

<begin subtitles>

01:00:06:08 01:00:11:08

♪♪

01:00:11:16 01:00:13:16

Welcome to "The First Twenty."

01:00:13:16 01:00:15:09

I'm James King.

01:00:15:09 01:00:18:04

In this episode,
we meet Jeremy Dennis,

01:00:18:04 01:00:20:05

a contemporary
fine art photographer

01:00:20:05 01:00:22:17

and member of the
Shinnecock Indian Nation,

01:00:22:17 01:00:25:10

whose work explores
indigenous identity,

01:00:25:10 01:00:27:18

assimilation, and tradition.

01:00:27:18 01:00:29:07

In addition to discussing

01:00:29:07 01:00:31:14

the evolution
of Native American art,

01:00:31:14 01:00:33:11

Jeremy shares the inspiration

01:00:33:11 01:00:36:06

for Ma's House
& BIPOC Art Studio,

01:00:36:06 01:00:38:21

an artists' retreat
and communal art space

01:00:38:21 01:00:40:20

on the Shinnecock Indian
Reservation

01:00:40:20 01:00:42:12
in Southampton, New York,

01:00:42:12 01:00:46:18
that will provide a safe space
for free creativity and healing.

01:00:46:18 01:00:48:19
We hope you enjoy
this intimate look

01:00:48:19 01:00:53:19
at the intersection of visual
art and social justice.

01:00:54:14 01:00:59:14
♪♪

01:01:08:22 01:01:13:22
♪♪

01:01:17:06 01:01:21:11
♪♪

01:01:21:11 01:01:24:02
Dennis:
When I create my visual art,

01:01:24:02 01:01:26:05
I often think of the future

01:01:26:05 01:01:29:12
because, especially
as an indigenous artist,

01:01:29:12 01:01:32:15
you're constantly trying
to place yourself in history,

01:01:32:15 01:01:36:03
in time and space,

01:01:36:03 01:01:41:03
and you're often trying to work
against the prejudices

01:01:41:08 01:01:43:12
of people that are
approaching your work.

01:01:43:12 01:01:48:12

♪♪

01:01:49:08 01:01:52:10

I think that, when people hear
you're going to go see a show

01:01:52:10 01:01:55:03

by a Native artist
or indigenous artist,

01:01:55:03 01:01:57:14

they probably think
it's about the past.

01:01:57:14 01:01:59:06

They probably think it's
about events

01:01:59:06 01:02:01:10

that happened hundreds
of years ago.

01:02:01:10 01:02:04:20

But, in my work, knowing that,

01:02:04:20 01:02:09:18

I try to create work that blends
different time periods together.

01:02:09:18 01:02:12:03

I try to appreciate the past

01:02:12:03 01:02:13:22

and incorporate it
in different ways,

01:02:13:22 01:02:17:12

but I think that people need
to recognize indigenous people

01:02:17:12 01:02:20:16

as a changing
and dynamic culture

01:02:20:16 01:02:22:09

that we can just be ourselves

01:02:22:09 01:02:24:16

without actually having
to appeal

01:02:24:16 01:02:27:18
to tropes and stereotypes.

01:02:27:18 01:02:31:01
And so I wanted to look
at social issues,

01:02:31:01 01:02:34:03
look at education,
look at history,

01:02:34:03 01:02:37:00
and try to figure out how,
as an artist,

01:02:37:00 01:02:40:19
you can approach these topics
and educate through your work.

01:02:40:19 01:02:42:15
♪♪

01:02:42:15 01:02:44:22
People just know so little
about you

01:02:44:22 01:02:46:21
that they don't even know
that you exist

01:02:46:21 01:02:49:01
as a people and as a community.

01:02:49:01 01:02:52:16
Just the fact that you have
some sort of medium --

01:02:52:16 01:02:55:02
in my case,
digital photography --

01:02:55:02 01:02:58:17
and you're able to generate,
from almost scratch,

01:02:58:17 01:03:01:06
these pictures

that tell a story,

01:03:01:06 01:03:04:08
that give people a chance
to have a conversation

01:03:04:08 01:03:07:19
and really, for me, it's
about celebrating my ancestry

01:03:07:19 01:03:10:10
and sharing it
with a wider audience.

01:03:10:10 01:03:13:05
♪♪

01:03:13:05 01:03:15:07
For the past year,
I've been working

01:03:15:07 01:03:18:19
on a communal art space
called Ma's House.

01:03:18:19 01:03:23:16
Ma's House is an indigenous-led
art communal space

01:03:23:16 01:03:25:08
on the Shinnecock Indian
Reservation

01:03:25:08 01:03:27:02
in Southampton, New York.

01:03:27:02 01:03:31:04
We're a very small community
of about 600 tribal members

01:03:31:04 01:03:33:01
who live on the territory

01:03:33:01 01:03:37:17
and the territory itself is
about 800 square acres of land.

01:03:37:17 01:03:40:03
If you look at it on satellite,

01:03:40:03 01:03:44:15
north to south, it's probably
one mile in length.

01:03:44:15 01:03:46:07
When you approach Ma's House,

01:03:46:07 01:03:49:09
you see this
very beautiful facade

01:03:49:09 01:03:53:08
that [Laughs] represents
a barn, in most people's eyes.

