



March 4, 2009

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Comic Art Exhibition Opens at the National Museum of the American Indian

The Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian will open "Comic Art Indigène" March 6 in the Sealaska Gallery. This intimate exhibition features more than 35 artworks, including paintings, works on paper, jewelry and clay figurines, and shows the evolution of narrative art through early examples of rock art, ledger art and ceramics and reveals how these traditional art forms are adapted to contemporary pieces of expression such as comic strips and panels. The exhibition is open until May 31.

Storytelling has long been an integral part of Native culture, and the exhibition looks at how stories are told through comics and comic-inspired art to express the contemporary Native American experience. Similar to American Indian cultures, comic art is amazingly complex and adaptive. As the first widely accessible mass media, comics were consumed by Indian people as a recognizable form of storytelling; they express cultural stories through pictures.

"We are proud to be able to host an innovative exhibition that reflects the diversity of mediums that Native people use to further explain identity, stereotypes, politics and views," said Kevin Gover (Pawnee/Comanche), director of the museum.

Featured artists include Marcus Amerman (Choctaw), Jason Garcia (Santa Clara Pueblo), Lisa Holt (Cochiti Pueblo), Eva Mirabel (Taos Pueblo), Harlan Reano (Santo Domingo Pueblo), Diego Romero (Cochiti Pueblo), Mateo Romero (Cochiti Pueblo), Rose Bean Simpson (Santa Clara Pueblo), Ryan Huna Smith (Chemehuevi/Navajo), Marty Two Bulls (Oglala Lakota), and Jolene Nenibah Yazzie (Navajo).

In addition to the exhibition, hands-on family activities will be held in the Resource Center on the third level of the museum and will include a light table where visitors can make their own drawings and comics and post them. There will also be an area to read contemporary Native comic books.

"Comic Art Indigène" is presented through the generous support of the museum's National Council.

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