

Art Museum
University of Toronto
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Justina M. Barnicke Gallery
University of Toronto Art Centre

7 Hart House Circle
Toronto, Ontario M5S 3H3
artmuseum.utoronto.ca

Art Museum

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kent Monkman's exhibition *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience* ushers in Canada's Sesquicentennial in 2017 at the Art Museum at the University of Toronto

January 26 – March 4, 2017
A project by Kent Monkman

Kent Monkman's new, large scale project takes the viewer on a journey through Canada's history that starts in the present and takes us back to a hundred and fifty years before Confederation. With its entry points in the harsh urban environment of Winnipeg's north end, and contemporary life on the reserve, the exhibition takes us all the way back to the period of New France and the fur trade. The Rococo masterpiece *The Swing* by Jean-Honoré Fragonard is reinterpreted as an installation with Monkman's alter ego, Miss Chief Eagle Testickle, in a beaver trimmed baroque dress, swinging back and forth between the Generals Wolfe and Montcalm.

As both artist and curator, Kent Monkman's first major solo-exhibition at the Art Museum at the University of Toronto includes his own paintings, drawings and sculptural works, in dialogue with historical artefacts and art works borrowed from museum and private collections from across the country. The exhibition narrates a story of Canada through the lens of First Nations' resilience.

Celebrated for his unorthodox approach to history—entailing humour, parody and artistic fiction—Monkman's project takes aim at stereotypes perpetuated in popular culture, high art, and spectacle: heteronormativity unravels in polysexual desire; colonial empire is upended in post-colonial

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counter-narratives; and the historical form of the museum diorama—the kind popularized by museums of Natural History, often featuring frozen moments of Aboriginal life in terms of a ‘vanished race’—is turned inside out.

With a focus on his new paintings and drawings, Monkman’s visceral and moving exhibition provides a searing critique of Canada’s colonial policies in response to celebrations of Canada’s 150th birthday. As Monkman explains, “The last 150 years—the period of Modernity—represents the most devastating period for First Peoples, including the signing of the numbered treaties, the reserve system, genocidal policies of the residential schools, mass incarceration and urban squalor.”

After premiering at the Art Museum at the University of Toronto, this large scale exhibition will travel across Canada over the next two years. A catalogue is forthcoming in the fall of 2017 and will be published in English, French, and Cree.

Kent Monkman is a Canadian artist and curator of Cree ancestry who works with a variety of mediums, including painting, film/video, performance, and installation. His most recent curatorial project was the exhibition *My Treaty is with the Crown* at the Leonard and Bina Ellen Art Gallery at Concordia University in 2011. As an artist, he has had solo exhibitions at numerous Canadian museums including the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art in Toronto, Winnipeg Art Gallery, and Art Gallery of Hamilton. He has participated in various international group exhibitions including: *The American West* at Compton Verney, Warwickshire; *Remember Humanity* at Witte de With, Rotterdam; 2010 Biennale of Sydney; *My Winnipeg* at la maison rouge, Paris; and *Oh, Canada* at MASS MoCA, North Adams. Monkman has created site specific performances at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Royal Ontario Museum, and Compton Verney. He has also made Super 8 versions of these

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performances which he calls "Colonial Art Space Interventions". His award-winning short film and video works have been screened at various national and international festivals, including the 2007 and 2008 Berlinale, and the 2007 and 2015 Toronto International Film Festival. His work is represented in numerous public and private collections including the National Gallery of Canada, Denver Art Museum, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Museum London, Glenbow Museum, Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Mackenzie Art Gallery, Art Gallery of Ontario, Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian and Vancouver Art Gallery.

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Opening Reception

Thursday January 26, 2017
Public Opening: 6:30-8:30pm
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The R.K. Teetzel Lecture in Art by Kent Monkman

Wednesday February 1, 2017, 4:30-6:00pm
University College, Room 140
The lecture will be followed by a reception from 6:00-7:30pm at
the University of Toronto Art Centre

Curatorial Tour with Kent Monkman

Saturday February 4, 2017, 2:00pm
Meet at the University of Toronto Art Centre

Wampum Woven through Anishinaabe History

Wednesday February 15, 2017, 6pm
Featuring Brian Charles
University of Toronto Art Centre

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This touring exhibition is produced by the Art Museum at the University of Toronto in partnership with the Confederation Centre Art Gallery, Charlottetown and has been made possible in part by the Government of Canada. Ce projet a été rendu possible en partie grâce au gouvernement du Canada.

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The Art Museum at the University of Toronto gratefully acknowledges the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, and the Toronto Arts Council.

Feature Image: Kent Monkman, *The Bears of Confederation*, 2016. Acrylic on canvas. 193cm x 345cm. Collection of Michelle Bilodeau and Matt Kingston.

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