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Trickster Plays: James Luna Performs Postindian Survivance
at the 51st Venice Biennale



figure 1: Artifact Piece: Visitors staring at Luna lying in the vitrine

[A]fter the white people came, elements in the world began to shift; and it became necessary to create new ceremonies...things which don't grow and shift are dead things.... Witchery works to scare people, to make them fear growth. But it has always been necessary, and more than ever now, it is. Otherwise we won't make it. We won't survive. That's what the witchery is counting on: that we will cling to the ceremonies the way they were, and then the power will triumph, and the people will be no more.

—Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*¹

One February day in 1987, visitors to the California Indian Hall at the San Diego Museum of Man encountered the unexpected amid pottery shards and fusty dioramas. Naked, except for a strategically placed towel, a stocky man lay motionless on a bed of sand inside a display case. Labels identified the scars on his body: needle marks from daily insulin shots; a skin callous from a missing wedding ring; an indentation on the left eyebrow from an alcohol-related accident. One adjacent vitrine displayed the objects from the twentieth century—a Sex Pistols album, a dog-eared copy of Alan Ginsberg's *Howl*, and several “Kodak moments”; another showcased a rattle and fringed bag—objects that looked “traditionally Indian.” After about ninety minutes, visitors watched the man rise from the display case, careful not to disturb his print in the sand, and climb down.

Unwittingly, they witnessed—and participated in—*Artifact Piece*, James Luna's groundbreaking performance-installation, now an iconic work. Museumgoers observed Luna hijack discourses about Indianness in order to reimagine a new identity free from the limitations of stereotypes. Ultimately visitors watched Luna perform what preeminent Native American writer and theorist Gerald Vizenor has termed “postindian survivance,” now continuously performed in the photographic traces of *Artifact Piece*. Three broad postmodern theses converge in Vizenor's formulation of postindian survivance: the “self” (or identity) as decentered, shifting, and hybrid; “race” as a social, not biological, construction; and “culture,” articulated best by Edward Said as a permeable organism “of appropriations, common experiences and interdependencies of all kinds among different cultures.”² Think of the word *Indian*. Centuries of colonial discourse corralled North America's diverse indigenous peoples under one race, from which emerged a cast of stock characters (stoic Tontos, long-haired maidens, nasty drunks, and healing shamans), all petrified in a static, impermeable Indian monoculture. In contrast, postindians perform multiple identities and recognize themselves as cosmopolitan *bricoleurs* who produce transcultural knowledge.³ Postindian survivance is thus liberation from a colonial discourse that stifles transformation, arguably the postmodern subject's *raison d'être*. Vizenor himself quotes Michel Foucault's *Technologies of the Self*: “The main interest in life and work is to become someone else that you were not in the beginning.”⁴



figure 2: Artifact Piece: Vitrine of twentieth-century objects



figure 3: Artifact Piece:
Vitrine of “Indian” objects

As Vizenor’s work illuminates, the “Indian” is an invention. Thanks to Christopher Columbus’s erroneous understanding of fifteenth-century geography, “more than a hundred million people, and hundreds of distinct tribal cultures, were simulated as *indians*,” Vizenor writes.⁵ After America’s colonizers christened the New World’s indigenous peoples “Indians,” they sketched, first in words and then in images, portraits of their new invention. The simulated Indian’s visual genealogy begins with early sixteenth-century German and Italian woodcuts (illustrations for the published letters of Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci), which spawned generations of wildly popular offspring, including the prints of Frederic Remington and Currier and Ives; Wild West shows; Edward S. Curtis’s catalogue of 40,000 sepia photographs; Hollywood Westerns; and, more recently, *Dances With Wolves* (1990) and Disney’s *Pocahontas*.⁶

