

Arbitrary Borders was born out of identified gaps in our collection: where the voices, histories and perspectives of diverse artists are all but missing. This exhibition presents a new collection of artworks that better represent the many faces and backgrounds of our community. *Arbitrary Borders* features 35 paintings and sculptures by 19 artists of color. All of the artworks are from Washington's State Art Collection, one of the oldest and largest statewide public art collections in the nation.

The new collection includes esteemed artists such as Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, James Luna, Earl Miller, Violet Fields, Alfredo Arreguín, Janet Taylor Pickett and Hock E Aye Vi Edgar Heap of Birds. The artists explore themes of personal identity, lived experience, cultural memory, politics, and both real and imagined borders. Extending the exhibition's discourse, the Western Gallery presents additional works by artists of color from our existing collection. These artworks further widen the exhibition's breadth of diverse perspectives. They are curated specifically to provide complimentary information for viewers to experience together alongside the new acquisitions.

Washington's State Art Collection includes more than 5,000 artworks, ranging from works on paper to paintings to large-scale installations that engage the issues of our time. The Collection can be found in 1,300 buildings and campuses across Washington. After *Arbitrary Borders* the works will be installed in public places throughout Western's campus— to ensure continued public access and representation for students, faculty, and the community.

The Western Gallery acknowledges that we are located on the ancestral homelands of the Coast Salish Peoples, who have lived in the Salish Sea basin, throughout the San Juan Islands and the North Cascades watershed, from time immemorial. We express our deepest respect and gratitude for our Indigenous neighbors, for their enduring care and protection of our shared lands and waterways.



1) The following artist biographies were researched and written by Western Gallery Museum Studies Interns L.E. Delzer, Grace Marquett, Carson McCully, Ariela Ikezawa, Grafton Grimm & Ashe Holm

2) A full list of works cited can be found here:



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

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith is a member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes of the Flathead Reservation. A prolific artist, her work is heavily inspired by her Indigenous heritage. Both a painter and printmaker, Smith often created symbols to represent her childhood in her work. These symbols encompass experiences from her childhood on the Flathead Reservation, and traveling with her horse-trading father. Smith earned her bachelor's degree in Art Education from Framingham State College in Massachusetts. Later, she earned a master's degree in Visual Arts from the University of New Mexico.

Smith's use of a variety of mediums evokes different ideas on contemporary themes of identity and politics. Narratives carrying personal or socio-political ideas throughout her art are prominent. Her body of work includes paintings, collages, prints, and lithographs. Some of her more well-known work include pieces such as *War is Heck*, the *I See Red* series, and her *Memory Map* work. While Smith is best known for her two-dimensional work, she's also created major installations. This includes the West Seattle Cultural Trail, and the Great Hall at Denver International Airport. Smith's has earned many awards including: the Academy of Arts and Letters Purchase Award (1987), the Women's Caucus for the Arts Lifetime Achievement (1997), Visionary Woman Award (2011), and the Living Artist of Distinction (2012). Her work can be seen in prestigious institutions including the Smithsonian American Art Museum, USA, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, USA, the Museum of Mankind, Austria, and the Museum of Modern Art, Ecuador.



Janet Taylor Pickett (b. 1948)

Janet Taylor Pickett was raised in Ann Arbor, Michigan before receiving both her BFA and her MFA from the University of Michigan. During her schooling, she developed a mixed media style that primarily utilizes collage and painting. In 1974 Taylor Pickett pursued textile design at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York, and later continued broadening her skills through studying graphic design at Parsons School of Design in 1980. Her art explores expressions of identity and personal narratives derived from her experience as an African American woman and artist. "My Blackness is a declarative statement in my work," Taylor Pickett says. "In the late 1960s and early 1970s in the midst of socio-political activities, I began to formulate an aesthetic language, a visual synergy." Symbolism is rich in Taylor Pickett's art, where images act as representations of femininity and remembrance. Taylor Pickett's work is inspired by fellow collage artist Romare Bearden alongside vibrancy and pops of color found in Henri Matisse's paintings, which "challenges exclusionary practices of canonical art history". Taylor Pickett was a professor of art and art history at Essex County College for over thirty years. She continues to create biographical collage and paintings that center on her identity as a Black woman, tethering history to the here and now.



