

Art Gallery of Hamilton's travelling exhibition **Shelley Niro: 500 Year Itch opens in New York City**

The first major retrospective of Mohawk Artist Shelley Niro's work will travel from New York to Hamilton, Ottawa, Vancouver, and Saskatchewan through 2025



Shelley Niro (Six Nations Reserve, Bay of Quinte Mohawk, Turtle Clan, b. 1954), *The Rebel*, 1987. Hand-tinted gelatin silver print. Collection of the artist

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Hamilton, Ontario

On May 27, 2023, The Art Gallery of Hamilton celebrated the inaugural launch of the multi-year travelling exhibition *Shelley Niro: 500 Year Itch* at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in New York City.

Shelley Niro: 500 Year Itch is the first major retrospective exhibition of the multi-media work of Mohawk artist Shelley Niro, who is based in Brantford, Ontario, Canada. Spanning four decades of her photography, film, painting, installation, sculpture and mixed media practice, the exhibition highlights the themes she constantly returns to: Indigenous Matriarchy, Memory, Performance/Actors, and Relations/Family. Her persistent vision is to represent Indigenous women and girls, advocating for self-representation and sovereignty. Her highly empathetic approach moves viewers to understand the issues at hand through her visually impactful and politically powerful manner. She uses parody, feminism, and spirituality to examine identity, and in turn, brings political power to the realm of the personal.

"Shelley Niro's retrospective is a momentous exhibition, marking a significant milestone in her career," stated Shelley Falconer, President & CEO of the Art Gallery of Hamilton. "We are immensely proud to bring the unique vision of this remarkable artist across the border into the US and across Canada, as her artistic practice has helped shape the discourse around Indigenous representation. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian for their invaluable partnership, which has brought this important exhibition to American audiences."

The exhibition features over 70 works by Shelley Niro, some in series (totalling 150 pieces) coming from public and private collections across Canada and the US, including new work to be debuted in Hamilton. The exhibition will double in size upon arriving in Hamilton from New York City.

Shelley Niro: 500 Year Itch is organized and circulated by the Art Gallery of Hamilton with the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), and with curatorial support from the National Gallery of Canada (NGC). Co-curated by Melissa Bennett, AGH Senior Curator of Contemporary Art; Greg Hill, Independent Curator, formerly Audain Senior Curator, Indigenous Art, National Gallery of Canada; and David Penney, Associate Director of Museum Scholarship, Exhibitions, and Public Engagement at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian. Major support for this project is provided by the Canada Council for the Arts and the Terra Foundation of American Art. PACART is the Exclusive Transportation Provider for the exhibition's tour.

The multi-year exhibition tour will include five venues, beginning with NMAI New York in May 2023. Exhibition tour dates:

May 27, 2023 – January 1, 2024

Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, New York, NY, USA

February 10 – May 26, 2024

Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton ON

June 14 – August 18, 2024

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, ON

September 21, 2024 – February 2, 2025

Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, BC

Spring 2025

Remai Modern, Saskatoon, SK

For more information, interview requests and images please contact:

Megan Olynik

Head of Marketing & Communications

Art Gallery of Hamilton

905.527.6610, ext. 225

megan@artgalleryofhamilton.com

..... end

About the Artist

Born in Niagara Falls, New York, in 1954, Shelley Niro is a member of the Turtle Clan of the Kanyen'kehaka (Mohawk) Nation, from the Six Nations of the Grand River territory. Her visual art and film works 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 a feature film to be released in 2023, *Café Daughter*.

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

Catalogue



Shelley Niro: 500 Year Itch will be accompanied by a heavily-illustrated 318-page publication designed by Barr Gilmore, including texts by invited authors, in addition to curatorial essays: Lori Beavis, Sally Frater, Adrianna Greci Green, Bryce Kanbara, Madeline Lennon, Nancy Mithlo and Hulleah J. Tsinhnahjinnie.

[Available for purchase online at the AGH Shop.](#)

About the Art Gallery of Hamilton

Founded in 1914, the Art Gallery of Hamilton is the oldest and largest public art gallery in southwestern Ontario. Its permanent collection, which is focused on historical Canadian, 19th-century European, and International and Contemporary art, numbers more than 10,000 works and is recognized as one of Canada's finest. The AGH is a vital creative hub and centre of lifelong learning that enables people of all ages to enrich their lives by gaining a deeper understanding of art. The Gallery is supported by the City of Hamilton, the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council.

Connect with us

Instagram [@at_theagh](#)

Twitter [@TheAGH](#)

Facebook [@artgalleryofhamilton](#)

artgalleryofhamilton.com