01:03:53:08 01:03:58:08
There's a plan to make it
into a museum, a gallery space,

01:03:58:20 01:04:01:21
general communal art space
for people of color,

01:04:01:21 01:04:04:02
especially
the Shinnecock community.

01:04:04:02 01:04:05:23
And it's really
a beautiful space

01:04:05:23 01:04:09:13
that will support, primarily,
artists of color

01:04:09:13 01:04:12:05
through different
art exhibitions,

01:04:12:05 01:04:16:24
through artist residencies,
and just different programming

01:04:16:24 01:04:19:20
around bringing
different people together

01:04:19:20 01:04:22:03
and, hopefully, foster
the next generation of artists

01:04:22:03 01:04:24:14
in this local community.

01:04:24:14 01:04:28:02
I decided to call the project
Ma's House because,

01:04:28:02 01:04:30:06
when I was growing up
in this house,

01:04:30:06 01:04:33:14
my grandmother was always
around the house.

01:04:33:14 01:04:36:05
She had a beloved nickname,
"Ma,"

01:04:36:05 01:04:38:18
but her birth name was
Loretta Silva.

01:04:38:18 01:04:41:09
When she was towards
the end of her life,

01:04:41:09 01:04:43:02
my mom asked my grandmother,

01:04:43:02 01:04:44:09
"What should we do
with the house?"

01:04:44:09 01:04:46:23
This family house
on the reservation.

01:04:46:23 01:04:49:14
And, eventually, she answered,

01:04:49:14 01:04:51:15
"Let's just make it
into a museum

01:04:51:15 01:04:54:01
to honor our family history,

01:04:54:01 01:04:56:21

along with that
of Shinnecock history."

01:04:56:21 01:04:58:18
She thought it would be
a good idea

01:04:58:18 01:05:03:03
because both parents thought
it was always important

01:05:03:03 01:05:05:14
for all their children
to learn about our culture

01:05:05:14 01:05:07:20
and just be invested in it.

01:05:07:20 01:05:10:16
You know, who we were,
our identity,

01:05:10:16 01:05:12:23
and just to highlight it
at Ma's house,

01:05:12:23 01:05:16:15
so, that's what she meant
by making it into a museum.

01:05:16:15 01:05:19:10
Dennis: Just that, alone,
is really inspiring to me,

01:05:19:10 01:05:22:03
to honor her legacy
through this gesture

01:05:22:03 01:05:25:09
of fostering
this art communal space.

01:05:25:09 01:05:27:13
This house represents family.

01:05:27:13 01:05:31:18
It represents community
and opportunity.

01:05:31:18 01:05:33:17

Ma's House is actually a house

01:05:33:17 01:05:35:22
that was just down the road
from my family's home,

01:05:35:22 01:05:38:00
and it was actually the home
that my uncle

01:05:38:00 01:05:40:00
was going to retire in.

01:05:40:00 01:05:42:21
And so I spoke with him,
at first.

01:05:42:21 01:05:45:12
I was just giving him
general questions like,

01:05:45:12 01:05:47:18
"How much money
would it probably take?"

01:05:47:18 01:05:52:11
And he actually said \$50,000
would probably be pretty ideal

01:05:52:11 01:05:55:16
for the investment,
to get it into a livable state.

01:05:55:16 01:05:58:09
I knew that the plumbing
needed to be replaced.

01:05:58:09 01:06:01:20
Most of the electricity
was sort of improvised

01:06:01:20 01:06:03:15
and so I thought maybe,
in my mind,

01:06:03:15 01:06:06:03
[Laughs]
\$50,000 was doable.

01:06:06:03 01:06:09:15

I didn't really have
that general understanding.

01:06:09:15 01:06:13:04
Just the plumbing alone,
that was nearly \$50,000.

01:06:13:04 01:06:15:09
It's just been ever-growing.

01:06:15:09 01:06:17:24
The thing that's been
good, however,

01:06:17:24 01:06:19:13
is the generosity of people

01:06:19:13 01:06:22:24
who learned about the project
and share the project.

01:06:22:24 01:06:24:19
And I think that, if it weren't

01:06:24:19 01:06:28:02
for that generosity
of those individuals,

01:06:28:02 01:06:30:18
many of whom are
my friends and family,

01:06:30:18 01:06:34:03
I probably wouldn't even be able
to start this project.

01:06:34:03 01:06:35:15
I remember one --

01:06:35:15 01:06:36:18
[Laughs]
well, it's actually two things

01:06:36:18 01:06:38:04
that were really surprising.

01:06:38:04 01:06:42:04
There are these 700-pound
furnace in the basement

01:06:42:04 01:06:44:21
that was totally detached
from any plumbing

01:06:44:21 01:06:46:23
and, somehow,
we had to carry that

01:06:46:23 01:06:50:14
out of the basement,
up two flights of stairs.

01:06:50:14 01:06:53:14
We had different
community members come down

01:06:53:14 01:06:56:23
and we could barely get it,
with probably seven of us.

01:06:56:23 01:06:58:08
My uncle, for some reason,

01:06:58:08 01:07:01:11
stored an old Harley Davidson
motorcycle in the basement

01:07:01:11 01:07:04:04
and so [Laughs]
that was just really a headache,

01:07:04:04 01:07:06:03
to even try to get
out of the basement.

