



JEFFREY GIBSON TO REPRESENT THE UNITED STATES

AT 60TH INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION OF LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA IN 2024

Jeffrey Gibson: the space in which to place me Will Present New and Recent Works

U.S. Pavilion Presented by Portland Art Museum and SITE Santa Fe
and Commissioned by Kathleen Ash-Milby, Louis Grachos, and Abigail Winograd

Portland, OR and Santa Fe, NM – November 14, 2023 – **Portland Art Museum** in Oregon and **SITE Santa Fe** in New Mexico, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, will present **Jeffrey Gibson** as the representative for the United States at the 60th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia. Celebrated for an artistic practice that combines American, Indigenous, and Queer histories with influences from music and pop culture, Gibson creates a dynamic visual language that reflects the inherent diversity and hybridity of American culture. Using abundant color, complex pattern, and text, he invites deep reflection on identity, inspires empathy, and advocates for a widening of access to democracy and freedom for all. On view April 20 through November 24, 2024, *Jeffrey Gibson: the space in which to place me* provides international audiences with the first major opportunity to experience Gibson’s work outside of the U.S.

The 2024 U.S. Pavilion is commissioned by **Kathleen Ash-Milby**, Curator of Native American Art at the Portland Art Museum and a member of the Navajo Nation; **Louis Grachos**, Phillips Executive Director of SITE Santa Fe; and **Abigail Winograd**, independent curator, and is co-curated by Ash-Milby and Winograd. A member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and of Cherokee descent, Gibson will be the first Indigenous artist to represent the U.S. with a solo exhibition. This exhibition is also the first to be commissioned and co-curated by a Native American curator.

“Throughout his career, Jeffrey has challenged us to look at the world differently through his innovative and vibrant work,” said Ash-Milby. “His inclusive and collaborative approach is a powerful commentary on the influence and persistence of Native American cultures within the United States and globally, making him the ideal representative for the United States at this moment.”

“Having recently collaborated with Jeffrey to present a solo exhibition in Santa Fe, we are honored to continue championing his dynamic, insightful, and timely work—now on an international stage,” said Grachos. “This collaboration builds upon SITE Santa Fe’s long history as a platform for artistic innovation, providing artists with the support and resources they need to realize bold and ambitious visions.”

“I have long believed in the ability of Jeffrey's work to be a force for positive change and to create the possibility of a radically inclusive future,” said Winograd. “It is my hope that as a global audience experiences his work through the Biennale, they will also find it to be a source of joy and healing, something sorely needed in a world driven by conflict and crisis. I couldn't be more thrilled to be working with Jeffrey and this team to share his work more broadly.”

“Jeffrey’s work embodies the aspirations of the Portland Art Museum’s program to reveal the beauty and complexities of the world, and creates a deeper understanding of our shared humanity,” said Brian Ferriso, Director of the Portland Art Museum. “We are incredibly honored to help bring his vision to an international audience through this presentation at the Venice Biennale.”

For the U.S. Pavilion, Gibson will activate the interior and exterior of the building with a series of new and recent works that invite reflection on individual and collective identities including sculpture, paintings, multimedia works, and a site-specific installation activating the pavilion’s courtyard. The title of the exhibition references Oglala Lakota poet Layli Long Soldier’s poem *Ĥe Sápa*.

The project includes two educational partners: the **Institute of American Indian Arts** (Santa Fe, NM) and **Bard College** (Annandale-on-Hudson, NY).

In conjunction with the presentation at the U.S. Pavilion, the **Institute of American Indian Arts** (Santa Fe, NM) will organize the Venice Indigenous Arts School, a series of public programs in Venice, June 10-14, 2024. The week-long school will be conducted by the IAIA MFA in Studio Arts Program, under the direction of Mario A. Caro. Focused on developing Keywords in Indigenous Arts, its curriculum aims to continue the work of identifying a vocabulary best suited for discussing Indigenous arts—on its own terms. **Bard College** (Annandale-on-Hudson, NY), under the direction of Christian Ayne Crouch, will organize a convening focusing on the relationship of the art and culture of Indigenous North America to global histories that will take place in Venice October 26-28, 2024. Both of these partner programs focus on connecting Indigenous, Native American, and international undergraduate humanities students, graduate art students, and the public.

Jeffrey Gibson: the space in which to place me is made possible by The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State. Major support is provided by Arison Arts Foundation, The Terra Foundation for American Art, and Carl & Marilyn Thoma Foundation. Generous support is provided by Lisa Domenico Brooke, Becky and David Gochman, The Pollock-Krasner Foundation, the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund, The Robert Lehman Foundation, and The Rockefeller Brothers Fund. Essential support is provided by David Bolger.

For more information on the 2024 U.S. Pavilion, please visit: www.jeffreygibsonvenice2024.org

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Jeffrey Gibson’s (b. 1972, Colorado Springs, CO) approach to art-making is defined by its hybrid and cosmopolitan nature, largely informed by his international upbringing in the U.S., Korea, and Germany.

