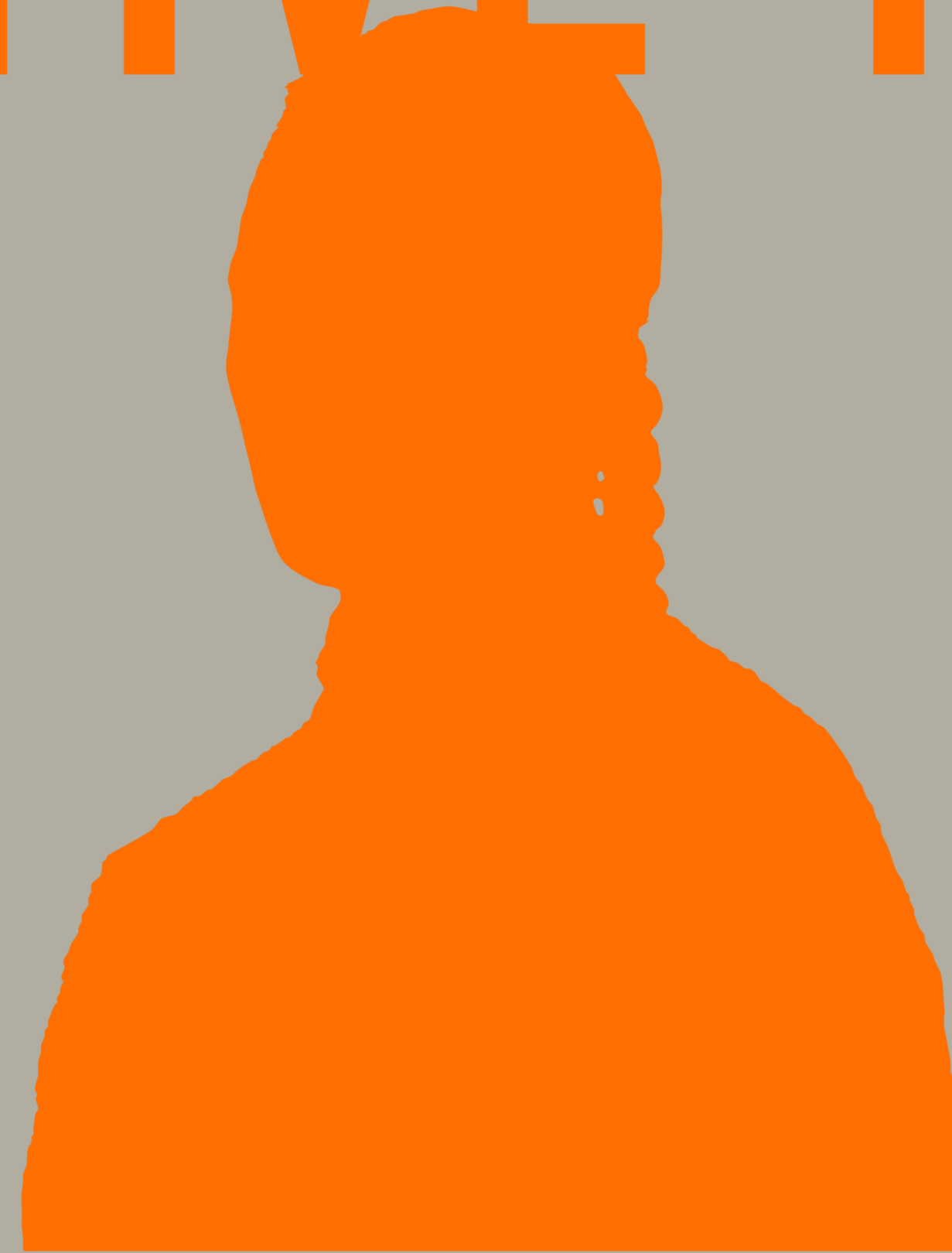


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# YOU DON'T LOOK NATIVE TO ME



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*by Maria Sturm*

**YOU DON'T LOOK  
NATIVE TO ME**



**YOU DON'T LOOK  
NATIVE TO ME**

**500**    **Copies – Limited Edition**  
**112**    **Pages**  
**66**     **Photographs**

You Don't Look Native to Me

MARIA STURM

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Photographs and texts  
by Maria Sturm





# *You Don't Look Native to Me*

**Marla Sturm**

In 2011, Marla Sturm began to photograph the lives of young people from the Lumbee Tribe around Pembroke, Robeson County, North Carolina. Through the process of documenting their lives, Sturm began to question her own understanding of what it means to be Native American. Her new book 'You Don't Look Native to Me' combines photographs with interviews and texts to preconceptions and show Native identity not as fixed, but evolving and redefining itself with each generation.

