

PRESS RELEASE

Mia to Present First Major Museum Exhibition Exploring the Achievements of Native Women Artists

Full Roster of Special Programming Accompanies the Exhibition, including Symposium with Artists and Scholars Exploring Exhibition Themes of Legacy, Relationships, and Power

Minneapolis Institute of Art
2400 Third Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55404
artsmia.org



Christi Belcourt, (Metis), born 1966, *The Wisdom of the Universe*, 2014, acrylic on canvas. Art Gallery Ontario, Toronto. ©Christi Belcourt

MINNEAPOLIS—April 9, 2019—On June 2, 2019, the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) will present the first major thematic exhibition to explore the artistic achievements of Native women. The exhibition, which will travel nationally, includes more than 115 works dating from ancient times to the present and made in a variety of media, including sculpture, video and digital arts, photography, textiles, and decorative arts. Drawn from Mia's permanent collection and loans from more than 30 institutions and private collections, the works are from communities representing all regions of Native North America. "Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists," presented by the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, is organized by Jill Ahlberg Yohe, PhD, associate curator of Native American Art at Mia, and Teri Greeves, an independent curator and member of the Kiowa Nation. An advisory panel of Native women artists and Native and non-Native scholars has provided insights from a range of nations.

An important symposium will inaugurate the exhibition on Saturday, June 1, 1–4pm. "Hearts of Our People: The Legacy, Relationships & Power of Native Women Artists" will feature three panels of artists and scholars who are each exploring themes of the exhibition. **Legacy**, with Jolene Rickard, Janet Catherine Berlo, DY Begay, and Jill Ahlberg Yohe as moderator, will reveal how the transmission of techniques, iconography, and historical narratives, and an understanding of the artist's role as culture bearer link contemporary artists with their ancestors. **Relationships**, with Anita Fields, Carla Hemlock, Ruth Phillips, and Dakota Hoska as moderator, will discuss the Native concept of "kincentricity," which envisions an interconnection among people, animals, plants, and the elements in a world view that prompts greater accountability for all beings. **Power**, with Heather Ahtone, America Meredith, Katie Bunn Marcuse, and Teri Greeves as moderator, will explore how Native art frequently references the specific agency exercised by women in their communities, not only as diplomats, but also as artists, mothers, and culture bearers. To register, call 612.870.6323 or [reserve online](#).

A robust programming series will take place throughout the exhibition run. Highlights include:

- As part of Minneapolis Parks' Movies in the Parks series, Mia will show a series of movies about and by Native women. Films screen at sundown.

Mia

- June 13: “First Daughter and the Black Snake,” a documentary about environmentalist Winona LaDuke. LaDuke and Director Keri Pickett will be present. Washburn Fair Oaks Park
 - July 30: “Blood Memory,” a documentary about Sandy White Hawk. Father Hennepin Park
 - August 4: “Rumble,” a documentary on how Native Americans have influenced popular music. East Phillips Park
- June 27: Gallery talk with artist Julie Buffalohead (Ponca), known for her narrative works on paper that use allegory and archetype to create dreamscapes with a rich cast of characters, including trickster coyotes and rabbits, as well as turtles, deer, birds, and rodents.
 - July 8, 11, and 12: Artist Graci Horne (Dakhóta) will lead “Hearts of Our People: Portraits of our Grandmothers,” an intergenerational workshop at Franklin Library.
 - July 14: “Hearts of Our People” Family Day with demo and talk by artist Kelly Church, known for her baskets, which feature birchbark biting, an ancient technique for decorating baskets.
 - August 1: Gallery talk with artist Mary Anne Barkhouse (Nimpkish band of the Kwakiutl First Nation), whose work examines ecological concerns and intersections of culture through the use of animal imagery.
 - Ongoing this summer: Natchez Beaulieu (White Earth Ojibwe) will work with young Native women to create a mural honoring Native women artists in our community. The mural will be displayed on the Native American Community Development Institute building on Franklin Ave.



Left: Jamie Okuma, Luiseno/Shoshone-Bannock, *Adaption II*, 2012. Shoes designed by Christian Louboutin. Leather, glass beads, porcupine quills, sterling silver cones, brass sequins, chicken feathers, cloth, deer rawhide, buckskin, Minneapolis Institute of Art, Bequest of Virginia Doneghy, by exchange 2012.68.1A,B, © 2012 Jamie Okuma
 Right: Sisseton Dakota artist, Table cloth, c. 1900, Wool cloth, beads, brass, cotton, National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution (12/814). Photo by NMAI Photo Services.

“Hearts of Our People” will elucidate the traditional role of Native women artists in serving the cultural, economic, diplomatic, and domestic needs of their communities, while also going beyond the longstanding convention of treating these artworks as unattributed representations of entire cultures. The contemporary works on view, in particular, will highlight the intentionality of the individual artist and demonstrate how the artist has been influenced by the preceding generations.

“Native women artists have rarely been recognized as individuals, as innovators, and as artists by the mainstream art world,” said co-curator Jill Ahlberg Yohe. “Hearts of Our People” acts as a corrective to an art history that has overlooked countless Native women artists because these women were and are ‘untrained’ in a canonical sense. Their work has been circumscribed by a misunderstanding that Native ‘craft’ is static with little to no individual artistic latitude or ingenuity.”

Visitors will gain an appreciation of the various ways in which contemporary Native women artists honor Native women artists of the past and respond to their predecessors’ work. For example, a Pueblo ceramic *olla* (rounded pot) from the 1940s by the renowned artist Maria Martinez (San Ildefonso Pueblo, 1887–1980) will be presented alongside a 1985 Chevy El Camino, titled *Maria* (2014), customized in the black-on-black painting style of Martinez by the contemporary artist Rose B. Simpson (Santa Clara Pueblo, b. 1983).

