

*My  
Medicine  
Part  
One*

*An Exhibition*

*Catalog*

*Presented by*



**Galaudet  
Gallery**

**Oscar Howe** was a Native American Modernist Painter (1919-1984 Yanktonai Sioux) and is an internationally acclaimed artist who brought awareness to Native American art that held the individual artist higher than the accepted stylized Native American art that had come to be expected.

**Robert Freeman** is a Native American who practices varying styles of art (1939-- Hunkpapa Sioux) Freeman has ties to California and the Crow Creek reservation in South Dakota. Freeman is internationally collected and has many exhibitions of his art.

**Vicki Milewski** is an American abstract expressionist working in oils, photographs and film. Milewski's work is internationally collected and exhibited by museums like the Terra Museum and the Smithsonian as well as organizations and private owners. Milewski also composes music for choirs and solo piano and is a published writer of articles, essays and poems.

**John James Audubon (1785—1851)** was an American Naturalist Painter who compiled books on North American fauna like his *Birds of America* publication. Audubon sought to transform traditional natural history illustration into an art, and in the process he became an artistic influence and scientific touchstone.

*June 18, 2014—July 28, 2014*

# *My Medicine: Part One*

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## *My Medicine: Part One 2014*

In cooperation with:

- The Oscar Howe Art Center/Dakota Discovery Museum, Mitchell South Dakota
- Hubbard Street School Chicago, IL
- The New York City Historical Society
- The Field Museum of Natural History
- Milewski Nature Fund, Inc.

## *My Medicine: Part Two Spring 2015*

## *My Medicine: Part Three Spring 2016*

## *My Medicine: Part Four Spring 2017*

## My Medicine: Part One Exhibition by Galaudet Gallery

The title of this, the first exhibition by Galaudet Gallery, curates the power art has to heal and to aid in self discovery and discovery of worlds beyond our day to day lives. Great art transports the viewer to another place and time, another space and moment, a new way of seeing life. The art in My Medicine: Part One does just that. The title also comes from the belief that the two primary artists hold that art is medicine for themselves and for others.

The exhibition utilizes three rooms in Galaudet Gallery to showcase three artists' work, with explanatory sheets for each work (included in this catalog) The turret room has the work of Native American artist Oscar Howe (1915-1984) set against deep blue and deep green wall color—which are two of the colors in some of the works displayed by Howe. The round turret part of the room has a buffalo skull from a relative of the white buffalo, Miracle, who lived in Janesville, WI.

Howe stated that he found his art to be his medicine. From a Native American perspective of medicine men and how they give their lives to healing others, this statement can position artists as medicine men—healing and aiding themselves and others. The sacred rituals and cultural stories Howe used within his art all speak of a healthy life and power and energy to live it.

The middle room has three prints from John James Audubon with correlative taxidermy birds from the collection of the Field Museum of Natural History. Each bird is placed at the same level as the hung print with these ensembles utilizing one wall each. This arrangement is not didactic; but instead, informs about Audubon's artistic process since he painted birds he had hunted and killed, placing them in poses that would exude their personalities which Audubon studied for years. Also in this room are some Native American artifacts with the rare opportunity to purchase them.

Galaudet Gallery will be exhibiting about half of Audubon's book *The Birds of America* over the course of four years. On average three birds will be chosen for inclusion in each exhibit based on exhibition themes, symbolism and/or the quality of Audubon's work.

The studio room has the art of American artist Vicki Milewski's Badlands Roads Collection which hangs

together on one wall at dual hanging heights requested by the artist. The roads which seem to reach toward the heavens (Badlands Roads North... and South...) are placed at the highest point with the Badlands Road South... seeming to incorporate the exposed original wallpaper from the early 1900's which has a similar color as the road in this drawing. The torn quality of the layers over the original wallpaper speaks to the discovery of other worlds, other points of time. Badlands Roads Below... and Above... hang at the same height since they express the same alchemy. Badlands Roads East... and West... hang at the lowest level since both depictions of these roads are seen from that angle.

American artist Vicki Milewski feels strongly that art is medicine. She says her art has had healing vitality for herself and others, "Healing is not just about our physical self, healing can be spiritual, mental and within our love. My art has resurrected my life for me and I hope it can offer healing to anyone else who may be in need."

Pieces from Milewski's White River Valley Collection are also on view. These are also inspired by the badlands of South Dakota.

My Medicine: Part One is the first of a four part series Galaudet Gallery will offer in the late spring for the next four years. Each of these four years will include art by Oscar Howe and Vicki Milewski along with other artists who share the belief that art is medicine for self and others.

Written by Vicki Milewski and Mike Milewski the sister/brother curating team for Galaudet Gallery

June 18, 2014  
Eau Claire, WI

## Howe's Paradox and Anomalistic Legacy

Oscar Howe's mid-career art is currently on view in an exhibition entitled *My Medicine: Part One* at Galaudet Gallery in Eau Claire, WI. Howe painted symbolic scenes based on his Native American cultural mythology that are imbedded in a Tohokmu (spider web); this Tohokmu could inform internet usage for the present and future users and programmers. In a Howe construction, every color and shape imaginatively propels the viewer forward into the seemingly infinite progression of possible configurations, meaning and myth; while simultaneously pulling the viewer backwards toward a quest for the "original" source or referent that underlines the paradoxes between sacred rituals and the real life harshness they honor. This paradox between ritual and real life has an ancillary paradox in internet programming and the internet users who surf--unaware of the code beneath them.

The soft complimentary colors in Howe's *Buffalo Hunt* (1973) set up a paradox in their softness that speaks to the sacred ritual of Plains Sioux buffalo hunting, with reverence paid to the buffalo, while at the same time there is an energy present in this work, in its forms and shapes, that speaks to the energy of the hunt and the anticipation of killing another creature in order to exist. These paradoxes lay within Howe's use of a Tohokmu (spider web) construction which is clearly visible touching the buffalo, horse and rider bringing them into a true cycle of life. The internet code which seemingly touches everything online is of a similar nature to Howe's Tohokmu, since it holds the action of internet browsing within its active code but cannot touch everything related to the internet like the use of its information, the collaboration of internet users in adapting code to do something it was not written to do, or even how the processes behind internet usage are understood or not. The ritual of a buffalo hunt is similar to the ritual of coding for the internet since both have prescribed actions that must be followed until the actual hunt begins and then real life enters the programmer's constructs in order to create the active, hidden code we have all become accustomed to.