In the two decades following *Artifact Piece*, Luna became a rock star of North American performance art by reinventing his identity as he tackled America’s discourses on Indianness, the real-life problems of its indigenous peoples, and a history of mostly brutal, though occasionally fruitful, encounters between colonizer and colonized. His oeuvre documents indigenous peoples’ millennial concerns and explores how indigenous peoples have adapted and survived—and how they might do so in the future—despite governmental policies of extermination and assimilation.⁷ *Emendatio*, Luna’s site-specific exhibition at the 2005 Venice Biennale, not only thrust Luna onto the global stage, but also provided a European platform on which to trace the discourse of Indianness back

to its origins while at the same time broadcasting postindian survivance stories. Here we explore how and why *Artifact Piece* and *Emendatio*, two of Luna’s most significant works, perform postindian survivance in the visual landscape. *Emendatio* is Latin for *emendation*, which means “to correct what is erroneous or faulty.” Indeed, *Emendatio* sets the record straight on the Indian of the American and European imagination. Vizenor’s concept of postindian survivance offers a flexible theoretical model for reading James Luna’s work that accommodates its multiple and often contradictory points of view.

A master of postmodern wordplay, Vizenor debuted the term *postindian survivance* in a seminal 1994 book, *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*, which deconstructs the language and visual images we use to describe Native Americans.⁸ *Postindian* is Vizenor’s neologism; *survivance* is an appropriation. He writes:

The *postindian*, an urgent new word in this book, absolves by irony the simulations of the *indian*, waives centuries of translation and dominance, and resumes the ontic significance of native modernity. Postindians are the *new* storiers of... survivance. (emphasis intact)⁹

Postindians subvert a colonial discourse whose DNA is spun from “manifest manners” and “terminal creeds.” Vizenor writes: “Manifest manners are the course of dominance, the racist notions and misnomers sustained in archives and lexicons as ‘authentic’ representations of *indian* cultures.”¹⁰

Terminal creeds are imposed static representations that are thought to be real. The idea of Indian, Vizenor says, is a terminal creed:

The Indian was an occidental invention that became a bankable simulation; the word has no referent in tribal languages or cultures. The postindian is the absence of the invention, and the end of representation in literature; the closure of that evasive melancholy of dominance. Native stories are an imagic presence, the actual tease of human contingencies, but *indians* are immovable simulations, the tragic archives of dominance and victimry.¹¹

Postindians, then, name themselves, create their own identities, and write their own (hi)stories. Using a strategy called “trickster hermeneutics” or “trickster interpretations”—the postindian trickster reinterprets and subverts what Vizenor calls “official hermeneutics,” or 500 years’ worth of colonial discourse that, simply put, presumes to name Indians, write their histories, and paint pictures that dictate how they’re supposed to look and act.¹²

Indeed, postindians use multiple trickster strategies to accomplish their missions. Like the shape-shifting trickster, a central character of world folklore—or perhaps the trickster-like decentered postmodern subject—Vizenor’s postindian breaks the rules and collapses binaries. Tricksters are sacred and profane mischief-makers who mess up meanings and have the power to transform into

other beings or appear differently to different people.¹³ Postindians, Vizenor says, use trickster play to perform new identities and (hi)stories that disrupt colonial discourse and *defy* resolution. Ever-transforming postindians defy resolution and ossification; they conjure an imaginative liberation from manifest manners and terminal creeds.

Vizenor, a self-proclaimed Métis (mixed-blood) of Anishinaabe (Ojibwe), Irish, and French-Canadian descent, appropriates the French *la survivance*, meaning the preservation and practice of Francophone culture amidst a dominant so-called alien culture.¹⁴ One young Native scholar says that survivance is a conflation of the words *resistance* and *survival*.¹⁵ Yet Vizenor’s slippery trickster language is irreducible to concise theses, instead generating multiple meanings. I propose that survivance means even more than subverting simulated Indians and colonial hegemony. According to Ward Churchill in *A Little Matter of Genocide*, ninety percent of North America’s indigenous population was exterminated from 1492 to 1892 through war, biological terrorism, starvation, slavery, and forced diasporas.¹⁶ Furthermore, North America’s indigenous peoples continue to reside in conditions that are neither colonial, post-colonial, nor neo-colonial, but what Vizenor calls *paracolonial*, a chronic and irresolvable “colonialism beyond colonialism” that bears the burdens of all colonialisms.¹⁷