Eduardo Calderón (b. 1949)

Eduardo Calderón was born in Arequipa, Peru, in 1949. He is a Peruvian photographer known for his unique documentation of everyday life. Calderón resides in Kirkland, Washington, where he has lived since 1979. The artist received degrees in Anthropology and Museology from the University of Washington. Calderón has worked as a photographer since the early 1970's. A running theme through his work lies in his interest in anthropology: exploring elements of unaltered, unbiased everyday life. The majority of the artist's body of work comes from his travels across Latin America and Europe. It is important to the artist to capture life authentically and with an impartial point of view. Calderón allows for reality to be the story-teller in his work. One of the artist's favorite subjects is people. Calderón describes that he likes to sneak up to his subjects and catch them writing their own story, "giving away through gesture, posture or positioning, their most private beginning, middle and end." In an interview with the artist, Calderón remarks that "The photographs are like chronicles of whatever catches my eye during those walks." Keeping his artwork unbiased and neutral invites audiences to create imaginative interpretations of his photographs, a blank slate for subjective eyes.



James Luna (b. 1950, d. 2018)

James Luna was a Puyukitchum (Luiseño)/Ipai/Mexican American artist who worked in mediums such as photography, performance art, and installation art. He lived on the La Jolla Reservation located in Southern California. He attended the University of California at Irvine where he earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts. Later, he earned an additional degree in Counseling at San Diego State University. He worked at two separate universities in California: The University of California and Palomar College. In 2011, The Institute of American Indian Arts in New Mexico awarded Luna with an honorary doctoral degree.

Much of his work has challenged stereotypes of Indigenous people, often using himself as the primary subject within his pieces to communicate his message. He utilized themes of irony and humor in his works, using them to further challenge the stereotypes he had set out against. By doing this, Luna intended to “question the fetishization, museological display, and commodification of Native Americans.”

In his photography piece “High Tech Peace Pipe” (2001), Luna photographed himself in front of his interpretation of a futuristic peace pipe, which was originally used as a part of a performance piece he made. He made this piece in order to “question the view that society has about native peoples... [by] us[ing] both stereotypical and traditional ideas and forms to dispel those myths.” The peace pipe was also made in response to the dwindling amount of pipestone—the material traditionally used to make peace pipes—caused by resources being taken from Indigenous land. Luna wanted the pipe to represent how Indigenous people are “making do with what we have been given or in some case[s] with what we have left to us.”



Rita Chavez (b. 1951)

Visual artist Rita Chavez was born and raised in South Dakota. She would later graduate from South Dakota State University in 1973 with a Bachelor of Arts. She currently works and resides in Washington state. Chavez often creates work utilizing a form of printmaking known as monoprint. Monoprinting refers to the process in which an artist will apply paint (or otherwise directly manipulate the printing plate/block) in order to create an image that is unique and unable to be reproduced. Unlike conventional printmaking, the artist can only make one impression of the print. Chavez employs this technique in her expressionistic exploration of fables and imaginative creatures. Her ambiguous forms, comprised of exaggerated brush strokes, function to emphasize emotion, movement, and perspective. Animal figures are frequently the subject of Chavez’s work—in part because of her relationship to her Mexican heritage. As Chavez stated, “My Mexican heritage has very strong ties with the animal image, not only in myth but also in the reality of our historical antiquity.” Chavez illustrates this focus on organic animal imagery in her 1989 monoprint series, now managed by ArtsWA as part of the State Art Collection. A selection of her work is housed and displayed both here in Western Washington University’s Western Gallery, and the Gildo Rey Elementary School of the Auburn School District.



