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Rose B. Simpson: “Which Artists Are Getting the Most Play in U.S. Museums This Month? These 6 figures top our tally from hundreds of shows.”

By Ben Davis  
March 12, 2025



Cara Romero, *3 Sisters* (2022). Courtesy the Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth © Cara Romero.

I am back with our quarterly look at which artists are having a moment at art institutions in the United States.

**Method:** I combed through the temporary exhibitions on view at more than 250 museums, counting which living artists are on view at any time in March 2025. The resulting list includes a little more than 3,700 artist names. Of these, only a few hundred appear more than once. And of those, only a very few repeat multiple times.

Because I’m most interested in breadth of influence, I don’t make any distinctions between bigger and smaller institutions. I rank career retrospectives and surveys highly, followed by special commissions or exhibitions that spotlight a specific body of work, biennial appearances, and then inclusions in group shows.

There’s no central source for all this data and museum websites are not always complete or reliable. There are bound to be things I missed. I still like doing this because it gives me a snapshot of the moment, and a sense to the influence of a wide range of figures—some of whom I wouldn’t know otherwise.

**Themes This Month:** Speaking of “influential figures I wouldn’t know otherwise”... Cara Romero is far and away the artist having the biggest March, and she’s not a figure I knew much about at all.

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Three of the six artists here have Native American backgrounds. Their names in some cases overlap in the large number of current shows devoted to celebrating Indigenous artists at U.S. museums right now.

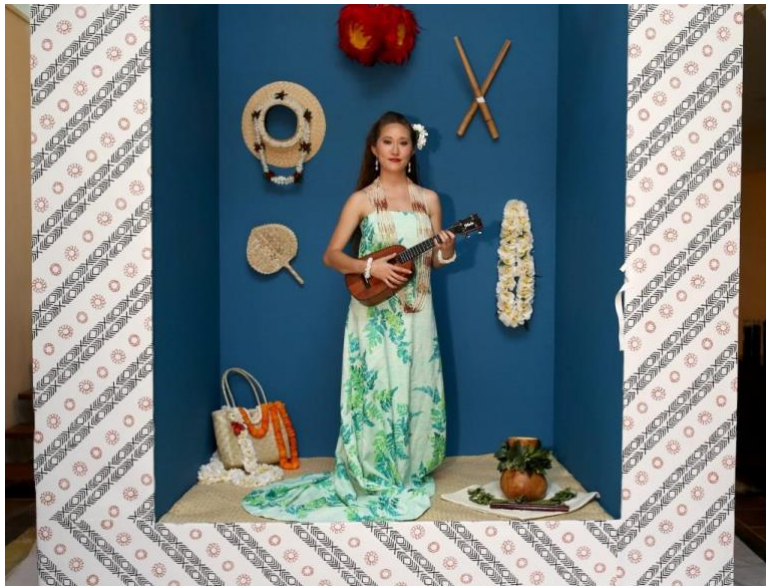
I should mention one artist who does *not* appear here, because I'm limiting the list to living artists: Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. The painter, curator, and advocate of Native art died in January at 85. She was hugely influential, appeared near the top of December's tally, and would have been here again thanks to her presence in many museums, including an exhibition dedicated to her work at the Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers University, coinciding with "Indigenous Identities: Here, Now & Always," a show that she curated that also happens to feature all three of the Native artists on this list.

In terms of media, Amy Sherald is only the second painter I've seen in these round-ups—the first was Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, last time.

In terms of common themes in March's list, the negotiation of traditional heritage and the prickly dynamics of post-colonial representation is a big one, cutting across a number of practices. Alongside plenty of considerations of history and the past, there's a strain of sci-fi, from Romero's "Indigenous Futurisms" series to Tuán Andrew Nguyễn's poetic post-apocalyptic meditations.

Here's the list, showing where you can find these artists this month.

### 1. Cara Romero



Student Kaitlyn Anderson poses in a doll-box set with Native Hawaiian props for photographer Cara Romero. (Photo by Jonathan Wiggs/The Boston Globe via Getty Images)

The Santa Fe-based Romero (b. 1977) is a maker of vivid, stylized photos. She has staged dream-like imagery evoking the history of Native displacement (*Water Memory*, 2015), made work mocking the depictions of Native Americans in pop culture (*TV Indians*, 2017), and most recently explored a stylish "Indigenous Futurism" (*3 Sisters*, 2022). "My greater intention is to create a critical visibility for modern Natives, to get away from that one-story narrative, and to dig into our multiple identities," she told *New Mexico Magazine* back in 2019

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This month, the Hood Museum at Dartmouth College in Hanover, N.H., is featuring a large retrospective of her work, including pieces she did with students styling them as life-size “American Doll” figures. Meanwhile, the Figge Museum in Davenport, Iowa, has an exhibition pairing her photography with the work of her husband, Diego Romero, who fuses Pueblo pottery tradition with comicbook-style graphics to witty effect.

