00:03:38.040 --> 00:03:45.660
W. Richard West Jr.: Good afternoon. I am, the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Autry Museum of the American West.

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W. Richard West Jr.: And to begin with, as is our honor and custom and practice. And frankly, our duty, I acknowledge the traditional caretakers of this land we now call Los Angeles and Burbank.

00:03:58.560 --> 00:04:10.740
W. Richard West Jr.: The Gabrielle Lino tongva people, I would like to thank our 2020 American Indian arts marketplace sponsors and Audrey donors and supporters for making this program possible.

00:04:12.450 --> 00:04:24.150
W. Richard West Jr.: I am privileged along with the board of trustees to welcome you to this autry artist salon, which also serves as the keynote for the American Indian arts marketplace.

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W. Richard West Jr.: Before we go any further, I would like to mention that if you have questions during the course of our conversation. Please enter your questions at any time in the Q AMP a feature at the bottom of your zoom window.

00:04:39.930 --> 00:04:51.720
W. Richard West Jr.: Joining me today is George horse capture is Joe course capture our newly appointed vice president of native collections and the elements and Curator of Native American history and culture.

00:04:52.320 --> 00:05:06.450
W. Richard West Jr.: And that slip was simply because George cap course capture is Joe's father and I worked with him at the National Museum of the American Indian and have the privilege of working with Joe here at the Museum of the American West.

00:05:07.050 --> 00:05:14.490
W. Richard West Jr.: More recently, Joe participated in an artist salon and conversation with second our triple artists summer Peters.

00:05:15.000 --> 00:05:21.240
W. Richard West Jr.: The video of which will be available on the first virtual American Indian arts marketplace this weekend.
W. Richard West Jr.: By way of background Joe is an enrolled member of Montana's on Indian tribe and has more than 20 years of museum experience before landing here at the Art Museum of the American West. More recently,

W. Richard West Jr.: Joe served as the first director of Native American initiatives at the Minnesota Historical Society where he developed and implemented a vision and strategy for American Indian programs and services in collaboration with American Indian communities in Minnesota and beyond.

W. Richard West Jr.: Prior to his position at the Minnesota Historical Society Joe was a curator for the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian. And sort of for 15 years as a curator of Native American Arts at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts through his work history. He has built strong working relationships with many tribal nations. The author Museum of the American West.

W. Richard West Jr.: represents something slightly different to each of you who visit us physically. And today, virtually

W. Richard West Jr.: For me, the Native American collections is one of our institutions greatest defining assets and strengths and I am thrilled to have Joe on the opportunity.

W. Richard West Jr.: Again, while we are talking. If a question comes to mind please jot it down in the Q AMP a feature as it comes to you and at the end of the session, we will scroll up and take all of these questions and more at the end of our discussion.

W. Richard West Jr.: Now if you get into the conversation with Joe

W. Richard West Jr.: Joe I in light of your very broad background and where you have been before coming here.

W. Richard West Jr.: I'd like you to just give us some sense of how coming to the opry is similar to where you have been and the work that you're undertaking.
W. Richard West Jr.: Is it similar to what you've done before and how it might different. How am I different how you see that and the own progression of your, of your own career working with native materials in any number of distinguished institutions, as you have

Joe Horse Capture: Higher echo, thank you for

Joe Horse Capture: Thank you for this opportunity to talk and it's always it's always good to see you. It's always good to be able to talk about these important topics.

Joe Horse Capture: And it is honestly it is great to be here. And part of the Autry family. So I've been fortunate enough to be in this museum field, as you mentioned a second generation person.

Joe Horse Capture: For a number of years and over these 20 something years I've certainly have seen some shifts in how people are looking at native history, culture and collections.

Joe Horse Capture: Early in my career in the 90s.

Joe Horse Capture: For the mountain. Again, these are all generalizations, as we know, can sometimes be kind of dangerous.

Joe Horse Capture: Many collections were slowly starting to open up

Joe Horse Capture: In the, in the early 90s when I first started and overtime. I noticed that many collections now are starting to open up for more access for Native communities and as you still go further down this go down this path in my mind for many institutions with native collections.

Joe Horse Capture: There is certainly more of an awareness of how important it is to ensure that access
Joe Horse Capture: To native collections is important for Native people. And to that point. And when I first started at the Minneapolis Institute of Art. I was one of two native curators.

Joe Horse Capture: In a native curatorial position in the country whose me Indiana dark, she was at the Portland Art Museum and now 20 something years later.

Joe Horse Capture: There are many there are many Native people who are entering the museum field. And certainly, that number is starting to grow, which is important. It's important because it provides an opportunity for Native people to be able to tell their own stories.

Joe Horse Capture: And of course that harkens back to

Joe Horse Capture: What has changed in the past 20 something years

Joe Horse Capture: And I think it's sort of, we take a, take a step back and see what is certainly has has happened during this time period, certainly the formation of National Indian American Indian has to be up there.

Joe Horse Capture: I would argue that enemy I one point you know under your direction has certainly set the pathway for

Joe Horse Capture: Museums to appreciate

Joe Horse Capture: The importance of having Native people tell their own story. And I think that is really critical extremely critical to where we are today within the museum world working with Native people

W. Richard West Jr.: I appreciate that.

W. Richard West Jr.: And I have to say that you your yours. You stand so substantially on your own, but your lineage is flawless and you're
W. Richard West Jr.: You're late father, George have had a great deal to do with anything. I was able to accomplish at the National Museum of the American Indian.

