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*Images available upon request.*

**Denver Art Museum presents**  
***SUSTAINED! The Persistent Genius of Indigenous Art***  
**to mark 100 years of collecting Indigenous Arts from**  
**North America**

*This exhibition focuses on ways Native people have been sustained and supported throughout time, centering Indigenous voices, perspectives, and artistic expressions past and present*

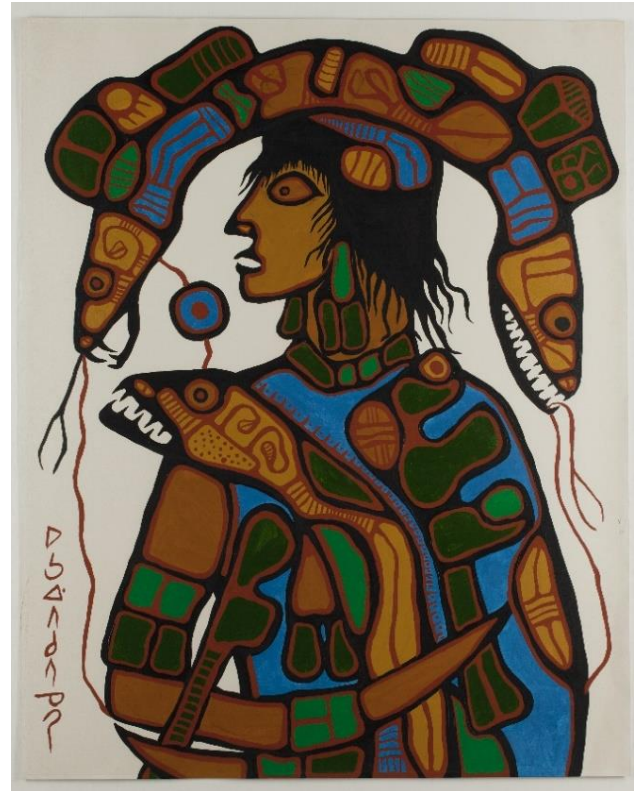


**(Denver, CO) — December 17, 2024** — The Denver Art Museum (DAM) proudly presents *SUSTAINED! The Persistent Genius of Indigenous Art*, an exploration of how Indigenous peoples' resilience, diversity and creativity have sustained them, and a celebration of Indigenous contributions to the arts and the museum over the past 100 years.

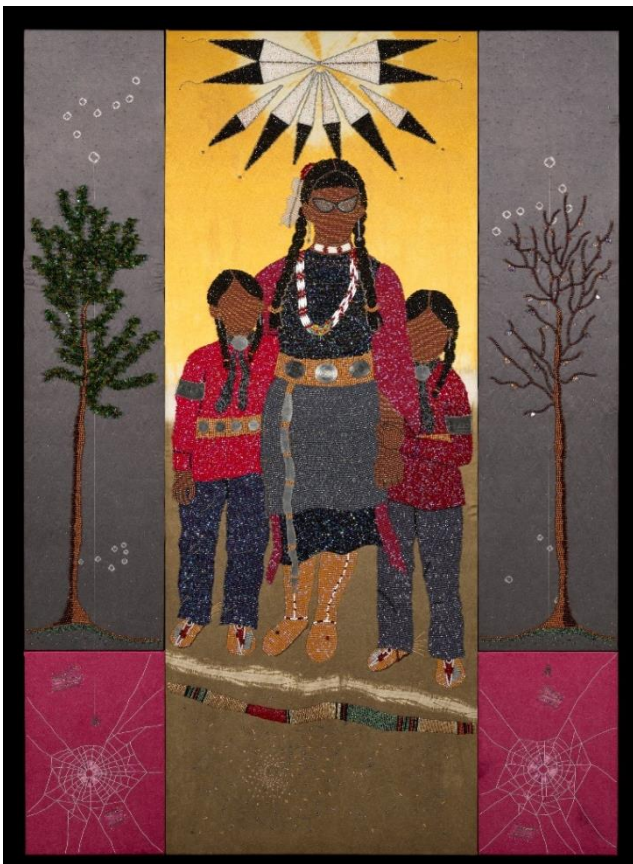
Opening December 22 and on view through 2025, *SUSTAINED!* was developed in conjunction with a panel of seven Indigenous community members who, through a series of meetings, shared with the museum's Native Arts curatorial team what type of exhibition would be meaningful to themselves and their communities.

*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.

This exhibition combines historic and contemporary works from DAM's permanent collection to show the resilience, diversity and creativity of Native people throughout time, reinforcing their continued relevance and innovation.



"Indigenous people have thrived regardless of the tumult and hardships they have faced throughout history and *SUSTAINED!* is our museum's celebration of their resilience and strength, uplifting Native arts and cultures as living and flourishing, which is a priority for our museum and community," said Christoph Heinrich, Frederick and Jan Mayer Director of the Denver Art Museum. "We look forward to presenting this compelling and boundary-pushing exhibition and welcoming our community to enjoy it and experience it throughout the year."



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 *Jaatloh4Ye'itsoh* or *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 (Sičhánǰu Lakǰóta), 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 from what is today known as Montana to the southern area of what is today's Oklahoma.

"The DAM owes our reputation as a leader in the collection and display of Native Arts to the creativity of the original inhabitants of today's United States and Canada. Our collections are the result of the hard work and dedication of ancestors that kept Native traditions, stories, and artistry alive for future generations," said Dakota Hoska, Associate Curator of Native Arts. "Our past and future rest on the skills of artists who learned from family members and embraced innovation, creating contemporary works at every moment in time. Our efforts are supported by Indigenous community members who during the last 100 years served as educators, advisors, liaisons, and council members for the museum. Our destinies are deeply and appreciatively intertwined."



Over the past 100 years, the Native Arts Department has built its Indigenous Arts of North America Collection through its steadfast commitment to collecting contemporary Native artists at every moment in time. 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). Our *SUSTAINED!* exhibition features

Gibson's *one becomes the other* video that highlights contemporary Indigenous people's relationship to the DAM's collections.

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 has been an essential part of the museum's collection and exhibition focus for the last century.

DAM currently dedicates more than 20,000 sq. ft. of gallery space in its Lanny and Sharon Martin Building to its Indigenous Arts Collection, which includes 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.

The DAM has a long history of collaborating 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 collection 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. For *SUSTAINED!*, the curatorial team worked closely with seven Indigenous community members who collaborated as advisors: Angela K. Parker (Mandan, Hidatsa, and Cree); Chelsea Kaiah (White River Ute and White Mountain Apache); Felicia Alvarez (Shoshone); Sid Whitting Jr. (Sičhánǵu Lakǵóta); Montoya Whiteman (Cheyenne and Arapaho); Raelene Whiteshield (Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Kiowa); and Cassandra Atencio (Southern Ute).

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.

*SUSTAINED! The Persistent Genius of Indigenous Art* is organized by the Denver Art Museum. Support is provided 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 CBS Colorado.

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## **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](http://www.denverartmuseum.org).

## **MEDIA RESOURCES**

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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:** 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 3:** 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.

**Image 4:** Fritz Scholder (Luiseño), *Hopi Dancers*, 1974. Lithograph; 22 ¼ x 30 in. Denver Art Museum: Bequest of the Estate of Suzanne W. Joshel, 2009.480. © Estate of Fritz Scholder.