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The DAM Celebrates 100 Years of Highlighting Indigenous Arts With Dynamic Exhibitions Featuring artists Kent Monkman and Andrea Carlson

DAM will present Monkman's First Survey at a U.S. Museum and Carlson's First Denver Exhibition

(Denver, CO) — September 3, 2024 — In celebration of the 100th anniversary of its Indigenous Arts of North America collection in 2025, the Denver Art Museum will launch a year of programming, including solo exhibitions of leading contemporary Indigenous artists Kent Monkman and Andrea Carlson. The 100th anniversary programming will also include a reinstatement of 8,000 sq. ft. of the museum's permanent Indigenous Arts collection spaces and a scholarly convening that reflects on the last century of collecting and looks forward to the future of Indigenous art and the role of museums.



As one of the first art museums in the country to collect Indigenous artworks from North America, and for decades the only major art museum in the world to focus its attention on Indigenous arts, the DAM's institution-wide commitment to uplifting contemporary Indigenous

artists at every moment in time has been an essential part of the museum's collection and exhibition focus for the last century.

In 1925, the DAM established a collection dedicated to contemporary Indigenous arts, one of the only museums to make this commitment at that time. DAM currently dedicates more than 20,000 square feet of gallery space in its Lanny and Sharon Martin Building to exhibiting its Indigenous Arts Collection of more than 18,000 works. Indigenous artworks and artists are also incorporated into exhibitions and presentations across the DAM's collections, including Modern & Contemporary Art, Textile Arts and Fashion, Architecture & Design, Western American Art and Photography, adding Indigenous perspectives to global art contexts.

"For the past 100 years, the Indigenous Arts Collection has educated generations of DAM visitors, fostering a deeper understanding and wider appreciation of contemporary Indigenous artists working today," said Christoph Heinrich, Frederick and Jan Mayer Director of the Denver Art Museum. "Celebrating Indigenous arts has long been a priority for our museum and community, as has our commitment to uplifting Indigenous artists working today. We look forward to presenting compelling and boundary-pushing exhibitions from today's leading artists including Kent Monkman and Andrea Carlson, while hosting celebratory, community-centered programs throughout the year."

The DAM has a long history of working closely with Indigenous communities in its ongoing work collecting, conserving and presenting important artworks by Native artists. Across its history, the DAM has focused its collecting on living artists and building relationships with Indigenous communities. The DAM formed the [Indigenous Community Advisory Council](#) in 2020 to continue to maintain a robust partnership with the local Native community and provide a platform for Native community members to engage directly with the DAM's Native Arts department. The DAM's actions and policies have been shaped and guided by an internal Policy on Collections Use and Repatriation of Culturally Sensitive Materials, written in collaboration with Walter Echo-Hawk (Pawnee) and Jhon Goes in Center (Oglala Lakota), formally adopted by DAM's board in 1994. With the release of updated NAGPRA regulations in 2024, the DAM has taken action to ensure its guidelines align with the new regulations while fostering the DAM's long-term relationship-building with Indigenous communities.

Kent Monkman

In his first large-scale U.S. exhibition, organized in partnership with the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, celebrated Cree artist Kent Monkman (Fisher River First Nation, b. 1965) will explore themes that he has grappled with throughout his career in an extensive survey at the DAM opening April 20, 2025. Based in New York City and Toronto, Canada, Monkman is known for his provocative interventions into Western European and American art history. Through his painting, Monkman pushes forward an understanding of the lived experiences of Indigenous people today while confronting colonial injustices. Featuring 41 monumental paintings, *History is Painted by the Victors* draws from the DAM's extensive collection of Monkman's work, which is the largest in the U.S., alongside newly created works and loans from other institutions and private collections.

Monkman frequently confronts difficult subjects in his large-scale history paintings ranging from the absence and erasure of Indigenous artists in the art history canon, to the representation of 2SLGBTQ+ people in art, and the ongoing project to decolonize bodies and

sexuality while challenging gender norms and generational trauma inflicted by forced residential and boarding school experiences. *History is Painted by the Victors* explores several key moments in Monkman's career, including the inception of Monkman's provocateur alter ego—Miss Chief Eagle Testickle— which he often places in his canonical landscape and genre paintings of 19th century North America as well as *The Rendezvous* series, which focuses on the “golden age” of settler/Indigenous relations. Through grand visual scenes that expertly employ camp and humor, as well as a direct approach that helps the viewer not only see the story but experience it, Monkman's work invites us to consider the authorship of histories we have learned as well as the histories and identities often missing from dominant narratives.

