

**Large-Print Visual Descriptions of Select Objects for *Sharing Honors and Burdens: Renwick Invitational 2023***

**First Floor**

**Please return after use.**

**Exhibition Text**

***Sharing Honors and Burdens: Renwick Invitational 2023***

We can be burdened by grief, by our personal histories, and by history writ large. Yet some kinds of burdens can be precious to us. We carry them with love and pride. The artworks in *Sharing Honors and Burdens: Renwick Invitational 2023* arise from traditions of making that honor family, community, moiety, or clan and require broad community participation. Six artists—Joe Feddersen, Lily Hope, Ursala Hudson, Erica Lord, Geo Neptune, and Maggie Thompson—analyze the present moment by evoking historical practices and potential futures. Each artist is Native American or Alaska Native. Their works are often culturally specific, yet they communicate across cultural boundaries.

**Maggie Thompson** (Fond du Lac Ojibwe) creates multimedia textiles that explore the intersections of loss and grief with honor and healing. **Erica Lord** (Athabascan/Iñupiat) crafts beaded objects with representations of common diseases abstracted from genetic tests. **Joe Feddersen** (Arrow Lakes/Okanagan) is a printmaker, glass artist, and basket maker who produces geometric patterns for living in the modern land. Sisters **Lily Hope** (Tlingit) and **Ursala Hudson** (Tlingit) weave textiles that balance tradition and innovation for garments representing honor and responsibility. Basket maker **Geo Neptune** (Passamaquoddy) weaves containers connecting the values of Passamaquoddy traditions with contemporary lived experience.

*Sharing Honors and Burdens: Renwick Invitational 2023* is the tenth installment of the series. Established in 2000, the Renwick Invitational showcases emerging and mid-career makers deserving of wider national recognition. This installment features Native American and Alaska Native artists for the first time, reinforcing a commitment by the museum to contemporary Native American artists and Indigenous voices.

## **Artist Panel**

**Maggie Thompson** (Fond du Lac Ojibwe; born Minneapolis, MN, 1989; resides St. Paul, with a studio in Minneapolis)

Maggie Thompson's artistic practice is deeply engaged in the work of processing emotions around loss, grief, and transformation. Her practice and finished artwork function as part of the healing process, for both the artist and the viewer. Thompson pushes the boundaries of textile art by combining beadwork with manufactured materials and techniques from quilting, sewing, and other handwork traditions. The use of labor-intensive methods and the large scale of the works honor the otherwise invisible emotional processes involved in change: rumination, accountability, grief, and intention.

Thompson lives and works in Minneapolis and often collaborates with other artists in socially engaged art projects. She is founder and owner of Makwa Studio, a machine knitwear brand.

## **Label Text**

*On Loving*

2022–23

vinyl, glass beads, thread, and zippers

Courtesy of the artist and Bockley Gallery

The artist explains the inspiration for this series:

*It was inspired by my experience of watching the coroners come in carrying a simple, solid colored bag the night my dad passed away. After this I was compelled to create a body bag as an act of saying goodbye and as a way to honor my dad. The colorful and beaded arms of the star wrap around the bag as a way of wrapping and holding a body with love.*

—Maggie Thompson

Quilts are created to recognize transitions in life, with details varying from one tribal community to another. Displaying a Morningstar patterned quilt is a public affirmation of honoring, whether it is displayed on a wall, on the ground, on a casket, or bestowed as a gift.

The conditions of the pandemic, especially early on, interrupted customary funerary practices. *On Loving* honors those lost during these difficult years since COVID-19 and honors the grief of the living as well. Thompson transforms a painfully anonymous, utilitarian object—the body bag—into a beautiful tribute, with the Morningstar pattern found on quilts further embellished with beadwork.

### **Visual Description**

Three identical life-size white body bags lay flat on a rectangular platform, lined up in a row, each cut in half by a long vertical zipper. Diamond-shaped vinyl patches of various colors radiate outward from each bag's center, creating a vibrant ombre effect. The patches form the shape of a six-sided Morningstar, which covers roughly two thirds of each bag. Each patch is lined with shiny copper-colored beads that have been woven into cords. These beaded copper cords create a vivid design that emphasizes the shape of each Morningstar. While the pattern does not touch the upper and lower borders of each bag, the left- and right-most points wrap around and under the bags' sides. The tips of the stars' points are a bright yellow that fades into orange, then to red, to maroon and deep blue, and finally to black. A smaller star composed of deep blue patches sits at the center of each Morningstar.

### **Label Text**

*I Get Mad Because I Love You*

**Maggie Thompson**

2021–23

glass beads, filament, and silver-plated tin cones

While some of Thompson's works honor sustaining relationships, others examine the indicators of unhealthy ones. This beaded panel repeats the title to evoke the dizzying interplay between words and intent. The variations in the translucence of the beads used to create the words symbolize the fading in and out of the voices we hear, and don't hear, in unhealthy relationships. Thompson states, "Even if we know someone is mistreating us, we can feel attached to their words, 'I love you.' It's all about the words." A fringe of metal cones references the healing potential of making and dancing in the jingle dress in Ojibwe culture.

Courtesy of the artist and Bockley Gallery

### **Visual Description**

Measuring four feet tall and six feet wide, this shimmering beaded textile is made up of countless tiny glass beads that lend it a delicate, glittering translucency. These white and clear beads form words that are arranged in evenly spaced capital letters of uniform size, only slightly larger than that of a large print book. They read, "I GET MAD BECAUSE I LOVE YOU." This phrase repeats with painstaking precision, line by line, across the entire panel. The lack of punctuation dissolves the sentence's grammatical structure and leaves the interpretation up to the reader. Translucent white beads have been used for the part of the phrase that reads "I GET MAD BECAUSE," while the "I LOVE YOU" is written in opaque white beads. This contrast makes each scattered "I LOVE YOU" stand out. The alternating opacity of the beads, combined with the repetition of the phrase and the lack of punctuation, creates a sense of disorientation and overwhelm. Inch-long silver-plated tin cones hang like tassels from the sides and bottom border of the textile. The beaded panel is suspended by a clear rod; there are no tassels lining the top edge.

