

00:00:04.35 **CAITLIN CHAISSON:** Alright. Hello, everyone. Thank you so much for your patience. We'll maybe give it another minute or so, just as people are entering in from the waiting room. I know we have a very full Zoom call today, so there's many guests here and just wait, yeah, just another few moments. Alright! So I see the windows are a bit more stable, so I think we're ready to go now. Hello, everyone, and thank you so much for joining us today for a conversation with our distinguished guest, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. My name is Caitlin Chaisson and I am a second year graduate student at the Center for Curatorial Studies Bard College. I would like to begin today with an acknowledgment that I have the privilege of speaking to you from the sacred homeland of the Munsee and Mohicanian people, who are the original stewards of the land on which CCS Bard sits. Due to forced removal, the community now resides in northeast Wisconsin and is known as the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohegan Indians. As a Canadian temporarily living here in the United States, I recognize my own role as a guest, but perhaps that is too polite and rosy of a term to account for my presence on land, which Jaune's work often reminds us, is stolen. I offer my sincere gratitude to the Stockbridge-Munsee, acknowledging their enduring and continued presence of past, present and future generations of their people in their lands. I also want to extend my thanks to those at CCS Bard, without whom this speaker series event would not be possible. Thank you to Lauren Cornell, Casey Robertson, Ramona Rosenberg and Paulina Ascencio Fuentes. My thanks also go to Rachel Garbade, assistant director at Garth Greenan Gallery, for all her help with coordination in advance of this talk. And of course, my thanks to Jaune. This will be very exciting. So please feel free to engage in ways that are comfortable to you, with your camera on or off. Feel free to use the chat box, which I'll do my best to monitor. There will also be time for questions, and you're welcome to unmute yourself and ask your question directly, when the time comes.

00:03:26.10 So without further ado, I am very happy to introduce Jaune, whose accomplishments are so many. It makes any kind of brief introduction of her futile. Her full biography can be found on the event page, but I'll offer an abbreviated one here. Jaune is an enrolled Salish member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Nation in Montana. She received an associate of arts degree at Olympic College in Bremerton, Washington; a B.A. in art education from Framingham State College, Massachusetts; and an MA in visual arts from the University of New Mexico. Jaune has been creating complex abstract paintings and prints since the 1970s. Combining appropriated imagery from commercial slogans and signage, art history and personal narratives, she forges an intimate visual language to convey her insistent sociopolitical commentary with astounding clout. Jaune's work carries tremendous weight and yet feels light and conversational in large part due to this forged personal lexicon of developed imagery. For her ability to create and integrate her own visual language and her canvases, Jaune produces multifaceted work grounded in themes of personal and political identity. She is a decorated artist, whose awards' track record is numerous. Some of the more recent awards include the Woodson Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. She was elected to the National Academy of Art in New York and received the Visionary Women's Award from Moore College, Pennsylvania. I also just saw this morning that Jaune received the Gwendolyn Knight Lawrence Awards in Art, presented by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Her work is held in the collections of the Walker Art Center, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, MOMA, the Brooklyn Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Whitney, among many, many others.

So this impressive biography details Jaune's artistic practice, but it doesn't even include her many curatorial achievements, which will be the focus of this talk today as it's taking place at the Center for Curatorial Studies. She has made a formative impact on the presentation of contemporary Native American art in museums and institutions across the country, and she has deeply influenced the collecting practices of major institutions. Jaune and I will be in dialog with one another, and hopefully with you as well. I have prepared a number of questions that will draw us through some of her extensive curatorial work, but I also invite you to drop your questions in the chat box at any point. Jaune has also prepared a bit of a PowerPoint, that perhaps we'll get to towards the end of the conversation. We'll see how things go. So thank you so much, Jaune, for being here.

00:06:49.31 **JAUNE QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH:** Thank you, I'm honored to be here. Caitlin and Lauren, thank you to Bard for inviting me. I'd like to acknowledge that I'm here, working, in the unceded land of Pueblo, Navajo, Apache people, and I'm honored to be here too, so thank you.

00:07:14.10 **CAITLIN CHAISSON:** So I thought, Jaune, that we could maybe start at the beginning. What began your curatorial practice?

