

American Museum of Natural History

Media Inquiries:

Kendra Snyder
Department of Communications
212-496-3419
ksnyder@amnh.org
amnh.org

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The American Museum of Natural History Announces *Grounded by Our Roots*, A New Indigenous Art Exhibition

Exhibition Opening April 3 Showcases Contemporary Indigenous Art
of the Northwest Coast Through Works of Five Up-and-Coming Artists



Church and State (left) and *Midnight at the Fireworks Stand* by Alison Bremner Naxhshagheit

Grounded by Our Roots, an exhibition of extraordinary works by up-and-coming Indigenous artists who draw inspiration from their cultural traditions, will open to the public on April 3 in the Northwest Coast Hall's rotating contemporary art gallery at the American Museum of Natural History. The exhibition is produced with guest curator Aliya Boubard, the curator of the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art in Vancouver, who is Anishinaabe and a member of Sagkeeng First Nation in Manitoba.

Grounded by Our Roots features 13 pieces—including paintings, prints, clothing, and sculptures—that showcase contemporary Indigenous art inspired by rich visual arts traditions of the Northwest Coast.

"We are thrilled to showcase the exquisite work of these emerging artists in this first new exhibit in the Northwest Coast Hall since it opened in 2022," said Museum President Sean M. Decatur. "*Grounded by Our Roots* beautifully showcases the vibrancy, brilliance, and creativity of Indigenous voices today and reflects the powerful connections of Native artists with their ancestral traditions. The Northwest Coast Hall was designed to incorporate special temporary exhibits like this one as part of our commitment to ensuring that contemporary Native art and perspectives are always part of the hall."

The artists featured in the gallery are:

- **Hawilkwala Rebecca Baker-Grenier** (Kwakiutl, Musgamagw Dzawada'enuxw, Skwxwú7mesh), a fashion designer who debuted her first collection at New York Fashion Week in 2022 and sees “fashion as a living practice that is rooted in our art form, laws, and worldview”
- **Alison Bremner Naxhshagheit** (Tlingit), who works in woodcarving, painting, digital collage, among other media, “exploring the present-day Tlingit experience, each concept ultimately dictating the medium”
- **SGidGang.Xaal Shoshannah Greene** (Haida), who studied hand-drawn animation before switching to classical and contemporary Haida formline and “love(s) to explore and play between the worlds of classical formline and contemporary mediums”
- **Nash'mene'ta'naht Atheana Picha** (Kwantlen First Nation), whose work is “focused on learning traditional Coast Salish design language and studying Northwest Coast artwork with the introduction of different material practices”
- **Eliot White-Hill Kwulasultun** (Snuneymuxw First Nation), an interdisciplinary artist who aims to “share our art and our teachings, and ensure that future generations will have that knowledge accessible to them”

“The mid-1900s saw the rise of contemporary Indigenous art across North America. On the Northwest Coast, artists experimented with traditional artforms in new media. No longer was art confined to regalia, wood carvings or ceremonial objects—it began to appear in silkscreen prints, contemporary sculptures, modern fashion, and other forms,” said Boubard. “Fast-forward to today, and we see incredible works from contemporary Indigenous artists who are deeply inspired by those who came before. The artists featured in this gallery are excellent examples of this movement. Rooted in their cultures, they push the boundaries of their craft, while gathering inspiration from their Ancestors.”

The Museum’s Northwest Coast Hall reopened in 2022 following a transformative renovation and reinterpretation in consultation with Indigenous communities from the Pacific Northwest Coast. As part of the revitalization, a rotating art gallery was created to showcase the continuity and transformation of Indigenous creative traditions. *Grounded by Our Roots* will follow the inaugural exhibition, *Living with the Sea*, which explored the significance of the ocean to Northwest Coast Native peoples. The curator of the Northwest Coast Hall is Peter Whiteley, curator of North American Ethnology at the Museum, and the co-curator is Haa'yuuqs, Nuu-chah-nulth scholar and cultural historian.

Northwest Coast Hall

Featuring exhibits that showcase the creativity, scholarship, and history of the living cultures of the Pacific Northwest, the Northwest Coast Hall focuses on the material culture of 10 Native Nations and language communities of the Pacific Northwest and presents more than 1,000 restored cultural items, enlivened with new interpretation developed with Consulting Curators from the Coast Salish, Gitksan, Haida, Hałtzaqv, Kwakwaka'wakw, Nuu-chah-nulth, Nuxalk, Tlingit, and Tsimshian communities.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY (AMNH)

The American Museum of Natural History, founded in 1869 with a dual mission of scientific research and science education, is one of the world’s preeminent scientific, educational, and cultural institutions. The Museum encompasses more than 40 permanent exhibition halls, galleries for temporary exhibitions, the Rose Center for Earth and Space including the Hayden Planetarium, and the Richard Gilder Center for Science, Education, and Innovation. The Museum’s scientists draw on a world-class permanent collection of more than 33 million specimens and artifacts, some of which are billions of years old, and on one of the largest natural history libraries in the world. Through its Richard Gilder Graduate School, the Museum offers two of the only free-standing, degree-granting programs of their kind at any museum in the U.S.: the Ph.D. program in Comparative Biology and the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Earth Science residency program. Visit amnh.org for more information.

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