### **Label Text**

*The Equivocator*

2021

rope, wire, stockings, thread, and ribbon

"A belly tied in knots with the red flags that you so delicately placed but insisted did not exist."

Thompson wrote these words to acknowledge an abusive relationship, and they became the starting point for her soft sculpture *The Equivocator*. It is often said that our gut corresponds to a source of knowledge, an instinct, a sixth sense. The meandering shape of Thompson's sculpture is interrupted by red ribbons, prompting us to honor the knowledge we gain from how we feel in our own bodies on our journeys to self-love and self-trust.

Collection of Hair and Nails

### **Visual Description**

This large, soft sculpture is about three and half feet tall and five and a half feet wide and is mounted on the wall. A long, tan, hollow, and transparent rope-like object that resembles intestines bends and gathers together to form an organic rectangular shape, appearing somewhat like a maze. Inside the tan rope form, there are gathered white rope pieces scattered in clumps throughout various sections, almost like noodles passing through a digestive tract. Red ribbons fasten a few of the coils together at about ten different points throughout to hold the overall rectangular shape loosely together. The coil is constructed from flesh-like stockings that stretch and sag, made of transparent mesh in various shades of tan and beige. Some sections are a lighter tan color, while other sections are darker. Though it is constructed with soft material like stockings and rope, the object overall appears stiff. The form has a rigid outline with sharp corners and jagged edges created by the rope inside the stockings. The bright red ribbons pop against the drab, beige form.

### **Artist Panel**

**Erica Lord** (Athabascan/Iñupiat; born Nenana, AK, 1978; resides Santa Fe, NM)

Erica Lord grew up traveling between the Tanana Athabascan village of Nenana, Alaska, and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Her mixed-race cultural identity as the daughter of a Finnish American mother and an Athabascan/Iñupiat father inform much of her work. With photography, beadwork, performance, video, and

installation work, Lord critiques institutional constructions of history, identity, and art.

Through her focus on the surface of the body, Lord's early performative and photographic works call into question the legitimacy of racial identification. In her recent work, Lord combines visual renderings of genetic testing data with traditional technologies for carrying burdens. This work provides her new ways of exploring invisible burdens, whether they are precious burdens of love and family or painful historic burdens of inequity.

### **Label Text**

*The Codes We Carry*

2022

sled, dog forms, and beaded tuppies (dog blankets)

Courtesy of the artist and Accola Griefen Fine Art

### **Tuppies**

Erica Lord's Alaskan village, Nenana, was the departure point for the famous 1925 dog sledding relay that delivered diphtheria antitoxin serum to an outbreak in Nome, Alaska. The 674-mile journey took twenty mushers and a total of 150 dogs five and a half days to complete. Many of the 1925 mushers were Alaska Natives. Likewise, delivering COVID-19 vaccines in Alaska required bush planes, boats, snow mobiles, and sleds pulled like trailers behind snow mobiles.

Tuppies (or tapis) fell out of use in Lord's village before she was born. She learned about the historical use of these fancy dog blankets in college by visiting museum collections. They are not practical gear for dog sledding. Rather, they are carried along to dress the dogs before a team's arrival for a ceremonial or social event. In the past decade, tuppies have slowly returned. Historically, the beaded designs on tuppies are floral. Lord's use of abstract, geometric designs is a departure from that convention, but she trimmed the dog blankets with fabric, fringe, and bells, like many historic examples.



Gwich'in (Kutchin) Sled Dog Blanket, 16 15/16 x 26 in., velvet, hide, metal bells, and glass beads, 1907–13, National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, no. 16/1667

### ***The Codes We Carry***

*The Codes We Carry* brings together a team of sled dogs dressed in tuppies that represent specific diseases. Lord expanded on the same concept and process as the beaded burden straps to create each blanket. The lead dog carries a diphtheria pattern. The swing dogs, behind the lead dog, wear smallpox and tuberculosis patterns. The following dogs wear a diabetes and ovarian cancer patterns. The tuppies on the dogs closest to the sled display two different microarray patterns representing COVID-19.

The dogs' blankets carry the disease burdens, but they also deliver the cures: antitoxins and vaccines. Combining representations of diseases with the modes of carrying precious burdens poses thoughtful questions: What burdens do we have to carry with us? What burdens are we honored to carry? And what burdens can we no longer tolerate?

### **Visual Description**

This installation depicts a team of trotting wolves pulling a child-size dogsled. The all-white, three-foot-tall wolf models seem to be caught mid-motion. They are arranged like sled dogs, with one leading the pack and the remaining three pairs following behind. Each wears a brightly colored beaded blanket that drapes over its back, falling almost to its paws. The undetailed, muted white of the wolf forms make these blankets even more vivid.

Each blanket depicts the unique colorful microarray of a specific disease. Made up of thin rectangles of colored glass beads, the blocky patterns appear pixelated. The lead dog's blanket carries a diphtheria pattern, a disease of the nose and

throat easily prevented by a vaccine, dominated by deep purples and blues. Behind the lead dog, the swing dogs wear smallpox and tuberculosis patterns. The smallpox pattern is composed of turquoise, electric and dark blue, flecks of green and yellow, and touches of red. Tuberculosis is mostly navy blue, with some orange, red, and yellow sections, and a bright band of pinks, purples, and turquoise. The fourth dog wears a diabetes pattern of pink, red, and blue. The ovarian cancer tuppie transitions from orange-red to a gradient of pale to dark blues. The tuppies on the dogs closest to the sled display two different microarray patterns representing COVID-19. One has shades of cool greys ranging to black, with patches of bright red scattered sparsely throughout. The other is a vibrant red-and-green pattern, with sky-blue bands along some of the edges.