00:07:23.42 **JAUNE QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH:** You know, when I came here to go to graduate school in 1977, there were a few of us, I mean, White Horse is one noted artist who was in school with me, and it seemed that the instructors were, you know, denigrating anything that we did that had to do with Native identity. And so, I felt the first thing was that we should get together, and maybe talk about it, and what we could do about it. So that became what was known as Grey Canyon, when we came together to do that, Larry Emerson, [INAUDIBLE] and Conrad House and Paul Willetto. And we were all, like, in school, but all struggling with this same issue with, with our instructors. So, that brought us together in a good way. And I remember inviting a curator from Albuquerque Museum to come and have dinner with us because sometimes we would get together and make a stew, and then we would we would bring our artwork and share with each other. And I can remember that she came in and she kept her coat on, wouldn't take her coat off, she wouldn't eat with us. And then she announced to us that, over her dead body, would there ever be a contemporary Native exhibition in the museum. So, those are some of the things that drove me forward, you know, to start maybe exhibiting our work. And I remember that first summer, I found thirteen places that possibly we could exhibit in. And so we each had drawings, we had things like that, that we could exhibit. And they were banks, restaurants, churches--we took advantage of those places who gave us. Sometimes the work wasn't mounted very well. For instance, I had unstretched canvases, that I called 'Ronan robes', and I remember them, hanging them on two sides of a window as curtains. Women in the church. Sometimes we would respond to that and ask, "You know, maybe that's not how we wanted them hung". Sometimes we just went with the flow. So that, that began, I think, you know, my wanting to do this for purposes of education and enlightening people at that point in time.

00:10:21.36 So, I stayed with Gray Canyon for four years and toward the end, well, probably, yeah, we, we exhibited around here and then I started writing to museums because, remember, those are the days when we didn't have cell phones, we didn't have computers, we just had snail mail and telephones. So I began writing to museums around the country and, which was probably very naive on my part. No one answered me except one museum in North Dakota. Laurel Reuter was the director of that museum, and still is today, and now it's the state museum. She responded, and eventually she flew down here and made a film, and, and we have, we have a small film in which she interviewed us. And then we did an exhibit there. But then over a period of time, I would put together an exhibit and then pack it and then send it someplace where there would be an Indian gathering or there might be like a community house. We did that. We did the AICH

in New York, American Indian Community House. And towards the end, though, I was, managed to get the show as far as Italy in San Marco Plaza and San Marco Gallery, an exhibit there. And then it went out to another town, I can't remember the town, in Italy and also the Portland Art Museum. Those were kind of, maybe, highlights.

00:12:07.73 And while I was working on that, and finishing grad school, I was also looking for photographers. Peter Jemison was directing the gallery, AICH, was the first director of that gallery, in around 1978 in New York. And I had been in there and, and I'd seen a little photograph on the wall of a native woman sitting on a bench and she had her hand up, something like that, and birds were flying up in the air around her. And it was just this little photograph, but really powerful, black and white. And I asked Peter about it and he said, oh, that's one of Jesse's photographs. And so that was my first introduction, you could say, to Jesse Cooday, from Alaska. A really powerful, interesting photographer. And then through Peter, I met Jolene and and saw her, her black and white photographs, which, in those days, were not large either. But she'd studied in London, in Rochester Institute of Technology, and she also was helping Peter with the gallery. And I used to sleep on their floor, they had a small apartment, on that floor, on their futon.

And so in those days, you know, there were things going on over on the Hudson River. Whitney just did a show about that, they did an exhibit about the empty buildings over there because New York was in financial doo-doo. And so there was a lot going on over there in the gay community, and, and we Indians were over here, on the other side, you know, in, doing our own thing there. Peter was doing, you know, one show after the other and I would bring shows to New York like, you know, photographing ourselves, which this became later. I was able to find, I don't know, maybe, maybe ten, that was all I could find. I went to Frank Blythe, who ran the Native American Broadcasting Consortium, which is, which has changed its name today, still in Lincoln, Nebraska. And there were people like Peter and myself, and like Frank, who were just seeing things that needed to get done. And then we would, oh, we would start to form something, or try to organize something. And we weren't always all of us successful at it, but and then we, you know, we would connect with each other, not quite sure how we did that. But like, I would go to Frank's conferences that he would have here with native news journalists, he was bringing them together. And I was looking for photographers. And in those days, there were just the photographers who were doing pictures for newspapers. And so it took me a while, but, you know, we had a little bit of a history. There were the [INAUDIBLE] in Oklahoma and then there were the [INAUDIBLE], you know, at Hopi, who had been in the military, and they brought cameras back, but, you know, cameras were really taboo, especially here in the Southwest, because the government had sent, you know, anthropologists out here with suitcases, you know, with holes in them to photograph snake dances. And, you know, the last snake dance I went to, you know, they had pickups on the road and if you weren't native, you couldn't go in. So it reached that, that place. And same thing at home, because the government was sending out people like Curtis, and people like that, to take photographs and, and like even now, today, when you go out to a pueblo, there's a sign that you can't bring your camera in. And I've been to dances where the Pueblo police take the film out and destroy the film and they give the camera back.

