



All My Relations Arts and the Native American Community Development Institute announce the debut of *Smart Wars: Many Shields*

Contact:

Angela Two Stars

atwostars@nacdi.org

For immediate release:

MINNEAPOLIS (January 24th, 2025) All My Relations Arts and the Native American Community Development Institute are pleased to present *Smart Wars: Many Shields*, a solo exhibition from multimedia artist Rory Wakemup (Minnesota Chippewa).

Smart Wars is a flip-the-script, satirical exhibition featuring works that assert Native identity, resilience, resistance and coexistence with our planet from multimedia artist Rory Wakemup. A continuation of his series, *Divest or Die*, Wakemup's work is a tongue-in-cheek exploration of culture vs controversy through the use of sculpture and installation. His exquisitely designed outfits are meant to subvert and amuse while commenting on social, political, and climate issues. Infusing traditional methods and materials, Wakemup's regalia is designed for 21st-century Indian warriors.

Through a practice dubbed "funktivism (fun activism), Wakemup's *Smart Wars* is intended to unite the human family toward the goal of environmental justice and protection. Wakemup says, "Funktivism is the *Smart Wars* strategy designed to include all people in the reawakening of Indigenous ancestry on planet earth."

Where performance art meets Indigenous reality, *Smart Wars* uses the familiar, yet appropriated, story of *Star Wars* — tyranny vs rebellion, good vs. evil — as a component to educate viewers on Indigenous values and beliefs, one of which is the protection of Unci Maka.



“These beliefs are centered around balance and the idea that the creator is in everything, thus everything should be treated with the same respect. *Star Wars* colonizes that belief by stating that only a certain few are special and can live in that balance, and it gives those skills to be better killers. References of the Jedi and Sith are used in ceremonies for humorous banter to both compliment and humble each other.” - Rory Wakemup. Wakemup’s work is a visual examination of the battle – led by Indigenous defenders – to restore harmonious co-existence through the lens of humor, Native truth-telling and activism.

Iterations of *Smart Wars* have been showcased during the Northern Spark Art Festival, the Weltmuseum Wien in Vienna, Austria and most recently, at the Miikanan Gallery at the Watermark Art Center in Bemidji, MN. Rory Wakemup has previously worked as Arts Director for All My Relations Arts. This exhibition marks the artist’s first solo exhibition at the AMRA gallery.

Program Dates:

On view: February 20th - April 5th 2025

Opening reception + Artist Talk: Thursday, February 20th, 2025, 6-8pm Artist talk at 7pm

3D Printing Youth Workshop: TBD

Closing Reception with Performative Elements: Saturday, April 5th 2025, 6-8pm

For additional programming, visit allmyrelationsarts.org

For questions regarding accessibility of the exhibition and the venue, please contact arts@nacdi.org.

ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Rory Wakemup (Minnesota Chippewa) is a Master of Fine Arts graduate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2015. He received his Master of Arts at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2014. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe New Mexico in 2010.



Wakemup is a multidisciplinary artist whose work turns the script of cultural appropriation on its head. He has morphed his experience in Indian ceremonies with his studio art practice and has become a conduit between conceptual ideas and the materials at hand. Wakemup enjoys playing with the grey areas of what is appropriate in today's society. He was a co-founder of the Humble Experiment, Independent Student Gallery in Santa Fe, New Mexico and was on a panel for Native Underground, sponsored by the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture. Wakemup was awarded the "Chazen Museum Prize" over 80 other applicants in the UW Madison MFA program for his MFA show "Kill the Idiot Save the Fan" and was featured on Wisconsin Public Television's "Wisconsin Life" and a front page Article on the "Sundays Best" section of the Wisconsin State Journal.

Native American Community Development Institute (NACDI) Our work is founded on the belief that all American Indian people have a place, purpose and a future strengthened by sustainable community development. NACDI initiates projects that benefit the Native community, often in partnership with other Indigenous-led organizations. Learn more at nacdi.org.

All My Relations Arts (AMRA) is Minnesota's premier American Indian-owned and operated contemporary fine arts gallery. Located on Franklin Avenue in Minneapolis, the gallery resides within the heart of the American Indian Cultural Corridor. The focus of AMRA is to provide the people of the Twin Cities, greater Minnesota, and beyond consistently high-quality exposure to Native American fine arts. As an initiative of NACDI, AMRA provides the public with education about American Indian history, culture, and contemporary experiences through the arts. Learn more at allmyrelationsarts.com.

Major support for *Smart Wars* is provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.