



**Displaying What is a Black Indian:
Evidence of Native American
Transculturalization of Africans in
a Smithsonian Exhibit.**

indiVisible

African-Native American Lives in the Americas

Mittwoch, 28. Mai 2014 | 15.15 – 16.45 Uhr
Merangasse 18/KG, SR 35.K1, 8010 Graz



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What is a Black Indian? To explore this question, this guest lecture takes a person-centered ethnographic approach to the dynamics of African and African American acculturation or “transculturalization” - a term coined by A. Irving Hallowell (1963) - within Native American communities, as discernible from life-histories collected during my tenure as a co-curator of the current Smithsonian’s traveling banner exhibit, “IndiVisible: African-Native American Lives in the Americas.” Three years in the making and reflective of community consultation and institutional collaborations between the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC), and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), this exhibit - like the lived experiences to be presented - illuminate past and present shared life ways, communities, policies, and unified forms of creative resistance experienced by African Americans, Native Americans, and individuals of blended African and Native American heritage racially and/or culturally (African-Native Americans), within and outside of Native American communities. Knowing that Africans and Native Americans interacted only skims the surface of this exciting area of the ethnographic and historical records. There remains the challenge of understanding the diverse natures and sources of these cultural exchanges throughout Native America.



Robert Keith Collins, PhD, an anthropologist, is Associate Professor of American Indian Studies at San Francisco State University. He holds a BA in Anthropology and a BA in Native American Studies from the University of California at Berkeley. Dr. Collins also holds an MA and PhD in Anthropology from UCLA. Using a person-centered ethnographic approach, his research explores American Indian cultural changes and African and Native American interactions in North, Central, and South America. His recent academic efforts include being a co-curator on the Smithsonian’s traveling banner exhibit “IndiVisible: African-Native American Lives in the Americas”, an edited volume for the American Indian Culture and Research Journal at UCLA on “Reducing Barriers to Native American Student Success”, and two books in final preparation: “African-Native Americans: Racial Expectations and Red-Black Lived Realities” (University of Minnesota Press) and “Memoirs of Kin that Race Can’t Erase: Kinship, Memory, and Self Among African-Choctaw Mixed Bloods” (University of North Carolina Press).

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