

Pasatiempo

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ART

An experimental exhibition

Ania Hull | For The New Mexican

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Visitors interact with Rapheal Begay's *ALL REZ* mobile exhibition at the Gallup Arts Crawl.



Visitors interact with Rapheal Begay's *ALL REZ* mobile exhibition outside the Navajo Nation Museum.

Rapheal Begay (Diné) may have exhibited his photography across several museums already, but his family and Diné relatives have rarely come to those shows.

"Museums tend to be very academic and elitist, and have for a long time excluded the stories and the history of minorities, specifically those of Indigenous peoples," Begay says. "A museum just wasn't originally a space for us, and many of us don't feel comfortable in a space like that.

"In addition, a lot of the objects in museums — Indigenous objects, Native-made objects — are primarily stolen objects or have been procured or obtained without prior informed consent. Even my own family has a lot of hesitation going to my own shows within museums."

To remedy this, Begay decided to bring the museum to the Diné. His new photography exhibition, *ALL REZ: K'éyah, Hooghan, K'é, Iiná / Land, Home, Kinship, Life*, is an experiment in museology. Begay is *ALL REZ*'s artist, lead curator, and creative director; Lillia McEnaney — a museum anthropologist and independent curator from Santa Fe — is the co-curator and the project's manager.

Together, they organized an exhibition that's in part in situ — inside the walls of the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology at UNM — and in part on the road, inside Axle Contemporary's mobile art space, a retrofitted van from the 1970s that Begay decked out with his photographs of the Navajo Nation.

The traveling component of *ALL REZ* set off for the Navajo Nation on June 1 and crossed Diné Bik'éyah ("the people's sacred lands" or Navajo Land), stopping at specific points to give as many people as possible a chance to visit and chat. *ALL REZ* returns to Santa Fe this weekend, where everyone can interact with Begay's photographs and speak with the artist at the Farmers' Market on Saturday, June 29, and at the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture on Sunday, June 30

Begay hopes the photographs in *ALL REZ* — of the Navajo Nation and the cultural landscape — will remind the Diné people of the beauty of everyday Diné life. "*ALL REZ* [on the road] is an opportunity to see what my people think and feel when they look at my work," he says, "as well as when they see themselves, their backyards, their relatives' backyards."

***ALL REZ: K'éyah,
Hooghan, K'é, Iiná /
Land, Home, Kinship, Life***

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**Santa Fe Farmers' Market
and SITE Santa Fe**

1606 Paseo De Peralta
8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday,
June 29

• Free

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**Museum of Indian Arts
and Culture**

710 Camino Lejo
10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday,
June 30
Free

allrez.net,
maxwellmuseum.unm.edu,
axleart.com

Begay lives in Window Rock, Arizona, the capital of the Navajo Nation, where he works for the Navajo tribal government. This gave him the opportunity to develop a different sense of what home means to him. "Home is not necessarily bound by walls, borders, or county or state lines," he says. "It is always beneath our feet. We are at this connection between Mother Earth and Father Sky."

For the mobile part of *ALL REZ*, Begay visualized Diné Bikéyah as a hogan, or a sacred Diné home. "You would enter [a hogan] through the east," he told Pasatiempo before he set off on the road, "and you would circle around it in a clockwise fashion and then exit."

So he took *ALL REZ* on a clockwise tour of Diné Bikéyah and entered the Navajo Nation from the east, through T'iis' Tsooz' Ndeeshgizh (Crownpoint) where he parked *ALL REZ* at the Crownpoint Rug Auction. Begay and McEnaney then traveled west to Na' nízhoozhi (Gallup), where they stopped at two different locations and later drove to Tségháhoodzáni (Window Rock), where Begay put his work on display at the Ch'ihootso Indian Market Place and outside the Navajo Nation Museum.

"In the case of the Gallup Flea Market, for example, it was fascinating to see all the vendors and the hustle that comes with sharing your work and sharing and presenting yourself," he says. "This is an act of vulnerability, and it's been beautiful, and strong, and powerful. A friend of mine and I were moved to tears by our mere conversation there, by simply being present and holding space and allowing each other to express ourselves and to see each other."

Once Begay reached Tséyi (Canyon de Chelly National Monument), he continued northeast through the desert to the copper hues of Tsé Bii' Ndzisgaii (Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park). *ALL REZ*'s final stop a week ago on Navajo Land was Naat'áanii Nez (Shiprock).

As he traveled, he recorded conversations, stories, and memories people shared with him and noted their reactions to photos of their own community. "Our youth and young adults seem to be more receptive to the project, and the intent of what it could become," he says. "Our elders may be unfamiliar with such types of spaces but are in fact curious and are wondering what is going on, what is this." He adds that most people were especially drawn to *Rez Dog*, a photograph of a dog showing his teeth.

Ania Hull is a journalist and writer based in New Mexico.