Timeline of Modern Native Art History for Action/Abstraction Redefined

1920’s
1922 – First Santa Fe Indian Market held, sponsored by the Museum of New Mexico
1924: Passage of Indian Citizenship Act
1925 – Native Arts department of the Denver Art Museum was founded
1927 – First Nations art exhibited with Euro-Canadian art in the Exhibition of the Canadian West Coast Art in the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa
1928 – Kiowa Six (Spencer Asah, James Auchiah, Jack Hokeah, Stephen Mopope, Monroe Tsatoke, and Lois Smoky) participate in the International Art Congress in Prague, Czech Republic
1928: The Meriam Report, a three-year study to examine the economies, health, education, and government administration of Indian affairs and trust funds, was commissioned.

1930’s
1931 – Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts opens at the Grand Central Art Galleries in New York City. Sponsored by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, the Secretary of the Interior, and the College Art Association, the exhibition of over 600 artworks then toured the Venice Biennale.
1932:
• Kiowa Six participate in the Venice Biennale. Their art, according to Dorothy Dunn, "was acclaimed the most popular exhibit among all the rich and varied displays assembled."
• Professor Mary Stone McClendon "Ataloa" (Chickasaw, 1895–1967) founds the Ataloa Art Lodge, a Native American art center at Bacone College, in Muskogee, Oklahoma
• The Studio at the Santa Fe Indian School is established by Dorothy Dunn was an American art instructor (December 2, 1903- July 5, 1992)
1933 – The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) organized the exhibition American Sources of Modern Art
1934: The Indian Reorganization Act passed in the United States
1934 – Arts and Crafts of the Indians of the Southwest opens at the DeYoung Museum in San Francisco
1934 –1941: The Seneca Indian Arts Project, a WPA-funded project at the Rochester Museum and Science Center, headed by Arthur C. Parker (Seneca, April 5, 1881 – January 1, 1955) hires 70 Haudenosaunee artists to create almost 6,000 artworks
1936 – Indian Arts and Crafts Board created in the US
1938 – Osage Nation establishes the oldest tribal museum in Pawhuska, Oklahoma
1939 – Many Native artists participate in the 1939 New York World's Fair, including realist landscape painter Moses Stranger Horse (Brulé Lakota, 1890–1941) and Fort Sill Apache sculptor Allan Houser (1914–1994)
1939 – Hopi artist Fred Kabotie (1900–1986) curates a Native American art show at the Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco

1940’s
1941 – Indian Art of the United States exhibition shows at the Museum of Modern Art, New York City
1944: National Congress of American Indians founded in the United States
1945:
• Hopi artist Fred Kabotie (1900–1986) receives Guggenheim Fellowship
• Leon Polk Smith (Cherokee descent, 1906-1996) participated in Sidney Janis Gallery’s exhibition, Post Mondrian Painters, which also included works by Josef Albers and Ilya Bolotowsky.
• *Native soldiers returning from World War II boost Native political activism in the United States and Canada, increase trend to urban migration*

1946:
Annual juried exhibition inaugurated, Philbrook Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma
• George Morrison (Chippewa, 1919-2000) was included in exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts
• Qualla Arts and Crafts is founded on the Qualla Boundary in North Carolina by Eastern Band Cherokee artists, becoming the first arts and crafts cooperative founded by Native Americans in the US

1948 – Allan Houser (Fort Sill Apache, 1914–1994) completes his first monumental sculpture at the Haskell Indian School in Lawrence, Kansas
1948-60: Canadian Government establishes permanent settlements for Inuit in the Arctic, some groups experience forced relocation

1950’s
1950 – Mungo Martin (Canadian Kwakwaka’wakw, 1879-1962) hired to restore totem poles at the University of British Columbia, stimulates renewal of traditional Northwest Coast arts.
1950: *The Lakota people openly revive the Sun Dance.*
1951: *Canada’s Indian Act amended; compulsory enfranchisement and ban on potlatch dropped.*
1953: *Mungo Martin holds potlatch at the British Columbia Provincial Museum.*

1958:
• Yanktonai Dakota artist Oscar Howe (1915–1983) writes his famous letter after his work was rejected from the Philbrook Museum art show for not being "Indian" enough.
• Leon Polk Smith (Cherokee descent, 1906-1996) had his first exhibition with the Betty Parsons Gallery and joined her influential roster of artists.
• George Morrison (Chippewa, 1919-2000) was included in group exhibitions at the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and an invitational at the Nonagon Gallery in New York along with the artists Willem de Kooning (1904- 1997), Philip Guston (Canadian, 1913-1980), Hans Hofmann (1880-1966), Franz Kline( 1910-1962), and Milton Resnick (1917-2004).
• Heard Museum Guild hosts their first annual Indian Fair and Market in Phoenix, Arizona.

