



U.S. Department of the Interior
Indian Arts and Crafts Board • Sioux Indian Museum
222 New York Street, Rapid City, South Dakota 57701



To feature Melanie Ratzlaff in a Special Exhibition

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA: The Sioux Indian Museum, administered by the Indian Arts and Crafts Board, U.S. Department of the Interior, will feature an exhibit of artwork by Melanie Ratzlaff. The exhibition will run from April 28 to July 8, 2016. On April 28, an opening reception will be held for the exhibit from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The artist will be available to discuss her work during the reception. The reception and exhibition are both free and open to the public.

Melanie Ratzlaff is an emerging artist who works with recycled materials to create unique three dimensional artworks. Born in Yankton, South Dakota, she is an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. Melanie graduated from Freeman High School in Freeman, South Dakota, and studied art at Northern State University in Aberdeen, South Dakota. She now resides with her family in Parker, South Dakota, where she works as a professional artist.

Melanie's style is modern and unconventional. She uses a wide variety of found materials, including paper, wire, plastic bags, and VHS tapes to create her artwork. One of her signature forms are painted "plates", which are actually crafted from paper. Old computer paper is first shredded and the resulting strips are then glued together to form a single long strip. Melanie then tightly rolls this paper strip to create the flat disc that is the basic form of the plate. The paper is then impregnated with a solution of diluted glue, which hardens the plate into its final shape. Between 60 and 70 sheets of paper are needed to make a full size plate. Melanie perfected this technique while making paper beads and later developed the process to make plates through trial and error. Once the plate is dry it is ready for painting. Melanie uses acrylic paints to create a variety of images and designs inspired by her Lakota heritage. In addition to her plates, Melanie creates pottery, sculptures, and charcoal drawings.

An underlying theme of Melanie's artwork is strength. Memories of her mother are the foundational source of that inspirational strength. Each piece begins as an idea that is embodied with an emotional attachment. Feelings, such as frustration or a lack of control, find a voice in her intricate and highly detailed artworks. Vivid and flowing pieces reflect feelings of happiness and joy. Melanie hopes that by giving recycled materials a second life, her audience will gain a different perspective and awareness of the aesthetic value of everyday materials.

Melanie's work has been awarded 3rd place in the three-dimensional, additive process division at the 2014 Northern Plains Indian Art Market, and 2nd place in the three-dimensional, additive process division at the 2015 Northern Plains Indian Art Market.

Prices for the artwork in the exhibition can be obtained by contacting The Journey Museum Store at (605) 394-2201. To purchase artwork after the exhibit closes, please contact Melanie Ratzlaff through her website at www.mkae84.wix.com/melanieratzlaff.

The Sioux Indian Museum, managed by the Indian Arts and Crafts Board, U.S. Department of the Interior, is located in The Journey Museum, 222 New York Street, Rapid City, SD 57701. For admission fees and hours of operation please call (605) 394-6923.