

## Acclaimed Artist Cannupa Hanska Luger to Create Major Site-Specific Installation at University of Michigan Museum of Art

*Commissioned Installation is Part of a Broader Project by the Museum, the nonprofit Monument Lab, and University's Arts Initiative to Explore Cultural and Social Impacts of Historic Structures on Campus*

**Ann Arbor, MI—JANUARY 12, 2023**—The University of Michigan Museum of Art (UMMA), in partnership with the nonprofit public art and history studio Monument Lab, today announced that multidisciplinary artist **Cannupa Hanska Luger** will create a site-specific installation on the exterior of the museum's Alumni Memorial Hall. The commission is part of an exhibition titled *You're Welcome* at UMMA featuring Luger's work, slated to open in fall 2023. Luger is an enrolled member of the Three Affiliated Tribes of Fort Berthold (Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara and Lakota), and his practice, driven by multifaceted installations and social collaborations, communicates stories of 21<sup>st</sup> century Indigeneity and offers critical cultural analysis through deep engagements with materials, environments, and communities. The collaboration with Luger is part of a broader project between UMMA, Monument Lab, and the Arts Initiative that examines how historic structures on the University of Michigan's campus uphold social and cultural systems and narratives.

Luger's project includes two primary elements, scheduled to open in September 2023:

- An exterior commission that directly interrogates the Museum's history and examines narratives around sovereignty, institutions, and colonialism
- and a site-specific gallery presentation of works by Luger paired with objects selected by the artist from the Museum's collection

Luger's exterior commission is a response to the central curatorial question, "How do we remember on this campus?". It will focus on Alumni Memorial Hall, a neoclassical building that opened in 1910 to commemorate U-M students and staff who served in the Mexican American, Civil, and Spanish-American Wars and is today one of UMMA's two adjoined buildings. In particular, Luger will explore key themes of commemoration, militarism, and land sovereignty. The commission will explore the relationship between the building, the land it stands on, the people it was built to commemorate, and a long history of the hidden colonial narratives deeply embedded in public structures.

"What happens when we start re-seeing things that have been obscured by the constant presence of itself? That's the psychological element of remembering I'm interested in exploring. Seeing things anew that have always been there," Luger said. "A person's cultural context allows them to see things others don't see, and what I'd like to accomplish here is to explore how myth generation and storytelling links cultures to cultures and perspectives to perspectives. I'm drawing what I see. Do you see it too?"

As another part of the project, Dr. Paul Farber, Director and Co-founder of Monument Lab and Curator in Residence for the University of Michigan Arts Initiative, and Ozi Uduma, UMMA's Assistant Curator of Global Contemporary Art, will conduct research and engage in dialogues about the ways in which the design and establishment of buildings, communal spaces, and monuments shape contemporary understandings of history, influence socio-political happenings today, and continue to reverberate across communities. This will include a public space within the museum activated by Farber and Monument Lab to provide programming and workshops to explore the role of monuments in shaping public narratives.

"We are inspired and honored to work with Cannupa Hanska Luger on this exploratory public art and history project," says Farber. "He is an artist whose work opens crucial questions about cultural memory and living history."

The collaboration with Luger and the broader project are part of UMMA's institutional work to examine the responsibilities of public institutions as cultural history makers and stewards. As part of its strategic vision, UMMA is committed to challenging and excavating its own history and historical approach to best practices, in order to create a museum that is reflective of and honest in its engagements with its community. Prior projects include [Wish You Were Here: African Art and Restitution](#), a research initiative and exhibition that made public the museum's investigations into the histories of 11 objects in its African collection, and [Vote 2022: Midterms Matter](#), which centered on the midterm elections and made the museum a site of active dialogue about our political divides.

"As institutional leadership, we are interested in probing how museums both produce and disseminate shared cultural history—both as it was once told and also as it is being re-examined and retold today," said Christina Olsen, UMMA's Director. "Our collaboration with Cannupa Hanska Luger allows us to reshape the narrative of a building central to our museum and to our campus to reflect a broader, more nuanced, and more accurate history that embraces different perspectives and cultural experiences. We look forward to continuing to partner with Cannupa in this essential effort to expand our knowledge of the creation and impact of monuments and institutional histories."

### **About Cannupa Hanska Luger**

Cannupa Hanska Luger is a multidisciplinary artist and an enrolled member of the Three Affiliated Tribes of Fort Berthold (Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara and Lakota). Through monumental installations and social collaborations that reflect a deep engagement and respect for materials, the environment, and community, Luger activates speculative fiction and communicates stories about 21<sup>st</sup> century Indigeneity.

Luger is a [2022 Guggenheim fellow](#), recipient of the [2021 United States Artists Fellowship Award](#) for Craft, and was named a [Grist 50 Fixer](#) for 2021, a list that includes emerging leaders in climate, sustainability, and equity from across the nation. He is the recipient of numerous other awards, including the [Creative Capital Fellowship](#) (2020), the Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship (2020),

the A Blade Of Grass Artist Fellowship for Socially Engaged Art (2020), the inaugural Center For Crafts Craft Research Fund Artist Fellowship (2020), Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors Grants (2019), Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Honoree, and the Museum of Arts and Design's 2018 inaugural Burke Prize. Luger has exhibited internationally, including at such venues as the Denver Art Museum, Gardiner Museum, Kunsthal KAdE, Washington Project for the Arts, Art Mûr, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and the National Center for Civil and Human Rights, among others. His work is held in numerous public collections, and he often lectures around the globe. Luger holds a BFA in studio arts from the Institute of American Indian Arts.

### **About UMMA**

The U-M Museum of Art puts art and ideas at the center of campus and public life. Welcoming more than 250,000 visitors each year, UMMA creates experiences that enrich our understanding of one another, foster joy, and build a more just future. Through exhibitions, programs, research, and community partnerships UMMA is redefining what a campus museum can be.

### **About Monument Lab**

Monument Lab is a nonprofit public art and history studio headquartered in Philadelphia. Monument Lab works with artists, students, educators, activists, municipal agencies, and cultural institutions on participatory approaches to public engagement and collective memory. Founded by Paul Farber and Ken Lum in 2012, Monument Lab cultivates and facilitates critical conversations around the past, present, and future of monuments. As a studio and curatorial team, Monument Lab collaborates to make generational change in the ways art and history live in public. For more information, visit [monumentlab.com](http://monumentlab.com) and follow on [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#).

### **About the Arts Initiative**

The University of Michigan Arts Initiative seeks to illuminate and expand human connections, inspire collaborative creativity, and build a more just and equitable world through the arts. The University of Michigan Arts Initiative will make the arts central to the University's identity and mission.

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