1959 – Rockefeller Conference on Indian Art, University of Arizona. The meeting set the stage for a new discussion regarding Indian art production. Among the participants was MoMA director Rene d’Harnoncourt (1901-1968).
1960’s
1960 – Oscar Howe (Yanktonai Dakota, 1915-1983) appears on an episode of This Is Your Life, Ralph Edwards Productions, NBC, 13 April 1960. The guest host was Vincent Price. Among the surprise guests was Howe’s former teacher, Dorothy Dunn.
1960 – 1961: As a result of Rockefeller Conference, a new exploratory workshop, the Southwestern Indian Art Project was created. Indian youth from around the country learned about contemporary art forms and practices. The Project was the precursor to the Institute of American Indian Arts. All three Native instructors, including Lloyd Kiva New (Cherokee, 1916-2002), became the first faculty members at IAIA.
1961: National Indian Council formed, the first national Canadian native political organization
1962 – The Institute of American Indian Arts is founded in Santa Fe, New Mexico: https://iaia.edu/about/mission/
1962 – The overnight success of Norval Morrisseau’s (Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek First Nation, 1932-2007) first one-man show, Toronto, gives momentum to new school of Anishinaabe painting
1965:
- Native Arts Program inaugurated, University of Alaska, Fairbanks
- Bill Holm (1943-2009) publishes influential Northwest Coast Indian Art: An Analysis of Form
1966 – Art’s critic and curator Lawrence Alloway (1926-1990) included Leon Polk Smith’s work in Systemic Painting at The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.
1966 – Leon Polk Smith (Cherokee descent, 1906-1996) received the National Council of Art Award
1967:
Fritz Scholder (La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians, 1937-2005) paints Indian No. 1, 1967, Oil paint on canvas, 20 x 18 in, the first of his famed Indian series painting
- Red Cloud Indian School in Pine Ridge, South Dakota hosts its first annual juried, competitive, intertribal art show which continues today
- First major exhibition on Native history and culture by Aboriginal curators shown at the Indians of Canada Pavilion of Expo 67, Montreal World’s Fair, alongside newly commissioned contemporary Native art.
- Canadian Inuit artist Kenojuak Ashevak (1927-2013) awarded the Order of Canada.
- US Congress passes American Indian Civil Rights Act
- American Indian Movement (AIM) founded by Dennis Banks and Russell Means
1969:
- N. Scott Momaday (Kiowa, b. 1934) is awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.
- At the Haida Village of Masset, Robert Davidson (Haida, b. 1946) erects the first new totem pole to be carved since the nineteenth century.
1969-71: Occupation of Alcatraz Island in the San Francisco Bay by group of Native Americans.

1970’s
1970:
- Ksan Art School and Cultural Centre established, Hazelton, British Columbia
- Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy petitions US courts for the return of wampum belts held in New York State Museums.
1971 – The Cherokee Heritage Center in Park Hill, Oklahoma hosts the first Trail of Tears art show, an annual juried, competitive, intertribal art show which also continues today
1972:
- The Institute of American Indian Arts Museum (now called the IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts (MoCNA)) is founded by the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, as the only museum to focus on
contemporary intertribal Native American art: MoCNA’s art collection grew out of a student honors program. Donations from outside artists and private collectors lead to the establishment of a museum in 1972: https://iaia.edu/mocna/

- Two American Painters shows at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Collection of Fine Arts in Washington, DC, featuring T. C. Cannon (Kiowa/Caddo, 1946-1978) and Fritz Scholder (Luiseño, 1937-2005).
- Sarain Stump (Shoshone-Cree, 1945-1974) founds the Indian art Project, Saskatchewan Indian Cultural College
- Salteaux artist Robert Houle (b. 1947) helps to establish Monitou College, La Macaza, Quebec

1973: AIM occupation of Wounded Knee on Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota, and siege by FBI.
1975 – Woodland Cultural Center Museum, Brantford, Ontario, initiates annual exhibition of contemporary Native art.
1976:
- Saskatchewan Indian Federated College is first Native-controlled college in Canada.
1977: First Inuit Circumpolar conference, Barrow, Alaska