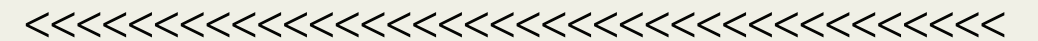


JORDAN SCHNITZER
MUSEUM OF ART

pearly gates

Sara Siestreem (Hanis Coos)



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 (Taino and PR) and Asia Tail (Cherokee Nation), Turmeric (Portland), 2017-2022. Courtesy of the Artist



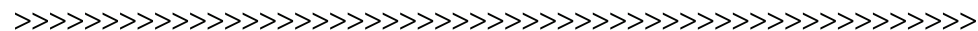
This exhibition is made possible by the University of Oregon, Center for Art Research (CFAR) and Curators-in-Residence, Tiffany Harker and Iris Williamson. Their 2021-22 program, titled HABITS OF DENIAL, features research, exhibitions, and public programs around the theme of “access.” Collaborating artists 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.

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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.

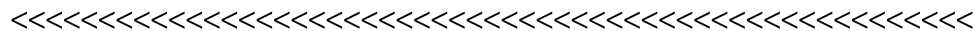
This is how I began to study the weaving traditions of my people. This research broadened the physical canister of my work to include spatial and social forms.

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.

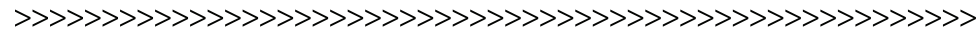
In 2015 I used my research to open an intergenerational, year round, tribal weaving program. The curriculum spans ceremonial and spiritual practices, first foods and protocol, science, mathematics, field work, communal and independent studio work, academic constructs, government to government relationships, 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.

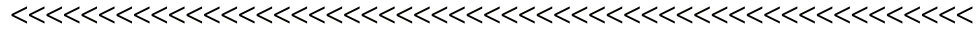
Art is a historic record and public education, an expression of cultural authority, and an act of love. I hope my people see themselves in mine, and that it brings them joy.



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



Sara Siestrem (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). Siestrem 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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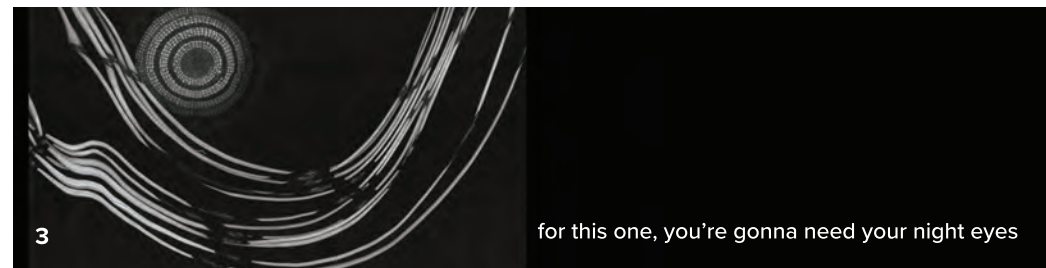


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7



5



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



5

6

8

9

1 summertime
Sara Siestrem (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 Siestrem (Hanis Coos, b. 1976)
Ceremonial Winnowing 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 Siestrem (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 Siestrem
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 Siestrem (Hanis Coos, b. 1976)
Ceremonial Dance Cap (Yellow Cedar Bark (Katmai) gifted by Vickie Era (Alutiiq), Red Cedar Bark (Okwunalis) gifted by Marianne Nicolson (Dzawada'enuxw), Sweet Grass (Columbia River), Blackberry Dye (Columbia River), Dentalium (Philippines), Abalone (Pacific), White Heart Glass Beads (Africa)
2016-2018
Courtesy of the Artist

6 Chief Don Ivy 1951-2021
Sara Siestrem (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

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 Swaha! + Alyuudaq Dance Cap (Coos, Lower Umpqua, Siuslaw and all our relations)
Sara Siestrem (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 Siestrem (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



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

E-mail: sarasiestreem@hotmail.com

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.](#)

WEAVING BACK TO ROOTS



written by Haley Martin | photos by Leah Nash

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."