

Finding a Contemporary Voice: The Legacy of Lloyd Kiva New and IAIA

BY CARMEN VENDELIN

In the collection of the New Mexico Museum of Art, a group portrait by Fritz Scholder, based on a ca. 1966 photograph, depicts early faculty members who helped shape the curriculum, mission, and direction of the newly established Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe. Among them is Lloyd Kiva New, IAIA's first art director, who devoted himself to the goal of empowering individual students to reach their full potential as artists and as people. He believed this could be achieved through a connection to traditional tribal art and culture to create a personal artistic expression and did not want his students to feel stifled by pressures to create a certain type of officially sanctioned Indian art.

Santa Fe has long been a tourist center. From the 1880s on, trains and, later, automobiles encouraged an influx of visitors. Local Pueblo and Plains Indian artists developed a variety of

pottery, textiles, jewelry, and other objects to meet the market demand and the tastes of non-Native buyers. In the 1930s, Dorothy Dunn taught students at the Santa Fe Indian School to incorporate tribal imagery into a new style of painting. The flattened style was intended to eschew European influences while presenting an “authentic” Indian art, even though the paintings were not part of a tribal tradition. Both of these precedents established a market for Native American art intended for nonindigenous buyers attracted by the forms and motifs of traditional tribal design and culture. The insistence that students adhere to particular styles was an idea that Lloyd Kiva New and the newly formed IAIA rejected.

The founding of IAIA intersected with a significant moment in the history of Western art. Ethnicity and culture, political