01:07:06:03 01:07:07:24
I don't even know
why you would store it

01:07:07:24 01:07:12:24
in such a humid and dark place,
but, I think that was just --

01:07:13:08 01:07:15:03
I think those two
were just different signs

01:07:15:03 01:07:18:18
that this project, possible,
is going to be difficult,

01:07:18:18 01:07:21:13
but, I think, in the end,
it was really worth it.

01:07:21:13 01:07:22:22
And it's hard to believe,

01:07:22:22 01:07:25:00
going down there
in the basement again,

01:07:25:00 01:07:29:09
what it looks like today,
versus what we started with.

01:07:29:09 01:07:32:21
One of the big difficulties
of renovating Ma's House

01:07:32:21 01:07:36:00
was the fact that
you can't even get

01:07:36:00 01:07:38:13
a bank mortgage or grant
of any kind

01:07:38:13 01:07:40:18
for housing on the reservation.

01:07:40:18 01:07:43:03
The reason for that
is the fact that,

01:07:43:03 01:07:44:23
if you have to default
on your loan

01:07:44:23 01:07:46:12
or you can't pay your bills,

01:07:46:12 01:07:49:14
the bank can't take your land,
they can't take your home,

01:07:49:14 01:07:53:16
especially on indigenous
tribal territory.

01:07:53:16 01:07:55:06
I guess that makes sense
on their end,

01:07:55:06 01:07:57:22
for their liabilities,
but, on my end,

01:07:57:22 01:07:59:19
it kind of felt discriminatory.

01:07:59:19 01:08:04:03
It felt like, "Well, how am I
supposed to build a house?"

01:08:04:03 01:08:06:05
Especially those
who don't even have a house

01:08:06:05 01:08:07:21
or a frame to begin with.

01:08:07:21 01:08:09:21
Are they supposed
to just save up

01:08:09:21 01:08:14:21
tens of thousands of dollars
before they even start anything?

01:08:15:00 01:08:18:05
All of this excitement
from my family came out,

01:08:18:05 01:08:21:03
in terms
of helping to finance,

01:08:21:03 01:08:22:24
trying to rescue the house,

01:08:22:24 01:08:24:20
just in terms
of volunteering time

01:08:24:20 01:08:28:09
to come down and do
house improvement jobs.

01:08:28:09 01:08:32:12

And I really remember,
when my mom walked down one day,

01:08:32:12 01:08:35:13
she was just so delighted
to know the fact that

01:08:35:13 01:08:38:03
this house that, really,
all of us grew up in,

01:08:38:03 01:08:39:13
my mom included,

01:08:39:13 01:08:43:24
was finally being restored
to its former glory.

01:08:43:24 01:08:47:03
Out of the pandemic,
a silver lining was

01:08:47:03 01:08:50:02
the rebirth of Ma's house again

01:08:50:02 01:08:53:06
because it was, you know,
just a matrilineal place

01:08:53:06 01:08:57:21
of love and laughter
and fun in a safe house, so,

01:08:57:21 01:09:01:06
that's going to be
something to share.

01:09:01:06 01:09:03:04
We've actually already
had one program

01:09:03:04 01:09:06:23
with Shinnecock Artist
Andrina Smith.

01:09:06:23 01:09:11:00
It feels really great to be

01:09:11:00 01:09:14:22
in a space where I get

to share a meal

01:09:14:22 01:09:17:14
and some of my work with people.

01:09:17:14 01:09:20:02
I think one of those things
that has been lost most

01:09:20:02 01:09:22:18
during this time, is community,

01:09:22:18 01:09:25:09
and to be able to reignite all

01:09:25:09 01:09:28:10
of those familiar
community elements again,

01:09:28:10 01:09:32:08
starting with a hearty meal
with a good group of people,

01:09:32:08 01:09:36:10
is a really fun way to kind of
reenter this process, you know?

01:09:36:10 01:09:38:03
To me,
that was just such a relief,

01:09:38:03 01:09:41:23
to have so many people
in one room at a time,

01:09:41:23 01:09:45:10
especially with COVID-19 still
lingering in the background,

01:09:45:10 01:09:47:16
along with the fact
that this is such an old house

01:09:47:16 01:09:50:08
that needed so much work.

01:09:50:08 01:09:51:13
With Ma's House

01:09:51:13 01:09:53:18

and this collaboration
with indigenous artists,

01:09:53:18 01:09:56:05
I'm really trying
to foster dialogue

01:09:56:05 01:10:00:13
between our local community
and Southampton and more abroad.

01:10:00:13 01:10:01:23
"We were here
for thousands

01:10:01:23 01:10:03:01
and thousands of years

01:10:03:01 01:10:04:21
before the first
white settlers arrived

01:10:04:21 01:10:06:19
in 1640,
she tells us,

01:10:06:19 01:10:09:13
as we stroll the rock-
and shell-strung shore

01:10:09:13 01:10:12:02
of Shinnecock Bay,
[indistinct]

01:10:12:02 01:10:14:18
a beautiful early
summer afternoon."

