

Art for a New Understanding: Native Voices 1950s to Today

At Crystal Bridges, we're committed to exploring the unfolding story of America. Through the 2014 State of the Art: Discovering American Art Now exhibition, the museum introduced 102 artists who live and work in communities all over the US. We're continuing that effort in 2018 through new installations and the current exhibition, Art for a New Understanding: Native Voices 1950s to Today, organized by Crystal Bridges.

BY RACHEL TUCKER OCTOBER 25, 2018



For *Art for a New Understanding*, Fields has painted a large-scale, site-specific mural titled *Astonishment of Perception*

Yatika Starr Fields

Resides in: Tulsa, OK

Social Media: [Instagram](#)

Yatika Starr Fields was raised in a family of artists; his mother works in ceramics and his father is a photographer. He currently lives in Tulsa, and grew up in Tahlequah, in northeastern Oklahoma, whose nature and landscape continues to influence his work today. While attending the Art Institute of Boston and living in New York, where he worked as a bike messenger, Fields became interested in graffiti aesthetics. He has completed murals as large as one hundred fifty feet long and forty feet high in cities such as Portland, Oregon; Oklahoma City; Phoenix; Santa Fe; and now, Bentonville, Arkansas. For *Art for a New Understanding*, Fields has painted a large-scale, site-specific mural in downtown Bentonville.

Fields pulls inspiration from a variety of sources for his abstractions—bulbous graffiti tags, Pop art, colors and patterns from Oklahoma Osage, Cherokee, and Creek traditions, and the hustle of urban life. He also draws inspiration from his experiences and travels around the world, citing demonstrations, prayer marches, and occupations of land that have been successful in drawing attention to, and in some cases, thwarting harmful actions. In 2016, Fields joined the Oceti Sakowin Camp as part of the Dakota Access Pipeline protests (NoDAPL) in North Dakota to protect sacred land and water sources of the Lakota from the proposed oil pipeline. In camps like Oceti Sakowin, tents furnish what Fields has characterized on his website as a “sense of softness in an otherwise hostile world, yet providing safety . . . claiming space on affected areas and . . . shielding our hopes and our spirits, as well as our physical selves.” The experience inspired the overlapping triangular shapes in vivid colors jumbled together and pressed against the surface of the canvas in the artist’s *Tent Metaphor 2* (2017).