

BRUCE SILVERSTEIN

Sarah Sense

Power Lines

September 22 - November 5, 2022

Opening Reception with the Artist: September 22, 6 - 8 pm

Bruce Silverstein Gallery is pleased to announce the exclusive representation of contemporary Native artist, curator, writer, and activist, Sarah Sense, as well as the opening of her first New York gallery exhibition, *Power Lines*, a unique body of work featuring two-dimensional photo-weavings and three-dimensional photo-baskets. Sense employs traditional weaving techniques from her Chitimacha and Choctaw family for this exhibition, combining photography and craft rich with historical significance and personal meaning. The visually layered imagery is both created and appropriated, incorporating subjects and themes that the artist has explored over her career, including her two personas, the Cowgirl and the Indian Princess, landscape photography, representations of American historical figures relevant to Native histories, stereotypical depictions of Natives in Hollywood, and maps from world-renowned archives.

All told, *Power Lines* is a multi-faceted story; it is one of historical marginalization and assimilation of Indigenous communities, including the destruction and loss of land through colonization and the disappearance of culture and traditions through forced assimilation. However, it is also an uplifting testament to Native resistance and resilience, celebrating Chitimacha and Choctaw weaving and furthering Sense's connection to her family and Native heritage.

Each work in this exhibition includes historical maps of North America re-imagined, relevant manuscripts, and colonial letters to the British monarchy, many from the collection of the British Library, where Sense is a Fellow. The maps illustrate the ever-changing borders, or *Power Lines*, that supported the claiming of Native lands regularly used as warfare against Native communities throughout America's history.

BRUCE SILVERSTEIN



Sarah Sense, *Four Kings*, 2022, Woven archival inkjet prints on Hahnemuhle bamboo paper, artist tape

Woven into Sense's work are her two personas, the *Cowgirl* and the *Indian Princess*. These recurring figures in the artist's work comment on American popular culture's Native interpretations in film, decoration, fashion, and education since the late 19th century. Sense associates these personas with her duality of being raised by a Native mother and a non-Native father.

BRUCE SILVERSTEIN



Sarah Sense, *Black Oak*, 2022, Woven archival inkjet prints on Hahnemuhle bamboo paper, rice paper, beeswax, artist tape

The landscape photography is from her recent waterways journey through Louisiana and Texas while also visiting archives to view maps relating to the ancestral land of the Chitimacha. The research and photographs include the Gulf of Mexico, Mississippi River, Bayou Teche, New Orleans Delta, Sabine River, and Avery Island. Other landscapes are from near the artist's home, California Redwood Coast.

BRUCE SILVERSTEIN



Sarah Sense, *Entering In*, 2022, Woven archival inkjet prints on Hahnemuhle bamboo paper, artist tape

Sense states:

The Cowgirl and Indian Princess play with these complicated feelings, becoming more emotionally evoking when woven into Hollywood film posters. Weaving such identity politics through ancestral land then ties the figures to place. Adding the maps through the landscapes and figures suggests memory bound to blood and water but manipulated with popular culture's interpretation of Native identity.

BRUCE SILVERSTEIN

Sarah Sense was raised in Sacramento, California. Her maternal grandmother is Choctaw from Oklahoma, and her maternal grandfather is Chitimacha from Louisiana. From her grandmother, she gained a love of baskets and an interest in practicing basket weaving herself. With the blessing of the Chairman of the Chitimacha Tribe, Sense began practicing her variation of the traditional method during graduate school at Parsons the New School for Design in 2004. While Director and Curator of the American Indian Community House in New York, Sense cataloged the AICH's thirty-year history, inspiring her search for Indigenous art internationally. She has since traveled across North America, Central America, South America, Southeast Asia, the Caribbean, and Europe to learn more about the art of Indigenous communities. Landscape photography from her travels is an integral part of her weaving.



View of Sarah Sense's studio

Her works will be featured in numerous exhibitions this fall, including *More Than: Expanding Artist Identities from the American West*, Tucson Museum of Art, Arizona, curated by Christine Brindza; *Transformative Power: Indigenous Feminism*, Vicki

BRUCE SILVERSTEIN

Myhren Gallery, University of Denver, Colorado, curated by Daina Warren; *Reclaiming Identity*, Trout Museum of Art, Appleton, Wisconsin, curated by Bruce Silverstein Gallery artist Dakota Mace; *Terra Firma*, New Museum Los Gatos, California, curated by Marianne McGrath, and *Chiefs, Clans and Kin, Art of the Five Civilized Tribes*, Choctaw Cultural Center and Tulsa Living Arts, Oklahoma, Curated by Laura Clark. The artist will also feature a unique commissioned work in the upcoming exhibition *Speaking with Light: Contemporary Indigenous Photography*, Amon Carter Museum of Art, Texas, Curated by John Rohrbach and Will Wilson.

Power Lines open Thursday, September 22, with a reception for the artist from 6 - 8 pm. For more information, please contact inquiries@brucesilverstein.com or go to www.brucesilverstein.com.