01:10:14:18 01:10:16:05
And so that was just
really proof

01:10:16:05 01:10:20:18
of what's possible
and what the future holds.

01:10:20:18 01:10:23:07
We're really excited to work
on the process

01:10:23:07 01:10:25:04
of becoming a nonprofit.

01:10:25:04 01:10:26:20
We really want to have

01:10:26:20 01:10:29:08
our mission of supporting
artists of color happen

01:10:29:08 01:10:31:17
through donations and grants,

01:10:31:17 01:10:34:16
rather than being more
of a commercial space.

01:10:34:16 01:10:37:03
And the other major thing
that we're working on

01:10:37:03 01:10:40:10
is just the artist
residency program.

01:10:40:10 01:10:42:18
♪♪

01:10:42:18 01:10:45:13
Huang:
I'm Yanyan Huang.

01:10:45:13 01:10:48:13
I'm an artist
and I work primarily

01:10:48:13 01:10:50:21
in painting and drawing,

01:10:50:21 01:10:53:20
as well as ceramics
and textiles.

01:10:53:20 01:10:57:04
This is my first
official residency.

01:10:57:04 01:10:59:19
I am living at Ma's House

01:10:59:19 01:11:04:19
and, so far, I've made
these two large paintings.

01:11:05:18 01:11:10:18
So, this painting is based
on the outline

01:11:11:24 01:11:16:23
of the Shinnecock
ancestral land,

01:11:16:23 01:11:20:14
Long Island,
North Fork and South Fork,

01:11:20:14 01:11:25:14
and then, I blended my own
gestural abstract style.

01:11:26:20 01:11:31:20
I have not worked
in a house like this.

01:11:31:23 01:11:33:08
It feels a lot different

01:11:33:08 01:11:38:07
from commercial
contemporary art spaces

01:11:38:07 01:11:41:11
that I've worked with before

01:11:41:11 01:11:45:13
because working within the
commercial gallery system is

01:11:45:13 01:11:48:18
an entirely different beast.
[Laughs]

01:11:48:18 01:11:53:11
So my research began
with these pamphlets

01:11:53:11 01:11:58:11
from powwows on Shinnecock land

01:11:59:19 01:12:03:09

and it's been really lovely,

01:12:03:09 01:12:06:03
going through the history,

01:12:06:03 01:12:08:10
seeing the close-knit community.

01:12:08:10 01:12:10:16
♪♪

01:12:10:16 01:12:15:13
I had hung a banner
from a painting that I made

01:12:15:13 01:12:18:06
and part of the idea was

01:12:18:06 01:12:21:18
that I would put it
on a flagpole here,

01:12:21:18 01:12:23:10
near the water,

01:12:23:10 01:12:27:16
so that it would look
like sails coming.

01:12:27:16 01:12:31:02
[Laughs]

01:12:31:02 01:12:34:23
And, now, it's standing here,
right outside,

01:12:34:23 01:12:39:23
and it feels like a great honor.

01:12:40:12 01:12:42:23
♪♪

01:12:42:23 01:12:45:07
I covered it with blue
because I wanted to

01:12:45:07 01:12:49:06
overlay the mythology of --

01:12:49:06 01:12:54:06

It is a huge honor to be here

01:12:55:07 01:13:00:07
and come to terms with issues
that have plagued me

01:13:02:04 01:13:06:03
and resonated with me
throughout my life,

01:13:06:03 01:13:09:08
through learning
about the history of America

01:13:09:08 01:13:13:15
and what it purports to be,

01:13:13:15 01:13:18:15
versus the reality
of its history.

01:13:18:20 01:13:23:20
So I've just been
gathering bits and pieces

01:13:24:19 01:13:28:23
and adding to my knowledge

01:13:28:23 01:13:32:16
and drawing inspiration
upon that.

01:13:32:16 01:13:36:00
I feel like this is more
of a partnership,

01:13:36:00 01:13:41:00
where both sides have a lot
to learn from each other

01:13:41:15 01:13:46:15
and It's more
of a cultural blending,

01:13:48:01 01:13:53:01
rather than
a business partnership.

01:13:53:13 01:13:57:00
If artists can work and create

and share their work,

01:13:57:00 01:13:58:13
then they're going
to be able to share

01:13:58:13 01:14:01:22
the cultural experience
with other people

01:14:01:22 01:14:03:13
and that'll lead
to more understanding

01:14:03:13 01:14:06:02
and respect for each other,
and so forth, so.

01:14:06:02 01:14:08:23
But I really enjoy the idea
of the collective nature

01:14:08:23 01:14:12:23
of having space
to work and present.

01:14:12:23 01:14:15:21
David Bunn Martine
is a Shinnecock artist.

01:14:15:21 01:14:19:02
He's still based here
on the Shinnecock Reservation

01:14:19:02 01:14:21:13
and he does a lot
of portraiture and landscape

01:14:21:13 01:14:24:01
and historical reenactment
type of painting.

01:14:24:01 01:14:25:15
♪♪

01:14:25:15 01:14:28:12
Native American cultures,
as a whole,

01:14:28:12 01:14:31:07

you know, percentage-wise,
we have so many artists.

01:14:31:07 01:14:33:18
It's a very powerful quality

01:14:33:18 01:14:35:12
that Native American
people have.