[00:16:37.69 So I was working, you know, in between all that, that was, that was another problem that I had, because the issue of photography was such a bad thing and taboo. But I, I took some tenth, the ten, the photographers that I found, and it was Rick Hill and Jolene and Jesse. I don't remember who the others were. And I called around and people would say, like, "What is Native American photography, are they portraits?" And I said, no, they're more like genre scenes. And so, I finally got Rosemary Ellison at the Southern Plains Museum to say that she would do it if she could mount a [INAUDIBLE] show at the same time. So Corrida, Coffee and I flew over there

and spent a whole day there, and Native Americans came from even across the borders to see the show because [INAUDIBLE] drew them, I'm sure, and not ours. But they stayed, and our families talked about the photographs and what they saw in the photographs and oh, they, they knew this person or they knew that person. And then, like T.C. Cannon's father came to me and said, well, I make photographs, too. So I just would like say, "OK", and figure that I'll get another exhibit and I'll just add everybody.

OK? So, I did this for two years. Chuck Daly made a little box for me and I put the photographs in there and they went to Fort Lewis College. You know, they went to Seattle. Joe Feddersen found a place there, in a photo gallery. And we just, I just moved them around to whoever would take them. And so the show grew. So, after the end of the second year, when the Heard Museum was interested in doing this, I had 60 photographers. And, you know, this wasn't, people were not trained or they were taking pictures of their family. Or you would see a picture of, you know, just somebody's living room with a pillow, beadwork or something and not always have somebody in it.

00:19:14.92 **CAITLIN CHAISSON:** And Jaune, was this the exhibition called "We The Human Being?"

00:19:22.08 **JAUNE QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH:** No, that was an exhibition, that was an exhibition about the, at that time, I think it was around 1992. That's a different exhibition. That's some of the catalogs. They're, they're, they're all kind of beat up and quite old. But that one, this one 'We The Human Beings' was at the College of Wooster in Ohio and it went to the Eiteljorg. [INAUDIBLE] was the museum director, who asked me to do this. And then I wrote an essay in this catalog, and it had twenty-seven contemporary native artists, and it was that in some of the research that I've been doing, I discovered that when the priest came with Columbus, you know, and they were torturing people, looking for gold and cutting feet off and hands and putting them, using them as laborers and also packing them in ships to take them back to Europe as slaves. So before that transatlantic thing started with slavery from Alaska, the first one that started was the Native American one that went to Europe where natives were packed in these ships. And at that time, there was, there were several priests who kept diaries, who wrote, and I remember reading an excerpt and it was about how the priests made paper images drawn on, on paper. And I'm not sure about what the paper was. And maybe it could have been a slice of bark, I don't know. And put them on sticks and made the Indians carry these images around with them.

So at the same time that I was thinking about that, I was discovering, as I was reading our treaties, that in our treaties we, almost all of us had a different name than the one that we're called to date. So I at first we're called Flatheads, but that was a name that was given to us by the raiders looking for a tribe that put a board on the baby's head. And we didn't do that. It was probably downriver from my tribe. So, in thinking about that and how we were misnamed and how we, each of us, each of our tribes all had original names that were about our identity, and they would say things like, 'we, the people' or 'we the human beings' or 'we, we are the original ones'. And so I was so fascinated with all of that. And then I was looking at the preamble of the Constitution of the United States around that time, because 1992 it happened, and there was so much going on between here and Europe and in the arts. And most of it was not good, let me say that, it was not. There were, there was a project, I was a juror for the NEA. It was a project in which this artist wanted to marry Columbus in Spain I think it was to the Statue of Liberty here. Wanted to put lingerie on the Statue of Liberty and put and then have, have them somehow get married transatlantically. And my thought was, we need to go over there and put a flag in the ground and claim Spain or do something.

But at any rate, OK, so that's what drove me to do 'We, the human beings', it was about the fact that we were still here, but we also identified ourselves as human beings. And at the time, you know, my dad didn't get to vote until he was 24 years old, but not that he probably did because

he was illiterate. But, you know, when you think about how Native Americans are treated, and I do know that the Pueblo's right here didn't get the vote until 1962, so it was like, no, we weren't citizens, we weren't treated as human beings, we were always treated as other, more related to animals or something. And even now, today, you know, we have Deb Holland coming in from the Department of the Interior, the first Native American in charge of Native American lands. Pretty interesting idea. But, the fact is that all, you know, all, all of our lands, everything, has been in control of Europeans. And, and you probably don't know this, but Native American education and welfare comes out of the Department of the Interior in the, in the Bureau of Indian Affairs, not over here, where the white people and everybody else gets their, you know, education, you know, welfare, all the things that, you know, all the services that you need.

00:25:05.86 So I know I'm scrambling this all around to get to this, but this, the purpose of this was to show that, yes, we are human beings, even though we're in the parks with the animals and the wildlife and because how we've been seen! So every, every time I did one of these shows, it was to try to prove that, yes, we're alive, we're not vanished or vanishing. That, that's another thing that I would, you know, because I was speaking all the time and when I talked to the audience, people thought we were dead or dying or we weren't here anymore or we were extinct. I even made a huge map called, I think it's 2001 tribes or something, I mean, the, the, the year 2001. And it was a tribal map and it was all the tribes that were alive. And yet I could hear, I could see writers who are not, you know, as engaged as you are Caitlin, but who would write about that map and say this is this is about extinct tribes. Because when I would talk to audiences, they would say, "What is the Native American language?" Well, duh, we had 3,000 languages here. And then they would ask they would just ask like, "Well, how many tribes are there?" So I would repeat that and ask the audience. And people would say, I don't know, five tribes, maybe we have 561 and more coming and we have several hundred waiting to be recognized.

