

Glenbow

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Large-scale photos bring artist's exploration of family and ancestry to life

Meryl McMaster: nikihci-âniskotâpân bloodline opens June 8 at Glenbow at The Edison

CALGARY, AB – June 7, 2024 – Throughout *nikihci-âniskotâpân bloodline*, artist Meryl McMaster's exploration of her family history, ancestry and her own identity is at the forefront. Her large-scale photographic self-portraits explore her mixed nêhiyaw/Métis and Anglo/Dutch ancestry.

"A lot of my work is informed by my mixed cultural heritage," says McMaster. "No doubt there are fault lines and pressure points in belonging to multiple cultures. For me, it is invigorating and enriching to have a bicultural heritage. It is that very complexity, the stories, ideas, and reflections that drive my work and that I strive to celebrate and hold space for."

While some of McMaster's earliest works infuse historical representations of Indigenous peoples with more contemporary expressions, others suggest an imaginative repossession of the land, showing dream-like scenarios playing out in beautiful photos. Her handcrafted, elaborate costumes embody the blended strains of her ancestry, often echoing historic garments and ceremonial regalia.

"Creating art contributes to who I am as it helps me understand the complex world around me," says McMaster. "I am constantly growing and changing, and I think that is reflected in my work. What I have learned through creating is that there are many layers to oneself. We are all complex, because of lived experiences. My practice is my way of processing and confronting these questions of self."

Opening June 8 at Glenbow at The Edison, *Meryl McMaster: nikihci-âniskotâpân bloodline* is an incredible showcase of the artist's work across her career. McMaster's dynamic and cinematic images feature the land as much as herself.

"Meryl McMaster's work highlights the power in both her creative process and her exploration of photography as a medium to connect with history," says Nicholas Bell, Glenbow's President & CEO. "We are honoured to host her work at Glenbow at The Edison for visitors to experience. It's so important to showcase diverse perspectives and mediums in visual arts and provide opportunities for deeper conversations about who we are and how we engage with our past."

McMaster uses research, family mementos, and her own family memories and experiences to inform each image. This exhibition includes work across McMaster's career – highlighting the growth and expansion of her artistic process.

"The images are layered and complex," says Sarah Milroy, Chief Curator and Executive Director of McMichael Canadian Art Collection. "Meryl McMaster is really an image maker in how she considers both the camera and angles, and also her location and the extraordinary apparel pieces she creates. She builds images from the very core of herself."

Meryl McMaster: nikihci-âniskotâpân bloodline is organized and circulated by McMichael Canadian Art Collection, in partnership with Remai Modern, with support from Hatch, CONTACT Photography Festival and Canada Council for the Arts. Exhibition supporters are Mawer Investment Management Ltd. Admission to this exhibition is free thanks to support from Calgary Foundation.

Meryl McMaster: nikihci-âniskotâpân bloodline runs from June 8 to September 1, 2024 at Glenbow at The Edison (150 9th Avenue SE). The exhibition is open Wednesday to Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Free, timed tickets can be booked at glenbow.org.

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About Glenbow

Founded in 1966 as an independent, non-profit museum, archive and gallery, Glenbow cares for an extraordinary collection of more than 250,000 works of art and historical belongings – from Canada and cultures around the world – on behalf of the people of Alberta. *Glenbow Reimagined* is a project to renovate the museum's 50-year-old building and provide a vibrant, thriving cultural resource in the heart of Calgary, committed to expanding the accessibility and impact of arts and culture. Glenbow's main building is closed as it renovates to become the JR Shaw Centre for Arts & Culture. While renovations are underway, visitors can experience exhibitions at the museum's satellite gallery, Glenbow at The Edison.

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