01:14:35:12 01:14:37:11
It's a creative quality,
you know,

01:14:37:11 01:14:38:23
whether it's traditional work

01:14:38:23 01:14:41:05
or any of the
contemporary practices

01:14:41:05 01:14:43:03
that we have going today.

01:14:43:03 01:14:44:21
♪♪

01:14:44:21 01:14:49:10
I enjoy painting narrative
scenes of Native American life,

01:14:49:10 01:14:52:19
specializing
in Northeastern Woodland tribes,

01:14:52:19 01:14:56:08
Long Island Native Americans --
Shinnecock and Montauk.

01:14:56:08 01:14:58:10
A lot of it is based
on research,

01:14:58:10 01:15:01:20
some of what I know,
my own personal research,

01:15:01:20 01:15:05:04
rather than academic learning
and books or whatever.

01:15:05:04 01:15:10:04
And then, I always try to get
into a lot of detail,

01:15:10:06 01:15:13:15
accurate detail,
of our unique cultures,

01:15:13:15 01:15:18:15
what made us unique, you know,
among tribal peoples here,

01:15:18:21 01:15:23:13
our connection to the sea,
the whaling and sea life,

01:15:23:13 01:15:28:13
and also our connection to the
natural surroundings we have.

01:15:29:00 01:15:31:13
You know, since the late '60s
and '70s, and so forth,

01:15:31:13 01:15:33:21
there was a strong renewal,

01:15:33:21 01:15:36:22
or revitalization,
of traditional culture.

01:15:36:22 01:15:39:08
At one point,
Many of the tribes,

01:15:39:08 01:15:42:10
especially in powwows
and different events,

01:15:42:10 01:15:44:14
would enjoy emulating more

01:15:44:14 01:15:47:12
of the Plains Indian
cultural traditions,

01:15:47:12 01:15:51:03
such as the headdress,
the war bonnet, as they call it,

01:15:51:03 01:15:52:20

or the lifestyle --

01:15:52:20 01:15:56:12

living in the teepees
and following the buffalo herds,

01:15:56:12 01:15:59:23

which was sort of a generic
Native American kind of thing

01:15:59:23 01:16:02:16

that was popularized
in the mass media,

01:16:02:16 01:16:04:15

Hollywood, and television.

01:16:04:15 01:16:08:04

And many of the tribes way back
for a while were into that.

01:16:08:04 01:16:10:24

That was the thing.
And I thought it would be nice

01:16:10:24 01:16:15:24

to try to show what was unique,
in terms of our dress,

01:16:16:13 01:16:18:18

how it was different
from the Plains Indian

01:16:18:18 01:16:23:04

or the Native American
that was more popularly seen

01:16:23:04 01:16:25:24

in movies, TV, and the media.

01:16:25:24 01:16:28:19

Later on,
many of the tribes began

01:16:28:19 01:16:32:12

to adopt more of their
original traditional styles.

01:16:32:12 01:16:37:06
You no longer see the
Plains Indian headdress as much.

01:16:37:06 01:16:40:18
Usually, it's only used
by veterans today, for example.

01:16:40:18 01:16:43:17
Many of the Native peoples
are more interested

01:16:43:17 01:16:45:23
in what made them unique,

01:16:45:23 01:16:49:03
as opposed to any other
tribal tradition or custom.

01:16:49:03 01:16:51:13
♪♪

01:16:51:13 01:16:53:16
Today, there are
more opportunities

01:16:53:16 01:16:56:06
for contemporary
Native American art, I think,

01:16:56:06 01:16:59:07
because people
are more open-minded

01:16:59:07 01:17:01:17
to seeing
that Native American art

01:17:01:17 01:17:03:08
could be almost anything today.

01:17:03:08 01:17:06:24
If the artist is Native,
it's Native American art.

01:17:06:24 01:17:09:07
It doesn't have to look
a certain way.

01:17:09:07 01:17:12:06

Usually, the work
has some connection

01:17:12:06 01:17:15:10
to the culture
the artist is representing,

01:17:15:10 01:17:20:10
whether it's symbols, story,
some design elements, color --

01:17:20:13 01:17:22:15
whatever it might be.

01:17:22:15 01:17:26:18
The Native part is in there
sometimes, but it's more subtle.

01:17:26:18 01:17:31:18
♪♪

01:17:32:09 01:17:34:07
Here at Shinnecock,
we have artists

01:17:34:07 01:17:37:22
who are doing portraiture
and representational work.

01:17:37:22 01:17:39:09
We have other artists
who are using

01:17:39:09 01:17:44:01
our traditional medium of wampum
and beadwork and jewelry.

01:17:44:01 01:17:46:23
And so we do represent
so many different forms

01:17:46:23 01:17:51:23
of expression and storytelling
in the way that we approach art.

01:17:52:06 01:17:55:16
My mom, Denise Silva-Dennis,
she actually went to school

01:17:55:16 01:17:58:18

for studio art, mostly painting.

01:17:58:18 01:18:01:05

Today, she actually
has her own studio here

01:18:01:05 01:18:03:03

on the Shinnecock Reservation.