W. Richard West Jr.: And I'm confident that that will that legacy will continue and you and what you do with us and for us at the Museum of the American West. I have to ask Joe this though, it's, it's a la is a unique place. It is not Minneapolis, St. Paul, and it

W. Richard West Jr.: See, either. So I just I just wonder how you, how you see that and it's it's a very different piece of of Indian country to and other words

W. Richard West Jr.: Because of its unique history and it, and especially tragic history, probably even more so unless documented in some ways, then what happened to the rest of us like you and me grew up in descend from the Great Plains.

W. Richard West Jr.: It is different in that way to how do you find that situation, and how does it have any impact upon how you might see your, your duties here and that may again be similar or different from what you did in Minnesota, or in Washington DC at the enemy.

Joe Horse Capture: Well, you know, LA has certainly a very large urban native population.

Joe Horse Capture: Which is which is great.

Joe Horse Capture: As you know, I started my work in March and then we had the pandemic, so

Joe Horse Capture: I've been working for home for eight months.
Joe Horse Capture: And I have really, I actually, I haven't had a chance to go out and meet people because of that.

So I've been fortunate enough to exchange emails and do some calls this way. But I think from my observation. It's a little different because we have such a large urban native population here.

We have a phenomenal collection of Native American items and also we have, there's many Native people who still belong within their community. So we have sort of multiple levels of how of the directions that we need that we need to go in.

And I think part of that is to ensure that we continue to work on positive relationships with Native people across the board.

Some great work has been done. I'm hoping with my presence here we can continue these these important efforts. And I think with the opening of the research center that that's really going to be helpful.

Can be helpful because it's going to provide an opportunity for us to work very purposefully with Native folks from a variety of backgrounds.

In a variety of communities because we have a great collection, we have a phenomenal library archives and it's important for us.

As an institution, not to dictate that relationship. Instead, it is important for me to work with communities in a sense of partnership of how we can work together.

And oftentimes I think museums in the passing well. This is how we're going to work with you or I come from the perspective, we need to sit down together and figure out how to work together.

W. Richard West Jr.: Well I, I couldn't agree more with that and of course that was again, kind of at the root of the legacy of the National Museum of the American Indian I remember a couple of things. First of all, we there as we try to do here. And it's, I think you will do even more.
W. Richard West Jr.: Began the entire process with a lengthy two to three year consultation period with Native communities throughout the hemisphere, actually, because the enemy is collections for hemisphere.

W. Richard West Jr.: To try to find out what it was they did expect of us, and it wasn't that sort of usual road show, you know, was looking and listening really listening, more than talking on us that I think so important.

W. Richard West Jr.: And the very first consultation. We did this is why I mentioned the point.

W. Richard West Jr.: Was here in California, both Southern California in Northern California. And that was in part because.

W. Richard West Jr.: In the experience of native peoples contemporary communities in California. They felt that even their own even other Native communities, sometimes pretty much ignore them, because they've been pushed so out of sight.

W. Richard West Jr.: By history. And so I think you have a kind of a special duty in that regard to engage in. I know you will.

W. Richard West Jr.: And what Joe mentioned, which is it I suppose it has a humorous side to it, but it's really kind of tragic Joe had come to work for us and was in the building for four days before was closed on March 13.

W. Richard West Jr.: And has been closed ever since. So he has a little bit of catching up. And I'm sure I can do it. But to your mention of collections, Joe.

W. Richard West Jr.: No doubt, this is one of the great collections. I saw it for the first time as a six year old kid coming from Oklahoma to visit relatives in California.
W. Richard West Jr.: And my dad wanted my younger brother and me to see all of the great collections. So we saw first the collection that became the National Museum of the American Indians collection and about the same time. So this collection is vastly

78
00:16:07.950 --> 00:16:16.110
W. Richard West Jr.: And both qualitatively and quantitatively. I know you haven't had that much chance to really dig into it yet, but

79
00:16:16.440 --> 00:16:28.200
W. Richard West Jr.: Tell me what you do know what your impressions, even without digging in our and. And what you see is some of the real possibilities and significance of the collections. We hope.

80
00:16:30.360 --> 00:16:36.540
Joe Horse Capture: I have. I've been fortunate to these past few weeks to be able to spend some time out at the Resources Center.

81
00:16:37.650 --> 00:17:07.890
Joe Horse Capture: And it's been great. A lot of the collection is still packed and a part of our process that we're doing now is working out a plan to unpack the you know 230 something thousand works. Many works are still unpacked about the collection.

82
00:16:55.080 --> 00:17:07.890
Joe Horse Capture: And for me, just taking a survey as much as I can, at this point, I'm running into surprises. When I as a son, very much of an object person. I certainly got that from my father.

83
00:17:09.270 --> 00:17:12.180
Joe Horse Capture: I've certainly run into some surprises, which has been really

84
00:17:13.620 --> 00:17:24.060
Joe Horse Capture: Rewarding. One example which we did a salon. I think it was last week or the week before Amanda and it ran into this, the quarter pipe bag that had

85
00:17:25.140 --> 00:17:31.380
Joe Horse Capture: A name beaded onto it. Eva feather man and for pipe bags. That's very, very unusual.

86
00:17:32.610 --> 00:17:43.560
Joe Horse Capture: Also part of my quest, which I got from working with my father and his, his lifelong project of fighting and documenting work some our tribe, which is very small.
Joe Horse Capture: And these works are often difficult to identify is I ran into a couple objects in our collection for my tribe, which I hadn't seen before. So that was great. So

Joe Horse Capture: Once we I think combine the the depth and importance of the collection, as well as the depth and importance of the archives and library and some of that not all that has been tapped yet.

Joe Horse Capture: And once we combine those forces together we can, we are really certainly in a position to make a lot of difference.

