



PRESS RELEASE

## **Kay WalkingStick Returns to the Heard Museum as Exhibition Artist and Guest Curator**

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**PHOENIX** – [The Heard Museum's](#) first two new exhibitions in 2026 will showcase the artistic talent and curatorial expertise of celebrated Cherokee artist Kay WalkingStick beginning Friday, Jan. 23.

*Kay WalkingStick / Hudson River School*, organized by the New York Historical Society, brings WalkingStick's bold landscapes into dialogue with iconic 19th century paintings from the Hudson River School. The exhibition showcases the ways in which WalkingStick's work both connects to and diverges from the Hudson River School tradition and explores the agency of art in shaping humankind's relationship to the land.

Highlights of the exhibition's more than 40 works include two of WalkingStick's paintings that are directly inspired by Hudson River School artists. Paintings include a landscape that references the Trail of Tears, a journey WalkingStick's Cherokee ancestors were forced to take, and examples of her early painted sculptural abstractions inspired by nature. Additionally, several of her most recent paintings, such as *Niagara* and *Aquidneck, After the Storm*, overlay geographically specific abstract Indigenous patterns onto representational landscapes in order to reassert an Indigenous presence long erased in depictions of North America as a pristine and unpopulated wilderness.

The exhibition celebrates a shared reverence for nature while engaging crucial questions about land dispossession and its reclamation by Indigenous peoples and nations and also explores the relationship between Indigenous art and American art history.

In 2002, the Heard Museum debuted *So Fine! Masterworks of Fine Art* from the Heard Museum, guest curated by WalkingStick. More than two decades later, she returns to the collection to select rarely exhibited large-scale paintings for a fresh look at the collection's enduring strength. Also opening Jan. 23, *Paintings from the Heard Collection* will feature more than 30 works by Native American artists spanning multiple generations, offering a dynamic view of Native painting through the decades.

"Kay Walking Stick has contributed in transformative ways to our collection and archive, and these two exhibitions allow us share with our visitors the dynamic relationship we have with her as an artist, scholar, interpreter, mentor, and friend," said David M. Roche, Heard Museum Dickey Family Director and CEO. "Kay's willingness to work with our curator, Roshii K. Montano, on the installation of *Paintings from the Heard Museum* ensures a rare opportunity for the transference of knowledge from one generation of Indigenous leadership to the next."

*Kay WalkingStick / Hudson River School* has been organized by the New York Historical Society. Major

support is provided by the Lily Auchincloss Foundation. At the Heard Museum, this exhibition is possible thanks to support from Max and Pamela Berry, Marilynn Sadowski and by supporters of the Grand Gallery Exhibition Fund.

For more information, please visit [heard.org](http://heard.org).

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*Image Above: Kay WalkingStick (b. 1935) Niagara, 2022*

Notes to Editors:

*Kay WalkingStick/Hudson River School* will be open from Jan. 23 through May 25. *Paintings from the Heard Collection* will be open from Jan. 23 through Aug. 1.

The Heard Museum and Museum Shop are open daily, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. It is closed on Easter, Independence Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. From June 1 to Aug. 31, the Museum and Shop are open Tuesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Ticket prices for the museum are as follows: adults are \$26; seniors (65+) are \$21; military members are \$21 (with valid ID); university/college students with a valid ID are \$10; children (6-17) are \$10; all children 5 years and under, American Indians (with Tribal ID or CIB) and Heard Museum members are free.

Photography of any kind may not be used for publication without written permission from the museum and/or artists.

Credentialed members of the media may contact a member of the marketing staff for more information concerning photography of public events or museum galleries.

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### About The Heard Museum:

Since its founding in 1929, the Heard Museum has grown to become nationally and internationally recognized for its world-class exhibitions, award-winning publications, unparalleled festivals, and innovative educational programs. Dedicated to connecting Indigenous creativity to the world, the Heard showcases the beauty and vitality of Indigenous creative expression by presenting the voice and vision of American Indian artists. A welcoming destination for children and families, the Heard offers engaging experiences that inspire curiosity and foster appreciation for American Indian art and culture. The Heard Museum is supported by the generosity of Heard Museum members and donors, the Arizona Commission on the Arts, and the City of Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture.

For more information, please visit [heard.org](http://heard.org).



To follow updates on the museum via Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, use [@heardmuseum](https://www.instagram.com/heardmuseum).

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