Exhibition Details

Size: 6,000 ft$^2$ (550 m$^2$)

Ceiling Height: 12 ft. (3.66 m)

Tour: Launches Summer 2021

Curators:
Nina Sanders, Apsáalooke, Field Museum Guest Curator, Senior Research Fellow at the University of Chicago

Alaka Wali, Ph.D., Field Museum Curator of North American Anthropology

Meranda Owens, Ph.D., Northern Paiute and Chicanx, Field Museum Postdoctoral Research Scientist
**Features**

- 39 historic objects, including 7 war shields from the Field Museum’s collection
- 22 works by 18 contemporary Apsáalooke artists, including Elias Not Afraid, Ben Pease, Birdie Real Bird, Kevin Red Star, Adam Sings in the Timber, Bethany Yellowtail, and others
- 1 full-size Apsáalooke tipi
- 3 replications, including beadwork and a coup stick from Apsáalooke makers
- 5 media pieces, including a video featuring the fashion of Bethany Yellowtail with audio by Supaman
- 2 digital interactives, including a historic ledger book from the NMAI collection

**Contact Information:** 312.665.7311 travelingexh@fieldmuseum.org
Through traditional and contemporary art, the Apsáalooke people of the Northern Plains honor women and celebrate bravery.
Marketing Messages
Celebrate the bravery, strength, and vitality of Apsáalooke culture with *Apsáalooke Women and Warriors*, a traveling exhibition from the Field Museum. Journey alongside the Apsáalooke people as they reflect on their past and shape their future through a unique mix of traditional objects and contemporary Native American artwork.
Created in partnership with the Apsáalooke people (also known as the Crow) from the Northern Plains of the United States, *Apsáalooke Women and Warriors* is an immersive exhibition exploring the history, values, and beliefs of this native community. Learn about the origin story of the Apsáalooke nation, the powerful roles women and warriors hold in their society, and understand the importance of honor and bravery in Apsáalooke culture.
See the connection of past and present Apsáalooke belief systems through art and objects by viewing historic war shields and regalia, a full-size contemporary tipi, and over 20 works of contemporary Native American art, including spectacular paintings, vivid photography, extraordinary beadwork, and high fashion.
Exhibition Summary

EMERGENCE & CREATION
- Creation Story
- Cosmology
- Language

JOURNEY
- Literal: Geography & Migration
- Spiritual: Becoming Apsáalooke

PEOPLE
- Apsáalooke worldview
- Meet important Apsáalooke individuals
- Matriarchy: Women are celebrated, leaders, life-givers
- Artistry and beadwork
- Courtship

BRAVERY & SUCCESS
- Bravery and honor in war
- War medicine & spirituality
- Individual shield stories
- Counting coup: defining and redefining success

CONCLUSION
- Celebration
Visitor Goals
**VISITOR GOALS**

**Sensory/Motor**

Visitors will

- See historic objects and contemporary art together
- See a full-scale Apsáalooke tipi
- Touch Apsáalooke flat stitch beadwork
- Hear the Apsáalooke language spoken and sung out loud
- See the faces of historic and contemporary Apsáalooke people

**Affective**

Visitors will feel

- Fun and excitement at the color, texture, and movement in the space
- Impressed at the painstaking and labor-intensive beadwork process
- Awed by historic and contemporary acts of counting coup
- Personal connection to individual Apsáalooke people and stories
- Curious and inspired to know more about Apsáalooke culture

**Cognitive**

Visitors will know/learn

- Bravery and beauty are critical to Apsáalooke culture
- Women are the center of Apsáalooke culture
- Counting coup means winning prestige, displaying exceptional bravery to gain honor
- Apsáalooke people are still alive, carrying on and redefining their culture
Experience Map
Section 1: Emergence and Creation
Visitors entering the space will meet Brings the Water (Nina Sanders) in graphic form, who tells them that she will be narrating this exhibit and telling the story of her people.

