

Jaune Quick-To-See Smith

FOR YOUR CLASSROOM

ACTIVITY

- Have students research a current event/topic they feel strongly about.
- Create hard copy about the event and/or opposing perspectives by printing or clipping out stories published by a reporting source (news station/newspaper/magazine).
- Have students affix the clippings to a surface (i.e. canvas, board, object) for expression.
- Encourage students to collage images, textures, or found objects that express their perspective and feelings regarding the event/topic.
- Have students emphasize key words, imagery, or feelings using paint/markers to highlight, and express their position through color, line, and texture.



Mischief by Jaune Quick-To-See Smith is a powerful mixed-media expression. The work is part of her *Indian Land* series, which illustrate the physical topography of landscapes as well as reveal the life and history embodied within the land itself. “Narrative Landscapes,” as the artist calls them, the works visually broadcast commentaries on social, political, and/or historical topics and events. By using mass-media imagery and text with traditional pictograph-like symbols, Smith communicates to the American mainstream culture through her Pop Art style of painting.

Using a combination of representational and abstracted imagery, Smith paints over clippings from newspapers, photographs, and textbooks, visually communicating her concerns about the land, government oppression, and commercial misrepresentations of Native American culture and histories. For *Mischief*, Smith collaged an array of materials onto a canvas, including newspaper

clippings, images of indigenous people, a map, a comic strip, and an advertisement for “Mischief Washington Apples.” The artist drips red paint over the surface of specific imagery, a deliberate allusion to spilled blood. These “bleeding” elements declare a commanding commentary about the destruction of her Native American culture and environment. Rage, sadness, and despair emerge to the surface of the colorful collage to confront the viewer. A newsprint excerpt taken from the *Lakota Times* reads, “Note from Indian Country, No skills—no jobs—no income.” The clipping is followed by a Donald Duck comic strip with a callout bubble—“There’s always Charity”—a distressing reality for all marginalized ethnicities.

Mischief addresses identity and the offensive usage of Native American imagery in advertising. The imagery and selected texts boldly articulate the artist’s perspective of the destruction and erosion of indigenous identity and culture through Euro-American influence.

Born at St. Ignatius Jesuit Mission on the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Reservation in Montana, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith is one of the most acclaimed contemporary American Indian artists. Smith’s Native American heritage as a member of the Flathead Nation is the foundation and essence of her life’s work as an artist. A spokesperson, historian, and activist for Native artists, Smith is committed to improving education for Native Americans and the preservation of Native American culture.



Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art

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Jaune Quick-to-See-Smith, *Mischief*,
Indian Land series, 1992, acrylic, oil stick,
and collage on canvas.