

# Intertwined: Weaving in Community

APRIL 5–JUNE 15, 2024



**THE MUSEUM**  
191 Fifth Street East, Ketchum, Idaho  
Tue–Fri, 10am–5pm  
Sat, 11am–4pm

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Scheduled Class Times

**SUN VALLEY MUSEUM OF ART**  
P.O. Box 656, Sun Valley, ID 83353  
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**COVER:**  
Sara Siestrem (Hanis Coos), *diamonds and pearls*, 2019, Red Cedar Bark (Kingcome, BC) gathered with Marianne Nicolson (Dzawada'enuxw), Spruce Root (Jordan Cove, Coos Bay, OR), Bear Grass (Baldich), Juncus (Schofield Creek), Hemlock Dye (Siulaw Forest), Sedge (Umpqua River) and Sweet Grass (Linton), courtesy the artist and Elizabeth Leach Gallery, Portland

**INTRODUCTION PANELS:**  
Installation photograph, Tanya Aguiñiga, *Border Quipu / Quipu Fronterizo*, 2016–2018, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Purchased with funds provided by AHAN: Studio Forum, 2018 Art Here and Now purchase, in New Abstracts: Recent Acquisitions at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, November 12, 2022–September 17, 2023, photo © Museum Associates/LACMA

Installation photograph, Tanya Aguiñiga, *Border Quipu / Quipu Fronterizo*, 2016–2018, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Purchased with funds provided by AHAN: Studio Forum, 2018 Art Here and Now purchase, in New Abstracts: Recent Acquisitions at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, November 12, 2022–September 17, 2023, photo © Museum Associates/LACMA

AMBOS (Art Made Between Opposite Sides), documentation from *Border Quipu / Quipu Fronterizo* project, 2016–2018

Tanya Aguiñiga, *Extraño 15*, 2021 (detail and installation view), ice-dyed cotton rope, synthetic hair, flax, courtesy the artist and Volume Gallery, Chicago

**BACK PANEL:**  
Sara Siestrem (Hanis Coos), *this clam basket stops pipelines and chevy*, 2022, glazed slip cast ceramic baskets, ed. 10, courtesy the artist and Elizabeth Leach Gallery, Portland

**INTERIOR CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT:**  
Sara Siestrem (Hanis Coos), *facing widespread opposition pembina withdraws application to Oregon department of state lands to create an ecological disaster in Jordan Cove, Coos Bay January 23, 2020*, 2020, acrylic, colored pencil & graphite on paper, courtesy the artist and Elizabeth Leach Gallery, Portland

Sara Siestrem (Hanis Coos), *ARETHA*, 2022, glazed slip cast ceramic dance cap, ed. 10, courtesy the artist and Elizabeth Leach Gallery, Portland

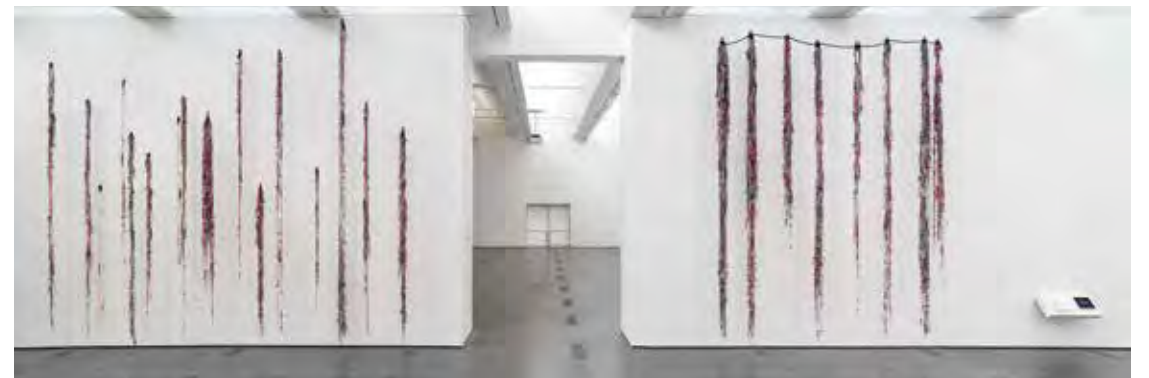
Sara Siestrem (Hanis Coos), *transtemporal clam basket*, 2022, 3D printed scan of a handwoven basket (Nylon 12 Powder), courtesy the artist and Elizabeth Leach Gallery, Portland

Sara Siestrem (Hanis Coos), *acorn basket / whale ovation*, 2015–2022, acrylic and graphite on BFK Rives paper, courtesy the artist and Elizabeth Leach Gallery, Portland

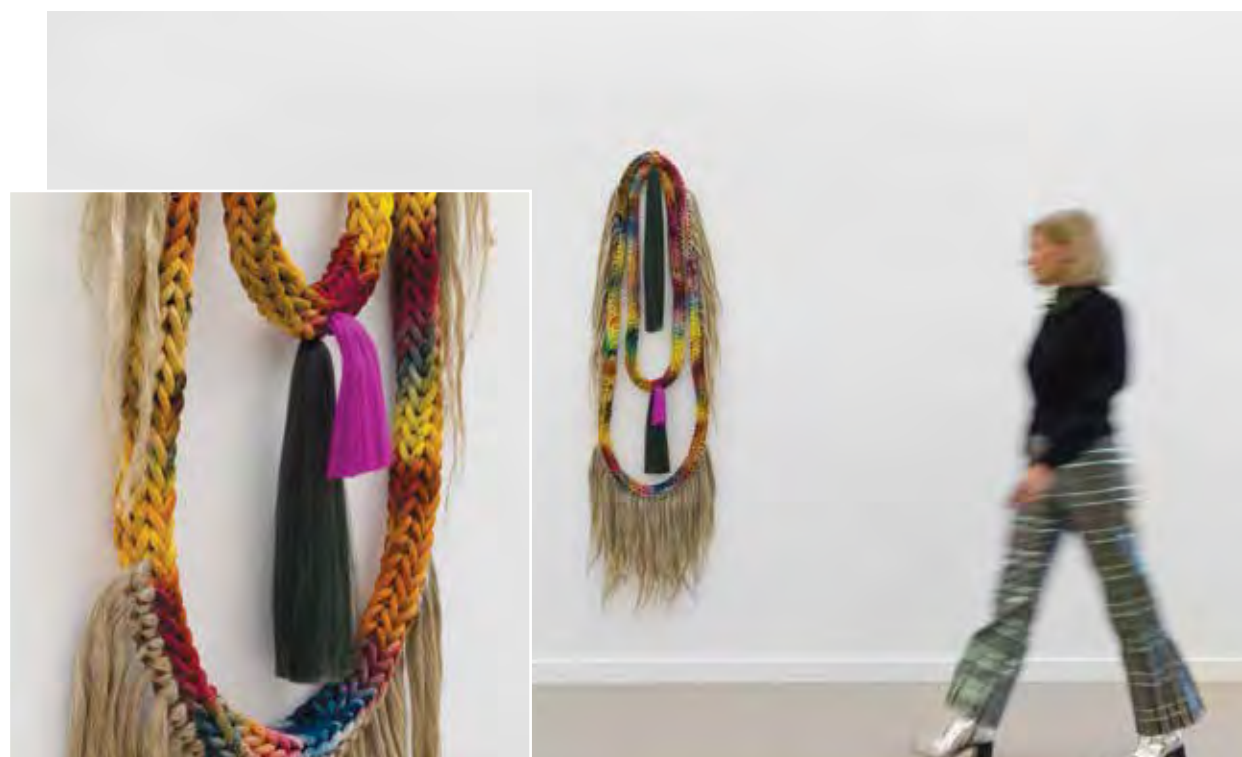
Tanya Aguiñiga, *Internal Body II* (installation view and detail), 2023, cotton rope and low-fire terracotta, aluminum armature, courtesy the artist and Volume Gallery, Chicago



Sun Valley Museum of Art



**I**ntertwined: *Weaving in Community* considers ways artists have used traditional weaving as social practice and a platform for activism. The exhibition features artwork by Portland-based artist Sara Siestrem (Hanis Coos), Los Angeles-based artist Tanya Aguiñiga, and AMBOS (Art Made Between Opposite Sides), a collective Aguiñiga founded in 2016.



# Intertwined: Weaving in Community

APR 5–JUN 15, 2024

## MUSEUM EXHIBITION

Artist **Sara Siestroom (Hanis Coos)** has created a self-sustaining weaving program for the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw people. Siestroom is an activist who uses the practice and teaching of traditional Native weaving to preserve Indigenous knowledge while healing communities and the relationship between humans and the environment. The exhibition includes a newly commissioned sculpture made from ceramic, fiber, and a variety of natural and human-made materials, as well as woven, 3D printed, and cast ceramic baskets. Also a painter and printmaker, Siestroom makes large-scale works on paper and board covered with patterns, marks, and imagery related to her weaving practice and activism.

**Tanya Aguiñiga** was born in San Diego, California, and raised in Tijuana, Mexico. Her experiences as a binational citizen who crossed the border daily for school inform her approach to textiles and other forms of craft. Drawing on Mesoamerican and Indigenous Andean weaving traditions, Aguiñiga makes sculptures that are radically contemporary. Often they reference the human body, including terracotta hands and other body parts, or synthetic hair. She thinks of some of them as portraits—woven figures, sometimes interconnected like networks of family or friends.

Aguiñiga, artist **Natalie M. Godinez**, and other members of the **AMBOS** collective are working with SVMoA to develop a community-based fiber artwork in the Wood River Valley. The artwork will emerge from workshops held with community partners in

Tijuana, Bellevue, and Hailey and will grow over the exhibition as visitors add to it, incorporating their handwork and stories into the project. The exhibition also includes AMBOS's *Border Quipu / Quipu Fronterizo*, an enormous fiber work made by thousands of participants on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border between 2016 and 2018. Inspired by Andean pre-Columbian quipus, systems of knotted strings used to store information and knowledge, the *Border Quipu* allowed participants to share their personal stories of life on the border.

### SVMoA MEMBERS EXHIBITION PREVIEW AND OPENING CELEBRATION

Fri, Apr 5, 5–7pm

Sun Valley Museum of Art

FREE for SVMoA members; pre-registration required

SVMoA members are invited to join artists **Sara Siestroom**, **Tanya Aguiñiga** and **Natalie M. Godinez** for a walkthrough of *Intertwined: Weaving in Community* at 5pm, followed by an opening celebration.

