



Smithsonian Institution

Seizing the Sky: Redefining American Art

Thursday, November 5, 2015, 1:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m.

Rasmuson Theater | National Museum of the American Indian
4th Street and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC



This special symposium celebrates the opening of *Kay WalkingStick: An American Artist*, the National Museum of the American Indian's major retrospective of acclaimed Cherokee artist Kay WalkingStick. *Seizing the Sky: Redefining American Art* honors Kay WalkingStick and considers her renowned work as a launching point for a fresh perspective and dialogue about contemporary American art with speakers from diverse viewpoints and backgrounds. The program features distinguished scholars, artists, and curators Janet Berlo, Jessica Horton, Robert Houle, Elizabeth Hutchinson, Angela Miller, Kate Morris, Jolene Rickard, Lisa Seppi, and Paul Chaat Smith. Kathleen Ash-Milby and David Penney will moderate. A reception and preview of the exhibition follow.

Live webcast at: <http://nmai.si.edu/multimedia/webcasts>

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PROGRAM

- 1:00 p.m. WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS
Kevin Gover, Director, National Museum of the American Indian
- 1:15 p.m. SESSION ONE — KAY WALKINGSTICK: ART PRACTICE AND PURPOSE
Moderator: Kathleen Ash-Milby, National Museum of the American Indian
- Kate Morris, Santa Clara University
Terra Firma: The 1970s
- Jessica Horton, University of Delaware
Love to Marsden
- Lisa Seppi, State University of New York at Oswego
With Love to Rome: Art, Memory, and Mythology
- Robert Houle, artist, scholar, and curator
Presence and Place on the Land
- 3:00 p.m. Break
- 3:15 p.m. SESSION TWO — REDEFINING AMERICAN ART
Moderator: David Penney, National Museum of the American Indian
- Jolene Rickard, Cornell University
Cherokee Dispossession, the Notion of “American Art,” and the Work of Kay WalkingStick
- Janet Berlo, University of Rochester
Erotic Topographies in the Work of Kay WalkingStick
- Angela Miller, Washington University
Dancing on the Grave of History: The Chief Joseph Series
- Elizabeth Hutchinson, Barnard College/Columbia University
What Are We Celebrating? American Art's Encounter with Multiculturalism in the 1990s
- 5:00 p.m. Paul Chaat Smith, National Museum of the American Indian
American Oxygen
- 5:30 p.m. Symposium concludes; Reception in the Potomac Atrium and
Kay WalkingStick: An American Artist exhibition preview, third floor gallery.

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SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Kathleen Ash-Milby is an associate curator at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in New York. A member of the Navajo Nation, she earned her MA in Native American art history from the University of New Mexico. She has organized numerous contemporary art exhibitions, including *C. Maxx Stevens: House of Memory* (2012) and *Off the Map: Landscape in the Native Imagination* (2007). She was the co-curator, with Truman Lowe, for *Edgar Heap of Birds: Most Serene Republics*, a public art installation and collateral project for the 52nd International Art Exhibition/Venice Biennale (2007). Ash-Milby received the 2011 Secretary of the Smithsonian's Excellence in Research Award for her exhibition catalogue *HIDE: Skin as Material and Metaphor* (2010). She served on the boards of the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective (2007-12), and the American Indian Community House, New York (2005-7), and was the president of the Native American Art Studies Association (2011-15). Ash-Milby was the curator and co-director of the American Indian Community House Gallery from 2000 to 2005.

Janet Catherine Berlo is professor of Art History and Visual and Cultural Studies at the University of Rochester. She holds a PhD from Yale University. She has written numerous books and articles on Native North American Art, including the influential *Native North American Art* survey (1998; revised edition 2015), the catalogue for the travelling exhibit *Plains Indian Drawings 1865-1935* (1998), and *Spirit Beings and Sun Dancers: Black Hawk's Vision of the Lakota World* (2000). Berlo has collaborated on publications with Native scholars and artists, including Gerald McMaster, Joe Horse Capture, Emil Her Many Horses, Colleen Cutschall, and D. Y. Begay. She has taught Native American art history as a visiting professor at Harvard, Yale, and UCLA, and has received grants from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Getty Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Kevin Gover (Pawnee) is the director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian and a former professor of law at the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University (ASU). He served on the faculty of the university's Indian Legal Program and was co-executive director of ASU's American Indian Policy Institute. Before joining the university faculty, Gover served as assistant secretary for Indian Affairs in the U.S. Department of the Interior from 1997 to 2000. A presidential appointee, he was responsible for policy and operational oversight of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, where he oversaw programs in Indian education, law enforcement, social services, treaty rights, and trust asset management.

Jessica L. Horton is an assistant professor of art history at the University of Delaware, specializing in modern and contemporary art and indigenous issues. She holds a PhD in Visual and Cultural Studies from the University of Rochester. Her research has received support from the Getty Research Institute, the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the National Museum of the American Indian, the Terra Foundation for American Art, and the Social Science Research Council. Her essays have appeared in the journals *Parkett, American Art, Third Text*, and *Journal of Transnational American Studies*, and in the exhibition catalogue *Shapeshifting: Transformations in Native American Art* (2012). Her book, *Places to Stand: Native American Modernisms on an Undivided Earth*, which includes a chapter on Kay WalkingStick's work, is forthcoming from Duke University Press.