Overhead, visitors hear a woman speaking in an unfamiliar language—Apsáalooke. They encounter two decorated tobacco bags in a case, and read about the sacredness of tobacco and a blessing upon entering the space. They also see a large, starry sky mural with replicated tobacco plants in front of it. The journey to find tobacco and the stories told in the stars make the Apsáalooke people, Apsáalooke.

Moving toward the back of the gallery, they see a colorful animated media piece—the source of the overheard voice. This media piece tells the human creation story as known by the Apsáalooke.
Section 1: Emergence and Creation

SECTION ELEMENTS

Introduction
- Meet Brings the Water (a.k.a. Nina Sanders): Introduction graphic

Creation Story
- Two historic tobacco bundles
- Media piece: creation story animation

Cosmology/Tobacco Journey Begins
- Replicated tobacco plants (*Nicotiana quadrivalvis*) with starry sky mural background
- Cosmology theme panel
Section 2: Journey
As visitors enter the second gallery, they walk alongside a transitional mural depicting artwork by Ben Pease titled *Sacred Under the Cliffs of Yellowstone*.

Turning the corner, they see a full-scale tipi with traditional tipi furniture inside. Behind the tipi is a panoramic mural of the Big Horn Mountains, where the Apsáalooke found the sacred tobacco many years ago.

Also in this gallery are various pieces of historic horse regalia: a saddle, a head ornament, and a parfleche suitcase. Each case is flanked by a floor-to-ceiling banner of an Apsáalooke person.

Visitors will learn that the Apsáalooke took a journey both physical and spiritual to find the sacred tobacco plant, and the place they’d call home.
Section 2: Journey

SECTION ELEMENTS

Introduction
• Scrim mural: Ben Pease Sacred Under the Cliffs of Yellowstone

Tipi
• Tipi display, with prop furnishings and painted door by Mona Medicine Crow
• Mural backdrop of the Big Horn Mountains
• Apsáalooke journey map graphic

Historic horse regalia/the importance of horses
• Historic horse regalia in cases: head ornament, saddle, martingale
• Buffalo hide parfleche
Section 3: People
APSÁALOKE WOMEN AND WARRIORS
After witnessing the Apsáalooke migration story, visitors will move into the next section about people. More floor-to-ceiling banners depicting historic Apsáalooke people adorn the space.

At the start of the section are mannequins representing an Apsáalooke man and woman, each dressed in traditional regalia. Women are at the center of Apsáalooke culture, and men are as good as the women who raise them.

Nearby, visitors see a 12-ft sculpture by Ben Pease of an Apsáalooke man and woman back-to-back, each dressed in regalia and stepping forward.

A horse mannequin stands in the center of the room outfitted in beaded regalia. Horses, like human beings, have souls, and are to be treated like family members.
A row of cases display beadwork, from historic to contemporary pieces, which is integral to Apsáalooke culture. A large projection at the back of the room depicts the tattooed hands of Elias Not Afraid, one of the star beaders featured in the exhibition, beading a piece in real time. Beneath it, visitors can touch the very same piece Elias is working on and appreciate its craftsmanship. They will learn about the beadwork process and see an example of a modern beadwork kit.
Section 3: People (Part 1)

SECTION ELEMENTS

Woman & Man
- Garments on open-air mannequins
- Ben Pease sculpture
- Historic cradleboard

Beadwork
- Beaded flag of Crow Tribe by Karis Jackson
- Apsáalooke flag interactive
- Historic cradle board
- Historic beaded bag
In this part of the People section, visitors continue to learn about ways Apsáalooke people honor women, historically and today. Contemporary paintings from Allen Knows His Gun and Ben Pease depict women with children, women on horses, and women with golden halos—all signifying the importance of women and the roles they play.

