

The Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth, Will Present the First Major Solo Museum Exhibition of Photographs by Cara Romero from January 18 through August 10, 2025



June 4, 2024—Hanover, N.H.—The Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth, will present the first major solo museum exhibition of photographs by artist Cara Romero (Chemehuevi / American). Curated by Hood Museum Associate Director of Curatorial Affairs and Curator of Indigenous Art Dr. Jami Powell, *Cara Romero: Panûpünwügai (Living Light)* will be on view from January 18 through August 10, 2025. The exhibition will then travel to other museums to be announced soon.

Featuring over 50 photographs, this exhibition presents Romero’s existing and new work spanning two decades on a scale never seen before. In addition, immersive installations will recreate the sets of two of Romero’s most iconic photographs, *TV Indians* (2017) and *The Zenith* (2022), inviting viewers to experience Romero’s innovative and multidisciplinary photographic process firsthand. Multiple new and never-before-seen works will debut in the Hood Museum exhibition, including photographs that will be created through a collaboration between Romero and Dartmouth students this summer.

Organized thematically, this exhibition encompasses five of Romero’s photographic series, including the foundational *Jackrabbit and Cottontail* as well as *Americana*, *Water Memory*, *Matriarchy*, and *Indigenous Futurisms*. Highlighted in *Matriarchy* are Romero’s signature photographs of Indigenous women transforming their individual self-image and power through ideas of rematriation. The final section includes Romero’s series on Indigenous futurisms alongside new works celebrating the ways in which Indigenous artists are imagining possibilities and elevating Indigenous science and knowledge.

Says Romero, "The Hood Museum of Art under the leadership of curator Jami Powell and director John Stomberg is an excellent example of how an American museum can create meaningful and positive impacts on Native community, representation, and living artists. When they offered my first expansive solo show to open at the Hood Museum, I was both overjoyed and cried because I never imagined this was possible for a Native woman photographer in her forties. The Hood Museum continues to elevate contemporary Native voices in meaningful ways. I am so honored to collaborate with this institution and the people making it a major force in sidelining preconceived notions about Native American art."

Adds Powell, "Cara Romero is an immensely generous storyteller, and her images invite people into complex and transformative dialogues about the histories and lives of Indigenous peoples. Romero's photographs provide opportunities for audiences to recognize the humanity of Native Americans and Indigenous peoples and ask questions they might otherwise be afraid to ask."

One of today's most renowned photographers, Romero brilliantly challenges dominant narratives of Indigenous decline and erasure and disrupts preconceived notions about what it means to be a Native American. The Hood Museum started collecting Romero's work in 2017 with the purchase of *TV Indians*. Since beginning her tenure at the museum in 2018, Dr. Powell has acquired six additional photographs by Romero for the museum's collection. Over the past four years, Romero's photographs have been used for teaching purposes in 45 Dartmouth courses and featured in three Hood Museum exhibitions.

Publication

The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue co-published by the Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth, and Radius Books. The catalogue will feature contributions by notable scholars including Suzan Shown Harjo (Mvskoke), former U.S. Poet Laureate Joy Harjo (Mvskoke), and Jordan Poorman Cocker (Kiowa and Tongan), Curator of Indigenous Art at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, among others.

Audio Tour

Visitors will also have the opportunity to hear directly from Romero and a handful of the collaborators depicted in her photographs in an audio tour produced by the Hood Museum of Art and Lantern Audio. The audio tour, like the museum, is free.

About the Artist

Cara Romero (b. 1977, Inglewood, CA) is an artist known for dramatic fine art photography that examines Indigenous life in contemporary contexts. An enrolled citizen of the Chemehuevi Indian Tribe, Romero was raised between contrasting settings: the rural Chemehuevi reservation in Mojave Desert, California, and the urban sprawl of Houston, Texas. Informed by her identity, Romero's visceral approach to representing Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultural memory, collective history, and lived experiences results in a blending of fine art and editorial styles. Maintaining a studio in Santa Fe, New Mexico, Romero regularly participates in Native American art fairs and panel discussions and was featured on PBS's *Craft in America* in 2019. Her award-winning work is included in numerous public and

private collections, domestically and internationally, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, Guggenheim Museum, Amon Carter Museum, Peabody Essex Museum, and Forge Project Collections, among others. Romero travels between Santa Fe and the Chemehuevi Valley Indian Reservation, where she maintains close ties to her tribal community and ancestral homelands.

About the Hood Museum of Art

The Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth, which opened in 1985, centers art and people in teaching and learning through inclusive and robust academic, cultural, and civic engagements with art and its histories. It seeks to advance learning, care, and connections through the reach and relevance of visual art and material culture as a nexus for the exchange of ideas.

The 65,000 objects in the Hood Museum's collection represent the diverse artistic traditions of six continents, including, broadly, Native American, European and American, Asian, Indigenous Australian, African, and Melanesian art. The museum collects, preserves, and makes available for interpretation these works in the public trust and for the benefit of all.

In early 2019, the Hood Museum concluded a physical expansion and renovation project with architects Tod Williams and Billie Tsien and their team, as well as a reinvigoration of what it does and how it does it. More information:

<https://hoodmuseum.dartmouth.edu/explore/museum>

About Dartmouth College

Dartmouth College educates the most promising students and prepares them for a lifetime of learning and of responsible leadership through a faculty dedicated to teaching and the creation of knowledge. The Dartmouth model is unique in higher education: the fusion of a renowned liberal arts college and robust research university where students and faculty partner to take on the world's great challenges. Since its founding in 1769, Dartmouth has provided an intimate and inspirational setting where talented faculty, students, and staff—diverse in background but united in purpose—contribute to the strength of an exciting academic community that cuts easily across disciplines.

Media Contacts:

- Meg Blackburn, meg@blackburncreative.com
- Anna Kaye Schulte, Communications Coordinator, Hood Museum of Art, anna.kaye.m.schulte@dartmouth.edu
- Dartmouth College Office of Communications, communications@dartmouth.edu

Images:

[Left:] Cara Romero, *Coyote Tales No. 1*, 2017, inkjet on paper. © Cara Romero
[Right:] Cara Romero, *The Zenith*, 2022, archival pigment print. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth: Purchased through the Acquisition and Preservation of Native American Art Fund; 2022.47.1. © Cara Romero