

The following is a Gallery Report by Tonalea Lyons, of the Odawa Tribe.

300 Miles The Oomaka Tokatakiya Future Generations Ride
October 26th - December 2nd 2017
Frank M. Doyle Arts Pavilion

Singling out one artwork in this grouping proved extremely difficult for me. Each had purpose and meaning of documentation. I especially loved Ken Marchionno's perspective and style of photography. He captured different scenes on the trail and using natural elements to intensify the composition and story of each photo.

Unfortunately there was no item description tag on the photo I really loved - however, to describe the photo I really loved by Ken Marchionno - the photo captured nature beautifully describing the elements, the figures, and the realities of harsh weather conditions Native Americans had to endure along with the reality of political and warfare conditions during history's highly volatile time.

The ride is homage to all those lives lost at Wounded Knee as well as having intentions to encourage the growth of leadership qualities in participating youth geared to increase the intellectual, spiritual and physical lessons ancestors before us endured, learned, and then ultimately perished for. The photo captures the group of riders riding along the trail engulfed in thick dense fog snow impacted landscape, and identifies their future, being bleak and fading into the void of deep fog.

My reaction to this exhibit started at the very door. I heard the music in the background after reading the intro on the wall before proceeding into the room. While reading I became emotional and the intro really set my mind to experience the rest of the exhibit. Seeing these young kids with their horses and remembering what these dear people would have experienced in 1890.

As a Native American from the Odawa tribe this exhibit spoke to my spirit. I have ancestry who died on the Trail of Tears, imprisoned on reservations, camps, and boarding schools and given Christian names. I was overcome by several emotions while in the exhibit.

I loved hearing the video playing in the background while looking at these photos it brought the experience to life. I loved looking into the eyes of these children and adults with their horses, who exhibited courage, endurance, while weathering long rides through cold bitter weather conditions. I thought of ancestors and their experiences and what they would have had to endure with no current day essential technologies, comforts, and infrastructure. I thought of the strength, courage, physical, emotional, temporal, and mental states these men, women, and children had to endure.

I felt an Indian pride emotion while in the exhibit. Thank goodness I was alone to go through so many emotions and have tears roll down my cheeks. As I slowly began from start to finish as well as emotions from start to finish I ended on a high note with pictures of ancestors who survived the massacre of Wounded Knee next to the tombstone and video of riders cheering and beaoning calls to go forward in strength.

On my journey through this exhibit at the end I felt at one, a sense of community, I felt hope, achievement, Indian pride, a sense of being and strength in myself and belonging as a Native American. I'm not sure other nationalities will understand this sense, but this is my perspective and wonderful experience at the Ken Marchionno exhibit.