

Solo exhibition by Brian Jungen presents new sculptures and reveals fresh perspectives into this important contemporary artist's way of working

Opening June 20, 2019 at the AGO, exhibition offers an insightful look at artist's creative process, through sculptures, film and extensive archival material

TORONTO, April 3, 2019 — This summer, the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) will open a major exhibition of the artist Brian Jungen, bringing together for the first time many of his most iconic sculptures in an installation specially designed by the artist. Internationally renowned for his sculptures made from repurposed consumer goods, this exhibition presents over 80 of his works, including a group of new pieces. To provide audiences with insight into his creative process, the exhibition also includes extensive material from Jungen's personal archive— materials that have served as sources of inspiration throughout his career. Organized by the AGO and curated by Kitty Scott, the Carol and Morton Rapp Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, *Brian Jungen: Friendship Centre* opens on June 20 and runs to August 25, 2019. This exhibition marks the first time that the AGO will host a solo presentation by an Indigenous Canadian artist in the Sam & Ayala Zacks Pavilion, the AGO's largest temporary exhibition space, at 11,000 sq. feet.

An artist of Indigenous and European heritage, Jungen's (b.1970) multidisciplinary art-making explores a long history of cultural inequality and expresses both a concern for the environment and a profound commitment to Indigenous ways of knowing and making. He has created an extensive body of work that engages equally with Indigenous materials and traditions as with pop culture and Western art history. The exhibition also transforms the AGO's galleries into an Indigenous meeting place, bringing to the fore different aspects of Jungen's personal experiences. For example, on the reservation, the gymnasium is a space not only for sport, but also for ceremony and conviviality; in Canadian cities, Friendship Centers serve a similar purpose. Jungen echoes these spaces in the design for his installation at the AGO.

The exhibition focuses on Jungen's sculptures, and brings together many of the Air Jordan masks from his earliest series, *Prototypes for a new Understanding* (1998-2005). In these

works, the artist transforms Nike sneakers into sculptures that resemble Northwest Coast masks and Plains Indian headdresses.

“My work is largely about transforming things, but these sneakers also speak about where I come from. Nike Air Jordan’s are popular among Indigenous youth,” Jungen says. The AGO exhibition is the first time such a large group of these sculptures has been presented together and will include many new works in this series.

Large-scale sculptures include Jungen’s *Cetology* (2002) and *Furniture Sculpture* (2006), along with other works, all of which bring together Western art history and Indigenous cultures. *Cetology* is a stunning, 40-foot long sculpture constructed out of white plastic patio chairs, resembling a whale skeleton. Modeled on a tipi, *Furniture Sculpture* was made using leather and poles sourced from contemporary sofas. A large-scale work, reaching 27 feet high, it will be installed in the AGO’s Walker Court. The exhibition also features the more recent sculptures *My Decoy* (2011) and *Fore Revolver Reverse* (2011). In these elegant works, Jungen wraps modern furniture, such as an Eames rocker, with elk hide and twine, transforming them into drums.

The exhibition also marks the debut of a new director’s cut of *Modest Livelihood*, a film the artist originally made with Omaskêko Cree artist Duane Linklater. Shown simultaneously on five screens, this projection encompasses over 5 hours of footage, detailing a series of moose hunting trips made by the artists.

A dedicated chronicler of his own life, work and influences, Jungen has a large archive that he stores in hundreds of Nike boxes. These boxes contain personal effects such as bearskin gloves and eagle feathers as well as printed matter connected to his career, books, 45s, photographic prints, and leftover scraps of sneakers and sports jerseys. To share Jungen’s creative process with visitors, the exhibition includes over 3,000 images of these objects from the artist’s archive.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue to be co-published by the AGO and Prestel in June 2019, featuring illustrations of more than 80 of Jungen’s artworks, as well as hundreds of images from his creative archive: sketches, prototypes, snapshots, film and video stills and personal artifacts. Contributors to the book include: Kitty Scott, Carol and Morton Rapp Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the AGO; Ken Lum, Professor and Chair of the Fine Arts Department, University of Pennsylvania; Gerald McMaster, Professor of Indigenous Visual Culture and Critical Curatorial Studies, OCAD University; Candice Hopkins, curator, writer, and researcher; and Yasmin Nurning-Por, Research Assistant, AGO.