Bordering the sides and bottom edges of the blankets, silver cones about two or three inches in length hang like tassels. The tops of the blankets, draped over the shoulders of each dog, are lined with a soft, shiny border of fabric. On some of the blankets, this fabric borders the beads all the way around the outside of the blanket. On others, the silver cone tassels are replaced by fringes of long string along the bottom of the blanket. One blanket is lined with silver bells. No two blankets are the same. Moving light and shadow dance over the installation, making the work appear in motion, as if traversing a snowy tundra.

### **Label Text**

*Blood Quantum* ( $1/4 + 1/16 = 5/16$ ), from the series *(Untitled) Tattooed Arms*  
2007  
inkjet print

*Enrollment Number (11-337-07463-04-01)*, from the series *(Untitled) Tattooed Arms*  
2007  
inkjet print

Erica Lord's father is Athabascan/Iñupiat and her mother is Finnish American. If Lord were to have a child with a non-Native or a Native from another tribe, that child would not be recognized legally as Native Alaskan because their percentage of "Indian blood" would drop below a quarter.



The series *Untitled (Tattooed Arms)* is composed of two life-size photographs of the artist's arms. The fractional formula representing her blood quantum is written on one arm, and her tribal enrollment number is on the other. Inscribing the dehumanizing numbers on her body draws parallels to the Nazis' use of numerical tattoos in concentration camps. Multiple exposures divide the "whole" person into fractions of a person.

Courtesy of the artist and Accola Griefen Fine Art

### **Visual Description**

Two life-size photographs of the right and left arm of a person are framed and hung on the wall. Each arm is raised and outstretched from the shoulder, with the palm of the hand facing the viewer. The hand is relaxed, bent slightly toward the ground. Each arm is made up of four separate photographs of different exposures, varying a little in light and shade. The first segment captures the hand and wrist; the second section captures the forearm; the third the upper arm; and the fourth the shoulder, including the bottom ends of medium-length dark brown hair. Within the third segments, written on the forearm, are tattoos in black ink. The right arm reads:  $1/4 + 1/16 = 5/16$ . The left arm reads: 11-337-07463-04-01. The background is completely black, in stark contrast against the skin of each arm.

### **Label Text**

#### **Carrying Burdens**

Athabascan and Iñupiat burden straps are used for carrying everyday supplies. They can be simple lengths of tanned hide or woven fibers. Wider, highly embellished straps are used for carrying babies. Made by the mother or other female relatives, baby belts honor and recognize new life as a part of the community. Erica Lord made her first baby belt out of moose hide in 2005, as she was thinking about motherhood and identity.



A woman uses a baby belt to carry her child, Ford Yukon, 1940. Alaska State Library, Evelyn Butler and George Dale Collection, George A. Dale, P306-0174

Lord then began thinking of burden straps symbolically rather than functionally. The designs and techniques used to embellish burden straps have strong ties within communities. As makers' skills increase, their motifs evolve, and their work becomes more their own. Lord took a conceptual leap from typical geometric patterns to an abstract design taken from genetic testing for diseases. By connecting the burden strap form with the science of genetic testing, she draws connections among invisible markers of genetics, the bureaucracy of “blood quantum” (the amount of “Indian blood” an individual possesses),\* and the burden of disease.

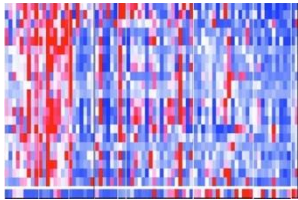
\* The “blood quantum” system was imposed on tribes by the federal government to track Native Peoples and limit their citizenship, reducing the populations each time someone has a child with a non-Native or someone from a different tribe.

### **DNA Microarray Analysis into Beaded Form**

With her beaded burden straps, Lord represents diseases that have affected her family members or, like diabetes, are conditions that disproportionately impact Indigenous communities. To create these patterns, she translates the exact graphic representation and colors of the genetic testing into beaded form.

The genetic testing method Lord adapts for her work creates microarrays—color-coded, spatially arranged representations of specific features in DNA strands. For red-and-green assays, the green fluorescence generally indicates the normal expression of a gene, while the red indicates a mutated or diseased segment. Black and yellow mark inconsequential segments. The pattern may appear to be pixelated, but it is not. Each colored block represents a match or mismatch in a comparison of genetic samples.

When designing a burden strap, Lord enlarges the microarray graphic, then creates a pattern board with assigned bead colors. Each four millimeter–square glass bead correlates to one segment of genetic code. The patterns are precisely duplicated.



An example of microarray data Lord uses to create a beaded burden strap. This is one detecting diabetes in DNA. See *Diabetes Burden Strap, DNA/RNA Microarray Analysis* on view nearby.

### **Visual Description**

When laid flat, this colorful beaded strap stretches about five feet long and seven inches wide, with beaded fringe that hangs in a tapering arc from the full length of its bottom edge. At its longest point, this fringe adds roughly twelve inches to the width of the strap. Shorter fringe also dangles from either end of the strap, adding six inches in length to both sides. The fringe is made up of beaded strands, with each strand consisting of alternating red, pink, white, and blue segments of beads. Thin rectangles in these alternating shades also comprise the intricate graphic pattern for the body of the beaded strap. The dense pattern is made up of tiny glass beads that have been strung together. Although contrasting shades are scattered throughout the strap, the far ends of the strap are predominantly pink and white, while the center of the strap is predominantly blue.