What, then, is postindian survivance? I submit that postindian survivance is a tripartite strategy. First, it is continually performed self-definition that destabilizes colonial discourse (manifest manners and terminal creeds) as writes postindian stories. Postindian survivance offers strategies for



figure 4: Artifact Piece:
Luna's body print

surviving the trauma of a centuries-long—and still largely ignored—genocide. “Native survivance stories,” Vizenor writes, “are renunciations of dominance, tragedy, and victimry.”¹⁸ Finally, postindian survivance stories transgress and subvert a chronic condition of paracolonialism. Vizenor performs postindian survivance at the site of language; Luna’s performances occur in the visual landscape.¹⁹

“I like to think of *Artifact Piece* as... the beginning of a relationship between a museum and a living Indian who was there to make a statement; who wasn’t there to grind corn or weave a blanket, or do something quaint for the Saturday crowd,” Luna said a few years ago. “I don’t even know how to fuckin’ weave a blanket.”²⁰ After Luna left the Indian Hall, a fresh “artifact” marked the spot where his living body debunked the myth of the extinct Indian, thus disrupting signifiers of Indianness and discharging a new chain of *postindian* signifiers. Luna’s tautological trickster play, centered on a redefinition of artifact, works in the following way: Because his body print is the so-called artifact of a time-based performative event, we thus redefine artifact as the snapshot of an ongoing event, not a static, self-contained object. We similarly read Luna’s *Sex Pistols* album and his copy of Ginsberg’s *Howl* as snapshots of events that occurred in time yet continue to live as memories in Luna’s body and mind, memories that often transmutate with time and experience. Objects, then, are visual portals into a constellation of *ever-changing* experiences that produce Luna’s identity, presented here as a mix of Luiseño (his mother’s tribe), American (whatever that means) and Mexican (his mostly

absent father). Finally, his personal belongings are visually equated with the museum’s similarly displayed traditional Indian objects, implying that the spears and dance regalia on exhibit are not static objects for titillating aesthetic pleasure.

Artifact Piece was not videotaped; only a dozen or so documentary images remain. The most essential part of the performance is impossible to document anyway: the *performance* that occurs when images of Indians in the viewer’s imagination collided with a living Indian *playing* a dead one. Ethnographic museums manufacture definitions of Indianness, and here Luna hijacks a primary site of image production to broadcast his postindian stories. That the museum’s staff was unaware of Luna’s plans for *Artifact Piece* intensified his trickster play.²¹ Accustomed to live weaving and pottery demos, museum staff never asked questions when Luna requested vitrines and a space in the California Indian Hall. No one imagined that James Luna, resident of the La Jolla Indian Reservation in San Diego County, was a *performance artist*.

Fast-forward twenty years. Today Luna is too well-known to engage in the facile trickster play of an artist under the radar; now his challenge is to produce even more sophisticated feats of cunning. He must play his conceptual game like a master chess player who lures opponents into traps. *Emendatio*, sponsored by the National Museum of the American Indian, was a collateral site-specific exhibition and performance event held during the 51st Venice Biennale. Housed in the Fondazione Querini-Stampalia, a fifteenth-century palazzo-turned-museum, it was located far away from Ed Ruscha and the U.S. Pavilion at the official Bien-



figure 5: Chapel for Pablo Tac

nale. During preview week, Luna performed a marathon *Renewal Ceremony* in Querini-Stampalia's verdant courtyard garden, where he danced in the guise of numerous male characters four hours each day for four consecutive days before an audience of media and art-world insiders. *Renewal Ceremony* was the live component of a site-specific installation whose centerpiece was *Chapel for Pablo Tac*, a simulated California Mission chapel dedicated to Pablo Tac, a young Luiseño who traveled from California to Rome in 1834 to study for the Catholic priesthood. This elaborate installation, *Art in America's* Marcia Vetrocq quipped, became "the 'American pavilion' to Ruscha's 'U.S. pavilion.'" ²² Tac wrote the first Luiseño history and grammar before he died at nineteen from a virus (his body had been weakened by smallpox the previous year). Although a Luiseño Indian, Tac was raised in a Catholic mission until he was dispatched to the Vatican at twelve. Why? Two decades after Columbus named the Indians, Vasco de Balboa spotted the Pacific Ocean and claimed its waters and all adjoining lands for the Spanish monarchy. Key to New Spain's settlement plans were the Roman Catholic missions that Christianized local perceived savages and turned them into a slave labor force. By the mid-1800s, twenty-one Spanish missions dotted the California coastline; among the most famous is Mission San Luis Rey, after which Luna's tribe, the Luiseño, is named.