Joe Horse Capture: But also really making an impact of working with Native communities to the way that they prefer to work with us, whether you call it revitalization. Whether it's language. Many of these work sometimes have stories that

Joe Horse Capture: embedded into the works that

Joe Horse Capture: Can be tapped into from a travel perspective. So the future in that sense is very exciting. And I really look forward to being part of it.

W. Richard West Jr.: Well, we certainly look forward to your being there, you, you're correct and describing this is a director's comment and we often make mistakes and making comments but you and your dad or envy, what

W. Richard West Jr.: We directors would characterize as objects people you love the material you know the material you lived with it. You grew up with. It is firsthand. It's not just third hand knowledge you experience it. That's, that's very, very important.

W. Richard West Jr.: And yet I do remember and it's again this connection between you and your dad and my own experience.
W. Richard West Jr.: Your dad was very much a person of the present, if you will. He was a contemporary Native person to

W. Richard West Jr.: High. He had a deep and abiding respect for all that has gone before and the strength that you find in that and the revelations that you find in these objects that both of you love so much, and that we have so many of the attributes of the American West.

W. Richard West Jr.: And yet you take a very contemporary perspective of it. You were, you were focused on the relationship between what sits there, which sometimes they have a past that's measured in four figures.

W. Richard West Jr.: And sort of bringing it up to the present into the future. So here's my question, I guess.

W. Richard West Jr.: Institutions like the artery, and it was the origins of all of these collections and face it, just to be honest, it's, it's not even sort of invoking

W. Richard West Jr.: Invoking words politicize words but both the enemy I and its origin says the Museum of the American Indian your and the collections of the Southwest museum.

W. Richard West Jr.: They derive from essentially colonial institutions. And by that, I simply mean that they were in their day cultural reclamation projects and other words it was assumed

W. Richard West Jr.: That all of us who call ourselves native simply be off the stage of history complete at some point. And these. This was the reclaiming these objects. And that's why these objects were collected initially

W. Richard West Jr.: So there is this preservation ethic that comes out of collections like this that we can serve and preserve the past so that it survives into the future.
W. Richard West Jr.: And yet, as you point out there is a living connection to this material to the what what is your own experience and your own instead of intentions about negotiating.

W. Richard West Jr.: That slight distinction, which is to say preservation, on the one hand, literally physical conservation material.

W. Richard West Jr.: And on the other hand, creating accessibility and the connection between these living objects and living peoples who still looked at them for all kinds of things. How do we balance that out. How does that work in a contaminated, you know, in a 21st century museum.

Joe Horse Capture: I think that your statement, the word that really sort of many words but the words that particularly struck out to me is the word that you that you just use is reclaiming and reclamation is because we have the collection.

Joe Horse Capture: And I come from their perspective that native collections.

Joe Horse Capture: Are the works that the ancestors left for us.

Joe Horse Capture: And it is our responsibility to ensure that we care for them that we love them in the way that they should be.

Joe Horse Capture: And part of that is to ensure that we give access in this particular topic to Native people because it's it's it's the oftentimes I think for many of us. Well, for many of us, or when I say this, I just may be the only one.

Joe Horse Capture: Oftentimes,

Joe Horse Capture: Yeah, thanks.

W. Richard West Jr.: One more in the room here who
Hopefully

00:23:07.770 --> 00:23:11.130
Joe Horse Capture: Oftentimes when I, you know, when I think about my ancestors.

00:23:12.540 --> 00:23:17.760
Joe Horse Capture: It's all very abstract. You know we can do stories we've seen photographs

00:23:19.290 --> 00:23:22.530
Joe Horse Capture: Photographs, we see is often sepia tone or black and white.

00:23:24.000 --> 00:23:31.710
Joe Horse Capture: And we sort of we sort of create this vision in our minds of what our ancestors were like

00:23:32.850 --> 00:23:38.580
Joe Horse Capture: Some of us are for some of us are lucky to have photographs of what our answers look like many of us don't

00:23:43.080 --> 00:23:50.220
Joe Horse Capture: What what they left for us. And although the trail to get to museums is often one of heartbreak and despair.

00:23:51.240 --> 00:23:53.490
Joe Horse Capture: Are these physical objects.

00:23:54.870 --> 00:23:56.940
Joe Horse Capture: And with many native traditions.

00:23:58.530 --> 00:24:11.220
Joe Horse Capture: When you particularly on the plains when you work with an item, let's say, a just for the sake of discussion a I hide scraper right one of those things you used to scrape behind

00:24:13.290 --> 00:24:15.570
Joe Horse Capture: The individual who is using that

00:24:17.040 --> 00:24:19.410
Joe Horse Capture: In a way, develops a relationship with that item.

00:24:21.270 --> 00:24:26.310
Joe Horse Capture: And in turn, that item develops relationship with the owner.

Joe Horse Capture: And now that they are no longer within that context in a museum. And I'm not talking about us talking about any institution and temperature controlled environmental control like controlled sometimes wrapped up which is good for preservation, but

Joe Horse Capture: To me there's something missing.

Joe Horse Capture: And what is missing is the love for that work that work needs to be an order and keep it happy, which is important to me, needs to be engaged.

Joe Horse Capture: It needs to with as long as it doesn't harm the object. It needs to be loved. It needs to be touched, and in some cases, and I know if our conservators see this later, they're probably going to chew me out. In some cases they they need to be used.

Joe Horse Capture: One of the things I've been doing over the past year is visiting collections, I, I visited the pit rivers Museum at Oxford and I visited the Field Museum and I worked at the curators and the conservator there.

