



Office of Public Affairs

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### **James Luna's "Emendatio" Opens in New York**

An installation of James Luna's "Emendatio" opens at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, the George Gustav Heye Center, Saturday, March 1, 2008. Originally presented at the Fondazione Querini Stampalia as part of the Venice Biennale 2005, this complex multimedia installation challenges mainstream assumptions about Native people and pays tribute to Pablo Tac, a 19th-century Luiseño Indian who traveled to Rome. "Emendatio" closes April 20, 2008.

*Emendatio*, a Latin word ("emendation" in English) means altering for the better or correcting what is erroneous or faulty; improvement; removal of errors or corruption. Comprised of two distinct parts, the exhibition is augmented by video clips of Luna's onsite performances. The first part, "Apparitions: Past and Present," contests the popular notion that there is a discontinuity between the indigenous world of the past and that of the present. "The Chapel for Pablo Tac" honors Pablo Tac, who came to Rome in 1834 from the San Luis Rey Mission in California to study for the priesthood and to be studied by others.

"James Luna's work challenges mainstream thought about Native culture," said Kevin Gover (Pawnee), director of the National Museum of the American Indian. "Through this multifaceted presentation, Luna responds to complex issues surrounding concepts of Native identity, origin and modernity."

"Luna's compelling works demand audiences worldwide to examine their own views and beliefs about Native peoples," said John Haworth (Cherokee), director of the George Gustav Heye Center. "We are delighted to present 'Emendatio' here in New York City."

James Luna (Luiseño, b. 1950) was named the Distinguished Artist of 2007 by the Eiteljorg Museum, where "Emendatio" is currently being presented as part of their

Fellowship for Native American Fine Art. A renowned performance and multimedia artist, Luna frequently employs humor to devastating effect in his work and confronts commonly held perceptions of Native Americans. He has performed in New York at The Studio Museum in Harlem and the Whitney Museum of American Art; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; UCLA's Armand Hammer Museum in Los Angeles; the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa; and many other museums. Based in southern California on the La Jolla Indian Reservation, Luna earned a bachelor's degree in fine arts from the University of California, Irvine and an master's degree in counseling from San Diego State University.

"Emendatio" was organized by associate curator Paul Chaat Smith (Comanche) and Truman T. Lowe (Ho-Chunk), curator of contemporary art. The exhibition is accompanied by an illustrated catalog that documents Luna's career.

The Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian's 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 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Thursdays until 8 p.m. Call (212) 514-3700 for general information and (212) 514-3888 for a recording about the museum's public programs. By subway, the museum may be reached by the 1 to South Ferry, the 4 or 5 to Bowling Green or the R or W to Whitehall Street. The museum's Web site is [www.AmericanIndian.si.edu](http://www.AmericanIndian.si.edu).