Howe's *Woman Scalp Dancer* (1964) also shows this Tohokmu construction. The correspondence of color in *Woman Scalp Dancer* makes the movement almost stilled until you see the Tohokmu encircling her and inside of her form, it is this circular formation that provides much of the movement in Howe's work, while it is his artistic

individuality which creates the inner movement most viewers experience that translates to a deeper understanding of one's self because of viewing a work of art. Howe's use of the Tohokmu is akin to our 21<sup>st</sup> Century internet "web" because the Tohokmu connects the elements of Howe's pieces just as the internet web connects users with information and more. The disembodied quality of internet usage is also present in viewing an Oscar Howe piece since there is a separation from reality present. But then there are realistic forms, just like online with a woman dancing that are clearly representational but in an individualized, artistic style.

The cold war creation of the internet as a non-hierarchical, without-center information management tool meant that it would be harder to destroy and hence messages could get through even during wartime.<sup>1</sup> Howe has a similar non-hierarchical construction in the prints on view in *My Medicine: Part One* like his *Calling Wakan Tanka* (1967) which features a family of three praying that a strong storm will not come back toward them.<sup>2</sup> It would be easy to suggest that a center lies in the middle of the three figures; however, the construction of the lightning caused prairie fire in the distance, the raised pipe of the central figure and the concentration of the figures nearest the ground move the center around the painting as the viewer takes in the elements and sees how they are all connected by the Tohokmu which is imbedded with tornadoes and white birds. The buffalo skull in the foreground is ostensibly located in the center but it is really slightly off-center since the real center lies within each viewer's understanding of the themes of prayer, storms, family, ritual and tradition.

Howe's *Ghost Dancer*, also in this exhibit, easily shows how the internet web is currently constructed: honoring the myth of freedom America presupposes and which the internet web supports by the ease we have in finding information, connecting with others and accessing a world beyond our day-to-day existence. Just as mystics and medicine people transcend the physical world and attempt to transform their students and those in need of medicine by providing knowledge of this world, so too the internet provides access to information through an active code which lies beyond most user's perception but which provides a new sense of reality. The Ghost Dance religion relied on the Native American Myths involving medicine men and visions. Does the historical outcome of this religion and Native Americans

<sup>1</sup> *Hidden Codes and Grand Designs: Secret Languages from Ancient Times to Modern Day*, Pierre Berloquin 2008 Sterling

<sup>2</sup> *Oscar Howe, Artist* by Oscar Howe 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2004 (1974) Oscar Howe Memorial Association, The University of South Dakota, Vermillion



predict a future for internet users?

Howe, like any great artist, provides access to a world beyond our physical one, just like the internet does, by using active code to create his images within the Tohokmu—which can carry messages along many different routes. Howe sends forth messages seeped in Native American cultural mores and also allows viewers utilization of the Tohokmu matrix to access messages we send to ourselves and to our worlds. Like a touchstone, Howe's art is an active participant in message sending while allowing the paradox of a painting, capturing a moment in time, which reminds each viewer that even in the flux of this 21<sup>st</sup> Century we are still very much the same as ancient peoples and ourselves from our own personal pasts.

0's and 1's may encode our very lives at this moment, but we can control that encoding (and the reading of such code) by how we live our lives. When I logon to Paypal and watch the timing wheel spin its web into my account, I think of Howe's *Wa pi ya (Medicine Man) With Herb Root in Human Form* (1974) which is surrounded by a Tohokmu which touches the medicine man, the herb root and the surrounding area alternately as well as intimately showing the interconnectedness of all life in this touching, showing a ritual moment caught in time, showing how not every part of the herb root or the medicine man is touched by the Tohokmu. This tells me not every part of my life is touched by the internet, that there are vast spaces within my life that are free even of the myth of freedom. As PayPal loads my account and its familiar homepage comes on, I see that I am touching and not touching millions of other users who are in reality individuals who have parts of their lives untouched by a societal convention such as the internet we; but as a collective we have agreed to create this 21<sup>st</sup> Century myth, like PayPal being an online bank, and in that creation we get paid, we may pay or another story may unfold which we have yet to consider within the myths of webs and freedom and self.

Howe's anomalistic representation of Sioux cultural tradition seems to draw viewers further away from this state of 21<sup>st</sup> Century being; not into a past but into a different world, into a different way of seeing. Howe also uses his anomaly of the Tohokmu to draw his own art further away from the primary source materials we have concerning Native American art up until the moment Howe decided to draw from his artistic eye instead of from accepted Native American linear motifs and genres

like Cubism which he insisted he was not a part of. Howe may have shared the Cubists' shift of art from representation of reality to the expression of the artistic eye<sup>3</sup> but he did not share their fractured and fragmented view of this expression. Just as Georgia O'Keefe fought against those who would call her an abstract painter, Howe also stands apart from cubism—since his paintings speak more of interconnectedness than a fragmentation, of joining forces together instead of fracturing them. As more time passes, Howe's degree of separation from those historical Native American representations and art critic labels grows ever greater, as if his orbit has shifted its center. The anomaly Howe presents as an individual artist painting his cultural history has stood the test of time and represents a part of American Art that is still being debated since it was in the later 1950's and 1960's that America clearly broke from European models of artistic representation and American Art was fully recognized as a separate entity. It is no coincidence this is also the time period when the internet web, as we know it, was created and set into operation.