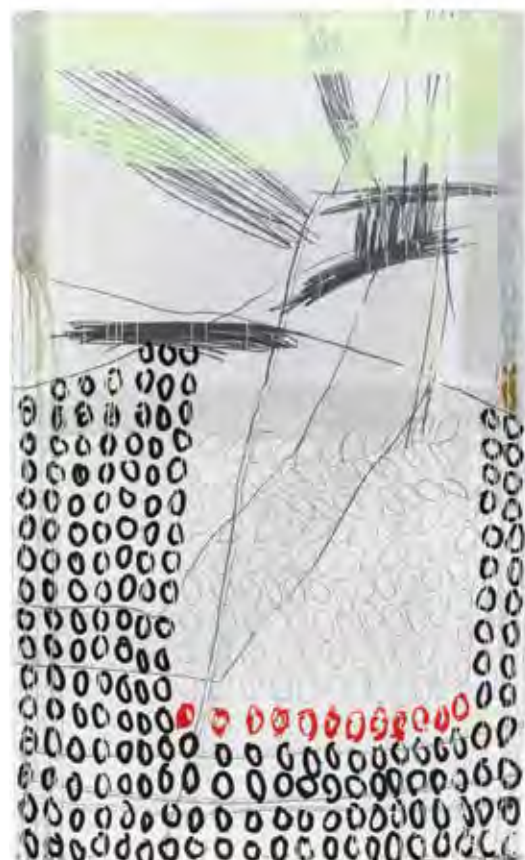
### EVENING EXHIBITION TOURS

Thu, Apr 11, May 23, and Jun 13, 5:30pm

Sun Valley Museum of Art

FREE; pre-registration recommended

Enjoy refreshments as you tour *Intertwined* with SVMoA's curators.



## WORKSHOPS & PROGRAMS

### BILINGUAL TEEN WORKSHOP: TEXTILE CRAFTS

Wed, Apr 3, 2–6pm

Hailey Classroom

FREE, drop in anytime between 2 and 6pm

Join artists from AMBOS for a textile craft afternoon!

**Tanya Aguiñiga** and **Natalie M. Godinez** will lead you in a variety of textile craft techniques, sewing, dyeing, embroidery, and weaving to create pieces for a collaborative art installation that will be part of *Intertwined*. The installation will be a collaboration between the artists, communities throughout the Wood River Valley, and people awaiting asylum along the U.S.-Mexico border.

### BILINGUAL COMMUNITY WORKSHOP: NATURAL DYES AND CYANOTYPE PRINTS

Thu, Apr 4, 2–5pm

The Hunger Coalition

FREE; drop in anytime between 2 and 5pm

Join artists from AMBOS, SVMoA, and the Hunger Coalition for a two-part workshop: dyeing fabric with natural dyes and making cyanotype prints. **Tanya Aguiñiga** and **Natalie M. Godinez** will lead you in using plants and vegetables to dye fabric and pillows and creating stunning one-of-a-kind photo prints using natural sunlight. Some of the art created will be included in *Intertwined*.

The Sun Valley Museum of Art acknowledges the Shoshone and Bannock peoples and their homelands here in the Wood River Valley, as well as their use of these lands, past, present, and future.

### WORKSHOP: SHIBORI SCARVES

Fri, Apr 5, 10am–1pm

Hailey Classroom

\$125 member / \$150 nonmember

Co-presented with The Alliance of Idaho

Join Los Angeles-based artists **Tanya Aguiñiga** and **Natalie M. Godinez** of AMBOS, SVMoA, and The Alliance of Idaho to learn various shibori dye techniques. Shibori, a traditional Japanese form of dyeing, allows makers to create beautiful, intricate patterns on fabric. With guidance from the artists, participants will leave the workshop with a shibori wool scarf of their own design.

### ART CLUB: ART21—TANYA AGUIÑIGA AND GUADALUPE MARAVILLA

Wed, Jun 5, 5:30pm

Sun Valley Museum of Art

Free for members / \$15 nonmember

Join SVMoA for Art Club—a new program for those who want to learn more about contemporary art. On June 5, we will screen *Art21* episodes featuring artists Tanya Aguiñiga and Guadalupe Maravilla, followed by a group discussion of the artists and their work. *Art21*, a long-running documentary series on PBS, features contemporary artists sharing their work, processes, and studios in their own words. SVMoA invited Tanya Aguiñiga to select another *Art21* artist with whom to be paired, and she chose the El Salvador-born, New York-based Guadalupe Maravilla, whose interdisciplinary practice examines migration, illness, and healing.



# Idaho Mountain Express

## Exhibit weaving indigenous knowledge, human relationships to open next week

Public invited to participate in community artwork project

By RAIZA GIORGI Express Staff Writer Mar 29, 2024 0



"Intertwined: Weaving in Community," the Sun Valley Museum of Art's newest exhibit, is opening at the museum on Friday, April 5.

Photo courtesy of Sun Valley Museum of Art



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**"I started noticing a few years ago that a lot of artists are working with traditional weaving techniques in new and fascinating ways."**

**Courtney Gilbert**

**Sun Valley Museum of Art curator**

A new exhibit at the Sun Valley Museum of Art in Ketchum is set to feature sculptures, large prints and more intended to preserve indigenous knowledge and illustrate the relationships between humans and the environment.

"Intertwined: Weaving in Community," will officially open during a celebration at the museum from 5-7 p.m. on Friday, April 5. Registration is required for the opening celebration.

The exhibition will feature artwork by Portland-based artist Sara Siestrem (of the Hanis Coos tribe) and Los Angeles-based artist Tanya Aguiñiga. Siestrem will display a body of work and Aguiñiga will display "AMBOS" — Art Made Between Opposite Sides—through June 15, according to SVMoA.

"We are particularly excited about the AMBOS, a community artwork project that will begin in free workshops we are hosting at the Hunger Coalition and in our Hailey Classroom and will continue as visitors add to a collective artwork in the Museum's galleries," said SVMoA Curator Courtney Gilbert.

Siestrem "created a self-sustaining weaving program for the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw people," the museum wrote in its exhibit description. She teaches and practices indigenous weaving to protect the knowledge of such cultures "while healing communities and the relationship between humans and the environment," Gilbert said.

"I started noticing a few years ago that a lot of artists are working with traditional weaving techniques in new and fascinating ways. Some are experimenting with materials or form, others with content. And some artists are using weaving as a means of working for social justice," Gilbert said.

Siestreem also creates large-scale works on paper and board covered with patterns, marks and imagery related to her weaving practice. These will be included in the exhibit.

Drawing inspiration from Mesoamerican and Indigenous Andean weaving traditions, Aguiñiga crafted sculptures that reference the human body using terracotta hands or other body parts and synthetic hair.

For her AMBOS exhibition piece, Aguiñiga is displaying her “Border Quipu/Quipu Fronterizo,” an enormous sculptural fiber work made by thousands of participants on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border between 2016 and 2018.

“I’m excited about putting these different voices and bodies of work in conversation together, and for ways people here in the Wood River Valley can help contribute to a community-based artwork through the workshops we are hosting with AMBOS,” Gilbert said.

Artist Natalie Godinez, Aguiñiga and others are working with SVMoA to develop a similar piece in the Wood River Valley, where the artwork will be created in workshops and will grow through the duration of the exhibition as visitors add to it.

The first exhibition event is a free textile crafts workshop for bilingual teens from 2-6 p.m. on Wednesday, April 3, at the SVMoA Hailey Classroom.

A workshop for the bilingual community on natural dyes and cyanotype prints will follow from 2-5 p.m. on Thursday, April 4, at the Hunger Coalition in Bellevue. It’s free to attend. Participants will use plants and vegetables to dye fabric and create unique photo prints with sunlight.

The adult-only Shibori Scarves workshop is from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. on Friday, April 5, at the Hailey Classroom. The cost to attend is \$125-\$150, and guests will use the traditional Japanese form of dying to create intricate patterns on fabric.

There will also be a screening of “Art21,” a documentary series on PBS featuring Aguiñiga and Guadalupe Maravilla, at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 5, at SVMoA.

There will be several free evening exhibition tours with Gilbert, providing visitors the opportunity to discuss the art pieces. They will be held at 5:30 p.m. on April 11, May 23 and June 13. Pre-registration is recommended.

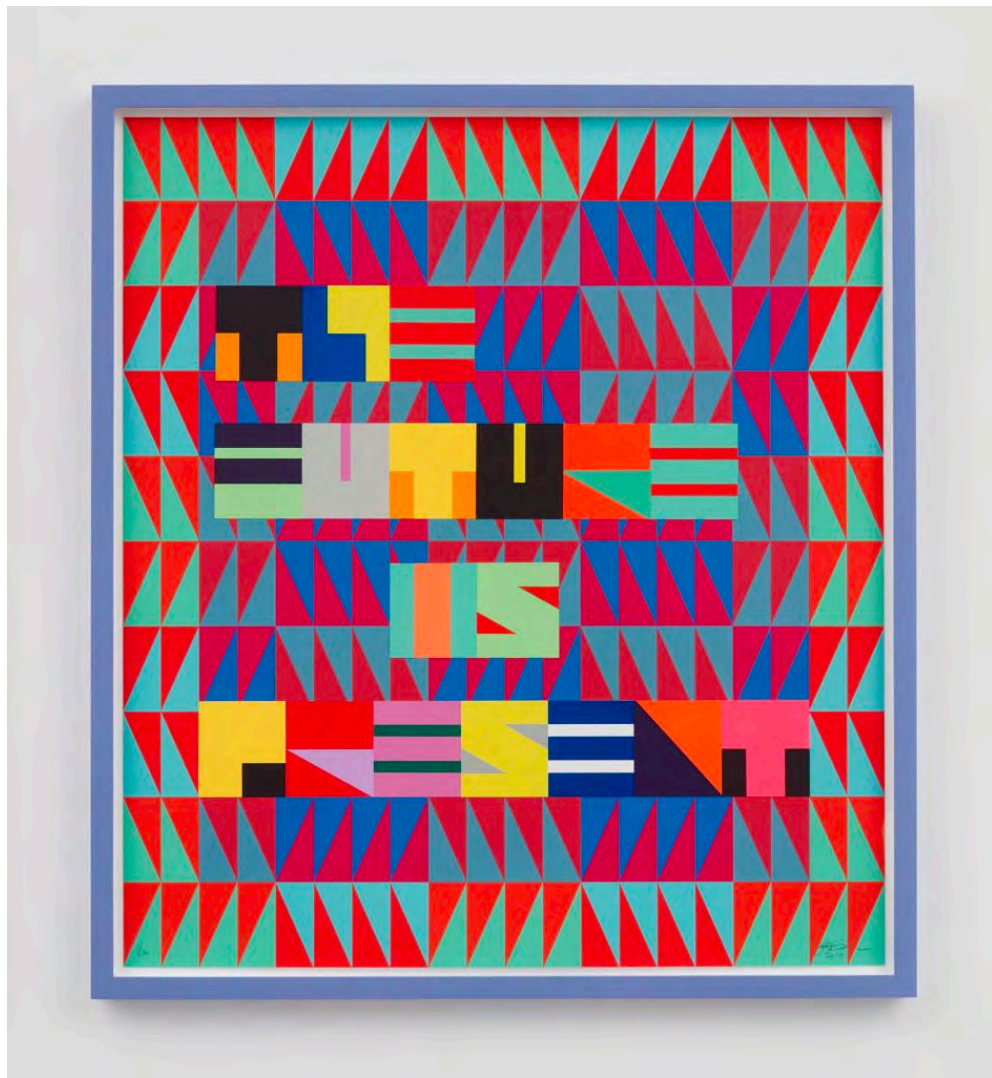
To learn more about the exhibition and the museum, or to register for various associated events, visit [svmoa.org](http://svmoa.org).

**Gallery Network**

## Explore 7 Artworks by Native American Artists From the Artnet Gallery Network

Traditional beading techniques, lithographs, and photography are just a few of the mediums these creators are engaging with.

