

# APSÁALOKE

## WOMEN AND WARRIORS





APSÁALOOKE WOMEN AND WARRIORS

# Exhibition Details

**Size:** 6,000 ft<sup>2</sup> (550 m<sup>2</sup>)

**Ceiling Height:** 12 ft (3.66 m)

**Tour:** Fall 2021 – Spring 2023

## Curators:

Nina Sanders, Apsáalooke, Field Museum Guest Curator, Senior Research Fellow at the University of Chicago

Alaka Wali, Ph.D., Field Museum Curator of North American Anthropology

Meranda Owens, Ph.D., Northern Paiute and Chicanx, Field Museum Postdoctoral Research Scientist





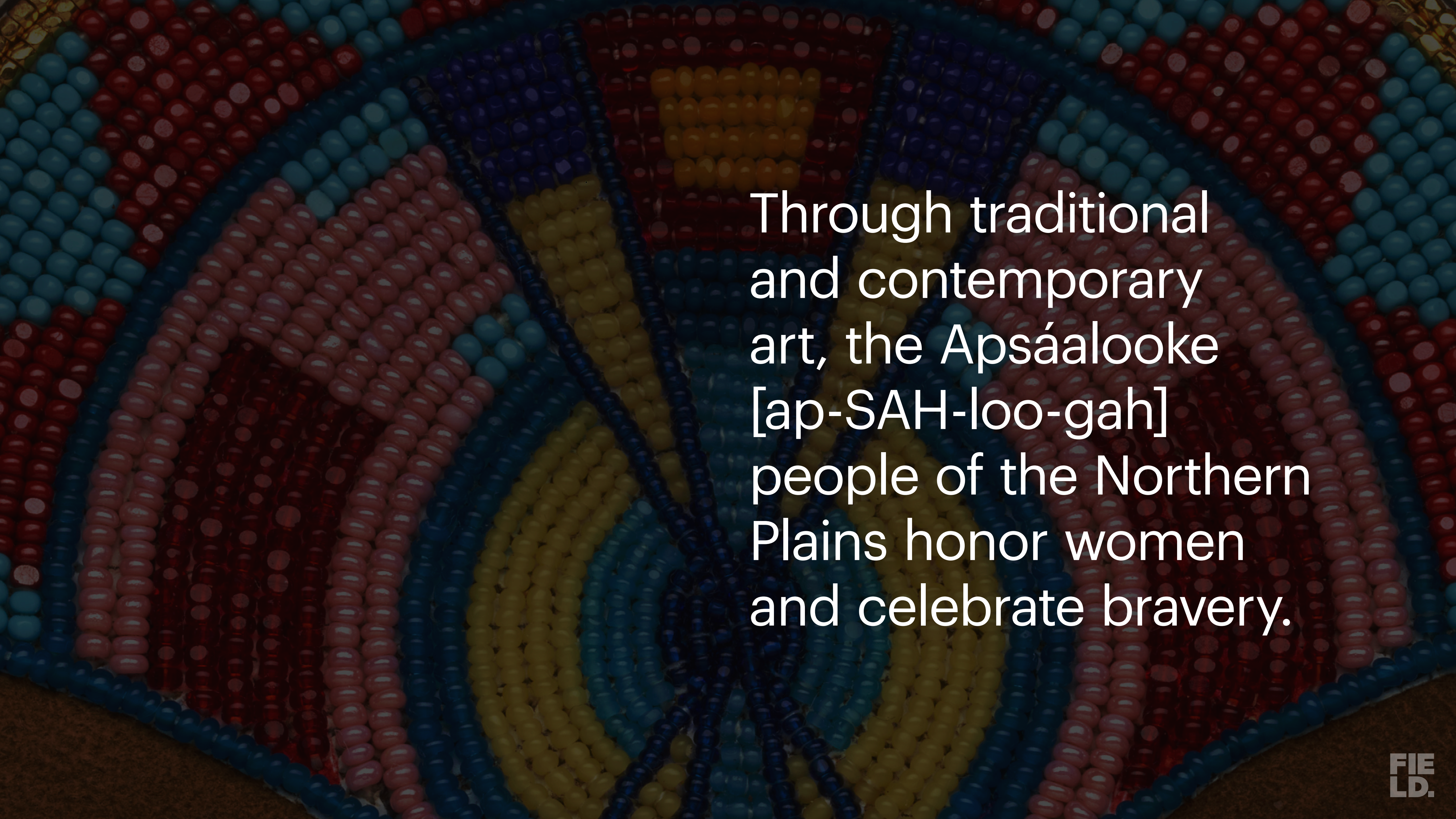
# Features

- 39 historic objects, including 7 war shields from the Field Museum's collection
- 22 works by 18 contemporary Apsáalooke artists, including Elias Not Afraid, Ben Pease, Birdie Real Bird, Kevin Red Star, Adam Sings In The Timber, Bethany Yellowtail, and others
- 1 full-size Apsáalooke tipi
- 5 media pieces, including a video featuring the fashion of Bethany Yellowtail with audio by Supaman
- 2 digital interactives, including a historic ledger book from the NMAI collection

