



**“We’re still here,  
and we’re very  
much alive.”**

**Patty Gobin  
TULALIP**

**BEYOND  
THE FRAME**

To Be Native

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

# What does it mean to be Native, beyond the frame?

Emily Washines (Yakama) speaks at the Beyond The Frame launch. The phrase “To Be Native” focuses Beyond The Frame on the living present, said Washines, whose relatives were photographed by Curtis.

Photo: Beau Garreau (Lakǰóta)



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Washington State  
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Wenatchee River  
Salmon Festival

Wenatchee Valley Museum  
and Cultural Center

Yakama Nation Museum

The 150th birthday of renowned photographer Edward Curtis presented an opportunity to ask a profoundly resonant question for today's world: what does it mean to be Native – Beyond the Frame?

Git-Hoan Dancers launch Beyond The Frame at Chihuly Garden and Glass with a dance of the Tsimshian coastal peoples.

Photo: Beau Garreau (Lak'hóta)



During the early 1900s, Curtis made more than 40,000 photographs, films, and audio recordings of 80 North American tribes. That work is historically significant. But in many ways, it also boxed Native people into a past Curtis believed was more “real” or “authentic” than contemporary life—including the contemporary lives Native people were living at the time.

**“The power to tell our stories, to use our own voice, is what will give us the power once again to become prosperous.”**

**Chris Stearns**  
NAVAJO

In 2018-19, more than two dozen tribal and cultural organizations in the Pacific Northwest revisited Curtis' work under the banner of Beyond The Frame – To Be Native. While their exhibits and events took different approaches and perspectives, most were determined not to be constrained by the same narratives that had been told for decades about Curtis and the peoples he photographed. Many made intentional space to celebrate Indigenous perspectives.

**Beyond The Frame was an opportunity for people across the region to listen to Native voices. Today, Curtis's work does not invite us to gaze on a supposedly "lost" past—rather, it calls us to engage with a thriving Native present.**

# Who tells your story?

Beyond The Frame exhibits and events across Washington called visitors to rethink how Native history is shared. How does transforming a narrative transform its impact?

Seattle Art Museum's Double Exposure provided a counternarrative to its Curtis photographs with multi-media installations from contemporary Indigenous artists Marianne Nicolson ('Tayagila'ogwa), Tracy Rector (mixed-race Choctaw/Seminole), and Will Wilson (Diné).

Photo: Natali Wiseman





A panel of Native artists and leaders at Hugo House discusses the documentary Looking At Edward Curtis; at center is filmmaker Marie Clements (Métis).

Photo: Alexander Woldeab

“Our facility is on land that was originally inhabited by indigenous people; we now acknowledge that before every event. We have stronger ties and a deeper commitment to Native peoples as a result of Beyond The Frame.”

**Tree Swenson**  
Executive Director  
HUGO HOUSE





Visiting artist Steven Paul Judd (Kiowa-Choctaw) led several Beyond The Frame events across Central Washington. This mosaic is one of four he created in collaboration with Wenatchee Valley residents, and is now in the collection of North Central Regional Library system. Art, Judd said, has been instrumental in understanding his own Native identity.

Photo: Sarah Fitzgerald



# Engaging a region

Beyond The Frame connected with people well beyond exhibits themselves. Starbucks highlighted the initiative with posters in 400 stores across Washington. Beyondtheframe.org shared Native perspectives and discussion guides, as well as details about events.



“This is our story. Be part of us, walk with us, walk next to us, walk behind us. But be part of our world that’s been so much a part of us through our bloodlines.”

**Debra Lekanoff**  
TLINGIT



“Princess Angeline”  
Edward S. Curtis  
c.1896

**It’s my turn to tell my story.**

Hear our voices. Visit [BeyondTheFrame.org](http://BeyondTheFrame.org).



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“On Spatsium River”  
Edward S. Curtis  
c.1910

**What does “You’re on Indian Land” mean?**

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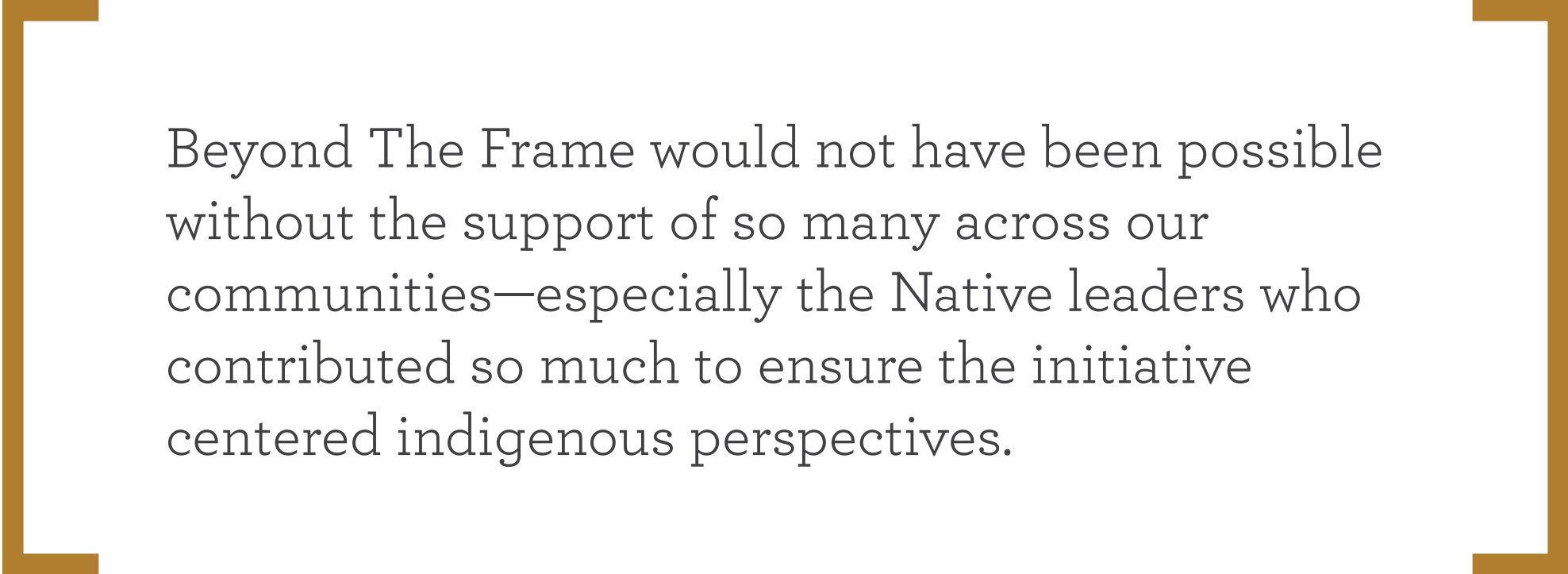


“Cowlitz Girl”  
Edward S. Curtis  
c.1913

**Think you know about me? Think again.**

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Beyond The Frame would not have been possible without the support of so many across our communities—especially the Native leaders who contributed so much to ensure the initiative centered indigenous perspectives.

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