

Julie Buffalohead Exhibition Opens at the National Museum of the American Indian in New York Oct. 20

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Hostage, 2008, mixed media on paper, 19 x 25.5 inches

Fourteen of Julie Buffalohead's playful narrative paintings will be on view in "Julie Buffalohead: Let the Show Begin" at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in New York, George Gustav Heye Center Saturday, Oct. 20. Buffalohead (Ponca, b. 1972) is a Minnesota-based artist who brings a complex mix of color, emotion and symbolism to her work—often replacing human figures with animals to tell stories about motherhood, identity and childhood. The exhibition will continue through April 28, 2013.

Buffalohead began this semiautobiographical work to encapsulate her conflicted emotions about motherhood and cleverly deconstruct romanticized visions of childhood. The cast of characters she draws from are from Native stories, such as ravens and coyote.

"So often there are preconceived notions surrounding contemporary Native life," said Kevin Gover (Pawnee), director of the National Museum of the American Indian. "Julie is a storyteller whose use of traditional characters subtly peels back these layers of fantasy to reveal a deeper understanding of the Indian experience."

Buffalohead's recent solo exhibitions include "Capture" (2010) and "Expecting" (2008) at the Bockley Gallery in Minneapolis; "Offerings from the Heart" at the C.N. Gorman Museum at the University of California, Davis, Calif. (2000). She has participated in several group exhibitions, including "Transcending Traditions: Contemporary Indian Artwork" at the Mesa Arts Center, Mesa, Ariz. (2010-11); "Animal Instinct: Allegory, Allusion, and Anthropomorphism" at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, Wis. (2010); and "Telling Stories: Julie Buffalohead and Steven Yazzie" at the Berlin Gallery, Phoenix (2010).

Buffalohead received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design in 1995 and her Master of Fine Arts from Cornell University in 2001. She is a recipient of the McKnight Foundation Fellowship for Visual Arts, a Jerome Foundation Travel and Study Grant and the Fellowship for Visual Artists from the Minnesota State Arts Board.