This is the first large-scale exhibition of Jungen's work in Toronto since his 2011 Gershon Iskowitz Prize exhibition at the AGO, *Tomorrow, Repeated*.

Jungen has had solo exhibitions in New York, London and beyond, and he is the first living artist to be shown at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), part of the Smithsonian Institution, in Washington, D.C in 2009.

Brian Jungen: Friendship Centre is organized by the Art Gallery of Ontario.

ABOUT BRIAN JUNGEN

Brian Jungen lives and works in the North Okanagan, British Columbia, Canada. Solo exhibitions include Kunstverein Hannover (2013); Bonner Kunstverein (2013); Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (2011); *Strange Comfort*, National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, DC (2009); Museum Villa Stuck, Munich (2007); Tate Modern, London (2006); Vancouver Art Gallery (2006); Witte de With, Rotterdam (2006); and the New Museum, New York (2005). Recent group exhibitions include *Art for a New Understanding: Native Voices, 1950s to Now*, Crystal Bridges Museum of Contemporary Art, Bentonville (2018); *Beautiful world, where are you?*, Liverpool Biennale, Liverpool (2018); *Unsettled*, Anchorage Museum (2018) and Nevada Museum of Art, Reno (2017); *On Space and Place: Contemporary Art from Chicago, Los Angeles, Mexico City, and Vancouver*, De Paul Art Museum, Chicago (2016); *Residue: Persistence of the Real*, Vancouver Art Gallery (2015); *Sakahàn*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (2013); and *Shanghai Biennial* (2012). *Modest Livelihood*, a collaborative work with Duane Linklater, has been shown at the Edinburgh Art Festival (2014); Art Gallery of Ontario (2013); and the Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre, in collaboration with *DOCUMENTA (13)* (2012).

Generously supported by: **The Schulich Foundation**
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Government Partner: **Canada Council for the Arts**

Contemporary programming at the AGO is generously supported by the **Canada Council for the Arts**.

ABOUT THE AGO

Located in Toronto, Canada's largest city of 5.9 million, the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) is one of the largest art museums in North America. The AGO's collection of close to 95,000 works ranges from cutting-edge contemporary art such as *Untilled* by Pierre Huyghe to European masterpieces such as Peter Paul Rubens's *The Massacre of The Innocents*; from the vast collection by the Group of Seven to works by established and emerging Indigenous

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and Canadian artists; with a photography collection that tracks the impact of the medium with deep holdings of works by artists such as Garry Winogrand and Diane Arbus; and with focused collections in Gothic boxwood miniatures and Western and Central African art. Drawing on this collection—as well as collaborations with museums around the world—the AGO presents wide-ranging exhibitions and programs, taking special care to showcase diverse and underrepresented artists. A major expansion designed by Frank Gehry in 2008 with lead support from the family of Ken Thomson makes the AGO a highly-photographed architectural landmark. Visit ago.ca and follow [@AGOToronto](https://twitter.com/AGOToronto) to learn more.

Nov. 29, 2018 – March 24, 2019: [*Mickalene Thomas: Femmes Noires*](#)

Feb. 16, 2019 – May 5, 2019: [*Impressionism in the Age of Industry: Monet, Pissarro and More*](#)

May 4, 2019 – Aug. 5, 2019: [*Vija Celmins: To Fix the Image in Memory*](#)

June 20, 2019 – Aug. 25, 2019: [*Brian Jungen: Friendship Centre*](#)

Oct. 12 – Jan. 5, 2019: [*Early Rubens*](#)

The Art Gallery of Ontario is funded in part by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. Additional operating support is received from the City of Toronto, the Canada Council for the Arts and generous contributions from AGO members, donors and private-sector partners.

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