

advanced by leaders such as Stan Natchez and influenced by his art.

No stereotypes

It is important to Stan Natchez that his art communicates Native American philosophy, purged of romantic or stereotypical idealism. He says, 'I paint the life I live and so every painting in some way is a self-portrait. My art is about you and the way I respond. That is my experience... my experience is my art... and art is my life.'

His paintings are powerful with rich colours combined and layered, prominently featuring gold leaf. He mixes media to create and express his ideas, combining modern and traditional images and objects: putting a traditional beaded vest on a character gives lovely texture. His canvases contain images and objects such as the stars and stripes of the USA flag, cars, Indians, title deeds, ledgers, mission priests, cowboys on horseback, fabric and sand; the result is a sensation of many factors merging.

Images also make political or personal observations. One of his most sought after image is the dollar bill, representing the modern equivalent of the traditional hide. Stan Natchez works are like pop art in style, as his influences include Andy Warhol, TC Cannon, Jasper Johns and many other pop artists. The pop art style gives an insight into the artist's sardonic sense of humour, adding a level of playfulness to communicate his ideas.

Natchez' creative expression delivers the best elements of both of his societies: traditional and modern, spiritual and materialistic, structured and creative. He believes this is the best way to achieve the harmony that is needed to survive and excel today.

Stan Natchez is a modern storyteller, providing an insight into historical and modern



cultures. He creates a relationship that balances the ideals, struggles, realities, philosophies, beauty and joys of both traditional and modern times. For the Native American culture, Stan Natchez is providing a pathway for new and older generations. He expresses a renewed identity that values and encourages traditional education and ways alongside modern American and western lifestyles; he aims to foster culturally rich and hardy Native Americans.

Whether one chooses to agree with Natchez' stories, his art radiates a unique richness and diversity on many levels that all viewers enjoy on their own terms. What results always is a piece of art that provokes ideas and discussions. Natchez gently reminds us that we should not take ourselves too seriously and to enjoy what all societies offer in addition to our personal cultural background ■

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