

THE JOSLYN

NATIVE

AMERICAN ART

Earth As Playground

Native American Art

October/November 2025

» MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS

NOVEMBER 15-MARCH 8, 2026 » OMAHA, NE

Earth As Playground

Using many mediums and an epic concept, Cannupa Hanska Luger brings a new exhibition to the Joslyn.

Using water as a foundational element to branching, serpentine storylines, Cannupa Hanska Luger is bringing the largest and most expansive museum project of his career to the Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha, Nebraska. The exhibition will include numerous mediums and disciplines, and feature works both big and small.



Cannupa Hanska Luger (Mandan/Hidatsa/Arikara/Lakota, b. 1979), *We Survive You—Midéegaadi*, editorial photograph featuring seven mixed media bison regalia made of repurposed materials, © Cannupa Hanska Luger. Courtesy of the artist and Garth Greenan Gallery, New York. Photo by: Brandon Soder, 2023

Dripping Earth: Cannupa Hanska Luger, which opens November 15, is an ambitious exhibition for the artist and the museum. It will ask visitors to expand their understandings of the world, and of Native American history. Even a short description from the museum has some heady stuff in it: “Luger envisions a future rooted in Indigenous knowledge, inspired by his ancestral connections to the Northern Plains and referencing the arts and technologies of past generations.”



Cannupa Hanska Luger with Midéegaadi, mixed media bison regalia with hands, made of repurposed materials. Photograph by Shayla Blatchford (Diné), 2025.

For Luger, a great starting point is water, particularly the water of the Missouri River, which submerged Native American lands because of, as the museum notes, “colonial damming projects, revealing how such interventions continue to shape the land and its people.” The Missouri River plays a large role in the work of Karl Bodmer, who traveled up the waterway in the 1830s with German explorer Prince Maximilian zu Wied-Neuwied, or Prince Max. During the trip, Bodmer painted numerous images of Native American people.



Luger in his studio with ceramic head for A Nation, 2025, in progress for Dripping Earth: Cannupa Hanska Luger. Photograph by Shayla Blatchford (Diné), 2025.



Luger in his studio with metal and ceramic components for A Nation, 2025, in progress for Dripping Earth: Cannupa Hanska Luger. Photograph by Shayla Blatchford (Diné), 2025.

“It made me start to think about the navigation of the river, a river that ran through my community. What has happened over the last 200 years includes dams, floods, smallpox and so much more,” Luger says. “So the river is a component, but so is Bodmer, whose early depictions of regalia and forms really shaped a lot for me. I like Bodmer’s work because he was more unbiased than some of the other anthropologists around that time. He was just trying to paint the people, which is funny because he was a landscape painter who was forced to do portraits for the voyage.”



Ceramic hands for A Nation, 2025, in progress for Dripping Earth: Cannupa Hanska Luger. Photograph by Shayla Blatchford (Diné), 2025

He adds that Bodmer “witnessed humanity and humility on the journey” that made his work better. Using Bodmer and water, Luger has developed Dripping Earth to comment on the past and present, but also the future through his speculative fiction series Future Ancestral Technologies. The exhibition will include many mediums, including ceramic vessels, paddles recently made in Switzerland, full-body regalia pieces, sculptures and much more. “I tend to work with a lot of different materials, mostly because I don’t struggle with creative blocks in that way,” he says. “Jumping from material to material allows me to really explore.”



Luger with clay shavings in his studio. Photograph by Shayla Blatchford (Diné), 2025.



Work in progress for Dripping Earth: Cannupa Hanska Luger. Photograph by Shayla Blatchford (Diné), 2025.

The title of the exhibition, *Dripping Earth*, refers to Luger's Hidatsa clan, the Awa xee, or Dripping Dirt. The clan oversaw the repair of earth lodge dwellings. "A trained ceramicist, Luger cites his application of clay as a natural extension of his lodge-building forebears' labor and care for their communities," according to the museum. "New work for the exhibition incorporates customary clay practices into a range of forms, from vessels to monumental sculpture. In using his hands to shape and transform wet earth, Luger connects with ancestors past, present and future."



Results of Bison Bead Project workshop which produced beads used in works for *Dripping Earth*: Cannupa Hanska Luger, held at the Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Nebraska, February 6, 2025. Photograph by Z Long.

The artist also draws attention to the "dripping" portion of the title, which he sees as a symbol for change. "Thinking about the river and people and the earth, I think of something in transition and in flux. The dripping is the transition," he says.

Adding another element to the exhibition is the Missouri River itself, which is about a mile from the museum. Its life-giving waters are never far away. —

November 15-March 8, 2026

Dripping Earth: Cannupa Hanska Luger

Joslyn Art Museum 2200 Dodge Street, Omaha, NE 68102, (402) 342-3300, www.joslyn.org