

los líderes de la tribu nativa de oneidas, para explorar la posibilidad de ampliar relaciones comerciales de la monarquía en Norteamérica (p. 166).

Importantes como son estos resultados parciales y, bien documentados, sin duda servirán para desarrollar análisis históricos especializados. Lo más estimulante es el conjunto, la concepción del libro, que lo hace una fuente inspiradora para los lectores más allá del campo de la historia de los Estados Unidos o la historia centroeuropea. En su ya clásica deliberación acerca del concepto y métodos de la historia global, Sebastian Conrad advirtió: “El interés en examinar fenómenos transfronterizos quizás no es nuevo en sí mismo, pero ahora se plantea un nuevo reto. Aspira a cambiar el terreno en el que piensan los historiadores.”¹³ Jonathan Singerton, como se observa en este libro, aceptó el desafío. Mostró claramente en su monografía qué debe significar este “nuevo modo de pensar” sobre las interconexiones a escala mundial, y los efectos de los procesos globales a desarrollos muy concretos, aparentemente aislados en contextos locales.

Markéta Křížová¹⁴ (Praga)
(Escrito en español por la autora)

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Exhibition *FIRST AMERICANS – Honouring Indigenous Resilience and Creativity: On the Wave of Indigenous Futurisms*¹⁵
(Leiden: Wereldmuseum Museum, until 2 July 2023)

When I visited the Dutch National Museum of Ethnography in Leiden (renamed Wereldmuseum in 2023) in 2020, I expected to encounter a familiar ethnographic script: collections of objects from the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Oceania presented

through generalized narratives of cultural difference, accompanied by descriptive labels that provided contextual information while largely avoiding structural critique of colonial power relations.

My previous visits to exhibitions in ethnographic museums had rarely gone beyond this pattern, and I had consistently found attempts at decolonization limited to partial gestures rather than genuine epistemic transformation. In this context, the *First Americans* exhibition represented a notable intervention, seeking a more substantive engagement with Indigenous perspectives.

According to the official text, the exhibition foregrounded Indigenous resilience, creativity, and self-representation. Rather than organizing artworks strictly along geographical or chronological lines, the curatorial structure was thematic, focusing on history, survivance, and futurity. Objects from the museum’s collections were placed in dialogue with contemporary Indigenous art, photography, fashion, and design, thereby disrupting the conventional temporal divide that had previously confined Indigenous cultures to a premodern past – a limitation that ethnographic museums often reproduce by overlooking ongoing contemporary artistic production. By juxtaposing historical and contemporary works, the exhibition challenged the ethnographic tendency to depict Indigenous peoples as static or anachronistic, highlighting their ongoing presence, agency, and cultural production.

At the same time, the exhibition’s decolonial ambitions revealed certain tensions. Most notably, the historical objects were displayed with little to no information regarding their provenance or the conditions under which they had entered the museum’s collection. Given the exhibition’s explicit engagement with colonial violence and Indigenous dispossession, this omission could not be dismissed as merely technical. It pointed to a persistent institutional reluctance to confront questions of ownership, extraction, and epistemic authority that remained central to any genuinely decolonial museological practice.

A particularly strong aspect of the exhibition lay in its engagement with Indigenous and Chicana futurisms. Drawing on artists primarily from Indigenous communities across what is now the United States, as well as creators of Mexican descent living in the country, the exhibition presented futurism not as escapist speculation but as a critical and political practice. Through media ranging from

¹³ S. CONRAD, *What is Global History?* Princeton 2016, p. 4. (An interest in examining cross-border phenomena may not in itself be new, but now it stakes a new claim. It means to change the terrain on which historians think.)

¹⁴ marketa.krizova@ff.cuni.cz, Charles University.

¹⁵ Véase <https://leiden.wereldmuseum.nl/en/whats-on/exhibitions/first-americans>.

graphic art and digital games to textile and fashion design, these works mobilized science fiction to reimagine Indigenous pasts, presents, and futures beyond linear, Eurocentric conceptions of time. Indigenous futurisms here functioned as a space for reworking historical trauma, including colonization and genocide, without reducing Indigenous experience to narratives of victimhood.

Importantly, the exhibition resisted framing Indigenous history solely through the lens of loss. Alongside references to colonial violence, it recalled moments of Indigenous political mobilization, particularly during the 1960s and 1970s, situating contemporary artistic practices within longer genealogies of resistance and activism. In this way, Indigenous peoples were presented not as passive subjects of historical processes but as political agents whose struggles took multiple forms.

Across the works on display, resistance emerged as a heterogeneous set of practices. These ranged from armed opposition, exemplified by Pueblo resistance to Spanish military and missionary expansion, to cultural strategies aimed at undermining settler colonial hegemony through the preservation, transformation, and continued

production of Indigenous knowledge systems and aesthetic forms. By foregrounding such strategies, the exhibition demonstrated that Indigenous cultures had not merely survived but had actively asserted their presence and reshaped dominant cultural narratives, engaging with popular culture on their own terms rather than being immobilized as relics of a vanishing past.

Although the exhibition did not fully escape the structural constraints of ethnographic museums, it demonstrated how such institutions could present Indigenous peoples in ways that recognize their agency, self-representation, and active engagement in shaping and sustaining their cultural practices. By centering Indigenous voices and artistic practices, the display marked a significant departure from conventional museum approaches, even as its silences around provenance highlighted the persistent limits of decolonial interventions within established institutional frameworks.

*by anna libánská, Prague¹⁶
(Written in English by the author)*

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¹⁶ anna.ricar@phil.muni.cz, Masaryk University.