

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](#)
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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 – [The Cherokee One Feather: Luzene Hill, a Cherokee artist, continues to push 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 *upcoming traveling* *The Land Carries Our Ancestors: Contemporary Native Artists*, Guest Curated by Jaune Quick-to-See Smith
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 *installation performance* *REVELATE*
Asheville Art Museum
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 *installation* *To Rise and Begin Again*
Armory Show Off-Site at USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center
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 solo	<p><i>Matri Lines</i> K Art Gallery March 18 – June 3, 2022 Buffalo, NY</p>
2021 traveling	<p><i>A Living Language: Cherokee Syllabary in Contemporary Art</i> Museum of the Cherokee Indian June 12 – October 31, 2021 Cherokee, NC</p> <p>Asheville Art Museum November 18, 2021 – March 14, 2022 Asheville, NC</p>
2021 action	<p><i>Smoke and Mirrors</i> Township 10 Artist in Residence December 2021 Marshall, NC</p>
2021 performance	<p><i>Revelate</i> deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum September 2021 Lincoln, MA</p>
2021	<p><i>Brought to Light: The Epidemic of Violence Against Native and Indigenous Women</i> K Art Gallery April 30 – October 7, 2021 Buffalo, NY</p>
2021	<p><i>Enate</i> Ohr-O'Keefe Museum February 2021 Biloxi, MS</p>
2021 duo traveling	<p><i>Marking Time</i>, with Heidi Brandow Ucross Gallery, January 11 – March 26, 2021 Ucross, WY</p> <p>Yellowstone Art Museum April 8 – June 27, 2021 Billings, MT</p>
2020	<p><i>More Than a Trace</i> K Art Gallery December 11, 2020 – April 11, 2021 Buffalo, NY</p>
2020	<p><i>Powerful Women: Contemporary Art from the Eiteljorg Collection</i> Eiteljorg Museum September 19, 2020 – March 21, 2021 Indianapolis, IN</p>

2020 *Indigenous Futurisms: Transcending Past/Present/Future*
Museum of Contemporary Native Arts
February 13, 2020 – January 3, 2021
Santa Fe, NM

2019 *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 ascendance.



Luzene Hill, *To Rise and Begin Again*, Cherokee syllabary

Ecate



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

Ecate 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



seven beeswax figurines



“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.

