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Minneapolis Institute of Art Presents Newest Exhibition Featuring American Ojibwe Artist Jim Denomie's Iconoclastic Collection

Opening July 8, 2023, the exhibition will showcase well-known and never-before-seen works from Denomie's later career, inspiring historical contemplation and examination

MINNEAPOLIS (May 3, 2023)—This summer, the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) will open "The Lyrical Artwork of Jim Denomie," featuring approximately 60 artworks from acclaimed Anishinaabe artist Jim Denomie (Ojibwe, Lac Courte Oreilles Band, 1955–2022). Best known for his monumental paintings, Denomie was a prolific artist whose work spanned numerous mediums. Throughout his career, he aimed a critical lens on the histories of Indigenous people and their intersections with mainstream culture.

Highlighting Denomie's singular vision and signature style over the second half of his career (2007–22), the exhibition is the first to bring together his iconic—and iconoclastic—paintings alongside lesser-known works and sculptures. The exhibition will be on view from July 8, 2023, to March 24, 2024.

Drawing inspiration from lived experiences, pop culture, Anishinaabe traditions, and American histories, Denomie's work portrays compelling narratives that depict his experiences of being Native in America. Despite the emotional weight of his subject matter, Denomie's dry wit prompts and provokes necessary conversations about the legacies of colonization and the nature of humanity. The exhibition examines Denomie's creative process, tracing his ability to transform inspiration into monumental artworks.

Honored with a multitude of grants and awards, Denomie received the McKnight Foundation's Distinguished Artist Award (2019), a McKnight Artist Fellowship, and the Artist Initiative Grant through the Minnesota State Arts Board (2018), as well as a Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant (2015). His work is in numerous collections, including the Philbrook Museum of Art, Denver Art Museum, and Walker Art Center. Born in Hayward, Wisconsin, Denomie lived in Minneapolis most of his life; however, he considered himself a global citizen, connecting with and supporting artists within and beyond the United States.

"American culture often applauds those who speak truth to power, but we often forget the vulnerability and generosity of these acts," said Nicole E. Soukup, assistant curator of contemporary art at Mia. "Not only was Jim an incredible artist, but his work holds space for complex, necessary conversations. His Anishinaabe and Minnesota roots add a special component to this exhibition for Mia. It will be a moment to celebrate and reflect upon the stories he left for all of us."

The exhibition explores three themes across three galleries: Beautiful Heroes, Watched Over at Nite, and Toppled Monuments:

Beautiful Heroes

Focused on two paintings, *A Beautiful Hero*, *Woody Keeble* (2009) and *Standing Rock 2016* (2018), the gallery celebrates and complicates human portrayals of resistance and liberation. Other works from his *Standing Rock* series explore Denomie's visual response to the Dakota Access Pipeline protests at the Standing Rock Reservation in 2016–17.



Jim Denomie, American (Ojibwe), 1955–2022, *Four Days and Four Nites, Ceremony*, 2022, oil on canvas. Tia Collection, Santa Fe, NM © Jim Denomie

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Watched Over at Nite

Denomie painted late into the night at his home studio in rural Minnesota. The works in this gallery show a quieter, spiritual side of his creative output. His last completed monumental painting, *Four Days, Four Nites, Ceremony* (2020), sketchbooks, and sculptures, Placed alongside works that articulate sensuality, desire, and the fecundity of life are loans by Denomie's family of the artist's easels, pallets, and unfinished canvases.

Toppled Monuments

The Lone Ranger and Tonto. Dorothy, the Tinman, Lion, and Scarecrow. With a wink and a nod, these fictional American characters find—and lose—their way on Denomie's canvases. Each work in this gallery calls attention to bizarre juxtapositions of American culture and urges visitors to confront the uncomfortable truths about our shared history and current events. Works include *Eminent Domain: A Brief History of America* (2011), *Vatican Cafe* (2014), *Oz, the Emergence* (2017), and *Toppled Monuments* (2020).

"We are thrilled to highlight Jim Denomie's work at Mia in a more expansive way through our newest exhibition, 'The Lyrical Artwork of Jim Denomie,'" said Katie Luber, Nivin and Duncan MacMillan Director and President of Mia. "We look forward to featuring this can't-miss exhibition at Mia."

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalogue with essays by Mia curators Soukup and Robert Cozzolino, also including a foreword by Diane Wilson, Denomie's widow, and Todd Bockley, Denomie's gallerist.

"The Lyrical Artwork of Jim Denomie" is sponsored by presenting sponsor, UnitedHealth Foundation, lead sponsor Rosina Lee Yue, with additional support provided by Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures.

For more information on "The Lyrical Artwork of Jim Denomie," as well as ways to view the collection, visit ArtsMia.org.

About Jim Denomie

Jim Denomie (Ojibwe, Lac Courte Oreilles Band, 1955–2022) was a prolific artist, creating vividly hued paintings, works on paper, and sculptures that aimed a critical lens on the history of Indigenous people and their intersections with mainstream culture. Work by Denomie has been exhibited throughout the United States, including at the Eiteljorg Museum, Indianapolis; the Minneapolis Institute of Art; the Plains Art Museum, Fargo, N.D.; and the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and internationally at the 21st Contemporary Art Biennial Sesc Video-brasil, São Paulo; El Colegio del San Ildefonso, Mexico City; Kusthalle Wien, Vienna; Projek Traum, Friedrichshafen, Germany; and the Saint Patrick Centre, Downpatrick, Ireland.

During his lifetime, Denomie received numerous awards, grants, and residencies including a Bush Artist Fellowship from the Bush Foundation (2008), the McKnight Foundation's Distinguished Artist Award (2018), the Native Arts & Cultures Foundation's National Artist Fellowship (2018), and an Artist Initiative Grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board (2018). He was awarded a Painters and Sculptors Grant from the Joan Mitchell Foundation in 2015 and selected for the Joan Mitchell Foundation Artist-in-Residence Program in 2017. He participated in the Minnesota Artist Exhibition Program at the Minneapolis Institute of Art in 2007.

Denomie's work is held in numerous private and public collections including the Davis Museum at Wellesley College, Wellesley, Massachusetts; Denver Art Museum; Eiteljorg Museum, Indianapolis; Forge Project Collection, Hudson Valley, New York; Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Willamette University, Salem, Oregon; Heard Museum, Phoenix; Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation, Eugene, Oregon; McKnight Foundation, Minneapolis; the Minneapolis Institute of Art; the Minnesota Museum of American Art, Saint Paul; Missoula Museum

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of Art, Montana; Muskegon Museum of Art, Michigan; Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa, Oklahoma; Tia Collection, Santa Fe; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; the Weisman Art Museum, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis; and the Westphalian Museum of Natural History, Münster, Germany, among others.

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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 art collections in the country—from all corners of the globe, and from ancient to contemporary—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.

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

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