



# NEWS RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Seconding That Emotion

*Lukachukai, Ariz., abstract expressionist beat drug, alcohol abuse*

**TSAILE, Ariz.** — Artist Antoinette Thompson is fascinated by the raw power of emotion.

In "My Culture, My World," an exhibit created with acrylic paint, water colors and stencil images that is in the midst of a six-month run at the Ned A. Hatathli Cultural Center Museum at Diné College, Thompson delves into people and things that have shaped her life.

Inspired by Spanish artists Salvador Dali and Pablo Picasso, Thompson's paintings focus on emotion and Native American lore, with the use of arrowheads and silhouettes the dominant themes. The paintings use human figures and inanimate images to examine the rich emotional life that lies just beneath the surface of the skin.

Thompson's paintings have sold throughout the world.

"I am an abstract expressionist artist," the Navajo-born Thompson told a recent gathering of Diné College students and administrators on hand to view the exhibit. "I use my emotions to paint what I feel and what I know. I explore what it means to be Navajo and an artist."

Thompson uses small art brushes to apply paint to a composition. A wide mix of colors and expression are evident in "*So Strong*," a 34-by-28 work that is the main draw of the 14-piece exhibit. Thompson's works are done on richly textured canvasses, with plenty of marks that replicate the cumulative impact that life has on the human soul. Thompson paints while

not wearing shoes — "I have to be free and comfortable when I'm doing this," she explains.

"We have gotten a lot of positive feedback and a lot of positive comments about the exhibit," Nonabah Sam, museum curator at Diné College, said, adding that Thompson's mother approached Diné College about the exhibit. "It's impressive."

### **The Thompson File**

A Chinle High School graduate, Thompson, 35, started painting about seven years ago. She graduated from the University of Phoenix with a degree in health administration and admits that there is no such thing as a "beginner artist." It's natural ability — something you're born with, she muses.

"I didn't go to school and learn this," Thompson said. "This is something that you teach yourself. This comes from the heart and from the standpoint of emotion."

### **The Meth Years**

While living and working in Phoenix for 17 years, Thompson became addicted to methamphetamine and alcohol, flirting with legal consequences. But one day, something roused Thompson from her drug-induced haze.

Now back on the Navajo Nation Indian Reservation, she paints out of a residence that she shares with family members in her native Lukachukai.

"Those were some of the worst years of my life," Thompson said of the drug period. "But I learned a lot about myself. I think we all go through experiences like that. I know it was God who came to me and put me on the right path."