

Hood Museum of Art Revisits “American” Art in 2022



October 26, 2021— Hanover, N.H.—Featuring works both beautiful and challenging, *This Land: American Engagement with the Natural World* compels viewers to reflect on their own relationship to place and land through historical and contemporary art by Native and non-Native artists. This groundbreaking exhibition, drawn entirely from the Hood Museum of Art’s collection, is the museum’s first major installation of traditional and contemporary Native American art set alongside early-to-contemporary art by African American, Asian American, Euro-American, and Latin American artists. It is also the first thematic, rather than chronological, installation of the museum’s historic

American collection. By incorporating a multitude of artistic responses to the natural world from the early nineteenth century to the present, *This Land* participates in a long-overdue broadening of what constitutes “American” art in the museum field.

The Virginia Rice Kelsey 1961s Director of the Hood Museum of Art, John Stomberg, says, “*This Land* opens new doors on the history of art and culture, boldly facing the complicated, and often painful, relationships that have shaped American art today. This exhibition prompts dialogue and historical reconsideration while presenting deeply evocative art of astonishing beauty.”

Exhibition co-curator Jami Powell, the Hood Museum’s curator of Indigenous art, says, “As a collaboratively curated project, *This Land: American Engagement with the Natural World* raises as many questions as it answers. This exhibition urges us to consider our relationships with the natural world and our hopes for its future. It is also a project that we hope will encourage our colleagues to ask difficult questions and engage in meaningful dialogues about what constitutes ‘American’ art as well as who has the power to define it.” The exhibition’s curatorial team also includes former Jonathan Little Cohen Curator of American Art Barbara J. MacAdam, former Curatorial Assistant for American Art Thomas Price, and former DAMLI Native American Art Fellow Morgan E. Freeman, as well as current Jonathan Little Cohen Associate Curator of American Art Michael Hartman.

This Land encompasses seven powerful thematic installations. “An Ecocritical Lens” examines the impacts of resource extraction and environmental degradation through contemporary photography. “Knowing Nature” looks at the natural world from a

variety of perspectives—scientific, aesthetic, personal, communal, spiritual, and political. Works ranging from an exquisitely detailed pastel by John James Audubon to the colorful, intricate beadwork of Jamie Okuma reflect deep knowledge passed down orally from generation to generation or technical information acquired through book learning, fieldwork, and formal or informal artistic training. “Sustenance” explores food acquisition in relation to concepts of necessity, abundance, nourishment, and labor, and includes prints by Romare Bearden and Elizabeth Catlett; photographs by George A. Tice; and a signed stoneware jug by enslaved potter David Drake.

“Expansion, Encounter, and Exchange” investigates the doctrine of Manifest Destiny—the belief that colonial expansion across the continent was both inevitable and pre-ordained—by recontextualizing works of Thomas Cole, Charles Russell, Elizabeth Hickox, and others. “Power of Place” explores how both individual and communal connections with the landscape are expressed through the iconic photographs of national parks by Ansel Adams and the depictions of urban centers by contemporary New York-based Dominican artists, including Alex Guerrero, Scherezade García, and Yunior Chiqui Mendoza. “Force of Nature” shows how elements of nature can be beneficial in moderation but destructive in extremes, as depicted in the work of Chris Jordan, Severa Tafoya, and Ken Gonzales-Day, among others. “Reimagining American Landscapes” demonstrates how contemporary artists such as Faith Ringgold, Arthur Amiotte, Fred Wilson, and Michael Namingha expand the visualization of the United States beyond the more conventional landscapes that often represent the nation.

This Land joins a purposeful grouping of exhibitions questioning knowledge and the American landscape at the Hood Museum of Art for the first half of 2022. This includes *Form and Relation: Contemporary Native Ceramics*, whose artists use the land or clay as a central organizing medium and draw on not only its materiality but also the knowledge embedded within it. *Unbroken: Native American Ceramics, Sculpture, and Design*, curated by Diversifying Art Museum Leadership Initiative interns in Native American art Dillen Peace '19 (Diné) and Hailee Brown '20 (Diné), explores themes of continuity, innovation, and Indigenous knowledges across time. In addition, the adjoining installation *BREACH: Logbook 20 | NEBULOUS*, by Shinnecock ceramicist and multimedia artist Courtney M. Leonard, invites viewers into a dialogue about the violence we perpetuate against the aquatic ecosystem through the impact of “ghost fishing,” which occurs when castaway aquaculture traps and nets are left in open waters.



This Land runs from January 5 through July 23, 2022, and will occupy four galleries in the museum. Related winter programming at the museum will include an evening for educators, an adult workshop, and a conversation with artist Cara Romero, as well as the winter exhibition opening celebration; check the museum's website for details.

This exhibition was organized by the Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth, and generously supported by a gift from Claire Foerster and Daniel Bernstein, Class of 1987, and the Terra Foundation for American Art.



About the Hood Museum of Art

The Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth enables and cultivates transformative encounters with works of artistic and cultural significance to advance critical thinking and enrich people’s lives. With its renewed focus on serving Dartmouth’s faculty and academic mission, the renovated and expanded facility broadens the museum’s reach to students, faculty, and departments across campus, while deepening its engagement with its longtime stakeholders. It also makes a bolder statement about the significance of the arts within the life of Dartmouth and provides the arts district with an arresting new front door to the Green.

About Dartmouth College

Dartmouth College educates the most promising students and prepares them for a lifetime of learning and of responsible leadership, through a faculty dedicated to teaching and the creation of knowledge. The Dartmouth model is unique in higher education: the fusion of a renowned liberal arts college and robust research university where students and faculty partner to take on the world’s great challenges. Since its founding in 1769, Dartmouth has provided an intimate and inspirational setting where talented faculty, students, and staff—diverse in background but united in purpose—contribute to the strength of an exciting academic community that cuts easily across disciplines.

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Image: Jamie Okuma, *Peep*, 2021, antique glass beads, brain-tanned deer hide, and vintage basket beads on Casadei boots. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth: Purchased through the Evelyn A. and William B. Jaffe 2015 Fund; 2021.8.1–2. © Jamie Okuma. Object photography by Jeffrey Nintzel.