## Contact Information:

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Through traditional  
and contemporary  
art, the Apsáalooke  
[ap-SAH-loo-gah]  
people of the Northern  
Plains honor women  
and celebrate bravery.



# Marketing Messages



Celebrate the bravery, strength, and vitality of Apsáalooke culture with *Apsáalooke Women and Warriors*, a traveling exhibition from the Field Museum. Journey alongside the Apsáalooke people as they reflect on their past and shape their future through a unique mix of traditional objects and contemporary Native American artwork.



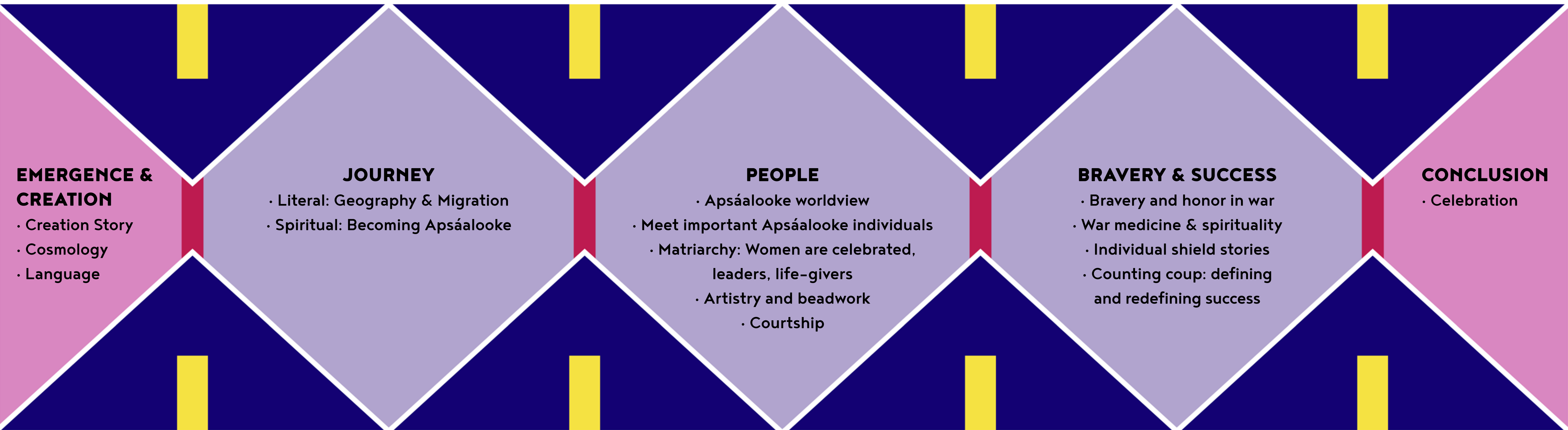
Created in partnership with the Apsáalooke people (also known as the Crow) from the Northern Plains of the United States, *Apsáalooke Women and Warriors* is an immersive exhibition exploring the history, values, and beliefs of this Native community. Learn about the origin story of the Apsáalooke nation, the powerful roles women and warriors hold in their society, and understand the importance of honor and bravery in Apsáalooke culture.



