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The Independent: Cannupa Hanska Luger



Life is Breathtaking: Without Sun Silence, 2017

For the 2020 edition of The Independent, New York, Garth Greenan Gallery presents an exhibition of mixed-media ceramic sculptures and installations by Cannupa Hanska Luger, all created between 2016 and 2019.

Wasted (Series Version 2.0) (2017), a meticulously crafted series of 180 ceramic objects, is an amalgam of cigarette butts, cans, and bottles decorated with Native American imagery that is as much a product of Hollywood and commercial branding as it is of Native culture itself. The Indigenous population of the United States, composed of over 500 Nations with distinct cultures and languages, is reduced to a set of clichés: tipis, feathers, headdresses, and arrowheads. Indigenous imagery, from the generic, to the caricatured, to the sacred, is plastered indifferently on disposable consumer products, often in ‘honor’ of Indigenous peoples. In this work, Luger explores the complex interplay between appropriation, stereotypes, and identity.

Despite the association of Indigenous culture and knowledge with the distant past, Luger reframes many of our most pressing contemporary concerns within its logic. In recent works, Luger highlights the ways in which Indigenous knowledge, contrary to being out of step with the modern world, is instead essential to adapting to it. *In At What Cost: Extraction* (2016), the artist renders our imbalanced consumption and extractive relationship to the earth as a monster. Steel horns protrude from a haunting black-glazed buffalo skull. The beast's mane is rendered as long, ropelike strands of jet-black fabric—evoking animal fur after an oil spill. The contemporary relevance of alternative ways of relating to land and nature is as undeniable as the increasingly urgent global environmental crisis.

Born in 1979 on the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota, Cannupa Hanska Luger is an enrolled member of the Three Affiliated Tribes of the Fort Berthold Reservation and is of Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara, Lakota, Austrian, and Norwegian descent. In 2011, he received a BFA in Studio Ceramics from the Institute of American Indian Arts.

Luger has received numerous awards such as the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts Multicultural Fellowship Award, 2015; the Native Arts & Cultures Foundation National Artist Fellowship Award, 2016; the Museum of Arts and Design Burke Prize, 2018; and the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors Grant, 2019. He has been the subject of more than 21 solo exhibitions and has participated in over 110 group exhibitions at venues such as Art Mûr (2014, Montreal), Princeton University Art Museum (2018), Washington Project for the Arts (2017), Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art (2018, 2019, Bentonville), Gardiner Museum (2019, Toronto), Orenda Gallery (2017, Paris), the Autry Museum (2017, Los Angeles), and the Museum of Arts and Design (2018, 2019, New York), among others.

His works are featured in the collections of many museums, including: the North America Native Museum (Zürich, Switzerland); the Denver Art Museum; the Museum of Contemporary Native Arts (Santa Fe); the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art (Norman, OK); the Luciano Benetton Collection: Imago Mundi (Treviso, Italy); the Yale University Art Gallery (New Haven); and the Conley Gallery, California State University (Fresno).

Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to represent Cannupa Hanska Luger.

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