Luzene Hill



Artist in her studio

Luzene Hill, Biography

Luzene Hill is a multidisciplinary artist known for immersive installations and performance collaborations. Through work informed by the pre-contact culture of the Americas, Hill advocates for Indigenous sovereignty - linguistic, cultural, and individual sovereignty. Hill focuses on the complex but important topic of violence against women, providing a voice for the silence that prevails in these experiences. Employing early autochthonous motifs, she asserts female power and sexuality to challenge colonial patriarchy.

Born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia, Hill spent time as a youth with her Cherokee family during summer vacations in North Carolina, where she currently resides. A Western Carolina University alumna, she received her Bachelor of Fine Arts, summa cum laude, in 2007 and a Master of Fine Arts in 2012 from that university. From 2006 to 2007, Hill was a National Artist Advisory Board member for ATLATL; in 2009, she received an Individual Artist Grant from the National Native Creative Development; in 2015, a First Peoples Fund Fellowship; and in 2016, a Native Arts and Culture Foundation National Artist Fellowship. She also taught at Callanwolde Arts Center from 2014 to 2017, and in 2012, her drawings were exhibited in the traveling expedition Octopus Dreams: 200 Works on Paper by Contemporary Native American Artists.

Most recently, Luzene Hill created a custom aluminum sculpture for the 2022 edition of the Armory Show in New York and was featured in publications like Artnet, The Art Newspaper, and others. The work, "To Rise and Begin Again," is made up of undulating columns that symbolize the upward push of Cherokee sovereignty, defying efforts to crush it. Each column has a letterpress piece with a Cherokee syllabary to spread awareness of the written language. In an interview with the New York Times about the monumental piece, she announces, "We're still here, and we keep rising up."

Hill's work can be found in numerous public collections, such as the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art, Indianapolis; The Heard Museum, Phoenix; The Portland Art Museum, Portland; Dartmouth College, Hanover; Coosawattee Foundation, Atlanta; Microsoft, Inc., Redmond; and private collections.

An enrolled member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Hill lives and works on the Qualla Boundary, Cherokee, NC. She has exhibited throughout the United States, Canada, Russia, Japan, and the United Kingdom. Awards include Ucross Fellowship, Native Arts and Cultures Foundation Fellowship, Eiteljorg Museum Fellowship, and First Peoples Fund Fellowship. Recent residencies include the Social Engagement Residency, IAIA MoCNA; Invited Artist Residency, Anderson Ranch Arts Center; and Invited Artist Residency, Township 10. Hill's work is featured in Susan Powers' book, "Cherokee Art: Prehistory to Present," Josh McPhee's book, "Celebrate People's History!: The Poster Book of Resistance and Revolution", and the PBS Documentary, "Native Art NOW!"

Represented by K Art Gallery Inquire: contact@thek.art

Website: www.luzenehill.com Instagram: @luzenehill

Recent Press

2022 - Asheville Made: Conceptual Art That's Essential to Survival

2022 – Artnet News: In Pictures: See the Grand-Slamming Sculptures in the Armory Show's First-Ever Exhibition at the U.S. Open

2022 - New York Times: At the U.S. Open, 5 Artists Get a Place in the Sun

2020 – <u>The Cherokee One Feather: Luzene Hill, a Cherokee artist, continues to push</u> boundaries

Notable Collaborations

Revelate, 2021, Activation on Jeffrey Gibson's sculpture, "Because Once You Enter My House, It Becomes Our House; DeCordova Sculpture Park & Museum, Boston, MA.





"A world in balance and equilibrium was the prevailing philosophy, as well as the structure of society, on this continent prior to 1492. Olin (motion-change) is the Nahuatl word given to the natural rhythms of the universe, from beating hearts to earthquakes. These cultural foundations were buried by the white noise of patriarchal colonialism.

The rhythm of a world in balance is here. It has always been here.