See the connection of past and present Apsáalooke belief systems through art and objects by viewing historic war shields and regalia, a full-size contemporary tipi, and over 20 works of contemporary Native American art, including spectacular paintings, vivid photography, extraordinary beadwork, and high fashion.



# Exhibition Summary





# Visitor Goals



## Sensory/Motor

### Visitors will

- See historic objects and contemporary art together
- See a full-scale Apsáalooke tipi
- Touch Apsáalooke flat stitch beadwork
- Hear the Apsáalooke language spoken and sung out loud
- See the faces of historic and contemporary Apsáalooke people

## Affective

### Visitors will feel

- Fun and excitement at the color, texture, and movement in the space
- Impressed at the painstaking and labor-intensive beadwork process
- Awed by historic and contemporary acts of counting coup
- Personal connection to individual Apsáalooke people and stories
- Curious and inspired to know more about Apsáalooke culture

## Cognitive

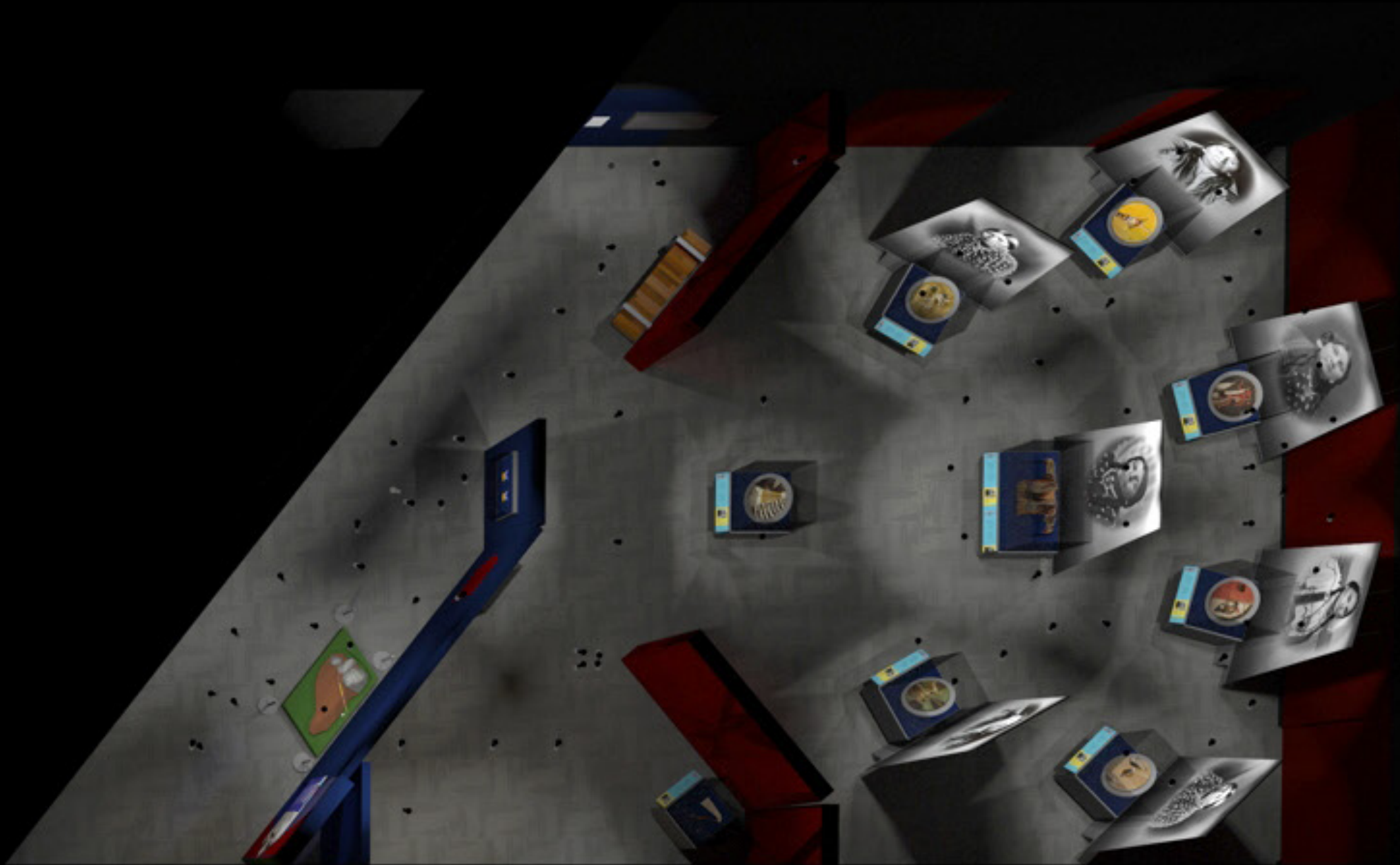
### Visitors will know/learn

- Bravery and beauty are critical to Apsáalooke culture
- Women are the center of Apsáalooke culture
- Counting coup means winning prestige, displaying exceptional bravery to gain honor
- Apsáalooke people are still alive, carrying on and redefining their culture



APSÁALOOKE WOMEN AND WARRIORS

# Experience Map





# **Section 1:**

# **Emergence and Creation**







## SECTION 1: EMERGENCE AND CREATION

Visitors entering the space will meet Brings the Water (Nina Sanders) in graphic form, who tells them that she will be narrating this exhibit and telling the story of her people.

Overhead, visitors hear a woman speaking in an unfamiliar language—Apsáalooke. They encounter two decorated tobacco bags in a case, and read about the sacredness of tobacco and a blessing upon entering the space. They also

