



Broken Jaw,
Chippewa Chief Nes-ro-sso-ba
(He is wild ricing and fishing on the lake), 2008
Leonard Peltier
Oil on canvas, 16 X 20"
Courtesy of Leonard Peltier Defense Offense Committee

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Oil paintings are by Leonard Peltier, all other artworks by Rigo 23 unless noted otherwise.
All artworks have been made available courtesy of Leonard Peltier Defense Offense Committee, Gallery Paule Anglim, Michelle Vignes, and the artist
All installation shots are courtesy of David Broda unless noted otherwise

RIGO 23
TATÉ WIKIKUWA MUSEUM: NORTH AMERICA, 2024, 2010
Installation, variable dimensions

ENTRANCE:
Newspaper clipping *FBI Agents Protest Idea of Peltier Clemency*, 16 December, 2000; one banner; quotes by Oren Lyons from the United Nations speech (1992); vinyl dates; painting by David Quimn

MAIN GALLERY:
Sculpture *Leonard Peltier* by Rigo 23 with Eunjung Shin and Jee Eun Lee; seven paintings by Leonard Peltier (2008-2009); two mini-drums by Leonard Peltier; four mini-drums from Leonard Martinez; two quilts by Her Many Horses; and Dream Catcher by Comauchi Poor Bear

TESTIMONIAL WALL:
Writings by the general public; twenty photographs by Michelle Vignes; book *Prison Writings, My Life is My Sun Dance* by Leonard Peltier; two posters; one banner

VAULT:
Thirty-three photographs by Michelle Vignes (*Wounded Knee*, 1973) from the collection of Onondaga Nation

THE WAREHOUSE GALLERY

Syracuse University
350 West Fayette Street
Syracuse, NY 13202

The Warehouse Gallery is an international contemporary art venue of the SUArt Galleries at Syracuse University. The gallery's mission is to present exhibitions and programs by artists whose work engages the community in a dialogue regarding the role the arts can play in illuminating critical issues of our life and times.

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San Francisco-based artist Rigo 23 is known nationally and internationally for his highly political site-specific work. Intercultural relations and justice issues are often present in his work, which includes working with political prisoners, such as Leonard Peltier, who is the subject of this show. The exhibition title refers specifically to Leonard Peltier's given name in Lakota (Taté Wikikuwa), to his next hearing in 2024, and to Rigo 23's former project at the De Young Museum in San Francisco (1999). *Taté Wikikuwa Museum: North America, 2024* at The Warehouse Gallery focuses on the artwork, life, and status of this Native American whose case has been an international controversy since the 1970s. This exhibition showcases Peltier through the visual arts (oil paintings, photographs, sculpture) as well as educational components such as the film screening of *Incident at Oglala* (1992) and round-table discussion.

Additional support for the installation is provided in part by Gallery Paule Anglim and Signage Systems. Additional support for the round table discussion on Leonard Peltier and the Civil Rights Movement on November 20, 2010 was provided by The SU Humanities Center, organizer of the 2010 Syracuse Symposium on CONFLICT: PEACE AND WAR, the Native American Studies Program, the PAL Project, and Community Folk Art Center.

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RIGO 23
TATÉ WIKIKUWA MUSEUM: NORTH AMERICA, 2024

18 NOVEMBER 2010–6 FEBRUARY 2011

THE WAREHOUSE GALLERY
GUIDE#13





Taté Wikikuwa Museum: North America, 2024 (detail, timeline corridor), 2010
Installation, dimensions variable

**HOSTING/BECOMING AN IMAGINARY MUSEUM
BY ANJA CHÁVEZ**

"It is all about process." (Rigo 23, 18 November, 2010)¹

A non-profit museum has many ways of addressing the production of a temporary exhibition. It can show works that are thematically relevant to recognized movements in contemporary art. The art may be site-specific, ephemeral, or be the recreation or alteration of a previous work for a different space configuration. As such the work can live on in ever changing form as the artist desires to continue its concept. During the installation of such works, the artist can also seek assistance from the community to pursue the goal of generating a social dimension that exceeds the individual artistic authorship or ownership of the work. Such is the case with Rigo 23 and the imaginary institution—Taté Wikikuwa Museum—that focuses on the problematic surrounding Leonard Peltier. The work was produced in altruistic collaborative spirit, created by and open to multiple audiences.

The Taté Wikikuwa Museum was erected within the Warehouse Gallery at SU to create a museum within a museum. Rather than the lasting bond and partnership that is formed when two museums officially and legally merge, in the case of Rigo 23's work, both the Taté Wikikuwa Museum and the Warehouse Gallery are joined in an experiment that highlights what is real and what is imaginary about a museum in general. It also serves to reexamine the aesthetic and administrative precepts on which a museum is founded and operates.