01:18:03:03 01:18:04:18

She painted it purple,

01:18:04:18 01:18:09:07

in honor of the traditional
medium wampum.

01:18:09:07 01:18:14:07

When I was raised with my
parents and my older siblings,

01:18:14:15 01:18:17:03

we were taught a lot
about our history,

01:18:17:03 01:18:18:23

going to powwows
and even hosting

01:18:18:23 01:18:22:12

our own little powwows
on Shinnecock.

01:18:22:12 01:18:24:18

My mom helped me
and showed me how

01:18:24:18 01:18:26:13

to do the beadwork,
the floral design,

01:18:26:13 01:18:30:08

so she was really
my first teacher of beadwork

01:18:30:08 01:18:32:15

and then,
I learned more through the

01:18:32:15 01:18:35:15

Shinnecock Native American

Cultural Coalition

01:18:35:15 01:18:37:24
on Shinnecock,
and that was to teach culture

01:18:37:24 01:18:41:09
and have classes
on beadwork and history.

01:18:41:09 01:18:44:13
But I did study formally
at Hamilton College,

01:18:44:13 01:18:45:22
with studio art,

01:18:45:22 01:18:48:09
did a lot of paintings
during that time,

01:18:48:09 01:18:51:01
and my professor said,

01:18:51:01 01:18:53:12
"Oh, well, if you're
from Southampton,

01:18:53:12 01:18:56:07
you know, that's known
as an artist's colony

01:18:56:07 01:18:58:13
and you're going to be
famous there one day."

01:18:58:13 01:19:01:07
[Laughing] But that
really never materialized

01:19:01:07 01:19:05:12
because more people were
more interested in my beadwork

01:19:05:12 01:19:08:03
than my actual paintings.

01:19:08:03 01:19:09:23
A lot of the beadwork
that you see

01:19:09:23 01:19:12:12
takes weeks and months
to create,

01:19:12:12 01:19:15:04
depending on the size
and details

01:19:15:04 01:19:18:05
and how intricate
and unique the design is.

01:19:18:05 01:19:21:13
Just a section,
like maybe this part,

01:19:21:13 01:19:24:10
this will take you
about a week to do.

01:19:24:10 01:19:27:24
I like to use like
different types of seed beads,

01:19:27:24 01:19:30:15
just to make it more
interesting, you know,

01:19:30:15 01:19:31:23
and what will fit.

01:19:31:23 01:19:35:23
And then,
on the seal of our flag,

01:19:35:23 01:19:39:05
the whales are much smaller
on the actual seal

01:19:39:05 01:19:42:08
and I still -- I wanted
to give them plenty of room

01:19:42:08 01:19:46:09
because they are, you know,
a mainstay for Shinnecock.

01:19:46:09 01:19:50:05
We first taught the colonists

how to whale.

01:19:50:05 01:19:52:03

I guess,
when I got out of college,

01:19:52:03 01:19:54:03

it seemed like
it was harder then

01:19:54:03 01:19:56:00

because there was no Internet,

01:19:56:00 01:20:00:23

so there's no way to really
get your information out there.

01:20:00:23 01:20:04:03

I remember, once, this woman
who owned an art gallery --

01:20:04:03 01:20:07:03

I believe it was on Main Street,
right in Southampton --

01:20:07:03 01:20:10:23

so we had made arrangements that
a couple of my beadwork pieces,

01:20:10:23 01:20:12:10

I think maybe two or three,

01:20:12:10 01:20:16:13

would be in a jewelry case
kind of table display.

01:20:16:13 01:20:20:00

And then, the night
before the opening of the show,

01:20:20:00 01:20:24:11

which I had shared
the information with postcards

01:20:24:11 01:20:27:08

for the advertisement
with relatives in the city

01:20:27:08 01:20:29:20

and different friends

and family,

01:20:29:20 01:20:32:06
so we were all going
to go to the opening,

01:20:32:06 01:20:37:03
and she called and said,
"Um, well, I'm sorry to say,

01:20:37:03 01:20:39:15
but, other people have come in.

01:20:39:15 01:20:42:09
You know, now it's closer
to the season

01:20:42:09 01:20:43:21
when all these
different people come out

01:20:43:21 01:20:46:23
from New York City
for the summer.

01:20:46:23 01:20:49:03
I have these other people,

01:20:49:03 01:20:51:23
other artists from New York City
who are coming out,

01:20:51:23 01:20:53:13
so we're going to have
to bump you.

01:20:53:13 01:20:55:14
You know, you won't be
in the opening.

01:20:55:14 01:20:57:21
It's not going to happen."

01:20:57:21 01:20:59:21
So then, I said to her,

01:20:59:21 01:21:01:19
"Well, I have all these
people coming.

01:21:01:19 01:21:04:17
You know, you're telling me
this the night before."

01:21:04:17 01:21:06:05
When it came time
for the opening,

01:21:06:05 01:21:10:11
my mother and my sister and I
went to the gallery

01:21:10:11 01:21:14:11
and we showed up
in our full regalia

01:21:14:11 01:21:18:13
and we shared the story
of how I was just bumped

01:21:18:13 01:21:20:09
and it was just going
to be here,

01:21:20:09 01:21:22:04
you know, for that one night

01:21:22:04 01:21:24:13
and then I have
to remove my things.

