



BALTIMORE  
MUSEUM OF  
ART

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## **BMA to Launch Expansive Initiative Centering the Voices and Work of Native Artists and Leaders in April 2024**

*Preoccupied* encompasses nine solo artist and thematic exhibitions, as well as museum interventions, presented across 10 months

BALTIMORE, MD (October 19, 2023)—In April 2024, the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) will launch *Preoccupied: Indigenizing the Museum*, a series of exhibitions and projects that centers the work, experiences, and voices of Native artists. *Preoccupied* explores the vital cultural contributions of Native people through the presentation of historical objects as well as works created by a breadth of contemporary makers, including **Julie Buffalohead** (Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma), **T.C. Cannon** (Kiowa/Caddo), **Dana Claxton** (Hunkpapa Lakota), **Nicholas Galanin** (Tlingit and Unanga), **Duane Linklater** (Omashêko Ininiwak from Moose Cree First Nation), **Laura Ortman** (White Mountain Apache), **Caroline Monnet** (Anishinaabe/French), **Wendy Red Star** (Apsáalooke (Crow)), **Jaune Quick-to-See Smith** (Citizen of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Nation), **Marie Watt** (Seneca Nation of Indians and German-Scot ancestry), and **Dyani White Hawk** (Sičáŋǵu Lakota), among others. Unfolding over the course of ten months, the initiative features focus solo presentations, thematic explorations, and a film series curated by **Sky Hopinka** (Ho-Chunk Nation and a descendant of the Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians). *Preoccupied* will also include interventions in the display and labeling of certain objects across the museum that depict Native subjects and espouse colonialist perspectives. Together, these projects and forthcoming public programs will significantly increase the presence of Native artists in the BMA's galleries and actively subvert the colonialist tendencies and hierarchies upon which museums have been built. The initiative will continue through January 2025.

*Preoccupied* is being developed with guidance from the Native community and cultural leaders in and around Baltimore. The initiative began with critical listening sessions and dialogues with Baltimore-area Native individuals. A broader retreat in February 2023 further shaped the fundamental purposes and experimental approaches that underpin the initiative. At the BMA, the work is being led by Darienne (Dare) Turner (Yurok Tribe), Curator of Indigenous Art at the Brooklyn Museum and former BMA Assistant Curator of Indigenous Art of the Americas; Leila Grothe, BMA Associate Curator of Contemporary Art; and Elise Boulanger (Citizen of the Osage Nation), BMA Curatorial Research Assistant, with guest curation from Sky Hopinka (Ho-Chunk Nation and a descendant of the Pechanga Band of Luiseño) and in consultation with an 10-member Native Community Advisory Panel that includes artists, scholars, designers, and community representatives. In addition to their significant efforts in the development of *Preoccupied*, many of the individuals involved in this community-oriented and iterative process will lend their voices to the audio guides, wall labels, and other didactic materials.

“From its inception, *Preoccupied: Indigenizing the Museum* has aimed to center Native voices and make visible an often overlooked community within encyclopedic museums,” said project co-curator Dare Turner. “This project challenges museums like the BMA to fight against shared colonialist tendencies and make space for new ways of thinking, learning, and being. It insists that Native lifeways have existed as long as memory, and they continue today through the practices, awareness, and art of contemporary Native people. *Preoccupied* celebrates Native art and artists in all their vitality and establishes a framework for ongoing engagement and presentation within the museum.”

*Preoccupied* will also include the creation of a publication that embodies Native approaches to knowledge sharing, which will be apparent in its physical form and contents. The publication is being designed by **Sébastien Aubin** (Opaskwayak Cree Nation) and takes its point of departure from the concept of controlled burns and small fires as a means of encouraging growth. The publication will feature scholarly essays by **heather ahtone** (Choctaw, Chickasaw Nation), **Paul Chaat Smith** (Comanche), and **John Lukavic**; a newly commissioned poem by **Heid E. Erdrich** (Turtle Mountain Ojibwe); a comic conceived, written, and illustrated by **Weyodi Old Bear** (Comanche), **Dale Deforest** (Diné), and **Lee Francis IV** (Laguna Pueblo); and critical perspectives from contemporary artists. Embracing Native methodologies, the content will be further visually amplified through rich illustrations and photography, experimental type and layout, and unconventional printing techniques.

“This almost year-long initiative captures the rich and diverse creativity of Native artists and provides meaningful insights into the history, heritage, and experiences that have shaped their practices. For far too long, the voices of Native artists and leaders have been absent from Western institutions. *Preoccupied* is a critical step in our ongoing work to rectify their absence and give prominence to their visionary work,” said Asma Naeem, the BMA’s Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director. “*Preoccupied* also reflects the BMA’s commitment to exploring new ways of collaborating with the community in the development of our curatorial and public programs. We are thrilled to bring this initiative to fruition and to share it with our audiences.”

More details about the upcoming exhibitions and film series are outlined below. \* indicates working title.