00:26:44.84 So, you know, these were the things I was up against when I would speak to audiences and that would like drive me forward to think, OK, how am I going to, like, shed more light on this? And, you know, because art was my field, it was to make another exhibit and make the exhibit talk about something like land rights or, you know, like in this case, 'We the Human Beings' or like, like the native women. 'Women of Sweetgrass' was a I have that catalog here, too. This, um, this one here, 'Women of Sweetgrass'. One of my favorite exhibitions that I did, of all of them. So, and it had, I think I had twenty-four women in here and some of the women have passed on now and some of the women in here are no longer making art, but here's Gayle Tremblay. Here's Kate Walking-Stick. Linda Lomahaftewa is in here. Here's Emmy White Horse. Like in the early days. And I'm so, like, really proud that, you know, maybe this helped nurture and encourage them. Because at that time we had no catalogs. We had we had nothing.

00:28:11.92 **CAITLIN CHAISSON:** Yeah. And I mean, education and art education has been such a critical part of your practice. And so I, I'm curious, like what you think about the exhibition as an educational mode.

00:28:29.45 **JAUNE QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH:** For me, that's been my path. I mean, I can only tell you that people who visited these exhibitions would say things like, "Oh, I didn't know there were that many Indians alive today". I mean, that, that sounds like a dumb statement. But I can tell you that Americans are just not aware. I can remember being in an elevator with Jolene Rickard in New York and Jesse was there, maybe Pete, and we were all in this elevator and this man stepped on to the elevator and he looked around at us and then he said "What are you guys, some kind of Asians or something?" And and we just laughed and we said, "Yeah". I mean, that was as good as anything. I mean, we just couldn't we were all different tribes, so we couldn't go into that.

00:29:24.44 **CAITLIN CHAISSON:** And so it's not only a challenge of finding an exhibition space or a place, a venue to support the work, it's also grappling with very different understandings of world views from a diverse audience. And, yeah, the difficulties of trying to find some common ground there. You've, you've said so many wonderful things, Jaune, and I kind of jump back a little bit to this, the importance of land in your, in your work and in your practice and also in the work of many of your peers. And one of the things that I wanted to discuss was something that you, that you've created in the in the 90s. So, I started thinking about it because this year the Holt/Smithson Foundation Fellowship was encouraging applicants to bring indigenous narratives into the research and historization of the Land Art Movement. And yeah, I immediately thought of you, because in the 80s you started to recognize the prevalence of white artists who were appropriating either indigenous sites or iconography in what was then known as land art or site specific sculpture. In 1991, when you created an indigenous-led land art symposium with Corky Clairmont at the Salish Kootenai College, and you had mentioned to me that it also took, you did another version in New York, but they were very different. Could you speak a little bit about those conferences?

00:31:14.90 **JAUNE QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH:** Sure. The one at Salish Kootenai. Was with a [INAUDIBLE] . So like like that's an oxymoron right there, [INAUDIBLE] grant money that we, that that was given to us. Stewart Sisters, and they had organized, Susan and Cathy Stewart, had organized a group called, I think it was MICA. And we changed it to MICA, Montana Indian Contemporary Artists. And so, so I became part of that co-op, sort of. It was sort of loosely put together. But then they had this money and wanted to do something with it. And so I was thinking, like, you know, Michael Heizer out here and Robert Smithson and all these people are doing, you know, Michelle Stuart, they're, they're all doing these land arts kinds of things. And, you know, it's not, because of our relationship with the land and our, our tribes, that's not something that, you know, native artists were thinking about. We were thinking about, you know, going to school and, and making a painting. I mean, we were kind of like all thinking that way. So I thought, what if we turn this around? What would we do? And so we, there's an old film that's really extensive and it would have to be edited and cut down. But I thought, OK, maybe James Luna will come and join in with this. I talked to James about it and he was all up for that. So Joe Feddersen, James Corky, and Corky has a house there on the reservation, but I would stay with my cousin. So I gave everybody a pelt and blanket and we rolled up in our blankets and, you know, which I did as a kid, and my cousin went down to the lake and slept on his boat. And so, then I brought Vic Charlo in, who's our poet and writer, and he would read to us and we made lunches in the cafeteria, breakfast, lunch and dinner. So we all had to eat together. And it brought together traditional people as well as contemporary. Now, I had kind of thought maybe, you know, some of the traditional people would come around and, you know, want to hang out with us. But like, it brought big crowds. And like, that was really, that was really heartwarming for me, because that's a hard thing sometimes to bring traditional artists or traditional people together with contemporary artists. But that's what it did. And I just have to tell you about a couple of them, because they're just, it's, it's like, you know, I could carry, I'll carry this with me the rest of my life.