During his itinerant childhood as the son of a retired civil engineer of the U.S. Army, he found solace and friendship in the world of music, at various times exploring the sounds and social traditions of the punk and rave music of his generation, and in the powwow traditions of his intertribal Native heritage. A member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and of Cherokee descent who currently lives and works near Hudson, Gibson's practice resists static, preconceived notions of what people believe Native American and Indigenous art looks like. He combines Native art traditions with the visual languages of modernism to explore the confluence of personal identity, culture, history, and international social narratives.

Recent solo exhibitions include *This Burning World: Jeffrey Gibson* (ICA San Francisco, 2022), *Jeffrey Gibson: The Body Electric* (SITE Santa Fe, 2022), *Jeffrey Gibson: They Come From Fire* (Portland Art Museum, 2022), *Jeffrey Gibson: INFINITE INDIGENOUS QUEER LOVE* (deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, 2022), and *Jeffrey Gibson: Like A Hammer* (Denver Art Museum, 2018). His work is included in many permanent collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, National Gallery of Canada, and Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. Gibson also conceived of and edited the landmark volume *An Indigenous Present* (2023), which showcased diverse approaches to Indigenous concepts, forms, and mediums. He collaborated with Pavilion co-curator Abigail Winograd on their co-edited monograph *Jeffrey Gibson: Beyond the Horizon* (2022), which accompanied the exhibition, *Beyond the Horizon* (2021-2022).

Gibson has been recognized with numerous awards, including a 2019 MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, and he is currently an artist-in-residence at Bard College. Gibson received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in painting from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1995 and his Master of Arts in painting from the Royal College of Art, London, in 1998.

ABOUT THE COMMISSIONERS/CO-CURATORS

KATHLEEN ASH-MILBY

Kathleen Ash-Milby is Curator of Native American Art at the Portland Art Museum, where since 2019 she has expanded the Museum's engagement with Indigenous artists locally, regionally, and nationally. Ash-Milby also organized exhibitions featuring the work of artists including Oscar Howe (Yanktonai Dakota, 1915-1983) and Jeffrey Gibson (Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and of Cherokee descent) as well as emerging and early career Indigenous artists in the exhibition *MESH* (2021). Prior to joining PAM, Ash-Milby spent 19 years at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in New York, during which time she organized numerous solo and thematic group exhibitions of Native art in diverse media, including *Dakota Modern: The Art of Oscar Howe* (2022); *Transformer: Native Art in Light and Sound* (2021); *Kay WalkingStick: An American Artist* (2015); *Meryl McMaster: Second Self* (2015); and *C. Maxx Stevens: House of Memory* (2012). Ash-Milby has also curated international projects including *SITELines Biennial: much wider than a line*, at SITE Santa Fe (2017); *Stop (the) Gap: International Indigenous Art in Motion*, Samstag Museum of Art, Adelaide, Australia (2011); and *Edgar Heap of Birds: Most Serene Republics*, Collateral Event of the 52nd International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia (2007). Ash-Milby has contributed essays to various publications, most recently *The Routledge Companion to Indigenous Art Histories in the United States and Canada* (2023), *Jeffrey Gibson: Beyond the Horizon* (2022), and *Joseph Yoakum: What I Saw* (2021). She has also written for publications including *Art in America* and *Art Journal*. Ash-Milby is a recipient of two Secretary of the Smithsonian's Excellence in Research awards and was a fellow in the Center for Curatorial Leadership Program in New York. A

member of the Navajo Nation, she earned her Master of Arts from the University of New Mexico in Native American art history.

LOUIS GRACHOS

Louis Grachos became the Phillips Executive Director of SITE Santa Fe in 2021, having previously served as SITE's Director from 1996 to 2003. During that time, Grachos oversaw the 1997 ground-breaking presentation of Robert Colescott as the first Black artist to represent the United States in a single-artist exhibition at the 47th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, curated by Miriam Roberts. With a 30-year career as a seasoned arts leader, Grachos is recognized for his artist-centric vision, fundraising experience, and extensive relationships with artists and community collaborators. Prior to rejoining SITE, he served for two years as the CEO and JoAnn McGrath Executive Director of the Palm Springs Art Museum. From 2013 to 2019, he was the Ernest and Sarah Butler Executive Director and CEO of The Contemporary Austin, where he expanded the museum's curatorial and public programs, presenting the work of emerging and established artists such as Ai Weiwei, Janine Antoni, Carol Bove, Tom Friedman, Wangechi Mutu, Do Ho Suh, and SUPERFLEX, among many others. He also led several critical construction projects and capital campaigns, launched an international program of contemporary outdoor sculpture at the Betty and Edward Marcus Sculpture Park, and established the Suzanne Deal Booth / FLAG Art Foundation Prize for contemporary artists. From 2003 to 2012, Grachos served as the Executive Director of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, now renamed the Buffalo AKG Art Museum; in that capacity, he stewarded one of the most prestigious museum collections of 20th century and contemporary art in the United States.