see a large, starry sky mural with replicated tobacco plants in front of it. The journey to find tobacco and the stories told in the stars make the Apsáalooke people, Apsáalooke.

Moving toward the back of the gallery, they see a colorful animated media piece—the source of the overheard voice. This media piece tells the human creation story as known by the Apsáalooke.



# Section 1: Emergence and Creation

## SECTION ELEMENTS

### Introduction

- Meet Brings the Water (a.k.a. Nina Sanders): Introduction graphic

### Creation Story

- Two historic tobacco bundles
- Media piece: creation story animation

### Cosmology/Tobacco Journey Begins

- Replicated tobacco plants (*Nicotiana quadrivalvis*) with starry sky mural background
- Cosmology theme panel





# Section 2: Journey



APSÁALOOKE WOMEN AND WARRIORS

**ASHTAANILE /  
A DWELLING**  
AN APSÁALOOKE TIPI

Although new we only sleep in tips for special ceremonies, celebrations, and ceremonies. Their structure has not changed. To us, tips are like our mothers' womb—a place where we are safe and nurtured.

ASHTAANILE / UN ASENTAMIENTO  
UN TIP APSÁALOOKE

Los tipis APSÁALOOKE son estructuras de piel de animal que se usan para dormir y para celebrar ceremonias y festivales. Aunque son nuevas, solo dormimos en ellas para ocasiones especiales. Su estructura no ha cambiado. Para nosotros, los tipis son como el vientre de nuestras madres, un lugar seguro y acogedor.

Los tipis APSÁALOOKE son estructuras de piel de animal que se usan para dormir y para celebrar ceremonias y festivales. Aunque son nuevas, solo dormimos en ellas para ocasiones especiales. Su estructura no ha cambiado. Para nosotros, los tipis son como el vientre de nuestras madres, un lugar seguro y acogedor.