Renewal Ceremony, Luna's reinterpretation of an altar typically found in Catholic Mission churches, was installed in a large room adjacent to the courtyard garden, where *Renewal Ceremony* took place. Luna replaces the altar's focal point—

the crucifix—with a woven trade blanket, a provocative switch given the blanket's association with biological warfare. Ward Churchill documents multiple instances, spanning almost 200 years, during which British forces and the U.S. Army gave Indians trade blankets and clothes infected with smallpox, which triggered epidemics that exterminated entire tribes.²³ Throughout the Biennale's run, a continuous-loop video montage of *Renewal Ceremony* was projected on the altar's red-and-white-striped blanket. Video images of Luna dancing blended with the blanket's geometric designs and the Spanish words written on it, a quote from Pablo Tac, which reads, in part: "[I]n Europe they dance for happiness.... The Indians of California dance only for ceremony and to remember our Fathers and Grandfathers, because they died and... have been defeated in war."²⁴ Luna equates the blanket, an instrument of death, with the cross on which Christ died. Yet Christ's corpse hangs in perpetual rigor mortis, whereas Luna's body dances on the blanket, offering a visual image of rebirth. But does Luna here present himself as the Savior figure? Playwright Tomson Highway explains: "In the same sense that Jesus Christ stands at the very... center of Christian mythology, we have a character [at the very center of] our mythological universe called the Trickster... Without the spiritual health of that figure I think Indian people are completely screwed."²⁵

Playing on a video screen at the front of the altar was a dream-like film that collapsed time and place: images of Catholic Missions fade into images of California landscapes, then the viewer's in a gondola and someplace that appears to be Ven-

figure 6: Aerial view of
Renewal Ceremony
in the gardens



ice, yet maybe it's the Venetian Hotel in Las Vegas. Visitors were allowed to sit in the chapel's pews to better contemplate Luna's new iconographies, while they listened to recorded organ music, also on continuous loop, that began as a Native American melody but morphed into Procol Harem's 1967 hit "A Whiter Shade of Pale."

Luna's installation performs postindian survivance in several ways. On one hand he replaces Catholic ceremonial objects with Native American ones, dethroning the imposed Almighty and reinstating indigenous spiritualities. And just as *Artifact Piece* recolonized the museum—a producer of simulated Indians—so does *Chapel for Pablo Tac* hijack the California Mission Church, another manufacturer of simulated Indians. On the other hand, these objects seem to say, particularly to Venice's predominantly Catholic population: "My spiritual practices are like yours." The object-juxtapositions elevate an indigenous spirituality, once denounced as "primitive savagery," to the level of holy Catholicism—or even beyond. After all, whose altar candle is burned to the nub? Yet when Luna replaces Christ's corpse with upbeat images of himself dancing in *Renewal Ceremony*, we wonder who are the true savages? Furthermore, Luna's myriad acts of postindian survivance in *Renewal Ceremony*, continuously performed in video images projected on the altar's blanket, frustrate a complete inversion. The blanket's indigenous resurrection scene suggests innumerable resurrections, presented from multiple perspectives, continuously reperformed—unlike Christ's one-time-only, one-size-fits-all Resurrection Scene, which is not even visually represented

on the Catholic altar. In fact, Christ's Crucifixion—not his Resurrection—is the central image of the Catholic altar, in stark contrast to Luna's hopeful transformations.