01:21:24:13 01:21:29:13
So all her patrons actually
learned of that mistreatment

01:21:29:23 01:21:32:10
and I actually sold
a couple of pieces

01:21:32:10 01:21:35:11
and then I had like a little bit
of a following, then.

01:21:35:11 01:21:38:10
But it's just that whole thing
of getting your story out.

01:21:38:10 01:21:41:10
And, you know,
I've learned the term --

01:21:41:10 01:21:44:01

it's a microaggression
when people do,

01:21:44:01 01:21:45:06

you know, things like that.

01:21:45:06 01:21:46:23

It could be perceived that way.

01:21:46:23 01:21:51:23

♪♪

01:21:53:17 01:21:57:04

In these past 20 years,
I really noticed a big shift,

01:21:57:04 01:21:59:10

in terms of indigenous
representation

01:21:59:10 01:22:00:23

and just opportunities

01:22:00:23 01:22:03:10

for indigenous people
working creatively.

01:22:03:10 01:22:05:19

Different cultural institutions
have been more receptive

01:22:05:19 01:22:09:17

to artists of color
and indigenous artists.

01:22:09:17 01:22:11:16

There's always been
indigenous artists.

01:22:11:16 01:22:16:05

Here on Long Island, we had been
known for our wampum jewelry

01:22:16:05 01:22:20:11

and we still have artists
that continue that practice.

01:22:20:11 01:22:23:04

Tohanash Tarrant
is a Shinnecock artist

01:22:23:04 01:22:27:03
who creates work
around beadwork and jewelry.

01:22:27:03 01:22:30:03
Tarrant: I did spend time
here as a young child.

01:22:30:03 01:22:31:18
I would come over and visit

01:22:31:18 01:22:34:00
and I remember
the house being filled

01:22:34:00 01:22:36:17
with laughter and love

01:22:36:17 01:22:40:03
and it just felt
really comfortable.

01:22:40:03 01:22:42:08
Every year, every summer,

01:22:42:08 01:22:44:15
my parents
would take my family --

01:22:44:15 01:22:49:11
I'm one of six siblings --
to powwows across the country

01:22:49:11 01:22:51:18
and we would visit
with other tribes

01:22:51:18 01:22:53:08
and we would dance with them.

01:22:53:08 01:22:57:12
And, in order to dance,
we would have to prepare

01:22:57:12 01:23:00:04
and one of those things
is making our own regalias --

01:23:00:04 01:23:03:11
the outfits
that we wear to dance.

01:23:03:11 01:23:06:11
So that was really my focus
when I was a teenager

01:23:06:11 01:23:07:23
because I wanted
to get out there

01:23:07:23 01:23:09:12
and I wanted to dance

01:23:09:12 01:23:11:10
and I wanted my stuff
to look beautiful.

01:23:11:10 01:23:16:07
So I spent a lot of time focused
on my own dance regalia

01:23:16:07 01:23:20:00
and now I have two children
that I get to dress

01:23:20:00 01:23:23:05
and make things for,
as well as nieces and nephews,

01:23:23:05 01:23:25:13
and I've been focusing more

01:23:25:13 01:23:30:10
on things that contribute
to my community,

01:23:30:10 01:23:34:10
ways that I can bring the beauty
of our culture back

01:23:34:10 01:23:36:20
into our day-to-day lives.

01:23:36:20 01:23:39:04
That's why you'll see items
that I have here,

01:23:39:04 01:23:41:08
such as a graduation cap,

01:23:41:08 01:23:45:17
and this one is for my
bachelor's in Early Childhood.

01:23:45:17 01:23:49:09
So, I spent a lot of time
decorating it

01:23:49:09 01:23:53:24
and it's something
that I hold very dear

01:23:53:24 01:23:55:22
and something I will always have

01:23:55:22 01:23:59:03
and pass down, hopefully,
to my children as well.

01:23:59:03 01:24:03:07
Something like this would
take me a good two weeks.

01:24:03:07 01:24:05:17
It's not something
you can do full-time

01:24:05:17 01:24:09:12
because it's very hard
to sew through the cardboard,

01:24:09:12 01:24:14:12
but it's something that, also,
you put a lot of thought into.

01:24:15:10 01:24:17:00
These are epoxy cabs.

01:24:17:00 01:24:20:12
They're made with Native prints
on the inside.

01:24:20:12 01:24:24:02
And I also have some
with our Nation seal,

01:24:24:02 01:24:26:03

the Shinnecock seal.

01:24:26:03 01:24:30:00
This is Pueblo-style
inlay earrings,

01:24:30:00 01:24:33:00
surrounded by beadwork
and rhinestones.

01:24:33:00 01:24:38:00
And these are rather large
and sparkly or blingy earrings.

01:24:38:03 01:24:39:24
These are very popular,
these days.

01:24:39:24 01:24:42:02
So it incorporates
the seed beads

01:24:42:02 01:24:44:23
that I've been using
for the last 20 years,

01:24:44:23 01:24:48:11
as well as new inlays,
which reflect

01:24:48:11 01:24:53:06
my Pueblo background,
my Hopi traditions,

01:24:53:06 01:24:56:12
as well as making
contemporary style.

