

Native Americans in Visual Countercultures: Shaping Italianicity through Cultural Appropriation

Abstract

An examination of underground print culture within a decolonial framework highlights the important political role of the figure of the Native American in the Italian countercultural movement. Influenced by a West Coast hippie culture, the Italian underground appropriated Native Americanness in various ways, such as using nineteenth-century photographs of Native Americans in the zine culture or fetishizing indigenous lifestyles by performing “ethnic drag” within the *Indiani Metropolitani* movement in 1977. Underground artist Matteo Guarnaccia developed a psychedelic interpretation of Native Americanness in his zines whereas Pablo Echaurren used détournement to subvert the macho messages of Far West Italian comics like *Tex*. This article problematizes the widespread appropriation of Native American visual culture while also examining its complex anti-American role in forming a post-war Italian identity.