



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**“Frohawk Two Feathers / MATRIX 170” Opens Oct. 2 at  
Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art**  
*‘On errythang’ Incorporates Hartford Region into Artist’s Epic Narrative*

The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art presents, “Frohawk Two Feathers / MATRIX 170,” Oct. 2 through Jan. 4, 2015. The exhibition, subtitled, “On errythang (On everything),” will open to the public during the museum’s First Thursday event, Oct. 2, from 5 to 8 p.m.

Frohawk Two Feathers, the artistic alter-ego of Umar Rashid (born 1976, Chicago, Illinois), is a performer, writer, history buff and visual artist whose work since 2006 has focused on an epic narrative of the rise of “Frenghland”—a fictitious union of France and England. Merged as one huge, colonial super-empire, Frenghland’s complex international saga of exploration, colonization and world domination is documented in an ongoing project that commences in 1658 and will one day conclude in 1880. Frenghland’s territories expand as Two Feathers participates in exhibitions in various cities around the world, where each new setting becomes part of the ongoing story. Combining real, imagined and conflated historical locations, the artist chronicles the paths of his characters from place to place. For his exhibition at the Wadsworth Atheneum, his story picks up in December 1791 and follows the Connecticut River, or “Fresh River,” to Suckiaug—the Native American name for Hartford.

Hartford’s Native American history and subsequent colonization by the Dutch and English in the early seventeenth century dovetails perfectly with Two Feathers’ already-established narrative between two main global forces—the kingdom of Holland and Zeeland and the republic of Frenghland. Through a fantastical series of official portraits, battle paintings, territorial maps and military paraphernalia, the artist compiles a tongue-in-cheek, alternative tale of the city, set in the late 18th century. The visual narrative is told through portraits of

duplicious royal family members, corrupt military leaders and rebel assassins, all coded with facial and body tattoos. They don tribal costumes, military uniforms and European fashions, supplemented with pertinent accessories. Intricate maps of expeditions and battle sites document the progress of the unstoppable superpower.

“On errythang,” the exhibition’s title, refers to the contemporary African American colloquialism that means “no matter what” or “going all out,” a stance shared by the dedicated participants in this epic narrative. A portrait of the saga’s main character, Bonnie Prince Johnnie, is titled, “PONY1791.” “PONY” stands for “Pharaoh of New York,” but the full title alludes to KONY2012, the recent campaign to stop African war criminal Joseph Kony, a comparable figure to Johnnie. References consistently cross cultures and time periods, distant past and present day, insinuating the cyclical nature of history.

Frohawk Two Feathers (born Umar Rashid Foster) earned a BA in 2000 from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. His artist pseudonym, which suggests his mixed heritage, is central to his revisionist, historical fantasies. The artist had his first solo museum exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Denver in 2012 and his second at the Nevada Museum of Art in Reno in 2013. He has participated in group exhibitions at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art and Burlington City Arts in Vermont. The artist’s work is in the public collections of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art in California; Mount Holyoke College Art Museum in South Hadley, Massachusetts; and the 21C Museum in Louisville, Kentucky. In addition to the aforementioned venue sites, Two Feathers’ faux-historical saga (spanning 1658 to 1880) has integrated diverse international exhibition-specific locations including Basel, Switzerland; Berlin, Germany; and Cape Town, South Africa.

### **Public Programs**

An opening celebration of “Frohawk Two Feathers / MATRIX 170” will take place as part of the Wadsworth Atheneum’s First Thursday event, Oct. 2 from 5 to 8 p.m. The evening will include an artist talk in the MATRIX exhibition gallery at 6 p.m., and a satirical hip hop performance by SUPERDELUXE (Frohawk Two Feathers and Micah James) at 7 p.m. Other programs include: an exclusive morning reception for museum members, Oct. 10 from 9 to 11 a.m.; “Sunday Serenades: Mozart & MATRIX” with the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, Oct. 26 at 2 p.m.; a gallery talk, Nov. 7 at noon; and “Second Saturdays: Stories by Frohawk Two Feathers, Nov. 8 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. More information is at <http://thewadsworth.org/events>.

## **Exhibition Credit**

MATRIX 170 is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency, and is additionally supported by Jeffrey G. and Marcia Reid Marsted. The MATRIX program is also supported in part by the current and founding members of the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art's Contemporary Coalition. Support for the Wadsworth Atheneum is provided in part by the Greater Hartford Art Council's United Arts Campaign and the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development Office of the Arts, which also received support from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

## **About MATRIX**

MATRIX, a changing exhibition of contemporary art that is challenging and sometimes controversial, was initiated in 1975 as an experimental pilot project with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Since then, MATRIX has presented over 1,000 works of art by more than 160 artists. MATRIX has served as the first one-person show in the United States for many distinguished artists, including Jonathan Borofsky, Barbara Kruger, Louise Lawler, Gerhard Richter, Cindy Sherman, Nancy Spero, Richard Tuttle and Carrie Mae Weems. From its inception, MATRIX has inspired more than 50 similar programs across the country, including the MATRIX Program at the UC Berkeley Art Museum. In 2015 MATRIX will celebrate its 40th anniversary with exhibitions by Michael C. McMillen, Mark Bradford and Mark Dion.

## **About the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art**

Founded in 1842, the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art is the oldest public art museum in the United States. The museum's nearly 50,000 works of art span 5,000 years, from Greek and Roman antiquities to the first museum collection of American contemporary art. The museum's five connected buildings—representing architectural styles from Gothic Revival to modern International Style—are located at 600 Main Street in Hartford, Connecticut. Since 2010 the museum has been undergoing a major, \$33 million renovation, slated to be complete 2015. Hours: Wed – Fri: 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Sat & Sun: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; First Thursdays: 11 a.m. – 8 p.m. Admission: \$5 – 10; discounts for members, students and seniors. Public phone: (860) 278-2670; website: <http://thewadsworth.org>.

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**Note to editors:** select high-resolution images are available for publicity of “Frohawk Two Feathers / MATRIX 170.” Please email [media@wadsworthatheneum.org](mailto:media@wadsworthatheneum.org) for permission and files.