Indians and the Opera

*Indians and the Opera* features Standing Bear only indirectly, in a visual quotation from his muslin illustrating the Sun Dance in the collection of the Museum of the South Dakota State Historical Society. The collage contrasts European and Lakota moral and cultural values, embodied in the juxtaposition of a drawing of the Sun Dance circle and an etching of the Paris Opera from an 1875 French newspaper. The Lakota on Buffalo Bill’s tour did see the Paris Opera, an opulent monument inaugurated in 1875. The inscription handwritten on ledger paper at the upper left says, “This is where those France people sing and dance and make music and perform for each other.” In reference to the figural sculptures in the grand foyer, it continues: “These women are like gods to them. They call them muses.”

Excerpt from the essay "Giving Voice to the Ancestors Through Art: Hybridity, Memory, and Imagination in Arthur Amiotte's Collage Series" written by Janet Catherine Berlo.