"Revelate" revels in Indigenous culture rising. The pulsing rhythm is resounding, exploding back into the world – through female sexual energy and power." - LH

Luzene Hill CV

29 Skilly Loop, Cherokee, NC Enrolled Member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

Born 1946, NC

Education

2007 Western Carolina University, B.F.A. summa cum laude

2012 Western Carolina University, M.F.A

Select Exhibitions

2023 The Land Carries Our Ancestors: Contemporary Native Artists, Guest Curated by Jaune Quick-

upcoming to-See Smith

traveling National Gallery of Art

September 24, 2023 - January 15, 2024

New Britain Museum of American Art April 18 - September 12, 2024

New Britain, CT

2023 REVELATE

installation Asheville Art Museum performance January – May 2023

Asheville, NC

2023 Foot Trails

K Art Gallery

March 2 - June 29, 2023

2022 Reclaiming Identity, Guest Curated by Dakota Mace

Trout Museum of Art

August 26, 2022 - January 8, 2023

Appleton, WI

2022 Disruption

Museum of the Cherokee Indians

September 8, 2022 - September 11, 2023

Cherokee, NC

2022 To Rise and Begin Again

August 23 - September 11, 2022

Flushing, New York

2022 Returns: Cherokee Diaspora and Art

The Atlanta Contemporary Art Center

June 11 - September 4, 2022

Atlanta, GA

2022 Matri Lines solo K Art Gallery

March 18 - June 3, 2022

Buffalo, NY

2021 A Living Language: Cherokee Syllabary in Contemporary Art

traveling Museum of the Cherokee Indian

June 12 - October 31, 2021

Cherokee, NC

Asheville Art Museum

November 18, 2021 - March 14, 2022

Asheville, NC

2021 Smoke and Mirrors

action Township 10 Artist in Residence

December 2021 Marshall, NC

2021 Revelate

performance deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum

September 2021 Lincoln, MA

2021 Brought to Light: The Epidemic of Violence Against Native and Indigenous Women

K Art Gallery

April 30 - October 7, 2021

Buffalo, NY

2021 Enate

Ohr-O'Keefe Museum February 2021 Biloxi, MS

2021 Marking Time, with Heidi Brandow

duo Ucross Gallery,

traveling January 11 – March 26, 2021

Ucross, WY

Yellowstone Art Museum April 8 – June 27, 2021

Billings, MT

2020 More Than a Trace

K Art Gallery

December 11, 2020 - April 11, 2021

Buffalo, NY

2020 Powerful Women: Contemporary Art from the Eiteljorg Collection

Eiteljorg Museum

September 19, 2020 - March 21, 2021

Indianapolis, IN

2020 Indigenous Futurisms: Transcending Past/Present/Future

Museum of Contemporary Native Arts February 13, 2020 – January 3, 2021

Santa Fe, NM

Now that the Gates of Hell are closed. . .

solo Different Trains Gallery

November 8, 2019 - January 2020

Decatur, GA

Select Collections

Bardo Fine and Performing Art Center, Western Carolina University Cullowhee, North Carolina

Cocoa Cinnamon Durham, North Carolina

Coosawattee Foundation Atlanta, Georgia

Dartmouth College Hanover, New Hampshire

Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art Indianapolis, Indiana

Emory University Atlanta, Georgia

Harrah's, Inc. Paradise, Nevada

Heard Museum Phoenix, AZ

Hunter Library, Western Carolina University Cullowhee, North Carolina

Larson Juhl, Inc. Norcross, Georgia

Microsoft, Inc. Atlanta, Georgia

Museum of the Cherokee Indians Cherokee, North Carolina

Portland Art Museum Portland, Oregon

Notable Works and Performances

To Rise and Begin Again, 2022



Luzene Hill's *To Rise and Begin Again* (2022) at the 2022 U.S. Open in Flushing, New York. Photo: Allison Joseph/USTA.

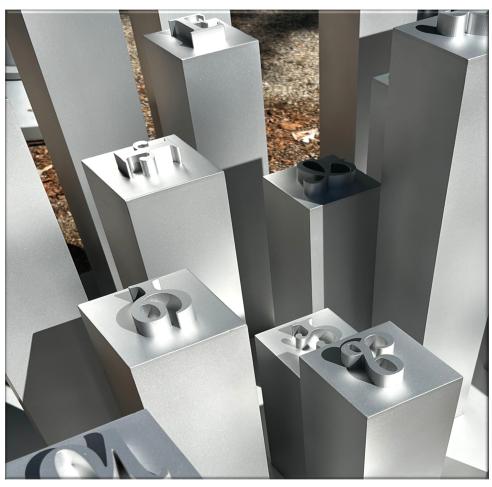
To Rise and Begin Again" displays 29 characters of the Cherokee syllabary, in the form of 19th century letterpress typeface rising up.

