



John Feodorov

Assimilations

MAY 23-JUL 5, 2025

TUREEN

Tureen is pleased to present a solo exhibition of new and recent work by the artist John Feodorov (Diné). The paintings on view represent a continuation of the Assimilation series exhibited in his 2021 exhibition at the CUE Foundation in New York curated by Ruba Katrib. The installation on view was originally shown in a group exhibition curated by Wendy Red Star in 2014 and is shown again here for the first time since its debut.

The Assimilation series represents for Feodorov a return to painting at its most elemental form. His engagement with the history of the medium reads first as an almost naive embrace of its physical qualities. Instinct drives the placement of paint and ephemera as it does the often garish choices of color. There are neither delicate compliments nor caustic textual eviscerations of otherwise blatantly racialized material on their surface—these paintings are a more spiritual, more fecund call and response that reify the contradictions in the artist's biography and yield new possibilities for personal discovery. From De Kooning to Guston to Quick-to-See Smith, the artist breathes sincerity into the pervasive irony of both his own and the broader history of contemporary art.

Feodorov's upbringing between two worlds, the Navajo Reservation where his mother was raised and attended Christian boarding school and Southern California where she settled, linger in his archive. Pentecostal hymnal pages, Boy Scout instructions on indigenous arts and crafts, family photos from the reservation all represent the disconnectedness one feels from place and culture when neither were settled on your behalf. Despite the tragedy they represent, of an appropriation and erasure of indigenous history, these things were also embraced by his mother. Like Feodorov's love of the stereotypical indigenous characters on the tv show F Troop, her affinity for native kitsch was a salve for an all-too-common displacement from community.

With these new paintings, the artist completes this absurdist cycle from theft of the sacred to consumption of the resulting propaganda and, finally, to reengagement with the theft and its kitsch through a contemporary art practice. If you yearn for a connection to your ancestral ways, to a spiritual existence but have no such personal history to return to, where do you find succor in the in-between? Feodorov has found it in the mundane. Of the cultural detritus taken most for granted, the souvenirs of imperialism, he exalts what is left of their power as objects and builds from them compositions of deeply personal beauty.

Shrine for a New God, the largest work in the exhibition, renders this pursuit in an absurdist three dimensionality. In it four silver pikes, what Feodorov calls sacred poles that define a new sacred space, stand on a drop cloth painted with the color wheel representing the Diné peoples' four sacred mountains. Atop each pole is affixed an object, or set of objects, that further evidence the artist's reclamation of the mundane. Each represents something both achingly personal and tinged with irony; a bottle of pills to treat the artist's diabetes adorned with feathers perhaps its most raw. The helmet resting on the central plinth from which the artist digitally drinks serves as the altar head in this shrine to an indigenous interstice. Beaded koozies read "sacred" and "profane" in a celebratory resignation to this in-between. Overhead on the gallery ceiling the installation is encircled by an eagle in flight, its own kind of kitsch sending the artist's genuine plea for meaning among the senseless skyward.

Katrib in her text for the CUE Foundation catalogue wrote of the impossibilities of reconciliation. And, moreover, there is an element of the fantastical in Feodorov's intentions for the exhibition and his practice more generally, a theme-park treatment of his experience as a displaced Navajo citizen; he is budging King Arthur's sword from the stone. The tragedy of losing what indigenous peoples have lost is an easily justifiable one on which to lay an ironic hand. Feodorov's work doesn't deny the tragedy but rather senses beyond it an instinct for survival, pleasure even and one that has no hierarchy of experience or aesthetic. His play is a liberation.