**SURVEYS:**

—“Cara Romero: Panûpünüwügai (Living Light)” at the Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H., January 18-August 10

**SPOTLIGHTS:**

—“Cara and Diego Romero: Tales of Futures Past” at the Figge Art Museum, Davenport, Iowa, March 8-June 8

**GROUPS:**

—“Nature on Notice: Contemporary Art and Ecology” at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, December 21, 2024-March 7, 2025

—“American Sunrise: Indigenous Art at Crystal Bridges” at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Ark., November 9, 2024-March 23, 2025

—“Everforward, Neverback” at the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY., January 25-April 13

—“Dazzle of Darkness” at the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, Colo., January 23-May 4

—“There Are Other Skies” at the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Ariz., February 22-June 1

—“Divergence of Legacy: Art of the American West in the 21st Century” at the Tucson Museum of Art, Ariz., February 22-June 22

—“Bold Women” at the Spencer Museum of Art, Lawrence, Kansas, February 18–July 6

—“On and Off Stage: Performance and Persona” at the Addison Gallery of Art, Andover, Mass., February 22-July 31

—“Second Nature: Photography in the Age of the Anthropocene” at the Cantor Art Center, Stanford University, Stanford, Calif., February 26-August 3

—“Smoke in Our Hair: Native Memory and Unsettled Time” at the Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, N.Y., February 14-August 31

—“Indigenous Identities: Here, Now & Always” at the Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J., February 1-December 21

**2. Shahzia Sikander**



Installation view of “Shahzia Sikander: Collective Behavior” at the Cincinnati Art Museum. Photo: Phil Armstrong. Courtesy the Cincinnati Art Museum

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An important artist since the 1990s, Sikander (b. 1969) is known for elegant paintings and animations riffing on and updating the look of traditional miniatures, and, more recently, sculptures that channel mythical figures and evoke cross-cultural collisions.

It was only a few years ago that a big retrospective, “Shahzia Sikander: Extraordinary Realities,” crossed the country. This month, she ranks very highly because of an unusual confluence: two museums on opposite sides of Ohio are presenting celebrations of her career. Both are titled “Collective Behavior,” and draw from a [large-scale tribute](#) that they organized together as a collateral exhibition at last year’s Venice Biennale. The Cincinnati Art Museum boasts that its iteration is the “largest and most comprehensive presentation of Sikander’s remarkable career;” Cleveland’s selection of the artist’s works is mixed together with objects from the museum’s South Asian collections, highlighting some of Sikander’s inspirations.

**SURVEYS:**

- “Shahzia Sikander: Collective Behavior” at the Cincinnati Art Museum, February 14-May 4
- “Shahzia Sikander: Collective Behavior” at the Cleveland Museum of Art, February 14-May 4

**GROUPS:**

- “Uncanny” at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C., February 28-August 10

**3. Rose B. Simpson**



Rose B. Simpson’s *A’gin* (2025) installed in front of the Honolulu Museum of Art. Courtesy Honolulu Museum of Art.

Simpson’s name repeats from last December’s list of most-seen artists. A few shows she was in then have closed since, but a couple of new ones opened. These include an appearance in the Hawai’i Triennial, where her sentinel-like sculpture *A’gin* (2025) greets visitors to the Honolulu Museum of Art.

**SPOTLIGHTS:**

- “Rose B. Simpson: Strata” at the Cleveland Museum of Art, July 14, 2024-April 13, 2025

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**BIENNIALS:**

“Hawai‘i Triennial 2025: Aloha Nō” at the Honolulu Museum of Art, February 15–May 4

**GROUPS:**

- “Tha Sun Will Set: Contemporary Abstraction and the Body” at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, November 16, 2024-April 6, 2025
- “Bold Women” at the Spencer Museum of Art, Lawrence, Kansas, February 18–July 6
- “Making Their Mark: Works from the Shah Garg Collection” at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, Calif., October 27, 2024-April 20, 2025
- “That Which Binds Us” at the Buffalo AKG Museum, N.Y., November 9, 2024-May 12, 2025
- “Indigenous Identities: Here, Now & Always” at the Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J., February 1-December 21
- “Art and Design from 1900 to Now” at the Rhode Island School of Design Museum, Providence, June 4, 2022-September 1, 2026

**4. Amy Sherald**

Installation view of “Amy Sherald: American Sublime” at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Photo: Matthew Millman. Courtesy SFMoMA.

