Jessica L. Horton, *Earth Diplomacy: Indigenous American Art, Ecological Crisis, and the Cold War*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2024. 400 pages. ISBN 9781478030492. $30.95 USD paperback.

While the United States and the Soviet Union engaged in a decades-long Cold War, beginning with the latter's control over Eastern Europe in 1947 and continuing until the communist dissolution of 1991, two opposing political ideologies fought military, clandestine, and propagandistic battles under the threat of nuclear annihilation. While the conflict unfolded, a number of critical events involving Indigenous peoples arose in the U.S., including the Termination Policy (1950), the American Indian Movement (AIM) (1968), and the armed Occupation of Wounded Knee (1973). These events threatened the effectiveness of the U.S. propaganda machine, which was then circulating travelling exhibitions of Indigenous art and visual culture internationally. But they were also exploited by the politburo in Moscow to denounce the U.S. government's handling of Indigenous self-determination, land stewardship, and sovereignty. While Indigenous issues were being treated as an international political pawn, even inflaming debate in the United Nations, the hypocrisy of both imperialist nations was deafening.

Jessica L. Horton's book *Earth Diplomacy: Indigenous American Art, Ecological Crisis, and the Cold War* emerges from this period of global turbulence. Employing an "ecocritical art history" (5), the introduction begins by deconstructing Fritz Scholder's painting *Indian and Rhinoceros* (1968) to demonstrate the character and function of Indigenous artist-diplomats as they toured the world through exhibitions and events sponsored by the U.S. Information Agency (USIA). Horton maintains that Indigenous artists, artworks, and exhibitions of the Cold War era enacted Indigenous systems of diplomacy and reciprocity that fundamentally reconfigured the fractured state of geopolitical relations. These diverse practices were, to a certain extent, rooted in ceremonies, rituals, and customs such as pipe smoking, wampum belts, treaty rights, and oral storytelling. Horton argues that Indigenous artist-diplomats of the time reconceptualized a holistic approach to art making, one that entails the symbiotic relationships between humans and other forms of life on the planet—what she refers to as the "more-than-human" (7).

There are a number of terms such as this assigned throughout the book that may not be immediately accessible to some readers. Such terminology also includes "other-than-human," "earth jurisprudence," "cosmopolitics," and "majority world art histories." The delayed definition or contextualisation of these and other disciplinary terminology points to the text's strong orientation toward a specialist readership.

The definition of earth diplomacy is framed within this expanded field of ecology, statecraft, and interconnectivity to encompass what she describes as "sensuous material exchanges that invite political alliances inclusive of the land" (7). In their own way, Horton contends, artists such as Scholder contributed to the splintering of free-market capitalism abroad, including the harms of resource extraction, wealth inequality, and labour exploitation propagated by the United States during the Cold War. To her credit, however, she also introduces the USSR and its allies into the same messy pot of ideological, ecological, and political disorder both here and throughout the book.

In Chapter One, Horton looks to three seminal events that transformed how Indigenous artists negotiated state-sponsored Cold War art programs: Congress's passing of the Termination Policy, President Dwight D. Eisenhower's foundation of the USIA (1953), and the exhibition *Contemporary American Indian Paintings* at the National Gallery of Art (1953). They established the criteria for how Indigenous artists and artwork would be shared throughout the world in

subsequent exhibitions such as *Contemporary American Indian Paintings from the Margretta S. Dietrich Collection*. Yet these expressions of soft power occasionally backfired, almost predictably so, in countries experiencing imperialist meddling and colonial pressures.

Here, Horton introduces the concept of Indigenous kinship to articulate how it operated as a principle deterrent of the U.S.'s global assimilationist and expansionist agenda, serving as "the foundation of Indigenous diplomatic cultures and a fundamental arena of Cold War contestation" (37). Rising out of this chapter is the question of how, precisely, USIA emissaries responded to political retaliation by Indigenous artist-diplomats, and whether they perceived the ideology associated with Indigenous kinship as a threat to the status quo, Eurocentric model of statecraft.

Chapters Two and Three depart from the medium of painting to focus instead on the work of Diné artists Fred Stevens and his wife, Bertha Stevens. On the one hand, Horton establishes how Fred Stevens performed Navajo sand painting as a poetic mode of "assembling people and environments into new relational patterns" (82). Grounded in Hózhǫ́, he enacted uniquely Indigenous manifestations of resistance against state aggression and violence. On the other hand, Bertha Stevens's poignant textiles shaped trans-Indigenous and ecofeminist kinship bonds that mediate the ecocidal and "gendered dimensions of earth diplomacy and its oppression within the patriarchal order" (123). Horton's narration of Bertha Stevens's story, in particular, resonates because it fundamentally unsettles the conventional male-dominated narratives surrounding Cold War diplomacy in North American scholarship, while also foregrounding the diplomatic and generative interventions of Indigenous women artists overseas.