### **Artist Panel**

**Joe Feddersen** (Arrow Lakes/Okanagan; born Omak, WA, 1953; resides Omak)

Joe Feddersen’s work in printmaking, glass, and basketry is unified by connections among landscapes, animate beings, and the built environment. He achieves this, in part, by adapting or creating new symbols that function similarly to the abstract visual representations used in regional petroglyphs, pictographs, and woven

patterns. Each suite of works builds a narrative about a shared experience such as social distancing or the annual canoe journey.

Feddersen grew up camping, hunting, and fishing throughout the lands of the Okanagan in North Central Washington State. His family often traveled to visit his maternal relatives in British Columbia among the Penticton Indian Band of the Okanagan Valley. These experiences imparted a love for this region of mountains, plateaus, valleys, lakes, and rivers. Feddersen states that one of his goals is “to contribute to *our* history. I want to do works that are of cultural significance and in the voice of my people.”

As he works across multiple media, Feddersen mingles historic symbolism with new symbols that we see and use every day without much notice: tire tracks, traffic control patterns, planned community layouts, hazard symbols, emojis, and more. In a few hundred years, will our ancestors understand them still? Will our lives continue to change so rapidly that we will lose the usefulness and meaning of some of these symbols?

## **Label Text**

*Fish Trap*

2021–22

fused glass and metal

Used in many Native communities, traditional fish traps require great skill to create and use. The form’s open weave allows water to circulate continuously and is sized to allow smaller fish to pass through unharmed. When larger fish swim into the trap’s open mouth, they are usually unable to swim out again. The fish are collected efficiently in a manner that does little harm to the overall population.

While on a visit to the Salish Kootenai Community Center nearly twenty years ago, Feddersen noticed a willow fish trap displayed on the wall and was stunned by the beauty of the form. Inspired, Feddersen created several large-scale interpretations. The glass and wire ribs of Feddersen’s *Fish Trap* cast shimmering shadows that evoke the play of water.

Courtesy of the artist and studio e, Seattle, WA

### **Visual Description**

Suspended horizontally from the ceiling hangs a large tapered sculpture constructed of colored and translucent glass and metal. It is six feet long and two feet in diameter at its wider end. The sculpture is modeled after a type of Salish fish trap commonly used in the Pacific Northwest, with a wide mouth at one end designed to draw in fish. The sculpture gradually narrows from its open mouth to a small opening on the other end. Long multicolored glass rods of blue, red, yellow, green, black, and white make up the delicate, airy frame of the trap. The rods run horizontally along the trap. They are fastened with copper wire to circular white metal rims of increasing length. Long, thin gaps between these rods allow the viewer to see inside the sculpture. Inside, translucent blue glass rods fold inward from the rim of the trap at a 45-degree angle, mimicking a mechanism that would prevent larger fish from escaping.

### **Label Text**

*Bestiary 5*

2021

monoprint

Courtesy of the artist and studio e, Seattle, WA

### **Visual Description**

A hodgepodge of overlapping black and silver symbols cover the vivid blue background of this three-and-a-half by two-and-a-half foot print. The layered shapes are created with clean, bold lines. The shapes depicted are simplified images of people and animals; there is a turtle near the top, a squirrel to its right, and a bee underneath. There are many small animals like ants, grasshoppers, ticks, butterflies, dragonflies, and mice. Some of these animals are depicted with black ink, some with silver, and others with grey. There are also larger animals

included like snakes, birds, foxes, deer, people, and horses. All these individual animals from nature are layered over the light blue background.

## **Label Text**

*Charmed (Bestiary)*

2022–23

fused glass and filament

*Charmed (Bestiary)* is a collection of signs and symbols from the Okanagan lands, which include present-day Eastern Washington State and extend north across the border into Canada. Feddersen’s father once commented on the desolate nature of the semi-arid land. In response, Feddersen created hundreds of fused glass “charms” to represent the abundance of natural life of the region, and the markers of human presence: pictographs, petroglyphs, and high-voltage electrical towers.

Courtesy of the artist and studio e, Seattle, WA

## **Visual Description**

Measuring a striking ten feet in height and fifteen feet in width, this large-scale installation is made up of hundreds of individually crafted clear glass “charms.” Roughly the size of two human hands, each charm is unique. Their forms curve with the grace and aesthetic simplicity of line drawings. Human figures, animals, and mythical beings hang from clear fishing line of various lengths beside glass depictions of planes, biohazard signs, and the microscopic image of a COVID-19 particle. From a distance, the charms seem to float, as if by magic. When light shines on *Charmed*, the glass figures cast shadows, like a rock wall with overlapping petroglyphs. A fan placed to the right side of the work creates a breeze that gently moves each charm, causing the shadows behind them to move and change. This movement makes the clear glass twinkle and sparkle. As they gently collide, the charms clink and jingle softly like windchimes.

## **Label Text**

## **Plateau Twined Basketry**

Feddersen bases his basketry forms, materials, and imagery on the Plateau twined bags historically used for gathering and storing food. There are two main Plateau shapes associated with food: rectangular flat bags used for storing foods, and cylindrical baskets used for gathering. Feddersen most often creates the latter, whether twined from fiber or formed in glass. Both traditional shapes customarily feature abstracted figurative designs and geometric patterns.

The materials and uses of these baskets have changed over time. Older plant-based materials had practical uses to ward off insects and prevent mold. Other materials like cornhusks and wool have been used for objects made for gifts and finery for public events. A resurgence of traditional food gathering practices has coincided with more people weaving cylindrical bags today. Commercial materials like hemp, cotton, wool, and acrylic yarn have become customary.

Feddersen makes baskets for use and ones to be shared with the public as art objects. In his current practice, the practical baskets are finished with fabric liner, loops for attaching to a belt, and a rim reinforced with hide. The baskets presented here are for display only. It is important to the artist that those intended for use are made available for that purpose.

