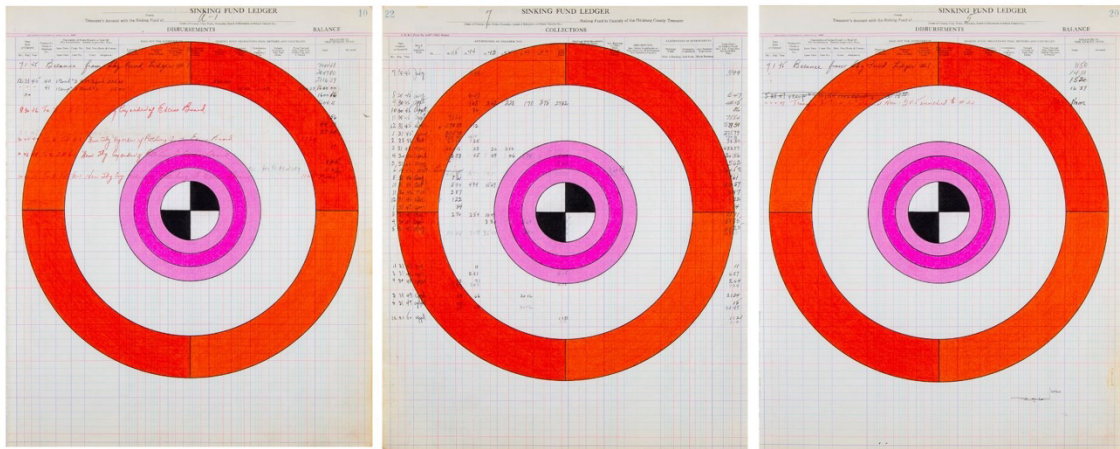


McCLAIN GALLERY

TERRAN LAST GUN: VOYAGER MESSAGES

SEPTEMBER 19 – OCTOBER 24, 2026

RECEPTION FOR THE ARTIST: SEPTEMBER 19, 2026, 3 – 5 PM



McClain Gallery is pleased to present its second solo exhibition with Indigenous artist **Terran Last Gun: *Voyager Messages***. Born in Browning, Montana, Last Gun is an enrolled member of the Piikani Nation of Montana, part of the Blackfoot Confederacy. The exhibition brings together single and multi-panel drawings as well as a new wall drawing. With this work, the artist continues to reimagine the Plains Indian Ledger Art tradition into new abstract works on paper. This is Last Gun's largest solo exhibition to date.

Typically a narrative and figurative tradition, the Ledger Art made in Last Gun's Santa Fe, New Mexico studio is an active expansion of the medium. The practice originated in the late 19th Century in the Great Plains from artists who began using discarded ledger books as a substrate for their work during a time of great cultural turmoil borne by European colonization, its expansion and aggression. On these pages oral histories were recorded pictorially, representing important events and cultural touchstones. In the hands of Last Gun, the imagery is abstracted, a specific cast of shapes iterated and ran through seemingly infinite color combinations and experiments. But despite the novelty of Last Gun's use of abstraction in the Ledger Art tradition, the strategy has always been paramount for Plains Indians' aesthetic practices; Last Gun also roots his work in the colorful graphics and adornments of his culture. In his own words:

My influences are Blackfoot painted lodges, hides, and war shirts, as well as Blackfoot archaeology throughout Montana and Alberta, Canada. ... I am revealing fragments of time, history, and Indigenous abstraction — an art form that has continued to survive in North America for thousands of years." — excerpt from

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an interview between Terran Last Gun and the Nerman Museum, quoted in *KC Studio*, June 2026.

Abstraction is frequently framed as a product of the Western, mostly White, Modernist cannon. Last Gun's compositions might recall the explorations of artists like Ellsworth Kelly and Frank Stella, the color theory of Anni and Josef Albers, and the form and pattern of Leon Polk Smith, Mary Heilmann, and Gene Davis. These references are important, unavoidable connections for the work. In order to fully understand Last Gun's intent, however, one must integrate the Indigenous roots of the artist's geometry as its basis. Last Gun has described geometric abstraction as classicism in the Indigenous cannon: a foundation on which much of aesthetics are based, a claim supported by the Moody Center for the Arts' recently opened exhibition *Radiant Geometries* and its curator Noor Alé's positioning of Indigenous abstraction: "Rather than treating geometry as an abstract system of forms, the exhibition presents it as a spatial practice through which correspondences between land, sky, time, and community are observed, nurtured, and carried forward. [Moody's] exhibition proposes an Indigenous historiography of mathematics, architecture, and science, countering notions of progress embedded in the colonial logic of extraction and dispossession."

