

Lesson 4: Community

Art for the Masses

The contemporary Native American art world has experienced a creative explosion of exciting new art trends. Two of the hottest are live paints and art battles. These are performance art events where artists demonstrate their talent and showcase their art before a live audience.

Live paints, featured at events like parties and art receptions, are full of creative energy and audience participation. The paintings often have to be created in a hour or less and a D.J. plays live music throughout the event. Although typically created on canvas, other media like skateboard decks can be used. At the end of the event, the audience has the opportunity to win or purchase the piece that was just created.

Art battles create a similar vibe, but instead of a single artist creating a piece of artwork, multiple artists compete against each other side-by-side to create the best painting. Most of the artists who compete create a vibrant blend of graffiti art and fine art. The audience gets to see firsthand the different techniques the artists use to create their paintings. Through applause and cheering, the audience also selects the winner of the battle, allowing that artist to advance to the next round of competition.

Live paints and art battles have cultivated a new community of young artists and art fans. Topics for the pieces often include Native identity, contemporary issues and pop culture. Performance paint events, like the OKC Nike N7 launch party and the Art Battles NYC, usually draw hundreds to thousands of people eager to see what their favorite artists create.



Bunky Echo-Hawk (Pawnee/Yakama),
OKC launch Party for Nike N7 line



Bunky Echo-Hawk



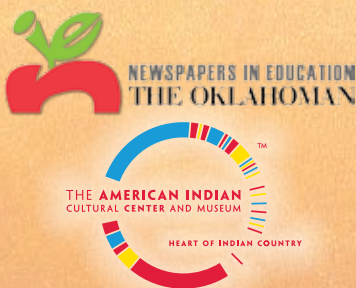
Art Battles NYC, Yatika Fields (Osage/Muscogee Creek/Cherokee)

Activity:

Check out a live paint at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=degjYOn4r70>

See an interview about art battles: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yUHQLvluYVE>

Visit <http://nie.newsok.com/> Contemporary Native American Art Teachers Guide to download a skateboard deck template to create your own skateboard design.



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