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See 'Infinite Indigenous Queer Love' Through The Eyes Of Jeffrey Gibson



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Arts

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Installation view of Jeffrey Gibson: INFINITE INDIGENOUS QUEER LOVE at deCordova Sculpture Park and ... [+]
COURTESY OF JEFFREY GIBSON. PHOTO: JULIA FEATHERINGILL.

“I've been stuck in the same conversation for 20 years.”

For Jeffrey Gibson, a queer Mississippi Choctaw-Cherokee artist, “That conversation is related to the histories of anthropology and ethnography and museology, there's no lighter space for Native people to talk in public,” he told Forbes.com.

Gibson creates that “lighter space” through a groundbreaking exhibition of new and existing work at deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum outside Boston, “[Jeffrey Gibson: INFINITE INDIGENOUS QUEER LOVE.](#)”

“I know the joy of being with my family, memories of being with my grandmothers and my aunts and uncles, laughter and food and humor, a place to put down these overbearing traumatic histories and literally just breathe and laugh,” Gibson said of his inspiration for marking a new chapter in his career after two decades establishing himself as a leading contemporary artist. “I would like for that to start existing in the way that people perceive Native people, that we're not always spotlighted with these hugely traumatic, problematic histories that really don't offer any resolve.”

From genocide to stolen land, broken treaties, [boarding schools](#), racism, health care, erasure—the Indigenous people of America have no shortage of “hugely traumatic, problematic histories.” No [Native artist](#) who has mined this material attempting to come to grips with it all could be faulted for doing so. Nor can those who will continue to do so—rightfully—forevermore.

Those aspects, however, are [only part of the Native American story](#). Spirituality, celebration, [survivance](#), family, contemporaneity, creativity, resilience, joy. Those aspects deserve prominent attention as well.

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With “INFINITE INDIGENOUS QUEER LOVE,” Gibson hopes to establish, “a different conversation regarding what indigeneity could look like.”

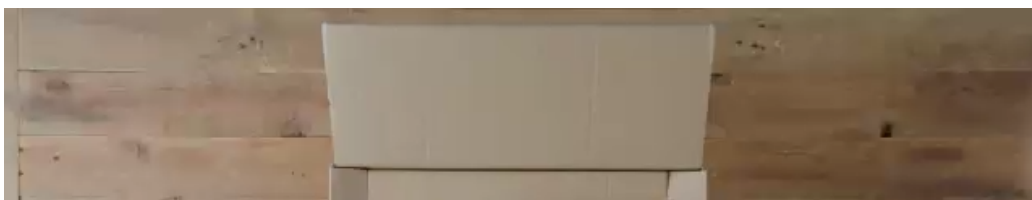
Through the eyes of Gibson, it looks colorful. Airy. Light.

It does so most prominently through three hanging fringe sculptures, stunning new works created specifically for the show.



Installation view of Jeffrey Gibson: INFINITE INDIGENOUS QUEER LOVE at deCordova Sculpture Park and ... [+]
COURTESY OF JEFFREY GIBSON. PHOTO: JULIA FEATHERINGILL.

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“For the fringe cubes, I remember thinking it's like taking the person who has always been in a supporting role and then making them the star,” Gibson said. “How do we take something like fringe that I've seen in this context in one particular way—usually on shawls and moving through the air, which is beautiful—but I'm like, what's the difference?”

The fringe, typically a feature of Indigenous dance regalia, continues Gibson's habit of combining elements from traditional Native American art with contemporary artistic references.

“These 12-foot-tall cubes of fringe are about this soft geometry and then the color; I feel like I've spent the last 20 years of my career trying to build the foundation for something like these cubes to make sense,” Gibson said.

“Within my own practice and career (I have) carved out a space where I'm going to make these huge fringe cubes, and then I'm going to title them, and I'm going to give them a new definition of what the words—which are all loaded—‘Indigenous,’ ‘infinite,’ ‘queer,’ ‘love,’ what does that look like? This is my interpretation of that collectively between the works on paper, the sculpture outside, the videos and the fringe cubes.”

The exhibition debuts a series of collages in addition to the hanging fringe sculptures and recent videos created with collaborators, musicians and performers.

“INFINITE INDIGENOUS QUEER LOVE” inside the museum complements Gibson’s large-scale outdoor installation *Because Once You Enter My House, It Becomes Our House*, on the front lawn of deCordova’s Sculpture Park. *Because Once You Enter My House, It Becomes Our House* serves as an homage to pre-Columbian architecture, a corrective to nostalgic views of Indigeneity, and celebration of queer camp aesthetics.

The tri-layer ziggurat structure draws inspiration from the earthen architecture of the [ancient Mississippian city of Cahokia](#) which flourished in the seventh through fourteenth centuries, prior to European contact.

