



THE CULTURAL SANCTUARIES FOUNDATION

Protecting the Protectors



Jake Laroque of the Mi'gmaq of Gesgapegiag in Quebec, Canada in Northern Traditional regalia

We are excited to tell you about the launch of a new CSF project.

As you know, our mission is to partner with indigenous communities to help them protect their culture, language and land. On the back of Chris' work since he left the Ansel Adams studio over 40 years ago to document indigenous peoples all over the world and complementing our current work at Cultural Sanctuaries, it is time to come full circle and bring our work 'home'.

So, alongside our cultural center projects elsewhere in the world, we are undertaking a documentation of Native American and First Nations regalia across the US and Canada.

The last photographer to do a comprehensive documentation of the first nations people of North America was Edward Curtis. Born in 1868, his work photographing the American West and Native American tribes in the early 1900s earned him the name of Shadow Catcher and created an astonishing archive of anthropologically important images. While viewed sometimes as controversial, it is without question one of the most important photographic collections in the United States.

The Curtis images speak, though, of a very different time. His purpose was to document for perpetuity what he called a "vanishing breed", a story of a disappearing culture and people.

Chris' photographic documentation will be connected but very different. Now we live in the time of tribal resurgence and revitalization. Native American cultures hold a power and a pride that can be seen in all walks of life including in their songs, dances, powwows, potlatches and sacred ceremonies. The communities are increasingly recognized and properly regarded as holding an

important archive of wisdom and knowledge, having an understanding of humanity's connection with the land and our planet and telling a story of re-indigenization that should inspire us all. This was no "vanishing breed". Instead, theirs is a tale of strength, determination, resilience, survival, connection, identity and pride.

Our new project, which we expect to take about 4 years to complete, will partner with communities across the US and Canada to document Native American traditions as they are now. It will be a collection of Chris' portraits – of elders, youngsters, leaders, dancers and influencers of the tribes in landscapes, pueblos and houses and at gatherings, powwows and potlatches; their incredible regalia as it is still danced today. The end result will be an historic archive; a celebration and visual documentation of Native America's rich traditions for future generations. It will be openly accessible to all: through a digitized ethnographic website collection, in a large photographic book and through donations of the portfolios of images to museum collections.

No project like this has been done for over a hundred years. It is urgently needed and well overdue.

We hope that you join us in feeling incredibly excited about it!

As always, we are immensely grateful to the donors who support our work. If anyone else is interested in getting involved, please do contact us.

Thank you so much
The Cultural Sanctuaries team



Left to right - Chief Reynard Faber of the Jicarilla Apache tribe in Dulce, New Mexico; Amanda Laroque with daughters Anayah and Anisah of the Mi'gmaq of Gesgapegiag in Quebec, Canada; and Raven dancer Gene Tagaban who is Cherokee, Tlingit and Filipino and of the Takdeintaan clan and the raven, freshwater sockeye clan of Alaska, photographed by Chris near Seattle