“My work can be employed in different ways, and I like it to sit in all kind of places, but I also need it just to be paintings of everyday Black people just being themselves,” Sherald (b. 1973) told Artnet’s Sarah Cascone just after she rocketed to fame on the strength of her Michelle Obama portrait, back in 2018. “I say that I paint America.” Since then, Sherald’s portraiture has continued to build a large following, capped by the touring retrospective, “Amy Sherald: American Sublime,” which just closed at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art before opening at the Whitney Museum next month—though the Whitney is starting its Sherald festivities early, debuting a newly commissioned public artwork, *Four Ways of Being*, outside its Meatpacking District/Manhattan home, this month.

**SURVEYS:**

—Amy Sherald: American Sublime” at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, November 16, 2024-March 9, 2025

**SPOTLIGHTS:**

—“Amy Sherald: Four Ways of Being” at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, March 25-September

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**GROUPS:**

—“Giants: Art from the Dean Collection of Swizz Beatz and Alicia Keys” at the Minneapolis Institute of Art, March 8-July 13

—“Ordinary People: Photorealism and the Work of Art since 1968” at the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, November 23, 2024-May 4, 2025

**5. Sky Hopinka**



Installation view of Sky Hopinka, *Sunflower Siege Engine* (2022). Courtesy of the artist, and Tanya Leighton, Berlin and Los Angeles

A maker of thoughtful experimental films, Hopinka (b. 1984) is this month featured in a truly impressive array of group shows. The Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive is also celebrating the recent acquisition of his film *Sunflower Siege Engine* (2022), which is about the occupation of nearby Alcatraz by Native activists in the '70s (among other things).

“I want people to watch these films because I want them to be part of a larger conversation of, like, then what comes next?” Hopinka told PBS in 2023, shortly after he won the MacArthur “Genius” Grant. “What does the next generation of Indigenous experimental filmmakers look like?”

**SPOTLIGHTS:**

—“Collection Focus / Sky Hopinka: Sunflower Siege Engine” at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, Calif., March 12–August 17

**GROUPS:**

—“When You See Me: Visibility in Contemporary Art/History” at the Dallas Museum of Art, April 7, 2024-April 13, 2025

—“Sovereign Memory: Photography, Remembrance, and Displaced Histories” at the Davis Museum, Wellesley, Mass., February 7-June 1

—“Widening the Lens: Photography, Ecology, and the Contemporary Landscape” at the Phoenix Art Museum, February 26-June 15

—“Exploding Native Inevitable” at the Sheldon Museum of Art, Middlebury, Vt., February 7-July 13

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—“Smoke in Our Hair: Native Memory and Unsettled Time” at the Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, N.Y., February 14–August 31

—“Ways of Knowing” at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, March 8–September 7

—“Indigenous Identities: Here, Now & Always” at the Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J., February 1–December 21

## 6. Tuấn Andrew Nguyễn



Still from Tuan Andrew Nguyen, *The Island* (2017). Courtesy Smithsonian American Art Museum.

The film works of Nguyễn (b. 1976) weave together science fiction, art history, and post-colonial political narratives in unexpected ways. The sheer range of connections allowed by such work has made him a favorite of curators around the world in recent years.

Indeed, three U.S. institutions have built shows around Nguyễn’s vision this month: *We Were Lost in Our Country* (2019) serves as inspiration and centerpiece of the eponymous show at the Nevada Museum of Art in Reno, focusing on an incident from the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists in Australia; his post-apocalyptic fable *The Boat People* (2020) is at the Des Moines Art Center in Iowa, paired with Mika Rottenberg’s *Cheese* (2007), for a show about the crossover of myth and history; and *The Island* (2017) is on view at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C., where it is shown with a sculptural headdress Nguyễn created as a prop for that film, which imagines an island refugee camp in a future after a nuclear cataclysm.

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