**THE APSÁALOOKE MIGRATION**

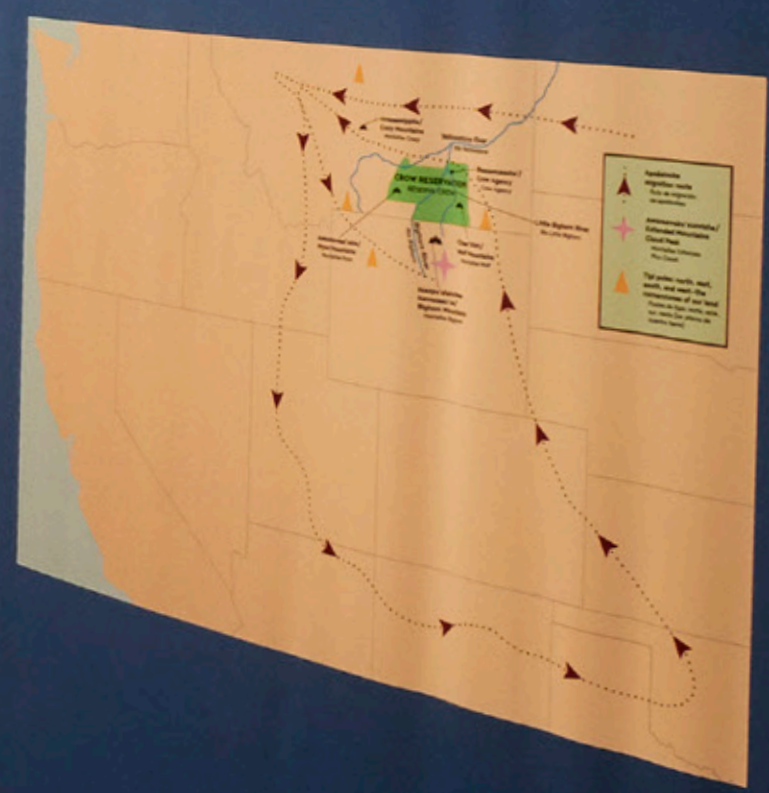
Before Chief No Vitals received his vision instructing us to find the Sacred Tobacco plant, my people were a part of a larger group. When we separated, we became the Apsáalooke and they the Hidatsa.

After my people traveled hundreds of miles down and around the plains, they came across the tobacco plant on Cloud Peak in the Bighorn Mountains—denoted on this map by a four-pointed star.

**LA MIGRACIÓN DE LOS APSÁALOOKES**

Antes de que el Cacique Sin Intestinos recibiera su visión que nos indicaba buscar la planta sagrada del tabaco, mi pueblo formaba parte de un grupo más grande. Cuando nos separamos, nos convertimos en los apsalookes y ellos en los hidatsas.

Después de que mi pueblo viajara cientos de millas hacia el sur y alrededor de las planicies, encontraron la planta de tabaco en el pico Cloud (Nube), en las Montañas Bighorn, las que se encuentran marcadas en este mapa con una estrella de cuatro puntas.





## SECTION 2: JOURNEY

As visitors enter the second gallery, they walk alongside a transitional mural depicting artwork by Ben Pease titled *Sacred Under the Cliffs of Yellowstone*.

Turning the corner, they see a full-scale tipi with traditional tipi furniture inside. Behind the tipi is a panoramic mural of the Big Horn Mountains, where the Apsáalooke found the sacred tobacco many years ago.

Also in this gallery are various pieces of historic horse regalia: a saddle, a head ornament, and a parfleche suitcase.

Each case is flanked by a floor-to-ceiling banner of an Apsáalooke person.

Visitors will learn that the Apsáalooke took a journey both physical and spiritual to find the sacred tobacco plant, and the place they'd call home.



## Section 2: Journey

### SECTION ELEMENTS

#### Introduction

- Scrim mural: Ben Pease *Sacred Under the Cliffs of Yellowstone*

#### Tipi

- Tipi display, with prop furnishings and painted door by Mona Medicine Crow
- Mural backdrop of the Big Horn Mountains
- Apsáalooke journey map graphic

#### Historic horse regalia/the importance of horses

- Historic horse regalia in cases: head ornament, saddle, martingale
- Buffalo hide parfleche





# Section 3: People



APSÁALOOKE WOMEN AND WARRIORS





APSÁALOOKE WOMEN AND WARRIORS

#WomenAndWarriors





### SECTION 3: PEOPLE (PART 1)

After witnessing the Apsáalooke migration story, visitors will move into the next section about people. More floor-to-ceiling banners depicting historic Apsáalooke people adorn the space.

At the start of the section are mannequins representing an Apsáalooke man and woman, each dressed in traditional regalia. Women are at the center of Apsáalooke culture, and men

are as good as the women who raise them.

