Born and raised on the Navajo Nation, Manuelito Wheeler is currently the Director of the Navajo Nation Museum in Window Rock, AZ. Since taking this position in 2008, he has worked with staff to see the completion of numerous exhibits which are 100% Native-built from concept, curation, and creation. Along with this, he has led his team (of 8) in creating innovative projects which influence and preserve Navajo culture. In the pursuit of native language preservation, the Navajo Nation Museum has partnered with major motion picture studios like Lucasfilm Ltd., Walt Disney Pictures and Deluxe Studios to dub popular movies into the Navajo language. Making these projects a reality has been a challenging but rewarding experience. Currently the museum is completing a Navajo-language dub of Disney's classic animation film Finding Nemo.

Under Wheeler’s direction, the Navajo Nation Museum has also worked with world renowned artist Ai Weiwei, partnering him with Navajo artist Bert Benally to create a site-specific installation piece in a remote canyon on the Navajo Nation. Wheeler attended Arizona State University from 88-03 where he earned his BA in Art History. He is married to Jennifer Wheeler, PhD (ASU) and they have two sons Waunekanez (currently attending ASU) and Hataaliinez.

“A tribal museum can help redefine what a museum can be for its community, which is more than just a community gathering place... It’s a place you can go and experience a sense of wonder. That sense of wonder is important—it gives us hope that humans have a future in this universe.”

—Manuelito “Manny” Wheeler

T’áá Áłtsxodée’ Hozho
Navajo Identity through Global Projects

THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 2016 | 7:00 p.m.
Heard Museum, Steele Auditorium, 2301 N Central Ave, Phoenix, Arizona