What, then, was the *Renewal Ceremony* that visitors saw projected on the altar's blanket? As I mentioned, Luna performed his sixteen-hour *Renewal Ceremony* during the Biennale's preview week. Today, the National Museum of the American Indian claims to own the only videotaped documentation of the performance—several hours of video and maybe 300 photo stills—which I reviewed at their archives in Maryland.²⁶ The image here gives us a bird's-eye view of the performance space in the Querini Stampalia's lush garden. In his preparatory materials, Luna wrote, "... the performance actions follow traditional seasonal rituals... for the health, well-being and regeneration of indigenous Nations."²⁷ He opened *Renewal Ceremony* by laying a circle of stones, insulin syringes, cans of Spam, and sugar packets, which "speak to the current health plight of many Indigenous nations," Luna writes.²⁸ He refers, of course, to the epidemic rates of diabetes, alcoholism, and cigarette smoking among indigenous populations, in addition to the unhealthy government-surplus commodity food provided to some reservations. Arrows mark what appear to be the four cardinal directions. However, for some tribes the cardinal directions delineate sacred space; for other tribes the medicine circle divided into quadrants is merely an Anglo invention or Pan-Indian concoction.²⁹ After delineating the performance space, Luna established what some might call *Renewal Ceremony's* performance logic and what others might interpret as its "ritual activ-



figure 7: Renewal Ceremony: Laying the circle of stones



figure 8: Renewal Ceremony's Indian Characters:

8a: Loincloth and beads, 8b. half-authentic Indian (leather vest and colorful skirt),



8c: Gondolier

8d: Gondolier in leather underwear

ity”: He appeared from behind the screen, walked the circle’s perimeter, and stopped at each arrow to shake rattles and whips, or wave feathers. Next he carefully stepped over the stones and syringes, into the ceremonial circle, and danced to the rhythm of Caribbean, African, Middle Eastern, and Native American instrumentals, all of which comprised a soundtrack that played continuously during the performance.³⁰ To change characters—or transform his identity—Luna exited the space by stopping and gesturing at the cardinal directions, and then he stepped over the circle before disappearing behind the screen. He danced in the guise of numerous male characters, sometimes half-naked in a loincloth, other times fully clothed in buckskin and beads, but generally in composite costumes that conflated past with contemporary; Plains Indian with, say, Luiseño, or so-called tribal with contemporary American. Some characters played what is considered the authentic Indian, although their accoutrements—a rattle made from a diner-style ketchup bottle, a black leather vest, or a pair of turquoise slippers that looked like moccasins—flout Euro-American fantasies of the imagined Indian, who also happens to be suspended in a romanticized past. But then, just when the audience suspected they might be watching an authentic Indian ritual, Luna thwarted their expectations of authentic Indianness, just as he had caught visitors off guard during the *Artifact Piece*. Here, riffing on Venice’s costumed gondoliers, who offer tourists a simulated Old World experience, Luna played a gondolier in leather underwear while his assistant offered him not a James Brown-style wipe of the brow, but a refreshing cappuccino.

A character called the Lounge Luna, who makes significant emendations to Indian simulations as he stories survivance, wears a maroon sharkskin suit, reminiscent of James Brown or Bobby Darrin. When I met him last summer, Luna talked about the lack of Native rock stars (notwithstanding Robbie Robertson, of course) and his fantasies about filling that need. Indeed, a 2005 installation titled *All Indian All the Time* at California State University at Fullerton featured photos of Luna posing as Elvis, Bruce Springsteen, and Johnny Cash. In the most recent pictures he wears what he calls his Lounge Luna suit, which he wore in *Renewal Ceremony*. When Lounge Luna makes his grand entrance at the Biennale, he struts over to the circle, occasionally stopping to effect menacing poses, and then stands, like a peacock, near an arrow. Slowly, deliberately, he straddles his legs and pretends to unzip his pants and urinate on the garden’s lush grass. Unfortunately, only one copy exists of that potent image in the world. The National Museum of the American Indian, Luna’s family friendly sponsor, has locked the profane trickster away in its archives (more on that later). Still, Luna is now a postindian rock star who colonizes not only pop culture but also the colonizer’s continent and the seat of Roman Catholicism itself. Entertaining as Luna’s macho tour de force might have been, did Europeans appreciate having a foreigner urinate on their turf? Were Roman Catholics insulted when Luna reconfigured their symbolically charged altar and rewrote the central plot of their sacred story? Did Luna’s cheeky gondolier in leather underwear desecrate a beloved Venetian icon, the *gondoliera*, or was he merely camp



figure 9: Lounge Luna,
front view

entertainment? Ultimately, what did Europe think of this visiting foreigner who turned upside down their sacred myths and ancient traditions?