Nearby, visitors see a 12-ft sculpture by Ben Pease of an Apsáalooke man and woman back-to-back, each dressed in regalia and stepping forward.

A horse mannequin stands in the center of the room outfitted in beaded regalia. Horses, like human beings, have souls, and are to be treated like family members.



### SECTION 3: PEOPLE (PART 1)

A row of cases display beadwork, from historic to contemporary pieces, which is integral to Apsáalooke culture. A large projection at the back of the room depicts the tattooed hands of Elias Not Afraid, one of the star beaders featured in the

exhibition, beading a piece in real time. Beneath it, visitors can touch the very same piece Elias is working on and appreciate its craftsmanship. They will learn about the beadwork process and see an example of a modern beadwork kit.



## Section 3: People (Part 1)

### SECTION ELEMENTS

#### Woman & Man

- Garments on open-air mannequins
- Ben Pease sculpture
- Historic cradleboard

#### Beadwork

- Beaded flag of Crow Tribe by Karis Jackson
- Apsáalooke flag interactive
- Historic cradle board
- Historic beaded bag





APSÁALOOKE WOMEN AND WARRIORS

NOT A COSTUME  
NO ES UN DISFRAZ

**Báashbaleikkupe/War bonnet**  
Feathers (hawk and eagle), textile, hide (leather, buckskin, rawhide), hair, animal tail/fur (est. ermine), copper alloy, felt, wood (est. cork), sinew, thread, dye

War bonnets are important symbols of achievement and leadership. My people wear two kinds: chiefs wear bonnets with long tails, while warriors wear shorter ones. We decorate bonnets with eagle feathers because we are taught the soul leaves and enters through one's head—to crown your head with eagle feathers brings your prayers and thoughts closer to the Creator.

**Báashbaleikkupe/Sombrero de guerra**  
Plumas (de halcón y águila), tela, piel (cuero, piel de ante, cuero crudo), pelo, cola/pelaje de animal (probablemente armiño), alceación de cobre, fieltro, madera (probablemente corcho), tendón, hilo, tintura

Los sombreros de guerra son símbolos importantes de logros y liderazgo. Mi pueblo usa dos clases: los caciques usan sombreros con colas largas, mientras que los guerreros unos más cortos. Decoramos los sombreros con plumas de águila porque nos enseñan que el alma sale y entra al cuerpo a través de la cabeza; por lo que coronar su cabeza con plumas de águila hace que las plegarias y los pensamientos estén más cerca del Creador.



Ashishishe (c.1856-1923), known as Curley, wearing his chief war bonnet. He was an Apáshalooke scout in the United States' Army during the so-called Sioux Wars, best known for having been one of the few survivors on the United States' side at the Battle of Little Bighorn.

Ashishishe (alrededor de 1856-1923), conocido como Curley, usa su sombrero de guerra de cacique. Él era un explorador apáshalooke en el Ejército de los Estados Unidos durante las llamadas Guerras Sioux, mejor conocido por haber sido uno de los pocos sobrevivientes de la batalla de Little Bighorn del bando Estadounidense.





### SECTION 3: PEOPLE (PART 2)

In this part of the People section, visitors continue to learn about ways Apsáalooke people honor women, historically and today.

Contemporary paintings from Allen Knows His Gun and Ben Pease depict women with children, women on horses, and women with golden halos—all signifying the importance of women and the roles they play.

We learn that women are the keepers of Apsáalooke culture.

A display featuring a mannequin dressed in a trade cloth dress with braided hair stands next to a small doll dressed in the same way. Directional audio tells visitors that the speaker is Birdie Real Bird, who creates these dolls and outfits like this after receiving a vision of her late mother in a dream.



### SECTION 3: PEOPLE (PART 2)

Visitors move on from this display to see another mannequin dressed in a modern-looking formal dress with Apsáalooke motifs, and a beaded mirror bag.

Graphics tell visitors that part of being Apsáalooke is focusing on inner and outward beauty.

A large blanket on the wall and a flip-book digital interactive tell the story of relationships

in Apsáalooke culture, and the importance of cultivating and maintaining partnerships.

