



**For Immediate Release**

Oct. 11, 2021

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**Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens Exhibition Honors Cheyenne Warrior Artists**

*Imprisoned but Empowered: Cheyenne Warrior Artists at Fort Marion* is open through February 27, 2022

**JACKSONVILLE, Fla.** — The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens presents *Imprisoned but Empowered: Cheyenne Warrior Artists at Fort Marion*, an ongoing exhibition that is on view to the public through February 27, 2022.

*Imprisoned but Empowered: Cheyenne Warrior Artists at Fort Marion* features deeply personal works by three Cheyenne artists who were taken from their homes by the United States government in 1875 and imprisoned at Fort Marion (officially known as the Castillo de San Marcos) in St. Augustine for three years. The humanity of these POW artists inspired their jailor, Richard Pratt, to experiment with assimilating the Plains warriors into quasi-soldiers. The missionary ladies of St. Augustine, including Harriett Beecher Stowe, convinced Pratt to allow them to create an ad hoc school in the fort, laying the foundation for Carlisle and Indian boarding schools.

Also included is a work by Gordon Yellowman, the exhibition's lead curator and Director of Language and Cultural Programs, Cheyenne & Arapaho Tribes — demonstrating a powerful link between past and present-day Cheyenne artists.

Together, these 52 drawings offer a window into the hearts and minds of men who were exiled for defending their families, cultures and territories.

"The significance of this exhibition is a powerful culture's way of life, based on personal experiences of the exiled warrior artist. Each ledger drawing depicts and captures a Polaroid moment of history," said Yellowman.

Though considered some of the most valuable Native American art ever created, these drawings have never been exhibited within a Cheyenne world view — until now. Over a period of two years, the Museum's curatorial team worked with Dr. Eric Singleton, curator at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, which holds the esteemed Arthur and Shifra Silberman Collection — the primary source for this exhibition.

"The Museum is humbled to be able to share this important chapter in our regional and national history with the Northeast Florida community. Working with the project's curators to bring this exhibition to fruition has been a powerful experience, and I hope our visitors can feel that authenticity when experiencing these works of art," said Holly Keris, the Museum's J. Wayne and Delores Barr Weaver Chief Curator. "It is easy for history to reimagine the Cheyenne warriors imprisoned at Fort Marion as an anonymous collective. However, they were individuals, with lives, experiences, families and voices, and we are proud to honor their perspectives."

Veronica Pasfield, Ph.D., Journalist, Independent Curator & Museum Decolonizer, Bay Mills Indian Community Member, provided additional curatorial insight for this exhibition..

"The Cheyenne artists in this exhibition are among the most celebrated and valued in Native American art," said Pasfield. "These imprisoned artists understood the high communicative value of their drawings. They used a visual language — colors, symbols, composition — to communicate so much about themselves and Cheyenne people. Today's Cheyenne can readily decode what their relatives communicated. Why? Because the very same traditions are still practiced — from warrior Society colorways to protocols for setting up a tipi encampment. It is an honor and privilege to amplify the voice of the Cheyenne people via this exhibition at the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens."

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### **About the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens:**

For 60 years, the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens has been committed to engaging and inspiring through the arts, gardens, and education. A permanent collection of more than 5,000 objects and historic gardens on a riverfront campus offers nearly 150,000 annual visitors a truly unique

experience on the First Coast. Nationally recognized education programs serve adults and children of all abilities. For further information, including hours, visit [www.cummermuseum.org](http://www.cummermuseum.org).