“The DAM has supported and acquired Kent's boundary-breaking work for over a decade, and we are proud to be the first museum in the U.S. to present this broad examination of his career, creating an opportunity for American audiences to experience Kent's monumental art firsthand.” said John P. Lukavic, the Andrew W. Mellon Curator of Native Arts and Head of the Native Arts Department at Denver Art Museum. “Visitors from Denver and around the country will have the unique opportunity to connect with Kent's staggering history paintings rooted in the resiliency of 2SLGBTQ+ people and Indigenous communities in the face of injustice.”



In conjunction with the exhibition, the DAM will publish a catalog with DelMonico Books featuring contributions from Lukavic and co-curator Léuli Eshrāghi (Seumanutafa and Tautua Sāmoan), Curator of Indigenous Practices at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts along with some of today's leading scholars including Ned Blackhawk (Western Shoshone), National Book Award Winner and Professor of History and American Studies at Yale; Brenda J. Child (Ojibwe), Northrop Professor of American Studies at the University of Minnesota; Adrienne Huard (Anishinaabe), Two-Spirit performer, scholar, curator, and writer; Bryan C. Keene, Associate Professor of Art History and Theatre at Riverside City College and former Associate Curator of

Manuscripts at the J. Paul Getty Museum; and Patricia Norby (P'urhépecha), Associate Curator of Native American Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Andrea Carlson

In October 2025, the DAM will present mixed-media visual artist Andrea Carlson's first museum survey. Carlson (Ojibwe descent, b. 1979) leans into Indigenous Futurism to create works that challenge historic injustices and museum practices that have harmed Indigenous communities by utilizing a combination of poetry, storytelling, cultural and pop references in prismatic layers of color and iconography. Known for her intricate, hyper-realistic works that interrogate themes of sovereignty and resistance, Carlson recently expanded her practice into sculpture and will mount a monumental sculptural work as part of the exhibition. Carlson's show with DAM will feature 40 works on paper and sculpture spanning her career, and for the first time, three of Carlson's large-scale stacked landscapes will be presented altogether—as the artist originally intended them to be shown.

"Carlson's meticulous, multilayered practice continues to be a source of inspiration for many, and I'm delighted that DAM is providing this important platform to share her work with national and international audiences," said Dakota Hoska, Associate Curator of Native Arts. "Carlson expands the narrative around how Indigenous artists and people are interpreted in the broader culture. By taking objects from museum settings and placing them in her own landscapes, Carlson reverses the idea of 'ownership' and deconstructs what it means to be interpreted as a stereotype."



Complementing the exhibition, DAM will publish a catalog featuring writers and contributors who are all women of color, with essays from leading scholars, journalists, and artists, including Aruna D'Souza, Nasrin Himada, and Heid Erdrich.

The DAM is also organizing a symposium that will draw together scholars of the field. The Native Arts Symposium has historically been a highly anticipated event for general and Indigenous audiences, specialists, experts, and scholars. The 2025 symposium will build on this history through an expanded two-day event featuring an ambitious line up of panelists examining the past, present, and future of Indigenous arts and representation in museums and in global contexts. The program will include a variety of session formats such as moderated panel discussions, formal paper presentations, artist interviews, and at least one keynote address. Through a varied program of topical discussions, symposium panelists and participants will explore the past 100 years and envision the next 100 years of Indigenous art collecting and collaboration; the evolution of the DAM's commitment to Indigenous communities; develop understanding for how institutions can achieve greater community interaction; explore how museums are evolving from "places of colonization" to "places of indigenization" and adjusting to new legal, social, and ethical parameters. Additionally, topics and artists related to concurrent Indigenous art exhibitions will be discussed, as will the rights and shared strengths of Indigeneity around the world, with visiting Indigenous speakers attending from outside the US and Canada, including Central and South America, Asia, Australia, New Zealand, and the Circumpolar North.

With this program, we will highlight the DAM's commitment to community collaboration and how in recent years community input informs our decision-making as a critical part of our curation process. We aim to share this model of inclusion and equity with other institutions by demonstrating past successes and foreshadowing a just future for Indigenous arts in the museum space. In September 2025, the DAM will also convene the 36th Annual Friendship Powwow, an annual gathering to celebrate Indigenous art and culture.



SUSTAINED! The Persistent Genius of Indigenous Art: The Reinstallation of the Indigenous Arts of North America Collections

In addition to the Monkman and Carlson exhibitions, the DAM is making changes to a portion of the Indigenous Arts of North America Permanent Collections. The exhibition will be anchored by the presentation of historic Indigenous art juxtaposed with contemporary works to reinforce Indigenous art and artists' continued relevance and innovation.