For the duration of this exhibit the Warehouse Gallery has been transformed into the Taté Wikikuwa Museum, the result of Rigo 23's decades long collaborative project with Peltier, his defense committee, and members of the Oglala and Onondaga Nations. In 1999, this work led to the first incarnation of the traveling show *Taté Wikikuwa Museum*, presented at such international venues as the De Young Museum, San Francisco, CA; the Royal College of Art, London; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Santiago, Chile. What has changed dramatically in the current project is that the previous work could be defined as exhibitions within sovereign museal spaces, whereas the Taté Wikikuwa Museum at the Warehouse Gallery has taken over this space and thus broken down its sovereignty. The setting for the museum also adds a profound new dimension to the work: it is part of Syracuse University in the city of Syracuse, NY and includes multiple elements and materials from the Onondaga Nation as well as the other federacies. In addition, the museum is located on land claimed by Onondaga Nation.

Intercultural relations and issues of justice are often present in Rigo 23's art, including working with political prisoners, such as Leonard Peltier. Accused and convicted of the murder of two FBI agents in 1976, Peltier remains in prison and still is the center of an international controversy. The exhibition title refers to Peltier's given name in Lakota (Taté Wikikuwa), and to his next parole hearing in 2024 (see the subtitle North America, 2024). It showcases Peltier's own oil paintings and published writings; works by French-born documentary photographer Michelle Vignes; art by the Oglala Sioux tribe (Pine Ridge, SD); as well as documentary posters, educational materials, and a round table discussion (with Oglala Vice-President Tom Poor Bear; Chief and Faithkeeper Oren Lyons, Onondaga Nation; Coordinator of Neto and Wolf-Clan from Grand River Territory Allan Jamieson; Angola 3 member Robert Hillary King; and Rigo 23)² that was an integral part of the exhibit.



Angela Davis, Louis Papirainan, Oren Lyons, and Bill Lazura (L-R)
Michelle Vignes
Untitled, 1973
Silver gelatin print, 8 x 10"
Courtesy of the artist, collection of Onondaga Nation



Taté Wikikuwa Museum: North America, 2024
(detail, vault), 2010
Installation, dimensions variable
All photos silver gelatin prints, 8 X 10", 1973 by Michelle Vignes
Courtesy of the artist, collection of Onondaga Nation

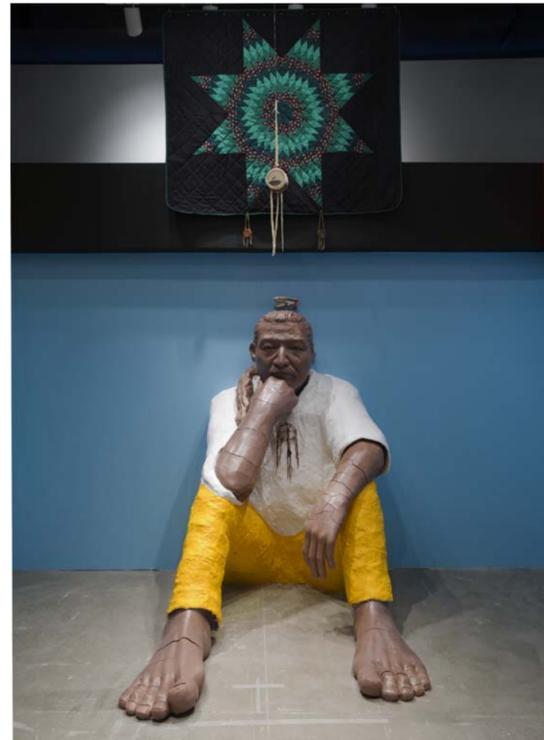
Taté Wikikuwa Museum includes barred windows both on the street front windows and within the space. It also presents a narrow hallway that chronicles Leonard Peltier's life through quotes from Oren Lyons' United Nations speech (1992), newspaper clippings, and photographs by Michelle Vignes. The hallway leads to the museum's main space that reveals Rigo 23's life size sculpture of Peltier—a collaborative work with community members and Rigo 23's artist collaborator Gonzalo Hidalgo. This space strongly suggests a prison cell, yet it also conveys spiritual elements through Peltier's paintings, as well as quilts, mini-drums by Peltier and Oglala tribe members, and the color choices for the walls and banners. The adjacent space shows Vignes' photographs that document the American Indian Movement (AIM) in the late 1960s, and it includes paintings produced by Leonard Peltier while in prison. Another area of the museum provides a testimonial wall where visitors are invited to share comments, while the Vault exhibits further photographs by Vignes. These were selected by Oren Lyons and focus on the occupation of Wounded Knee, SD (1973)³