The syllabary is comprised of 85 characters, representing syllables, not letters. This writing system, created by Sequoyah, a Cherokee polymath, was completed and adopted into use by the Cherokee Nation in 1821. Within two years ninety percent of the Cherokee people were literate.

Two hundred years later Cherokee and other Indigenous languages are endangered. When a language dies, a culture ceases to be expressed and shared. Indigenous languages reflect what societies value - their history, cosmology, medicine, myths, and humor.

The undulating forms of "To Rise And Begin Again" suggest the lyrical rise and fall of spoken language; and more broadly, the rise, fall – and unrelenting rise again – of Indigenous people and their cultures. This work also reflects the ever upward push of urban skyline silhouettes, and specifically, the rise of NYC's steel horizon, which was made possible by Indigenous ironworkers. For over a hundred years, these "Skywalkers" (as they are known within their communities) have been integral to NYC's ascendence.





Luzene Hill, To Rise and Begin Again, Cherokee syllabary

Enate

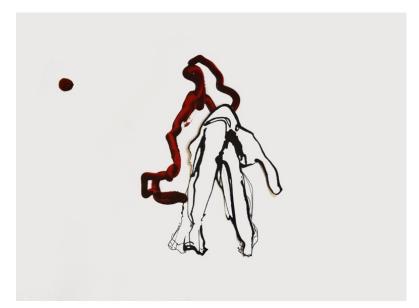


"Enate" "In the beginning . . ." implies both what I seek (the genesis of indigenous culture in the Americas) and what I reject (a patriarchal foundation).

Enate is an exposition of the numbers of Native American women who are sexually assaulted each year, presented as material volume - 6956 silk taffeta female figures. The silhouettes, dyed with cochineal, are motifs from the earliest (4,000 - 3,500 BCE) images of females in the Americas. 6956 is the average reported number of Native American women sexually assaulted each year. These figures are layered in threes. Native women are three times more likely to be assaulted than other women in the United States and many of the assaults are by non-Native men. Each trio forms a cluster, resembling feathers, and is attached to the cloak, metaphorically unifying the women into a solid mantle of protection and empowerment.

Now That the Gates of Hell Are Closed..., 2019 - Ongoing





When I was a freshman in college a professor opened the first day of class by asking the *young ladies* on the front row to "please cross your legs". They complied, quizzically, then he stated, "now that the gates of hell are closed, we can begin".

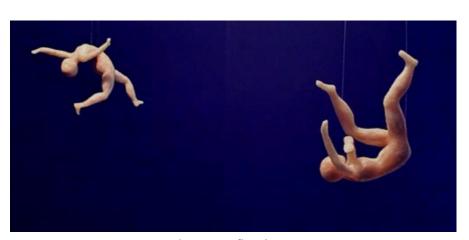
Decades later, never having forgotten that class, this is my response.

The emergence of patriarchy obliterated matrilineal cultures, societies in which women had agency and sexual freedom – freedom of choice on so many levels.

Framing women as the guilty party has been a patriarchal tradition – from Eve to blaming female survivors of rape... she was drinking, she was flirting, she was wearing provocative clothing, she was *jogging in a park at* 7:15 in the morning.

This work challenges phallogocentrism to celebrate female sexuality and eroticism.

Transparent to Transcendence, 2004







"Transparent to Transcendence" is about transformation and the way in which Native American people relate to the world around them. Most tribes have retained stories that explain celestial constellations and many of these stories involve children being drawn up into the sky. I especially like the Kiowa story in "The Ancient Child", by Scott Momaday, in which seven sisters become the stars of the Big Dipper. A similar Cherokee story tells of children ascending into the sky to become The Pleiades. Both stories suggest their subjects moving effortlessly and unafraid through the transformation process.



The Pilgrimage Ribbon, 2019



The Pilgrimage Ribbon" explores journeys and the loss of Native American Culture. Accordion books reference *Codex Boturini*, which told the story of the Aztec's journey to find a home. These two codices (each eleven feet long) represent my own journey during an eleven-year period, and the journey we all have in common, as we make our way through life, its foibles, *our* foibles - vulnerability expressed by the negative space in which the figures and shapes exist. Our paths dip and wind through encounters, exploration, danger, disappointment; eventually straying into uncharted areas of ourselves.