**Artnet Gallery Network**, December 26, 2023



Jeffrey Gibson, *THE FUTURE IS PRESENT* (2019). Courtesy of Sikkema Jenkins & Co.

Before we bid adieu to 2023 and welcome in 2024, we at the [Artnet Gallery Network](#) pulled together one last roundup for the year of art that intrigued or inspired us. Over the thousands of combined galleries, artists,

and artworks we came across, we found a distinct and exciting presence of art made by Native American artists. From pieces made using traditional, hand-beaded techniques and others showing innovative uses of abstraction in painting, this collection of works by Native American artists certainly caught our eye.

The works below are only a glimpse of everything that can be found with the Artnet Gallery Network, where you can search thousands of galleries and explore diverse art and artists from around the world with just a few simple clicks. And be sure to keep a lookout for our first Artnet Gallery Network deep dive of the year in January!

Sara Siestream  
*couplet* (2017)  
**Inquire Here**



Sara Siestream, *couplet* (2017). Courtesy of Elizabeth Leach Gallery, Portland.



ArtSeen

# Converge 45 Biennial: *Social Forms: Art as Global Citizenship*



By [Tess Bilhartz](#)



(L-R) Narsiso Martinez, Lisa Jarrett, and Julian Gaines, *Assembly*, Converge 45, Parallax Art Center, Portland, OR, 2023.

For *Social Forms: Art as Global Citizenship*, the third iteration of the Converge 45 Biennial, curator Christian Viveros-Fauné sought out art that engages with the pressing questions of its time and that might intervene, somehow, in a reimagining of Portland and other places. Many of the biennial artists seek to give a place form and direction, either as a witness to devastation and change or a conjurer of sometimes hopeful visions.

Peter Gronquist floats a new mark, a simple line, a gesture, up into Portland's skyline with his billboard above the Eastbank Commerce Center. The polished steel backing disappears into a reflection that blurs with the sky, and Gronquist's neon flourish hovers weightlessly. Places are marked by signs and billboards and also subtle imprints like wind on dirt; they are marked by animals and plants who may leave bones or fossils behind; they are marked by climate disasters and industry. In Richard Mosse's immersive video, *Broken Spectre*, the mark is a scar as mercury stains the Amazon River where miners extract gold, and deforestation brutally gouges the rainforest, devastating Indigenous communities along the river.

Jorge Tacla also considers marks of damage in his panoramic painting of the destroyed Syrian city Homs, *Sign of Abandonment/Señal de abandono 34* (2018). Tacla paints primarily in black and white with an oil and cold wax mixture that allows him to make shapes and lines shiver. The architecture jitters, and every so often, rhythmically across the canvas, the jittery forms are rubbed out and dissolve into formless gray clouds. In rare moments the smearing and shakiness crystallize into clear lines, only to devastate with the contours of rubble. Above the city, the clouds hang heavy and corporeal, wrong in scale and density. They hover, briefly holding the dust and remains of the city.



Installation view: Sara Siestream: *Assembly*, Converge 45, Parallax Art Center, Portland, OR, 2023.

Some marks are ephemeral, like the lines left by skates on an ice rink or the brief and often imperceptible impact of a runner's shoe on the ground. There are also the invisible imprints of fragrance or breath that mark a place at the molecular level. In *Assembly* at Parallax Art Space, Sara Siestream's (Hanis Coos) basket weaving materials hang, ready, at the entrance

in *cache eleven: straight to heaven*. As I walk around the gallery, I might inhale scents and bits of intentionally placed olfactory and medicinal plants that reciprocally absorb particles of my own skin, hair, or breath. We all take something with us, and we all leave something behind. I'm reminded of Malcolm Peacock's potent installation that also considers breath and the invisible comingling of molecules.

Peacock's own recorded voice narrates the exhibition, and he begins with a passage about a future when people literally struggle to understand where one person ends and another begins. What follows is an account of distance runners who "rub elbows," exchange breath, and share stories. As Peacock tells it, on a run through the Portland landscape he encounters Edward Gardner (1898–1966), a fellow Black distance runner whose own story structures the exhibition *next in line at the peak of the valley, his spine bent forward as he surrendered to his choices*, at SE Cooper Contemporary.

Peacock records this story as he runs, and his runner's breath is the ever-present rhythm of the piece, sometimes fast and shallow, sometimes slow and deep. As I listen, I'm lying next to another visitor on a large, braided, circular bed, its coils shifting from brown to deep green to gold. We follow Gardner on a 3,000-mile cross-continental marathon as he tackles the profound endurance of the race, harassed by two white men on horseback. Peacock mentions a desire to integrate into the landscape of the Pacific Northwest, but the landscape can be threatening. He finds a companion, though, in Gardner's story, his legend or his ghost, and a kind of fusion takes place between the two runners as their strides connect and they listen to each other's breath. My breath is in that room, too, as is my companion's. Throughout, Peacock substitutes the word "travel" for "run," and "traveler" for "runner", and he guides us on a kind of hero's journey, one that he has been on before and one that Gardner traveled before him.

Marks left on the ice by Amanda Ross-Ho's skates, like Peacock's breath, are a testament to physical demand and commitment. The wobbly lines where she falters and pulls herself back on track tell the story of her performance, *Untitled Figure, (THE CENTER OF IT ALL)* at the mostly vacant Lloyd Center mall. She guides her movements through muscle memory from that bygone era, the era of the American mall and the era when she skated competitively. Her skates repetitively draw a figure-eight, emphasizing its parameters and blurring them as she wobbles, catches herself, and re-finds the circle in this tongue-in-cheek embodiment of nostalgia and dreams.



Installation view: *Malcolm Peacock: next in line at the peak of the valley, his spine bent forward as he surrendered to his choices*, Converge 45, SE Cooper Contemporary, Portland, OR, 2023.

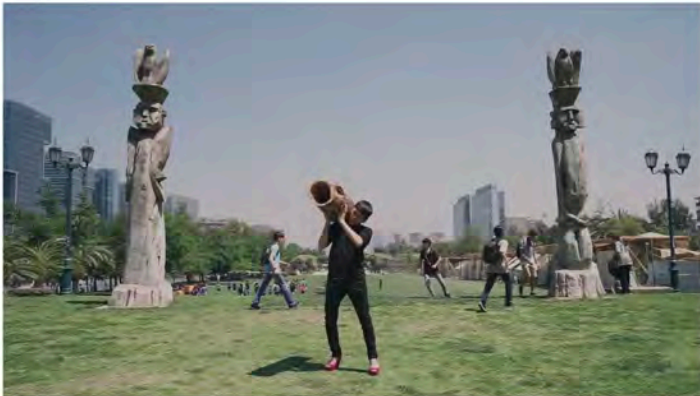
Local galleries and arts organizations have taken up residence in some abandoned sections of the Lloyd Center mall. It straddles past and, maybe, some kind of future. Another transfer of intent and ownership occurs when, driven by conversations around Land Back, the Center for Native Arts and Culture acquires a turn-of-the-century red brick building that houses Marie Watt's monumental *Chords to Other Chords (Relative)*. Watt had extended an open call to Native artists, asking for fliers, slogans, and poster materials. She plasters their words to a panoramic wooden backing that runs the length of the room, and enormous red neon text: "Turtle Island And", glows over the collected ephemera. The small notes demand that I step up close to read them, and the large neon text, no longer legible as words, instead lights the notes. I step back to read the large words, and I step forward to read the small ones, the scale shift making apparent the cacophony of voices participating in this "Turtle Island And."

The chorus of personal notes in Watt's piece is reminiscent of the breath and intimacies exchanged in Peacock's, these small voices over time chip away at the contours of a place and reshape it. Jesse Murry's quiet and moving suite of small paintings shape an internal world. These are paintings about paint and the placement of the hand, abstract but with a disappearing horizon. Corporeality departs, and for a moment, we levitate.

## Contributor

Tess Bilhartz

**Tess Bilhartz** is an artist and writer who grew up in Dallas, Texas and is currently based in New York City. Recent solo shows include *Follow Me Down* at Rubber Factory in 2022 and *What On Earth* at Super Dutchess in 2020. Residencies include the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (2017) and the Sharpe Walentas Space Program (2013). She teaches art at Borough of Manhattan Community College, City University of New York.



Seba Colluqueo, "Alka Domo," courtesy of the artist and Converge 45.

ART

## Explore the Vibrant Art Scene of Portland with Converge 45 Biennial

By Andrew Huff  
August 10, 2023



## The Converge 45 Biennial Opens This August in Portland

There was a moment, years before the COVID-19 pandemic, when it felt like a new art biennial was popping up every week. Different cities, unique offerings, and the promise of innovation often summarized these ambitious events. With the advent of COVID, there seemed to be a fear surrounding how often people would travel once restrictions were lifted, and how this might influence the ways in which people would experience culture and art post-pandemic. Thankfully, the world is in a place where traveling is safer, but still, there still seems to be a lingering hesitation to restart the need for constant travel; people seem a bit more selective about where they should go, and which biennials and art fairs they should commit to visiting. A relatively new biennial in Portland, OR is making its case as a show that's not to be missed.

Founded in 2015, **Converge 45** has sought to celebrate the city's vibrant arts scene, made up of new, smaller galleries and not-for-profit organizations, as well as established museums, by offering a biennial that is helping shed light on the wealth of world-class offerings throughout Portland. This is accomplished through key partnerships and inventive programs that engage in a city-wide cultural conversation between creative minds and incredible artists.

Their upcoming edition, entitled "Social Forms: Art as Global Citizenship" and organized by writer and curator **Christian Viveros-Fauné**, brings together a remarkable line-up of artists who are responding to the issues of their times through art, installations, and public works. Opening on August 24, 2023 the show will present a series of new commissions and major activations by more than 50 artists at 15 sites across the city of Portland.

We spoke with Converge 45 founder **Liz Leach** for an inside scoop into what to expect at this year's edition, as well as some information about the history of this important organization that continues to innovate exciting programs throughout the city of Portland.



Sara Siestreem (Hanis Coos), "they would prefer to be a cloud, fastened to the rock," 2013-2022, acrylic, graphite, Xerox transfer on panel board, 88 x 176 inches overall, photo by Mario Gallucci courtesy of the artist and Elizabeth Leach Gallery.

## **WHITEWALL: What was the impetus for creating Converge 45?**

**LIZ LEACH:** Portland has a strong cultural ethos with a number of galleries and non-profit art institutions centered in the Pearl District near downtown and within walking distance of each other. The vibrant energy of the artists and arts organizations in Portland is inspiring. Artist-initiated spaces continue to emerge in Portland, primarily on the east side, such as **SE Cooper Contemporary**.

The more I traveled, the more I realized how rare it is now for a city, of any size, outside of New York City to have a core of visual arts organizations in the heart of a city. This realization motivated me to start Converge 45, art on the 45th parallel, to draw attention to the vibrant arts ecosystem of Portland and the surrounding region. The audience is multifold. First, to invite the residents of the city, many newcomers, to explore the region's abundance in the visual arts. Second, to invite the art world to convene in Portland in August for opening weekend and

beyond. Third, to create opportunities for artists and art students in the region to view the best contemporary art around. Overall, the experience in Portland in the summer and fall is sublime, with the proximity of nature in and near the city.