### ***Dyani White Hawk: Bodies of Water***

**April 21–December 1, 2024**

**Dyani White Hawk** (Sičáŋǵu Lakota) presents one new and two existing sculptural works from her *Carry* series. Each *Carry* piece, composed of a large copper bucket and ladle adorned with glass beads, bears extravagantly long fringe whose draping emulates arboreal root structures. Alongside the artist’s works, White Hawk selected historic Lakota belongings from the BMA’s collection. Through these works, White Hawk insists upon an interdependence between art and function—and by extension art and life—effectively calling into question art history’s tendency to devalue craft. These works operate as physical metaphors for the carrying of history, cosmology, generational teaching, and deep thought.

### *Enduring Buffalo*

**May 12–December 1, 2024**

This exhibition reflects upon the buffalo as essential to Indigenous lifeways on the Plains since time immemorial. Euro-American colonizers and the United States government attempted to eradicate the species in a calculated strategy to subdue Native people and force them onto reservations in the late 19th century. This effort fundamentally transformed Native artmaking, both historically and presently. The critical importance of the buffalo within Plains Indigenous cultures can be felt across artworks that pre- and post-date the attempted eradication of the species. Among the artists included in the exhibition are Long Soldier (Hunkpapha Lakshota) and Cannupa Hanska Luger (enrolled Three Affiliated Tribes of the Fort Berthold Reservation, Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara, Lakota descent).

### *Finding Home*

**May 12–December 1, 2024**

This presentation speaks to Native people's dynamic and powerful relationship with land, home, and sanctuary. While they have beliefs and practices as wide and vast as this continent, Native communities share a recognition that humans exist as part of a larger ecosystem that must stay in balance. As the pressures of colonization and contemporary life have assaulted traditional lifeways, the works in this exhibition demonstrate the resilience and versatility with which Native artists maintain their cultures, community connections, and sense of home. Both historic objects and contemporary works by **Duane Linklater** (Omaskêko Ininiwak from Moose Cree First Nation), **Mark Tayac** (Piscataway Indian Nation), **Marie Watt** (Seneca Nation of Indians and German-Scot ancestry), and others are featured.

### *Illustrating Agency*

**May 12–December 1, 2024**

This exhibition highlights the ways in which Native artists have increasingly asserted agency—the exertion of one's own power—over representations of their communities and identities over time. In the early 20th century, white arts educators encouraged Native artists to create “authentic” art—as defined by settlers—that embraced traditional subject matter while often neglecting present realities. In the decades that followed, generations of artists have shrugged off settler expectations by depicting their community on their own terms. Such work illustrates the modern Native experience, problematizes harmful stereotypes, and pointedly challenges outsider understandings of Indigenous identity. Among the featured artists are **Julie Buffalohead** (Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma), **T.C. Cannon** (Kiowa/Caddo), **Jaune Quick-to-See Smith** (Citizen of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Nation), **Wendy Red Star** (Apsáalooke (Crow)), and **Rose B. Simpson** (Santa Clara Pueblo).

### *Don't wait for me, just tell me where you're going*

**May 12–December 1, 2024**

**Sky Hopinka** (Ho-Chunk Nation and descendant of the Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians) is curating a film program that will be presented on a continuous loop in the BMA's Black Box gallery. A founding member of COUSIN, a collective supporting Indigenous artists expanding the form of film, Hopinka has identified experimental films by five Native filmmakers, including *We Only Answer Our Landline* (2019) by **Olivia Camfield** (Muscogee Creek Nation) and **Woodrow Hunt** (Cherokee, Klamath, and Modoc Tribes descendent); *All-Around Junior Male* (2012) and *seeing her* (2020) by **Lindsay McIntyre**



## **Baltimore Museum of Art**

Founded in 1914, the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) inspires people of all ages and backgrounds through exhibitions, programs, and collections that tell an expansive story of art—challenging long-held narratives and embracing new voices. Our outstanding collection of more than 97,000 objects spans many eras and cultures and includes the world’s largest public holding of works by Henri Matisse; one of the nation’s finest collections of prints, drawings, and photographs; and a rapidly growing number of works by contemporary artists of diverse backgrounds. The museum is also distinguished by a neoclassical building designed by American architect John Russell Pope and two beautifully landscaped gardens featuring an array of modern and contemporary sculpture. The BMA is located three miles north of the Inner Harbor, adjacent to the main campus of Johns Hopkins University, and has a community branch at Lexington Market. General admission is free so that everyone can enjoy the power of art.

## **Visitor Information**

General admission to the BMA is free. The BMA is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., with extended hours on Thursdays until 9 p.m. The Sculpture Gardens are open Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to dusk. The museum and gardens are closed New Year’s Day, Juneteenth, July 4, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. The BMA is located at 10 Art Museum Drive, three miles north of Baltimore’s Inner Harbor. For general museum information, call 443-573-1700 or visit [artbma.org](http://artbma.org).

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