Having explored, met, and learned about various Apsáalooke individuals, visitors see a familiar, Native-looking headdress with a long, feathered tail. This is a war bonnet, worn by the bravest and strongest of the Apsáalooke: chiefs.



## Section 3: People (Part 2)

### SECTION ELEMENTS

#### Honoring Women

- Allen Knows His Gun painting
- Ben Pease painting *Wherein Lies the Beauty of Life*
- Birdie Real Bird doll with audio story
- Birdie Real Bird historic dress
- Historic blanket with beaded strip
- Ben Pease portrait of Pretty Shield

#### Relationships and Beauty

- Della Big Hair-Stump formal dress
- Historic mirror bag
- Historic ledger book
- Ledger book digital rail interactive





# Section 4:

# Bravery & Success



APSÁALOOKE WOMEN AND WARRIORS





APSÁALOOKE WOMEN AND WARRIORS



**APSÁALOOKE BRAVERY IN WORLD WAR II**

**1 Bronze star medal**  
2008  
Courtesy of Ronald Medicine Crow, son of Joseph Medicine Crow


**Medalla de la Estrella de bronce**  
2008  
Cortesía de Ronald Medicine Crow, hijo de Joseph Medicine Crow

El entonces soldado Joseph Medicine Crow lideró a un escuadrón de siete, bajo fuego intenso, para atacar los búnkers alemanes con TNT, a fin de que la Infantería de los Estados Unidos pudiera avanzar. Por perdido ni un solo soldado. Por lo tanto, le otorgaron la Estrella de bronce del Ejército de los Estados Unidos por actos de valor.

**2 Medal**  
Silver  
2008  
Courtesy of Joseph Medicine Crow

Burned Old Coyote is enlisted in the army at age 17, saying "when there is gunfire at the edge of the camp, matters answer." He served in WWII as a "code talker" speaking the Apache language to send the radio to keep the enemy from intercepting messages. Of this he said, "we are not code talkers. We simply speak Crow."

El Dr. Medicine Crow fue el último jefe guerrero del pueblo apálathe. El Dr. Medicine Crow, hijo de Joseph Medicine Crow, fue un soldado que, en una batalla, mató a un soldado alemán por su valiente comportamiento. Él fue el último jefe guerrero del pueblo apálathe. Él fue el último jefe guerrero del pueblo apálathe.



**DR. JOSEPH MEDICINE CROW**

Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow was a scholar, advocate, historian, musician, and the last War Chief of our Nation. He served in World War II and received the Presidential Medal of Freedom alongside Stephen Hawking and Desmond Tutu.

He was a member of my clan, the Whistling Waters. He inspired us all to get an education, serve, and live a life of honor.

**EL DR. JOSEPH MEDICINE CROW**

El Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow era un académico, abogado, historiador, músico y el último cacique de guerra de nuestra Nación. Prestó servicio en la Segunda Guerra Mundial y recibió la Medalla Presidencial de Libertad junto a Stephen Hawking y Desmond Tutu.

Era miembro de mi clan, los Agua Silbadora. Nos inspiró a todos a educarnos, a prestar servicio y a llevar una vida honorable.

"I love to learn. This is the way to get somewhere in life."  
-Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow

"Amo aprender. Esta es la manera de llegar lejos en la vida."  
-Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow

**COUP: THE HIGHEST BRAVERY**

War deeds, or coup [koo], are acts of courage in the face of an enemy. The ultimate test of skill and spiritual power, coup is part of our system of honor.

Here, Shot In The Hand holds a ceremonial *balaxihachley* coup stick, in which each feather and decoration celebrates his war deeds. Coup sticks are also war medicines, connected to spirituality. I'll tell you more about that in the next gallery.

**ÉXITOS: LA MAYOR VALENTÍA**

Los hechos de guerra, o los éxitos, son actos de valentía frente al enemigo. El éxito es parte de nuestro sistema de honor, es la prueba final de poder espiritual y de habilidad.

Aquí, Tio En La Mano sostiene una *balaxihachley* o vara del éxito, en la que cada pluma y elemento decorativo celebra su hazaña de guerra. Las varas del éxito también son medicinas de guerra que se conectan con el lado espiritual. Te contaré más al respecto en la siguiente galería.