Opening in the DAM's permanent galleries in December 2024, *SUSTAINED! The Persistent Genius of Indigenous Art*, explores those things that sustained Indigenous people during the tumult and disappointment of the last 100 years. The exhibition was developed in conjunction with a panel of seven Indigenous community members

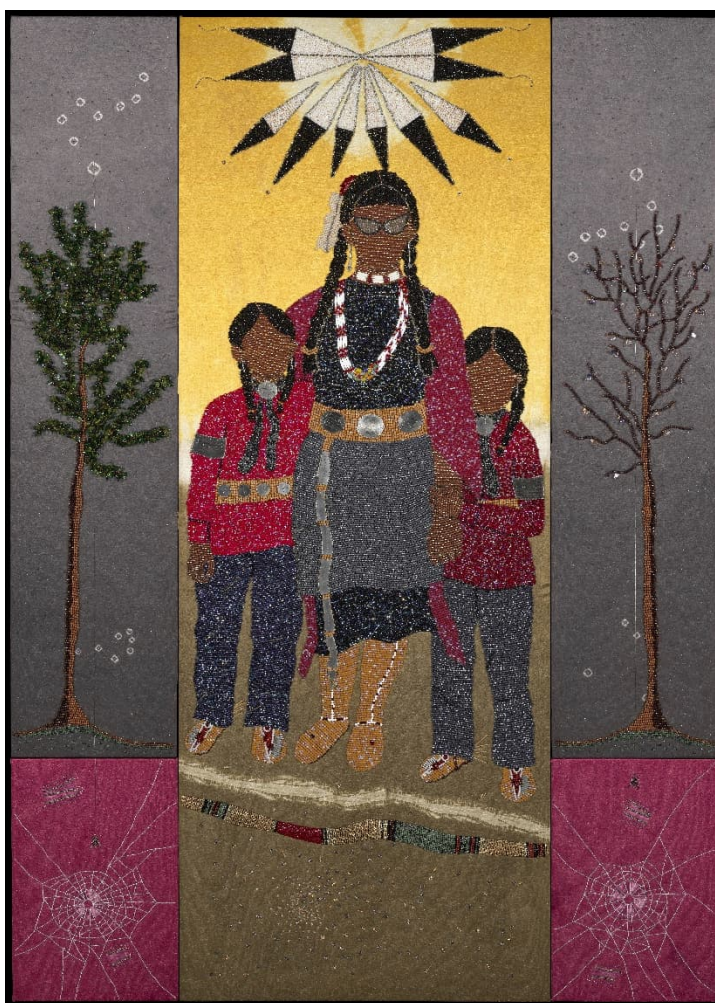
who, through a series of meetings, told the museum what type of exhibition would be meaningful to themselves and their communities. *SUSTAINED!* investigates the ways in which Native people have been sustained by beauty, by connections, and by spirituality, tracing these themes through fashion, family, ancestors, and the reasons people gather, such as games, ceremonies and dance.

A wide range of artworks from the permanent collection combine the historic with the contemporary and continue the progress this department accomplished with its 2021 reinstallation.

Focusing on the great diversity of Indigenous communities across the continent, this exhibition provides insights through objects including a beautiful dress by fashion designer Orlando Dugi (Diné), a pair of *Earrings for the Gods* by Eric Paul Riege (Diné), a breastplate made from gun shell casings that celebrates food sovereignty and providing for a family crafted by local community member Sid Whiting (Sičhánǵu Lakhóta), and a new work by Teri Greeves (Kiowa), among others. The DAM has a long history of commissioning Indigenous artists to make work for the permanent collection. Measuring 6' x 8', Greeves' recently commissioned work combines medicines and creation stories of the Kiowa as they migrated from the North part of America near today's Montana to the Southern area of what is today Oklahoma.

Over the past 100 years, the Native Arts Department has built upon its steadfast commitment to maintain a collection of the time's leading contemporary artists while centering presentations and stories on artists. In 2023, the DAM acquired 156 works by Indigenous artists from North America, including Jeffrey Gibson's (Mississippi Band Choctaw Indians) *CAN'T TAKE MY EYES OFF OF YOU* (2015), which was previously on view as part of his first major museum exhibition at the DAM, *Jeffrey Gibson: Like a Hammer* (2018).

DAM's Native Arts Artist-in-Residence program serves as an incubator for creative expression, providing artists with an opportunity to push their artistic practice, study and take inspiration from the museum's collections and engage and collaborate with museum visitors. Since its founding in 2012, twenty-one artists have participated in the program. Two new residents will be selected to live and work in Denver for three consecutive weeks in 2025.



