



100 W. 14th Avenue Pkwy
Denver, CO 80204-2788
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pressoffice@denverartmuseum.org

[Images available upon request.]

Speaking with Light: Contemporary Indigenous Photography Focuses on Native Voices and Perspectives

*Featuring New and Recent Works by More than 30 Indigenous
Photographers, Opens at the Denver Art Museum February 2023*



DENVER- October 18, 2022

- The Denver Art Museum (DAM) will present [*Speaking with Light: Contemporary Indigenous Photography*](#), one of the first major museum surveys to explore the practices of Indigenous photographers working over the past three decades. Featuring works by more than 30 contemporary Indigenous photographers, this exhibition is organized by the Amon Carter Museum of American Art (the Carter), where it will debut before its presentation in Denver, and includes new commissions and recently acquired works from the Carter's collection alongside loans from artists and other institutions.

The artists featured in *Speaking with Light* use the medium to investigate

Indigenous worldviews through the exploration of history, loss, identity and representation. *Speaking with Light* opens at the DAM February 19, 2023 and will be on view in the Hamilton Building's Gallagher Family Gallery through May 21, 2023. The exhibition will be included in general admission, which is free for everyone 18 and under every day, as well as museum members.



"The Denver Art Museum looks forward to sharing this incredible selection of photography by Indigenous artists working today," said Christoph Heinrich, Frederick and Jan Mayer Director of the DAM. "Our location on the homeland of the Arapaho, Cheyenne and Ute peoples underscores the importance of highlighting historically underrepresented views and voices of Indigenous communities. The works in *Speaking with Light* aim to shift power dynamics and bring attention to

misrepresentations by focusing on Indigenous perspectives."

Speaking with Light presents photographs from both emerging and established artists, including **Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie** (Taskigi/Diné), **Wendy Red Star** (Apsáalooke), **Nicholas Galanin** (Tlingit/Unangax[^]), and **Jeremy Dennis** (Shinnecock). The show will include dynamic installations by **Kapulani Landgraf** (Kanaka ʻŌiwi), **Jolene Rickard** (Skarù:rę?/Tuscarora), and **Alan Michelson** (Mohawk member of Six Nations of the Grand River).

"Photography is powerful in its storytelling," said Eric Paddock, Curator of Photography at the DAM and the local curator of the exhibition. "These photographs trace paths across time and place and reflect experiences that can shape and inform understanding of the past, the present and the future."

Speaking With Light is curated by John Rohrbach, Curator of Photographs at the Carter, and Diné artist and curator Will Wilson. The works of these contemporary artists are arranged in thematic sections, that explore different aspects of Indigeneity and reflect common experiences and feelings of Indigenous people.

Prologue: State to State

This prologue features photographs made by White photographers when Indigenous leaders traveled to Washington, D.C. for treaty negotiations. Those leaders may not have been happy about what they heard from the U.S. government, but they projected strength, agency and

dignity in the photography studios. Indigenous photographer Will Wilson's "Talking Tintype" portrait of Enoch Haney, former principal chief of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, vividly carries these early photographic encounters into the present day, tracing a through line to questions of identity, governance and sovereignty in the 21st century.



Survivance: An Ongoing Process

In this section photographers use humor, pathos, anger, and declaration to defy erasure and stereotyping, and to demand recognition of Indigenous existence, rights, and cultural commitment. The spray-painted sign in Nicholas Galanin's *Get Comfortable*, 2012, for example, insists on respect for Indigenous land rights, while other artists counter selective repression of Indigenous history.

Nation

Relations of individuals to their communities are central to Indigenous identity. Here, artists delve into what it means to belong and question how dislocation, forced assimilation, or disconnection impact the concept of nationality. Killiii Yüyan's (Nanai/Hèzhè and Chinese American) photograph, *Joy Mask, IK*, 2018, shows how a mask, created in a classroom and patterned after traditional Yup'ik mask-making traditions, transforms and empowers its wearer.

