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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

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Hoffman Gallery Announces

***Future Memories of this Land:*
The Confluence Project, Indigenous Counter-narratives, and Maya
Lin's Counter-monuments**

January 27–April 2, 2022

Portland, Ore. – Co-initiated by tribal representatives and regional community activists, the Confluence Project's departure point was to revisit the cultural memory of Lewis and Clark's journey from an Indigenous perspective. This goal was materialized by internationally celebrated artist Maya Lin in a series of five earthworks on significant sites along the Columbia River, created over a ten-year period. Lin sought to re-situate the Lewis and Clark narrative in the context of 15,000+ years of Indigenous land stewardship in the Northwest and draw attention to the ecological unfolding of the region until the present. *Future Memories of this Land* brings together the project's archival material with the voices of contemporary Indigenous artists, to consider how the Confluence Project intersects with today's conversations on monuments, decolonization, and social justice.

Lin describes her earthworks as “memory works” that invite people to think. *Future Memories of this Land* proposes them to be counter-monuments that offer possibilities for challenging dominant historical narratives. Acting as sites for the renegotiation of public memory, they hold open space for the past, present, and future generations of the Indigenous Tribes of the Columbia River system: Chinook Indian Nation, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Cowlitz Indian Tribe, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Yakama Nation, The Wanapum, and Nez Perce Tribe.

Encompassing ecological restoration at each of the river sites, which cover more than 15,000 acres of federal, state and city lands, Maya Lin's Confluence Project works are collectively one of the most ambitious public works nationwide. Despite being the renowned artist's most extensive project to date, they are among her least known. This exhibition presents a selection of the project's archival material, including tribal correspondences, documentation of site blessings, design plans and models, alongside artworks by contemporary Indigenous artists, many of whom are regional tribal members. Their video installations, sculptural, and mixed-media works raise questions around cultural and linguistic self-determination, water preservation, land reclamation, and Indigenous futures.

This exhibition includes plans for the Confluence Project's yet-to-be-completed sixth and final earthwork near Celilo Falls, the spiritual and cultural heart of local tribal cultures and

the base of their fishing economy, which was flooded in 1957 to make way for the Dalles Dam. In response to opposition from one of the four local tribes, this project is currently on hold for further consideration. This offers an opportunity for collective reflection on the role and future of this and other monuments. The Confluence Project extends beyond an act of commemoration to encompass 20+ years of public gatherings, outreach and education programs. This exhibition is an opportunity to reflect on the shifting cultural and critical parameters surrounding its existence; to examine related national imaginaries, cultural assumptions, and aesthetic choices.

It is significant that the exhibition will take place on the campus of Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon, which was named after the historic explorers. A public program organized in collaboration with the Native Student Union will offer the opportunity for collective reflection and discussion, through a series of public events with invited cultural producers, critical thinkers, and organizations. The exhibition and the public program are curated by independent curator and writer Lucy Cotter with artist-curator Steph Littlebird.

Featured artists will include, among others: Sky Hopinka, Lillian Pitt, Gail Tremblay, Lehuauakea, Cannupa Hanska Luger, Jason Clark, Ka'ila Farrell-Smith, Joe Feddersen, and Natalie Kirk Moody.

VENUE:

Ronna and Eric Hoffman Gallery of Contemporary Art
Lewis & Clark College
615 S. Palatine Hill Road
Portland, OR 97219
www.lclark.edu/hoffman_gallery/

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

Future Memories of this Land is organized by Lewis & Clark College, Portland, in collaboration with Whitman College, Walla Walla. The exhibition and the public program take place with the support of the President's Office and the Dean's Office at Lewis & Clark College and are funded in part by the Mellon Foundation's Northwest Five Consortium grant for community-engaged learning.

The Confluence Project archives are housed at the Whitman College and Northwest Archives. *Future Memories of this Land* reconceives and expands upon the first-ever exhibition of the project's archives, *Along the ~~Columbia River~~-Nch'i-Wána: Maya Lin and the Confluence Project*, held at the Maxey Museum at Whitman College, Walla Walla, from April 30-December 15, 2021.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

Lewis & Clark College purposefully reflects on the history of the land it occupies. Prior to the newcomers arriving in this area, the Indigenous land of what would later be called Multnomah County was home to many tribal people. We honor the Indigenous people on whose traditional and ancestral homelands we stand: the Multnomah, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Tumwater, and Watalala bands of the Chinook; the Tualatin Kalapuya; and many other Indigenous nations of the Columbia River.

It is important to acknowledge the ancestors of this place and recognize that we are here because of the sacrifices forced upon them. In remembering these communities, we honor their legacy, their lives, and their descendants.

PRESS ENQUIRIES:

Further information and images are available for press use. Please email gallery@lclark.edu for any press requests.

