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The Many Hats of Robert Altman: A Life in Cinema

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The Western

Buffalo Bill and the Indians, or Sitting Bull's History Lesson [1976]

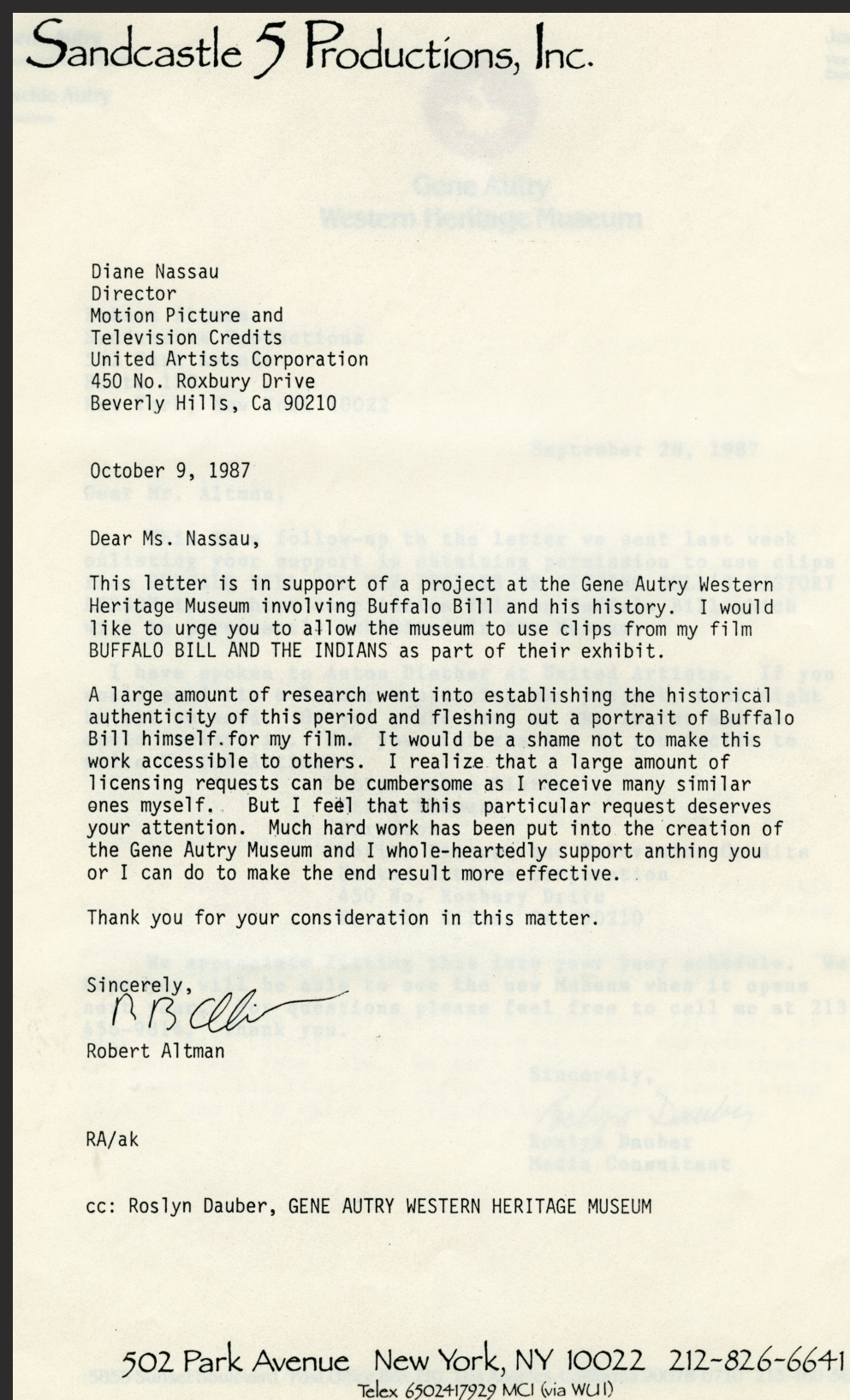
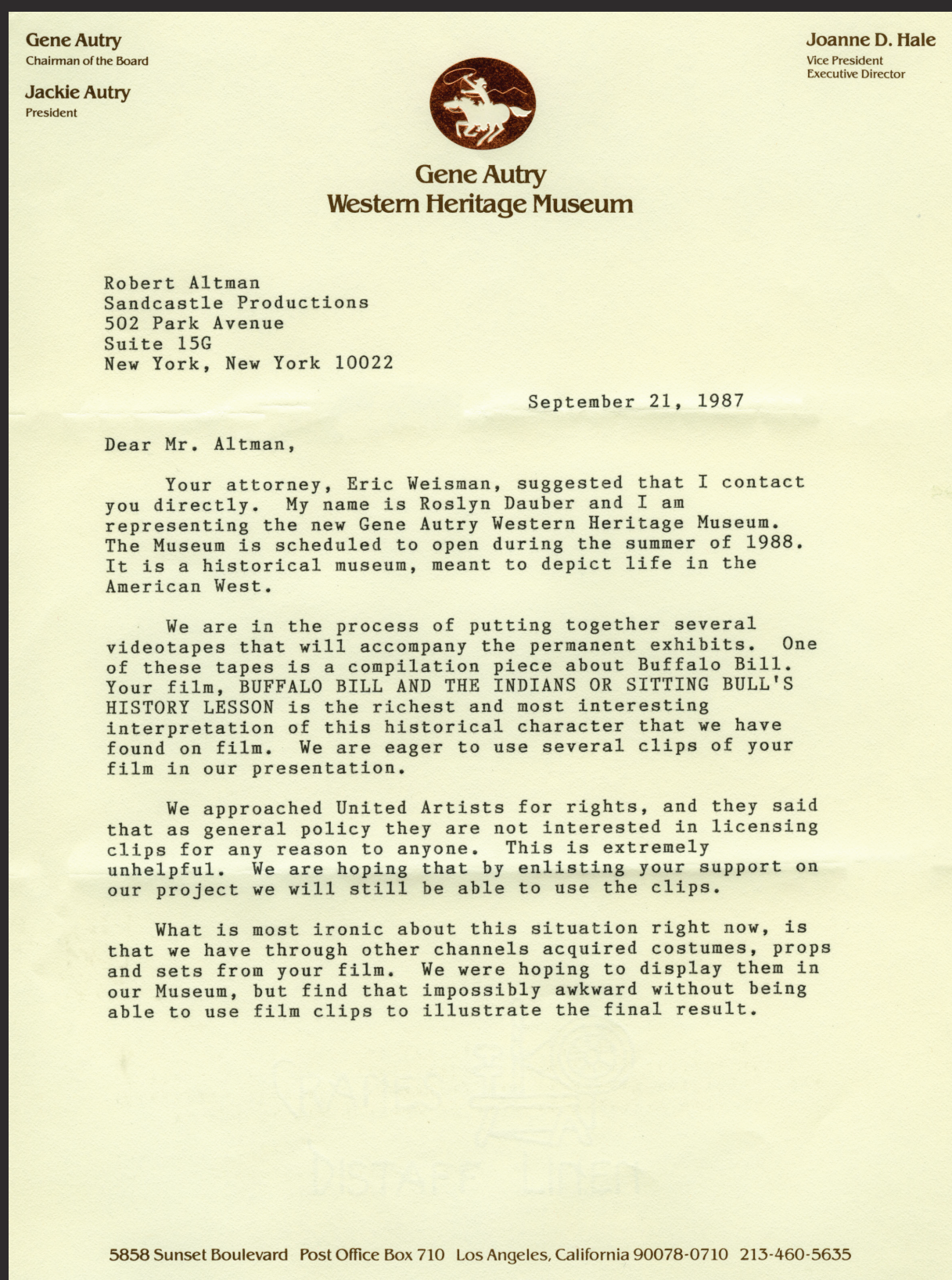
When filmmakers looked at the “old west” through the lens of the socially turbulent 1960s and 1970s, one of the most striking revisions they made to the traditional genre of the Western is a reinterpretation of the role of Native Americans. In *Buffalo Bill and the Indians*, Buffalo Bill Cody is disconcerted to find that Chief Sitting Bull is not willing to act out Custer's Last Stand from the point-of-view of white man's history.



Photograph from the set of *Buffalo Bill and the Indians* showing Frank Kaquitts, who played Chief Sitting Bull.



Photographs of original paintings by Art Director Tony Masters for *Buffalo Bill and the Indians*. Both works are signed by Masters.



Roslyn Dauber, typed letter to Robert Altman, September 21, 1987.
Robert Altman, typed letter to Diane Nassau, October 9, 1987.

Altman's portrayal of Buffalo Bill Cody was held in high regard by those preparing exhibits for the new Gene Autry Western Heritage Museum in 1987. Curator Roslyn Dauber asked Altman to intercede on behalf of the museum to request permission from United Artists to use clips from the film. In response, Altman composed a letter to Diane Nassau, an executive of United Artists, asking that they grant permission to the museum and referring to the research that was done to make the portrayal historically authentic.