00:34:08.63 But Ernie Pepion, who had been injured and he was a quadriplegic and he had a nurse, rode into town in the back of a pickup in his wheelchair and got blocks of ice and he made 'Medicine Wheel' on that lawn at Salish Kootenai College. And then, he put some kind of red, like red ochre on top of it. And then, they would come back and photograph it and it would melt in the sun, about the fragility of life. So a medicine wheel made out of ice, you know, melting away. And it was like about Ernie's life, too. And I can remember, Ernie was so excited to be there and he never got to be out much and, because of his wheelchair, and I remember him flying down the hill in the back of the college, in his wheelchair, and the nurse running behind him, trying

to keep up with him and Ernie, with his hair flying in the wind. And that was just my idea, in my memory of one of the greatest moments of this whole conference and how much it freed people and made two days of just wonderment for all of us, and also the closeness of everybody eating together and us sleeping together.

00:35:31.22 And then and then Neil Parsons went into town and he got Kelkal in fabric and got a ladder and climbed up in a tree that had a branch, a little branch coming out. So he wrapped the main trunk like that, and then he wrapped the little branch coming out. And it was about the elders here as the tree trunk and the young ones coming out, you know, the branches coming out. It gives me shivers when I'm telling you this because, I mean, it was. It was. And then James was there, and James was in rare form. And he had, he found a stick that was kind of like a fork stick and he called it his talking stick. And he would carry it around and like, hold it up to us and then interview us. And of course, it did nothing in the, the I think Roy Big Crane was taking the film, was doing it, was the person who was taking the photographs or the film. And then Dwight [INAUDIBLE], who is Blackfeet, and he's married into my tribe several times now and he took the nap weed, which is a really nasty weed that the cattle can't eat. And he made a big pile. And, you know, that shot course in England, he made a big, made a big buffalo on the hillside, I think it was. And then at sundown we all gathered around and watched him light it like a fuse while it crept up the hillside and burned. I mean, I just you know, I think about the things that that they all did and it's like, it, I, you know, that's, I've got to get that film edited because it needs to be, we need to pass it around. I didn't, I need to tell you this.

00:37:26.45 You know, recently, or well, OK, I'm going to back up. Twenty-five, for twenty-five years, I've been wanting to make a book on contemporary native art and it's had such a bad rap with the museums. And you may or may not know that at the turn of the century, you know, the government sent white women out here to help the poor Indians. And in a lot of the baskets and things that they, that Indian people made all wound up in museums and then rich people collected this stuff. So the rich people give things to the museums and give money. And so that had a lot to do with what went into the museums, what the museums housed and what they don't house, which is contemporary native art. We were seen as bastardized and as inauthentic. And so that was another one of my issues with making these shows was to prove that, yes, we were real Indians and we were authentic. We just happened to leave the reservation and go to college. And now, of course, Indian people know how important that is because it's Indian people who are running our tribal affairs. So coming up to today, I'm working on a book finally with a company. Book company in England. I don't have the contract yet, but I'm like this close. I'm like right here. And the book will be curatorial. And then it'll be essay and it'll be the first native book with 200 plates in it written by all native people. Neal Ambrose-Smith and Mario Caro, and we will have other native writers in this book, with an introduction by Lucy La Par, because she's our bridge to the art world. And Lowry Sims, our other important bridge, will be there as well. So that's all, all this time of doing all of this work is now culminating into something like that.

00:39:39.44 And the second thing, which which I just discovered is that, in doing this, I decided to interview our elder artists because we're losing elder artists now at a rapid rate. And it's, it's actually scaring me. And of course, I'm an elder artist, too, so there we go. But I, so every weekend with the help of Mario and with the help of Neal and Kirsten, we've been interviewing, I have seven now and I'm going to keep moving forward with them. So Peter Jennings and George Longfish, you know, are great, are great elders, Lillian Pitt, they're all, Juanita Espinosa. They are walking encyclopedias. And so now I decided, "Oh, this is so wonderful. It's not just useful for the book, but, OK, this is going to work for and making an archive and not put it in just one place for scholars and writers. Put it here at IAIA". I just contacted the longhouse at Evergreen. They want

00:48:38.38 it. Somebody else just asked me. Oh, oh, my friend Richard Hill in Canada, who is my cohort and wonderful peer. He's just another, I mean he's, well. Richard and I had, my father and his mother were born in a [INAUDIBLE] village at Pincher Creek, and so I just know we're related and we, we both think a lot alike and we're part social workers. OK, so he, he's forming an archive there, at Emily Carr. So you see, that it takes, I mean, I never do anything by myself but say that, you know, it's whose going to bell the cat? I have a little idea, but who is going to help me with this immense work?

