

HOUSTON MUSEUM *of* NATURAL SCIENCE

John P. McGovern Hall of the Americas

PROJECT STAFF



Dirk Van Tuerenhout, Ph.D.
Curator of Anthropology

Dr. Dirk Van Tuerenhout is curator of anthropology at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. Among the exhibits he has worked on is *Lucy's Legacy*, which brought one of the best-known early human ancestors to Houston. Currently he is part of a team working on the renovation of the museum's John P. McGovern Hall of the Americas. The exhibit will cover Turtle Island and Abya Yala. One of the main goals of this new hall is to expand the story of contemporary Indigenous people.



Gabriela Truly
Director of Collections

Gabriela Truly is the Director of Collections at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. She supervises the Collections Team responsible for the documentation, housing, care and maintenance of the over 2,000,000 artifacts, belongings, and specimens in the permanent collection, as well as loans and temporary exhibitions. She also supervises the Curatorial team responsible for the research and science related to the current curatorial departments: Anthropology, Entomology, Malacology, Paleontology, and Vertebrate Zoology. Prior to HMNS, her career has included being responsible for the collection at the Blanton Museum of Art in Austin, Texas; the Dallas Museum of Art in Dallas, Texas and the San Antonio Museum of Art in San Antonio, Texas.

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INDIGENOUS ADVISORY COUNCIL



Ms. Concepción Pooou Coy Tharin

Q'eqchi' Maya

Samac, Alta Verapaz, Guatemala

Concepción, or Concep for short, is a Q'eqchi' Mayan woman from the village of Samac near Cobán, Alta Verapaz, Guatemala. Taught by her mother and sister to weave at age eight, she has mastered her local style, an intricate gauze-like weave called *pikb'il*. Traditional back-strap weaving is one of the few sources of income for the women of her village, though each blouse takes a month to weave. By selling her textiles, Concepción was able to fund her education. With other women in her village, she founded, and was selected, as the first president of the village's first women's weaver cooperative. As such, she helped start an association of artists and artisans of all kinds from her area. With them, she participated in many festivals and demonstrations around her area and her country in an effort to secure weaving as a sustainable source of income. Now living in Florida, she demonstrates and teaches backstrap weaving, bringing this ancient tradition to life for people in the U.S. Her own textiles preserve traditional designs to honor her ancestors.



Ms. Candace Linklater

Moose Cree First Nation

Educator & PhD Candidate

Candace Linklater is from the Moose Cree First Nation, born and raised on her reservation of Moose Factory, Ontario, Canada. Candace served her community as an educator and an elected Councilor, as well as sat as Vice Chair of the Moose

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Cree Education Authority. Candace is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and works as a Research and Policy Analyst for a national secretariat where she advocates for First Nations education in Canada. She has grassroots experience creating holistic learning opportunities for First Nations that honour Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being. She also runs her own consulting business where she provides lectures, workshops, and consulting services for organizations, educational institutions, and companies who wish to move toward reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.



Dr. Linda Langley
Alabama-Coushatta Tribe
Louisiana

Dr. Linda Langley is a retired Professor of Anthropology from McNeese State University who served as the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana's first Historic Preservation Officer for the past decade. Together with her husband, Bertney Langley, a member of the Coushatta Tribe and native speaker of Koasati, Dr. Langley also served as Co-Principal Investigator for two NSF Documenting Endangered Languages grants that provided the funding and impetus for the Koasati Language Project. The Langley's were co-recipients of the Louisiana Endowment For the Humanities 2020 Lifetime Contribution to the Humanities Award. A graduate of Harvard and Brown Universities, Dr. Langley is the author of over forty-five articles, books, and videotapes spanning various areas of her work and research. Her recent book, *Louisiana Coushatta Basket Makers: Traditional Knowledge, Resourcefulness, and Artistry as a Means of Survival* (2021, LSU Press) has been nominated for the prestigious Louisiana literary award.



Mr. Diego Romero
Cochiti Pueblo
Artist

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"Ambivalent views toward Indian culture made me strong in the belief that my art was both Indian and contemporary art and it was going to stay that way." —Diego Romero

Firmly positioning his work within an Indigenous visuality, Diego Romero has built a career constructing ceramic vessels that elevate Pueblo life to Olympian stature. A third generation professional artist, Romero was born and raised in Berkeley, California to a Cochiti father and a non-Native mother. Merging autobiography with narratives of contemporary Indian life and stories of Pueblo resistance to colonial violence, Romero elevates Pueblo and contemporary Indian narratives to the level of the superhero, devices he draws from Greek pottery and comics. When placed into an autobiographical context, his ceramic practice develops further layers of nuance and complexity. This investigatory nature of simultaneously inserting biographical material while interrogating the cross-sections of Indian life enables Romero to transcend the commonly provincial status of contemporary Indian art.

-Excerpt from biography courtesy of Dylan A.T. Miner, PhD



Ms. Wendi Schovanec
Indian Education
Norman Public Schools

Wendi Schovanec is Cheyenne and is in her 10th year as an Indian Education teacher for Norman Public Schools in Norman, Oklahoma. She has partnered with several Oklahoma tribes to create culturally relevant lessons and tribally specific resources for implementation in the Norman Public School District. She is currently working to update Norman's Indian Education teacher resources and lesson plans over Oklahoma's 39 tribes to align with the Oklahoma State Department of Education's newly revised social studies standards. Her passion is to create authentic and accurate curriculum for Oklahoma educators so they can provide culturally appropriate and effective instruction to meet the needs of Native students.

Prior to joining Norman's Indian Education Program, Wendi attended the University of Oklahoma where she received her Bachelor's of Science degree in Education and Master's in Instructional Leadership and Academic Curriculum. Wendi also taught English and Literature in an Oklahoma City private school.