

John Scholder

SUPER INDIAN

FRITZ SCHOLDER

1967-1980



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DENVER
ART MUSEUM

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FOREWORD

Christoph Heinrich, Ph.D.
Frederick and Jan Mayer Director
Denver Art Museum

Super Indian: Fritz Scholder 1967–1980, organized by the Denver Art Museum, features more than forty paintings and lithographs by the artist and is the first exhibition to explore how Scholder blended figurative and Pop Art influences to create compelling and revolutionary images that challenge viewers to look beyond the stereotype of the romantic past. The work reveals the raw reality of being an American Indian through the eyes—and palette—of an artist who once vowed never to paint Indians.

Drawing its name from the iconic painting *Super Indian No. 2*, the exhibition concentrates on the controversial period in Scholder's art between 1967 and 1980; the former is the year Scholder began his *Indian* series, while 1980 marks the exhibition of his *Indian Land* paintings at the Elaine Horwitch Galleries in Santa Fe. It is organized chronologically and thematically to follow Scholder's developing style and subjects: early *Indian* series, Pop Art, psychological portraiture, dark subjects (mystery and the morbid), and stereotypes and representation. Additionally, a selection of Scholder's lithographs demonstrates how the artist used this medium as a natural progression from painting to further push the boundaries of subject and color. The central elements that permeate all of this work are his focus on the figure, his glorious colors, and his energetic brushwork.

The exhibition is part of the Denver Art Museum's initiative to expand the recognition of contemporary art by American Indian artists through acquisitions, exhibitions, in-gallery residencies, lectures, and other programming. With the founding of its Department of Native Arts in 1925, Denver was among the first major art museums in the United States to collect American Indian art and remains a leader in the field to this day.

For this publication, exhibition curator John Lukavic delves into the pivotal role Scholder played in the figurative arts movement and provides context on the events surrounding Scholder's *Indian* series. Jessica Horton, Getty Research Institute National Endowment for the Humanities Postdoctoral Fellow, offers an in-depth analysis of *Super Indian No. 2* and, for the first time,