

Andrea Carlson's two new artworks for Prospect.6 lean more heavily into the depiction of an object that is often viewed as a Native signifier: the canoe. In these two new sculptural installations, Carlson explores the interconnectedness of communities from the north, like the Ojibwe, to those located in the New Orleans area, including but not exclusive to the Chitimacha, Atakapa, and Choctaw, as well as other Indigenous peoples. She does this by contemplating the historic trade routes of the Mississippi River and the vehicles used to move goods and people along this waterway.

These two works address the future mourning of New Orleans. As climate disruption becomes an ever-increasing reality, those islands, people, and cultures lying in low places are more susceptible to erasure—a painful state of being known all too well by Indigenous people across the world. In her two works, Carlson pays homage to an important artistic influence, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, who has several pieces that begin with the words "Trade Canoe," including *Trade Canoe for Don Quixote* (2004), *Trade Canoe: Making Medicine* (2018), and *Trade Canoe for the North Pole* (2017). The latter, perhaps, is the most connected to Carlson's two installations.

Andrea Carlson

b. 1979, USA; lives in Grand Marais, MN



Trade Canoe for the North Pole, according to the Whitney Museum of American Art, "is populated with images of palm trees, buffalo, and rubber ducks . . . which ominously remind viewers of the effects of people's actions in transforming the environment and increasing global warming."¹ Both of Carlson's works—the outdoor piece entitled *Trade Canoe for Earthdivers to Come*, and the indoor work *Trade Canoe for Recollection*—signal Jaune Quick-to-See-Smith as an artistic predecessor, but Carlson brings her own meaning and nuance to the conversation. With their size, and especially with the outdoor canoe's bright red color, the works become something that people have to reckon with, move aside for, and navigate around. They cannot be easily ignored by viewers, in the same way that Indigenous people can be ignored when placed out of sight, or a painting can be passed by without interrupting a stride.

Additionally, in *Trade Canoe for Earthdivers to Come*, Carlson also acknowledges that there will be a rebuilding after the losses caused by climate change, but that some

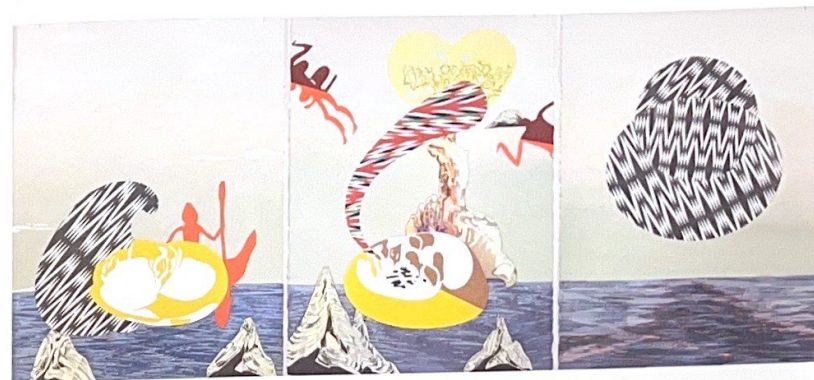
things will be forever lost. This work relates to the Anishinaabe recreation story that tells of Earthdivers who lost their lives trying to rebuild the world after the great flood. The indoor work, *Trade Canoe for Recollection*, is flanked by multiple paintings of Ojibwe assumption sashes. These sashes were also traditionally meant for carrying items when wrapped around the body. When shown together, the artist asks us to contemplate what vehicles or tools we will use to remember, to mourn, to carry, or to anchor ourselves as we move into the murky future.

by Dakota Hoska

¹ Whitney Museum of American Art, Teacher Guide: Jaune Quick-to-See Smith: Memory Map, <https://whitney.org/education/schools-educators/k-12/teaching-materials/teacher-guides/jaune-quick-to-see-smith/moving-messages>, accessed on August 21, 2024.



Trade Canoe for Earthdivers to Come



Top: *Trade Canoe for Recollection*, 2024 (detail)

Above: *Trade Canoe for Recollection*, 2024