**WW: Have the ideas and goals you set out for the organization changed over time, or have the artists and partners you've collaborated with over time influenced the way in which you have expanded the program?**

**LL:** The goals and ideas for Converge 45 have remained true to the initial vision. Christian Viveros-Fauné is the third Guest Curator for Converge 45. **Kristy Edmunds** was the first, and **Lisa Dent** the second Guest Curator, which was interrupted by the pandemic.

The cycle of mounting an ambitious project that is city wide has influenced the timing of the exhibition to a longer engagement with the Guest Curator. The goal is to develop a rich relationship with the Guest Curator so that the artists, the art community benefit from this interaction as well as the artists in the exhibition who need time to create their work.

The collaborating institutions such as **PICA**, the **Cooley at Reed College** and numerous other non-profits have been generous in their partnership with Converge 45. Portland is and continues to be a very collaborative city in the arts.



## Engaging the Portland Art Community with a Free, City-Wide Exhibition

**WW: How important is community outreach and engagement, both to the organization as a whole as well as to each artist participating?**

**LL:** Community outreach is critical to the organization, our partners, and the artists in the exhibition. The city-wide exhibition is physically held in every quadrant of the city with the intention to reach into all areas of the city including the outer east side where we will support APANO with their newspaper publication and North Portland where Tavares Strachan and Sam Hamilton will exhibit at Oregon Contemporary. Beyond being physically inclusive we are reaching out to numerous schools including **Portland Public Schools** and all the higher educational institutions in the region as well to inform the students. Sam Hamilton's project *Te Moana Meridian* which will be sited at Oregon Contemporary in North Portland interfaces with indigenous groups and the United Nations. There are also panel discussions and talks scheduled throughout the year that create opportunities to engage with multiple communities.



Richard Mosse, "Broken Spectre," photo by Jack Hems, courtesy of the artist and Converge 45.

**WW:** When selecting artists to participate, how collaborative is the experience of producing works for the exhibition? Do you have an idea in mind for what an artist will contribute, or is it a bit more of a surprise what you'll end up seeing in the end?

**LL:** This question is more appropriate for the Guest Curator. However, I do know that several of the artists commissioned for large-scale sculpture installations, including **Malia Jensen** and **Marie Watt** and a few others have been able to realize some ideas that these artists have long desired to make. I also am aware that there are multiple conversations between many of the artists and Christian Viveros-Faune and Converge 45's Artistic Director, **Derek Franklin**. The process is very involved in some cases and lots of details to attend to!

The decision by Christian Viveros-Fauné, who has organized this next edition, to focus on the ways in which artists respond to the challenges of their time, feels particularly pressing in a city like Portland, which has been a hotbed for political turmoil, specifically over the last few years.

**WW: Can you talk about working with Christian Viveros-Fauné on this project in this particular climate?**

**LL:** Christian is the perfect guest curator for Converge 45 and Portland at this moment. His city-wide exhibition, *Social Forms: Art As Global Citizenship*, is engaging the community on many levels. The exhibition spotlights the ideas of the artists in the show, whether it be climate change which is addressed in **Richard Mosse's** four-channel film *Broken Spectre* or addressing the horrors of war as in the work of **Jorge Tacla** shown at the **Reser Art Center** in Beaverton and **Yishai Jusidman** exhibiting at the **Oregon Jewish Museum** in the Pearl District; and, of course, the late **Hung Liu's** mini-survey at the museum at **Portland State University**. Regional artists address the challenges in our city and many cities at this time and are featured in the group show at the **Jordan D. Schnitzer** warehouse space in *WE ARE THE REVOLUTION*.



Marie Watt, "Companion Species (Envelop)," 2021, vintage Italian glass beads, industrial felt, thread, 13.5 x 112 inches, photo by Kevin McConnell, courtesy of the artist and Converge 45.

## Converge 45 Portland, Art on the 45th Parallel

**WW: It seems like a differentiator between Converge 45 and other biennials is how it doesn't just operate as a standalone show, but a city-wide initiative that seems a bit hard to simply define as an art exhibition. Is this intentional?**

**LL:** The inspiration for Converge 45 is from European models such as the **Skulptur Projekte** in Munster, where one gets a map and bicycles around to discover the artworks all over the town and experience the city as well. **Prospect in New Orleans** is also a model. Prospect collaborates with the city's museums and outdoor spaces to mount exhibitions of importance. In both instances and in Converge 45, viewers get a broader feeling of a place than if an exhibition was mounted in one interior space.

**WW: What are some of the unique qualities of Portland and its art scene that make it an exciting place to visit?**

**LL:** Portland is much like a European city. One can land at our airport, take light rail into the heart of the city center, and walk everywhere. The blocks are 200 feet long and designed for walking. Nature is close by with forest park, the largest urban park in the country, and with the urban growth boundary we have an abundance of riches in weekly farmers markets throughout the urban core. This lush urban environment is complemented by a vibrant cultural community with numerous events such as literary readings, art openings, music and dance performances. Gardens such as the world class Japanese Garden, Lan Su, the walled Chinese Garden, the Rose Garden along with the proverbial stop at **Powell's bookstore**, the largest independent bookstore in America, create an enriching experience.

**WW:** I'm sure it's impossible to pick, but are there any projects you are most excited for this year?

**LL:** I am very excited about the Tavares Strachan neon piece *One Hundred More Fires* showing at Oregon Contemporary and also **Malcolm Peacock's** interactive piece at **SE Cooper Contemporary** as well as the group shows at **Parallax**, **Stelo Arts**, and **PNCA**, and the paintings by **Jessie Murry** curated by **Lisa Yuskavage** and **Jarrett Earnest**, at the Cooley Gallery at Reed College.

**WW:** How might you define success for this next iteration of the biennial?

**LL:** For me, the success of this Converge 45 is to see the light go on in people about the significance of art in our world; for people to experience art as a way to confront pressing contemporary issues, to open hearts and minds, and create economic pathways to success. Connecting people to art is what motivates me. Hopefully reaching young people at schools like **Rosemary Anderson** and creating opportunities for them as well as creating opportunities for the artists featured in the exhibition.

Locating Portland as a significant center for relevant conversations about art in the world would be an achievement.

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CONVERGE 45

PORTLAND

PORTLAND BIENNIAL

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Art

# An Indigenous MFA Program Moves Beyond “Mastery”

*Beyond Mastery* illustrates how the Institute of American Indian Arts is liberating and expanding truly beyond those expectations of Indigenous art.



Joelle E. Mendoza (JEM) June 19, 2023



Carmen Selam (Yakama\_Comanche), "Switch Dance" ( 2023), installation (photography, video, beadwork), dimension variable (all images courtesy Dakota Mace)

SANTA FE — “What is most exciting about the exhibition is the experimentation that each graduate student took on,” says Dakota Mace, who is an Artist Mentor at the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA). *Beyond Mastery*, continuing through June 30, features work by the inaugural Master of Fine Arts in Studio Arts (MFASA) cohort at the IAIA, exhibited off campus at the Coe Center and the Container gallery. Mace called

this exhibition the first of its kind because it challenges Western colonial approaches to art-making, education, and its hierarchical structure. Many of these artists produced work on different scales and using mediums they had not considered previously. The program's Indigenous pedagogical aims and methods allowed each artist to push their conceptual practice *beyond*, resulting in a stunning and thought-provoking show. *Beyond Mastery* collaboratively interrogates the idea of gaining "mastery" and an MFA from an Indigenous perspective. This two-year program, "provides a professional degree in Studio Arts while allowing students to live at home and continue participating in work, family, and community," and includes intensive summer and winter residencies on the IAIA campus in Santa Fe. Director Dr. Mario A. Caro states that the program centers mentorship, supporting individualized study plans and art practices, along with expanding community relations. Because of this Indigenous pedagogical framework and mission, the Artist Mentors enthusiastically signed on to participate, while maintaining their own practices and careers in their communities. Artist Mentor Tanya Lukin Linklater shared, "In my experience and understanding of Indigenous practices, we are continuously learning over our lifetimes." Centering an Indigenous lifelong perspective provides space to take risks and produce innovative thesis work.

"Where else can you say *all* your mentors are Indigenous?" asks artist and graduate student Margarita Paz-Pedro. Many students applied to IAIA because of this radical and unique representation within academia and arts institutions. Even with all Indigenous mentors, though, it is essential to highlight the diversity of their tribal affiliations, histories, homelands, and interdisciplinary art practices and methods. Student Carmen Selam shared, "What I love about IAIA is that you don't have to do the whole 'Indigenous 101,' because there's already a context for Indigeneity, so you're able to really focus on the work and growth." Many of the artists came into the MFA program with decades of experience and developed practices, yet every artist undertook a new interdisciplinary work.





Madelynn Boyiddle-Schoel, "From the Ashes" (2023), sculptural triptych, hand-processed earthenware, modpodge, red tissue paper, strawberry meat and juice, blueberry meat and juice

Dr. Caro notes, "The first year is all experimental; we try to break people out of their discipline [...] and encourage them to play, make mistakes ... [and] grow as artists." Academic disciplines usually function as a system of rules within a field, but at IAIA there's a commitment to foster unstructured creative inquiry. Pulitzer Prize recipient and Artist Mentor Raven Chacon wants students to know, "It's okay to make things that you don't know exactly the outcome. And you *may* fail. Because that is what an experiment is." Many students identify the *mistakes*, along with creative explorations, as part of the growth process; this approach provides the possibility for transformation beyond one's practice. For instance, Shane Hendren entered the program with more than 30 years of experience as a metalsmith and jewelry maker, but during his first year, he turned his attention to filmmaking, working with Artist Mentors like Chacon and Anna Hoover. Hendren's films document intergenerational historical, personal, and environmental storytelling. "Matanza" presents a pig butchering to honor the life of Larry Ortiz while contextualizing Genízaros, descendants of Native American captives, in New Mexico. Collaborating with his family and Navajo community, the films

“Grandma Said” and “Grandma Says Diné” impart knowledge exchanged through oral and active listening, while “Sunup to Sundown” is a montage film of his meditative practice of watching sunrises and sunsets and is projected in a round stock tank filled with water.

At the Coe Center, all the artists utilize innovative installation techniques. Margarita Paz-Pedro shifted from production pottery to a multidisciplinary conceptual practice. “Parts of the Whole” is a large installation that interrogates how knowledge is produced and shared through history, land, structures, and relationships. Traditional pottery designs are painted directly on walls as monumental murals and adobe bricks that serve as abodes or habitats for her ceramic pottery, and shards.

Dominick Porras said that working with Artist Mentor Jackson Polys helped form his concept of “memory deposits,” or individual/community cultural story building (i.e., dreams, mythologies, lived experience), as valid forms of research. Porras’s interactive installation work, “p’Akenmamm,” includes a large-scale net that hangs from the ceiling, inviting the public to interact with and touch it, which triggers a video projection of fish. His films “Culture Confidential: Talking Stones” and “Simulation: Voladores” employ digital 3D sculpting/animation and investigate Mesoamerican cosmovision/cosmology and environmental consciousness. Interdisciplinary artist Nika Feldman is interested in making visible the unseen exploitation of land labor in textile and fashion production. Her haunting hanging installation of white t-shirts, titled “Kriah and the Hungry Ghosts,” explores Jewish tradition, in which holes are cut in clothing, to illustrate grief/grieving. “Footnotes of Atrocity” is another part of a larger trilogy, titled *Unmaking a Coded Call*, and all these works explore her concepts of sartorial sabotage, schmatte prowess, and feminist chutzpah.