There's more. Emblazoned on the back of Lounge Luna's suit is a flashy appliqué with a colorful silhouette image of James Earle Fraser's notorious sculpture, *End of the Trail*, which has become since its international debut at the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco among the world's most copied and reproduced images of Native Americans. Astride a bone-skinny horse, the Indian warrior slumps forward, his head hanging down to his chest. His spear dangles uselessly on the ground; even his braids droop. The Indian warrior is not only doomed, he is also emasculated and impotent. Not so with Luna: His trickster play has corralled Fraser's doomed Indian inside a zigzag Navajo pattern that has neither spirit trail nor escape.³¹ Now his ketchup-bottle rattle is raised high in the air. He is not only the first indigenous rock star, but also a strong, potent, and even funny postindian warrior. Now maybe the simulated Indian motif is forever locked away in the Lounge Luna's suit.

On the other hand, the urinating postindian should be rescued from NMAI's ivory-tower archives. In what more visceral—or comical—way might Luna communicate the brutal experience of colonization? *Humor heals wounds*. The profane trickster performs funny-yet-serious postindian survivance, and censoring or sanitizing his visual dispatches deflates their potency. Luna is creating a *mutually productive* colonial encounter, and NMAI is stifling his discourse; he wants his audience to laugh at the Lounge Luna *and* empa-

tize with the psychic violence of colonization in order to forestall it. He also wants us to explore our differences while working together as a “global tribe.”³² Would the Guggenheim put a fig leaf over Matthew Barney's testicles?

Despite the sanitized versions of *Renewal Ceremony* that NMAI now circulates, *Emendatio* performs postindian survivance by purging literal and symbolic plagues as it broadcasts postindian stories. *Portrait of Pablo Tac*, a conflated portrait of Tac and Luna that presided over *Emendatio*'s entrance, signaled Luna's disregard for the West's discrete units of time, space, and identity. Pablo Tac's journey to Italy presaged Luna's trip to the Biennale; and Tac, speaking forward from the nineteenth century, offers Luna a role model for postindian survivance. Tac went to Rome not only to become a priest, but also to study linguistics so he could preserve his native language and culture by writing a grammar book and dictionary.³³ *Emendatio* also tells the story of Luna, who truly went to Venice as a performance artist masquerading as a healer—or was he a healer masquerading as a performance artist? Either way, Luna's high-and-low-tech trickster plays continually redefine postindian art and postindian identity. Thanks to Luna, Vizenor, and Tac, who perform a cosmopolitan and ever-transforming postindian survivance, the *indian* actually is vanishing. As N. Scott Momaday writes in his classic essay, “The Man Made of Words”: “We are what we imagine. Our very existence consists in our imagination of ourselves.”³⁴



