Howling Wolf, 1849-1927 ca. 1875
ink and watercolor on paper, 7 1/2 x 10 1/4 in., Gift in memory of Anna Burke Richardson Joslyn Art Museum 1991.19

Discussion Questions
What did Howling Wolf’s paintings want to communicate to the viewer? How were they received by his contemporaries?

How did the displacement of Native peoples affect American Indian art?

What are the similarities and differences between Howling Wolf’s style and traditional ledger painting?

Ledger Art
A history

Prior to the 1860s, art was integral to American Indian culture. For the Plains Indians, art had spiritual, social, and political functions. Art was a powerful force that reinforced social order and helped maintain cultural identity. Art also functioned as a form of communication, conveying messages and stories to the people. The ledger art of the Plains Indians was a unique form of creative expression. It was not only a record of daily life, but also a means of preserving history and cultural traditions.

In 1847, the Chicago Board of Trade began to keep a ledger to track the trade of buffalo hides. This led to the establishment of a new form of art known as ledger art. Ledger artists used the ledger format to create visual records of their daily lives and experiences. They created images of events such as battles, ceremonies, dances, and other significant events. These images were not only used for record-keeping, but also served as a form of communication and storytelling.

By the late 1850s, ledger art became a popular form of artistic expression. Ledger art continued to be produced well into the 20th century. It was a way for Native Americans to preserve their history and culture, and to share their experiences with others.

Howling Wolf, Southern Cheyenne, 1849-1927

Howling Wolf was born a Cheyenne in 1849. He was named after a wolf that saved his life from a bear. He learned to paint and draw as a child and became a skilled ledger artist. Howling Wolf’s artwork is characterized by his use of symbolic elements, such as the wolf, which he used to represent his identity as a Cheyenne. His paintings often depict scenes of war, ceremonies, and other significant events in Cheyenne life.

In 1881, Howling Wolf was released from Fort Marion, where he was imprisoned. He began to sell his artwork to white traders and gained fame for his ledger paintings. Howling Wolf’s paintings are known for their use of symbols and colors, and for their depiction of Cheyenne life.

Howling Wolf died in 1927. His legacy continues to inspire and inform artists and scholars today. His paintings provide a unique glimpse into the lives of the Cheyenne people and their culture.
HOWLING WOLF (SOUTHERN CHEYENNE, 1849–1927)

DRAWING BOOK
ca. 1875, INK AND WATERCOLOR ON PAPER

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Gift of Alexander M. Maish in memory of Anna Bourke Richardson, 1991.19