## **Object Label**

*Canoe Journey*

2021

twined waxed linen

Colville Tribal Museum, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation

## **Visual Description**

This basket is made of a woven material that is stiff enough to hold the object's cylindrical shape. The basket is about seven inches tall and five inches wide, with a rim and sides that ripple slightly where the fabric is not quite stiff enough to hold a completely solid and straight line. Along with its khaki background, the basket's movement lends it a natural feel. The basket's fabric surface is composed

of tiny woven squares. This adds to the basket's coarse texture and creates an impression of pixelation. A series of stylized, two-dimensional figures and canoe shapes are depicted in blue, black, and amber dye on the basket's surface. The canoes are of a simple, elegant design with minimal detail. They are represented by solid blue lines that arch up and are punctuated by distinct shapes at each end. Three or four figures sit atop the canoes, each with a uniquely shaped head. Some look like people, others like animals, and some are a mix of both—people with antlers or antennae. Near the top of the open basket is a thick stripe of black-dyed fabric that acts as the background for a string of amber-colored half-human, half-animal figures.

### **Label Text**

*Social Distancing series*

2021

mirrored and blown glass

*Social distancing has become part of our lives. I would like to relate that idea on some of the traditional basket forms. We are living through these times. —Joe Feddersen*

When viewers gaze into these vessels, their reflections become part of the work, and they see themselves as a part of the narrative. Like his ancestors and earlier artists, Feddersen is communicating through symbols and signs about lived experiences and current events.

Anonymous; Museum of Glass, Tacoma, WA, Gift of the artist; and Courtesy of the artist and studio e, Seattle, WA

### **Visual Description**

A cylindrical mirrored glass vessel stands roughly fifteen inches tall and eight inches in diameter. The surface of the vessel is a reflective silver. The rim is lined with a similarly shiny thin black line. The inside of the vessel is a rich copper color. Set along the outside surface, suspended in the shining silver, are figures created with colorful, thin glass lines. Their height nearly equals the height of the vessel.



The figures are simple, with a circle for a head, a rectangle for a body, and lines for arms. This elegant simplicity, combined with the deep reds, bright blues, yellows, browns, and more that are spread through the figures, makes these figures vivid and striking. Each figure is different. One has bright orange moose antlers attached to its head, while others represent animals. This vessel is a part of a series of six on view in this exhibition, all varying slightly in height and width, with the same shiny silver surface and vivid glass figures. There is a bright, light blue bird or water bug on one vessel, a humanoid figure with elk antlers on another, a figure with a large torso and small head and short legs, and more.

### **Artist Panel**

**Lily *Wooshkindein Da.Aat* Hope** (Tlingit; born Juneau, AK, 1980; resides Douglas, AK)

**Ursala *Kadusné* Hudson** (Tlingit; born Santa Fe, NM, 1987; resides Pagosa Springs, CO)

Tlingit sisters Lily Hope and Ursala Hudson were trained in Ravenstail and Chilkat weaving by their mother, renowned weaver Clarissa Rizal (1956–2016). To the untrained eye, Ravenstail and Chilkat weavings may appear similar, but the techniques can be distinguished by design: Chilkat weavings typically feature curving formline shapes, while Ravenstail weavings employ geometric designs. Formline design is a highly developed pictorial system using ovoids and U-shaped elements to represent animals, humans, and other beings. Many formline designs belong to clan crests and carry specific rights and responsibilities. It takes extensive understanding of the design principles to create works that do not overstep permissions. The curving lines in formline designs are technically challenging to transform into weaving.

These weaving traditions produce garments for use in ceremonial practices by high-ranking members of Haida, Tsimshian, Tlingit, and other Northwest Coast Indigenous Peoples of Alaska and western Canada. Such textiles take hundreds of hours to make and years of training, research, perseverance, and dedication to master.

Lily Hope's works respond to societal issues with care and emphasize the need to pass knowledge along to future generations of weavers. Ursala Hudson's work explores the delicate balance between custom and innovation by combining Ravenstail and Chilkat techniques with a high fashion sensibility. Hudson describes her work as, "ceremonial regalia for the globalized yet indigenous-spirited warrior woman—her heart with the ancestors and her mind on the future." Their works reflect clan relationships, gendered labor, and the Tlingit values of reciprocity and balance.

## **Label Text**

### **Ursala Hudson**

*We Are the Ocean*

2021

collar: merino, silk, steel cones, and leather

*Woman as a Wave* robe: thigh-spun merino and cedar bark with silk

*Tidal* apron: merino, silk, leather, and steel cones

Tencel garments

National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, Purchased with support from the Ford Foundation, 27/717

## **Visual Description**

This set of clothing is comprised of three separate pieces: a collar, an apron, and a robe in women's size six. The collar is made of white woven wool that rests about halfway up the neck and extends down. There are many different textures woven into the collar that alternate with bands of four different light blue geometric patterns encircling the neck. At the collarbones, the woven texture stops, and a curtain of thick wool coils begins. These coils form a V-shape down the chest, with the sides angling upward to drape across the shoulders. At the back of the collar, the coils cascade over the shoulder blades. Each coil is finished with a small, tin piece at the end. The collar fastens at the back of the neck, where three pieces of long wool coil separately tie together.

The apron sits at the small of the waist, then extends just past the knees. The waistband is made of a deep, dark blue silk with a light blue band through the

center. This design is comprised of light and dark blue interlacing triangles. At the hips, another design of light and dark blue rectangles creates a wider band. Just underneath this band, a large section of textured woven material covers the front of the pelvis to the top of the thighs. The design is a bold, striking, black-and-white line pattern. Each line can be traced as it weaves its way to the center of the pattern, creating a diamond-like shape as all the lines come together. Finally, attached to the bottom of this material, long wool coils fall in a thick curtain, coming to a rounded point at the knees. Each coil has a silver piece of metal at its end.

