

SHELLEY NIRO

silent

waiting

moving

LOUD

Opening Reception: Saturday, March 2, 2-5pm

Guided Tour of the Exhibition with Shelley Niro: Saturday, March 2, 3pm & Saturday, April 27, 3pm

Exhibition Dates: March 2 – April 27, 2024

Stephen Bulger Gallery is pleased to present “silent, waiting, moving, LOUD,” our first solo exhibition of work by Shelley Niro (b. 1954, Niagara Falls, New York, USA). Niro is a member of the Turtle Clan of the Kanien’kehaka (Mohawk) Nation, from the Six Nations of the Grand River territory. This exhibition is concurrent with her major retrospective organized and circulated by the Art Gallery of Hamilton (on view from February 10 until May 26, 2024) with the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian, New York, and the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; this travelling exhibition will also appear at the Vancouver Art Gallery and the Remai Modern, Saskatoon.

Initially trained in performing arts from Cambrian College Sudbury, Niro graduated from the Ontario College of Art in 1990. After receiving an MFA from the University of Western Ontario in 1997, Niro participated in the Women In The Director’s Chair. A program designed in film at Banff Centre for the Arts. Her multi-disciplinary practice includes photography, film, painting, sculpture, and installation art. Niro explores the oral history of the Haudenosaunee people in general and the diaspora of Mohawk people in particular. Using herself, family, and friends in many of her series, Niro often incorporates humour and pop culture references for a unique perspective on the social, cultural, and personal values passed down from generations. Niro contributes to the long history of Indigenous storytelling by making objects of beauty and wonder that are appreciated by viewers from all backgrounds.

Our exhibition is comprised of multiple series that are not included in the AGH’s retrospective, including examples of Niro’s painting practice, as well as her multi-media sculptural objects, featuring her beadwork. The photographic components include the genre of portraiture and landscape, created with analogue methods and digital tools. Her subject matter incorporates observations of the moon, fossils, and appropriated images. Presented as single panels, as well as diptychs and triptychs, the individual series seen together offer insights into Niro’s Indigenous heritage, as well as the concerns and fascinations shared with contemporary citizens of planet Earth.

Niro’s visual art and films have been featured across Canada and internationally. In 2009, her first feature film, *Kissed by Lightning*, premiered at Toronto’s imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival and won the Santa Fe Film Festival’s 2009 Milagro Award for Best Indigenous Film. Her short film *The Shirt* was presented at the 2003 Venice Biennale and the 2004 Sundance Film Festival. Films include; *Honey Moccasin*, *It Starts with a Whisper*, *The Incredible 25th Year of Mitzi Bearclaw* and the recently released *Café Daughter*. *Café Daughter* won the People’s Choice Award at the ImagineNative Film Festival 2023.

Niro was the inaugural recipient of the Aboriginal Arts Award presented through the Ontario Arts Council in 2012. In 2017, she received both the Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts and the Scotiabank Photography Award, two preeminent contemporary art awards in Canada. In 2017, Niro also received the Hnatyshyn Foundation REVEAL Indigenous Artist Award, and the Arts and Culture Award from the Dreamcatcher Charitable Foundation. In 2019, Niro received an honorary doctorate from the Ontario College of Art and Design, she was also the 2019 Laureate of the Paul de Hueck and Norman Walford Career Achievement Award for Photography. In 2023 Niro was awarded an honorary doctorate degree of law from the University of Western Ontario.