We learn that women are the keepers of Apsáalooke culture. A display featuring a mannequin dressed in a trade cloth dress with braided hair stands next to a small doll dressed in the same way. Directional audio tells visitors that the speaker is Birdie Real Bird, who creates these dolls and outfits like this after receiving a vision of her late mother in a dream.
Visitors move on from this display to see another mannequin dressed in a modern-looking formal dress with Apsáalooke motifs, and a beaded mirror bag. Graphics tell visitors that part of being Apsáalooke is focusing on inner and outward beauty. A large blanket on the wall and a flip-book digital interactive tell the story of relationships in Apsáalooke culture, and the importance of cultivating and maintaining partnerships.

Having explored, met, and learned about various Apsáalooke individuals, visitors see a familiar, Native-looking headdress with a long, feathered tail. This is a war bonnet, worn by the bravest and strongest of the Apsáalooke: chiefs.
Section 3: People (Part 2)

SECTION ELEMENTS

Honoring Women
- Allen Knows His Gun painting
- Ben Pease painting Wherein Lies the Beauty of Life
- Birdie Real Bird doll with audio story
- Birdie Real Bird historic dress
- Historic blanket with beaded strip
- Ben Pease portrait of Pretty Shield

Relationships and Beauty
- Della Big Hair-Stump formal dress
- Historic mirror bag
- Historic ledger book
- Ledger book digital rail interactive
Section 4:
Bravery & Success
Entering the next gallery, visitors see a tall decorated pole sticking out of a landform: this is a coup stick, which Apsáalooke warriors would have used to ride close and touch the enemy without killing them—the most iconic form of counting coup. Here visitors will learn about contemporary examples of counting coup: Joe Medicine Crow’s participation in WWII and Kevin Red Star’s famous paintings being two examples.

Turning the corner, visitors encounter an array of decorated shields, each in its own case with a floor-to-ceiling photograph of a woman behind it. Shields are made by men, but cared for and interpreted by women. These shields are solemn, spiritual, and cared for by the women in this gallery.

As they exit, visitors read about a historic riding crop, or quirt, and see a painting of famous two-spirit, transgender Apsáalooke beadworker and warrior named Finds Them and Kills Them.
Section 4: Bravery & Success

SECTION ELEMENTS

Introduction
• Coup stick in landform

Contemporary Success
• Joe Medicine Crow bronze star
• Karis Jackson *Blessing of a Leader* beadwork
• Kevin Red Star paintings (x4)
Section 4: Bravery & Success (continued)

SECTION ELEMENTS

Shields
- Shield: Spotted Tail
- War Shirt: Spotted Tail
- Shield: Charges Strong
- Shield: Crazy Pon de Ray/Kiss
- Shield: Owner Unknown (x4)

Historic Bravery and War Deeds
- Historic quirt
- Del Curfman painting *Finds Them and Kills Them and Other Magpie*
Section 5: Celebration
APSÁALOKE WOMEN AND WARRIORS
As visitors enter the final section, they are met with an explosion of color and music. Metallic gold displays highlight six mannequins featuring fashions by Apsáalooke fashion designer Bethany Yellowtail. At the center is a historic outfit of Irene Not Afraid Yellowtail’s, Bethany’s grandmother and primary inspiration. On tall vertical screens we see commercial footage of Bethany’s fashions in Crow country among the grasses and plains on tall. Her collection celebrates Native American artistry and entrepreneurship. Hip-hop music by Christian Parish (a.k.a. Supaman) puts an Apsáalooke twist on a familiar sound.

Exiting the space, visitors encounter a large backlit mural of Crow Fair and a panel explaining it is the largest annual gathering of Apsáalooke people. Each year they gather to celebrate, show off their regalia, participate in rodeos and pow wows, come together as families, and remind the public and each other that they are still here.
Section 5: Celebration

SECTION ELEMENTS

Bethany Yellowtail and Supaman
- Irene Not Afraid Yellowtail historic outfit
- Bethany Yellowtail outfits (x6)
- Bethany Yellowtail fashion video with Supaman audio

Crow Fair
- Della Big Hair-Stump formal dress
- Historic mirror bag
- Historic ledger book
- Ledger book digital rail interactive
Apsáalooke Women and Warriors is an exhibition jointly organized by the Field Museum and the Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society at the University of Chicago.

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