



They Already Got Yo Kids ("Tricked my wisdom with the system that imprisoned my son")

Date

2013

Primary Maker

Umar Rashid (Frohawk Two Feathers)

Medium

Acrylic, ink, coffee, and tea on paper

Description

In his artistic practice, Frohawk Two Feathers (born Umar Rashid) imagines an alternative, or counterfactual, history of the eighteenth century in which two large superpowers, the FrenGLISH Empire and the Kingdom of Holland and Zeeland, struggled to control the globe. Couched in historical research, the artist's paintings, sculptures, and drawings—all fashioned to appear antique—depict a fantasy world that explores the effects of imperialism and includes in positions of power people who have typically been excluded from or diminished in the historical record on account of their race or gender. *They Already Got Yo Kids* is a fictional piece of propaganda resembling a traditional Madonna and Child but specifically meant to recruit the Christian children of survivors of the siege of a FrenGLISH fort to join the ongoing fight

against the Dutch. Two Feathers's mock-historic portraiture often depicts his own friends and acquaintances and incorporates references to modern popular culture, such as the hoop earrings seen here and the slang that appears in the title, layering past and present. By emulating eighteenth-century painted portraits, the artist calls attention to the ways power has traditionally been visualized and to the unspoken code of iconography that underlies such portrayals. In his works, tattoos often serve a similar function, professing the allegiances and personal accomplishments of the sitter. The frame drawn around this image is meant to evoke both a mirror—"so it's like people are looking at themselves when they look at my portraits"—and a gravestone. Both symbols encourage viewers to consider their relationship to history and the roles they and their ancestors have played in it. The artist's intention is to remind humankind of the shared past that has brought us to the present: "In a way I'm trying to re-explore what it is to be an American. Our history as Americans is one born of conflict, and greed, stemming from the various European empires. . . . But once here, we all began to search for our identity." (SOURCE: Alcauskas, INNOVATIVE APPROACHES, HONORED TRADITIONS, 2017)

Dimensions

Sheet: 43 1/2 × 30 1/2 in. (110.5 × 77.5 cm) Frame: 48 3/8 × 35 1/8 × 2 in. (122.9 × 89.2 × 5.1 cm)