

ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART

125 Washington Avenue, Albany, New York 12210
T: (518) 463-4478 | F: (518) 462-1522
www.albanyinstitute.org

Facebook : www.facebook.com/albanyinstitute
Twitter: @AlbanyInstitute
Instagram: AlbanyInstitute

NEWS

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CONTACT: Doug McCombs
Chief Curator
mccombsd@albanyinstitute.org
(518) 463-4478 ext 428

Aine Leader-Nagy
Public Relations & Marketing Associate
leader.nagya@albanyinstitute.org
(518) 463-4478 ext 408

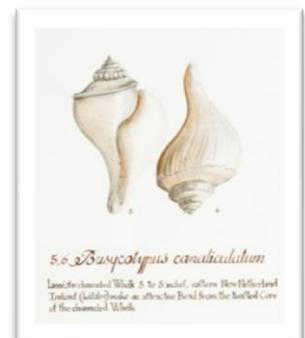
MULTIMEDIA ART INSTALLATION BY INTERNATIONAL ARTIST EXPLORES CHANGING MEANING OF WAMPUM

Wampum World: An Art Installation by Renée Ridgway will run March 4—June 18, 2017



ALBANY, NEW YORK —On March 4, the contemporary art exhibition *Wampum World: An Art Installation* by Renée Ridgway opens at the Albany Institute of History & Art. This multimedia exhibition is an artist’s interpretation of the meaning of wampum from culture to culture and time period to time period. It combines video installations and the artist’s watercolors and collage works with objects that the artist has selected from the museum’s collection of Dutch colonial materials. The exhibition will run from March 4—June 18, 2017. Please note that no physical wampum is displayed in this exhibition.

According to Netherlands artist Renée Ridgway, “Wampum World is about wampum, which is made from shell. Historically, it had manifold functions for Native Americans in various aspects of their societies and is still considered sacred today. In contrast, Dutch settlers, having recognized the value of wampum for Native Americans, used wampum in exchange with European goods in order to procure beaver pelts, as part of the seventeenth century trade triangle ‘beaver, wampum, hoes.’



Busycotypus canaliculatum,
watercolor on paper, 2009

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(518) 463-4478 ext 408 | leader.nagya@albanyinstitute.org

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Metal coinage was not readily available in the New World, therefore wampum served as currency. Wampum World visually elucidates this historical exchange system and present day usages of wampum from various perspectives.”



Video stills from *Native New Yorkers*, 2006

Legacy and the (art) of storytelling

Ridgway conveys her interpretation through a multimedia exhibition that shows her mixed media drawings, prints, and video works, combined with archival documents, maps, and artifacts from the Albany Institute to form an artistic installation. The objects from the Albany Institute’s collection enhance the artist’s contributions and range from portraits of “Indian Kings,” to deeds of land purchases, to period objects such as a Dutch kas. Wampum World facilitates a greater understanding of wampum for the general public, not only as a historical document or medium of exchange, but also in relation to its modern day usages and meanings as a “cultural currency.”

Transmedia platform (<https://wampumworld.net>)

The Wampum World transmedia platform, set to launch on March 4, 2017, augments the exhibition as a tool for interactive storytelling. It contains video clips with interviewees, photographs, and archival documents. Interviews are with people from various fields who share their knowledge about wampum. These interviews enable various personal anecdotes and stories to surface, whether based on oral histories, archival documents, or history books. When the visitor clicks on various tags of videos, texts, and images, a unique “wampum string” is created by beads that reflect each of the viewed pages of user history. Eventually the transmedia platform will showcase documentation from the exhibition and users will be able to contribute to the site.

Sponsors

The artist would like to thank all of the interviewees for their participation, the Albany Institute of History & Art, the archives for their cooperation, and the following institutions for their financial support: Mondriaan Foundation, Dutch Culture: Centre for International Cooperation, and Shared Cultural Heritage. The exhibition and educational program is also supported as part of Dutch Culture USA by the Consulate General of the Netherlands in New York. Special thanks for in kind contribution by Emerald Landscape Supply, Plymouth, Massachusetts.