Joe Horse Capture: And I, when I lived in the Twin Cities. I got very much involved with the traditional across community there right people. I just really a wonderful

Joe Horse Capture: Community, they have their for the cross and and I was always the oldest and the slowest player but and you know I play I play a few times, end up pulling a muscle of my leg and hobble around for a couple weeks and then come back and play that was kind of like my thing.

Joe Horse Capture: But when I was at these two institutions.

Joe Horse Capture: And discussing this idea with them, we look, we identified a couple of lacrosse sticks and realized that it was safe. And I actually got a chance to use them in the hallway.
Joe Horse Capture: I made it a little ball and I got the throw the ball around and there's a certain I can't really describe it. There's a certain energy, one gets when you what I call reactivate

An object. Yeah, we activate this work has been sleeping for such a long time. And I think part of our obligation as people who work in collections, who have a love for the works.

And the culture is to find ways to ensure that these that we fulfill our obligation, not just for preservation, but also for cultural obligations. I think part of that.

As a way that I sort of sort of moving along, is to ensure obviously that we provide access for Native people to the collections. For communities in California and around that have community centers or travel museums that can certainly accommodate works.

In a safe way. You know, we have what 230,000 objects Native American objects, really, at the end of the day in the collection. I'm not sure we need to necessarily have 230,000 objects sitting in our rooms. So instead, let's treat these non native

In a positive way.

And let's lend out some of these works long term loans to these communities. So then these communities can come back home, they can teach

They can be engaged and they can be loved. So the end of the day, I love to see not only us, but also museums around the country. And if you look at the work that

Heather autobahn and Jim pepper Henry are doing for first American Museum, it's all right along that same line. So it's, I feel, there are several institutions that are sort of
Joe Horse Capture: An almost a spontaneous way kind of getting on on lining up of how we can sort of activate these collections, as you move forward, which I think is really, really critically important for the work that we do.

W. Richard West Jr.: No, I couldn't agree with you more. There, there are a couple of couple of really important points that you made that I wanted to still a bit for those who are sitting with us today.

And that is, it begins with the fundamental nature of an object as living. And I think that lots of people don't appreciate that, that is taken quite literally and correctly, as far as I'm concerned, personally, given my own native background.

That that is a truth. These are living objects. It's sit there right now and they need the loving care that you're referring to.

And I, I can't make that statement without remembering the very first experience I had at the enemy I when I was taking a number of healthy, including a couple of cacique ease through the collections of the enemy. I've been there was still up in New York.

And it was a train that included them. There were at least for tribal representatives, I was with them, maybe another senior member of the staff was with them. And then there were a couple of conservators who were kind of trailing along behind us.

And behind the Hopi delegation and all of a sudden, which I am not expected, but which didn't shock me

One of the cacique ease wholesome corn pot from a pouch and sprinkled it over a number of the casinos that were sitting up on the shelf.

I thought I was going to hear the conservators hit the floor behind me.
Because that you know that is definitely a no no but we've all learned a lot and I will give the enemy I credit, even after I was long gone from there that conservator staff made a particular effort to reach out to try and to educate themselves about caring for these objects that recognize her fundamental nature and that their continuing existence and and being and and took care of them in that way. So that's one point but the second point is another one you make, which is the notion of these as lived objects. In other words, they literally I mean our daughters regalia of course has has the path for this scrapers it sits right on the belt of her dress. And there was a connection between these objects and life very broadly. These were never meant to hang on TP walls. They were used by people, all of them all the time. And and that is a confirmation of the first point that I made. And somehow, if we can effect that ethic. And and so there was a connection between these objects and life very broadly. These were never meant to hang on TP walls. They were used by people, all of them all the time. And and that is a confirmation of the first point that I made. And somehow, if we can effect that ethic. And museums, you also touch on another point that is that is important. And now, I think, is probably in a state of relaxation. But, but more comfort than it was initially I became the director of the enemy. I the year that Nagpur was passed in the year that the Repatriation Act was actually was actually enacted.
W. Richard West Jr.: And it was it was a great discomfiture too many in the museum community. I'd like you to talk about that just the level, if you would, in terms of what we're doing, how you see that

00:32:24.360 --> 00:32:39.210
W. Richard West Jr.: Progress, that the author itself is making in a way that is sensitive to the both the legacy of the collection, but embraces the wishes, which are confirmed by federal law in the United States.

00:32:40.110 --> 00:32:51.360
W. Richard West Jr.: About the kind of access that tribe shouldn't have to certain kinds of material under that and how again we we balance we balance that in a way that abides by the law.

00:32:53.160 --> 00:32:57.150
W. Richard West Jr.: But still is consistent with the interest of museums.

00:32:58.560 --> 00:33:09.210
W. Richard West Jr.: And as I say much progress made there, but lots left to be done yet. How do you look at that central to how you approach it during your tenure. It's the Audrey.

00:33:11.490 --> 00:33:23.400
Joe Horse Capture: repatriation is a very important but yet sensitive work sensitive topic because often times aspects of the collection that certainly

00:33:23.940 --> 00:33:40.470
Joe Horse Capture: Qualify or these obviously qualify for the patriots and there's a very heightened sensitivity, not only from the institution point of view, but also from the community point of view, whether whether it involves ancestors or items used for prayer.

00:33:41.670 --> 00:33:57.150
Joe Horse Capture: These in my mind are topics that when your sense of my priorities. We certainly need to put at the top. The Audrey has done some great work. In this section we have a small staff that is dedicated to this aspect of our work.

00:33:58.200 --> 00:34:01.320
Joe Horse Capture: And the rest of our team certainly supports them.

00:34:02.400 --> 00:34:20.070
Joe Horse Capture: And I think really the the key to that as we sort of go down this repatriation road together, which is a very long road. It's a very, very long road is to ensure from my perspective that we always keep communication open
Joe Horse Capture: Because for so many years.