Indigeneity



Installation view of Jeffrey Gibson: INFINITE INDIGENOUS QUEER LOVE at deCordova Sculpture Park and ... [+] COURTESY OF JEFFREY GIBSON. PHOTO: JULIA FEATHERINGILL.

Jeffrey Gibson turns 50-years-old in 2022. How has he seen the fortunes of Native Americans evolve in that time?

“I'm excited to see more Native artists exhibiting, [showing up in collections](#) (and) being written about than I've ever seen in my lifetime,” he said. “That is very exciting for me, but I will say, in our home communities—so for me, Oklahoma and Mississippi—there's so much there that has not changed: dependency on the government, social issues, psychological health and physical mental health issues.”

In addition to greater representation for artists, Gibson also applauds the current activism among Indigenous communities.

“There's a lot of topics right now whether it's the land acknowledgments or [land back](#) or [the environmental issues](#), I'm happy to see Native people from all different tribes collectively speaking up, and also wanting to break up this general term of ‘Indigenous’ or ‘Native American’ and begin to focus on the specifics of who we are,” he said.

With 574 federally recognized tribes across America, along with many other tribes who aren't, hundreds of distinct languages, cultures, origin stories and historic geographies across the continent, “Native Americans” are no more monolithic than “Latin Americans,” who likewise represent a variety of native nations, cultures and languages.

With much of his artwork addressing identity, both Indigenous and queer, Gibson also keeps a keen eye on this evolving intersection.

“Historically, like many tribes, there was an acceptance (of LGBTQ members), but with Cherokee and Choctaw, two early [acculturated](#) tribes, the modern Cherokee and Choctaw—like many other tribes that have left the matriarchal systems and moved into a patriarchal kind of (societal and political structure) emulating white culture perspectives—it's the same thing where there's a homophobia there,” Gibson lamented. “In my experience with the Choctaw Nation in Mississippi, I was working with a self-identified trans Choctaw a woman on the reservation, we shot a video together, people talked—it's a very small community—and she lost her employment and hasn't

regained it. In Oklahoma ([home of the Cherokee Nation](#)), as much as I love my family, to me it's still a very conservative southern state. I personally don't feel comfortable there.”

“INFINITE INDIGENOUS QUEER LOVE” can be seen through March 12, 2022.

Around Boston



Hans Haacke, U.S. Isolation Box, Grenada, 1983, 1984. Wood planks, hinges, padlock, spray painted ...
[+] © HANS HAACKE AND ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY. THIS WORK WAS EXHIBITED IN THE BENEFIT EXHIBITION FOR ARTISTS CALL AT CUNY GRADUATE CENTER MALL IN NEW YORK.

An historic presentation of artists as activists opens January 20 at the [Tufts University Art Galleries](#). “[Art for the Future: Artists Call and Central American Solidarities](#)” will be the most in-depth exhibition to explore the 1980s activist campaign Artists Call Against US Intervention in Central America. The campaign, which sought to educate North Americans and protest U.S. military interventions, included a vast array of political and artistic actions across nearly 30 cities.

The forthcoming exhibition provides an expansive examination of the campaign through the work of more than 100 artists and archival materials.

The conscious-raising effort resulted in exhibitions, performances, poetry readings, film screenings, concerts, and other cultural and educational events, with more than 1,000 artists participating across the U.S. and Canada. “Art for the Future” offers a robust history of the campaign and captures its enduring influence on art and activism.

Among the highlights of the exhibition on view through April 24 is the reconstruction of Hans Haacke’s original installation *U.S. Isolation Box, Grenada, 1983*. The artwork recreates the boxlike isolation chambers that American troops used to detain prisoners at the Point Salines airport following the U.S. invasion of Grenada. Its presentation in “Art for the Future” marks its first exhibition since being destroyed in 1986.

North of Boston in Salem, the Peabody Essex Museum offers “[The Great Animal Orchestra](#),” an immersive audio-visual experience celebrating the planet’s rich biodiversity.

Entretien avec Matthew Clark & Bernie Krause - Le Grand Orchest...



Over the course of nearly fifty years, Bernie Krause collected more than 5,000 hours of recordings of natural environments from locations around

the world. Trained as a musician, Krause found animal vocalizations in the natural world to be akin to musical harmony and orchestral organization. Krause's soundscapes reveal that within any ecosystem, each species has its own acoustic niche and human activities are increasingly silencing these great animal orchestras.

Krause worked with United Visual Artists to visualize these recordings as animated spectrograms (visual representations of sound), creating a "virtual zoo" which makes a plea for preserving the wondrous diversity of the animal world.

"The Great Animal Orchestra" will remain on view through May 22 and has been [previously reviewed by Forbes.com](#).

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