Fact Sheet

National Museum of the American Indian in New York

Background
The Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian in lower Manhattan, the George Gustav Heye (pronounced high) Center, opened in 1994 in the historic Alexander Hamilton U.S. Custom House, one of the most splendid Beaux-Arts buildings in New York. The museum features year-round exhibitions, dance and music performances, children’s workshops, family and school programs, film festivals and video screenings that present the diversity of the Native peoples of the Americas and the strength of their cultures from the earliest times to the present.

The museum is a branch of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian located on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. The National Museum of the American Indian was established by Congress in 1989. The Heye Center in New York opened in 1994; the Cultural Resources Center, eight miles from the National Mall building in Suitland, Md., opened in 1999; and the National Museum of the American Indian opened in September 2004.

Exhibitions
The museum’s new, permanent exhibition “Infinity of Nations: Art and History from the Collections of the National Museum of the American Indian” showcases some 700 objects from Native North, Central and South America. Objects include an exquisite Olmec jade head, a rare Anishinaabe man’s outfit and a remarkable Charles and Isabelle Edenshaw (Haida) spruce root hat. This unparalleled assemblage of American Indian cultural material represents the tremendous breadth of the collections and the richness of Native art.

In addition, the museum hosts a selection of changing exhibitions that present and reaffirm the Native voice. The schedule includes exhibitions developed by the museum from its collections, installations of contemporary Native art and significant traveling exhibitions from other institutions.

Public Programs
The museum hosts Native musicians, dancers, artists and elders in presentations of their art and cultural heritage and in informal programs that invite them to share directly with museum visitors the life ways and world views of Native peoples. Programs include dance presentations, hands-on
workshops, storytelling programs and annual events, including the Children’s Festival and the Native Sounds Downtown concert series.

**Film + Video Center**
The Film + Video Center of the National Museum of the American Indian is dedicated to presenting the works of Native Americans in media. An international leader in the support and presentation of indigenous film and video projects, the Heye Center hosts a biennial Native film festival, annual presentations of films during Santa Fe Indian Market and daily screenings for children and adults in the museum’s Screening Room. The museum also maintains an extensive website that details upcoming events and lists important resources for Native media at [www.nativenetworks.si.edu](http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu).

**Resource Center**
Scholars from around the world visit the Resource Center to learn from its collection of more than 5,000 titles, as well as its holdings of Native periodicals, information databases, videos and language tapes. The center also maintains extensive files on a variety of diverse subjects, from pre-Columbian kissing to repatriation and reburial. Expert staff assist visitors and callers with all questions related to Native art, life and culture. To contact the resource center, call (212) 514-3799 or email nin@si.edu.

**Staffing**
The Heye Center has a staff of 50 employees.

**About the Museum**
Located at One Bowling Green, across from Battery Park, the George Gustav Heye Center is free and open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, except Thursdays, when it is open until 8 p.m. The public may call (212) 514-3700 for general information and (212) 514-3888 for a recording about the museum’s public programs. By subway, the museum may be reached by the 1 to South Ferry, the 4 or 5 to Bowling Green or the R or W to Whitehall Street. The museum’s website is [www.AmericanIndian.si.edu](http://www.AmericanIndian.si.edu).