ABIGAIL WINOGRAD

Abigail Winograd is an independent curator and writer. Until April 2023 she was Curator-at-Large and MacArthur Fellows Program Fortieth Anniversary Exhibition Curator at the Gray Center for the Arts and Inquiry, a role she originated at the Smart Museum of Art. In that role, she curated *Toward Common Cause: Art, Social Change, and the MacArthur Fellows at 40*, a city-wide, multi-venue exhibition of 29 artists, including Gibson (2021-2022). She also recently collaborated with Gibson on their co-edited monograph *Jeffrey Gibson: Beyond the Horizon* (2022) which examined his complex relationship to the depiction of Indigenous people, the history of Native American portraiture, and the institutions that frequently house such depictions. Her scholarly work has focused on the emergence of aberrant abstractions and institutional approaches to expanding canonical histories. She has held positions at the Frans Hals Museum in Haarlem, the Netherlands; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden; Blanton Museum of Art; and Art Institute of Chicago. Winograd has contributed to books and museum catalogs, published academic articles, and written for publications such as *Bomb*, *Mousse Magazine*, *Frieze*, and *Artforum*. She received a Master's and Ph.D. in Art History from the University of Texas at Austin and has additional degrees from Northwestern University and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

ABOUT PORTLAND ART MUSEUM

Among the oldest museums in the United States, the Portland Art Museum is internationally recognized for its permanent collection and ambitious special exhibitions. Based in Portland, Oregon, and distinguished for its longstanding commitment to showcasing the broad spectrum of Native American art, its holdings also include renowned collections of Asian and graphic arts. With a diverse program that includes PAM CUT // Center for an Untold Tomorrow, which expands the reach of cinema as an art form, the Museum is dedicated to creating opportunities for artists and access to art for the enrichment of our many audiences and diverse communities. The Museum strives to be an inclusive, accessible institution

that facilitates respectful dialogue and the free exchange of ideas through art within its campus of landmark buildings, a cornerstone of Portland's cultural district, and through its forthcoming expansion and renovation project that includes the construction of the Mark Rothko Pavilion (slated opening mid-2025). portlandartmuseum.org

ABOUT SITE SANTA FE

Guided by artists, rooted in New Mexico, SITE Santa Fe celebrates contemporary creative expression. SITE Santa Fe aspires to be an internationally recognized destination for art and artists and a community resource for creativity and learning. Founded in 1995 to establish the first international contemporary art biennial in the United States, SITE Santa Fe is a non-collecting art institution committed to supporting new developments in contemporary art, encouraging artistic exploration, and expanding traditional museum experiences. Since its launch, SITE Santa Fe has presented 11 international biennials, more than 100 contemporary art exhibitions, and works by hundreds of emerging and established artists from around the world and in New Mexico. SITE Santa Fe also presents a wide range of public and educational programs that include conversations with artists and curators, performances, film screenings, concerts, hands-on workshops, and collaborations with dozens of local schools and community organizations. sitesantafe.org

ABOUT LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA

Established in 1895, La Biennale di Venezia is acknowledged today as one of the most prestigious cultural institutions. The International Art Exhibition is considered the most prestigious contemporary art exhibition, introducing hundreds of thousands of visitors to exciting new art every two years. The 60th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia (April 20 – November 24, 2024) will be curated by Adriano Pedrosa.

The United States Pavilion at the Giardini della Biennale, a building in the neoclassical style, opened on May 4, 1930. Since 1986, The U.S. Pavilion has been owned by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation and managed by the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice, which works closely with the Department of State and exhibition curators to install and maintain all official U.S. exhibitions presented in the Pavilion. Every two years, museum curators from across the U.S. detail their visions for the U.S. Pavilion in proposals that are reviewed by the NEA Federal Advisory Committee on International Exhibitions (FACIE), a group comprising curators, museum directors, and artists who then submit their recommendations to the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Past exhibitions can be viewed on the Peggy Guggenheim Collection website at: www.guggenheim-venice.it/inglese/pavilion/index.php

The United States Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs supports and manages official U.S. participation at the International Architecture Exhibitions of La Biennale di Venezia. The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) builds relations between the people of the United States and the people of other countries through academic, cultural, sports, professional, and private exchanges, as well as public-private partnerships and mentoring programs. These exchange programs improve foreign relations and strengthen the national security of the United States, support U.S. international leadership, and provide a broad range of domestic benefits by helping break down barriers that often divide us, like religion, politics, language and ethnicity, and geography. ECA programs build connections that engage and empower people and motivate them to become leaders and thinkers, to develop new skills, and to find connections that will create positive change in their communities. For more information, please visit <https://exchanges.state.gov/us>

Press Contacts:

Caroline McKinley/Julia Exelbert/Jenny Levine

Resnicow and Associates

212-671-5162/212-671-5155/212-671-5189

2024USPavilion@resnicow.com

Office of Public Affairs and Strategic Communications

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

202-632-6452 / ECA-Press@state.gov