John Feodorov (b. 1960, Los Angeles, California. Lives and works in Seattle, Washington) received his BFA in Drawing and Painting at California State University at Long Beach, and his MFA in Visual Art from Vermont College, Montpelier Vermont. His work has been included in several publications, such as *Time and Time Again* by Lucy R. Lippard, *Art + Religion*, edited by Aaron Rosen, and *Manifestations*, edited by Dr. Nancy Marie Mithlo. He was also featured in the first season of the PBS series, "Art 21: Art for the 21st Century. Recent solo exhibitions include a career survey at the Western Gallery at Western Washington University (2024), Kennedy Art Museum (2022) and CUE Foundation (2022). His work is included in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Seattle Art Museum, and the Eiteljorg Museum where he is a current fellow of the 2025 Eiteljorg Fellowship.



Installation view, Assimilations



Where Are the Dead?, 2023, Acrylic, latex, paper, sand, feather, graphite on panel, 60 x 60 in., JF0001

(Detail) Where Are the Dead?

OTHER DESIGNS AND SYMBOLS

MANY other designs besides the Thunderbird were used by the Indians to decorate their clothing and pottery. Those shown here are from many sources and will be valuable in decorating your moccasins, vests, war drums, and tepees. Remember that the Indians used colors made from roots, berries, bark and fruits of plants and shrubs, as well as some mineral colors. These were very delicate colors so keep that in mind when you use water colors and enamels.



BUFFALO



HORSE



WARRIOR



WOMAN



MAN



DEER



RAIN CLOUDS



BUFFALO TRACKS



BEAR TRACKS



LIGHTNING



MOUNTAINS



SUN



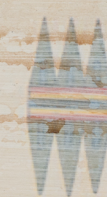
TEPEE



WOODLAND — GEOMETRIC DESIGNS USED IN LOOM BEADING (Ojibwa)



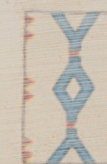
WOODLAND — FLORAL DESIGNS USED IN APPLIQUE BEADING (Ojibwa)



BLACKFOOT — GEOMETRIC AND FLORAL DESIGNS USUALLY APPLIED



SHOSHONE — GEOMETRIC BEADING, USUALLY DONE IN EASY STITCH



SHOSHONE — GEOMETRIC

PUEBLO — PAINTED DESIGNS

(Detail) Where Are the Dead?

Where Are We Dead?



empty
one in
not
natural

Jehovah has made loving men
start ones from the bad effect
and death. This grand rule, w
the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ,
his provision for man's redemption.
is only seen from him. The world
at gain his through him." (1 John)
God's due time, under the Kingdom
n, inherited his inheritance will
be the same and there will no



Assimilation #4, 2020, Acrylic, latex, paper, sand, graphite on panel, 48 x 42 in., JF0002

(Detail) Assimilation #4



(Detail) Assimilation #4





Installation view, Assimilations



Memories of a Suburban Ind'n #4, 2023, Acrylic, latex, paper, sand, and graphite on panel, 60 x 60 in., JF0005

(Detail) Memories of a Suburban Ind'n #4



(Detail) Memories of a Suburban Ind'n #4



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7
BEADS

15
BEADS

A BLACK WIG IS A MUST
UNLESS HAIR IS NATU-
RALLY BLACK. USE A
BEADED BROWBAND
WITH 1 OR 2 FEATHERS
FASTENED TO IT.

98

(Detail) Memories of a Suburban Ind'n #4



Assimilation #3, 2020, Acrylic, latex, paper, sand, graphite on panel, 48 x 42 in., JF0003

(Detail) Assimilation #3



(Detail) Assimilation #3





Installation view, Assimilations



Memories of a Suburban Ind'n #3, 2023, Acrylic, latex, paper, sand, and graphite on panel, 60 x 60 in., JF0004

