



Native Recognition: Indigenous Cinema and the Western (SUNY series, Horizons of Cinema)

Joanna Hearne

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Offers a new interpretation of the century-long relationship between the Western film genre and Native American filmmaking.

In *Native Recognition*, Joanna Hearne persuasively argues for the central role of Indigenous image-making in the history of American cinema. Across the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries, Indigenous peoples have been involved in cinema as performers, directors, writers, consultants, crews, and audiences, yet both the specificity and range of this Native participation have often been obscured by the on-screen, larger-than-life images of Indians in the Western. Not only have Indigenous images mattered to the Western, but Westerns have also mattered to Indigenous filmmakers as they subvert mass culture images of supposedly “vanishing” Indians, repurposing the commodity forms of Hollywood films to envision Native intergenerational continuity. Through their interventions in forms of seeing and being seen in public culture, Native filmmakers have effectively marshaled the power of visual media to take part in national discussions of social justice and political sovereignty for North American Indigenous peoples.

Native Recognition brings together a wide range of little-known productions, from the silent films of James Young Deer, to recovered prints of the 1928 *Ramona* and the 1972 *House Made of Dawn*, to the experimental and feature films of Victor Masayesva and Chris Eyre. Using international archival research and close visual analysis, Hearne expands our understanding of the complexity of Native presence in cinema both on screen and through the circuits of film production and consumption.

“This will be a major work for ethnic studies professionals, and people wanting a better understanding of how mass media impacts culture. Joanna Hearne does an excellent job weaving a tapestry across time, from the early days of film, to more modern looks at film making.” — *Portland Book Review*

“The first section stands out because of its rich content and insightful analysis. Here, Hearne culls a laudably wide range of archival materials from which she assembles an original work on the genesis of indigenous representation in the earliest American films. The final section of the book is a brilliant juxtaposition to the first, as the contemporary films present not a climax but rather a beginning of a new era that is still evolving. Academics will appreciate the historical insights that place the films within their proper contexts. General readers will be drawn in by the compelling nature of the work, which also includes a large number of movie stills.” — *CHOICE*

“With countless black and white photography all spread throughout, *Native Recognition* is a vital addition to any community or college library collection focusing on filmmaking or Native American issues, highly recommended.” — *Midwest Book Review*

Joanna Hearne is Associate Professor of English and Film Studies at the University of Missouri. She is the author of *Smoke Signals: Native Cinema Rising*.

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