Margarita Paz-Pedro, "Parts of the Whole" (2023), installation of porcelain clay, adobe, mural, dimensions variable

Carmen Selam's interdisciplinary installation "Switch Dance" flows in a circular movement, much like powwow or dance, and welcomes the public to engage with that flow. She offers "new mourning protocols," emerging from lived experience. They include large photographs and videos, along with seed bead buckskin bags — "23 Tamish" and "The Black Pearl." As a Queer Indigenous past pageant queen who grew up on the reservation, she's reevaluated her visibility and positionality in the arts, which she defines as "revolutionary," and continues to highlight with her work

Joseph (wahalatsu) Seymour, Jr., whose work is on display at the Container Gallery, states, "I work with whatever medium I can to preserve Coast Salish culture [...] and mentors like Sara Siestrem took me to task on moving beyond a static image." Because his traditional language's alphabet is only about 50 years old, Seymour explained how important it was to include the language in his image making, as in "Enjoy Beautiful bastiqiyu." In his paper weavings, like "Mesa in the Valley," he deconstructs two archival documents and weaves a new image representing Salish agency. Angélica M. Garcia's installation "El Altar Olvidado" includes some of her ventures in paper-making, sound, and film. Her work centers her maternal grandmother, Teofila Peña, who died on a coffee plantation in El Salvador. She intertwines personal histories with the violent

realities and impacts of global capitalism. On opening night, Garcia performed a live serenade offrenda, or offering, which further activated the altar space.

Another artist working with paper, Susanna Mireles-Mankus expanded her painting practice by exploring larger-scale works incorporating text and bookmaking. She looks at the materiality of seeds and their symbolic cyclical potentiality. “Memories of Heat” is an accordion book incorporating watercolor, photo collage, ink, and poetics from her dreams and lived experience. The work journeys through land, dreamscapes, and potential futures.



Nika Feldman, “Kriah and the Hungry Ghosts” (2023), secondhand t-shirts, string, starch, 30 pieces, 36 x 20 x 20 inches each

Madelynn Boyiddle-Schoel, aka Madboy, placed her work outside the gallery space at Container. “Whole Bison Mindset” is a sculpture of an ear made from a butterfly chair frame, wire fence, packing foam, and other repurposed materials. Boyiddle-Schoel credits her environmental research findings and program mentors like Sara Siestroom for prompting her to “educate the already established educators,” with diverse methods of making rooted in sustainable arts pedagogical practice. Her art production has inspired her daughter to recycle and reimagine what kinds of things can be considered art supplies.

This cohort of students pursued their education and art practice during the pre-vaccine COVID-19 pandemic and completed their first year completely online. During their first semester, the cohort tragically lost their friend and colleague DeAnna Autumn Leaf Suazo. At their hooding graduation, her family was given an honorary certificate of recognition and a scholarship was established in her memory.

*Beyond Mastery* showcases the powerful creative openness of “continuous learning” in IAIA’s first MFASA cohort. Much of the public discourse around Indigenous traditions and history sets up stereotyped expectations of “Native art.” This exhibition instead illustrates how the IAIA is liberating and expanding *truly beyond* those expectations in and out of the art community.



Angelica M. Garcia, “Altar Olvidado (The Forgotten Altar)” (2023), digital print on canvas, wood frame, burlap coffee sack



Shane Hendren, left to right: "Grandma Said" (2022), video, 4:11 mins., "Sunup to Sundown" (2023), video and stock tank, 6:42 mins., "Matanza" (2022), video, 16:04 mins.



Susanna Mireles-Mankus, "Memories in the Heat" (2022), accordion book, watercolor, photo collage, and India ink, 15 x 35 1/2 inches



Dominick Porras, "p'Akenmam" (2023), projection, interactive nets, nylon cordage, camera sensor, touch designer application, dimensions variable



Joseph Seymour Jr., "The Mesa in the Valley" (2022), paper

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**Joelle E. Mendoza (JEM)**

Joelle E. Mendoza (JEM) is an Indigenous-Chicana artist and writer based in East Los Angeles. JEM is currently an MFA student in fiction at the Institute of American Indian Arts. She also works with clay... [More by Joelle E. Mendoza \(JEM\)](#)



JORDAN SCHNITZER  
MUSEUM OF ART

# pearly gates

Sara Siestream (Hanis Coos)



**Chief Don Slyter (Doc).** Sara Siestream (Hanis Coos, b. 1976). Ceremonial Salmonberry Basket (Spruce Root (Jordan Cove), Bear Grass (Baldich) gathered with Chief Don Slyter, Triangle Sedge (Umpqua and Smith River), Oregon Grape Dye (Sandy River) gathered with Emelia Whiteside (Mexican Indigenous), Dustin Rivera (Taino and PR) and Asia Tail (Cherokee Nation), Turmeric (Portland). 2017-2022. Courtesy of the Artist

This exhibition is made possible by the University of Oregon, Center for Art Research (CFAR) and Curators-in-Residence, Tiffany Harker and Iris Williamson. Their 2021-22 program, titled HABITS OF DENIAL, features research, exhibitions, and public programs around the theme of “access.” Collaborating artists investigate specific issues within larger systems of power and their embedded exclusionary impacts. Four anchoring programs will examine access through lenses of language and communication, technology and economies, communities and archives, and Indigeneity and institutions. Residency and related programming are made possible by The Ford Family Foundation.



JORDAN SCHNITZER  
MUSEUM OF ART



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EO/AA/ADA institution committed to cultural diversity

# SARA SIESTREEM (HANIS COOS) ARTIST



My work is based in the ceremonial traditions of my ancestors, combined with contemporary modes and materials of making.

The process is informed by observations of Nature combined with a formal structure and improvisational practice.

Nature generates new life through rhythmic cycles of elemental interaction. This is evident in biologic life cycles, geologic and hydrodynamic events, and in the astronomic elements that affect the seasons.

In Nature, basic designs repeat themselves from one form to the next structurally; matter organizes itself in predictable and repetitive ways.

The formal structure consists of three elements, consideration of the space that will hold the work, the intended audience and impact, and establishing repetitive interactions between gathered and or created materials.

This represents a natural system, a rhythmic cycle. From the visual noise created by this improvisation, basic forms from nature emerge, arriving at the second observation, new life.

The hope is that in the same way we receive an energetic charge from contact with the land, other animals or a natural event, this artwork will affect the viewer.

In 2010 I began teaching collegiate studio arts and critical race theory. At that time, I also began advising institutions regarding Contemporary Indigenous Fine Art, education, curation, and reform. Through this labor, I gained access to a broad network of Indigenous knowledge holders and my ancestors, held up inside these institutions.

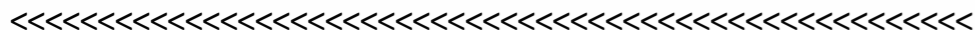
This is how I began to study the weaving traditions of my people. This research broadened the physical canister of my work to include spatial and social forms.

The continuum of our culture and associated practices were violently interrupted by attempted genocide in the 1850's. We have been working since that time to restore our lifeways.

In 2015 I used my research to open an intergenerational, year round, tribal weaving program. The curriculum spans ceremonial and spiritual practices, first foods and protocol, science, mathematics, field work, communal and independent studio work, academic constructs, government to government relationships, sovereignty, museum collections and collection management, repatriation, documentation, professional practices for artists, and gallery exhibition.

The goal was to create a self-sustaining ecosystem; to get the practices into as many of our families as possible, to train our tribal government where it interfaces with the traditions to protect the land, and to create access for our tribal diaspora through digital tools. We met these goals.

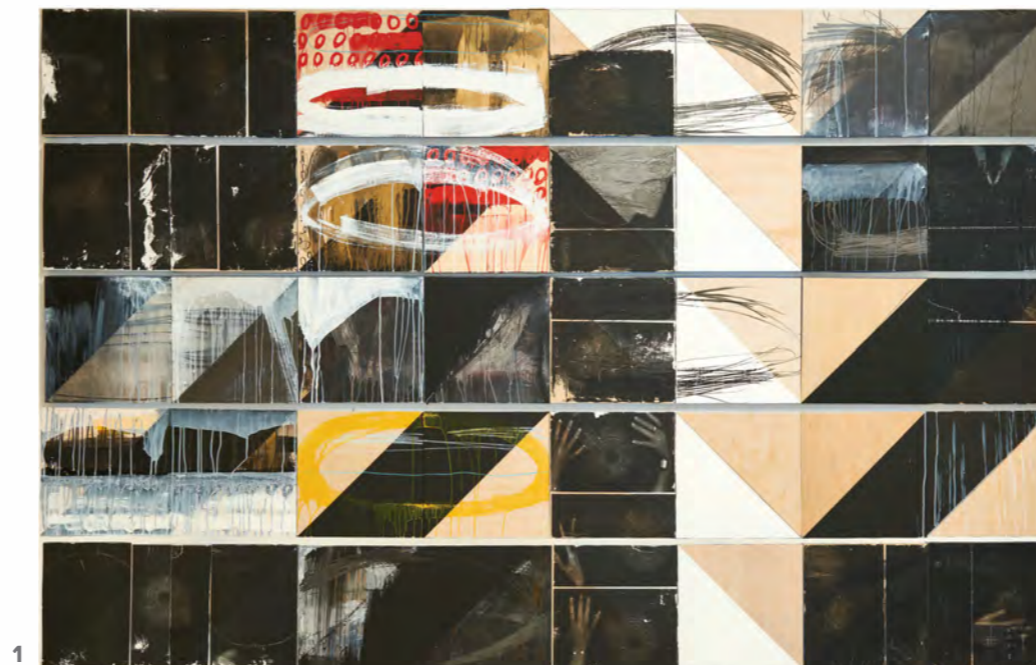
Art is a historic record and public education, an expression of cultural authority, and an act of love. I hope my people see themselves in mine, and that it brings them joy.



>>>\\uuii\\gracias\\thank you\\ everybody\\I love you\\sara<<<<



Sara Siestreem (Hanis Coos, 1976-) is a master artist from the Umpqua River Valley on the South Coast of Oregon. She comes from a family of professional artists and educators; her training began in the home. Her lifelong mentor is Lillian Pitt (Wasco, Warm Springs, Yakama) and her weaving teachers are Greg Archuleta (Grand Ronde) and Greg A. Robinson (Chinook Nation). Siestreem graduated Phi Kappa Phi with a BS from PSU in 2005. She earned an MFA with distinction from Pratt Art Institute in 2007. She is represented by the Elizabeth Leach Gallery. She lives and works in Portland, Oregon.