Pembroke is the tribal seat of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina, the largest state-recognised tribe east of the Mississippi River. Although the Lumbee Tribe is state-recognised, they are federally unrecognised and do not have a reservation nor receive financial benefits from the federal government. The Lumbee name was voted for in 1952 to unite all tribes in the area in an attempt to gain federal recognition. Their tribal status remains one of the most debated in the United States.

Sturm's photographs, at first glance, appear to depict the daily life of an archetypal American community. On closer inspection elements of hybridity between heritage and contemporary life are revealed—a street named 'Dreamcatcher Drive', a 'Native Pride' baseball cap with feathers, Halloween fangs on a Tuscarora child in regalia—in the town where nearly 90% of the population identify as Native. The protagonists of Sturm's photographs present themselves as individuals with their own unique identities and shared culture. The presence of Native symbolism—on street signs, pictures on walls, on cars, on shirts and as tattoos—shows how a stereotypical image is often presented back to them. The book's title 'You Don't Look Native to Me' is borrowed from a quote familiar to many residents of Robeson County and encapsulates the discrepancy between their identity and preconceptions of others.

\*On the usage of the term Native American.

In the past few years I've noticed a growing shift in using the term Indigenous for self-identification in comparison to Native American. One of the protagonists has expressed a preference for pre-Colonial America Native rather than American, which I respect. For the purposes of this press release and project, after research and consultation, I decided to use the term Native American as it seems to still be the most widely used and accepted in official texts and publications. However, I felt it important to acknowledge the debate and that this term is imperfect.'

*My work engages an unfamiliar mix of concepts: a tribe whose members are ignored by the outside world, who do not wear their otherness on their physique, but who are firm in their identity... I am tracing their ways of self-representation, transformed through history, questions of identity with which they are confronted on a daily basis, and their reawakening pride in being Native. I hope to raise questions to the viewer regarding their own identity and membership to the unspecified mainstream.*

**Maria Sturm**





# *Maria Sturm*

Maria Sturm (born 1985, Romania) studied photography at the University of Applied Sciences Bielefeld, Germany and at the Rhode Island School of Design as a Fulbright and DAAD scholar. Her work has been published in the New York Times, the Guardian, The Atlantic, der Spiegel and Zeit Magazin amongst others.















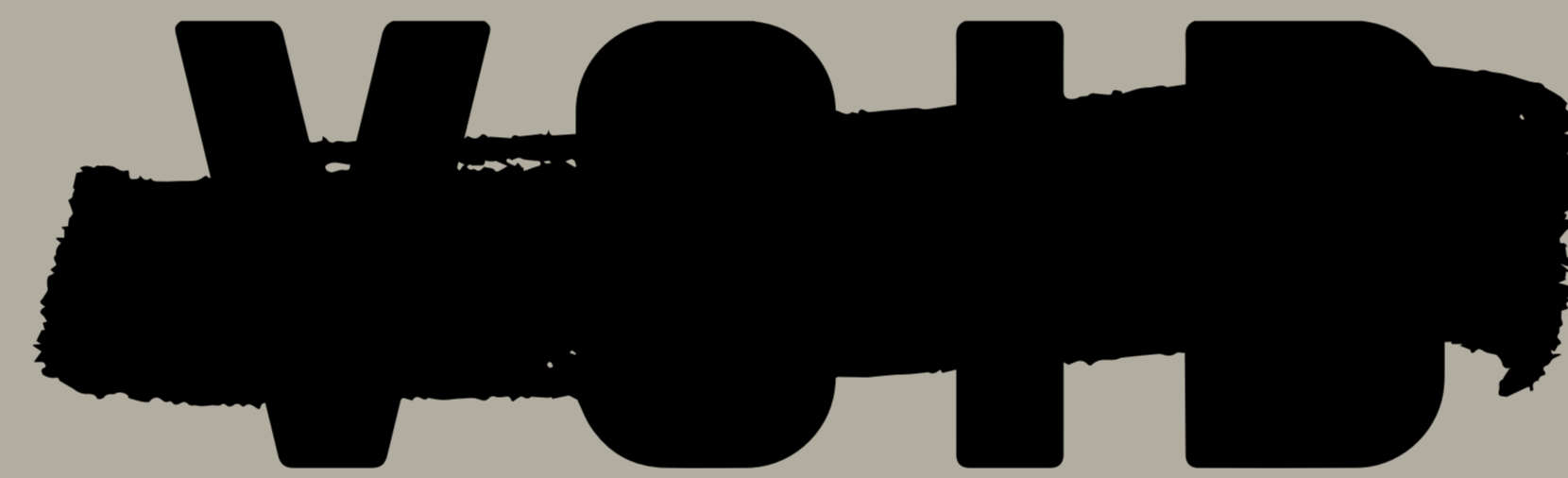








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