On View at the Henry Art Gallery: JUNGEN

Submitted by Michael Neininger on July 26, 2017 - 10:33am


Viewpoints is a rotating series that highlights works from the Henry's collection, paired with commentary and insights from University of Washington faculty. By offering diverse perspectives across academic fields, the series encourages open inquiry and presents diverse ways of seeing and interpreting the art on view.

Brian Jungen: Untitled drawings
Mezzanine, Henry Art Gallery

June 24, 2017 — October 08, 2017

This iteration of Viewpoints features four related drawings by Brian Jungen (born 1970), a Canadian artist of Swiss and Dane-zaa Nation ancestry. These drawings create visual intersections between pop cultural representations of Native people, extreme sports, and gender tropes. They destabilize essentialist ideas of Native identities and raise questions about the ways indigenous cultures are interpreted and appropriated by pop culture and industry. Jungen takes advantage of the visual ambiguity of the silhouette to create composite images combining visual markers of identity in unexpected configurations. In the artist's own words, his drawings from this period present “explicit tableaux of queer/Native aggression.”

These drawings are early works of Jungen's, made just three years after his graduation from the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in 1995. His work often explores cultural identity in relation to globalized consumerism, with a particular interest in First Nations cultures. Jungen is best known for a series of mask-like sculptures fashioned from Nike Air Jordans, titled Prototypes for New
Understanding (1998–2005). Jungen often uses materials related to the athletic industry, reconfiguring the raw materials of athletic products to create hybrid objects.

As part of Viewpoints, accompanying commentary is provided by University of Washington faculty, including Chadwick Allen, Professor, Department of English, Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Advancement; Richard T. Gray, Lockwood Professor in the Humanities, Department of Germanics; Dian Million (Tanana Athabascan), Associate Professor, Department of American Indian Studies.