

PRESS RELEASE

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SEATTLE ART MUSEUM PRESENTS MAJOR RETROSPECTIVE OF JAUNE QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH

Memory Map traces the groundbreaking Indigenous artist's 50-year career

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SEATTLE - The Seattle Art Museum (SAM) presents *Jaune Quick-to-See Smith: Memory Map* (February 29-May 12, 2024), exploring five decades of work by the groundbreaking Indigenous artist. As an artist, activist, curator, educator, and advocate, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith (b. 1940, citizen of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Nation) has forged new paths for contemporary American art. *Memory Map* brings together over 130 of Smith's paintings, prints, drawings, and sculptures in the largest and most comprehensive exhibition of the artist's 50-year career. The exhibition is an immersive journey through her singular blend of modern art strategies and Indigenous cultural practices.

Memory Map is organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York and curated by Laura Phipps, Assistant Curator. SAM is the third, final, and only West Coast stop for the retrospective, which traveled to the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth in Texas after its debut at the Whitney. Theresa Papanikolas, Ann M. Barwick Curator of American Art, organized the presentation at SAM. "It is an honor to host this retrospective at SAM," says Papanikolas. "As an artist, Smith creates work that is immersive, breathtaking, relatable, and powerful. But even more importantly, as an advocate and activist she has opened doors for generations of women and Native artists. By consistently interrogating systemic hegemonies and peeling back the surface of what it means to be American, she has inspired and transformed our approach to American art at the museum."

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Early Work and Personal Lexicons

Memory Map begins with Smith's rare early paintings and drawings from the 1970s, whose intense color and intricate line evoke specific places in the Pacific Northwest (where she spent much of her childhood), the Southwest (where she

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currently lives), and Montana (where she was born). A selection of works from her foundational series of the 1980s traces her transition from abstraction to figuration and ultimately collage, which reached its height in the 1990s with the *Chief Seattle (C.S.)* series. Here, Smith deployed texts, objects, and images from popular culture to construct a visual vocabulary loaded with meaning and accessible to a general audience—a practice she continued in subsequent series, also on view, that took on the quincentennial of Christopher Columbus’s landing in the Americas, President George W. Bush’s post-9/11 policies, the 2003 invasion of Iraq, and the fallout of American imperialism. Emblematic motifs—trade canoes, maps, the wing dress, and a host of trickster animals—appear and reappear throughout the exhibition, a personal lexicon through which Smith explores her positions on current events and long-standing issues.

Explorations of Form and Voice

Smith’s work engages the languages of abstraction, expressionism, and Pop Art to interrogate American life and identity from a Native perspective, and addresses issues important to Indigenous communities—such as the environment, cultural preservation, racism, and the negative stereotyping of Native identity. Through humor and satire, she inverts historical narratives to expose the absurdities in the formation of dominant discourses and questions why certain visual languages are valued over others. *Ceci n’est pas une peace pipe* (1993) transforms René Magritte’s famed surrealist print with a cheeky twist of phrase. Another noteworthy work, *Paper Dolls for a Post-Colonial World with Ensembles Contributed by the US Government* (1991) is rendered with a comic strip-like iconography as it contemplates the stereotyping and exploitation of Native people. Here, Smith reappropriates the appropriators, using the dolls to relay a story drenched in sarcasm.

Across decades and mediums, her approach blurs boundaries and activates images and ideas from history, mapping, environmentalism, popular culture, and mass media. Her impact—visible not only in her artwork but also in her activism and curatorial practice—has positioned contemporary Native American art at the center of today’s critical dialogues around land, social justice, preservation, and sustainability.

Pacific Northwest Connections

SAM’s iteration of *Memory Map* highlights Smith’s deep connections to Seattle and the Pacific Northwest, a region in which she has lived and worked over the decades. As a child, she traveled to various reservations with her father, an accomplished horse trader. As an adult, she graduated from Olympic College, curated exhibitions of Native art, and exhibited her own work at Sacred Circle Gallery of American Indian Art at Daybreak Star Cultural Center in Seattle. The exhibition will highlight the West Seattle Cultural Trail, a City of Seattle public art project that debuted in 1996. Smith collaborated with fellow artists Joe Feddersen (Coleville) and Donald Fels on the mile-long trail, which celebrates the human and natural history, species diversity, geology, and geography of the area through the intervention of images, practical information, and community stories. One gallery will feature a large-scale map of the trail, and visitors can experience a “re-creation” of its stops throughout the galleries.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith (b. 1940) is a citizen of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Nation, Montana. She received an AA degree from Olympic College in Bremerton, Washington, in 1960; a BA in art education from Framingham State

College, Massachusetts, in 1976; and an MA in Visual Arts from the University of New Mexico in 1980.

Smith has received numerous awards, including the Academy of Arts and Letters Purchase Award (1987); Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors Grant (1996); Women's Caucus for the Arts Lifetime Achievement Award (1997); College Art Association Women in the Arts Award (2002); New Mexico Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts (2005); ArtTable Artist Honoree (2011); Georgia O'Keeffe Museum Living Artist of Distinction Award (2012); Montana Governor's Award (2018); New York Foundation for the Arts Murray Reich Distinguished Artist Award (2019); United States Artists Fellowship (2020); Anonymous Was A Woman Award (2022); and Barnard College's Medal of Distinction (2022). Smith has received honorary doctorates from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design (1992); Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia (1998); Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Boston (2003); and the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque (2009).