While all artists and internet programmers across the world share a common muse and genres seem to circulate the globe much like the atmosphere we live in, there are cultural arenas that each geographic location claims as their individual stake. If it were not for the early 1900's American artists who began to break from European traditions by proposing new forms and colors, then the artists of the 1950's and 60's would not have been so clearly separate. While the term "American Artist" was still being tried out on the world stage in the 1950's, Native American Artists had a clear linear style that had come to be expected by Americans and the world. Oscar Howe started his artistic career painting in this style but soon abandoned it for his artistic integrity moved him to create paintings that only he could create. As his art opens new avenues for internet webbing considerations, it also offers viewers new perceptions of self. Oscar Howe is truly one of the great American Artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, even without paradoxes and anomalies, and he is speaking to the multi-faceted artists of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century—to be an artist means to be an individual.

By Vicki Milewski, Curator for My Medicine  
Viewing of the Galaudet Gallery exhibition My Medicine:  
Part One will be until July 28, 2014

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<sup>3</sup> Quote from Leonard A. Lauder in *W* magazine May 2014

# *My Medicine: Part One*

## *Oscar Howe*

*Native American Artist*

*Full Size Reproductions:*

### *Woman Scalp Dancer (1964)*

18" x 24"

406/1000 Printed in June 1991 on 100# LOE Saxony

93% pH Paper with colorfast inks that meet archival standards

### *Wa pi ya (Medicine Man)*

#### *With Herb Root in Human Form (1974)*

28 ½" x 18"

242/1000 Printed July 1994 on 80# Karma Handmade

Paper with colorfast inks that meet archival standards

### *Buffalo Hunt (1973)*

25 ¾" x 19 ½"

53/1000 Printed 2002 an archival, museum grade giclee

### *Calling Wakan Tanka (1967)*

10" X 16"

An archival, museum grade giclee

### *Ghost Dancer*

14 11/16" X 19 7/8"

Printed in 1993, a Sioux Falls giclee

*Resized Reproductions:*

### *Origin of the Sioux*

Reduction to 4" X 6" from original casein on paper work

### *Dakota Medicine Man (1968)*

Reduction to 4" X 6" from original casein on paper work

Printed July 1984

### *Wa pi ya (Medicine Man)*

#### *With Herb Root in Human Form (1974)*

Original: 28 ½" x 18"

Reduction to 4" X 6" Printed in 1981

### *Children At Play*

Original: 28 ½" x 18"

Reduction to 4" X 6" Printed in 1988

## *Woman Scalp Dancer (1964)*

The circular Tohokmu formation of *Woman Scalp Dancer* brings a rhythm to the viewer that is quite different than the other Howe pieces in this exhibit. The curves and circles propel the dancer both inward and outward which brings to mind John Muir saying that when he went outside he was really going in.<sup>4</sup> This dancer is separate from the viewer but her movement back and forth, further into the painting and then coming out from the wall, causes the viewer to experience dimensionality rather than comprehend it.

Scalp dancing was done to honor dead enemies, it was to honor the tribe's warriors for being victorious, it was to honor the women, young and old, chosen to dance since only those pure of heart could scalp dance. Howe's use of the Tohokmu (spider web) and his success in the dimensional movement of the dancer honors his art, his legacy and it honors the viewer who takes time to experience this dance.

When Howe wrote about this painting he focused on the circular forms which he said were directly connected to the Dakota symbol of the circle which permeated Dakota life providing unity and structure as well as a philosophical intent.<sup>5</sup> Howe states that he consciously chose a circular construction to honor the "ancient meaning of the circle".

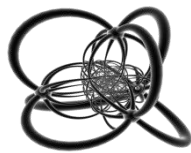
<sup>4</sup> Mountaineering Essays, John Muir, 1997 Houghton Mifflin

<sup>5</sup> Oscar Howe, Artist by Oscar Howe 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2004 (1974) Oscar Howe Memorial Association, The University of South Dakota, Vermillion

## *Woman Scalp Dancer*

Continued

In so honoring the Dakota culture and its symbolisms Howe strengthens the power of this piece, giving it a nod toward the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> dimensions through the motion of the dancer which represents the dimensionality of time based on Einstein's Theory of Relativity. The 5<sup>th</sup> dimension is represented by the Tohokmu construction which is mirrored by the dancer's hair and fringe and could be seen as a 600 cell finite polytope where an average of 57 cells are touching at any point in this graphic representation of the 5<sup>th</sup> dimension. <sup>6</sup>



Stereographic projection 600 Cell polytope

To suggest that Howe's *Woman Scalp Dancer* could be placed into a current graphical representation of outer dimensions is to recognize the power of true art to understand our world through an intuitive process rather than a rational one. For millennia, artists have created work that foreshadows and assists us in moving our knowledge of the world outward (and inward). Howe's art has done this by utilizing his knowledge of his cultures rituals and traditions and then by putting into action his artistic eye so that 21<sup>st</sup> Century viewers can learn more about themselves and their worlds as well as Howe's intended subject: Sioux culture.

## *Wa pi ya (Medicine Man)* *With Herb Root in Human Form* (1974)

This piece shows Howe's use of the spider web as an element of the artwork and as a symbol toward a cultural understanding of Native American medicinal practices. Oscar Howe wrote about the Tohokmu spider web motif:

It is my greatest hope that my paintings may serve to bring the best thing of Indian culture into the modern way of life. I have been labeled wrongfully Cubist. The basic design is Tohokmu (spider web). From an all-Indian background I developed my own style.

The Tohokmu is structured around the central figures of the medicine man and the mandrake root (as a prostrate human form). The power of healing seems to radiate from the medicine man's arms, revolving around him and the one who needs medicine. The concentration of the medicine man upon the human form is a part of the medicine

For millennia, medicine people have been shown ways to heal with natural resources and with songs and rituals given to them through visions and experiences which make them effective in healing the afflicted. Part of the medicine in this piece is the Tohokmu construction since it touches the medicine man and the person in need alternately, intimately and spiritually.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.math.cmu.edu/users/fho/jenn/polytopes/index.html>

## *Ghost Dancer*

### *Buffalo Hunt* (1973)

The buffalo hunt was a ritual that had a special place in the Dakota spiritual culture. Howe's painting *Buffalo Hunt* tells a larger story about the Dakota philosophy that everything in life has a circular order from hunting cycles to the changing seasons and our own human life.