Marita Dingus (b. 1956)

Washington State based artist Marita Dingus was born in Seattle in 1956. Raised in nearby Auburn, Washington, she continues to reside in her childhood home to this day. Teachers motivated Dingus to pursue art from a young age, by 5th grade distributing copies of her work throughout her school to be colored by fellow students. In high school, Dingus recalls her brother-in-law inquiring why she never drew Black people. She cites this epiphany as a crucial turning point in the development of her artistic identity and subsequent work. After relocating from the University of Washington to the Tyler School of Art at Temple University in Philadelphia, Dingus studied abroad in Rome and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts. Throughout the mid-1980s, Dingus transitioned from painting to sculpture while pursuing her Master of Arts at San Jose State University.

Dingus continues to travel the world, visiting the Caribbean, Africa, and South America to gain cultural experience and further inspiration. Describing herself as an environmentalist, feminist, and African American artist, Dingus' mixed media sculptures reflect these themes. Her work utilizes discarded materials such as old cloth, scrap metal, and leftover packaging to act as a historical metaphor for the victims of the African slave trade. Furthermore, the use of discarded materials emphasizes Dingus' environmentally conscious mindset. Dingus has received numerous awards, including the John S. Guggenheim Fellowship (1999) and the Morrie and Joan Alhadeff PONCHO Artist of the Year Award (2005), with her work being exhibited extensively throughout the World.



Armond Lara (b. 1939)

Armond Lara is an artist of Navajo and Mexican descent who grew up in Colorado. His pieces feature mixed media such as found objects, traditional Navajo beadwork and handmade paper. When he began his studies in the arts, he enrolled at Colorado Institute of Art and later earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in California at Glendale College. During the 1960s and 1970s Lara spent time in Seattle and attended the University of Washington. Here, he became inspired by the artist Paul Horiuchi, who is known for his collages and painting and regarded as a master in Japanese paper art. Around the same time, he also worked as a city planner in Bellevue, Washington. Lara's career also includes time spent working in the aerospace industry of Seattle and arts administration.

Notably, in 1973 Lara helped to create the 1% for the ARTS program based in Seattle, Washington. With the introduction of this program, Seattle became "one of the first cities in the US to adopt funding for public art." In recent years, Lara has been at the head of many fundraisers to support emergency funds for artists without medical insurance.

Lara's piece "Basketmaker" (1984) is made up of basket fibers, handmade paper, and masking tape. The piece shows a mix of both his Navajo and Mexican culture, with Lara stating that "both myself and my works are re-interpretations of Navajo traditions."

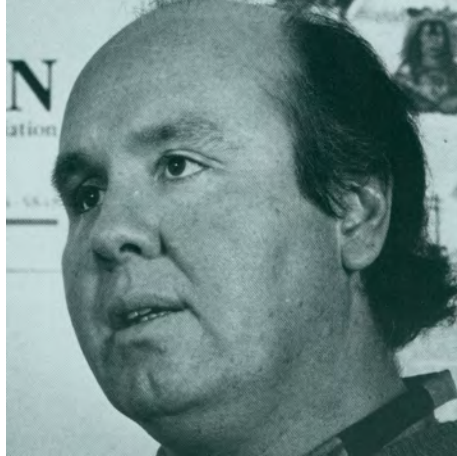


G. Peter Jemison (b. 1945)

G. Peter Jemison (Seneca, Heron Clan) is a prolific multimedia artist who grew up outside of the Cattaraugus Reservation in New York state. He attended Buffalo State College where he received a bachelor's degree in Arts Education as well as the University of Siena, where he received education in the Academic Arts. Jemison has curated exhibitions featuring other artists (such as *The Elegant Eye: Contemporary Haudenosaunee Beadwork*) and has been featured in exhibitions around the world.

Throughout his work, Jemison's Indigenous heritage is a prominent motif. Many of his works are rooted in his response to political and social issues, while others depict his personal connection to nature. A frequent theme in his work is the concept of "orenda," or "the traditional Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) belief that every living thing and every part of creation contains a spiritual force."

Jemison's piece "An International Lie" (1987), a small bag with many intricate drawings on it, was created in response to the injustices that Indigenous people face and the human rights violations that they have endured. When explaining this piece, Lara stated that "the United States has supported dictators who have carried out genocide against Indian people. The stated purpose was to stop the spread of communism. My belief is that the United States government was protecting the interests of U.S. corporations." This piece is a criticism of those actions.