Joe Horse Capture: When Native communities would reach out to museums about items that would certainly qualify as NAGPRA repatriation, museums to stay silent.

And even if the museum stay silent, not with ill intention not saying, well, we don't want to tell you because we want to give these up. But because if you know if there's a busy or trying to figure things out. It leaves a bad impression for tribal communities when resumes are being communicated.

So from my point of view, as we work down this road this road continue to work with communities. It is really important to me that we keep our communication.

Wide open we stay on top of it and really listen to what tribes need and how we can use our resources and our collections for their betterment.

And to ensure that we do it in a respectful way and that respectful way is what we feel is respectful, but really keeping an open air of how they want to be respected and that's absolutely critical.

W. Richard West Jr.: How would you, how would you assess the arteries.

W. Richard West Jr.: Position right now in relation to questions like that the communities. We're working of how we're perceived by Native communities who are dealing with us about repatriation issues. Is that where it should be.
W. Richard West Jr.: How would you work with that and attempt to make that and even more effective relationship going forward.

Joe Horse Capture: Well, because because of the depth of the collection, there is still a significant amount of work that needs to needs to be done. And I think part of that is to

Institutionally is to ensure that we set our priorities in order to reflect that, to ensure that we

Really put repatriation efforts really sort of at the top of our list because once we can really even continue repatriation efforts more

It will certainly help us in many ways, and also to ensure that many of these works can go back home, or they where they belong to. So far, based on my observation of eight months.

I think we're we're doing great. There's always more work to do. And we always need to sort of come together to ensure that we assure these efforts in a in a good and meaningful way.

This is a complicated question is complicated for Native people it's complicated for the museum.

This is how best, would you explain, which I indeed as a puppy director growing into my first position as a director. It's very same time the legislation was passed.

How do you explain this to non natives who may not have this firsthand experience with subjects when really what is happening is so contrary

And let me let me add this, if I may, to
W. Richard West Jr.: To the way in which lots of people look at museums, they collect things they don't take things out of the collection, etc. How would you conduct that conversation with

Joe Horse Capture: Museums are about museums are about collecting and museums, of course, are one of the most colonial based institutions in the West.

Joe Horse Capture: Having said that, museums have changed over the past several decades to sort of have maybe a more understanding about their communities.

Joe Horse Capture: And part of Nakba and repatriation of federal the federal legislation of federal legislation is to ensure that items in museums.

Joe Horse Capture: That shouldn't necessarily be there be returned back to communities or at least negotiated and of course the easy one is the ancestors, like many native museums have human rains.

Joe Horse Capture: And I think everybody would agree that that's not necessarily the best scenario, by any means. So retreating those back the native people is pretty straightforward.

Joe Horse Capture: Items that are associated food or a objects that were found with remains are so sure their manes, you know, though, it certainly can be put together in one category and return the other category is

Joe Horse Capture: Objects that are sacred and nature and sacred in nature always is a bit tricky because how one defines what sacred is

Joe Horse Capture: Now I'm going to sort of go back to a story. I'm not going to name. I'm not going to name the institution of one of the places I used to
be employed more of the tribe, but I was on a I was on a repatriation review committee.

Joe Horse Capture: And there was a tribe in the northern plains who requested one of their sacred bundles.

Joe Horse Capture: And for those of you not

Joe Horse Capture: Familiar with sacred bundles. These are holy objects.

Joe Horse Capture: Or a grouping of holy objects which often referred to as a bundle that has theirs imbued with strong spiritual power.

Joe Horse Capture: And many of these betting on the tribe and the origin of the bundles, how they came to tribes. Oftentimes, there they are brought to the owner

Joe Horse Capture: Your visionary experience through a creator, the creator, whatever the case may be. Their imbued with spiritual power and the owner or the keeper of this bundle.

Joe Horse Capture: Uses the spiritual power for the betterment of their community.

Joe Horse Capture: And over time.

Joe Horse Capture: Many bundles across the planning for collected and put in museums and sat there dormant and that kind of relates to what I talked about before about how they could be active and this tribe on the plains requested this institution where I used to work to have their bundle back

Joe Horse Capture: And, you know, gone sort of back and forth and sort of talking about it and you know it's it's it's a it's a a very thoughtful process.
Joe Horse Capture: And the process is never goes as fast as anybody wants to. But that's just sort of the part of the part of the nature of it.

Joe Horse Capture: Is it's a very thoughtful process on both sides. And of course, legally, there's a lot of hoops when you jump through and what struck me about that is you know just sort of chatting with him.

Joe Horse Capture: Is we asked him, you know why, you know why do you want this sacred item back now. You know, it's not a judgment. Just a question.

Joe Horse Capture: Their youth is having such a hard time with drugs and alcohol that they needed

Joe Horse Capture: To make the community better

Joe Horse Capture: And to me, that just struck

Joe Horse Capture: About the responsibilities of museums and the collections that we care for of how we can make a positive

Joe Horse Capture: reinvigorate three, four to five Native communities. And to me, that should be the key of our mission as well as the key of our repatriation efforts.

W. Richard West Jr.: Well I, I believe that's that's that's true. And again, just to

W. Richard West Jr.: Accent couple of the points that you're making. You're right. The repatriation laws divided kind of into two fundamental sections, there is that which has to do

W. Richard West Jr.: With human remains and the ancestors and associated associated funerary objects. I've always looked at that is kind of the result
of a moral imperative, which was to say something really wrong and immoral was done.