Rigo 23's museum also coexists with art activism. It eschews labels and overly stylized graphic design. For example, all titles, quotes, and statements are handwritten. In this way, and along with the testimonial wall, Rigo 23's work further challenges the museum as sole proprietor of the commentary about the exhibition. Similarly, social commentary is thus woven into the aesthetics through the display of art from varied artists: Peltier's paintings; Rigo's selection of Vignes' documentary photographs (focusing, for instance, on individuals such as Dennis Banks and Peltier, and on events such as the Occupation of Alcatraz); Rigo 23's sculpture of Peltier (an homage that refers iconographically to the figure of Buddha as well as to Auguste Rodin's late nineteenth-century *The Thinker*); and mini-drums painted by Leonard Martinez that bear the dates of the massacre of Native Americans in 1890 and the incident in 1973 (both at Wounded Knee, SD).

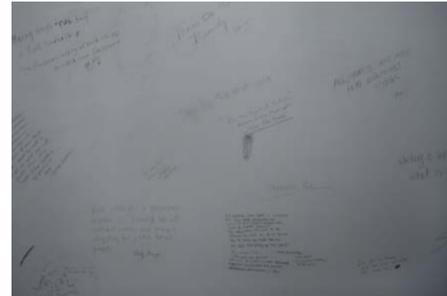
For his part, Rigo 23's Taté Wikikuwa Museum brings together communities from close and afar. It was shaped by his travels to South Dakota to work with the Oglala tribe and by his collaboration with Onondaga Nation in New York. While Rigo 23 is far from wishing to be considered a curator, director, or spokesperson for Native Americans, on the day of the opening he could be found writing quotes onto the walls, and declaring the museum a success for having brought communities together to reflect on Peltier and the current political status of this one individual and Native Americans in general. As such, Rigo 23's Taté Wikikuwa Museum can best be described as a process that merges art, politics, and social activism; a process long ago defined as the ethical imperative of the zoon politikon or political animal.

Exhibited internationally, this is Rigo 23's third solo museum show on the East Coast.

¹ Rigo 23, conversation with the author.
² This event was moderated by Gregg Lambert (Dean's Professor of Humanities and Director, The SU Humanities Center, SU) and hosted on November 20, 2010 by the 2010 Syracuse Symposium (themed Conflict: Peace and War), at the Warehouse Auditorium.
³ Oren Lyons brought these photographs to a meeting with the author and community members (September 7, 2010). We are indebted to his generosity.



Taté Wikikuwa Museum: North America, 2024
(detail, main gallery), 2010
Installation, dimensions variable
Sculpture: clay, plaster, and mixed media, 98 X 72 X 93"



Taté Wikikuwa Museum: North America, 2024
(detail, testimonial wall), 2010
Installation, dimensions variable



Taté Wikikuwa Museum: North America, 2024
(installation view, corner gallery), 2010
Installation, dimensions variable

We Indian people like to say "we are all related".

I pass that truth on to you now.

Each and every one of you and the work you are doing are related.

Let that be your greeting between groups and persons, as well as an ethic - the very spirit of what gatherings like this are intended to be.

Practice thinking it and saying it until it is automatic.

We are all related, so put aside whatever differences you may have And make solidarity a new and constant reality.

Remember, this is not your struggle. It is for everyone.

Excerpted from Leonard Peltier's statement for the opening ceremony of the US Social Forum, Detroit June 25th, 2010

**The Day of Mourning
Thursday, November 25, 2010**

I have not for a moment forgotten the needs of my people the atrocities committed against them

I paint pictures of them sometimes people I've known people I've met places I've seen and places I've only seen in my mind's eye

And if my paintbrush was magical, rest assured I would paint for myself one open door

In the Spirit of Crazy Horse, who gave his life for what was right and tried to right what was wrong

Your Brother,
Leonard Peltier

COVER:
Rigo 23: Taté Wikikuwa Museum, 2024
(installation view, main entrance), 2010
Installation, dimensions variable



Eunjung Shin and SU students Jee Eun Lee and Emily Lynda Jade Ellis assisting the artist
Photo credit: Rigo 23



Taté Wikikuwa Museum: North America, 2024
(detail, main gallery), 2010
Mini-drum by Leonard Martinez