Howe wrote about the reasons why he painted such cultural ceremonies:

One criterion for my painting is to present the cultural life and activities of the Sioux Indians; dances, ceremonies, legends, lore, arts . . . It is my greatest hope that my paintings may serve to bring the best thing of Indian culture into the modern way of life.

The Tohokmu (spider web) construction is clearly visible in this piece as it informs much of Howe's work during this period. The Tohokmu touches the buffalo, horse and rider bringing them into a true cycle of life.

A Paiute medicine man, Wovoka, announced in 1889 that he was the messiah come to earth to prepare the Indians for their salvation because of a dream Wovoka had during the solar eclipse on January 1, 1889. He claimed to have seen visions concerning earth renewal and the reintroduction of the spirits of ancient ancestors into the contemporary day to help the Indians suffering on reservations. He also claimed that he was shown that, by dancing the round-dance continuously, the dream would become a reality and the participants would enjoy the new Earth.

The dance itself - dancing in a circular pattern continuously - which induced a state of religious ecstasy, is shown here to great effect by Howe. The dance as told by Wovoka went something like this:

"You must dance for five days: four successive nights, and on the last night continue dancing until the morning of the fifth day, when all must bathe in the river and then return to their homes. You must all do this in the same way....I want you to dance every six weeks. Make a feast at the dance and have food that everybody may eat."

After The Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890, the dance lost much of its meaning and is rarely performed.



## *Calling Wakan Tanka*

Calling Wakan Tanka can easily be viewed on three levels.

The first is a family praying to Wakan Tanka (the Great Spirit) to keep a strong storm from returning. A prairie fire in the distance, caused by a lightning strike, stretches across the flat horizon line as the father holds his connected pipe up to the heavens in prayer as highlighted by another burst of lightning. His wife smokes tobacco in an ancient way from a hole in the ground and a rolled up leaf used as a straw while the son prays to a rock with a hand imprint on it. Howe explains that, “the Sioux only prays through these unusual nature things to the Great Spirit.”<sup>7</sup> Howe makes the distinction that the Sioux do not pray to these natural objects but through them.

The second way to view this piece is through the Tohokmu (spider web) construction which has imbedded flashes of lightning, white birds and tornadoes in the distance and which touch each of the central three figures. Off center is a buffalo skull which represents the Sioux life since it is their main source of nourishment. Viewing this piece through the Tohokmu brings the viewer into the piece and shows how these deftly created visual representations of symbols create a wider viewing area than the paper drawing is contained on.

## *Calling Wakan Tanka*

Continued

The last way to view this piece is through the title, Calling Wakan Tanka, which speaks to the idea of Wakan, sometimes translated as sacred or as great mystery. When Tanka is added there is a sense of a God presence or a Great Mysterious presence which can be of help when honored through prayer, respected through symbol and understood through contemplation as the three central figures demonstrate calling on a Great Mystery to help keep the storm from returning

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<sup>7</sup> Oscar Howe, Artist by Oscar Howe 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (1974) Oscar Howe Memorial Association, The University of South Dakota, Vermillion

## *Children At Play*

*Children At Play* is an uncharacteristically whimsical portrayal of girls dancing in play. There is great detail in the girls' fringe and in the butterflies and dragonflies joining in the dance. The smiles on the girls' faces are enhanced by the pastel colors which speak of innocence, playfulness and youth. The slight rendering of the Tohokmu around the edges of the dance show how the life cycle is a part of this recreation but not fully understood by the young girls.

## *Origin of the Sioux*

This striking blue and white painting shows a mother with twins at her feet who are to be the progenitors of the Sioux Nation.

The upward movement of this painting draws the eye upward as if the center or the point of interest is off canvas—somewhere up there in an honoring of the Great Spirit who saved the Sioux Nation from the flood by saving one girl who birthed twins.

## *Other Resized Reproductions by artists influenced by Oscar Howe*

### *Robert Freeman*

*Native American Artist*

#### *Untitled (Indian Dancer)*

*Full Size Reproduction:*

*15 9/16" X 21"*

*An archival, museum grade giclee*

### *Rich Red Owl*

*Native American Artist (Oglala Lakota)*

#### *Warriors' Victory Celebration (1990)*

*Reduction to 4" X 6" from original oil painting held by St Joseph's Indian School, Chamberlain, SD*

### *Richard DuBois*

*Artist*

#### *Chasing the Sun*

*Reduction from the original watercolor*

### *Donald F. Montileaux*

*Native American Artist*

#### *Taking the Flight to Morning Star (2013)*

*Reduction from original work*

### *Michael L. Willcuts*

*Native American Artist (Minniconjou Sioux)*

#### *Daybreak*

*Reduction from original airbrush (watercolor) held by St Joseph's Indian School, Chamberlain, S*

## *Warriors' Victory Celebration (1990)*

The exuberant joy of returning, victorious warriors resonates through the village. It's as if the whole battle is relived for all to share.

The warrior built his reputation by impressing on his band how brave and courageous he is.

## *Taking the Flight to Morning Star (2013)*

Montileaux was mentored by Oscar Howe and has been well known for his linear drawings on antique ledger paper. *Taking the Flight to Morning Star* shows Howe's influence in coloration and movement as well as in Montileaux's choice to express his own individual artistic eye.

## *Daybreak*

"In my illustrations I can bring our legends and old ways of living back into the modern day (nothing will be lost or forgotten!)"—  
Michael L. Willcutts

## *Untitled (Indian Dancer)*

Robert Freeman's *Untitled* work shows a similar quality to Oscar Howe's in rhythm, movement and color. The general sense of a "web" of color surrounds this Indian dancer as if he is dancing his colors onto his surroundings and vice versa. The lifted leg of the dancer has such energy and movement as well as his facial expression which looks concentrated and meditative with an open mouth that shows he may be joining in the singing. The regalia shown in this piece may be for a current fancy dance at a Pow Wow or could be something much more ancient. The two eagle feathers held by each hand are the same as the top most eagle feathers in the dancer's headdress and signal a special person in the tribe maybe even a chief or medicine man.

