

# THE LAST THANKS

## GUIDE

Wendy Red Star  
(Apsáalooke, b. 1981)  
*The Last Thanks*, 2006  
Archival pigment print

To create this imaginary scene, Wendy Red Star borrowed her composition from Leonardo da Vinci's (Italian, 1452–1519) *The Last Supper* (1495–98), lining up figures behind a table, while the appropriated paper headaddresses and blown-up turkey reference Thanksgiving. By conflating the Last Supper's story of betrayal and, ultimately, death with the American tradition of Thanksgiving, Red Star reveals the holiday to be a myth—one with ongoing, apocalyptic effects. As she has said, "the first Thanksgiving is our last supper." Red Star also invokes an alternative reality: sitting at the center of the table, dressed in her full Apsáalooke regalia with her eyes diverted, she affirms Indigenous peoples' ongoing resistance

## Whose land do we live on?

When creating *The Last Thanks*, Wendy Red Star thought about the destruction of Native people and the genocide that has happened to Native peoples across the United States of America. Native folks are still here, and their traditions are still present in our society, but often not celebrated as often as they should.

Using the website **Native Land Digital**, research the stolen land you are on. What tribe inhabited the land you are living on? What were and are their traditions? How are those traditions still carried out today?



MCA  
CHIC  
AGO

## We are more than our trauma.

"Everybody got their senior photo in their traditional regalia. But for me, there's something very powerful about wearing that regalia, and it's unexplainable. But I think that the dress itself, the elk tooth dress is so powerful that um, immediately... and I feel safe to say this about other Crow women and girls too, who put on the dress. It transforms you in a way, you know, you sort of walk differently."

—Wendy Red Star

We might not all be connected to a culture or community that has something like regalia, but we all have something in our lives that might make us feel transformed. It might be something that you wear, or maybe people you surround yourself with. What does being transformed feel like and look like you? Discuss as a class, in a small group, or with a partner.

Create your own artwork to show what feeling transformed feels like to you. This could be a drawing, painting, collage, poem, short story, or medium of your choice.