BIOGRAPHIES:

Maya Lin is acclaimed for her large-scale environmental artworks, her architectural works and her memorial designs. Lin was thrust into the spotlight when, as a senior at Yale University, she submitted the winning design in a national competition for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to be built in Washington, D.C. She has gone on to a remarkable career in both art and architecture, whilst remaining committed to memory works that focus on some of the critical historical issues of our time. Her architectural projects create a close dialogue between the landscape and built environment, and she advocates sustainable design solutions in all her works. Often working with non-profits, her designs include the Neilson Library (2021) at Smith College, the Novartis Institutes for Biomedical Research, Cambridge Campus (2015) in Massachusetts, the Museum for Chinese in America (2009) in New York City and the Riggio-Lynch Interfaith Chapel (2004) and Langston Hughes Library (1999) in Clinton, Tennessee. Her artwork has been featured in solo exhibitions at museums and galleries worldwide, with works in the permanent collections of the National Gallery of Art; The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Museum of Modern Art; The Smithsonian Institution; The California Academy of Sciences, among others. She is represented by the Pace Gallery in New York.

In 2009, Maya Lin started work on her last memorial, *What is Missing?*, an ongoing, multi-sited multimedia installation that raises awareness about habitat and biodiversity loss, emphasizing how habitat restoration can reduce climate change emissions. A member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Lin has been profiled in *TIME*, *The New York Times Magazine* and *The New Yorker*, and in the Academy Award-winning documentary, *Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision*. In 2009, she was awarded the National Medal of Arts, America's highest honor for artistic excellence. In 2016, President Barack Obama awarded Lin the highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom for her celebrated career in art and architecture, and for creating a sacred place of healing in our nation's capital. Born in Athens, Ohio in 1959, Lin lives and works in New York City.

Lucy Cotter is an internationally known curator and writer, whose practice engages with contemporary art as a form of knowledge and a site for cultural transformation. Irish-born, she holds a PhD in Cultural Analysis from the University of Amsterdam for her research on curating and decolonization. She currently lives in Portland, where she is Curator in Residence at Oregon Center for Contemporary Art 2021. Her recent exhibitions include *Unquiet Objects* (2021) which probed questions around art and cultural hierarchies, restitution, and the digital futures of cultural heritage, and *The Unknown Artist* (2020), which examined attribution, creative labor, and uneven cultural value systems in art. Other recent projects include a performance of keyon gaskin (2021) and *Undoing Language: Early Performance Works by Brian O' Doherty* at The Kitchen, New York (2021).

Cotter was curator of the Dutch Pavilion, 57th Venice Biennale (2017), with *Cinema Olanda*, a two-part project foregrounding postcolonial national imaginaries in the Netherlands through a solo exhibition with Wendelien van Oldenborgh in Venice, and a multi-sited exhibition and events program in the Netherlands bringing together artists, activists, and academics. She has also led transdisciplinary conversations on the decolonization of Irish culture, guest-editing a special edition of the globally renowned journal *Third Text* in 2005. An internationally published writer on contemporary art in books, catalogs, and art journals including *Flash Art*, *Frieze*, and *Artforum*, she is the author-editor of *Reclaiming Artistic Research* (2019), a book on how art creates new forms of knowledge. She was the inaugural director of the MA Artistic Research at the Royal Academy of Art, The Hague, and lectures internationally, as well as being an adjunct lecturer in Critical Theory at Portland State University.

Steph Littlebird is an artist, curator, writer, and a registered member of Oregon's Grand Ronde Confederated Tribes. She received national recognition as curator of *This IS Kalapuyan Land* (2020) an exhibition at the Five Oaks Museum in Portland, which was featured by ArtNews and PBS NewsHour. Other curatorial projects include *Untold Parallels*, Mata Art Gallery, L.A. (2020), which re-examined colonial histories of the so-called Philippines and Filipinx-American diaspora, and colonized people Indigenous to "North America." Most recently, *Phot-Choch*, an exhibition held at Anita, Astoria OR (2021) presented traditional and contemporary art of the original Chinook inhabitants of the North Coast.

Littlebird is the 2020-2021 Fellow of the Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. A widely published writer, she is currently writing a series about Indigenous Resilience for Oregon Arts Watch Magazine with the support of the Oregon Cultural Trust. As an artist, Littlebird's work combines traditional aesthetics with contemporary materials and subject matter to forge connections between our collective past and imminent future. Her works frequently engage issues related to present-day Indigenous identities, marginalized histories, and responsible land stewardship. Littlebird earned her BFA in Painting and Printmaking from the Pacific Northwest College of Art (PNCA) in Portland, she currently lives and works in Las Vegas.

Confluence is a community-supported nonprofit that works through six art landscapes, educational programs, and public gatherings in collaboration with northwest tribes, communities, and the celebrated artist Maya Lin. It seeks to connect the public to the history, living cultures, and ecology of the Columbia River system through Indigenous voices. <https://www.confluenceproject.org/about-confluence/>

The Ronna and Eric Hoffman Gallery of Contemporary Art at Lewis & Clark College, opened in 1997, emphasizes work at the forefront of the contemporary tradition: challenging, provocative, and international in scope.

IMAGE CAPTION:

Dedication ceremony of Confluence Project site by Nez Perce tribal members at Chief Timothy Park, 2015. Photo by Miranda Ross. Courtesy of Confluence.

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