Indomitably Indigenous is a showcase that highlights the creativity of youth ages 12-25 who identify as Indigenous. The show runs Nov. 1, 2024–Jan. 3, 2025, in the museum's Wonderscape Spotlight space in the Martin Building. Artworks in this exhibition celebrate the Indigenous identities and artistic abilities of emerging artists in the Denver Metro area. The goal of this program is not only to highlight and uplift Indigenous youth but also to shine a spotlight on local Indigenous nonprofits and organizations. This year's showcase will highlight artwork from youth associated with Spirit of the Sun's Youth Media Hub. For over a decade, Spirit of the Sun has partnered with Native American communities across the nation to develop new opportunities for tribes and Native American individuals. The Youth Media Hub is an Indigenous-led arts and liberatory education program. This no-cost program is intended to engage BIPOC youth with various forms of re-Indigenized digital storytelling and media.

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 holdings reflect the city and region—and provide invaluable ways for the community to learn about cultures from around the world. Metro area 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, call 720-865-5000 or visit www.denverartmuseum.org.

ABOUT KENT MONKMAN

Kent Monkman (b. 1965) is an interdisciplinary Cree visual artist. A member of Fisher River Cree First Nation in Treaty 5 Territory (Manitoba), he lives and works in New York City and Toronto.

Known for his thought-provoking interventions into Western European and American art history, Monkman explores themes of colonization, sexuality, loss, and resilience—the complexities of historic and contemporary Indigenous experiences—across painting, film/video, performance, and installation. Monkman's gender-fluid alter ego, Miss Chief Eagle Testickle, often appears in his work as a time-traveling, shapeshifting, supernatural being who reverses the colonial gaze to challenge received notions of history and Indigenous peoples.

Monkman's painting and installation works have been exhibited at institutions such as The Denver Art Museum, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal; Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal; The Royal Ontario Museum; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art; Hayward Gallery; Witte de With Centre for Contemporary Art; Musée d'art Contemporain de Rochechouart; Maison Rouge; Philbrook Museum of Art; Palais de Tokyo; and the Hood Museum at Dartmouth College. He has created site-specific performances at The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Royal Ontario Museum; Compton Verney, Warwickshire, and The Denver Art Museum. Monkman has had two nationally touring solo exhibitions, *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience* (2017-2020), and *The Triumph of Mischief* (2007-2010).

Monkman's short film and video works, collaboratively made with Gisèle Gordon, have screened at festivals such as the Berlinale (2007, 2008) and the Toronto International Film Festival (2007, 2015). Monkman is an Officer of the Order of Canada (2023) and the recipient of the Ontario Premier's Award for Excellence in the Arts (2017), an honorary doctorate degree from OCAD University (2017), the Indspire Award (2014), and the Hnatyshyn Foundation Visual Arts Award (2014).

ABOUT ANDREA CARLSON

Andrea Carlson (b. 1979) is a visual artist who maintains a studio practice in northern Minnesota and Chicago, Illinois. Carlson works primarily on paper, creating painted and drawn surfaces with many mediums. Her work addresses land and institutional spaces, decolonization narratives, and assimilation metaphors in film. Most recently, her work is exploring the colonizing language of the landscape genre of painting. Her work has been acquired by institutions such as the Whitney Museum of American Art, The Walker Art Center, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, the Denver Art Museum, the Minneapolis Institute of Art, and the National Gallery of Canada. Carlson was a recipient of a 2008 McKnight Fellow, a 2017 Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors award, a 2021 Chicago Artadia Award, and a 2022 United States Artists Fellowship. Carlson is a co-founder of the Center for Native Futures in Chicago.

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Image Credit Lines

Image 1: Tom Jones (Ho-Chunk (Winnebago)), *Bela Falcon*, 2023. Digital Inkjet Photograph with glass beads, shell beads and rhinestones; 40 in. x 77 in. Denver Art Museum: Funds from the Friends of Native Arts, 2023.193. © Tom Jones

Image 2: Kent Monkman (Fisher River Cree Nation), *Victory for the Water Protectors*, 2018. Acrylic paint on canvas, 84 x 132 in. Tia Collection, Santa Fe, NM. © and image courtesy of Kent Monkman.

Image 3: Andrea Carlson (Ojibwe, born 1979), *Anti-Retro*, 2018. 19-layer screenprint on paper. Denver Art Museum: Native Arts acquisition funds, 2020.881. © Andrea Carlson, courtesy of the artist and Bockley Gallery.

Image 4: Norval Morrisseau (Anishinaabe), *Untitled (Snakes)*, about 1970. Acrylic on paper board; 40 x 32 in. Denver Art Museum: Native Arts acquisition fund, 2010.441. © Norval Morrisseau Estate.

Image 5: Teri Greeves (Kiowa), *Sons of the Sun*, 2023. Beads, raw silk, and dye on canvas; 8 ft. x 6 ft. Denver Art Museum: Purchased with the Nancy Blomberg Acquisitions Fund for Native American Art, 2023.777A-E. © Teri Greeves.