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Jan. 19, 2010

Media Web site: <http://newsdesk.si.edu>

National Museum of the American Indian in New York to Inaugurate a Permanent, Hemispheric Survey of Native American Art

A spectacular, permanent exhibition of 700 works of Native art from throughout North, Central and South America will open Saturday, Oct. 23, at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in New York, the George Gustav Heye Center. Organized by geographic regions, "Infinity of Nations: Art and History in the Collections of the National Museum of the American Indian" will demonstrate the breadth of the museum's renowned collection and highlight the historic importance of many of these iconic objects.

Five years in the making, "Infinity of Nations" will establish the museum as an educational cornerstone for the city, providing an expansive overview of Native America. The exhibition will also provide the foundation for eight seasons of public programs, each celebrating a different region and revealing the richness and diversity of indigenous nations.

Chosen to illustrate the geographic and chronological scope of the museum's collections, the objects have been meticulously conserved and will be displayed in custom casework by the acclaimed Laboratorio Museotecnio Goppion of Milan, Italy.

"Infinity of Nations" will open with a display of headdresses, signifying the sovereignty of Native nations, including a magnificent Kayapó *krok-krok-ti*, a macaw-and-heron-feather ceremonial headdress. Focal-point objects, representing each region, will include an Apsáalooke (Crow) robe illustrated with warriors' exploits; a detailed Mayan limestone bas relief depicting a ball player; an elaborately beaded Inuit *tuilli*, or woman's inner parka, made for the mother of a newborn baby; a Mapuche *kultrung*, or hand drum, that depicts the cosmos; a carved and painted chief's headdress depicting a killer whale with a raven emerging from its back, created and worn by Willie Seaweed (Kwakwaka'wakw); an anthropomorphic Shipibo *joni chomo*, or water vessel from Peru; a Chumash

basket decorated with a Spanish-coin motif; an ancient mortar from Pueblo Bonito in Chaco Canyon, N.M.; a gourd carved with a detailed picture of the Battle of Arica by Mariano Flores Kananga (Quechua); and an early Anishinaabe man's outfit complete with headdress, leggings, shirt, sash and jewelry. The exhibition will conclude with works by Native artists such as Allan Houser (Warm Springs Chiricahua Apache) and Rick Bartow (Mad River Wiyot).

“Long before European contact, Native America was interconnected and culturally active,” said Kevin Gover (Pawnee), director of the National Museum of the American Indian. “This exhibition will demonstrate how, throughout time, the visual arts were an important communication tool of this ongoing vitality.”

“Visitors will experience the diversity of Native America through some of the most historically significant and greatest artistic masterpieces of the collection,” said John Haworth (Cherokee), director of the Heye Center. “This will be a new moment for us to inspire and serve New York City residents, tourists and school groups.”

“Infinity of Nations” was organized by Cécile R. Ganteaume, museum associate curator. A major publication, edited by Ganteaume, will be co-published with HarperCollins in October. The invaluable contributions of Native historians and numerous community members provided new perspectives and historical information for the exhibition and the book.

“Infinity of Nations” has received support from the Lower Manhattan Development Corp.; the City of New York with support from the Office of the Mayor and the New York City Council through the Department of Cultural Affairs; and the New York State Council on the Arts. “Infinity of Nations” has received additional support from the Latino Initiatives Pool, administered by the Smithsonian Latino Center, and the Smithsonian School Programming Fund.

Leadership foundation support is provided by the Leon Levy Foundation. Support is also provided by the Booth Ferris Foundation, an anonymous donation administered by the Carnegie Corp., Valerie and Jack Rowe, Barbara and James Block and the American Express Foundation.

The Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in New York, the George Gustav Heye Center, is located at One Bowling Green in New York City, across from Battery Park. The museum is free and open every day (except Dec. 25) from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Thursdays until 8 p.m. For information, call (212) 514-3700 or visit www.americanindian.si.edu.

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