But it is the rhythm of colors which speak the most in this piece. Placing the work clearly outside of romanticized Native American art and more within the area of an individual artist who is expressing cultural traditions he is intimate with. The swirl of colors may speak to the swirl of definitions placed on such a dancer with some wrong and some right, that have assisted in making an art piece like this one important and collectable because it is made by someone who understands this dancer from a personal connection and history.

Freeman was born in 1939 and is a Hunkpapa Sioux who was born in the San Francisco area but spent his summers on the Crow Creek reservation in South Dakota. Freeman is internationally collected and has varying styles of art that he practices.

## Vicki Milewski's Badlands Roads

When viewing Vicki Milewski's Badlands Roads at Galaudet Gallery as part of their exhibition My Medicine: Part One, the viewer has a sense of timelessness and movement. The roads in question all exist in her artistic reality and in the badlands of western South Dakota; and they offer a glimpse of the transformation of the American road trip into one of self discovery and humble acceptance that there are powers and experiences that are a part of our physical reality but which are seldom spoken of in our 21<sup>st</sup> Century lives.

*Badlands Road North: The Pink Road (a gentle way to learn the red one)* (2014) climbs over Bigfoot Pass in a gentle way that shows a care for the surroundings as well as an understanding of the historical nature of the named pass.<sup>8</sup> That the road is pink also shows an understanding that learning the Native American red road takes time and means sacrifice of exemplar ego and restrictions in how reality is defined. Although this road, and the 7 others of this collection, seem localized to the badlands area they are also eminently open ended and can be found on any road or trail we care to see them in. The complimentary colored formations surrounding this pink road support it and allow it to climb to its destination in the North, but they also allow it interconnectedness with its surroundings. Even though this road lies on top of these forms and seems almost to hover over them, it is a part of these forms and as it meets with the horizon line on top it shows that it will bring a sense of these forms with it.

Yet while *Badlands Road North...* may deliver its travelers to the horizon line with formation baggage, *Badlands Road South: Going to See Joe* (2014) takes its cue from the alchemical idea of, "as above, so below"<sup>9</sup> since it shows a star studded sky ostensibly mirrored in the prairie grasses below it. But upon closer inspection, those stars in the prairie grasses are not mirror images but stars that stand alone and apart. When Milewski asked her Native American friend, Joe, about these prairie stars his alchemical reply was familiar to Milewski but then he launched into a story about inner knowledge: "reminding me of the people who would come to hike on Mt Harney and Bear Butte hoping for the hike to change their lives but when they returned to their cars unchanged Joe would

say to me 'As above, so below' referencing the person remaining the same on the top and bottom of Harney because they wanted the hike to change their lives instead of changing it themselves. 'The mountain can assist us but it cannot do the work for us.' Joe would say. But in seeing the 'stars on earth' Joe said I was seeing my life already changed and this idea helped to sustain my work in creating a better life for myself steeped in my own personal and cultural history and living fully in the present."<sup>10</sup>

*Badlands Road East: Road Like a River Spilling Me Home* (2014) and *Badlands Road West: Hills Breathing Pink* (2014) are similar in their soft shading and coloration with one being called "the blue one" and the other being called "the pink one". Both represent a movement toward self and an understanding that our environment is alive since the hills are "breathing" and the road is like a "river", both of these elements show a commonality in their support that everything is alive. Milewski states that the blue road mirrors her state of mind depending on the hue of the road; while the pink outlined road reminds her to remain gentle and soft—it is when we are open to new experiences that they are able to occur.

The two pieces which seem the most other worldly are the *Badlands Road Below: The Green Road* (2014) and the *Badlands Road Above: The Twelve Tribes* (2014). The former shows a spiraling green road within a badlands formation. The shape and movement of this road show again that these formations are alive even though many of them hold the fossilized remains of a prehistoric ocean which covered this area, but also a concern for the environment is present in that the green is "inside" the formation. Milewski states that she saw this twice during her time hiking and camping in the badlands area and both times were separated by a decade which saw her shift her environmental focus from working with environmentalists<sup>11</sup> to being more "gentle about my approach to our environment and feeling more akin with conservationists. When I recently saw the green road in a badlands formation again I knew I was on the right path for my time spent conserving environmental resources instead of my past work in trying to get people to radically change their approach to environmental resources usage. We have to be able to live our lives, and

<sup>8</sup> *History of the Badlands National Monument: and the White River (Big) Badlands of SD*, Ray Mattison and Robert Grom, 1968 Espe Printing Co

<sup>9</sup> *Spiritual Alchemy*, Omraam Mikhael Aivanhov, 1989 Prosveta

<sup>10</sup> *Tell the World About Us*, Vicki Milewski, 2014, OFM Publishers

<sup>11</sup> See Milewski's work on legislating the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge into a Wilderness Protected area at [www.vickimilewski.com](http://www.vickimilewski.com)



as long as we use common sense and a gentle approach we should be in harmony with our resources.”

*Badlands Road Above: The Twelve Tribes* (2014) shows a blue road spiraling up into the sky. Milewski says she was hiking during a full moon night and that the trail “lifted up into the sky and then became a road.” The full moon then dimmed and twelve stars started shining, some of these stars were in the sky and some were on the blue road connected to the trail Milewski was hiking. She thought of the Native American ghost dancers from the 1890’s who used the moon and stars as symbols of rejuvenation on their clothing and who also thought that water would wipe out the “white people” or the “bad people” who were not honorable and who were forcing Native Americans to change their way of life.<sup>12</sup> But even more so, Milewski see connectedness with the twelve tribes of Israel and the blue of their priestly tradition since she is a Christian. That this vision of the blue road and twelve stars appeared to her in a place she has found to be spiritual and a symbolic representation of the desert region many of God’s people had to traverse to reach a promised land only makes sense to her. That she has found many modern day monks and mystics go out into the desert to avoid distractions from modern day society only to find the distractions really exist within their own minds is also a part of this painting.<sup>13</sup>

Milewski’s Badlands Roads Collection has much to offer in the way of art that can stand alone as art but also as art which holds much more for contemplation. There are still visions to be seen and experienced and Milewski knows that as long as she continues to tell the world about her experiences it will help others to share what they have experienced. From her counseling and education background, Milewski has found that the more she shares about her personal life the more she can create a space that is accepting of everyone as they are not as society needs them to be. “My art is a way to create that space and I am overjoyed to be a part of this gallery that supports such a space and enables conversation about these ideas to take place.”

