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MEDIA CONTACTS: Shadia Lemus, 720-913-0096
slemus@denverartmuseum.org
Elle Welch, 720-913-0079
ewelch@denverartmuseum.org

Denver Art Museum debuts *Super Indian: Fritz Scholder, 1967–1980*, in 2015
Vivid and colorful exhibition explores the iconic 20th century artist’s signature blend of figurative and pop art influences

DENVER – Dec. 22, 2014 – The Denver Art Museum (DAM) announced today that in October 2015 it will present a groundbreaking exhibition, *Super Indian: Fritz Scholder, 1967–1980*. Featuring more than 40 rarely seen, monumental paintings and lithographs by the renowned 20th century artist Fritz Scholder (1937–2005), this exhibition is the first to explore how Scholder blended figurative and pop art influences to create colorful, compelling and revolutionary images. Influenced by abstract expressionists including Willem de Kooning and Franz Kline, as well as painters such as Francis Bacon, Francisco de Goya and Paul Gauguin, Fritz Scholder’s work was purely his own. His art reveals the raw reality of being an American Indian through the eyes—and palette—of an artist who once vowed never to paint Indians.

“Scholder claimed he was not an American Indian artist, but he was. He claimed his art was not political, but it certainly polarized the art world. For every position he took, he also explored the opposite perspective,” said John Lukavic, associate curator of Native Arts at the DAM and curator of *Super Indian*. “But this artist was first and foremost a colorist who used figurative art to test the limits of what paint can express.”

Super Indian will be on view in the level 3 modern and contemporary art galleries in the Hamilton Building Oct. 4, 2015, through Jan. 17, 2016. *Super Indian* is organized by the DAM. Following its Denver debut, the exhibition will travel to the Phoenix Art Museum (Feb. 26, 2016–June 5, 2016) and the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art in Overland Park, Kansas (June 23, 2016–Sept. 18, 2016).

Drawing its title from the iconic painting *Super Indian No. 2*, the exhibition begins with Scholder’s controversial *Indian* series, started in 1967, and ends with his 1980 *Indian Land* paintings, which marked a seismic shift in palette and subject matter. Visitors to *Super Indian* will be taken on a thematic exploration following the development of Scholder’s style and themes: Early Indian series, pop art, psychological portraiture, stereotypes and representation and dark, mysterious subjects. The central elements that are most evident in his work are his focus on the figure, vibrant color and energetic brushwork. A selection of lithographs will show how the Luiseño-enrolled artist used the medium as a way to push the boundaries even further in terms of subject and color. The exhibition also includes several highlights, including two portraits of Fritz Scholder by Andy Warhol.



Fritz Scholder, *Super Indian No. 2*, 1971. Oil on canvas. Promised gift of Vicki and Kent Logan to the Denver Art Museum. ©Estate of Fritz Scholder.



Fritz Scholder, *American Portrait with One Eye*, 1975. Acrylic on canvas. Collection of Kent and Vicki Logan. ©Estate of Fritz Scholder.

“*Super Indian* is one piece of the Denver Art Museum’s overall initiative to expand the visibility of contemporary art by American Indian artists through acquisitions, exhibitions, in-gallery residencies, lectures and programming,” said Christoph Heinrich, the Frederick and Jan Mayer Director of the Denver Art Museum. “We’re excited to present this thought-provoking group of masterworks.”

The exhibition will highlight a total of 13 of the 44 works by the artist from the museum collection, as well as nine Scholder paintings that are promised as gifts to the DAM from collectors and museum supporters, Vicki and Kent Logan. This significant gift includes some of the artist’s most renowned works, including the iconic painting *Super Indian No. 2* and *Dog and Dead Warrior*.

About Fritz Scholder (1937–2005)

Fritz Scholder (1937–2005) was born in Breckenridge, MN, his paternal grandmother a member of the Luiseño tribe of Mission Indians. Although Scholder did not consider himself an Indian, he became known as a leader of the New American Indian Art movement. His work blended figurative and pop art influences to create compelling and revolutionary images that challenge viewers to look beyond stereotypes. Scholder cultivated his interest in drawing, and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree at Sacramento State University. During his undergraduate study, instructor and artist Wayne Thiebaud introduced him to the pop art movement and helped arrange his first solo exhibition. Eventually, Scholder earned his Master’s Degree in Fine Art from the University of Arizona and taught painting and art history at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Throughout his career, Scholder defied the label “Native American artist.” This paradox and others are evident in his renowned *Indian* series, which spanned the years 1967–1980. His work has been featured globally, including exhibitions in China, France, Germany, Japan, Russia and the United States. Several books have been published on his contributions, and Scholder has received many awards and honors for his work, including the Golden Plate Award from the American Academy of Achievement, the Arizona Governor’s Award and several honorary degrees.

Exhibition Catalog

An exhibition catalog, published by the DAM in association with DelMonico Books-Prestel, will be available in The Shop at the DAM in the spring of 2015. The rich and colorful volume features a foreword by Dr. Christoph Heinrich and major essays from scholars Dr. John P. Lukavic, Denver Art Museum; Dr. Jessica L. Horton, Getty Research Center National Endowment for the Humanities Postdoctoral Fellow and Eric Berkemeyer, Denver Art Museum; as well as artists David Bradley, Brad Kahlhamer, John Gritts, Donald F. Montileaux, Theodore Waddell exploring Scholder’s art and history. An essay from a collector’s perspective by Kent Logan also is included.

Exhibition Organizers and Sponsors

Super Indian: Fritz Scholder, 1967–1980, is organized by the DAM. It is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts. It is presented with generous support from Vicki and Kent Logan, donors to the Annual Fund Leadership Campaign and the citizens who support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD). Promotional support is provided by *5280 Magazine*, CBS4, Comcast Spotlight and *The Denver Post*.

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The Denver Art Museum is an educational, nonprofit resource that sparks creative thinking and expression through transformative experiences with art. Its holdings reflect the city and region—and provide invaluable ways for the community to learn about cultures from around the world. Metro citizens support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD), a unique funding source serving hundreds of metro Denver arts, culture and scientific organizations. For museum information, call 720-865-5000 or visit www.denverartmuseum.org.