00:41:37.86 **CAITLIN CHAISSON:** It's such an undertaking and so exciting to hear about these potential new projects, the film and the forthcoming book. Yeah, and this, this idea of collaboration is so, yeah, you can see it in all of your curatorial work and your ability to kind of bring together a community that for, for decades will work together, be friends. You know, it's such a generative and, and really joyous, it sounds like many of these events.

00:42:14.02 **JAUNE QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH:** So you asked me about New York. You asked me about Seneca.

00:42:18.52 **CAITLIN CHAISSON:** Yes.

00:42:19.48 **JAUNE QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH:** OK, so. All right. In everything that I do, I always try to be respectful and cooperative, and especially when I'm working with arts agencies that may or may not be very savvy about native affairs and and native culture. And in this case was a woman who had heard about the work I did here. And she hired me to come to New York and she wanted me to replicate the conference that I had at Salish Kootenai and do a symposium there. And so I agreed to do that. And I went and she had a list of artists that she had invited. And so there was a wooded area near a native gallery, and that's where she wanted us to work, and so, I was like, not sure about how we were going to work in this area. I knew my reservation and I knew, you know, we had to Songbird Pond and we had the Willows and we had all these different locations that people could work in. But there I wasn't sure. So I began talking to people and then this lady came and said we were working quickly enough. And I said to her, well, we needed to talk about the location here. We needed to talk about what people want or were thinking of or wanted to do. And so we kept getting kind of like interrupted and nudged by this lady. And people were not like, you know, they weren't telling me very many things. So that night we had a bonfire, and we all gathered around the bonfire, and then out it came. Oh, my God, this place that we were in, that she had located us in, had been a killing field, it had been a place where for decades Indian men. Sorry about that. Sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry about that. Um, had come there to drink at night and people had died. People had knifed and knifed and people had died. And they were like uncomfortable and didn't want to work here, so I had to like, so I had to pull this lady aside and I had to talk to her and she wasn't listening to me at all. She just didn't want, she didn't want any anything to do with it. She just wanted us, she was paying me to to lead the symposium and and to get the work done so it could be photographed. And Jolene was there with me and so, we talked it over and we decided that we would just try to work with each artist, Jolene and I would, and we would see what we could do because that, the, the lady, the artist lady wouldn't let us move it. You know, I almost could, this could bring me to a different kind of tears right now because it was so heartbreaking for me and Jolene and I did the best we could. So, but that lady was never happy. She took photographs. I guess it, it she had to do that to, you know, verify the grant, verify that we had done the work, that we were hired, that I was hired to do. But I mean, look at the contrast between the joyful one at Salish Kootenai and between that one and then the location that she put us in. So I mean, it, well, what a contrast. What a contrast.

00:46:19.94 **CAITLIN CHAISSON:** Yeah. And just really indicative of the importance of of understanding, like the ground beneath your feet.

00:46:28.52 **JUANE QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH:** Well, how important the land is. Yeah, absolutely. When you ask me about the land and, and the importance of it, I'll just make this short, Caitlin, because I know we're, we're, we're short on time. But what people don't understand about Native Americans and their ties to the land, for instance, right here, Navajo people, you know, bury the umbilical cord in the corral. And so. I've been thinking about making a painting that asks the question like, "Do you know where your umbilical cord is?" Because that's a really native thing. Other natives make a pouch, you know, beaded pouch and carry it with them. But that's just one little thing about the importance of the land. The other thing is that all of our, all of our stories, all of our origin stories come out of the land. And if you stop to think about it, all of the Bible stories come from the other side of the world. They're not part of our life in any way. So when that was thrust on us, to take that up, it didn't make any sense. And we can compare some of the stories in there, like the Great Flood in Genesis. We all had the Great Flood, too. And so, I mean, that's kind of science, isn't it, that there was a great flood. And about the movement of the glaciers, when I was working on an Indian project in Seattle, I discovered that issue about the movement of the glaciers and how for a thousand years the story was passed down with the Salish people about this. And so the stories come out about north wind, south wind and, you know, the Chinook wind. But we have we have other stories that are similar to the stories in the Bible, it's just that, you know, ours come with Coyote or Raven or [inaudible 00:48:38], the rabbit or, you know, the turtle and the, and then these, these are our, our origin stories. So that tells you that all of our teaching stories, they're about the mountains where we are or the rivers or the lakes or, you know. It's, it's all there. It's, and been there for thousands of years and, you know, some of the things that they've dug up, you know, Ted Turner was digging on his ranch and invited us over there. Those things are 20,000 years old. Let me, we were doing, we were there doing things 20,000 years ago. And we didn't have a Safeway store. We didn't have a drugstore. Our elders kept us alive. That's how I got here. We didn't have those things. And that's the importance of that land, because all the medicine and everything came from there, all of our food. I just wrote a piece for Corky Clairmont's catalog about Corky making his work and going out, and he would leave things on the land every 50 miles. This was about his recent project with the tar sands. And so I wrote about how we, how we knew we were called nomads, but we knew how to harvest and when to harvest, when, when the Buffalo calves were born or the beaver ponds melted. Everything was measured in a careful way, seasonally. And then, we had to go get chokecherries to make Hemas pemmican, you know, those kinds of things. We still do that at home. Dig for kamus. And all, all that stuff is not in the Bible. The Bible doesn't have kamus. The Bible doesn't have, you know, chokecherries. They, they have foods that are foreign to us. So, people here don't realize how foreign that book is and how our, you know, our oral material and now being written down are really important to us. And they're all connected. They're all connected to this land, all the trees, all the all the flowers, all the herbs, all the medicine, everything there. All the animals, all, for thousands of years, they kept us alive.