By Mike Milewski, Curator of Galaudet Gallery

# *My Medicine: Part One*

*Vicki Milewski*

*American Artist*

*Original Works of Art*

*From The Badlands Roads Collection:*

***Badlands Road North:***

***The Pink Road***

***(a gentle way to learn the red one) (2014)***

*11” x 14”*

*By Bigfoot Pass Badlands, SD*

*Prismacolor on Archival Paper*

***Badlands Road South:***

***Going to See Joe (2014)***

*8” x 10”*

*Cedar Pass, Badlands National Park, SD*

*Prismacolor on Archival Paper*

***Badlands Road East:***

***Road Like a River Spilling Me Home***

***(2014)***

*11” x 14”*

*Approaching Cedar Pass Badlands, SD*

*Prismacolor on Archival Paper*

***Badlands Road West:***

***Hills Breathing Pink (2014)***

*11” x 14”*

*By Conata Basin, Badlands, SD*

*Prismacolor on Archival Paper*

***Badlands Road: Below***

***The Green Road (2014)***

*11” x 14”*

*By Dillon Pass, Badlands, SD*

*Prismacolor on Archival Paper*

***Badlands Road: Above***

***The Twelve Tribes (2014)***

*11” x 14”*

*By Medicine Root Trail, Badlands*

*Prismacolor on Archival Paper*

<sup>12</sup> *The Ghost Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890*, James Mooney, (1891) 1991  
Bison Books

<sup>13</sup> *Wisdom of the Desert*, Thomas Merton, 1960, Abbey of Gethsemane

# *My Medicine: Part One*

*Vicki Milewski*

*American Artist*

*From The White River Valley Collection:*

*Place Between Two Rocks' Dawn (2014)*

*11" x 14"*

*Place Between Two Rocks, Badlands, SD  
Prismacolor on Archival Paper*

*The Zig Zag Trail (2014)*

*11" x 14"*

*By Conata Basin, Badlands, SD  
Prismacolor on Archival Paper*

*The Zig Zag Trail 1 (2011)*

*5" X 7" (12/25)*

*By Conata Basin, Badlands, SD  
Photo printed on Archival Paper*

*The Zig Zag Trail 2 (2011)*

*5" X 7" (4/25)*

*By Conata Basin, Badlands, SD  
Photo on Archival Paper*

*Badlands Mound (1998)*

*5" x 7"*

*Badlands, SD  
Prismacolor on Archival Paper*

*Badlands Road North:*

*The Pink Road*

*(a gentle way to learn the red one) (2014)*

*11" x 14"*

*By Bigfoot Pass Badlands, SD*

As I left in the morning with the pink light of the not yet risen sun coloring the intricate hills and pinnacles around me I thought how the pink could infiltrate the road and make a more gentle way of going for me and how the pink could infiltrate my life and cause me to live more gently and dare I say more as a girl than a adventuring scientist boring into the remnants of glaciated ice. This thought stays with me to this day.

## *Badlands Road South:*

*Going to See Joe (2014)*

*8" x 10" Cedar Pass, Badlands National Park, SD*

During the late 1990's and early 00's I would visit the Badlands and Black Hills of South Dakota to camp, hike and rediscover my life with a native American man named Joe. One evening just after dusk I was crossing Cedar pass in the Badlands National Park headed south toward Joe's home outside of Pine Ridge Reservation when the stars fully appeared in the still dusking sky and then on the lush, spring prairie grasses several hundred feet below me there were stars shimmering. At first I thought the stars in the grass were reflections of those stars in the sky but they were not since they were in different locations and in different sizes.

When I mentioned the "stars on earth" to Joe he made one of his standard reply's, "As above, so below" reminding me of the people who would come to hike on Mt Harney and Bear Butte hoping for the hike to change their lives but when they returned to their cars unchanged Joe would say to me "As above, so below" referencing the person remaining the same on top of Harney and on the bottom of Harney because they wanted the hike to change their lives instead of changing it themselves. "The mountain can assist us but it cannot do the work for us." But in seeing the "stars on earth" Joe said I was seeing my life already changed and this idea helped to sustain my work in creating a better life for myself steeped in my own personal and cultural history and living fully in the present.

## *Badlands Road East:*

*Road Like a River Spilling Me Home*

*(2014)*

*11" x 14"*

*Approaching Cedar Pass Badlands, SD*

*Prismacolor on Archival Paper*

Leaving the badlands before dawn even begins to wake makes it possible to drive all the way home in one day (12 hours). Many times as I have driven the loop road east during this hour of night the road would start turning blue. I started to notice the hue of blue would be similar to my state of mind at the time of my leaving: a deep blue would mean I was deeply at peace, a lighter blue would mean I had a lightness of heart. On this particular drive my heart was quite light and the road was a beautiful cloud blue and it seemed fluid like water with a current flowing east, spilling me toward home.

*Badlands Road West:  
Hills Breathing Pink* (2014)

11" x 14"

*By Conata Basin, Badlands, SD  
Prismacolor on Archival Paper*

Crossing over Big Foot Pass as the sun begins to rise causes the badland formations surrounding the road to turn into many hues of pink. One morning the center line on the road turned into a bright red and I smiled to think that I was on the right path and doing the right thing. I was headed north but needed to visit the badlands before going in that direction. The red center line told me I could camp on Conata Basin that night and prepare more for the glacial recession surveys we were doing in Glacier National Park for the next week. After hiking all day and watching the sunset blend oranges and browns across the badlands the new moon rose with two stars and tracked across the sky with them all night.

