

Media Alert

Nico Williams: Aaniin, I See Your Light Unveiled on Brooklyn Museum Plaza

Opens May 31, 2024



Nico Williams. *Breeze I* (detail, top); *Breeze II* (detail, middle); *Breeze III* (detail, bottom), 2024. Courtesy of the artist, © Nico Williams

First Nations artist Nico Williams (Anishinaabe, born 1989) will activate the Brooklyn Museum’s outdoor plaza and American Art galleries this summer with [Nico Williams: Aaniin, I See Your Light](#). The site-specific installation features the artist’s prismatic beadwork and large-scale iridescent jingles, which will transform the Museum into a place to play, explore, and celebrate Anishinaabe ways of being. Aaniin means both “hello” and “I see your light” in Anishinaabemowin, making the title of this interactive installation a greeting and an invitation to join in. Through this project, the Museum builds on its commitment to amplify Indigenous voices.

For generations, Anishinaabe artists have created beadwork that shares cultural knowledge and recognizes beauty as a form of medicine. Williams reflects on this tradition in his *Breeze* series, photographs of which will be installed on the Iris Cantor Plaza. Inspired by objects from the Museum’s collection of Indigenous art, the beaded patterns in this series overlay Anishinaabe geometric designs with visual motifs found in 19th-century beadwork and ribbon-work designs. Original pieces from the *Breeze* series will be on view in the American Art galleries through August 18, 2024.

The Iris Cantor Plaza will also be decorated with giant jingles inspired by the colorful metal adornments that Anishinaabe women use to decorate regalia. Originally made from tobacco tins and employed for healing practices, jingles are now worn by dancers from many Indigenous nations when competing at powwows. Williams’s kaleidoscopic versions are embossed with a pattern from an Anishinaabe sugar mold in the Museum’s collection (also on view in the galleries). Visitors are encouraged to gently play with the

jingles and help celebrate this long-standing tradition. The outdoor installation is on view through October 2024.

“I’m excited for people to experience my work at the Brooklyn Museum this summer, both on a larger scale outside the Museum and through the smaller pieces on display in the galleries,” says Williams. “It’s wonderful to receive support from the Museum. Our art is our culture, so it’s meaningful to present it to the Brooklyn community. I’m overjoyed to be able to share Anishinaabe practices and all the exciting visual components that come along with them.”

“As the first Indigenous artist ever featured on the plaza, Nico Williams both reflects upon and expands the artistic legacy of his community,” says Dare Turner, Curator of Indigenous Art at the Brooklyn Museum. “His work commandingly transforms the front of the Museum and celebrates the enduring vibrancy of Anishinaabe culture. In doing so, he affirms Indigenous artists’ rightful place within the world of museums, within Brooklyn, and within the fabric of society at large.”

Nico Williams: Aaniin, I See Your Light is organized by Dare Turner, Curator of Indigenous Art, with Grace Billingslea, Curatorial Assistant, Arts of the Americas and Europe, Brooklyn Museum.