Neal Ambrose-Smith

The (Tense) Present

Curated by Suzanne Newman Fricke, PhD

516 ARTS

February 27 – May 22, 2021

Albuquerque, New Mexico

Neal Ambrose-Smith

Born 1966, Texas, Flathead Salish, Metis and Cree, Descendent of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Nation, Montana

EDUCATION

2009  M.F.A. Printmaking, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM
1989  B.A. Painting, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2020  Windows on the Future, 516 ARTS with Albuquerque Museum, Albuquerque, NM
       Reflecting on 2020, an international print exchange, Boulder, CO
       Allegories of Transformation, PACE Center, Parker, CO
       Larger Than Memory: Contemporary Art from Indigenous North America, Heard Museum, Phoenix AZ
2019  Inspired Thinkers Series, Regis University, Denver, CO
2018  Making Medicine, Garth Greenan Gallery, New York City, NY
       Effeloat (Cree): He who shouts, McNichols Civic Center Building, Denver, CO
       In Red Ink Exhibition, Museum of Northwest Art, La Conner, WA
       Contemporary Native American Group Show, Chiaroscuro Gallery, Santa Fe, NM
       Home: Contemporary Indigenous Artists Responding, West Patties Library, Penn State University, University Park, PA
2017  Footprints on the Moon, Northtrust Steele Gallery, Montana State University, Billings, MT
       Neal Ambrose-Smith, Burnell R. Roberts Triangle Gallery, Sinclair Community College, Dayton, OH
       Exploring Beyond Tradition, Durango Arts Center, Durango, CO
       Train of Ink, SGC International Printmaking Conference, Atlanta, GA
2016  Transferring Thought, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO
2015  Re-Riding History, The Crisp-Ellert Art Museum Flagler College, St. Augustine, FL
       The Map is Not the Territory, P21 Gallery, London, England
       Pushing the Limits, Central Booking Gallery, New York, NY
       Terrain, The Evergreen Galleries, Evergreen State College, Olympia, WA
       Face to Face: Wall to Wall, Yellowstone Art Museum, Billings, MT
2013  Neal Ambrose-Smith, The Switzer Gallery, Pensacola, FL
       Octopus Dreams, Tomk Art Museum, Tomk, Russia

SELECTED PUBLIC COMMISSIONS & AWARDS

2021  Nominated, United States Artists Fellowship
2012  Denver International Airport, Central Terrazzo Floor, Main Terminal, Denver, CO
       Real Deal Printmaking, Bernalillo County for the arts, Albuquerque, NM
1991  Denver International Airport, Terrazzo Floor, Main Terminal, Denver, CO

SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO
       Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art, Indianapolis, IN
       Flint Institute of Art Museum, Flint, MI
       Georgia O'Keefe Museum, Santa Fe, NM
       Library of Congress, Washington, DC
       Limerick School of Art and Design, Limerick, Ireland
       Missoula Art Museum, Missoula, MT
       Museum of Contemporary Native Arts, Santa Fe, NM
       New Mexico Public Library, New York, NY
       NM Arts/Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC
       Tia Collection, New York, NY

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FUNDERS

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In Neal Ambrose-Smith: The (Present) Tense, the artist shares a body of work he created in the past four years to address the seismic political and cultural shifts that have taken place. While the chaos and upset have left many paralyzed into inaction, the artist was extremely productive. Utilizing many different mediums, including printmaking, painting, drawing, and neon, he captured the cacophony of our times. Incorporating familiar images from popular culture and classic fiction, including trailer homes and Alice in Wonderland, Ambrose-Smith encompassed the anger, fear, degradation, and uncertainty of contemporary life. As a parent and as an adult, he finds the lack of manners upsetting and argues for the need to teach good behavior and to accept responsibility. Even with all the confusion, Ambrose-Smith finds a way to express the need to find a way forward with kindness and integrity. As the artist observed, “as a nation, we face a reckoning seen the rise in anger, racism, hatred, destruction of the planet, and illness. As human beings, we have to find a way to work together.”

As a member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Nation of Montana, he feels an obligation to create art that reflects his position as an Indigenous artist. His mother, noted artist Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, stressed the importance of hard work, and he notes that she often calls and asks, “are you in the studio? Are you working?” She shared her attitude that offers a sense of hope, suggesting ways to move forward and return to a time of love, compassion, and manners.

Suzanne Newman Fricke earned her doctorate in Native American art history from the University of New Mexico specializing in contemporary Native American Arts. For over 25 years, she taught a variety of art history courses at the University of New Mexico and the Institute of American Indian Arts. As an independent curator, she organized a number of exhibitions in the United States and internationally. Her writings include a special edition of World Art Journal about Indigenous Futurism. In 2020, she opened Gallery Híñachí at Hotel Chaós in Albuquerque, a fine art gallery dedicated to artists from New Mexico.