Robert Houle, a member of Sandy Bay First Nation, Manitoba, is a contemporary Anishnabe Saulteaux artist who has been exhibiting internationally since the early 1970s. Houle was curator of contemporary aboriginal art at the Canadian Museum of Civilization (1977-81) and has curated or co-curated groundbreaking exhibitions such as *New Work by a New Generation* (1982), in connection with the World Assembly of First Nations at the Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery; and *Land, Spirit, Power: First Nations at the National Gallery of Canada* (1992). Houle has written many essays and monographs on major contemporary First Nations and Native American artists, and he has received numerous awards for his influence as an artist, curator, writer, educator, and cultural theorist. In Canada, Houle is represented by Galerie Nicolas Robert in Montreal and Kinsman Robinson Galleries in Toronto.

Elizabeth Hutchinson is associate professor of North American art history at Barnard College/Columbia University. She earned a BA at Yale University and a PhD from Stanford University. She is the author of *The Indian Craze: Primitivism, Modernism, and Transculturation in American Art, 1890-1915* (2009) and is working on a book exploring issues of sovereignty in portraits of Native Americans from the colonial period to the twentieth century. Hutchinson and a group of graduate students have organized an exhibition, *Messages Across Time and Space: Inupiat Drawings from the 1890s at Columbia University*, which is currently on view at Columbia's Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race.

Angela Miller is professor of art history and American Studies at Washington University in St. Louis where she teaches the cultural history of the arts in the 20th century United States. She is a lead author, along with Janet Berlo, Bryan Wolf, and Jennifer Roberts, of *American Encounters: Art, History, and Cultural Identity* (2008), an integrated history of the arts from pre-conquest to the present. She has also written on the shifting dynamics of intercultural exchange at various stages in the history of New World colonization. Miller's 1993 book *Empire of the Eye: Landscape Representation and American Cultural Politics, 1825-1875*, won awards from the Smithsonian Institution and the American Studies Association. This year she is the William C. Seitz Senior Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, where she is working on gay artistic networks in the mid-20th century.

Kate Morris is an associate professor of art history at Santa Clara University, and president of the Native American Art Studies Association. She earned her MA in art history from the University of New Mexico, and her PhD in art history from Columbia University. She is the author of *Shifting Grounds: Framing the (Post) Colonial Landscape in Contemporary Native American Art* (2016), and coeditor of the forthcoming volume *Native Art Now! Developments in Contemporary Native American Art Since 1992*, which features more than twenty original essays on contemporary Native American art. In 2014 she was a scholar in residence at the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum Research Center in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

David W. Penney is the associate director of museum scholarship at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian and an internationally recognized scholar of American Indian art. He holds a doctorate in art history and archaeology from Columbia University. He was formerly the vice president of exhibitions and collections strategies at the Detroit Institute of Arts and the longtime curator of that museum's Native American art collections. The author of *North American Indian Art* (2004), he was also the curator and catalogue author for the exhibition *Indigenous Beauty: Masterworks of American Indian Art from the Diker Collection* (2015) and co-curator for the exhibition *Before and After the Horizon: Anishinaabe Artists of the Great Lakes* (2013) for the NMAI and the Art Gallery of Ontario. He has written many other books and essays.

Jolene Rickard is a visual historian, artist, and curator interested in the issues of Indigeneity within a global context. Recent projects include the 2015 Creative Time Summit, Venice, Italy; advisor to Sakahàn: 1st International Quinquennial of New Indigenous Art, National Gallery of Canada, 2013; Ford Foundation Research Grant, 2008-11; Te Tihi Scholar/Artist Gathering (New Zealand) 2010; and co-curator for the inaugural exhibition for the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (Washington, D.C.), 2004. She is from the Tuscarora Nation (Haudenosaunee), the Director of the American Indian Program, and an Associate Professor in the History of Art and Art Departments at Cornell University.

Lisa Roberts Seppi is an associate professor of art history at the State University of New York in Oswego, where she teaches modern and contemporary European-American art history, critical theory, and Native American art. She is currently the art history subject editor for the *American Journal of Undergraduate Research*. Her research has been published in *Double Desire: Transculturation and Indigenous Contemporary Art* (2014), *Multicultural America: A Multimedia Encyclopedia* (2013), and *Activist Art in Social Justice Pedagogy: Engaging Students in Global Issues through Arts* (2011). She has curated several exhibitions, including *Hannah Claus: In/Tangible Presence* (2012), and she recently spoke at the *On the Trails of the Iroquois* exhibition at the Martin-Gropius-Bau in Berlin, Germany (2013).

Paul Chaat Smith is a Comanche author, essayist, and curator. His work is focused on the contemporary landscape of American Indian politics and culture. He is a co-author (with Robert Warrior) of *Like a Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee* (1996), and the author of *Everything You Know about Indians Is Wrong* (2009). In 2005, *Art Papers* named him one of the 25 most respected contemporary art curators working today. Smith served as creative consultant for the American Experience series *We Shall Remain: A Native History of America*, broadcast on PBS in April 2009. Smith joined the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in 2001. His projects include the permanent history exhibition at NMAI's Mall Museum, performance artist James Luna's *Emendatio* at the 2005 Venice Biennial, *Fritz Scholder: Indian/Not Indian*, and *Brian Jungen: Strange Comfort*. Like Kobe Bryant and LeBron James, he turned pro right after high school and has no college or university degrees.



Front cover image: Kay WalkingStick (Cherokee, b. 1935), *New Mexico Desert*, 2011. Oil on wood panel, 40 x 80 x 2 in. National Museum of the American Indian purchase through a special gift from the Louise Ann Williams Endowment, 2013. 26/9250. Photo by Ernest Amoroso/NMAI.