

Bockley Gallery



Cara Romero

Indigenous Futurisms

Opening Reception, Friday, October 20, 6–8pm

Artist Talk with Juleana Enright, Friday October 20, 5pm

On view October 21–November 26, 2023

Bockley Gallery is pleased to present *Indigenous Futurisms*, an exhibition of works by Cara Romero that imagine an unlimited future for Native people while resisting being relegated to the past.

“These works come from a personal place of regenerative thoughts and active resilience,” says Romero (Chemehuevi Indian Tribe). “As we (Natives) continue to heal from past and ongoing traumas, we move from surviving to thriving. We are now in a creative space to imagine our futures while remembering all of our gifts granted by the sacrifices of those that came before us. We address themes like the futurity of precious Native life ways, our climate and Mother Earth, bringing balance and women’s leadership, and speculative fantasy with what feels like hope.”

In a photographic practice that blends documentary and commercial aesthetics, Romero creates stories that draw from intertribal knowledge to expose the fissures and fusions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultural memory, collective history, and futurity.

Indigenous Futurisms includes the 2022 photograph, *3 Sisters*, which refers to the Indigenous science—sometimes known as Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)—that has helped tribes live sustainably and in harmony with the environment for thousands of years. “*3 Sisters* imagines a future in which Native women hold a sacred role in the healing and balance of our Earth,” Romero says. Each woman wears specific vernacular from their tribes, digitally remastered on their bodies, and wires are plugged in to their hearts, minds, and life-giving energies—“the things our futures depend upon for survival,” the artist states.

gikendaaso (2022) features Leah Kolakowski (Keweenaw Bay Ojibwe) and borrows its name from the word in her Native language for “s/he knows, is smart, is intelligent, is educated.” Reflected in the lens of her

glasses are images of Keweenaw powwow dances in the woods. “Here,” Romero says, “we envision they will still be taking place far into the future.”

In a lighthearted work, *The Zenith* (2022), George Alexander (Mvskoke Creek) floats at the highest point on the celestial sphere in a field of indigenous white corn strung up on a fishing line to simulate “space.” A lighthearted composition, it addresses the futurity of our precious foodways—one that, to Romero, could equally apply to this entire body of photos: “In an Indigenous future, we take our past with us.”

Cara Romero (Chemehuevi Indian Tribe) was raised between the rural Chemehuevi reservation in California’s Mojave Desert and the urban sprawl of Houston. Based in Sante Fe, she has held solo exhibitions in the US, UK, and Germany. Her current and recent group exhibitions include *In Our Hands: Native Photography, 1890 to Now* at the Minneapolis Institute of Art (2023–24); *Our Selves: Photographs by Women Photographers* at the Museum of Modern Art, and *Water Memories* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (2022). Her public art projects include *#TONGVALAND*, presented in Los Angeles by NDN Collective (2021); *Restoration: Now or Never* with Save Art Space in London (2020), and *Desert X* in the Coachella Valley (2019). Widely collected, Romero’s photographs are in private and public collections including the Denver Art Museum, the Peabody Essex Museum, the Minneapolis Institute of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian, and others.

About Bockley Gallery

Founded in 1984, Bockley Gallery represents artists from across Minnesota and North America, including Andrea Carlson, Pao Houa Her, Postcommodity, Cara Romero, and the Jim Denomie Estate. Its space since 2005, in Minneapolis’s Kenwood neighborhood, offers an intimate experience with art, while its outreach programs to local, national, and international museums and biennials expands the dialogue around what it believes to be the most relevant ideas in art today.

Media Inquiries

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image: Cara Romero, *3 Sisters*, 2022, archival pigment print, edition of 7, 40 x 45 inches