

The New York Times, Sunday, April 17, 2016

## The Week Ahead

A Survey of the Cultural Landscape

### ART

Kay WalkingStick's American History, Personal Journey

HOLLAND COTTER



"Me and My Neon Box" (1971), included in the Kay WalkingStick retrospective at the National Museum of the American Indian. Credit Kay WalkingStick

“Kay WalkingStick: An American Artist,” at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, is an overdue career survey of a near half-century of work by an artist, now 81, for whom “American” has multiple and conflicted meanings.

Ms. WalkingStick’s father, who disappeared early from her life, was Cherokee, and her mother was Scottish-Irish. Raised in Syracuse, Ms. WalkingStick was part of the New York City painting scene of the 1970s. As she grew increasingly absorbed in the realities of her Native American ancestry, she approached them through a series of powerful diptychs that juxtaposed landscapes and symbolic abstraction. Their mood of mingled anger and sorrow sharpened into lamentation after the sudden death of her husband. The show carries us through this personal and political history to a resolution in recent work, which finds the diptychs merging into single, serene panoramic vistas. (Through Sept. 18, 202-633-6644; [nmai.si.edu](http://nmai.si.edu).)