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National Gallery of Art



Release Date: June 24, 2020 (Updated July 2, 2020)

## Major Painting by Native American Artist Jaune Quick-To-See Smith Acquired by National Gallery of Art



Jaune Quick-to-See Smith  
*I See Red: Target*, 1992  
mixed media on canvas  
overall (three parts): 340.4 x 106.7 cm (134 x 42 in.)  
National Gallery of Art, Washington  
Purchased with funds from Emily and Mitchell Rales  
2020.6.1

Washington, DC—The National Gallery of Art announced today the acquisition of *I See Red: Target* (1992) by Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, the first painting by a Native American artist to enter the

collection. Smith, an enrolled Salish member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Nation in Montana, is one of the most highly respected artists of the past 40 years. An impressive 11-foot-tall mixed-media work on canvas, *I See Red: Target* addresses both local and national conversations around the commercial branding of Indigenous American identity through Smith's deftly layered assemblage of printed ephemera and painterly touches.

The acquisition was made possible by Mitchell and Emily Rales.

"I am thrilled to bring this exceptional work into the collection of the National Gallery of Art. *I See Red: Target* creates a meaningful dialogue among works in the collection to enrich our understanding of modern art. I am also delighted to add a major painting by a Native American woman artist to the Gallery's narrative of American art. Smith's painting tackles long-standing complexities of Native American identity, and I am grateful that Mitch and Emily Rales have acquired it for our nation's collection of fine art," said Kaywin Feldman, director, National Gallery of Art, Washington.

*I See Red: Target* (1992), made in a significant year for the artist, belongs to an ongoing series begun in response to the quincentenary of Christopher Columbus's arrival in the Americas. The painting is currently on view in the East Building pop art galleries, installed among works by Jasper Johns and Andy Warhol—artists who have also incorporated recognizable imagery into their signature styles. Smith makes clear reference to Johns's *Target* (1958), displayed across the room, in her title and in the topmost element of *I See Red: Target*. She has said the work is both a nod to Johns's famous *Target* and a riff on art history, taking a well-known image and "flipping" it to present a view of Native America. Like another nearby work in the gallery, Warhol's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men (Rauschenberg Family)* (1962), Smith's work makes use of the grid, repetition, photographic elements, and painterly effects to create a memorable image-field. In contrast to Warhol, Smith humanizes her subject.

### ***I See Red: Target* (1992)**

*I See Red: Target* (1992) features at its top a target and dart game that gives the work its subtitle. Smith added further meaning by arranging the darts at the top of the work to allude to feathers in a headdress.

Below the "head" of the work, Smith attached two canvases collaged with clippings from mainstream newspapers as well as the *Char-Koosta News* (the official publication of the Flathead Reservation, where she was raised), a comic book cover, fabric, and a pennant. The alternating bands of historic images of Native Americans used in a reservation community service notice bear the stain-like drips of bloodred paint, which serve as an evocative device throughout Smith's *I See Red* series to call up issues of history, identity, race, and rage.

The intertwined construction of Native American and American identity is further signified by the pennant honoring the Washington football team's victory in Super Bowl XXVI on the left side of the top panel. The game, played by the national capital's team against the Buffalo Bills on January 26, 1992, marks a specific time and place in Smith's critique, with Washington's win offering an opportunity to call out the frequent use of Native imagery for commercial gain. Of this work, Smith has written, "I reference Indians being the Target of the corporate world of mascots and consumer goods." On the bottom panel, a comic book cover for *Son of Tomahawk* (from a DC Comics series printed from the 1950s to the early 1970s) provides an additional allusion to the "tomahawk chop" performed by fans at games. Referencing Washington's losing opponents, the Buffalo Bills, Smith includes images of bison under the headline "Defying the Stereotypes" and an article on the Seneca Nation of Western New York.

### **Jaune Quick-to-See Smith (b. 1940)**

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith is an enrolled Salish member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Nation who grew up on the Flathead Reservation in Montana. She holds a BA in art education from Framingham State College (now Framingham State University) in Massachusetts, and an MA in visual arts from the University of New Mexico. In addition, Smith has been awarded honorary doctorates from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Massachusetts College of Art, and the University of New Mexico for her work and outreach to a wide spectrum of audiences. Smith's roles as artist, teacher, curator, and activist have resulted in hundreds of exhibitions over the course of 40 years, featuring both her work and that of other artists, across the United States and in Europe. A prolific artist, Smith's works often include imagery and objects from everyday life, past and present, and invite close reading to challenge received notions and cultural signs referencing Native Americans.

### **Native American Art at the Gallery**

*I See Red: Target* (1992) by Jaune Quick-to-See Smith joins 24 works—either photographs or works on paper—by Native American artists currently in the Gallery's permanent collection. Other artists represented include Sally Larsen, Victor Masayesva Jr., and Kay WalkingStick. The Gallery mounted the exhibition *Contemporary American Indian Painting* (1953), featuring 115 paintings by 59 Native American artists.

### **Press Contact:**

Anabeth Guthrie, (202) 842-6804 or [a-guthrie@nga.gov](mailto:a-guthrie@nga.gov)

### **General Information**

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

Department of Communications

National Gallery of Art

2000B South Club Drive

Landover, MD 20785

phone: (202) 842-6353

e-mail: [pressinfo@nga.gov](mailto:pressinfo@nga.gov)

Anabeth Guthrie

Chief of Communications

(202) 842-6804

[a-guthrie@nga.gov](mailto:a-guthrie@nga.gov)

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### PRESS CONTACT ▼

Anabeth Guthrie

(202) 842-6804

[a-guthrie@nga.gov](mailto:a-guthrie@nga.gov)

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