Indigenous Visualities

Photographs in this section, such as Cara Romero's (Chemehuevi) *Water Memory* (2015), lift Indigenous voices, embracing spirit and a deep connection with the natural world. The works push back against colonial narratives to demonstrate that Indigenous voices are integral in the ever-evolving social landscape.

Gallery Experience

Speaking with Light concludes with an interactive touchscreen where visitors can explore the work of many more Indigenous photographers through the online database, [Indigenous Photograph](#). Throughout the exhibition, visitors will encounter short videos and hear insights about the work from artists themselves.



The DAM's Anderman Photography Lecture Series will include an artist from this presentation. Please visit the museum's website for more information.

Speaking with Light: Contemporary Indigenous Photography is organized by the Amon Carter Museum of American Art. The Denver Art Museum exhibition is supported by the donors to the Annual Fund Leadership Campaign and the residents who support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD). Promotional support is provided by 5280 Magazine and CBS4.

About the Amon Carter Museum of American Art

Located in the heart of Fort Worth's Cultural District, the Amon Carter Museum of American Art (the Carter) is a dynamic cultural resource that provides unique access and insight into the history and future of American creativity through its expansive exhibitions and programming. The Carter's preeminent collection includes masterworks by legendary American artists such as Ruth Asawa, Alexander Calder, Frederic Church, Stuart Davis, Robert Duncanson, Thomas Eakins, Georgia O'Keeffe, Jacob Lawrence, and John Singer Sargent, as well as one of the country's foremost repositories of American photography. In addition to its innovative exhibition program and engagement with artists working today, the Museum's premier primary research collection and leading conservation program make it a must-see destination for art lovers and scholars of all ages nationwide. Admission is always free. To learn more about the Carter, visit <https://www.cartermuseum.org>.

Planning Your Visit

The most up-to-date information on planning a visit to the Denver Art Museum can be found online under the [Plan Your Visit](#) tab. Use this page to find details on ticket pricing, public transit options and access information. General admission for museum members is free every day. Youth aged 18 and under, regardless of residency, receive free general admission everyday thanks to the museum's Free for Kids program. Free for Kids also underwrites free admission for school and youth group visits.

COVID-19 Protocols The safety of visitors and staff remains a top priority, and the museum is continually updating its COVID-19 safety and security protocols based on advice from the CDC and federal and local guidelines. Current protocols can be found in the "Visit" section of the museum's website. <https://www.denverartmuseum.org/en/plan-your-visit>

About the Denver Art Museum

The Denver Art Museum is an educational, nonprofit resource that sparks creative thinking and expression through transformative experiences with art. Its mission is to enrich lives by sparking creative thinking and expression. Its holdings reflect the city and region—and provide invaluable ways for the community to learn about cultures from around the world. Metro residents support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD), a unique funding source serving hundreds of metro Denver arts, culture and scientific organizations. For museum information, visit www.denverartmuseum.org or call 720-865-5000.

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Media Contacts

Andy Sinclair/Press Office

Denver Art Museum

720-913-0096/719-761-9390

asinclair@denverartmuseum.org or

pressoffice@denverartmuseum.org

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Image 1: Cara Romero (Chemehuevi, b. 1977), *Water Memory*, 2015. Inkjet print, Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, P2021.54. © Cara Romero. All rights reserved.

Image 2: Nicholas Galanin (Tlingit/Unangan, b. 1979), *Get Comfortable*, 2012. Dye couplerprint. Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, P2021.42. © Nicholas Galanin.

Image 3: Zig Jackson (Mandan/Hidatsa/Arikara, b. 1957), *Indian Man on the Bus, Mission District, San Francisco, California*, 1994. Inkjet print. Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, P2021.7. © Zig Jackson Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara, North Dakota.

Image 4: Kiliii Yüyan (Nanai/Hèzhé and Chinese American, b. 1979), *Joy Mask, IK*, 2018. Inkjet print. Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, P2021.41. © Kiliii Yüyan.

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