



BALTIMORE  
MUSEUM OF  
ART

**For media in Baltimore**

**Anne Brown**

410-274-9907

abrown@artbma.org

**For media outside**

**Baltimore**

**Alina Sumajin**

PAVE Communications

& Consulting

646-369-2050

alina@paveconsult.com

## **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** (Sičąŋǵu 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 11-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*** \*

**April 21–December 31, 2024**

**Dyani White Hawk** (Sičáŋǵu Lakota) presents one new and two existing sculptural works from her “Carry” series. Each Carry piece is composed of a large copper bucket and ladle adorned with glass beads and bears extravagantly long fringe, with draping that emulates arboreal root structures. These works operate as physical metaphors for the carrying of history, generational teaching, and value systems. They are displayed alongside historic Lakota moccasins and tobacco bags that White Hawk selected from the BMA’s collection. The presentation reflects her grounding belief about the interdependence between art and function—and by extension art and life—effectively calling into question art history’s tendency to oversimplify and devalue Native American artwork through the label of craft.

## *Enduring Buffalo*

**May 12–December 1, 2024**

In the 19th century, the U.S. government led a concerted effort to exterminate the buffalo as a means of systemically eradicating vital Native lifeways and forcing Native people onto reservations. This effort not only fundamentally transformed Native life but also artmaking, historically and into the present moment. *Enduring Buffalo* explores the critical importance of the buffalo within Plains Indigenous cultures through six artworks that pre- and post-date the attempted extermination of the species.

## *Finding Home*

**May 12–December 1, 2024**

The exhibition is anchored in Native Americans' dynamic relationships with the land. As the pressures of colonization and contemporary life have interfered with traditional ways of being, Native people have maintained their culture and community connections with resilience and versatility. *Finding Home* explores the ways in which the ideas and experiences of sanctuary are preserved through historic objects and contemporary works by **Duane Linklater** (Omashêko Ininiwak from Moose Cree First Nation) and **Marie Watt** (Seneca Nation of Indians and German-Scot ancestry), and others.

## *Illustrating Agency*

**May 12–December 1, 2024**

The exhibition highlights the ways in which Native artists have increasingly asserted their agency over representations of their communities and identities through 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 have followed, artists have shrugged off these expectations by depicting their communities on their own terms. Such work illustrates the modern Native experience, problematizes harmful stereotypes, and pointedly challenges outsider understandings of Native 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** (Inuk); ✧Ⓡ ❄️🇺🇸🇯🇵🇨🇦🇪🇵🇸🇩🇪🇸🇬🇪🇦🇺🇻🇪🇰🇷🇮🇪🇯🇵🇮🇹🇸🇰🇪🇦🇺🇻🇪🇰🇷🇮ᄄ

### *Caroline Monnet* \*

**May 12–December 1, 2024**

For this new site-specific installation, **Caroline Monnet** (Anishinaabe/French) draws inspiration from the traditional eel trap basketweaving practiced by Indigenous people of the Chesapeake watershed. The artist responds to the BMA's architecture as a departure point for her distinct aesthetic vocabulary, which inscribes traditional Anishinaabe motifs and cultural practices within contemporary forms and construction materials. The installation forcefully claims space, while also reflecting a sense of openness, reception, and transmission. In this way, Monnet's work affirms the long-denied place of Indigenous peoples within the world of museums and the fabric of society at large.

### *Nicholas Galanin* \*

**July 14, 2024–January 19, 2025**

**Nicholas Galanin** (Tlingit and Unanga̓x̓) will create new work that continues his critical examinations of cultural appropriation, colonialism, and the complexities of Indigenous identity in the contemporary world. These sculptural installations and interventions will be presented alongside some of his prior works to capture an ongoing dialogue in the artist's practice.

### *Laura Ortman* \*

**July 17–December 8, 2024**

**Laura Ortman** (White Mountain Apache) collaborated with director **Nanobah Becker** (Diné) to create her single edition work *My Soul Remainer*, which features the artist playing the violin within the dramatic Southwestern landscape. Her collaborator **Jock Soto** (Diné), a former principal of the New York City Ballet, assumes reverential postures as Ortman plays her original score, which samples a classical Mendelssohn piece and later bleeds into an atmospheric composition. For this exhibition, *My Soul Remainer* is presented in conversation with a historic violin by **Amos Gustina** (Western Apache). Both works are part of the BMA's collection.

### *Dana Claxton* \*

**August 4, 2024–January 5, 2025**

**Dana Claxton** (Hunkpapa Lakota) presents a solo exhibition of her large-scale, backlit, color transparency photography, which she terms "fireboxes." Works from her "Lasso" and "Headdress" series, including a newly commissioned "Headdress" portrait, bring together contemporary Native subjects with regalia and items from the sitter's own cultures. The exhibition situates many of the objects depicted in the firebox images alongside objects from the BMA's historic Native art collection. Together, these works provoke a consideration of the care—whether personal or institutional—for cultural belongings and recognize items as extensions of the people who made them.

## **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).

# # #