Chapter Four details how the USIA commissioned Blackfeet artist Darryl Blackman to construct a painted Crow lodge for Expo 70 in Japan. Horton makes clear that Expo 70 in Japan, witnessed by sixty-four million visitors, "set the stage for an alternative Indigenous futurism, one in which ancient gifts from earth beings are materialised by human artists to expand a cosmic circle of reciprocity" (166). She posits that, embedded within the tipi itself, was a cosmology of human experience shared with the land, flora, and fauna, cultivating in an oppositional framework that challenged the Vietnam War, as well as American nuclearism and ecocide. Three years earlier, at Expo 67 in Montréal, Indigenous artists and representatives curated the Indians of Canada Pavilion to include didactic panels outlining a blunt counternarrative to settler-colonial violence and injustice. It is unclear whether Blackman himself was aware of the resistance movement emerging within the Indians of Canada Pavilion in 1967 and, if so, how this awareness may have shaped the design, status, and function of his tipi during the 1970 Exposition. If this is correct, then his project would appear to be far more subversive than is commonly recognized.

The final chapter, Chapter Five, investigates how Oscar Howe's portrayal of ceremonial Dakota pipe smoking articulates Indigenous diplomacy and relationality. The ceremony gained resurgence in 1971, as the artist officially toured nine countries with the U.S. Department of State (DOS), and AIM activists were embracing it as a metaphor for Indigenous political mobilisation. It is through its smoking that Horton finds a "rich history and sensibility," be they "aesthetic, spiritual, ecological, and diplomatic," that allows us to reconsider "modernist abstraction and political relations" (218). Howe and his work are regarded as a paragon for cultural diplomacy, one that integrates elements of sacred spirituality within a productive matrix of listening, mutual care, interchange, and respect—the very things that diplomatic ideals are based on but seldom follow. The chapter finalises the chronological narrative of the book, culminating in 1973 with the AIM occupation of Wounded Knee. Horton rightly states that the optics surrounding that germinal event, coupled with other overlapping events, would become a propagandic liability for U.S.

diplomatic missions, so Indigenous artists and artwork were quickly and quietly supplanted for more palatable soft power strategies.

The book concludes with a brief section titled *"Artist-Diplomat-Vampire,"* which explains how, during the Romanian leg of his touring exhibition, *Two American Painters: Fritz Scholder and T. C. Canon,* Fritz Scholder "defected" from the tour to instead visit sites in Transylvania (269). Upon his eventual return to the tour in West Berlin, he had created a fascinating series of eleven small paintings titled *Indian/Vampir.* "Interpreted through the lens of earth diplomacy," Horton writes, "vampires also have the potential to activate more-than-human kinship, reciprocity, and regeneration," adding, "Theirs is the spiraled temporality of renewal, of simultaneity with ancestors, future generations, and other-than-human beings, common to Indigenous ceremonies" (275). The selection of Scholder's enigmatic series to illustrate her final observations on earth diplomacy is curious, since Bram Stoker characterised vampires as sadistic and immoral beings with an insatiable hunger to assimilate loved ones and innocents into their death ritual through bloodletting. This says nothing of spreading terror and suspicion throughout Transylvania and England. As such, it is difficult to reconcile the dark ethos of vampires with Horton's favourable portrayal of them.

One of the lingering questions of Horton's book is whether the actions and interventions of Cold War artist-diplomats produced real, lasting political transformation in the cities and countries where their work and exhibitions circulated both during USIA sponsored activities and after governmental organisations began to distance themselves from Indigenous-related content. The question of how, exactly, Indigenous modes of interconnection, reciprocity, and kinship affected then dispersed among these communities and citizenry seems to necessitate a separate and wholly distinctive body of research. To take this line of flight further, do official or declassified documents exist that unambiguously highlight the exploitation of Indigenous artist-diplomats and artwork for purposes of U.S. government propaganda? And, if so, to what extent do they corroborate Horton's observations regarding earth diplomacy?

Horton's book is rigorously researched and theoretically sophisticated, yet the density of citations—104 in the Introduction alone—incidentally causes the voice of the writer to fade into the analysis of others. Somewhat ironically, the voices and experiences of the artist-diplomats themselves are also limited in certain sections of the book, with the first citation from an Indigenous artist or representative not appearing until page 51. This problematises the authoritative voice of non-Indigenous writers like Horton (and myself) when speaking about Indigenous art, artists, and communities. As I have been reminded, this can be mitigated, to some extent, by centering Indigenous voices and agency through frequent and direct citation of their words, thereby enabling these to determine the discursive trajectory of the text.

By positioning Indigenous knowledge and worldviews at the centre of environmental crisis and international statecraft, *Earth Diplomacy* impresses both through its meticulous research and ambitious objectives. The book is recommended to specialists in Art History, Ecology, Indigenous Studies, Museology, and Political Science, given its theoretical framework, disciplinary vocabulary, and historical subject matter. It will be of particular value to scholars interested in the convergences between Indigenous art, epistemology, and the environment during the period from 1947 to 1973. This is not to imply, however, that the book's scope is confined to international activities in Europe, Asia, or beyond; it also engages with pivotal developments within the domestic U.S., including ecofeminism, extractive capitalism, and trans-Indigenous relations.

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