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Art Basel: OVR: Pioneers



I See Red: Indian Fighters, 1998, mixed media on canvas, 50 x 60 inches

For Art Basel’s 2021 edition of OVR: Pioneers, Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition of works by Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. The six paintings in the exhibition were made between 1995 and 2011, and begin with the artist’s iconic *I See Red* series. These pivotal works further extended and elaborated Smith’s use of red as a signature of Native American identity.

In *I See Red: House II* (1995) the artist depicts a clash of perspectives on the foundational human concept of housing. A painted tipi is decorated with a polyphony of newspaper clippings—“Pssst! Need a Great Mortgage?” and “It’s the Lease You Can Do?”—foregrounding America’s runaway financialization of shelter. “Whose House Is This Anyway?”

asks another headline, possibly alluding to the scant reservations to which the descendants of America's first human inhabitants are now relegated.

In *I See Red: Get Rich Click* (1998), Smith addresses the moral compromise of parasitic casino revenue, which has become irresistible for reservations, governments, and the wealthy alike. A casino dealer's vest covered dripping red paint overlays distinctly American newspaper clippings like, "Spend and grow rich—it's the American way." Each work in *I See Red* activates a racialized discourse that might otherwise go unquestioned by reframing a dominant cultural metaphor within Smith's specific aesthetic and political critique.

While Smith's critiques are often poignant, they are rarely straight forward or didactic. In *Black Ice* (2011), Smith depicts a headless figure. To the figure's left is a snowman, composed of four tiers of black ice or snow. The number four is of particular significance in Salish ceremony and prayer, and is echoed in the four points of a compass-like shape by the figure's feet. To the figure's right is the archetypal Rabbit Trickster, a creatively destructive, mischievous character that makes frequent appearances in the artist's work. "*Black Ice* might be a metaphor for treacherous ground we humans suddenly, abruptly, meet up with," the artist suggested in an interview. Many of Smith's works confront looming economic or ecological crises that appear almost unavoidable due to sheer civilizational momentum, stubbornness, or denial.

Born in 1940 at the St. Ignatius Indian Mission on her reservation, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith is an enrolled Salish member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Nation, Montana. Smith received an Associate of Arts Degree at Olympic College in Bremerton, Washington in 1960, a BA in Art Education from Framingham State College, Massachusetts in 1976, and an MA in Visual Arts from the University of New Mexico in 1980. Since the late '70s, Smith has had over 50 solo exhibitions, including at Kornblee Gallery (1979, New York), Bernice Steinbaum Gallery (1990, New York), Steinbaum Krauss Gallery (1992, 1995, 1998, New York), and Jan Cicero Gallery (2000 and 2002, Chicago). In 2004, the Milton Hershey School Art Museum (Hershey, Pennsylvania) opened *Jaune Quick-to-See Smith: Made in America* which traveled to Keene State College (Keene, New Hampshire).

Smith's work is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, Quito, Ecuador; the Museum of Mankind, Vienna, Austria; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota; the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C.; the Museum of Modern Art, the Brooklyn Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to represent Jaune Quick-to-See Smith.

Art Basel: OVR: Pioneers will be available to view online through Saturday, March 27, 2021. For more information, please contact Garth Greenan at (212) 929-1351, or email info@garthgreenan.com.

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