01:24:56:12 01:24:59:19
So I brought with me regalia
that I've been working on.

01:24:59:19 01:25:03:18
This is a woman's
fancy shawl regalia.

01:25:03:18 01:25:06:06
These are the leggings.

01:25:06:06 01:25:10:01

And the significance
of the flowers are beauty.

01:25:10:01 01:25:13:13

And the dance is
a butterfly dance,

01:25:13:13 01:25:18:08

so butterflies and flowers
kind of go together very nicely.

01:25:18:08 01:25:21:24

I have blue in here
for the ocean,

01:25:21:24 01:25:26:23

and the yellow is like the sun
or the back of our our flag,

01:25:26:23 01:25:29:01

the Shinnecock Nation flag.

01:25:29:01 01:25:33:00

And the seal,
I beaded in size 13 beads.

01:25:33:00 01:25:38:00

And this is the seal that's
on our flag.

01:25:38:03 01:25:41:14

With Ma's House developing,
I hope to include Tohanash

01:25:41:14 01:25:44:14

as a featured artist
in different programs,

01:25:44:14 01:25:47:12

maybe workshops
on some of her skills

01:25:47:12 01:25:49:05

and just having
her work featured

01:25:49:05 01:25:51:19

for the public to enjoy.

01:25:51:19 01:25:56:11

Art is something that is living,
that is part of our culture,

01:25:56:11 01:25:58:22
and I'm so happy
to be able to share it.

01:25:58:22 01:26:03:22
♪♪

01:26:08:03 01:26:11:00
Silva-Dennis: People want to know,
"Well, how can I help, you know?"

01:26:11:00 01:26:13:15
I wasn't there
during slavery times.

01:26:13:15 01:26:15:07
I wasn't there when

01:26:15:07 01:26:17:20
Native Americans
were being assimilated

01:26:17:20 01:26:21:02
or the children
were being taken away.

01:26:21:02 01:26:24:09
But I live now,
so what can I do?"

01:26:24:09 01:26:25:14
So, what can you do?

01:26:25:14 01:26:27:03
You can help to, you know,

01:26:27:03 01:26:30:00
lift up, you know,
different artists

01:26:30:00 01:26:32:13
who are trying to tell
the story of what happened

01:26:32:13 01:26:35:08
because, that way,
we can all move forward

01:26:35:08 01:26:39:14
as a society
and just really heal.

01:26:39:14 01:26:42:05
People really want
to have an opportunity

01:26:42:05 01:26:43:17
to visit Shinnecock

01:26:43:17 01:26:46:01
and engage with our community
and support our artists,

01:26:46:01 01:26:48:22
but people are really trying
to figure out a way

01:26:48:22 01:26:52:20
to do that,
to facilitate visitation

01:26:52:20 01:26:55:21
without intruding
or trespassing.

01:26:55:21 01:26:57:15
Ma's House is filling that gap

01:26:57:15 01:27:00:08
on a very intimate,
one-on-one level,

01:27:00:08 01:27:03:11
and just do a tour of what's
going on at Ma's House,

01:27:03:11 01:27:05:03
whether that's the garden,

01:27:05:03 01:27:09:21
whether that's a program similar
to that of Andrina Smith.

01:27:09:21 01:27:11:17
I was talking to him
and like --

01:27:11:17 01:27:14:12
I think that we're just part
of a longer narrative

01:27:14:12 01:27:17:18
of what art can do,
what art is,

01:27:17:18 01:27:21:04
and this indigenous art world.

01:27:21:04 01:27:22:23
Even though Ma's House today

01:27:22:23 01:27:25:17
is getting so much support
and attention,

01:27:25:17 01:27:29:05
it's also important to recognize
those who came before us

01:27:29:05 01:27:32:09
because, without them,
we probably wouldn't be able

01:27:32:09 01:27:35:13
to express a lot of what
we're expressing today.

01:27:35:13 01:27:37:13
♪♪

01:27:37:13 01:27:40:23
My hope for Ma's House is
to invite

01:27:40:23 01:27:44:23
indigenous artists nationwide
to tell their story,

01:27:44:23 01:27:48:08
share their experiences,
just amplify their voice

01:27:48:08 01:27:50:24
because, even though
we've been here at Shinnecock

01:27:50:24 01:27:52:23

for more than 10,000 years,

01:27:52:23 01:27:55:09
somehow, the dynamic
with our neighbors

01:27:55:09 01:27:57:23
is that we don't even exist.

01:27:57:23 01:28:00:03
By inviting artists
to come collaborate,

01:28:00:03 01:28:03:06
whether that's hosting them
for a couple of months

01:28:03:06 01:28:06:17
or allowing them to use
the space to share their art,

01:28:06:17 01:28:08:24
I think that we can
really facilitate

01:28:08:24 01:28:11:24
a type of collaboration
that will help our Nation

01:28:11:24 01:28:14:13
and their Nation as well
to rise up

01:28:14:13 01:28:18:09
and be recognized
for all that we represent.

01:28:18:09 01:28:23:09
♪♪

01:28:27:06 01:28:32:06
♪♪

01:28:37:06 01:28:42:06
♪♪

01:28:47:06 01:28:52:06
♪♪

<end subtitles>