The robe is comprised of similar patterns and colors as the apron and collar. Shaped like a rectangle, the material is stiff and retains its shape on the mannequin, creating a unique silhouette. It is wrapped around the shoulders and comes together at the front. Two white buttons made of mother of pearl fasten the robe together under the chest. The robe has a wide border of black, then dark blue, before containing a geometric design of black-and-white interlocking diamond shapes. Along the bottom of the robe, a thick curtain of white wool coils begins, extending down, just past the hips.

## **Label Text**

### **Ursala Hudson**

Tlingit

born 1987, Santa Fe, NM

*Tideland Warrior*

2021

headpiece: merino, feathers, and mother of pearl

shawl: merino, cedar bark, silk, mountain goat fur, and mother of pearl

belt: merino, cedar bark, silk, and leather

Tencel garments

*It is such a blessing to continue these artforms traditionally and it's a blessing to get to see how they're changing.*

—Ursala Hudson

Inspired by the enduring strength of the women in her own clan, Hudson engineered this ensemble using a combination of Chilkat and Ravenstail weaving techniques. *Tideland Warrior* incorporates precious mountain goat fur, a material that conveys strength and status. The green color used in the ensemble can sometimes be found in older examples of both Ravenstail and Chilkat weaving, though this green is deliberately closer to that of the Ponderosa pine trees around Hudson's home in Colorado. Traditional techniques and materials blend with Hudson's signature aesthetic to create a high-fashion ensemble that honors the women in Hudson's community.

Courtesy of the artist

### **Visual Description**

This ensemble is comprised of four pieces: a women's size six dress, a wrap, a shawl, and a headband. Each piece contributes to the overall impression of the outfit. Woven from merino wool and cedar bark, the headband is constructed with a one-inch-thick band that encircles the head like a crown. Its pattern is textured and consists of thin, dark green stripes that cross to form a series of diamonds and triangles. This pattern stops abruptly near the left end of the headband and is followed by three curved diagonal blocks of black and cream. Pinned with a mother-of-pearl button to each side of the headband, bunches of long feathers arc backward in an elegant spray just above the wearer's ears. The speckled white feathers are streaked with light brown stripes.

Long, thick, white mountain goat fur fully covers the back of the shawl, which spreads along the shoulders and drapes down the back to a point just above the tailbone. The front of the shawl is woven from merino, cedar bark, and silk. Two matching woven wool sections fall along the collarbones and arch downwards to a point at the center of the chest where the shawl fastens. The two large buttons that fasten the shawl are made of shiny white mother of pearl. The shawl's woven pattern consists of thick, curved lines that alternate between undyed and dark green fiber. Coils of yarn and tufts of mountain goat fur line the bottom edges of the woven sections.

The wrap consists of a woody, olive-green leather strap and a section of dark green and undyed woven merino and cedar bark with silk. The strap slopes down

from above the hips and fastens like a belt, at a point just under the bellybutton. The silver belt buckle is circular with a textured pattern. Fastened to the bottom of the belt, is a section of woven fiber similar in pattern and color to the front sections of the shawl. It extends down from the belt and ends just past the hips while leaving the front open. Suspended from the bottom of the section is a curtain of wool coils that end at the mid-thigh.

Beneath all these elements is a sleek black dress made of Tencel, a material created from wood pulp that feels soft and smooth like rayon or viscose. The dress is floor-length and formfitting with long sleeves. The collar is high and comes to a point at the neckline. The simplicity of the dress creates a base on top of which the shawl and wrap stand out for their texture and color.

## **Label Text**

### **Lily Hope**

*Between Worlds* (child's robe)

2022–23

high-spun merino and cedar bark with beaver fur

This version of the *Between Worlds* robe is the little sister; the big sister resides at Houston's Museum of Natural Science in Texas. The robes feature the Diving Whale pattern, but instead of the customary Chilkat forms being the only design elements, Hope has "collaged" a face peering back at us. The overlaid and interwoven face represents the first and the previous weavers of Chilkat. Those ancestors become present as Chilkat textiles take form, serving as a physical conduit of knowledge and a tangible link between the weaver and those who came before. The spirit present in the robe quietly watches as a new generation of weavers carry their clan, tribal, and family obligations and traditions forward into the future.

The Hope Family Trust

## **Visual Description**

This robe was designed to drape over the shoulders of a child like a shawl. When worn, it nearly grazes the floor with a sheet of long, cream-colored fringe that

hangs from the bottom edge of the garment. When laid flat, the robe has a rectangular shape that dips into a subtle point at the center. The canvas of the robe is made of woven merino wool and cedar bark. Its rectangular shape arcs downwards to a subtle point at the center of the back of the robe. The shape is outlined with bold black wool, followed by a second outline of a deep golden yellow. Curvilinear, flowing formline shapes and patterns in blue-gray, rust red, cream, and black make up the robe's design. When viewed as a whole, the shapes and lines compose an abstracted face in the formline style traditional to many northern Northwest coast Indigenous peoples.

Lining the bottom edge of the robe is a thick curtain of long coiled wool. The coils fall gracefully towards the floor. They are cut in a way that mimics the rectangular outline of the robe with the point in at the center of the back almost touching the floor when worn.

## **Label Text**

### **Lily Hope**

*Woven Chilkat Protector Masks*

2020

thigh-spun merino and cedar bark with tin cones and ermine tails

Anonymous and The Hope Family Trust

## **Visual Description**

Three differently sized face masks, one fit for a child and two larger in size, are spun from wool and have a woven pattern of an abstracted mouth and nose of a creature similar to a bear. The wearer of this mask assumes the mouth of this animal. The animal-like nose is woven from a rust red color that continues into a wide mouth with a row of simple white teeth that almost look like a horizontal zipper. The base of the mask is a light-tan wool color. The sections above the noses on each of the masks are dyed with different colors, one with light blue, another with light yellow, and one with a zig-zag pattern of the same rust red color of the nose with delicate yellow details. Where the mask curves around the wearer's chin, a row of twisted wool coils is attached, giving the impression of a beard. Attached at the end of each coil is a shiny piece of silver metal.