Four triptychs in which concentric circles oscillate around one another bolster the exhibition. Like celestial discs expanding in brilliant color, each panel repeats its order and pattern in a coordinated line dance. The exception is *Exploring Dazzling Places*, which groups three drawings within which no color repeats. The hues should be discordant and yet the overall effect is hypnotic, each center calling the eye at its own beat. Circular forms also appear in the twelve single-page drawings, as in *Stumbled Across Something Appealing*, this time with a gradient of yellow ring-like bands that function as open portals bound by a beneficent square, revealing the pale void of the light blue and red gridded paper marked with the vintage scrawls of its previous use. In *Astonishment Fills As Bolts Of Cosmic Energy Beam Through Land And Sky*, a new polyptych, the circles are halved, peeking over the bottom edge of the page. Through the piece's nine panels, the artist summons the feeling of a rising sun with a black to white gradient, contrasted by bright blue and red beams of color that fall from the top of the page in the shape of a chevron. Nearby, the gallery space is anchored with a wall drawing featuring the trapezoidal shape found in four of the single-panel works. Slightly taller than a doorway, the shape is a gate shepherding the viewer into a tight kelly green orb.

The titles of Last Gun's works hint at the myths of the Piikani as well as the artist's own. Each phrase elicits a sense of wonder and discovery: *Delightfully Extraordinary*, *Strange Site for Gifts*, and *Collecting Knowledge Sets* belie an optimism for the process of making these works. Each title celebrates all the possibilities of interpretation and the curiosity that spurred them on. While making this work, Last Gun thought of humanity's interstellar messenger, Voyager. Curious how North American Indigeneity was incorporated, the artist found Navajo chants and photographs of contemporary communities. It led him to wonder - if Voyager arrived to another intelligent

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species, what would they think of Last Gun's drawings, had they been included as part of our collective message? What would they think of Terran, of the Piikani, of abstraction? What would they recognize of themselves in the shapes and colors? This is the artist's intent, same as Voyager, bottled and sent out on the vast ocean's surface: to show us who he is so that we might see who we are.

TERRAN LAST GUN (b. 1989) is a Piikani (Blackfeet) visual artist and printmaker whose work reveals fragments of time, history, and Indigenous Abstraction—an art form that has persisted for tens of thousands of years. Sah'kwiinaamah'kaa (Last Gun) was born and raised in Browning, Montana, where the Rocky Mountains greet the Great Plains. As a citizen of the Piikani Nation in Montana—who are members of the Siksikaitsitapii (Blackfoot Confederacy) that includes Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani nations of Alberta, Canada—Last Gun is contributing to an ancient Indigenous North American narrative.

Last Gun received his A.S. degree from the Blackfeet Community College in 2011 and his BFA in Museum Studies and AFA in Studio Arts from the Institute of American Indian Arts in 2016. He is a recipient of awards from the First Peoples Fund, 2020 Artist in Business Leadership Fellowship; Santa Fe Art Institute, 2018 Story Maps Fellowship; and the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture, 2016 Goodman Aspiring Artist Fellowship. The artist was recently recognized in *Art in America's* New Talent 2026, as one of 20 emerging artists to watch.

His work has been exhibited at *SITE SANTA FE*, Santa Fe, NM; Anderson Ranch Arts Center, Snowmass Village, CO; Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers, New Brunswick, NJ; Hockaday Museum of Art, Kalispell, MT; Missoula Art Museum, Missoula, MT; Contemporary at Blue Star, San Antonio, TX; and the IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts, Santa Fe, NM, among others. His work is held in permanent collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; the Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, MA; the Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, TX; the Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, OH; and the Museum of Plains Indian, Browning, MT. Last Gun is represented by McClain Gallery in Texas, where he has had two solo exhibitions. He currently lives and works in Santa Fe, New Mexico.