



ARCHIVOPAPERS

JOURNAL OF PHOTOGRAPHY AND VISUAL CULTURE

ISSN (Online) 2184-9218

PORTFOLIO

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Tahila Mintz

To cite this article:

MINTZ, Tahila. "Ancestral Gratitude Bridge: 360 Virtual Reality Experience," *ARCHIVO PAPERS* 3, n° 2 (2023): 136-141. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10038270>

Published online: 26 October 2023

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PORTFOLIO

ANCESTRAL GRATITUDE BRIDGE: 360 VIRTUAL REALITY EXPERIENCE

TAHILA MINTZ

Tahila Mintz is a multidisciplinary artist and cultural technologist whose practice works to facilitate a greater intersectional understanding of Indigenous cultures. Mintz engages with ancestral systems of matriarchy and gender equality, land relationships, genocide and mental health within the framework of contemporary issues impacting native peoples. Predominantly creating alongside Indigenous communities of the Americas, Mintz strives to reclaim bodies of knowledge that have been suppressed through colonial intervention and foster a closer connection to the natural world.

Most of Tahila Mintz's work is created in direct relationship with community. Addressing their needs is a primary motivation. Secondly, the work is for sharing between Indigenous communities and thirdly for the world. This engagement tiering does not negate the relevance or importance of the work across all of the tiers but rather highlights her focus in creating for them, with them, by them. Some works are not shared beyond the first tier, only intended for the community. *Ancestral Gratitude Bridge* (2023) is the first of a collection of experiences, growing to encompass diverse Indigenous communities, ancestral teachings and ecosystems.

Ancestral Gratitude Bridge was created in response to the high suicide rate of Native youth. The immersive experience is rooted in original teachings of gratitude expressed through the *Thanksgiving Address* with recognizable environmental and cultural scenes. The experience is a reminder of all of their relations, from the bugs, to the winds, to the birds and people. The teaching and experience are a reminder that they are never alone, but always supported and surrounded by community, not only the two- and four-legged kind. It is being engaged with across Haudenosaunee territory and an expanded version with additional landscapes representing the Emirate territory was recently on view at the Sharjah Art Biennial 15: *Thinking Historically in the Present*.

Tahila is an Indigenous Yaqui and Jewish woman who has been photographing for 30 years, living, and working throughout the Americas, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. She worked for some years as a university lecturer and is the Founding Executive Director of OJI:SDA' Sustainable Indigenous Futures. Her speaking engagements range from speaking at the United Nations to being a Pecha Kucha presenter. Her chapter "Integrating Immersive Technology Tools and New Media for Indigenous Culture and Wellness" will be published in the upcoming book *Resilient Health: Leveraging Technology and Social Innovations to Transform Healthcare for COVID-19 Recovery and Beyond*. Her artwork was shown in such places as the Sharjah Biennial 15: Thinking Historically in the Present, the MAC, Project Row House, Photoville, and Contact Photo Festival. She has won various awards and fellowships.

FUNDING

The work "Ancestral Gratitude Bridge" was funded by Insta360; Goethe-Institute; Cornell University; and Sharjah Art Foundation.

© Tahila Mintz. From the series *Ancestral Gratitude Bridge*, 2023. Images courtesy of the artist.