(Detail) Memories of a Suburban Ind'n #3





(Detail) Memories of a Suburban Ind'n #3

Installation view, Assimilations



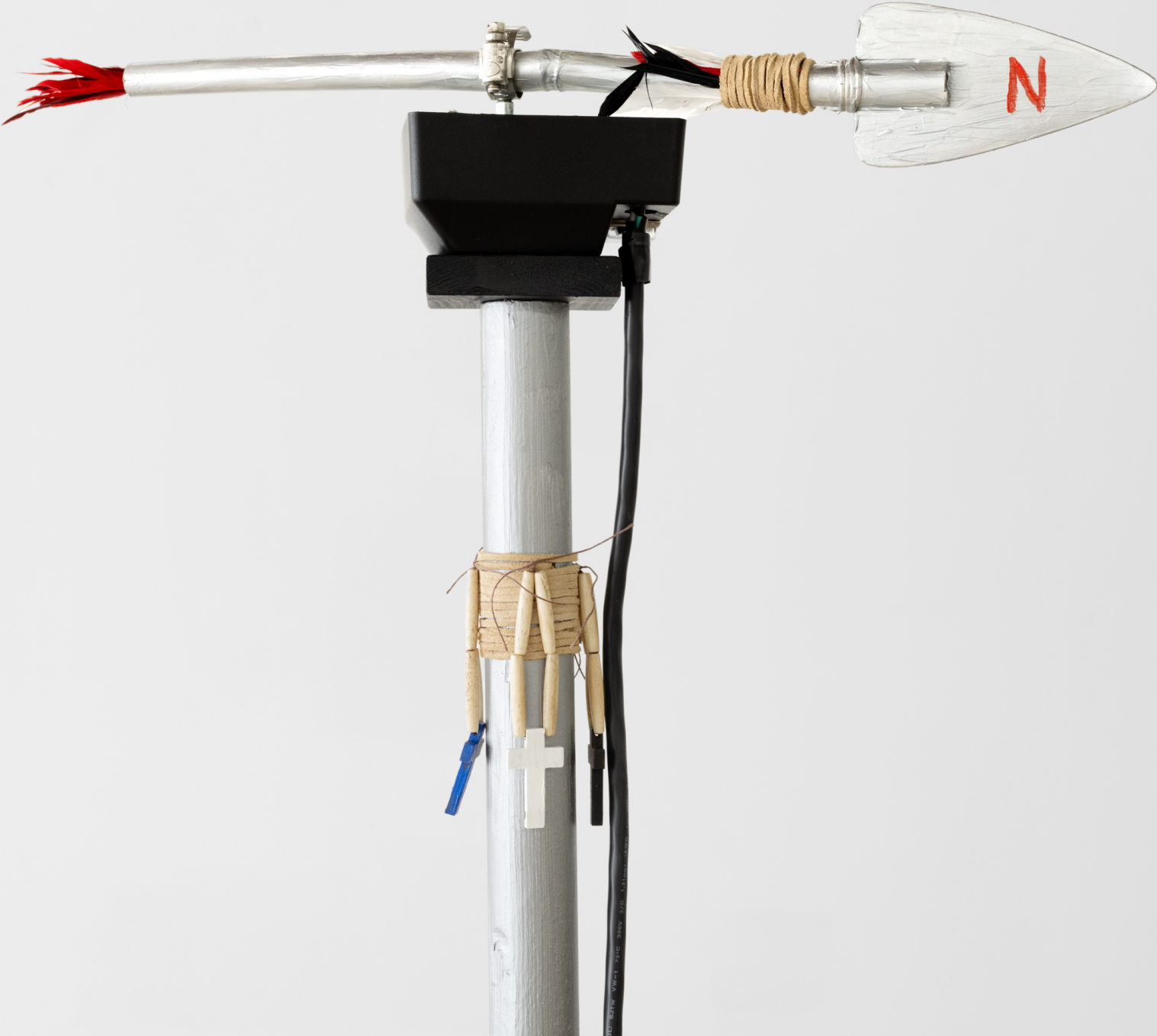


Shrine For a New God, 2014, Mixed media, Dimensions variable, JF0006,

(Detail) Shrine For a New God



(Detail) Shrine For a New God



(Detail) Shrine For a New God





Installation view, Assimilations

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