00:51:03.89 **CAITLIN CHAISSON:** Yeah. And. It's the richness of also cultural practice that has been happening for thousands of years. It's making me think of, of your prints here, enormous print, that says 40,000 years of American art. And in all of that cultural production, I also I know we're running out of time. There's so much more to talk about. But I did want to ask one last question about thinking about collecting practices and collecting Native American art. And then we can open it up for maybe, a little bit of questions, perhaps 15 minutes or so, if there's, if people are willing to stay a little bit longer. But, Jaune, you've, you've made such an impact on collecting practices of museums and institutions and galleries. And there's, there's I guess, like two things that I want to talk about, but maybe I'll start with this recent, a more recent one. So last year in 2020, not very long ago, the National Gallery of Art in Washington acquired your painting "I see Red Target" from 1992. And this has received a lot of press because it was noted as the first time a painting by a Native American had been purchased by the National Museum. But I know

you're going to want to clarify that. But yeah, I'm just wondering, like in this experience and also your previous experiences, what do you believe is the role of collections in the purchase and maintenance and presentation of Native American art?

00:52:47.70 **JAUNE QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH:** Well, you know, I can't see any reason why any institution in this country would not have contemporary native art. A lot of them have collections of antiquities, but not to have contemporary native art. And so, like, when I look at a museum like the Figi, I think it's in Ohio, has a big collection of Haitian art. It all has to do with a collector who collects the art and then, you know, gives it to a museum. So the other day I wrote to Lowry and I said, "You know, Lowry, here's a reason why we people of color are not really widely collected in the museums", although African-Americans right now are certainly having their day. Black Lives Matter is really making a difference. It's also opening the doors for native people as well. And the fact is, that you have white collectors who collect, you know, hundreds of like landscape paintings. And then I just saw the other day, where this couple were giving their landscape paintings to some museum. I wrote to Lowry and I said, "We can't compete with this". I said, "They buy one of our paintings, and yet their, their storage is laden with thousands of like white people's paintings and sculpture". Look at all the Greek civis kind of sculptures that are in these museums. And these rich people collect that. And then, you know, off it goes and then the museum buys, you know, one native painting, you know, and maybe two African-American paintings. And so, even when the Baltimore Museum tried to change that a little bit, remember the big dust up there about letting go of a Warhol and a couple of other paintings and people, you know, white artists, just like en mass, you flooded the museum with messages, "How could you sell those paintings, yada, yada". And so the Baltimore Museum said, OK, they're not going to do that because this white art is so important and they're figuring, they'll figure out another way to purchase a painting. So, yes. So the National Gallery, yes, it was a big deal. And I'm so proud and I was thrilled. But, you know, I mean, you could have picked my name out of a fishbowl because they didn't know who I was and could have been anybody. But I was happy that it was me. Now, Leon Polk Smith was there already.

00:55:37.08 **CAITLIN CHAISSON:** Mhm.

00:55:38.43 **JAUNE QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH:** And though he's not widely recognized as a native man, he was born in Indian territory. And he, in those days, they didn't keep good records and here's a fact that the agents that they sent out to our reservations to keep the records up and we're able to read and write a little better than the Indian people and often were really corrupt, crooked people. And I know that just from all the stories that I've been told at home and by other people and by Wilma Mankiller, about how those guys would like, ask baksheesh for you, pay me and I'll put your name on the roll. And they put their own grandchildren and their own, who are all white, their own children on the rolls. And they're still there to this day. And Indian people who should have been on the rolls didn't get on the rolls because they didn't have the money to pay those guys, those corrupt guys. OK, there's a thousand stories. I wish I could write them all down about how crooked this system is. And so Leon Polke Smith doesn't in his estate, I mean, his foundation, he doesn't have it written down in there that he's native because of this public law, which is a racist law, public law 101466, that is, that is a racist law. It's stating that if you have no documentation, you cannot call yourself and so identify yourself that way. And so, like when I talk to my African-American friends and I've talked to the Latinx friends and everybody else, they get "What you, you can't, you know, you can't call yourself what you think you are, what your family you know, how they raised you?" No, you can't. We have the law here. So you know what? People don't know their history. That is the issue here. Is that all the young ones out there do not know the history that we grew up in, the violent, racist, horrid history that I come out of. they don't know this. And Wilma and I used to talk about this at length.

