

Images available upon request

Denver Art Museum Debuts First Major Exhibition Featuring American Indian Contemporary Artist Jeffrey Gibson

Jeffrey Gibson: Like a Hammer features the artist's most acclaimed work

DENVER – April 12, 2018 – The Denver Art Museum (DAM) presents contemporary artist Jeffrey Gibson's first major museum exhibition, showcasing his acclaimed multi-disciplinary work from 2011 to the present. On view May 13–Aug. 12, 2018, *Jeffrey Gibson: Like a Hammer* features 57 objects comprised of large and mid-sized figurative works, text-based wall hangings, a significant selection of his illustrious Everlast beaded punching bags, painted works on rawhide and canvas, as well as videos. Organized by the DAM and curated by John Lukavic, curator of Native Arts, the exhibition chronicles a pivotal moment in the artist's career when his contemporary artistic practice converged with his Native American heritage.

"Jeffrey Gibson is widely recognized as a unique and influential voice in contemporary art as well as within Native American art circles, and we are eager to present his first major museum exhibition, which is bold in both color and scale," said Christoph Heinrich, Frederick and Jan Mayer Director of the DAM. "This exhibition builds on our ongoing initiative to showcase contemporary art by American Indian artists. It is also a continuation of our emphasis on organizing monographic exhibitions, exposing, and in some cases introducing, our visitors to a single artist's creative process."

Jeffrey Gibson: Like a Hammer reveals how the artist draws upon his heritage and remixes his older works to create a distinct visual vocabulary in artworks that explore his multi-faceted identity and the history of modernism. Gibson's abstract works take inspiration from his Choctaw and



Cherokee heritage, pan-Native American visual culture, alternative subcultures and the artist's experiences living abroad as well as popular culture. Materials used in the works on view include rawhide, tipi poles, sterling silver, wool blankets, metal cones, beads, fringe and sinew. Exploration of materials and striking patterned and textured works in the form of punching bags and wall hangings will incorporate text

from poems, Gibson's own voice and popular song lyrics such as Stevie Wonder's "Sir Duke."

"Gibson seamlessly blends indigenous aesthetics and contemporary methods," said Lukavic. "His work offers our visitors an experience that doesn't exist elsewhere and challenges the generic categories of art, presenting a new way of conceptualizing what people see and experience."

Gibson frequently explores colonialism and the post-colonial mindset, reflecting on how American Indian experiences parallel other civil rights movements. His work also revolves around universal themes of love, community, strength, vulnerability and survival. Through this exhibition, catalog and related programming, visitors will be able to gain an enhanced understanding of Gibson's distinctive and complex creative practice, as well as how it has evolved from series to series.

"*Like a Hammer* features works from one of the most important periods of my career so far," said Gibson. "The exhibition begins with artworks that I made just after nearly giving up making art altogether due to feeling misunderstood as an artist and struggling to establish a personal language that describes my experience without compromising it. The objects, sculptures and paintings I've made since 2011 document this journey of establishing my own forward-looking voice influenced by all that has come before me."

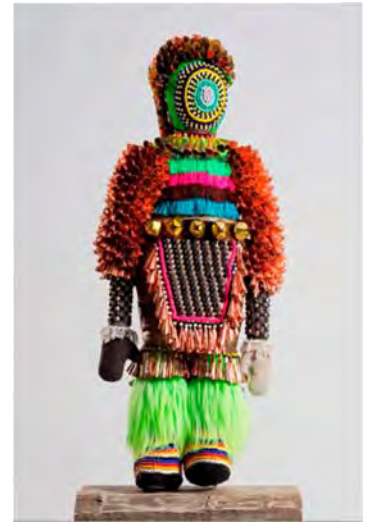
The museum has published the first exhibition catalog to comprehensively detail Gibson's career and body of work.



The publication features essays by leading scholars in the contemporary and American Indian art fields that provide a range of perspectives on Gibson's work, including Anne Ellegood, senior curator at the Hammer Museum, and Glenn

Adamson, senior scholar, Yale University. The catalog is available in The Shops at the DAM.

Jeffrey Gibson: Like a Hammer is included in general admission and free for members and youth 18 and under. The exhibition is on view in the Gallagher Gallery on level 1 of the Frederic C. Hamilton Building at the DAM. Following its presentation in Denver, the exhibition will travel to the Mississippi Museum of Art (Sept. 8, 2018–Jan. 20, 2019), Seattle Art Museum (Feb. 28–May 12, 2019) and Madison Museum of Contemporary Art (June 7–Sept. 14, 2019).



EXHIBITION ORGANIZERS AND SPONSORS

Jeffrey Gibson: Like a Hammer is organized by the Denver Art Museum. It is presented with the generous support of the National Endowment for the Arts, U.S. Bank, the donors to the Annual Fund Leadership Campaign and the citizens who support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD). Promotional support is provided by *5280 Magazine*, CBS4, Comcast Spotlight and *The Denver Post*.

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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 citizens 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.

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Image Credit Lines:

Image 1: Jeffrey Gibson (Mississippi Band Choctaw/Cherokee), *OUR FREEDOM IS WORTH MORE THAN OUR PAIN*, 2017. Glass beads, artificial sinew, acrylic felt, steel and brass; 114 x 71 x 42 in. Collection of Vicki and Kent Logan. Courtesy of the artist and Roberts & Tilton, Los Angeles, California. Photograph by Peter Mauney.

Image 2: Jeffrey Gibson (Mississippi Band Choctaw/Cherokee), *All Things Big and Small*, 2016. Acrylic paint and graphite on canvas; 70 x 57.25 in. Collection of Lisa and Stuart Ginsberg. Image courtesy of Jeffrey Gibson Studio and Roberts & Tilton, Los Angeles, California. Photograph by Peter Mauney.

Image 3: Jeffrey Gibson (Mississippi Band Choctaw/Cherokee), *Like A Hammer*, 2014. Elk hide, glass beads, artificial sinew, wool blanket, metal studs, steel, found pinewood block, and fur; 56 x 24 x 11 in. Collection of Tracy Richelle High and Roman Johnson. Courtesy of Marc Straus Gallery, New York. Image courtesy of Jeffrey Gibson Studio and Roberts & Tilton, Los Angeles, California. Photograph by Peter Mauney.