**BAAALAXXIXILEETE IAXSHÉE**

**BRAVERY AND SUCCESS**

Bravery is directly connected to an individual's spiritual power and spiritual abilities come from a spiritual source.

In the past, our way of life embodied spiritual power. This was culture, completed by people to serve those who carried on the legacy. These values are still embedded today, but differently.

A victory today is participating in the military, completing a degree, doing honorable work in your career, or winning a significant sports competition.

**VALENTÍA Y ÉXITO**

La valentía está directamente conectada al poder espiritual de un individuo y las habilidades espirituales provienen de una fuente espiritual.

En el pasado, nuestra forma de vida encarnaba el poder espiritual. Esta fue la cultura, completada por el pueblo para servir a quienes la llevaron adelante. Estos valores aún están arraigados hoy, pero de manera diferente.

Una victoria hoy es participar en la milicia, completar un grado, hacer un trabajo honorable en tu carrera, o ganar una competencia deportiva importante.



#### SECTION 4: BRAVERY & SUCCESS

Entering the next gallery, visitors will learn about counting coup—the ultimate test of skill and spiritual power in Apsáalooke culture. The most iconic form involved Apsáalooke warriors riding close to the enemy and touching them with a coup stick without killing them. Contemporary examples of counting coup include Joe Medicine Crow's participation in WWII and Kevin Red Star's famous paintings.

Turning the corner, visitors encounter an array of decorated shields, each in its own case with a floor-to-ceiling photograph of a woman behind it. Shields are made by men, but cared for and interpreted by women. These shields are solemn, spiritual, and cared for by the women in this gallery.

As they exit, visitors read about a historic riding crop, or quirt, and see a painting of the famous two-spirit, transgender Apsáalooke beadworker and warrior Finds Them and Kills Them.



# Section 4: Bravery & Success

## SECTION ELEMENTS

### Contemporary Success

- Joe Medicine Crow bronze star
- Kevin Red Star paintings (x4)
- Karis Jackson *Blessing of a Leader* beadwork





## Section 4: Bravery & Success (continued)

### SECTION ELEMENTS

#### Shields

- Shield: Spotted Tail
- War Shirt: Spotted Tail
- Shield: Charges Strong
- Shield: Crazy Pon de Ray/Kiss
- Shield: Owner Unknown (x4)

#### Historic Bravery and War Deeds

- Historic quilt
- Del Curfman painting *Finds Them and Kills Them and Other Magpie*





# **Section 5: Celebration**



APSÁALOOKE WOMEN AND WARRIORS





## SECTION 5: CELEBRATION

As visitors enter the final section, they are met with an explosion of color and music. Metallic gold displays highlight six mannequins featuring fashions by Apsáalooke fashion designer Bethany Yellowtail.

At the center is a historic outfit that belonged to Irene Not Afraid Yellowtail, Bethany's grandmother and primary inspiration. On large video screens we see commercial footage of Bethany's fashions in Crow country among the grasses and plains on tall. Her collection celebrates Native American artistry

and entrepreneurship. Hip-hop music by Christian Parish (a.k.a. Supaman) puts an Apsáalooke twist on a familiar sound.

Exiting the space, visitors encounter a large backlit mural of Crow Fair and a panel explaining it is the largest annual gathering of Apsáalooke people. Each year they gather to celebrate, show off their regalia, participate in rodeos and pow wows, come together as families, and remind the public and each other that they are still here.



# Section 5: Celebration

## SECTION ELEMENTS

### Bethany Yellowtail and Supaman

- Irene Not Afraid Yellowtail historic outfit
- Bethany Yellowtail outfits (x6)
- Bethany Yellowtail fashion video with Supaman audio





# APSÁALOKE

## WOMEN AND WARRIORS

*Apsáalooke Women and Warriors* is an exhibition jointly organized by the Field Museum and the Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society at the University of Chicago.

**Field Museum – Traveling Exhibitions**  
**[travelingexh@fieldmuseum.org](mailto:travelingexh@fieldmuseum.org)**