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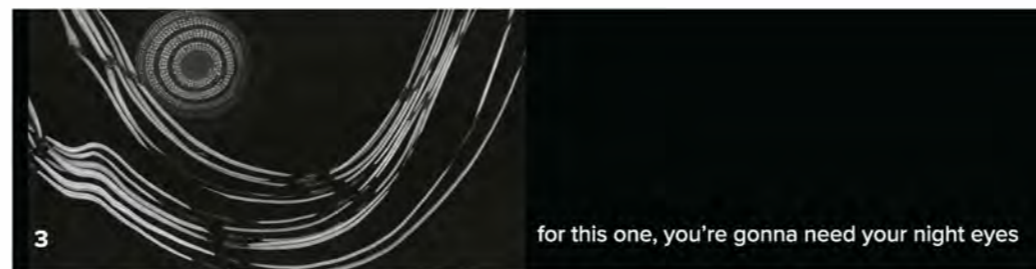


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for this one, you're gonna need your night eyes




5

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9

- 1 summertime**  
Sara Siestreem (Hanis Coos, b. 1976)  
Painting Installation (acrylic, graphite, Xerox transfer, panel board)  
128 x 84.5 inches  
2014-2022  
Courtesy of the Artist and Elizabeth Leach Gallery
- 2 tl'exech**  
Sara Siestreem (Hanis Coos, b. 1976)  
Ceremonial Wincrowing Basket (Spruce Root, Huckleberry Dye, Mud Dye)  
2014-2017  
On loan from the Hallie Ford Museum of Art, The George and Colleen Hoyt Weaving Arts Acquisition Fund
- 3 >>>>>>>>>>bear story**  
Sara Siestreem (Hanis Coos, b. 1976)  
Video (Digital Documentation, Xerox Scans, Field Notes), running time: 25 minutes  
Video Producer: Alexander M. Woodward  
Voices in order of appearance:  
Karen Dalton (Cherokee Descent)  
Molly Jochem  
Sara Siestreem  
Kazi Rafizullah  
2022  
Courtesy of the Artist
- 4 Ceremonial Basket Cap**  
Unrecorded Coos or Coquille Artist, South Coast, Oregon  
Ceremonial Dance Cap (Spruce Root, Bear Grass, Woodwardia Fimbriata Fern)  
Made prior to 1928  
On loan from the University of Oregon Museum of Natural and Cultural History
- 5 Aretha Franklin (reigns supreme) 1942-2018**  
Sara Siestreem (Hanis Coos, b. 1976)  
Ceremonial Dance Cap (Yellow Cedar Bark (Katmai), Bear Grass (Baldich) gathered with Chief Don Slyter, Triangle Sedge (Umpqua and Smith River), Oregon Grape Dye (Sandy River) gathered with Emelia Whiteside (Mexican Indigenous), Dustin Rivera (Taíno and PR) and Asia Tail (Cherokee Nation), Turmeric (Portland)  
2017-2022  
Courtesy of the Artist
- 6 Chief Don Ivy 1951-2021**  
Sara Siestreem (Hanis Coos, b. 1976)  
Ceremonial Salmonberry Basket (Spruce Root (Jordan Cove), Bear Grass (Baldich) gathered with Chief Don Slyter, Triangle Sedge (Umpqua and Smith River), Oregon Grape Dye (Sandy River) gathered with Emelia Whiteside (Mexican Indigenous), Dustin Rivera (Taíno and PR) and Asia Tail (Cherokee Nation), Turmeric (Portland)  
2017-2022  
Courtesy of the Artist
- 7 Ceremonial Salmonberry Basket**  
Unrecorded Coos Artist, South Coast, Oregon  
Ceremonial Berry Basket (Spruce Root, Cattail, Triangle Sedge, Bear Grass, Seaweed, Glass Beads)  
Made prior to 1936  
On loan from the University of Oregon Museum of Natural and Cultural History
- 8 Swahili + Aliyuudaq Dance Cap (Coos, Lower Umpqua, Siuslaw and all our relations)**  
Sara Siestreem (Hanis Coos, b. 1976)  
Ceremonial Dance Cap (Spruce Root (Jordan Cove), Mud Dye gathered by Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw weaving program led by the Artist (Charleston), Oregon Grape Root Dye gathered by Maori, Samoan, Japanese, Hawaiian, and Indigenous weavers from all over this land mass led by the Artist (Evergreen Longhouse, WA), Bear Grass (Baldich) gathered with Chief Don Slyter (Hanis Coos) led by the Artist, Red Cedar Bark (Siuslaw) gathered by Doug Barret (Siuslaw) and Jesse Beers (Siuslaw)  
2015-2018  
Courtesy of the Artist
- 9 Chief Don Slyter (Doc)**  
Sara Siestreem (Hanis Coos, b. 1976)  
Ceremonial Salmonberry Basket (Spruce Root (Jordan Cove), Bear Grass (Baldich) gathered with Chief Don Slyter, Triangle Sedge (Umpqua and Smith River), Oregon Grape Dye (Sandy River) gathered with Emelia Whiteside (Mexican Indigenous), Dustin Rivera (Taíno and PR) and Asia Tail (Cherokee Nation), Turmeric (Portland)  
2017-2022  
Courtesy of the Artist



## Forge Project announces its 2022 Fellows

This year's Fellows represent breadth and complexity of contemporary Native artistic practices, activism, and culture bearing

PRESS POOL • MAY 2, 2022

[\(Photo: Alon Koppel Photography, courtesy Forge Project\)](#)

### News Release

#### Forge Project

Forge Project, a Native-led art, culture, and decolonial education initiative on the unceded homelands of the Muh-he-con-ne-ok in Upstate New York, is pleased to announce the six winners of the 2022 Forge Fellowship: Catherine Blackburn, Dene; Laura Ortman, White Mountain Apache; Rainer Posselt, Stockbridge Munsee Band of Mohicans; Sara Siestroom, Hanis Coos of The Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians; Tania Willard, Secwepemc Nation; and Ilgavak, Peter Williams, Yup'ik.

“As we move into the second year of our Forge Fellowship, we’re thrilled to honor this incredible group of changemakers, whose practices champion those aims central to our mission at Forge,” said Forge Project Executive Director Candice Hopkins, Carcross/Tagish First Nation. “This year’s Fellows represent the breadth and complexity of contemporary Native artistic practices, activism, and culture bearing.”

Forge Project’s 2022 cohort of six Indigenous individuals represents a broad diversity of cultural practices, participatory research, organizing models, and geographic contexts that honor Indigenous pasts as well as build Native futures. Each Forge Project Fellow will receive a total of \$25,000 toward their practice and will have full access to the Forge Project site, libraries, and collection of contemporary art by Indigenous artists during a three-week fellowship at Forge.

Fellows will have the opportunity to present their work at on-site events, as well as online via social media and live-streamed programs.

The Forge campus consists of two structures designed by the artist and activist Ai Weiwei, in collaboration with HHF architects. The Tsai Residence, where Forge Project hosts its public programming, including special-topic talks with Fellows, is the larger of the two buildings. Parallel to the Tsai residence is a Y-shaped building housing a fluid living and studio space for Forge Fellows.

This year's Fellows are a widely accomplished group working in a range of fields:

- Catherine Blackburn is an artist and jeweler, who uses personal narrative to speak back to colonial histories.
- Laura Ortman is an experimental musician and vocalist working with everything from the electric guitar and piano to the Apache violin.
- Public and mental health worker Rainer Posselt, whose background in youth work and food-sovereignty initiatives inform explorations of historical trauma.
- The artistic and pedagogical visions of multi-disciplinary artist Sara Siestroom who combines painting, photography, printmaking, weaving, and large-scale installation with work in education and institutional reform.
- Tania Willard's notions of the contemporary and traditional as applied to Indigenous art, probing intersections between Indigenous practices and land-based pedagogies.
- Culture bearer, artist, designer, and filmmaker Ilgavak, Peter Williams, whose hand-sewn works repurpose hide and skin from self-harvested traditional foods, bridging worlds of Indigenous art, fashion, and subsistence.

The Forge Project Fellowship 2022 applications were reviewed by a juried panel of six distinguished Native scholars, artists, writers, and former Fellows: Misty Cook, Sky Hopinka, Dr. Rose Miron, Dr. Jolene Rickard, Dr. Miranda Roberts, and Dr. Anton Treuer.

Forge Project's annual fellowship launched in 2021 with a cohort of four individuals selected by Heather Bruegl, Oneida/Stockbridge-Munsee. The inaugural Forge Project Fellows were architect Chris T Cornelius, Oneida, multidisciplinary artist Sky Hopinka Ho-Chunk Nation/ Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians, ecologist and researcher Jasmine Neosh, Menominee, and Mohican language preservation activist and teacher Brock Schreiber, Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohicans.



Pictured: Forge Project Fellowship winners (clockwise, from top left): Catherine Blackburn, Dene; Laura Ortman, White Mountain Apache; Rainer Posselt, Stockbridge Munsee Band of Mohicans; Ilgavak, Peter Williams, Yup'ik; Tania Willard, Secwepemc Nation; and Sara Siestroom, Hanis Coos.  
(Image: Forge Project)

## About the Fellows

Catherine Blackburn was born in Patuanak, Saskatchewan, of Dene and European ancestry and is a member of the English River First Nation. She is a multidisciplinary artist and jeweler, whose common themes address Canada's colonial past that are often prompted by personal narratives. Inspired by her late Setsuné's (grandmother) incredible talent of garment making, hide-tanning, and adornment, her work grounds itself in the Indigenous feminine and is bound through the ancestral love that stitching suggests. Through stitchwork, she honors her cultural history, using these techniques and materials as "storiers" while challenging perspectives of contemporary Indigenous experience.

Laura Ortman, White Mountain Apache, creates across multiple platforms, including recorded albums, live performances, and filmic and artistic soundtracks. An inquisitive and exquisite violinist, Ortman is versed in Apache violin, piano, electric guitar, keyboards, and amplified violin, often sings through a megaphone, and is a producer of capacious field recordings. She has performed at The Whitney Museum of American Art and The Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal, The Stone residency, The New Museum, imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival, The Toronto Biennial, and the Centre Pompidou,

Paris, among countless established and DIY venues in the US, Canada, and Europe. In 2008, Ortman founded the Coast Orchestra, an all-Native American orchestral ensemble that performed a live soundtrack to Edward Curtis's film *In the Land of the Head Hunters* (1914), the first silent feature film to star an all-Native American cast. Ortman is the recipient of the 2020 Jerome@Camargo Residency in Cassis, France, 2017 Jerome Foundation Composer and Sound Artist Fellowship, 2016 Art Matters Grant, 2016 Native Arts and Culture Foundation Fellowship, 2015 IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts Social Engagement Residency, 2014-15 Rauschenberg Residency, and 2010 Artist-in-Residence at Issue Project Room. She was also a participating artist in the 2019 Whitney Biennial. Ortman lives in Brooklyn, New York.

Rainer Posselt, Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians, has worked with Native youth, food-sovereignty initiatives, and currently works in public and mental health, including conducting various community needs assessments for the Menominee tribal epidemiology department and for the urban Indian community in Milwaukee. He designs and administers surveys, conducts focus groups, and examines epidemiological data to identify current mental health services needs for Native people in Milwaukee. Posselt's Master's thesis will examine how historic trauma has affected the attachment patterns of Native American adults. This theoretical relationship has never been quantitatively examined with regards to Native American historical trauma. His study aims to elucidate some of the relationships between historical trauma and how it is transmitted by demonstrating that a high burden of historical trauma cognitions and related symptoms result in the development of anxiety or avoidant attachment within members of Indigenous communities.

