siblings throughout his life. Baldwin became a preacher between the ages of fourteen and seventeen at the Fireside Pentecostal Assembly. His experience in the church would have an impact on the themes and biblical references in his writings.

**"God gave Noah the rainbow sign
No more water, the fire next time!"**

Baldwin attended DeWitt Clinton High School in The Bronx, where he edited the school literary magazine and participated in the literary club. He graduated in 1942, and the following year lost his stepfather and witnessed the Harlem Race Riot. He met Richard Wright in 1944, who became a mentor. Wright helped Baldwin to attain a fellowship to write his first novel, *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, which enabled him to relocate to Paris in 1948. Baldwin left the United States because of a cruel combination of racism and homophobia. In Paris, Baldwin interacted with other writers and met Maya Angelou, who was a close friend until the end of his life.

**"I got to Paris with forty dollars in my pocket, but I had to get out of New York.
My reflexes were tormented by the plight of other people."**

The Fire Next Time was published in 1963 (the same year as the historic March on Washington) and contains two essays. The first, which is the form of a short letter to Baldwin's nephew, James, discusses the role of race in American while commemorating the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation.

**"Now, my dear namesake these innocent and well-meaning people, your countrymen,
have caused you to be born under conditions not very far removed from those described for us
by Charles Dickens in the London of more than a hundred years ago."**

Baldwin goes on to note that, "This innocent country set you down in a ghetto in which, in fact intended that you should perish." He encourages his nephew to trust no one word and to trust in his own experiences.

**"Please try to remember that what they believe as well as what they do and cause you to endure,
does not testify to your inferiority but to their inhumanity and fear."**

Baldwin goes on to note:

**"Well, the black man has functioned in the white man's world as a fixed star, as an immovable pillar:
and as he moves out of his place, heaven and earth are shaken to their foundations. You, don't be afraid."**

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MISSION

The LGBTQI + Resource Room at Bronx
Community College works to foster an inclusive,
safe, and welcoming environment for students,
faculty, and staff of all sexual orientations,
gender identities, and gender expressions.
The LGBTQI + Resource Room aims to sustain
visibility and a sense of community by providing
education, programming, and support services
on campus.

In the News...

CIVIL RIGHTS WATCH

Republican Bathroom Bill Targets Congress's First Transgender Member

The Guardian reported on November 19, 2024 that after Delaware elected the first ever openly transgender member of Congress earlier this month, a Republican introduced a bill to ban her from using the bathroom that corresponds with her gender identity.

The South Carolina Republican Nancy Mace introduced the bill, which comes a little less than two months before Sarah McBride is due to be sworn in as the first openly transgender member of Congress. The measure would charge the House sergeant at arms with enforcing the bill, though it is unclear exactly how. Mace's bill comes as Republicans have attacked transgender people as part of a broader political culture war strategy.

Laurel Powell, a Human Rights Campaign spokesperson, said the measure would also target trans people who had worked in the Capitol for years.

Read more at: <https://shorturl.at/puUAn>

THE ARTS

Get to Know Artist Mickalene Thomas

Mickalene Thomas is a contemporary African American LGBTQI+ visual artist who was born January 28, 1971, in Camden, New Jersey and received a BFA from the Pratt Institute in 2000 and an MFA from Yale University School of Art in 2002. Thomas creates paintings, collages, photography, video, and installations that draw on art history and popular culture to construct a contemporary vision of female sexuality, beauty, and power. Thomas constructs complex portraits, landscapes, and interiors in order to examine how identity, gender, and sense of self are informed by the ways women are represented in art and popular culture.

Pictured below is the mixed media painting *A Little Taste Outside of Love*. Here, Thomas depicts an African American woman as the leading lady in an updated version of the sexualized female that remakes the nude by ousting the white European woman from the bed. More artworks by Thomas may be seen at the Brooklyn Museum.

Learn more at: <https://mickalenethomas.com/>



We are looking for student writing for the Spring 2025 issue of *Loud!*
If you are interested in submitting an article, poetry, or artwork please
send an e-mail to edwin.roman@bcc.cuny.edu.