00:42:55.560 --> 00:43:04.410
W. Richard West Jr.: With sweeping battlefields for human remains and we're then sent off to the department. They aren't made before they were then turned over to the Smithsonian.

00:43:04.830 --> 00:43:16.860
W. Richard West Jr.: And we had to begin repatriating them. And so that's just some wrong. I think a historical wrong. It says certain kinds of objects. For that reason, and on a moral basis should never have been in museums to begin with.

00:43:17.640 --> 00:43:26.760
W. Richard West Jr.: The second is, is an equally valid point but has a slightly different grounding, which is to say when one is talking about sacred ceremonial objects.

00:43:27.900 --> 00:43:35.970
W. Richard West Jr.: And even cultural patrimony which gets even a little bit stickier and more complicated than even sacred ceremonial material.

00:43:37.800 --> 00:43:50.160
W. Richard West Jr.: You have to, you have to look at the words that were used by the framework so that legislation, where it said those objects that are are are central

00:43:50.730 --> 00:43:57.000
W. Richard West Jr.: To the continuing ceremonial life of the tribe, if you will. And that brings me to what you just said.

00:43:57.450 --> 00:44:04.560
W. Richard West Jr.: You can't measure that you really can't measure that only in terms of what might have been true the mid 19th century.

00:44:05.250 --> 00:44:20.730
W. Richard West Jr.: If we, as we use the hymns holding native material, which I believe we do relate to that the enemy. I believe it here at the Autry have a stake in sustaining this very, very precious piece of the American

00:44:21.510 --> 00:44:26.460
W. Richard West Jr.: Cultural heritage and the fabric of our of our national culture.

00:44:27.450 --> 00:44:40.080
W. Richard West Jr.: Then we have a state quite frankly as museums and making sure that we abide by the law to begin with, but that it has a certain it has certain ethical underpinnings which are very important.

241
00:44:41.010 --> 00:44:47.880
W. Richard West Jr.: If, if we have a stake in the maintenance that continuing maintenance and sustaining of native culture as a museum.

242
00:44:48.600 --> 00:44:59.070
W. Richard West Jr.: Likely Autry which is cultural history in nature, but looks as much to the present and the future is it tested the past, then we have a stake and making sure that that happens.

243
00:44:59.400 --> 00:45:17.220
W. Richard West Jr.: And I see I do see repatriate repatriation as an implementation, if you will, of that of that ethic sky, sir. And that brings me to one other question, then we better wrap before we move on to what picking up some of the questions and I see our, our box has several and it

244
00:45:18.690 --> 00:45:38.400
W. Richard West Jr.: Is the coven crisis that which cause you not to have set foot in the place, except for the first four days of your being in in Los Angeles. Why, what is your own sense of how this crisis in which we all sit has had to impact in particular Native communities.

245
00:45:39.090 --> 00:45:53.370
Joe Horse Capture: It's it's had a profound impact on Native communities. I mean, it's been very well established in the news media, how much our Navajo friends has really really impacted them in a very, very bad way.

246
00:45:53.910 --> 00:46:02.310
Joe Horse Capture: And, you know, as we look at the map, which I think you and I probably both do every morning of the United States, we can see that Montana.

247
00:46:03.000 --> 00:46:20.160
Joe Horse Capture: North and South Dakota. I think throughout the country has an extremely high infectious rates and it's been very, very difficult for Native communities for my particular community Fort Belknap reservation in north central Montana, which is, you know, overall pretty small.

248
00:46:21.270 --> 00:46:35.760
Joe Horse Capture: You know I'm texting and talking to my relatives up there and it's not good. I mean, it is not good at all. There's a, there's a lot of sickness. People are passing away, even within my family. We've had some positive

249
00:46:37.650 --> 00:46:43.500
Joe Horse Capture: Diagnosis with the virus. It's just, it's very, very difficult and very saddening. Yeah. However, however.

Joe Horse Capture: Native people for generations.

Joe Horse Capture: Have adapted to change.

Joe Horse Capture: Whether it is Disease.

Joe Horse Capture: The whole colonial experience.

Joe Horse Capture: Does act, whatever the case may be. We have adapted and survive and we will get through this.

W. Richard West Jr.: Well, I think that's a lesson, not only for Indian country, but also for all of us, quite honestly, and I, I guess I would wrap this part of it by saying our discussion with each other that

W. Richard West Jr.: I think both of us really want the Autry Museum of the American West. Just as we both did at the National Museum of the American Indian

W. Richard West Jr.: To be an instrument of the future to, if you will, with the survivalists and surviving. This is different from Survival. Survival. It's me to triumph over adverse circumstances, not just coping with them.

W. Richard West Jr.: And that's what I hope these institutions that you and I associate ourselves with can do with respect to the Native community. Now, let me turn, if I may.
Joe Horse Capture: What Rick

262

Joe Horse Capture: We get to the question before we get to that, and I appreciate all the questions, I would like to ask you a question, if that's okay.

W. Richard West Jr.: Of course, of course.

Joe Horse Capture: So you're the you're the founder of nm AI.

Joe Horse Capture: And so much that the impact under your leadership of Indian country Indian countries relationships to museums how museum is across the world look at themselves as I mentioned before, all come back to

Joe Horse Capture: The founding in the beginning of nm AI under your, your leadership, you've been in the museum field certainly much to the fields betterment for a number of years.

Joe Horse Capture: And as you prepare to take a couple steps back from your current duties be very interested in hearing about your perspective of not only how a change. And I know we are limited amount of time here but also sort of the two directory, how you see us moving in the future.

