

Press Release



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Newly Reinstalled Galleries Showcase Newark Museum's Holdings of Native American Art *Native Artists of North America* Long Term Installation

NEWARK: The Newark Museum has unveiled its newly redesigned Native American galleries. Featuring more than 100 objects from throughout the United States and Canada, *Native Artists of North America* presents a fully reinterpreted selection of works from the Museum's permanent collection, dating from the early 19th century to the present, including many objects never before exhibited.

The Newark Museum began collecting Native North American Art in 1910, and that collection has grown to more than 2,000 works of indigenous art from the continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii and Canada. While the arts of the Americas includes more than 4,000 objects, ranging from Alaska to Argentina and spanning the pre-Columbian era to the present, *Native Artists of North America* will focus on highlights from Newark's comprehensive North American collection. By situating the new galleries at the entrance to the permanent installation of American Art, which has been renamed *Seeing America*, the Museum reinforces the curatorial philosophy that Native American art is a crucial part of American art.

"This exhibition is about widening the story of American history to include underrepresented artistic and cultural voices, and introducing Newark and New Jersey audiences to American Art that better reflects them and the world around them," said Steven Kern, the Museum's Director and CEO. "This newly expanded introduction to *Seeing America* will set the tone for the inclusion of multiple voices as visitors continue through the galleries."

More than twenty-seven tribal nations are represented in *Native Artists of North America*, grouped roughly by region to represent the richness of distinct geographic areas and the diversity of living indigenous cultures. The result of a collaborative curatorial process involving a number of internationally recognized Native American artists and scholars, the objects on view are organized to highlight strengths of the collection, including Northwest Coast (Haida, Tlingit, and Tsimshian), Northern California (Pomo) and the Southwest (Pueblo watercolors and pottery, and Navajo and Hopi textiles).

Among the works on view are exquisitely woven Pomo baskets, hand-made items of dress from across the continent, and southwestern pottery and textiles. Other highlights include works by the Haida master carver Charles Edenshaw and a rare Bear rattle attributed to the 19th-century Haida carver Sdiihldaa/Simeon Stilthda. Pueblo watercolors are another strength of Newark's holdings, with strong examples by leading painters such as Fred Kabotie, Tonita Peña and Awa Tsireh. Additional works by contemporary Native artists are installed both within *Native Artists of North America* and in nearby galleries of modern and contemporary American Art and Decorative Arts.

“This permanent installation celebrates the great diversity of styles, media and creativity of Native artists and places them in a broader context,” said Tricia Laughlin Bloom, Ph.D., Curator of American Art and Project Director for the reinstallation. “By placing these collections within our American galleries, we are able to draw out some wonderful connections and to highlight the ingenuity and creativity of Native artists past and present.”

A major commission by contemporary artist Jeffrey Gibson (Cherokee/Choctaw) stands at the physical crossroads of the Native American and American galleries, at the center of the Mary Sue Sweeney Price and Clement Alexander Price Atrium. Titled *Come Alive! (I Feel Love)*, Gibson's handcrafted figural sculpture is covered from head to toe in a variety of beads, jingles and arrowheads.

The lead curator for the exhibition is Adriana Greci Green, Ph.D., a research collaborator at National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution and Curator of the Arts of the Americas, The Fralin Museum of Art at the University of Virginia. Dr. Greci Green is a scholar of Native American art with emphasis on Plains and Great Lakes arts, material culture and cultural performances.

Consulting curators are:

- Sherrie Smith-Ferri, Ph.D. (Dry Creek Pomo-Coast Miwok), director, Grace Hudson Museum, Ukiah, CA; leading scholar of Pomo basketry and culture.
- DY Begay, Diné (Navajo), independent curator and internationally recognized weaver.
- Susan Sekaquaptewa (Hopi), independent curator, internationally recognized scholar of Hopi culture.
- Emil Her Many Horses (Oglala Lakota), associate curator, the National Museum of the American Indian; curator and scholar of Central Plains cultures and curator of the exhibition *Unbound: Narrative Art of the Plains*, currently on view at the National Museum of the American Indian in New York.
- Mique'l Dangeli, Ph.D. (Tsimshian and Tlingit Nations), assistant professor of Alaska Native Studies at University of Alaska Southeast and co-founder of Git Hayetsk, an internationally renowned Northwest Coast First Nations mask-dancing group located in Vancouver, British Columbia.

The opening of *Native Artists of North America* represents the first phase of *Seeing America*, an ongoing reinstallation of the American Art galleries highlighting the diversity of the of the American experience through Newark's rich collections. *Seeing America* will feature new

permanent installations of Latin American, African-American and Native American art from the 19th through the 21st centuries integrated throughout the chronological narrative of American art that the galleries present.

Native Artists of North America has received major support from the PSEG Foundation, with additional support from the E.J. Grassmann Trust, Union Foundation, and Richmond County Savings Foundation. For additional information, follow the Museum on Facebook at facebook.com/newark.museum or Twitter at twitter.com/newarkmuseum; or by visiting www.newarkmuseum.org.

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