*Badlands Road Above:  
The Twelve Tribes* (2014)

11" x 14"

*By Medicine Root Trail, Badlands, SD  
Prismacolor on Archival Paper*

Reading a new translation of Revelations I was struck by the use of the twelve tribes as stars in the sky which came down to become messengers of God.

While hiking on the Medicine Root trail in the Badlands of South Dakota one early summer evening, I saw the trail lift off into the sky and then blue flowed from the sky onto the trail. The bright full moon had made other celestial objects disappear in its light but then stars started appearing with some of them appearing on the trail in the sky.

As all this happened the trail widened into a road and the scene hung there in front of me as the winds started to blow stronger. I smelled the green sage growing alongside me and felt myself perspiring at this vision. I had seen a road lift off into the sky at Arches National Park in Utah so I was not too surprised, but the stars shimmered so beautifully and were bathed in a clear blue light that I found myself holding my breath at such a wonder.

I counted twelve stars before the moon started glowing again, blocking out the stars with a light reflected from the sun.



*Badlands Road Below:  
The Green Road (2014)*

11" x 14"

*By Dillon Pass, Badlands, SD  
Prismacolor on Archival Paper*

One early morning day hike brought this view of a green road inside a large badland formation. At first it seemed contained in the formation until I saw how the tip of the road on top was not an ending point but that the road continued on into the formation. I tried to walk around the formation but could not climb over the steep grades. Later that week I was hiking on bear butte enjoying a cool morning and having the trail to myself when I came upon a Native American man tying prayer ties to a tree. The usual colors of red, white, yellow and black billowed out on the soft breeze but there was also a green strip of cloth.

I asked the man what the green one meant and he said, "The green road is to take care of the earth and tell the world about our relatives the trees, grass, rocks and water."

I thought about the green road in the badlands and realized then it was a part of my Badlands Road Collection. Since it was inside the formation I decided that in addition to *North, South, East* and *West* there would be *Above* and *Below* and *Inside* and *Outside*.

*The Zig Zag Trail (2014)*

11" x 14"

*By Conata Basin, Badlands, SD  
Prismacolor on Archival Paper*

This is a favorite trail by Conata Basin which zig zags through the yellow and red mounds and then into an open prairie with badland formations standing alone instead of in a wall. I walk around each one to see how it is built and how gravity and erosion work upon it. Each year these structures are different—actually each moment they shift and change like the South Dakota sky. Their colors and shadows and shapes are transformed with each movement of this tiny planet hurtling through space at around 28,000 kmph.

I wonder at these moment to moment changes and realize I do the same when I am awake and alert to my life and surroundings—with each moment I have a chance to learn, feel, see, taste, touch, smell and incorporate these into my foundation of self—allowing my structures of history, present and future to build upon these new "stones" in my foundation. The sky, even when cloudless, changes with each view like the sea of moisture and gas that our atmosphere is so it churns and waves, rolls and runs along its way.

## Selected Birds' Native American Symbolism

### *Place Between Two Rocks' Dawn (2014)*

11" x 14"

*Place Between Two Rocks, Badlands, SD*  
*Prismacolor on Archival Paper*

There is a place in the White River Badlands that has two rocks with a space between them. I can sit all day with those rocks. I have dreamt of them since childhood and was already aware that dreams are real when I saw them on a trail many years ago. I had needed to rest in the shade of a large badland formation and while resting I saw in the hazy heat of mid-afternoon the two rocks.

The heat of the desert floor met with the moist heat of the surrounding air making the scene colored in blue hues. At first, I thought the rocks a mirage, a construction of my imagination based upon my past dreaming. But once I rose to walk over to them, sit between them in their shade, I ended up staying there until the next morning. There was so much to see, feel and learn.

The battle between the rising sun and the night sky was fun to watch as the two rocks started glowing.

John James Audubon is best known for *The Birds of America*, a book of 435 images, portraits of every bird then known in the United States – water-colored painted and then printed in life size. Audubon spent eighteen years finding the birds, making the book, and selling it to subscribers. Audubon also wrote narratives about the birds (*Ornithological Biography*) while also working on paintings of mammals (*The Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America*).

Three of the birds from *The Birds of America* are on view in Galaudet Gallery's My Medicine: Part One exhibit. The Rough Legged Hawk (aka Falcon), The American Crow and Blue Jays were chosen for their Native American symbolism, for the beauty of the prints and because Audubon assisted in the discovery and formulation of knowledge about birds and about how naturalist illustrators should seek artistic qualities in their creations.

For many Sioux Native Americans the blue jay symbolizes clarity of vision and how the blue of the jay against a blue sky means a double vision can occur or a vision with twice the amount of power. Blue on blue often means truth and purity, but mostly clarity.

For many Native Americans the hawk is associated with the power of vision. Just like the hawk can see in great detail at great distances, so too will a vision be able to provide great detail and distance. Hawks are seen as messengers from the spirit world bringing visions and other experiences.

According to many Native American myths the American Crow had the power to talk and was therefore considered to be one of the wisest of birds. The sacred bird of the famous Ghost Dance was the crow. The Ghost Dance Religion used it as a symbol of the past when the crow had acted as a pathfinder for hunting parties. The feathers of the crow were sewn onto their clothes and each dancer was to wear an eagle feather or a crow feather in their hair. The Sioux believed that when the great flood came to earth that the crow feathers would lift the ghost dancers from the ground to the safety of the heavens.<sup>14</sup>

Galaudet Gallery has selected these three birds because of their affinity to Native Americans and because of the high quality of the prints. Audubon was also a consummate artist who “combined a naturalist’s curiosity with an artist’s eye and a poet’s expressiveness to ensure his unique place in the pantheon of natural history.”<sup>15</sup> A true American artist, Audubon has kept the world viewing for almost 150 years.