figure 10: Lounge Luna, back view with raised rattle



figure 11: Portrait of Pablo Tac

NOTES

1. Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 127.
2. Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York, Vintage, 1994), 217.
3. Vizenor does not capitalize *indian* or *postindian* and he italicizes both terms. See Footnote 11 for an explanation.
4. Foucault qtd in Gerald Vizenor, “Crossbloods” in *Shadow Distance: A Gerald Vizenor Reader*. (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), 227. See Michel Foucault, *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988).
5. *Ibid.*, 239.
6. Literature abounds on the “imagined Indian” in literature, visual art, and film. In addition to Vizenor’s essays, see Robert F. Berkhofer Jr., *The White Man’s Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Random House, 1978); Ward Churchill, *Fantasies of the Master Race: Literature, Cinema and the Colonization of American Indians* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1992.); Phillip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998); Shari M. Huhndorf, *Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination*; Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press; and Alan Trachtenberg, *Shades of Hiawatha: Staging Indians, Making Americans 1880–1930* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004).
7. Issues in Luna’s work include *cultural schizophrenia* (a term Vizenor coined that describes the mind-scape of natives torn between tribal and dominant American culture) and intercultural travel in *Two Worlds* (1989); alcoholism in *The History of the Luiseno People, Christmas 1990* (1990); long-term impacts of the government’s mid-twentieth-century Termination and Relocation policy in *Relocation Stories* (1993); creating positive role models for young indigenous males in *Bringing it All Back Home* (1993); Indian shamanism in *Shame-Man* (1993); diabetes and cultural memory in *In My Dreams* (1997); the need for Indian intellectuals in *Indian Having Coffee with Kerouac, Ginsberg and Hemingway* (199?); Indian spirituality in *American Indian Studies* (1999); reservations in *Creation and Destruction of an Indian Reservation*; construction of race in *The Sacred Colors* (2000); the simulated Indian and self-invented postindian in *Petroglyphs in Motion* (2000); casinos in *Uncle Jimmy* (2001); the “authentic Indian” in *Take a Picture with a Real Indian* (2001 and 2003); and, finally, the most self-aggrandizing of all—becoming a rock star in *All Indian All The Time* (2005).
8. Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*, second edition (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1999. (Originally published in 1994 as *Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survivance*.)
9. *Ibid.*, x.
10. *Ibid.*, vii.
11. *Ibid.* Since terminal creeds and manifest manners are encoded in words, language itself becomes the site of Vizenor’s transgressive postindian survivance. Therefore, he samples, appropriates, conjoins and concocts words in order to invent a new language that “absolves by irony the simulations of the *indian*” and “waives centuries” of translation, dominance, and surveillance. Vizenor’s refusal to capitalize “indian” and “postindian” allows him to recolonize language and freely imagine Native identity.
12. “Shadow Survivance” in *Manifest Manners*, 63–106.
13. In fact, Luna’s artistic practice is a vehicle for in

tercultural travel. Given America's current racial taxonomy, we might be tempted to imagine Luna traveling between center and margin, or between mainstream and minority cultures. However, in her classic essay, "Explanation and Culture: Marginalia," Gayatri Spivak upends the center-margin binary: "The deconstructivist can use herself (or himself)... as a shuttle between the center... and the margin... and thus narrate a displacement." Spivak proposed inhabiting an essentialized position—say "Native American"—in order to deconstruct it. Perhaps a more useful spatial metaphor here is Michel Foucault's notion of heterotopic space, that is, the coexistence of a large number of superimposed fragmentary possible worlds. Think of Luna shuttling amongst fragmentary socio-cultural spaces, or audiences composed of multiple publics, as he plays "Indian" here or "American artist" there. An audience is a heterotopic space where Luna can simultaneously appear as different identities to different people.

14. *La Survivance* has been used to describe how French Canadians, primarily from Québec, maintained their cultural identity in both Canada's Anglophone culture and after migrating to New England at the turn of the nineteenth century. As a self-proclaimed "crossblood" of Ojibwe, French-Canadian and Irish ancestry, Vizenor applies the French term to the crucial project of proactively maintaining native identities in the midst of a dominant culture.
15. Malea Powell, "Rhetorics of Survivance: How American Indians Use Survivance," *College Composition and Communication*, 53, no. 3 (February 2002), 396–434.
16. Ward Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas 1492 to the Present*, (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1997), 1–15.
17. Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*, 77.
18. *Ibid.*, vii.
19. In addition to being a theorist, Vizenor is also an essayist, novelist, poet, and playwright. His fiction allows him to perform and illustrate his critical theories.
20. James Luna, "Sun and Moon Blues," *Obsession, Compulsion, Collection: On Objects, Display, Culture and Interpretation*, ed. Anthony Kiendl (Banff, Alberta, Canada: The Banff Center Press, 2004), 147.
21. Luna's original performance of the *Artifact Piece* at the San Diego Museum of Man was neither curated nor planned by museum staff, according to Philip Hoog, the museum's curator of archaeological collections, with whom I spoke on August 10, 2006. When I reviewed the museum's file on Luna that same day, I found no preparatory materials, curatorial notes, press releases, or advertising matter for the 1987 work. Hoog alleges that Luna merely requested space and vitrines in the California Indian Hall and then showed up. My interview with Luna in August 2006 corroborates Hoog's account. Of course, Luna's second (and thus far last) performance of *Artifact Piece* at the 1990 Decade Show was curated by an exhibition team of curators from the Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, The New Museum of Contemporary Art, and The Studio Museum in Harlem.
22. Marcia E. Vetrocq, "Venice Biennale: Be Careful What You Wish For," *Art in America*, 93, no. 8 (2005): 108–119.
23. Ward Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide*, 151–156.
24. Lisbeth Haas, "Pablo Tac: memory, identity, history" in *James Luna: Emendatio*, eds. Truman T. Lowe and Paul Chaat Smith. (Washington, DC: Nation-