Raymon Elozua (b. 1947)

Raymon Elozua, a mixed media artist based in New York, was born in Bernstadt, Germany in 1947. His father, a Cuban immigrant, met Elozua's French mother while serving in WWII. Upon returning to the United States, Elozua was raised in south Chicago among Cuban, French, and American familial traditions. He would later cite this "melting pot" experience as the inception of his fluid relationship towards artistic identity. Furthermore, as the son of American immigrants, Elozua finds outside interpretations and perspectives to be a guiding inspiration in his work.

Though Elozua studied Political Science, Sculpture, and Theater at the University of Chicago from 1965-1969, he considers himself to be primarily self-educated as an artist. In the early 1970s Elozua gained prominence in response to his lifelike ceramic renderings of decaying industrial landscapes and architecture. Elozua achieved further distinction throughout the mid-1980s with several multimedia exhibitions, as he expanded his artistic processes to incorporate steel, painting, and photography. Within his work, Elozua explores both the tactile and the abstract, utilizing industrial/architectural form in conjunction with the re-contextualization of found or pre-owned objects. This explorative mindset extends to the present day, as Elozua cooperatively employs glass, steel, and ceramic mediums in his new sculptures. Elozua has instructed within several institutions including, New York University, Pratt School of Design, and the California College of Arts & Crafts. He has additionally received numerous awards, including three National Endowment for the Arts Grants in Sculpture, Ceramics, and Paintings, with institutions throughout the United States continually exhibiting Elozua's work.



Manuel Izquierdo (1925-2009)

A prolific Pacific Northwest sculptor and artist, Manuel Izquierdo arrived in the United States as a refugee. As a child, he fled the Spanish Civil War to France, where he enrolled in his first art school. When WWII broke out, Izquierdo and his siblings left Europe and permanently resettled in the US. A humanitarian aid organization supported Izquierdo and his siblings' immigration to Portland, Oregon. In Portland, he graduated from high school and went on to study sculpting and printmaking in college. Izquierdo graduated from the Museum Art School (now the Pacific Northwest College of Art) in 1951. Izquierdo would go on to be a celebrated faculty member at his alma mater. He would teach art for the next fifty years, until his retirement from the Northwest College of Art in 1997.

Izquierdo is best known for his innovative work with welded metal sculptures. These include seminal pieces such as *The Dreamer*, *Silver Dawn*, and *Unfolding Rhythms*. His sculpture work tends to be abstract and often surrealist in nature. In contrast, his print work is narratively complex and full of lyrical imagery. Exhibitions and galleries that have featured his work include the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Portland Art Museum, the Seattle Art Museum, and the Henry Gallery in Seattle. In 1991 he received the Oregon Governor's Arts Award for his contributions to Pacific Northwest Art.



Richard Glazer-Danay (b. 1942)

Richard Glazer-Danay, of Caughnawaga Mohawk and Jewish descent, was born in 1942 on Coney Island in New York. In the late 1800's and early 1900's his family came to Coney Island, drawn to the circuses and Wild West shows that took place there. His great grandfather Joseph Danay sold tonics at the circus, while his great uncle Peter White Cloud was a trick rider and roper in the Wild West shows. After his family permanently relocated to New York in the 1920s, his family began in the iron working trade. Richard Glazer-Danay eventually entered the trade himself. Inspired by his work as an ironworker, and by the many iron workers in his community, hard hats became a repeating motif in his work. These hard hats are painted in bold, cartoon-like colors, with designs that invoke Coney Island's bright array of colors. These painted hard hats also became associated with Native American art; due to Richard Glazer-Danay's heritage as well as the large number of Mohawk ironworkers during that time. After working as an ironworker, Richard Glazer-Danay went on to earn his Bachelor of Arts from California State University, Northridge as well as a Master of Fine Arts from California State University, Chico. He earned an additional Master of Fine Arts degree from California State University, Davis. Richard Glazer-Danay went on to become the Rupert Costo Chair of American Indian Affairs at the University of California, Riverside, and teach at California State University, Long Beach, where he earned the title of professor emeritus.

