



SKEET MCAULEY

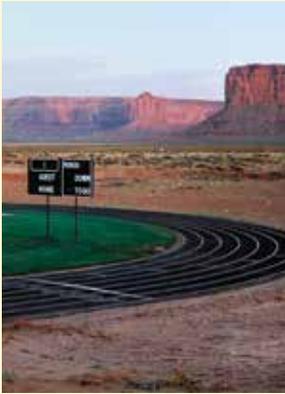
American, b. 1951

Navajo Tribal School Near Goulding, Utah, 1985

Chromogenic print

Gift of Andrew and Elizabeth Wallace in honor of the
Figge Art Museum's 10th Anniversary, 2015.6

Navajo Tribal School Near Goulding, Utah



Skeet McAuley (b. 1951) Photographer Skeet McAuley was born in Monahans, Texas, in 1951. He attended Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas, earning his BA in 1976. Two years later he received his MFA from Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. By 1980, McAuley was showing his photographs professionally. To date, he has exhibited domestically and internationally in over thirty one-man shows and well over eighty group exhibitions. McAuley, a photographer, videographer, educator, and professional artist, has received numerous accolades. He was awarded two National Endowment for the Arts Individual Artists Fellowships, one in 1984 and the second in 1986. In 1988 he received a Polaroid Artist Support Grant: Polaroid Corporation.

A product of its time

From 1981-1989 McAuley concentrated his efforts on location photography, focusing on Native American cultures. His pictures of Southwest American Indian life on a Navajo reservation are a study of the conflicts inherent in blending contemporary life with traditional Native American cultural values. The modern athletic track, the central image in this photograph, juxtaposed with the backdrop of ancient desert and monument rocks creates a visual irony. The context of building a confined, structured running space in the middle of open ageless desert illustrates the incongruity of imposing “civilized” order to the natural order.

Take a closer look

McAuley describes his art as showing the relationship between the natural environment and consumer-driven cultures. His images are filled with visual clues that express the paradox of such a relationship. In *Navajo Tribal School Near Goulding, Utah*, the verdant grass expanse that fills the center of the athletic track mocks the dry brown desert in which it is located. The modern school amenity set in the vast empty desert space is a distortion of the indigenous natural order.

Did you know?

The Southwest American Indian series of photographs McAuley produced between 1981-1989 was published in the 1989 book, *Sign Language: Contemporary Southwest Native America*. McAuley’s art images extend well beyond his interest in Southwest Native America, including photographic series of golf courses, bonsai trees, landscapes, Suiseki Stones, and studio works. The relationship between consumer-driven culture and nature is an ongoing theme in all of his art.

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