



ARTIFACT

History and the Photographer's Art

NATIVE CRITIQUE: History major Carlie Fishgold '12 and Alexander Marr, a graduate student in visual and cultural studies, organized an exhibition of photogravure prints by early 20th-century photographer Edward Curtis as part of the 2010-11 Humanities Project. On display this spring in the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, the exhibition *Theatres of Memory: New Perspectives on Edward Curtis's The North American Indian* drew on a collection donated to the University by Hiram Watson Sibley. Beginning in 1904, Curtis spent 30 years on a project he believed was a last opportunity to document indigenous cultures. But his overt staging of his photographs later earned his work fierce criticism as "imperialist nostalgia"—a critique that the exhibition sought to place in a broader context. "These photographs have given rise to a host of contradictory and incompatible understandings of Native American life," says Marr. "That's what I find most interesting about Curtis's work."