W. Richard West Jr.: I think it has a little bit to do without getting too.

W. Richard West Jr.: long word at about it with my perception of what museums in the 21st century should be

W. Richard West Jr.: We spent a lot of time here talking as we should, about the collections and both of us have had experience with the National Museum of American

W. Richard West Jr.: History Museum of American West. But my profound belief and my aspiration is a museum director, which has stood out through all of my career.
W. Richard West Jr.: Is that I see museums, not only as houses a beautiful and significant things objects. I know that's what sets us apart everything with us is based upon our uniqueness as an institution that collects material culture and art.

W. Richard West Jr.: And and uses that as the pivot point for his work, but I really see objects as a means to an end and not the end.

W. Richard West Jr.: The the the means to the end. The end is that museums are gathering spaces they are civic space and social place.

W. Richard West Jr.: And that these objects should be used as especially at an institution like the artery or even a multicultural museum like the enemy. I

W. Richard West Jr.: The object is to explicate stories in the case of the Autry about the great diversity of the American West. But about American Indians in particular. And so that requires three things, as far as I'm concerned.

W. Richard West Jr.: It requires and this is how I would look at it for the future. It requires, first of all, that you pivot off voices.

W. Richard West Jr.: And the authority and the authenticity of native peoples themselves and what you do that they be a part of how you do things and what you tell people

W. Richard West Jr.: And second, that we not ever get trapped into the, what was the downside of ethnography where Indian communities for looked as things that the past, not the present.

W. Richard West Jr.: There are 30 to 40 million indigenous people in the Americas right now and three to 4 million right here in North America and we need to make sure that everything we do.
W. Richard West Jr.: Is consistent with that notion that we have a deep past, but we're right here now and we want a future. So that's what we should be focused on a theocracy to and finally

282
00:51:29.760 --> 00:51:43.710
W. Richard West Jr.: That we need to find a way which we have spent time talking about today. I'm glad we could have bringing what we have directly to Native communities themselves. That's where culture is maintained. It is not maintained.

283
00:51:44.100 --> 00:51:52.170
W. Richard West Jr.: For the enemy I in New York City or Washington DC, or even in Los Angeles, to a degree, a significant degree in the case of the Autry

284
00:51:52.560 --> 00:52:04.560
W. Richard West Jr.: And so these connections you talked about whether it is the repatriation of certain kinds of materials. The loan of objects to local institutions of culture and museums in Indian Country in California.

285
00:52:05.040 --> 00:52:19.290
W. Richard West Jr.: That's what we should be doing. And so that that three fold was my beginning at the enemy. I probably read my ending because nothing's changed as far as I'm concerned, that is what we should be doing.

286
00:52:19.920 --> 00:52:21.060
Joe Horse Capture: Great, thank you. Thank you.

287
00:52:21.570 --> 00:52:25.300
W. Richard West Jr.: Not at all. All right, now let me see what I can pull up here.

288
00:52:26.670 --> 00:52:45.000
W. Richard West Jr.: Let's see Joe I and I'm just going to go down the list. And we do have a cutoff point, but we'll get to as many of them as we possibly can. Joe, what do you hope to accomplish in your new role at the Autry. Once we are open again. Now, I suppose, maybe what you can do is accent.

289
00:52:46.020 --> 00:52:54.600
W. Richard West Jr.: Those things which may be a higher priority than others. Because you you haven't deep pretty much address what you wish to do here. But what do you see is particularly significant

290
00:52:55.410 --> 00:52:58.620
Joe Horse Capture: I think particularly significant is getting the RC open
Joe Horse Capture: Up and running the collection impact. So we can host
native groups coming in, we have with the RC open up and running at 100% it
will allow us to engage with

Joe Horse Capture: Native tribes that they can have more of a further more of a
meaningful way because we'll be able to host them access the collection, as
well as the Library and Archives

Joe Horse Capture: Furthermore, is, you know, I have a lot of catching up to
do and need to go out and meet people and folks within the Community, which I
haven't obviously haven't had a chance to do yet but I very much look forward
to it.

W. Richard West Jr.: Good, good. I look forward to you're doing that, and I
know you will. Second question, this is

W. Richard West Jr.: Let's, let's let you you answer this one too. Can you
speak a bit about the evolution, you've seen and how the American Indian has
been depicted in American popular culture, including how Hollywood has to
pick that the American Indian

Joe Horse Capture: That's a much larger discussion.

Joe Horse Capture: Instead, what I, what I would say is certainly now within
the past decade or so there's a lot more Native filmmakers

Joe Horse Capture: Which has significantly had a positive impact on how
people perceiving Native Americans, of course, we have the great native
theater at the Autry which certainly helps with with our audience.
Joe Horse Capture: And even. I mean, I think I read somewhere, wasn't it, was it Marvel hiring a native, you know, Marvel comic people made of illustrators to flush out more native characters. Yes.

W. Richard West Jr.: That's correct. That was all over it quite recently.

Joe Horse Capture: Yeah, so all those to me are very positive.

Joe Horse Capture: Positive besides that we're going in the right direction.

W. Richard West Jr.: Right, well, and I will add to that that without, without being too crass about it. I happen to have a son who's a filmmaker and he's a documentarian and he is the particular subject of their film, which is not yet finished is a sports team names and mascots, and in that is embedded much of what Hollywood itself has done to and it's still recovering from in its depiction of native peoples.

W. Richard West Jr.: But I would also sort of enlarge that that more personal comment by saying that there is a vital native film community.

W. Richard West Jr.: Both drama film and documentarians. And I think that's important.

W. Richard West Jr.: To a point you made earlier. Joe Native people are famous for sort of moving into media that are not historic or traditional to them and sort of doing their thing and that has been true very much with with native film and so

W. Richard West Jr.: In answer to this person's question. I think that there is is no doubt that I think Native filmmakers themselves will have a great impact upon what others do with with native film.