Smith's work is in the collections of the Albuquerque Museum; Brooklyn Museum, New York; Eiteljorg Museum, Indianapolis; Heard Museum, Phoenix; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Missoula Art Museum, Montana; Museo de Arte Moderno, Quito, Ecuador; National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; Seattle Art Museum, Washington; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and Yellowstone Art Museum, Montana, and others.

PROGRAMS AND INTERPRETATION

In conjunction with the exhibition, SAM will present a dynamic lineup of programming, including docent tours, programs for schools and educators, and public programs. On the public opening day on Thursday, February 29, the artist will give a free public talk. Two Family Fun Workshops on March 9 will introduce young artists to Smith's practice. SAM Open House on April 19 will be inspired by the exhibition; this new recurring series presents after-hours programming including gallery tours, performances, music, and more.

Memory Map also offers in-gallery interpretative experiences. An audio tour, produced by the Whitney and available via smartphone, features reflections on 19 of the works on view from notable artists and curators Neal Ambrose-Smith, Andrea Carlson, Jeffrey Gibson, G. Peter Jemison, Josie Lopez, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, and Marie Watt. Verbal descriptions for all works are available via smartphone. A reading room adjacent to the galleries features books from the Seattle Public Library as well as a short video interview with the artist. A family guide produced by the Whitney will be available for in-gallery exploration.

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

A fully illustrated 264-page catalogue published by the Whitney Museum of American Art and distributed by Yale University Press will be available for purchase at SAM Shop (\$40). Also titled *Jaune Quick-to-See Smith: Memory Map* (ISBN: 978-0300269789), the catalogue features essays by curator Laura Phipps, Candice Hopkins, Richard William Hill, and Josie M. Lopez, along with a conversation between Jaune Quick-to-See Smith and Lowery Stokes Sims. The publication includes illustrations of nearly five decades of Smith's work in all media accompanied by poems and texts by contemporary Indigenous artists and scholars on Smith's major bodies of work.

PLANNING A VISIT

Museum Hours

- Closed Monday and Tuesday
- Wednesday–Sunday 10 am–5 pm
- Holiday hours on the website

Admission Prices

- Adults: \$29.99 (advance), \$32.99 (day of)
- Seniors (65+), Military (with ID): \$24.99 (advance), \$27.99 (day of)
- Students (with ID), Teens (15–18): \$19.99 (advance), \$22.99 (day of)
- Children (14 and under): FREE
- SAM members: FREE

Free & Discounted Options

- First Thursdays: Free to all
- First Fridays: \$5 admission for seniors (65+)
- Complete list of discounts available: [Discount Access Programs](#)

Details are subject to change. For the most up-to-date information on planning a visit, go to seattleartmuseum.org.

EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION AND SUPPORT

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith: Memory Map is organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art.

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Image captions: *Memory Map*, 2000, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, oil, acrylic, and paper on canvas, 36 × 48 in., OZ Art NWA, Bentonville, Arkansas, © Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. *Indian Madonna Enthroned*, 1974, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, burlap, fabric, polyester batting, dried corn, leather thongs, beaded leather bands, necklaces, book (*God Is Red* by Vine Deloria Jr.), pheasant wings, American flag, beaded hide moccasins, two framed ink and graphite pencil drawings, Masonite cradleboard, animal hide, sheepskin and fleece, bird feet, wood chair, and painted plywood, 52 × 34 × 20 in., Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Purchase, with funds from the Director's Discretionary Fund; courtesy Garth Greenan Gallery, New York, Fabricated by Andy Ambrose, © Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, Photograph by Neal Ambrose-Smith. *Custer Series: Peace Pipe (after Magritte)*, 1993, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, charcoal and pastel on paper, 41 1/2 × 29 1/2 in., Gochman Family Collection, © Jaune Quick-to-See Smith.

ABOUT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM

As the leading visual art institution in the Pacific Northwest, SAM draws on its global collections, powerful exhibitions, and dynamic programs to provide unique educational resources benefiting the Seattle region, the Pacific Northwest, and beyond. SAM was founded in 1933 with a focus on Asian art. By the late 1980s the museum had outgrown its original home, and in 1991 a new 155,000-square-foot downtown building, designed by Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, opened to the public. The 1933 building was renovated and rededicated as the Asian Art Museum in 1994, and it reopened on February 8, 2020, following an extensive renovation and expansion. SAM's desire to further serve its community was realized in 2007 with the opening of two stunning new facilities: the nine-acre Olympic Sculpture Park (designed by Weiss/Manfredi Architects)—a “museum without walls,” free and open to all—and the Allied Works Architecture designed 118,000-square-foot expansion of its main, downtown location, including 232,000 square feet of additional space built for future expansion. The Olympic Sculpture Park and SAM's downtown expansion celebrated their tenth anniversary in 2017.

From a strong foundation of Asian art to noteworthy collections of African and Oceanic art, Northwest Coast Native American art, European and American art, and modern and contemporary art, the strength of SAM's collection of approximately 25,000 objects lies in its diversity of media, cultures, and time periods.