Sara Siestroom, Hanis Coos, is a multi-disciplinary artist from the South Coast of Oregon, whose practice includes painting, photography, printmaking, weaving, and large-scale installation. Her work also branches into education and institutional reform. Siestroom created a weaving program for the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw people and teaches collegiate studio arts and theory at PNCA and MFA program at the Institute for American Indian Art.

Her work has been exhibited at Museum of Northwest Art, Missoula Art Museum, Hallie Ford Museum, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, The Whatcom Museum of Arts, The University of Oregon Museum of Natural and Cultural History, the IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts, Crow's Shadow Institute of the Arts, The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, The Evergreen Longhouse, Spaceworks Gallery, Crossroads Carnegie Arts Center and many others. Her work figures in public and private collections internationally.

Tania Willard, Secwepemc Nation and settler heritage, works within the shifting ideas around contemporary and traditional as it relates to Indigenous art, often working with bodies of knowledge and skills that are conceptually linked to her interest in intersections between Indigenous and other cultures. Willard has worked as an artist in residence with Gallery Gachet in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, the Banff Centre's visual arts residencies, fiction and Trading Post, and as a curator in residence with grunt gallery and Kamloops Art Gallery. Willard's curatorial work includes *Beat Nation: Art Hip Hop and Aboriginal Culture* (2012-2014), co-curated with Kathleen Ritter, Vancouver Art Gallery (and national tour), featuring 27 contemporary Indigenous artists. Most recently she was one of a team of co-curators for *Exposure: Native Art and Political Ecology* at the IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts, Santa Fe, NM (2021). In 2016 Willard received the Award for Curatorial Excellence in Contemporary Art from the Hanatyshyn Foundation as well as a City of Vancouver Book Award for the catalogue for the exhibition, *Unceded Territories: Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun*. Willard's

ongoing collaborative project BUSH gallery, is a conceptual land-based gallery grounded in Indigenous knowledges and relational art practices. Willard is an Assistant Professor at University of British Columbia Okanagan in Syilx territories (Kelowna, BC).

Ilgavak, Peter Williams, Yup'ik is a culture bearer, artist, designer, filmmaker, and educator based in Sheet'ká (Sitka), Alaska. His hand-sewn works repurpose skin from self-harvested traditional foods, bridging worlds of Indigenous art, fashion, and subsistence. Williams completed artist residencies at Santa Fe Art Institute and Institute of American Indian Arts, and has guest lectured and/or taught skin sewing at Yale University, Stanford University, UCLA, Portland Art Museum, and Alaska State Museum, among others. His art has been shown at museums and galleries across North America. His presentations at New York Fashion Week and Fashion Week Brooklyn in 2015 and 2016 led to profiles in *The Guardian* and *The New York Times*. He produced the documentary *Harvest:Quyurciq*, which received a Native Peoples Action project grant. In 2018-2020 Williams became a Cultural Capital Fellow, a Luce Indigenous Knowledge Fellow, and received an Individual Artist Award Project Grant from Rasmuson Foundation. In 2021 he received an NDN Collective Radical Imagination Grant and, in 2022, United States Artists Fellowship. Williams's professional and personal work is increasingly focused on climate change and its disproportionate effects on Indigenous peoples.

### **About the Jury**

Misty Cook, Stockbridge-Munsee, M.S. is the author of *Medicine Generations: National Native American Medicines Traditional to the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohicans Tribe* and a cultural consultant.

Sky Hopinka, Ho-Chunk Nation/Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians, is a multidisciplinary artist who has studied and taught chinuk wawa, a language indigenous to the Lower Columbia River Basin. Among many other honors, he has received a Sundance Art of Nonfiction Fellowship, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and was an inaugural Forge Project Fellow.

Dr. Rose Miron is the Director of the D'Arcy McNickle Center for American Indian and Indigenous Studies at the Newberry Library and Affiliate Faculty in the Center for Native American and Indigenous Research at Northwestern University. She holds a BA in History and a PhD in American Studies from the University of Minnesota.

Dr. Jolene Rickard, Tuscarora Nation, is an artist and academic. She is a recipient of a Ford Foundation Research Grant and is conducting research in the Americas, Europe, New Zealand, and Australia that will culminate in a new journal on Indigenous aesthetics, and is currently the director of Cornell's American Indian & Indigenous Studies Program.

Dr. Meranda Roberts, Yerington Paiute Tribe, earned her PhD from the University of California, Riverside and has worked as a post-doctoral researcher at the Field Museum of Natural History, and is now the Education Manager at the Museum of Us in San Diego, California.

Dr. Anton Treuer, White Earth/Leech Lake Ojibwe, is Professor of Ojibwe at Bemidji State University and author of 19 books. He has a B.A. from Princeton University and a M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota and is editor of the *Oshkaabewis Native Journal*, the only academic journal of the Ojibwe language.

## **About Forge Project**

[Forge Project](#) is a Native-led initiative centered on decolonial education, Indigenous art, and supporting leaders in culture, food security, and land justice. Located on the unceded homelands of the Muh-he-con-ne-ok in Upstate New York, Forge Project works to upend political and social systems formed through generations of settler colonialism.

Launched in 2021, Forge Project serves the social and cultural landscape of shared communities through a funded fellowship program, public education and events, a lending art collection focused on living Indigenous artists, and a teaching farm developed in partnership with Sky High Farm.

Candice Hopkins, Citizen of Carcross/Tagish First Nation, serves as Forge Project's executive director and chief curator. Forge Project was co-founded by Becky Gochman and Zach Feuer.





# OREGON ARTSWATCH

## ARTS & CULTURE NEWS

### A visual-arts bright spot in COVID summer

Chehalem Cultural Center showcases work by the late Michael Gibbons, Kerri Evonuk, and Sara Siestrem.

JULY 28, 2020

DAVID BATES

COAST, OREGON / NW, YAMHILL

In Yamhill County, for a few more days, visual art enthusiasts have an opportunity to see a sprawling collection of paintings by **Michael Gibbons, the self-described “poet with a paintbrush” who died July 2** at his Toledo home, the result of complications from a stroke suffered in 2006. The exhibit fills two galleries in the Chehalem Cultural Center that are large enough to easily accommodate our new normal of six feet from others. The exhibition runs through Friday.

*The Yaquina Exhibit: A Painted Voice for a Sacred Landscape*, curated by the center’s director of arts programs, Carissa Burkett, showcases paintings inspired by vistas from the Oregon Coast around Newport. When considering Newport, most Oregonians probably think of Yaquina Bay and civilization’s stamp immediately around it: the Oregon Coast Aquarium, the restaurants, shops, and docks along the waterfront, the bridge. We forget an ecological fact: Yaquina Bay is merely the lowest elevation of a 250-square-mile basin that stretches up and away into the hills and out of view. As the show’s notes point out, the watershed encompasses breathtaking geographic and biological diversity and is home to bears, Coho salmon, cougars, beaver, eagles, and other wildlife.

Gibbons packed his paints, brushes, and easel into this area beyond the bay, producing over three decades the more than 45 plein air oil paintings that compose the show.

“When en plein air,” the notes say, Gibbons “comes to a place that feels right to him, then he’ll pause, find a bush he can hang onto and grab a branch. ‘How would you like to be seen?’ he’ll ask. You can almost hear the chorus of the different trees. It’s a sense. You don’t hear words, per se. The language is right there. It’s a living being.”



“Doyle Thorne’s Ditch” by Michael Gibbons (oil, 1987)

The exhibit features a series of drawings Gibbons created in preparation for *The Mighty Oak*, depicting a **Heritage Tree at the Oregon Gardens**. It allows the viewer to see and truly appreciate the extraordinary amount of work — rehearsal, one might say — that can go into a piece before the artist ever picks up a brush.

**THE CHEHALEM CULTURAL CENTER IN NEWBERG** remains one of Yamhill County's bright spots in our COVID-19 summer. The center is open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday just north of the Newberg Public Library (which is also open) and is following the state's Phase 2 guidelines. Last week I exchanged notes with Burkett, and it's encouraging to learn that the rest of the year's exhibitions are still on the calendar — so long as the center is able to remain open.



"Rose's Wedding" by Kerri Evonuk (mixed media,  
11 by 14 inches, 2020)

Along with Gibbons' exhibition, you'll find in the Founder's Gallery at the rear of the building Kerri Evonuk's *Creative Houses and the Sprouting of New Ideas*, also curated by Burkett. These mixed media pieces — sculpture and a few using canvas — reflect a "desire to build or sprout new ideas," according to the artist. "It is a celebration of the creative desire for growth and development for tranquility with nature, architecture, and the figure's past and present." The exhibit runs through Aug. 29.

Out in the Grand Lobby and Mezzanine is an exhibit one can only wish was as expansive (in terms of the number of pieces) as the artist's thoughtful, accompanying notes. *CACHE NINE: the hope material (how to feel not scared in a pandemic)* is by Sara Siestreem (Hanis Coos), a Portland artist who teaches at Portland State University and is represented by **Augen Gallery** in Portland. The baskets, hangings, and paintings on display are few, but Siestreem's notes are arguably the most important aspect in terms of educating the public about Indigenous art — not so much about the technique behind it as the mindfulness behind its creation and

the political content. She teaches weaving to the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians, and writes of that program:

*To share this awakening with the mainstream I exhibit each year's cache of natural materials in public spaces. This is an occupation of public land, an overt political act. To gather and possess these plants is an exercise of sovereign rights, a legal provision for Indigenous people of this land mass to continue to practice our cultural and spiritual birthright. Each plant represents a different relationship I initiate and maintain with Federal, State, and private landowners.*

*More importantly, every very single section of this cache represents lifelong relationships I have with the places I gather and the plants themselves. From an Indigenous world view, plants, animals, and elements are equals, we are relatives. It is forbidden to take anything without permission, compensation, follow-through on promises made, and within the boundaries of sustainability. That means I must establish and gain permission from the land and plant itself. I cannot do that in one day, it takes years. I must visit these places and plants again and again before I can gather them.*

At the top of the notes, the artist acknowledges the occupational nature of the center itself.

*Newberg, Oregon, lies within the traditional homelands of the Tualatin Kalapuya Peoples who were relocated to the Grand Ronde Reservation under the Kalapuya etc., 1855, ratified treaty (also known as the Willamette Valley Treaty, 1855). Today, these Tribes are a part of the **Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde**. The Grand Ronde people continue to maintain a connection to their ancestral homelands and maintain their traditional cultural practices.*

Siestreem is a master artist from the Umpqua River Valley on the South Coast. She comes from a family of professional artists and educators. She graduated Phi Kappa Phi with a BS from Portland State University in 2005 and earned her MFA with distinction from **Pratt Institute** in 2007. She describes her studio work as multi-disciplinary, and while her primary language is painting, she also works in photography, printmaking, drawing, sculpture, video, and (obviously) traditional Indigenous weaving.

*CACHE NINE* will be on display through Sept. 19.



