

New York Gallery 47 Canal Makes Soho Debut

Ten indigenous artists travelled from as far as Washington State to participate in the space's debut exhibition.

By [Sophia McKinnon](#)

New York

5 July 2024



47 Canal's Soho opening, 3 July 2024. Photo: Sophia McKinnon.

'Listen carefully,' announced curator and artist G. Peter Jemison (Seneca Onóndowahgah) in his native language, proceeding to welcome and introduce each of the indigenous artists by name and clan included in the exhibition *Summer with Friends and Family*, the first at 47 Canal's new space in Soho.

Many had never shown in New York before, and some had travelled across the country from Washington State to be present.

Jemison was invited to curate the inaugural show at the new 47 Canal, which has retained its name through the shift after 13 years in its previous Chinatown location.

The gallery was established on 47 Canal Street by artist Margaret Lee, who has since departed the gallery, and dealer Oliver Newton in 2011. It became known as a champion of emerging and Asian-American artists in particular, and last worked with Jemison in 2023 for a solo show, recognising his unique ability to bring gravity and community to all projects.



Jay Carrier, *Gathering of the Nations pow wow fancy dancer* (1994). Oil on canvas. 213 x 168 cm. Photo: Sophia McKinnon.

The ten artists shown together bridge two generations of practitioners. Two (Jaune Quick-to-See-Smith and Joe Fedderson) were a part of the 1983 exhibition Jemison curated while founding director at the American Indian Community House on West Broadway, with younger artists

subsequently discovered through juried open calls led by Jemison. Each address and process the realities of being native in America.

One wall was filled with Jaune Quick To See Smith's (whose major solo show at the Whitney last year positioned her as a household name for many) pastel on paper works, installed in a row like parts of a story where coyotes and people encounter each other in folkloric reference on land and in boats.



Hayden Haynes, *Pretendians* (2024). Moose antler, wood, whitetail deer antler, leather dye, stove polish, enamel paint and beads made of marine shell, wood, quartz, red acrylic, and black glass. 14 x 18 x 23 cm. Photo: Sophia McKinnon.

Hayden Haynes' pieces, each only a few inches high, used moose antler, stove polish, leather dyes, and cell phone parts to create palm-sized totemic figures. One combined single-letter wood beads to read 'representative' and in a smaller, embedded layer 'pretendian'. A large oil on canvas piece by Jay Carrier held the room; titled *Gathering of the Nations pow wow fancy dancer* (1994), it seemed to describe bodies and animal forms in motion with a mass of abstracted, layered colour.

The new U-shaped premises, which has six distinct spaces, looks out at the corner of Wooster and Broome Streets in downtown Manhattan. The opening, which unfolded over five hours on the eve of American Independence Day when so many have left the city, drew a large crowd of easily over 100.

At the core of the event was a supper prepared by rising star chef Patty Lee, affiliated with the restaurant Mission Chinese Food, and in collaboration with the White Corn Project which aims to bring the staple back into the Iroquois diet through farming, education, and distribution.

Attendees stood, leaned, sat in all parts of every room with small bowls of three sisters salad, white corn soup, and tamales, all made using the ingredient donated by the Friends of Ganondagan and using recipes adapted from Jemison's wife, Jeanette. It was an unusually warm scene for a downtown opening.



Joe Feddersen, *Kamloops Residential School* (2024). Twined waxed linen. 25 x 23 x 23 cm. Photo: Sophia McKinnon.

Jemison has been steadily stewarding generations of indigenous artists for decades. He explained to me, as we perched on stools at the front desk of the exhibition, that when he began cultivating meaningful work around historic cultural sites in the late 1970s, a number of people had asked him to pull together a native marketplace for local sellers, similar to successful models in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Instead, he opted to organise visual art shows for young artists, ensuring they could logistically meet this invitation (producing enough for a show, getting the work there on time) as well as artistically. This show is evidence of the ongoing integrity and necessity of his reach.

Summer with Friends and Family includes Jay Carrier, Joe Feddersen, Hayden Haynes, Lauren Jimerson, Luanne Redeye, Natasha Smoke Santiago, Marjorie Skidders, Duane Slick, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, and G. Peter Jemison.

The exhibition continues through 9 August.