

# HIGH DESERT MUSEUM

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## High Desert Museum Welcomes New Curator

*Curator of art and community engagement to help guide educational programs, exhibitions and the Museum collection*

BEND, OR — The High Desert Museum continues its commitment to the arts with the appointment of master artist Sara Siestream (Hanis Coos) as the new curator of art and community engagement.

Siestream will be instrumental in guiding exhibition research and creation, program development and oversight of the Museum's growing art collection. She will continue to develop trips, tours and interpretive programs with an emphasis on art, collaborating with other Museum curators to integrate art with cultural and natural history. Education programs, guided and enhanced by Siestream, will build on the Museum's art opportunities for underserved public schools.

"I am honored to be here in the ancestral and contemporary homeland of the Klamath, Nez Perce, Northern Paiute, Umatilla, Warm Springs, Wasco and Yakama people," Siestream said. "I want to express my sincerest gratitude for the opportunity to join the High Desert Museum. I have encountered the softest landing and warmest welcome by people, animals and the land. I hope to bring a harmonious and dynamic energy to the intersection of art and community engagement that was so handsomely established here by my predecessor, Andries Fourie, and the Museum team. I am delighted to be here."

Siestream moved to Bend from Portland. The artist hails from the Umpqua River Valley on the south coast of Oregon. She comes from a family of professional artists and educators, and her training began in the home. Siestream graduated Phi Kappa Phi with a Bachelor of Science from Portland State University in 2005. She earned a Master of Fine Arts with distinction from Brooklyn's Pratt Art Institute in 2007.



New Curator of Art and Community Engagement Sara Siestream  
Photo by Aaron Johanson

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Her studio work is multidisciplinary with a primary medium of painting, followed by photography, printmaking, drawing, sculpture, video and traditional Indigenous weaving. Her art practice branches into education, curation and institutional reform. Siestreem created and runs a weaving program for the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw people. Her weaving teachers are Greg Archuleta (Grand Ronde, Clackamas Chinook, Santiam Kalapuya, Shasta) and Greg A. Robinson (Chinook Nation). She taught collegiate studio arts, critical race art theory and curatorial practices for a decade in Portland. She has been represented by Augen Gallery in Portland since 2010.

“We are thrilled that Sara has joined the High Desert Museum family and we look forward to the intellectual and artistic vision she’ll bring to our community,” said Museum Executive Director Dana Whitelaw, Ph.D. “Our commitment to arts education has grown as we’ve recognized the diminishing bandwidth for art programs in our public schools. Our goal for the curator position is to help fill that gap, in addition to being a resource for our community and visitors.”

The position of curator of art and community engagement was established in 2017. Siestreem’s appointment continues to fulfill the vision of innovative community arts programs.

The High Desert Museum is committed to adding to its vibrant art collection to share in thought-provoking exhibitions and inspiring community programs. In the past year, the Museum acquired two pieces by James Lavadour (Walla Walla), both of which were prominently featured in original exhibits, and two works by Rick Bartow (Wiyot).

Siestreem considers Lavadour and Bartow important influences on her artwork, as well as friends — Bartow passed away in 2016. Siestreem’s mentor of 20 years is artist Lillian Pitt (Tenino, Yakama and Wasq’u).

Siestreem has been represented in numerous group exhibitions including, most recently, *Portland2019* and *Hexsa’am-to be Here Always* in Vancouver, British Columbia. Solo exhibitions include *black huckleberry* at the Augen Gallery in Portland (2018), *ballast* at the Missoula Art Museum in Missoula, Montana (2013-2014) and *Collections* at the Crow’s Shadow Institute of the Arts in Umatilla (2013). In 2016, Siestreem received both the Purchase Award at Oregon State University and the Oregon Community Foundation Creative Heights Grant. A full list of her achievements can be found at [augengallery.com/artists/artists/siestreem](http://augengallery.com/artists/artists/siestreem).

In December, Siestreem will launch the Winter Art Series, a series of lectures and workshops shining a light on the Museum’s permanent art collection. On December 3, the focus begins with a discussion of Indigenous basket weaving, followed by a hands-on, three-hour workshop the following weekend. Artists will learn the basic life drawing techniques through study of the wonderful Indigenous baskets that live in the Museum. In January and February, the series will highlight two-dimensional and three-dimensional works of art including paintings and sculptures. The programs are free to tribal members. Register for the lectures and workshops at [highdesertmuseum.org/calendar](http://highdesertmuseum.org/calendar).

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## ABOUT THE MUSEUM:

THE HIGH DESERT MUSEUM opened in Bend, Oregon in 1982. It brings together wildlife, cultures, art, history and the natural world to convey the wonder of North America's High Desert. The Museum uses indoor and outdoor exhibits, wildlife in natural habitats and living history demonstrations to help people discover and appreciate this diverse region. The Museum is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, is a Smithsonian Affiliate, was a 2018 finalist for the National Medal for Museum and Library Services, and is the recipient of the Western Museums Association's 2019 Charles Redd Award for Exhibition Excellence. [highdesertmuseum.org](http://highdesertmuseum.org)

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