- al Museum of the American Indian, 2005), 48–53.
25. Tomson Highway, *Tomson Highway: Native Voice*. Interview by Phyllis Wilson. (Thompson, Manitoba, Canada: Native Communications, 1988). Also see Allan J. Ryan, *Trickster Shift: Humour and Irony in Contemporary Native Art*, (Vancouver/Toronto: UBC Press, 1999), 3.
 26. I conducted research during January 29–30, 2007 at NMAI's Cultural Resource Center in Suitland, Maryland.
 27. James Luna, "Renewal Rough Draft #8." 3 August 2004. James Luna file, San Diego Museum of Man, San Diego, CA.
 28. Ibid.
 29. One also may read Luna's performance space cum medicine circle as institutional critique. During NMAI's planning stages, architects and designers held focus groups and community meetings to determine "commonalities" in the traditions and worldviews of diverse indigenous communities. The circle and the cardinal directions—both based on cosmogonies—were two of the primary "commonalities" translated into the formal vocabulary of NMAI's architectural design. One community participant said: "We will probably come out with the daddy of stereotyping regarding who American Indians are and what they stand for, but at least it can be a more or less updated version—espoused by the Indians themselves." See Judith Ostrowitz in "Concourse and Periphery, Planning the National Museum of the American Indian," *American Indian Quarterly* 29, nos. 3 and 4 (Summer and Fall 2005), 384–425. *Our Universes*, an exhibition currently on view at NMAI, clearly indicates that the circle and cardinal directions are not, in fact, common to all indigenous cosmogonies. See *Native Universe: Voices of Indian America*, eds. Gerald McMaster and Clifford E. Trafzer, (Washington, D.C.: National Museum of the American Indian, 2004).
 30. In a November 2005 phone interview, Luna told me that Jorge Arevalo's composition synthesizes Procol Harem's version of Bach's *Air on a G string* for an organ with church bells, upon which he overdubbed "tribal" melodies, as well as musical samplings from rock, blues and the Catholic church.
 31. A traditional Navajo weaver incorporated the famous "spirit trail" (also called "spirit line" or "weaver's pathway") so that her spirit could escape from the rug she finished weaving it. Significantly, this Navajo pattern, although not woven but quilted, has no "spirit line." Luna captured the spirit of Fraser's doomed Indian, now eternally contained, even silenced, in the Lounge Luna suit. In addition, Luna's choice to depict the doomed Indian as a silhouette doubly positions the image as a stereotype, as in Kara Walker's sprawling silhouette narratives of a racist antebellum South. Silhouette images literally and figuratively reduce individuals to bare, faceless, undifferentiated outlines to become a screen onto which viewers project racist stereotypes.
 32. Kwame Anthony Appiah's *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1996).
 33. James Luna, 6 June 2005. Videotaped interview. Videotape 12 (of 22) of NMAI's documentation of Luna's experience at the 51st Venice Biennale. Audiovisual Archives, Cultural Resources Center of the National Museum of the American Indian, Suitland, Maryland.
 34. N. Scott Momaday, "The Man Made of Words," *Literature of the American Indians: Views and Interpretations*. ed. Abraham Chapman (New York: Meridian, 1975), 96–110.