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## Denver Art Museum to Debut First Major Exhibition Featuring American Indian Contemporary Artist Jeffrey Gibson

*Jeffrey Gibson: Like a Hammer* will feature the artist's most acclaimed work

**DENVER—May 16, 2017**—The Denver Art Museum (DAM) today announced that it will present contemporary artist Jeffrey Gibson's first major museum exhibition, showcasing his acclaimed multi-disciplinary work from 2011 to the present. On view May 13–Aug. 12, 2018, *Jeffrey Gibson: Like a Hammer* will feature about 65 objects comprising large and mid-sized figurative works, text-based wall hangings, a significant selection of his illustrious Everlast beaded punching bags, painted works on rawhide and canvas, as well as videos. Organized by DAM and curated by John Lukavic, associate curator of Native Arts, the exhibition will chronicle a pivotal moment in the artist's career when his contemporary artistic practice converged with his Native American heritage.

"Jeffrey Gibson is widely recognized as a unique and influential voice in contemporary art as well as within Native American art circles, and we are eager to present his first major museum exhibition, which is bold in both color and scale," said Christoph Heinrich, Frederick and Jan Mayer Director of the DAM. "This exhibition builds on our ongoing initiative to showcase contemporary art by American Indian artists. It is also a continuation of our emphasis on organizing monographic exhibitions, exposing, and in some cases introducing, our visitors to a single artist's creative process."



Jeffrey Gibson (Mississippi Band Choctaw/Cherokee), *OUR FREEDOM IS WORTH MORE THAN OUR PAIN*, 2017. Glass beads, artificial sinew, acrylic felt, steel and brass; 114 x 71 x 42 in. Collection of Vicki and Kent Logan. Courtesy of the artist and Roberts & Tilton, Los Angeles, California.



Jeffrey Gibson (Mississippi Band Choctaw/Cherokee), *ALL THINGS BIG AND SMALL*, 2016. Acrylic paint and graphite on canvas; 70 x 57.25 in. Collection of Lisa and Stuart Ginsberg. Image courtesy of Jeffrey Gibson Studio and Roberts & Tilton, Los Angeles, California. Photograph by Peter Mauney.

*Jeffrey Gibson: Like a Hammer* will reveal how the artist draws upon his heritage and remixes his older works to create a distinct visual vocabulary in artworks that explore his multi-faceted identity and the history of modernism. Gibson's abstract works take inspiration from his Choctaw and Cherokee heritage, pan-Native American visual culture, alternative subcultures and the artist's experiences living abroad as well as popular culture. Materials used in the works on view will include rawhide, tipi poles, sterling silver, wool blankets, metal cones, beads, fringe and sinew. Exploration of materials and striking patterned and textured works in the form of punching bags and wall hangings will incorporate text from poems, Gibson's own voice and popular song lyrics such as Stevie Wonder's "Sir Duke."

“Gibson seamlessly blends indigenous aesthetics and contemporary methods,” said Lukavic. “His work offers our visitors an experience that doesn’t exist elsewhere and challenges the generic categories of art, presenting a new way of conceptualizing what people see and experience.”

Gibson frequently explores colonialism and the post-colonial mindset, reflecting on how American Indian experiences parallel other civil rights movements. His work also revolves around universal themes of love, community, strength, vulnerability and survival. Through videos featuring interviews with the artist and related programming, visitors will be able to gain an enhanced understanding of Gibson’s distinctive and complex creative practice, as well as how it has evolved from series to series.

“*Like a Hammer* will feature works from one of the most important periods of my career so far,” said Gibson. “The exhibition begins with artworks that I made just after nearly giving up making art altogether due to feeling misunderstood as an artist and struggling to establish a personal language that describes my experience without compromising it. The objects, sculptures and paintings I’ve made since 2011 document this journey of establishing my own forward-looking voice influenced by all that has come before me.”



Jeffrey Gibson (Mississippi Band Choctaw/Cherokee), *Like A Hammer*, 2014. Elk hide, glass beads, artificial sinew, wool blanket, metal studs, steel, found pinewood block, and fur; 56 x 24 x 11 in. From the collection of Roman Johnson and Tracy Richelle High. Image courtesy of Jeffrey Gibson Studio and Roberts & Tilton, Los Angeles, California. Photograph by Peter Mauney.

The museum will publish the first exhibition catalog to comprehensively detail Gibson’s career and body of work. The publication will feature essays by leading scholars in the contemporary and American Indian art fields that provide a range of perspectives on Gibson’s work, including Anne Ellegood, senior curator at the Hammer Museum, and Glenn Adamson, senior scholar, Yale University. The catalog will be available in The Shops at the DAM in May 2018.

*Jeffrey Gibson: Like a Hammer* will be included in general admission and free for members and youth 18 and under. The exhibition will be on view in the Gallagher Gallery on level 1 of the Frederic C. Hamilton Building at the DAM.

### **Exhibition Organizers and Sponsors**

*Jeffrey Gibson: Like a Hammer* is organized by the Denver Art Museum. It is presented with the generous support of the donors to the Annual Fund Leadership Campaign and the citizens who support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD). Promotional support is provided by *5280 Magazine*, CBS4, Comcast Spotlight and *The Denver Post*.

### **Media Resources**

Online Newsroom: [www.denverartmuseum.org/press](http://www.denverartmuseum.org/press)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/denverartmuseum](http://www.facebook.com/denverartmuseum)

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/denverartmuseum](http://www.twitter.com/denverartmuseum)

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### **About the Denver Art Museum**

The Denver Art Museum is an educational, nonprofit resource that sparks creative thinking and expression through transformative experiences with art. Its holdings reflect the city and region—and provide invaluable ways for the community to learn about cultures from around the world. Metro citizens support the [Scientific and Cultural Facilities District](http://www.scfd.org/) (SCFD), a unique funding source serving hundreds of metro Denver arts, culture and scientific organizations. For museum information, call 720-865-5000 or visit [www.denverartmuseum.org](http://www.denverartmuseum.org).