During each step of the curatorial process, the curators have worked closely with an Exhibition Advisory Board, established to provide knowledge and insights from a wide range of nations. The panel comprises 21 Native and non-Native scholars from across North America, as well as Native artists, some of whose work will be included in the exhibition and accompanying catalogue. The committee has worked collaboratively to develop the exhibition's major themes and advise on selected objects, as well as determine the structure and content of the catalogue, programming, and community outreach activities.

"The Exhibition Advisory Board was an essential part of our curatorial process," said Teri Greeves, co-curator of the exhibition. "Just as many Native nations use consensus to make important decisions, we wanted each phase of the exhibition planning and development to be guided by our advisory board. This radically different methodology means many voices, instead of just one or two individuals in the role of curator, shaped the exhibition."

Following its debut at Mia, "Hearts of Our People" will travel to the Frist Art Museum in Nashville in September 2019, the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C., and the Philbrook Museum in Tulsa.

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue, *Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists*, a compilation of essays, personal reflections, and poems by 20 members of the Exhibition Advisory Board and other leading scholars and artists in the field. It will be available for purchase from [The Store at Mia](#).

"Hearts of Our People" is presented by: Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
Lead Sponsors: Henry Luce Foundation, Rosemary and David Good Family Foundation, George Family Foundation, Penny and Bill George, and Johanna Maud Hill
Major Sponsors: Carl & Marilynn Thoma Art Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities: Exploring the human endeavor
Major Corporate Sponsor: Bank of America
Education Sponsor: Target
Generous Supporters: The George and Marjorie Dixon Endowment Fund and Suzanne C. LeRoy
Community Supporters: Women's Foundation of Minnesota and the Consulate General of Canada in Minneapolis

This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a Minnesota State Arts Board Operating Support grant, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this exhibition do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

About the Native Exhibition Advisory Board

In 2015, Jill Ahlberg Yohe and Teri Greeves, curators of "Hearts of Our People: Native American Women Artists," formed the Native Exhibition Advisory Board—a panel of 21 Native artists and Native and non-Native scholars from across North America—to provide insights from a wide range of nations at every step in the curatorial process. The process was supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Exhibition Advisory Board members include:

Heather Ahtone, Choctaw, senior curator, American Indian Cultural Center and Museum, Oklahoma City; DY Begay, Navajo artist, Santa Fe; Janet Berlo, professor of Art History and Visual and Cultural Studies, University of Rochester; Susan Billy, Pomo artist, Ukiah, California; Katie Bunn-Marcuse, director and managing editor, Bill Holm Center for the Study of Northwest Coast Art, Burke Museum, Seattle; Christina Burke, curator, Native American and Non-Western Art, Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa; Kelly Church, Anishinaabe artist and educator, Michigan; Nadia Jackinsky, Alutiiq art historian, Anchorage; Heid Erdrich, Ojibwe writer and curator, Minneapolis; Anita Fields, Osage artist, Tulsa; Adriana Greci Green, curator and assistant professor, University of Virginia; Carla Hemlock, Mohawk artist, Kahnawake; America Meredith, Cherokee, publishing editor of *First American Art Magazine*, Oklahoma City; Nora Naranjo Morse, Santa Clara artist; Cherish Parrish, Anishinaabe artist and educator, University of Michigan; Ruth Phillips, Canada Research professor and professor of art history, Carleton University; Lisa Telford, Haida artist, Seattle; Graci Horne, Dakhóta, independent curator, Minneapolis; and Dyani White Hawk, Lakshóta artist and curator, Minneapolis.

Mia

About Mia's Americas Collection

The Americas Collection at Mia represents the immense creativity of Native peoples of the Americas, from prehistory to the present. The collection has grown significantly since the department was founded more than 30 years ago, and now numbers more than 5,500 objects, including masterworks of sculpture, ceramics, textiles, metalsmithing, painting, basketry, and bead-, shell-, and quillwork, reflecting the diversity of these regions and cultures.

Highlights include a rare [Woodlands man's shirt](#) from the 1700s, an [unparalleled 3,000-year-old Olmec jade mask](#), and a [beaded man's shoulder pouch](#) made in Minnesota in the early 1800s. Additional masterworks include the [finely worked gold earspools](#) from the ancient Andes, and a [pair of Christian Louboutin heels](#) covered with exquisite bead and quillwork by contemporary Native American artist [Jamie Okuma \(Luiseño/Shoshone-Bannock\)](#)



Rose B. Simpson, Santa Clara Pueblo, *Maria*, 2014. 1985 Chevy El Camino. Collection of the Artist. © 2014 Rose B. Simpson. Image: © Kate Russell

Press Contacts

Minneapolis Institute of Art

Michaela Baltasar-Feyen

+1 612 870 3280

mbaltasar-feyen@artsmia.org

Polskin Arts & Communications Counselors

Alison Buchbinder

+1 646 688 7826

alison.buchbinder@finnpartners.com

Tammy Pleshek

+1 612 870 3171

tpleshek@artsmia.org

Ruth Frankel

+1 646 213 7249

ruth.frankel@finnpartners.com

About The Minneapolis Institute Of Art

Home to more than 90,000 works of art representing 5,000 years of world history, the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) inspires wonder, spurs creativity, and nourishes the imagination. With extraordinary exhibitions and one of the finest wide-ranging art collections in the country—Rembrandt to van Gogh, Monet to Matisse, Asian to African—Mia links the past to the present, enables global conversations, and offers an exceptional setting for inspiration.

General admission to Mia is always free. Some special exhibitions have a nominal admission fee.

Museum Hours

Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday 10am–5pm

Thursday, Friday 10am–9pm

Sunday 11am–5pm

Monday Closed

For more information, call + 1 612 870 3000 or visit artsmia.org

Mia