## **Label Text**

### **Lily Hope**

*Clarissa's Fire Dish*

2021

cedar bark and merino

Care for ancestors is a widespread Indigenous practice. One form of ancestor care involves the use of fire or smoke to carry the offerings of the physical world to the spirit realm. In Tlingit, *gankas'ix'i* means "Dishes for the Fire" and represents the Tlingit practice of placing food into a fire to feed and comfort the spirits of the departed.

Lily Hope created this fire dish in honor of her late mother, Clarissa Rizal, with the intent that, eventually, it will be ritually burned. Hope created the sculptural dish form by weaving a cedar bark vessel with sections of Chilkat weaving around the rim of the dish. The construction of the dish conveys Hope's appreciation of her mother's knowledge and skills and her own commitment to continuing Tlingit weaving traditions.

The Hope Family Trust

## **Visual Description**

A rectangular woven dish sits roughly thirteen inches long, seven inches wide, and an inch and a half tall. It is made up of woven cedar bark of a rich mix of light and dark brown colors, with colored wool details on its edges. The dish has a sunken center to make room for items to be placed inside. On either end of the long dish, there are handles lined with bright yellow-colored woven wool. On one of the yellow handles, there is an abstracted eye woven in black and white wool. It has a large, black iris that looks upward. The white ends of the eye are elongated and stretch to either end of the handle. Numerous sharply pointed, loose pieces of cedar stick out at the ends of each handle on either side of the dish, creating a jagged but elegant edge.

## **Label Text**

### **Lily Hope**

*Memorial Beats*

2021

thigh-spun merino and cedar bark with copper, headphones, and audio files

*Memorial Beats* is adorned with the “Sisters” Ravenstail pattern, designed by Haida artist Patty Fiorella, and woven in a Chilkat style. The copper cones pay homage to the *Copper* series of regalia sets for man, woman, and child created by Hope’s mother, Clarissa Rizal.

The headphones play a layered audio file featuring several voices and sounds. Master weaver Jennie Thlunaut speaks in Tlingit and master weaver Clarissa Rizal speaks in English about their lives as weavers. The rhythmic subtle tones of twining a Chilkat robe are mixed with vocals by Irene Lampe (Tlingit), Hope and Hudson’s maternal aunt, who sings a Takdeintaan clan song.

The Hope Family Trust

## **Visual Description**

Plush black fur has replaced the standard ear covers of these black-and-white over-the-ear headphones, making them instead resemble a set of warm earmuffs. A square-shaped patch made of woven merino wool and cedar bark is stitched into the outside of each ear cover. The pattern on this patch depicts a thick black plus sign, which is outlined by alternating lines of white and black. Hanging from each woven ear cover is a sheet of cream-colored wool coils meant to drape over the wearer’s chest like hair. At the end of each coil is a piece of copper metal.

## **Artist Panel**

**Geo Soctomah Neptune** (Passamaquoddy; born Indian Township, ME, 1988; resides Indian Township)



Geo Soctomah Neptune is a two-spirit master basket maker, educator, and activist living in the Dawnland, the homeland of the Wabanaki in the town of Motahkomikuk (Indian Township, Maine). The term “two spirit” describes roles found in many Native cultures that hold a sacred space between masculine and feminine energies. Raised in a family of artists, Neptune was immersed in Passamaquoddy arts and cultural lifeways from an early age. They learned basketry from their grandmother, Molly Neptune Parker (1939–2020), a Passamaquoddy master basket maker and family matriarch. Neptune started weaving baskets at the age of four, and by eight was teaching basketry classes. The black ash and sweetgrass baskets they create display superb precision—whether in the tiny, rainbow curls on a woven corn cob or in the intricately braided sweetgrass stem on a petite strawberry.

As an Indigenous artist, Neptune has commented on the burdens of creating art for a mainstream audience. Unlike non-Native artists, they must bear the burden of “combatting all of these boxes and labels put on us and our art, questioning whether or not it is ‘traditional’ or even ‘Indian’ art.” On the other hand, “basketmaking represents the Passamaquoddy’s ability to survive and adapt, and a refusal to conform to that Western lifestyle.” On the surface, Neptune’s baskets are colorful and bright, but they also tell powerful stories and reveal a personal journey. Through these works, Neptune honors their family, community, and heritage while expressing their view of the world.

### **Label Text**

*Basket with Cover*

2013

black ash splints and sweetgrass with commercial dye

National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, Museum purchase from Molly Neptune Parker, 26/9287

### **Visual Description**

A small, strawberry-shaped basket balances at a precarious angle, held upright by its arching, five-inch-long stem. Made of woven ash splints and sweetgrass, the

basket's strawberry body is just two inches in diameter. The basket's curlicue weave creates a dynamic texture that mimics the pitted skin of a strawberry. While one side of the basket is dyed a rich scarlet, the other is pale green, suggesting that this strawberry has not yet ripened. The rim of the basket's lid creates a beige belt around the strawberry's center, tied together by a red spiraling stripe of black ash. The strawberry's braided sweetgrass stem is attached to the lid by a green splint. A bundle of grass fastened at the base of the stem creates the impression of leaves. The arc of the stem ends in a small, braided loop, perhaps designed to hang or carry the basket.

