



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Shelburne Museum Announces Native American Artist Program

New Initiative Supports Contemporary Indigenous Artists



SHELBURNE, Vt. (Sept. 29, 2026)—Shelburne Museum has announced the creation of a new program devoted to supporting Native American artists and connecting contemporary artwork with the museum’s historical collections.

The program coincides with the opening of the new [Perry Center for Native American Art](#) in summer 2027 and is funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. through its Religion and Cultural Institutions Initiative.

“Shelburne Museum is committed to ensuring our historical collection is placed in context with contemporary Indigenous artists and art. Supporting Indigenous artists as they create original work, engage with our historical collections, and share their processes with their communities and the museum’s broad audience is an important aspect of what the Perry Center for Native American Art brings forward,” said Thomas Denenberg, the John Wilmerding Director and CEO of Shelburne Museum.

The Perry Center for Native American Art will be devoted to the exhibition and care of the museum’s collection of more than 700 Indigenous items from 389 Tribal Nations across the continent. The Perry Center is designed to serve as a welcoming space for Tribal members and scholars to study and engage with the collection and to reimagine the museum experience for all visitors.

The program will offer \$18,500 each to three selected artists to pursue a creative project that responds to the theme of “Spirituality Across Time.” Applications are available on the museum’s website: <https://shelburnemuseum.org/about/employment/> and will be accepted through January 8, 2027.

About Shelburne Museum

Founded in 1947 by trailblazing folk art collector Electra Havemeyer Webb (1888–1960), Shelburne Museum in Shelburne, Vermont, is the largest art and history museum in northern New England and



Vermont's foremost public resource for visual art and material culture. The Museum's 45-acre campus is comprised of 40 buildings including the Pizzagalli Center for Art and Education and Webb Gallery featuring important American paintings by Andrew Wyeth, Winslow Homer, Anna Mary Robertson "Grandma" Moses, John Singleton Copley and many more. The new Perry Center for Native American Art, designed in close partnership with Indigenous voices and devoted to the stewardship and exhibition of the Native American art in the museum's care, is scheduled to open in 2027. For more information, please visit shelburnemuseum.org.

About the Lilly Endowment:

Lilly Endowment Inc. is a private foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly Sr. and his sons Eli and J.K. Jr. through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. While those gifts remain the financial bedrock of the Endowment, it is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. In keeping with the founders' wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion and maintains a special commitment to its hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana. A principal aim of the Endowment's religion grantmaking is to deepen and enrich the lives of Christians in the United States, primarily by seeking out and supporting efforts that enhance the vitality of congregations and strengthen the pastoral and lay leadership of Christian communities. The Endowment also seeks to improve public understanding of about religion and lift up in fair, accurate and balanced ways the roles that people of all faiths and various religious communities play in the United State and around the globe traditions in the United States and across the globe.

About the Perry Center for Native American Art

The Perry Center for Native American Art, scheduled to open in 2027, will be devoted to the exhibition and care of the Museum's collection of more than 700 Indigenous items from 389 Tribal Nations. In planning for the Perry Center, Shelburne Museum was intentional in collaborating with Tribal Nations and culture bearers whose works are represented in the collection. The result is a building and integrated landscape design that honors the traditional stewards of the site and is referential to the many cultures whose items will be housed in the Center.

The Perry Center for Native American Art a highly sustainable structure designed to serve as a welcoming space for Tribal members and scholars to study and engage with the collection and that will reimagine the museum experience for all visitors.

For more information about the Perry Center for Native American Art, please visit shelburnemuseum.org/about/perry-center-for-native-american-art/.

About the Collection

The Museum collection is comprised of more than 700 Indigenous items from 389 Tribal Nations across the continent. Some of the items were on display until the 1990s when evolving professional standards prompted deinstallation for reinterpretation with appropriate cultural sensitivity. The collection includes



baskets, clothing, and textiles primarily created by Plains and Northwest Coast Tribal Nations during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Recently, Shelburne Museum became stewards of the Perry Collection through the generosity of Teresa “Teri” Perry, in memory of her late husband Anthony “Tony” Perry, a restaurateur and businessman with close ties to Vermont and Colorado. The Perry Collection is remarkable for its depth, breadth, and quality. Including pottery, garments, footwear, dolls, and other items predominantly from Plains, Prairie, and Southwest peoples. The Perry Collection amplifies and diversifies the Native American materials already stewarded by the Museum. Together, the collections represent more than 389 Tribal Nations, presenting an opportunity to collaborate with these and other Tribal Nations in the study of both historical and contemporary Indigenous material culture and art in a manner intentionally accessible to students, scholars, and visitors.

IMAGE: Maker formerly known (Haak'u [Acoma Pueblo]), *Water Jar*, ca. 1880–90. Clay and pigment, 16 x 17 1/2 in. Collection of Shelburne Museum, Anthony and Teresa Perry Collection of Native American Art. 2022-16.4. Photography by Pitkin Studio, Rockford, IL, USA.

For high res images please click [here](#).

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