Joe Horse Capture: I was born in the early 60s in the Bay Area, and my memories of Native Americans in pop culture are, of course, Dustin Hoffman's "A Little Big Man."

Joe Horse Capture: The movie, as well as the character. I remember she was the guy who would look down at the camera and old teacher would come up.

Those commercials are some of my fondest memories about culture and things have changed so much since I was young.

W. Richard West Jr.: Yes.

Joe Horse Capture: Remember those commercials.

W. Richard West Jr.: Oh, I know.

Joe Horse Capture: Those are some of my fondest memories about culture and things have changed so much since I was young.

W. Richard West Jr.: Actually Italian American.

Not yet.

W. Richard West Jr.: So there has been a bit of that. But no, that's change and there is a way. There is a way in which Dances with Wolves mark a turning point that is not inconsequential and commercial fail.
W. Richard West Jr.: But what I would say is that much work remains to be done and for since we live in this city. I will say that one thing that is notable to me.

00:57:33.930 -- 00:57:46.170
W. Richard West Jr.: Is that the same year the Dances with Wolves came out which of course was a crashing commercial success. And actually one of their openings was done for the benefit of the National Museum of the American Indian. So I've always been grateful for that.

00:57:46.560 -- 00:57:50.730
W. Richard West Jr.: But there was another film called black robe which came out the very same year.

00:57:51.150 -- 00:58:04.470
W. Richard West Jr.: And if anything that film had a closer be to sort of effecting, if you will, from kind of a gut level on native history and experience and and i think that it's just spike.

00:58:05.250 -- 00:58:21.450
W. Richard West Jr.: We say and interpretations to take place in the country itself. It helps if you have native people of competence and authority and authenticity and there are lots of them right now in the room with you when you're doing anything like this time. Yeah.

00:58:22.680 -- 00:58:40.170
W. Richard West Jr.: Now let's see we have only about three more minutes. Let me go, Oh, here's here's

00:58:40.470 -- 00:58:50.610
W. Richard West Jr.: To have those stories told in the narrative of the native artists to people's. But that begs the question of telling multiple stories at once, from various players in history.

00:58:51.390 -- 00:59:08.940
W. Richard West Jr.: In their own voices, particularly when they come in conflict or at Borderlands some of the country's best exhibitions do this and it makes each story take on greater importance thoughts. Well, I'll give you my thought first and then I will let you finish it finish it up.

00:59:09.990 -- 00:59:12.090
W. Richard West Jr.: Joe, first of all,
W. Richard West Jr.: I will say to this person, you don't be have. You don't have to be telling multiple stories all the time, which is to say.

W. Richard West Jr.: That from exhibit to program to exhibit to program. There are occasions when you will be focused upon.

W. Richard West Jr.: An experience that is more specific. And just to give you an example. Harry fonts sacred that exhibit.

W. Richard West Jr.: Now that was about Harry fun sake. And it was about his experience, but it was also about his engagement with lots of other cultural forces and impacts outside of his own life. And so even that was a crossover.

W. Richard West Jr.: And exhibit which I have which I loved was the the Civil War exhibit that they are treated.

W. Richard West Jr.: At that that was super in as this person is suggesting you can touch several basis at the same time.

W. Richard West Jr.: But I think that the key has to be. And then I guess we're going to have to wrap up in just a moment.

W. Richard West Jr.: The key is that your ethic, always be invoking authoritative and authentic voices, whether you're doing it more in solo mode. Sometimes or.

W. Richard West Jr.: at one and the same time trying to cross a number of inputs and voices and but that is what I think the key to the actress success is.

W. Richard West Jr.: And I think they do it brilliantly and well and they did that, even before I set foot in the place. So it's not as though I did all that a bit. I was done before I got here but but Joe, you have exactly one minute to give a wrap.
Joe Horse Capture: Okay, I will. I have a lot to say. And only have a minute or so, I'll talk like an auctioneer. Yes, yes, I, I am on board where you bring in multiple authentic voices different perspectives and have them tell the story, the

01:01:08.370 --> 01:01:17.160
Joe Horse Capture: A plus part about that from a what I perceive as a visitor's point of view is you get to see all these narratives. Talk about a similar experience.

01:01:17.790 --> 01:01:30.780
Joe Horse Capture: But what that does to me and it's we need to have exhibitions that do that, what that does to me is the visitor is sort of dropped into this experience that has been highly curated

01:01:31.620 --> 01:01:39.360
Joe Horse Capture: And they look at this subject from an objective point of view, learning all these different perspectives simultaneously, which is great.

01:01:40.980 --> 01:01:52.110
Joe Horse Capture: I also come from the perspective that we should really consider having space where communities have opportunities to tell their own story.

01:01:53.250 --> 01:02:12.840
Joe Horse Capture: And through that, as you mentioned, through an author or through an authentic voice. It provides the visitor a a singular narrative from a community to help them sort of step inside of that community. And I think that is very, very much of an important experience.

01:02:14.070 --> 01:02:19.800
W. Richard West Jr.: Well, so we are going to leave it there. We appreciate all of you who have joined us today.

01:02:21.210 --> 01:02:32.850
W. Richard West Jr.: We will get through the covert crisis is Joe is emphasized the Audrey will reopen we'll do whatever we can to maintain contact and keep you interested in what we do in the interim

01:02:33.240 --> 01:02:41.130
W. Richard West Jr.: Through our rich menu of virtual programming, but we do look forward to having you back in the building. And thank you so very much for joining us today.

01:02:42.750 --> 01:02:43.290
Joe Horse Capture: Thank you.