### **Label Text**

*Strawberry Vine Earrings*

2022

black ash and sweetgrass with commercial dye, antique French seed beads, antique whiteheart seed beads, 24-karat gold-plated seed beads, freshwater pearl, garnet, and wampum beads

Courtesy of the artist

### **Visual Description**

A pair of long, dangling earrings, each about six inches in length, hang from gold earring hooks. A small loop of gold beads branches into three long, beaded strings that make up the dangling section of each earring. A white bead fastens the loop to the rest of the earring. Tiny beads of gold and translucent green with some opaque green, white, and purple make up each string. Attached to each string are small, delicate woven strawberries of dyed red grass topped with green grass of the same woven pattern, which total three little strawberries on each earring. Underneath each strawberry, the string continues with green beads until they form a small loop at the very end. Each of these loops holds a long white pearl bead that is oblong in shape with an uneven, raw but smooth surface. The chains vary in length, so each strawberry and long pearl bead fall at slightly different lengths.

## **Label Text**

*Apikcilu Binds the Sun*

2018

black ash and sweetgrass with commercial dye, acrylic ink, and 24-karat gold-plated beads

Koluskap is a cultural hero who created the Wabanaki. Sometimes, he was accompanied by Apikcilu (Skunk). Jealous of the praise Koluskap received, Apikcilu sought recognition through a devious plan. He traveled to find Kisuhs, the Sun Bird. When Kisuhs stood atop her mountain and opened her wings, she provided daylight for the world. When she closed her wings, nighttime arrived. Apikcilu grabbed Kisuhs, bound her wings, and threw her into a ravine, causing worldwide darkness. Koluskap rescued Kisuhs, but he could only free one wing. Now, when Kisuhs stands on her mountain, the extended wing provides sunlight to half of the world while the bound side is in darkness. She slowly makes a full rotation each day, allowing sunlight to reach every part of the globe.

Neptune's *Apikcilu Binds the Sun* depicts the end of the Wabanaki story. Kisuhs sits atop a pink mountain range woven in relief on the lid. The lid is divided into two hemispheres, one with ash splints dyed in bright yellow and the other dyed in deep purple. Where Kisuhs's open wing extends, that side of the basket is bathed in sunlit yellow and pink colors. The black, dark purple, and blue side of the basket mimics the colors of the night sky.

Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, ME, Museum Purchase, The Philip Conway Beam Endowment Fund

## **Visual Description**

Made of expertly folded and woven black ash and sweetgrass, a delicate, yellow-and-purple bird perches gracefully on the lid of this colorful woven basket. One of the bird's wings extends outward, as though ready to take flight, while the other is bound to the bird's side by a string of gold-plated beads. The basket stands about sixteen inches tall and is roughly nine inches wide, with an oblong shape

that is narrowest at the bottom and widest at the middle. A vibrant color scheme of jewel-toned purples, pinks, blues, and gold, weave together to create an ombre effect. From the top of one side, yellow and gold blend into orange, which blends into pink, which in turn blends into purple and blue. The dazzling effect conjures images of sunset and sunrise. The other side of the basket approximates the inky colors of the night sky, a gradient of deep purples and blues. Though left undyed, the rims of the basket and lid are accentuated by a series of diagonal, sky-blue stitches. The basket's lid follows the color scheme of the basket, with one side bathed in gold and the other in dark purple. A bright pink square sits at the center of the lid, surrounded by woven semi-circles. Each corner of the square is raised, creating four small peaks. The woven bird perches on one of these peaks. Its texture appears almost like origami, with tail feathers that elegantly extend out past the lid of the basket.

### **Label Text**

*Piluwapiyit: The Powerful One*

2018

black ash and sweetgrass with commercially tanned deer skin, brain-tanned deer skin, cochineal-dyed deer skin, 24-karat gold-plated beads, freshwater pearls, garnets, charlotte-cut glass beads

*Piluwapiyit: The Powerful One* is a self-portrait that contains the Wabanaki creation story. The sculpture is a human figure sewn in deerskin, wearing beaded Wabanaki regalia—a white, fringed dress with a wine-colored collar, cuffs, and double-peaked cap. The figure emerges from the circular woven base of an ash tree on grass dotted with tiny flowers. The Wabanaki are made from the ash tree; the cultural hero Koluskap shot an arrow into the tree, and the first humans emerged from its bark.

Neptune sees themself in this story. When they were born, elders told Neptune's mother and grandmother that the child would help the people. Neptune felt different growing up and later came out as two spirit, pointing out, "what people struggle with is that they define [two spirit] as a sexual orientation, a gender identity, a spiritual identity, or a societal role. In reality, those four parts are not

separate but exist into one intersectional identity.” *Piluwapiyit: The Powerful One* depicts Neptune’s arrival into their true self.

Courtesy of the artist

## Visual Description

A woven, sculptural figure decorated with bright colors and many different materials stands about a foot in height. Its right arm extends out to the side and holds up a small bird perched on its hand. The figure wears clothes of cream, red, and pink colors. A dark, reddish-pink headdress with two sharp peaks on top and decorated with two white spirals on each side sits atop its head. The figure itself is made of a light brown, caramel colored soft fabric. The face is left blank, without any details. A dark pink V-shaped cape drapes over the shoulders. Two flowers of three petals each are embroidered on the red cape. White beads are sprinkled throughout. Attached along the edge of the cape, at the shoulders, are long white rope coils that cascade down and fall to about the figure’s wrists. Dark pink bracelets with embroidered white flowers that match the cape wrap around each wrist. Underneath the cape, a white tunic with caramel-colored and pink flower details extends down the narrow body of the figure. It widens below the hips and near the thighs and ends in strips of the fabric, like fringe.

A woven basket makes up the bottom of the figure, creating a skirt form with a wide, round base. This woven material is dyed light reddish orange at the top and blends into a dark pink and then ends in a rich red toward the bottom. The woven green and blue circular base contains orange, pink, and white flowers and green leaves that rise up slightly from it. Finally, the small bird perched on the figure’s hand is made of a pale pink grass woven into the shape of a bird. The bird’s wings are extended, as if it has just landed. It has a long, thin, elegant beak and long tail feathers. The bird’s shape is like that of a large hummingbird.