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About the Artist

Renée Ridgway is an artist, researcher, and educator based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Since completing her studies in fine art at the Rhode Island School of Design (BFA) and Piet Zwart Institute (MA), she has exhibited widely in the Netherlands and internationally at Manifesta8, P.S.1 MoMA Hotel New York, Centraal Museum Utrecht, Museum De Lakenhal, Gouda Museum, and Conflux Festival. Ridgway has made numerous public presentations at conferences and forums and has taught at universities in the Netherlands and abroad. Much of her work explores the Dutch colonial past and its contemporary repercussions through the transformation of “cultural currencies” such as wampum.



Exhibition Events

The public is invited to attend opening weekend activities including an opening reception with a special performance as well as a gallery talk with the artist:

Opening Reception

Saturday, March 4, 2017, 5—7PM

6PM Remarks

6:15PM Special Performance

Ohontsiaké:khen — Social songs by Akwesasne Mohawk youth singers, Logan Herne and Kanenhakaien.

- Free for Albany Institute members | \$10 general public
RSVP (518) 463-4478 ext. 412 or go to www.albanyinstitute.org.

Gallery Talk

Sunday, March 5, 2017, 2PM

Artist Sue Herne, program coordinator at the Akwesasne Cultural Center, will interview artist Renée Ridgway about her new exhibition *Wampum World: An Art Installation* by Renée Ridgway.

- Free with museum admission

Native American Crafts | presentation

Sunday, March 5, 2017, 3PM

Sue Herne will discuss her work as an artist and describe some Akwesasne craft such as woven baskets, jewelry, quilts, sculpture, beadwork, and more. Selections will be available for purchase in the Museum Shop.

- Free with museum admission

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Shell Mosaics | Art for All

March 4, 11, 18, and 25 from 10AM-4:30PM

Bring your family to the museum and spend the day being creative! Activities are inspired by Wampum World, and include diverse media and techniques. Participants will use crushed shells to create their own beautiful designs.

- Free with museum admission

Shell Art | Vacation Art Break

Tuesday, April 18-Thursdays, April 20 from 9AM-Noon

Ages 6-12

Students will be inspired by Wampum World. We'll observe the exhibition's blend of history and artistic interpretation and take a special focus on the images and uses of shells. Participants will explore watercolor techniques to paint and draw their own shells in the studio. Young artists will also complete beaded designs, mosaics, and collages.

- \$65 non-members | \$50 members

Tuition includes materials and museum admission. Registration is required and space is limited. Register online at albanyinstitute.org.

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The Albany Institute of History & Art is located at 125 Washington Avenue in Albany, New York. Free parking is available in the museum's lot at the corner of Elk and Dove Streets.

The exhibition galleries, Museum Shop, and the new Crisan Café at the Albany Institute are open Wednesday 10am-5pm, Thursday 10am-8pm, Friday 10am-5pm, Saturday 10am-5pm, and Sunday noon-5pm. In addition, the café and museum shop are open Tuesdays from 10am-5pm. The Research Library is open on Thursdays from 1pm-4:30pm and by appointment.

Current admission rates are \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors and students with ID, \$6 for children aged 6-12, and free for children under 6. Albany Institute members are admitted for free. There is no charge to visit the café or museum shop. The museum offers free admission to the galleries on Thursdays from 5pm-8pm and on the First Fridays of the month from 5pm-8pm. To learn about discounts and free admission days, please refer to the Visit section of www.albanyinstitute.org.

For more information, visit www.albanyinstitute.org or call (518) 463-4478.

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Founded in 1791, the Albany Institute of History & Art is New York's oldest museum. Its collections document the Hudson Valley as a crossroads of culture, influencing the art and history of the region, the state, and the nation. With more than 35,000 objects and one million documents in the library, it is an important resource for the region, giving our community a sense of the part the Hudson Valley played in the American story, and our own place in history. Permanent and temporary exhibitions are open year-round and create a sense of place, allowing visitors to meet the people who helped shape this region. Among the museum's best-known and most-loved collections are the 19th century Hudson River School landscape paintings by artists like Thomas Cole and Frederic Church, the 19th century sculpture collections, and, of course, the famous Albany Mummies that came to the museum in 1909 and have been on view ever since. For more information, please visit www.albanyinstitute.org and be sure to follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/albanyinstitute) and Twitter (@AlbanyInstitute).