00:57:57.81 **CAITLIN CHAISSON:** And perhaps that's one of the ways that exhibitions and exhibition making and indigenous led exhibition making can really make a difference here.

00:58:08.17 **JAUNE QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH:** Yes.

00:58:10.69 **CAITLIN CHAISSON:** I have a million other questions, but I do want to make some space for for others.

00:58:16.00 **JAUNE QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH:** So can I tell you a secret?

00:58:18.88 **CAITLIN CHAISSON:** Yes, please.

00:58:20.23 **JAUNE QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH:** I mean, you and me, because of that situation at the National Gallery. I've been contacted by them to curate a contemporary native show for them. I'm not huge, not a huge space, but I've been working with them every week. They're really, the three curators I'm working with are really lovely and wonderful. Molly Donovan is the head curator and this will be the first contemporary, just think of that, the first contemporary native exhibit there [INAUDIBLE] must be in today's enlightened world. Then here we are. We are the first peoples of this country. And how can how can this be? Yeah. Anyway, yeah, that's a new project.

00:59:22.90 **CAITLIN CHAISSON:** Very exciting. And I'll I'll admit, I've been doing a poor job of keeping track of the chat, so if you have any questions, perhaps just resurface them in the chat box or you're welcome to go and unmute yourself and and join in. If, if while we're waiting, I could ask, um, OK, while we're waiting, I could ask perhaps one more question about kind of collection development, because I'm really interested about this and. You, you made an arrangement with the Missoula Art Museum and you promised them a print from every subsequent body of work that you would make in the future, but the stipulation was that they also had to add a piece by another Native American artist each time your work entered into the collection. So you created a situation where your own work was actually ushering in the work of other artists. How did you think to do this and what did that do to the collection?

01:00:42.57 **JAUNE QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH:** Well, you know, in Montana, I mean, you know, there was a lot of racism in Montana, let me say it that way. And when Lauren million came into the museum, I had already worked with her on a jury at the National Endowment for the Arts several years before, and she ran, or owned,, a feminist bookstore in Seattle, and she married and moved to Missoula and became the director of the museum. And when we did the symposium, the Land Land Art Symposium Salish Kootenai College, she came out there and that was the first time that any anybody from any of the museums, you know, paid any attention to native people. And I was so impressed that she stayed. She came every day for two days and she would eat with us and, and hung out with us and talk to us. That was a whole new kind of thing going on there. And so eventually I got this idea that if I, I learned that if I this, I learned this early on that if I wanted to make something happen, I had to make a group effort out of it and I had to name it. That is, you know, if I gave any advice to anybody, that would be part of organizing 101. So, I decided, OK, they're not collecting native art, they don't have native art there. So what if I make like a fund? So I wrote a check. I gave them, like, a nice sum of money, and I promised to give them all of my life's work in, in printmaking. And I would even come and talk to their board about it. And I went and talked to this all white board and there was a luncheon, flew myself up there, paid for it myself, got there and gave them this lovely talk. I can tell you about two other, I'll tell you about two other things similar to this, one worked out and one, maybe not so much. But in this case, you know, they didn't jump on it right away. That's been my that's, that's always been a shock to me because, you know, when I present it, you know, I have a lot of enthusiasm, of course, and I

have a real love for what I'm doing. And so I always expect to kind of attach that to somebody. And they said, they would think about this, they would discuss it and they'd get back to me and I think it took 'em a month before, like, what was they asking? I was I was giving everything to them! And I was only asking them to consider making a collection of contemporary native art! How hard is that?

01:03:43.59 **CAITLIN CHAISSON:** Yeah, yeah. And so what was the impact in the end?

01:03:48.93 **JAUNE QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH:** Well, they have they have a good collection there. I've given them other artists work that I purchased and traded for. I've continued to give them art and I recommend artists to them to do exhibitions. Lillian Pitt just had a big exhibition there and I nudged them to do that. Corky's catalog, I helped with that. I do things like that with them all the time. They're, they're always hearing from me, but they're 60 miles from my reservation. So, you know, I feel, I feel the importance of that also. Then I went to the university and I tried to do the same thing over there with their museum. And so far they've got my artwork, they've got my money, and I've never heard from them. So, I'm hoping that one of these days they wake up over there because they're sitting on Salish land. That is our original land. And we were forced to sign the Hellgate Treaty. So, I would like everybody there to know about that.