

Capturing cultures past and present

Modern with a nod toward tradition, the past merged with the present; for art major and sophomore Michael Sekaquaptewa (SEE KAH KWOP TEE WAH) these views are more than imagery in his work, they are a way of life.

Michael is one of six Native American Heritage students whose works are on display in People of the Plateau: Through the Lens Past and Present at the Larson Gallery. The display features the students' images juxtaposed with historical images taken by photographer Lee Moorhouse between 1898 and 1915. His stark black and white photographs show a romanticized view of Native American life and culture during the era. In contrast, the students' works portray unfiltered, contemporary images of the life and culture of Native Americans today and help to dispel stereotypic perceptions.



For Michael the project brought together his love for art and his appreciation for his culture. Each of his images contains elements that ties together the past, present and future—from a cradle board placed on a bassinet to a kachina doll in front of towering power lines that share a similar form.

"I hope that the person who sees this exhibit will understand how much appreciation Native Americans have for their traditions and how we are incorporating those traditions into our lives," said Michael.



Even the medium—photography—blends culture, history and the future for Michael.

"I want to leave a mark. I looked at old pictures for inspiration and try to mimic some of the same elements in my photos but with a contemporary subject matter," he said.

Michael's works and that of his fellow students: Kim Agiak, Nicole

George, Kendall Mansfield, Brian Pinkham, and Mallorie Yates will be on display through March 7. The exhibit is part of a community-wide celebration of the culture of the Yakama Nation. Other activities include exhibits at Allied Arts of Yakima, the Yakima Valley Museum and the Yakama Nation Museum and Cultural Center.