Through a partnership with the Field Museum, Galaudet Gallery is able to display the taxidermy American Crow, Rough Legged Hawk and two Blue Jays alongside these Audubon prints to elucidate the artistic process of and to assist in our appreciation of these fine birds.

By Vicki Milewski, Curator of Galaudet Gallery

# *My Medicine Part One:*

## *John James Audubon American Artist*

### *Rough Legged Falcon aka Rough Legged Hawk (1833)*

*Resized from original engraving on paper held by the Natural History Museum in London Plate #166 in Birds of America  
Printed on acid free museum paper (2012)*

### *American Crow*

*Resized from original engraving on paper held by the Natural History Museum in London Plate #156 in Birds of America  
Printed on acid free museum paper (2012)*

### *Blue Jay (1830)*

*Resized from original engraving on paper held by the Natural History Museum in London Plate #102 in Birds of America  
Printed on acid free museum paper (2012)*

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<sup>15</sup> The “Early Birds” of John James Audubon”, Roberta J. M. Olson from Master Drawings, Volume 50, Number 4, Winter 2012

## *Blue Jay* (1830)

The *Blue Jay* (*Corvus Cristatus*) demonstrates John James Audubon's mastery at creating lively compositions which he developed from both direct observation and the specimens he collected. Engraved by Robert Havell after Audubon's original watercolor, it captures the villainous character of its subject with a restrained beauty. The image depicts two female and one male blue jay feasting on the eggs of an unidentified bird.

Audubon wrote extensively about his field work and wonderment of the natural world:

The sky was serene, the air perfumed, and thousands of melodious notes, from birds unknown to me, urged me to arise and go in pursuit of those beautiful and happy creatures. Then I would find myself furnished with large and powerful wings, and, cleaving the air like an eagle, I would fly off and by a few joyous bounds overtake the objects of my desire.

From his *Ornithological Biography* (1831–39)

Audubon first did studies of a French Blue Jay in pastel in 1803-5 that show the beginning of his artistic legacy and scientific curiosity.

## *Rough Legged Falcon aka Rough Legged Hawk* (1833)

Due to Audubon's use of the scientific names for each bird he painted, this painting has been called both a hawk and a falcon since its genus *Buteo* is from the Latin for falcon or hawk.

Though Audubon was equally interested in scientific accuracy and fine art quality he tended to write more about the artistic endeavor:

My drawings were first made entirely in watercolors. –  
John James Audubon

But Audubon's watercolors are not watercolors in the sense we are accustomed to, as Audubon's watercolors used mixed-media, such as papers, adhesives, glazes, pastels, graphite, oil paint, egg white, gouache, chalk and more. These watercolors were preparatory compositions or studies to the subsequent producing of the *Birds of America* and were often painted in the field. This collection of 433 watercolors stands as a world class natural history document of the 19th century, and an artistic achievement. The detail, quality and life of his watercolors reveal a meticulous observation of the natural world.

Audubon's watercolors depicted for the first time, life-size, all known species of North American birds in characteristic poses. Each painting presented a drama in the life of the subject, and Audubon succeeded in surpassing what he viewed as



*Rough Legged Falcon aka  
Rough Legged Hawk (1833)*

Continued

the stilted and constrained efforts of previous naturalists.

I felt a great desire to make choice of a style more particularly adapted to the imitation of feathers than the drawings in water colors that I had been in the habit of seeing, and, moreover, to complete a collection not only valuable to the scientific class, but pleasing to every person, by adopting a different course of representation from the mere profile-like cut figures, given usually in the works of that kind.—

John James Audubon

Audubon was enamored in the natural world as evidenced by his art work that shows a care and consideration for each bird from the outward appearance to the ostensible personality. Audubon spent almost two decades tracking, hunting, observing and then painting these birds attempting the honor their death at his artistically hungry hands by producing a masterpiece in each drawing.

*American Crow*

Through *The Birds of America* and his watercolor models for its plates, Audubon sought to transform traditional natural history illustration into an art, and in the process he became a great American artist.

In the past, Audubon's associations with artists in America and abroad and his general familiarity with Old Master painting have been underestimated. He believed that naturalists should know art and also study living creatures, assigning the failure of past ornithological illustration to a lack of this kind of knowledge:

Take such advantages away from the naturalist, who ought to be an artist also, and he fails as completely as Raphael himself must have done, had he not fed his pencil with all belonging to a mind perfectly imbued with professional knowledge of real forms, muscles, bones, movements, and, lastly, that spiritual expression of feelings that paintings like his exhibit so beautifully.—JJ Audubon

Audubon began every watercolor by outlining in graphite the contours of each bird, but no trace of any grid survives. In some cases he also outlined contours with a stylus, or in a few instances anatomical structures, perhaps to transfer the designs to the copperplates or to transfer an earlier composition to the Whatman paper.

**For more information about  
Oscar Howe:**

<http://www.usd.edu/fine-arts/university-art-galleries/oscar-howe-collection.cfm>

<http://www.dakotadiscovery.com/>

**For more information about  
Vicki Milewski:**

[www.vickimilewski.com](http://www.vickimilewski.com)

<http://www.myspace.com/vickimilewski>

[facebook.com/vickimilewski360](https://www.facebook.com/vickimilewski360)

<http://www.linkedin.com/in/vickimilewski>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/VickiMilewski>

**For more information about  
Robert Freeman:**

<http://www.robertfreemanartist.com/>

**For more information about  
John James Audubon:**

<http://www.audubon.org/john-james-audubon>

<http://www.nyhistory.org/explore/john-james-audubon>

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**Galaudet Gallery Mission**

To present fine art exhibitions and education from professional fine artists and emerging talent including oil painting, photography, sculpture, mixed media and multi-media pieces

**Upcoming exhibitions:**

8.8.2014—9.12.2014

The Chakra Collection--Oil Paintings by Vicki Milewski

9.19.2014—10.24.2014

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Vintage Movie and Musician Stills, Comic Book Art