“Taxai lo?lo? t’see mə’kme’k kwansəm”  
(huckleberry pie forever), Coos ceremonial  
cooking basket, by Sara Siestreem (Hanis)



# Sara Siestreem

2017-2018 TAAP Awardee

**Traditional Skill/Art Craft:** Hanis and Miluk Coos Traditional Basketweaving

**Apprentice:** Ashley Russell

Contact Information

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## Q+A WITH THE MENTOR ARTIST

**Describe your traditional skill/craft/art, when and why it is done, and your history with it.**

I am a Hanis Coos tribal member, enrolled in the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians. I am the weaving teacher for the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians. Our weaving tradition is a dynamic year-round practice that spans from the natural world, our homes, the classroom, tribal government, and outside institutions.

In the field of our ancestral homeland I teach gathering and processing protocols of natural materials indigenous to our region. These lessons span from plant identification, uses, cultivation, mapping, and optimal gathering times for each plant. The study also includes cultural meaning, spiritual practices, sustainability, and safety practices inherent to our tradition. I teach my students about the contemporary political nature of gathering and resource protection, our sovereign rights on the land, and best practices for interfacing with landowners, both private and public.

I teach monthly weaving workshops at our tribal hall in Coos Bay. In workshops, I take my students through the primary components of traditional Coos basketry; all phases of natural materials processing, start-to- finish weaving, creating natural dyes, overlay and plaiting techniques, three-strand twine, closed, open and cross warp weaving techniques, basket architecture and motif, and ceremonial aspects.

**How and from whom did you learn the tradition?**

In 2011, I began to study the weaving culture of my people. I created The Hanis Coos Traditional Weaving Research and Education Project. With the support of my tribe and The Evergreen Longhouse, I opened our tribal field to studio weaving education program in 2014. The study and ongoing research for my program and weaving practice is conducted in museums, with regional knowledge holders, and in the field. I studied with The Grand Ronde under the tutelage of Greg Archuleta and Greg A. Robinson. I have been advised by Gail Tremblay, Pat Courtney Gold, Shan Goshorn, Lillian Pitt, and the late Dr. Teri Rofkar. I have conducted institutional research visits in the collections at UC Berkeley, The Burke Museum, The Maryhill Museum, The Portland Art Museum, The University of Oregon Museum of Natural and Cultural History, The Bandon Pioneer Museum, and The Siuslaw Pioneer Museum. The practice of this tradition has utterly transformed my work and life path. It is the connection point for the past, present, and future and the vehicle through which I activate my ancestral and cultural inheritance.

### Why is this cultural tradition important to your community?

We are Salmon people from the south coast of Oregon. Historically, we were a large and powerful group, rich in natural resources and cultural lifeways.

This was violently disrupted in the 1850s by the United States government. In a few years we were reduced to a handful of people through massacre and disease. Our material culture was destroyed, stolen, or sold out of desperation, almost completely. We were forcibly and repeatedly removed from our land to reservation and our seasonal round (the practice of moving according to the availability and location of desirable food) was disrupted. Cultural practices such as language, ceremony, the arts and traditional education went into hibernation at this time.

My generation is working to reclaim and awaken our cultural practices and identity as well as make our presence known to the mainstream. My contribution to those efforts is in the arts. With institutional collections, I am working to establish a baseline of our historic intellectual and cultural property. In the classroom, I am working to ignite these quantities in the people. In the studio, I am working to create a new line in history that claims all of that and provides new insights to who we are now.

Through all these activities, I am training my community to carry the weaving tradition on in their own lives as well as the places that they have impact; inside our tribal government, families, and community. Together, we are working to integrate our weaving culture back into all aspects of our daily lives and ceremony. This tradition is a very important way for us to connect with one another, the land, and our ancestors.

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Sara Siestreem (Hanis Coos, 1976-) is a master artist from the Umpqua River Valley on the South Coast of Oregon. She comes from a family of professional artists and educators; her training began in the home. Siestreem graduated Phi Kappa Phi with a BS from Portland State University in 2005. She earned an MFA with distinction from Pratt Art Institute in 2007. Her studio work is multi-disciplinary. Her primary language is painting, but she also works in photography, printmaking, drawing, sculpture, video, and traditional Indigenous weaving. Her art practice branches into education and institutional reform. Siestreem created and runs a weaving program for the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians. She teaches Studio Arts and Indigenous Studies Courses at Portland State University and Community Education courses at Pacific Northwest College of Art. Her work in institutional reform relates to curatorial and

educational practices regarding Indigenous Fine Art. She has been represented by Augen Gallery in Portland, Oregon since 2010.

### **Experience/Honors**

Her work has been shown at Museum of Northwest Art, Missoula Art Museum, Hallie Ford Museum, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, The Whatcom Museum of Arts, The University of Oregon Museum of Natural and Cultural History, Museum of Contemporary Native American Art, Grants Pass Museum of Art, Crow's Shadow Institute of the Arts, The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, The Evergreen Longhouse, Newport Visual Arts Center, Spaceworks Gallery, Littman Gallery, Archer Gallery, Royal Nebeker Gallery, Crossroads Carnegie Arts Center, Central Oregon Community College, Oregon State University, 1Spot Gallery (Phoenix AZ), Jacobs Gallery, Columbia City Gallery, Pratt, Mark Wooley Gallery, Modern Zoo, The Life Gallery, Zeitgeist Gallery, Pip Gallery, and City Center Gallery. Her work figures in The Bonneville Power Administration Native Art Collection, Propel Insurance Collection, Crow's Shadow Institute of the Art Collection, The Hallie Ford Museum, The Missoula Art Museum, Native American Student and Community Center at Portland State, The Portland Art Museum, and the Regional Arts & Culture Council, Portable Works Collections as well as private collections around the world. She lives and works exclusively in the arts in Portland, Oregon.

### **Awards**

2016 Bonita Mestiza Basket awarded second place honor/"Sgwigwial?txw at 20: Building Upon the Past, Visioning Into the Future," Evergreen Longhouse, Olympia, WA

### **Grants and Scholarships**

2016 Native Artist Grant, Potlatch Fund, Seattle, WA  
2016 Oregon Community Foundation, Creative Heights Grant, Portland, OR  
2016 Bill Holm Center Visiting Researcher Grant, Burke Museum, Seattle, WA  
2014 Native Master Artist Initiative Grant, The Evergreen Longhouse, Olympia, WA  
2014 Hanis Coos Traditional Weaving Research Project Grant, CTCLUSI, Oregon

### **Artist Talks and Lectures**

2016 Artist Talk, Missoula Art Museum and University of Missoula, MT  
2016 Artist Talk, WOVEN: The Art of Contemporary Weaving, Vancouver, WA  
2015 Artist Talk, Evergreen State College for the Arts Symposium, Olympia, WA  
2015 Artist Talk and Panel Participant, thlatwa-thlatwa: Indigenous Currents, Center for Contemporary Native American Art, Portland Art Museum, OR  
2015 Panel participant, Oregon State of Craft, Museum of Contemporary Craft Museum

### **Bibliography**

["Weaving Back to Roots, Artist in Residence: Sara Siestreem"](#)

["Artist's "Whiteness Goggles" Blot out Significance of Cultural Appropriation"](#)

["Art Exhibit Explores the Hazards of Cultural Appropriation"](#)

"Interview with Sara Siestreem," Contemporary Native Art Magazine, Issue #3, pp 34-39, 2014 (cover and illustrate).

[More TAAP Award Recipients.](#)

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## WEAVING BACK TO ROOTS

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*written by Haley Martin | photos by Leah Nash*

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*Sara Siestreem has several jobs, no cell phone and no car, allowing her to focus intently on what she cares about most. "I was taught I could do whatever I wanted to do, so I have some big ideas," she said.*

*The 38-year-old is a multimedia artist and educator. She teaches studio arts at Portland State University, tribal museum studies at Northwest Indian College in Washington and pre-college painting at Pacific Northwest College of Art. She also serves as a consultant for art institutions in contemporary indigenous fine art, education, and theory and professional arts practices.*

*A Hanis Coos tribal member from the Confederated Tribes of Coos Lower Umpqua and*

*Siuslaw Indians, Siestream grew up in the Lower Umpqua River Valley and in Portland. Every member of her family practiced the arts in the home and professionally, and Siestream wanted to follow the family path.*



*It seemed only natural that Siestream would enroll in art school at Portland State University. “It was dreamy,” she said. “I was impressed with my teachers’ brains and that they were there to give us their knowledge. I thought it was the coolest place in the world.”*

*The allure of New York City for young artists is powerful. For Siestream, grad school at Pratt Art Institute in Brooklyn was a cultural and conceptual stepping stone. “I had thought the art scene in Portland was podunk, and I couldn’t wait to get into the ‘art world,’” she said. “I got there and saw that they had a huge crush on us. I realized I had gold back home.”*





*She returned to Oregon in 2008 to be close to her family, the land to which she is culturally connected and the arts community she knew. “I love New York, but I was really homesick for quiet and space,” said Siestreem. “I’m almost six feet tall—I need a lot of room to relax. Everything is compact and stressful there.”*

*In 2011, she began studying traditional weaving. Historically, in her culture, young people were taught how to weave, using the skill throughout their lives. At some point, though, the skill was lost. “During the 1850s, my tribe experienced tremendous cultural disruption through contact with the U.S. Government. The weaving practice was severely impacted at that time,” she said.*



*While she practices most forms of her art in solitude, learning to weave in a group setting has been a collaborative experience for Siestreem. “Meaningful art does not happen in a vacuum,” she said. “What you make becomes pretty boring for those outside yourself if there is no external influence or intention.”*

*She eventually made it her goal to help reestablish the skill in her tribal community. This was no minor commitment, she explained. Just the process of gathering and seasoning the materials takes a year and a single basket often takes more than sixty hours to weave. She studies and weaves during weekly classes at a Grand Ronde center in Portland with teachers Greg Archuleta (Grand Ronde) and Greg Robinson (Chinook).*

*In addition to honing her weaving practice, Siestreem is creating educational tools and resources around the practice for her tribe. She is increasing accessibility by building a cache*

*of weaving materials, documenting existing collections of notable baskets housed in museums around the region and establishing maps of historic gathering territories for her tribal members. She was recently awarded a master artist initiative grant from the Evergreen State College Longhouse Education and Cultural Center to support this project.*



*“In this work, there are challenges regarding the documentation of indigenous art,” she said. “There’s a misconception that if an object is functional, then it is not fine art. This was a way to marginalize our artwork institutionally. Often there is no record of the artist’s name or even the tribe that the objects are connected to. This is a huge problem we are all working to fix.”*

*The body of her work created with Archuleta and Robinson will be featured in the inaugural exhibit of the Native American Contemporary Art Gallery at the Portland Art Museum. This show will open in September and run through December. Her weaving project will also be included in the State of Oregon Craft exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Craft where she will also be featured in a film component of the exhibition.*



*Deana Dartt, the Portland Art Museum curator of Native American art, has worked closely with Siestreem and is excited to share the exhibit. "It's so beautiful that she's willing to take this on," she said. "If she didn't, another generation of potential artists would go without this knowledge." While Siestreem is still learning, Dartt sees an artist who is well on her way to becoming a master weaver.*

*"In twenty years, I want everyone to say, 'of course we weave,'" Siestreem said. It's a long road, and she admits the weight of the cultural responsibility can be daunting. Still, she's confident the effects of the work will last beyond her time. "I'd like the mainstream to understand that we were always here, we are still here, and we're all around you."*