
Through painting and drawing, Carlson creates large-scale compositions with densely layered references that bring visibility to Native spaces and histories. In *Red Exit,* she presents a panoramic seascape informed by ideas of re-creation and renewal. Vibrant, prismatic motifs – some drawn from the land of the artist's ancestral home, and others from effigies, petroglyphs, and navigational signs – pulsate and collide across a series of horizons. The composition is anchored by a loon, known in the Ojibwe re-creation narrative as an Earth-Diver, who alongside other surviving animals, helps remake the world. Carlson also incorporates the infinity sign from the flag of the Métis People and the silhouetted figure of “Man Mound,” a destroyed earthwork – fractured by a road – that appears here to rise up from the land. Through her images, which take shape as a continuous wake pattern, she invokes moments of resistance and empowerment. Symbols of Native advocacy come together in a gesture of reclamation, creating new narratives of Indigenous experience in North America.
While *Red Exit* confronts the ongoing erasure of Indigenous cultures, it is, in the artist's words, a celebration of "the place we (Native People) reserve for ourselves... places of joy amidst removal, exclusion, and attempted assimilation."

Melinda Lang, senior curatorial assistant and organizer of the project, remarked, "Carlson's highly intricate images coalesce into disorienting scenes that often evoke futuristic and, at times, apocalyptic worlds. With its dizzying sense of movement, *Red Exit* yields and eludes legibility, playing up moments of visual confusion while inviting viewers to seek different vantage points as they take in the work—an experience that will be heightened through its presentation on the billboard."

"At this time when we are frequently kept apart, Carlson's engagement with public space raises so many compelling questions about belonging, landscape, and the boundaries between the public and private. These are concerns we all share, but they are concerns that Carlson and Indigenous artists have centered and foregrounded in their respective practices. As a museum located in Lenapehoking, the ancestral homeland of the Lenape, the Whitney is honored to live with Carlson's visualization of Indigenous histories and space," said David Breslin, Director of Curatorial Initiatives.


**About the Artist**

Alongside her works on paper, Carlson (b. 1979, Grand Portage Ojibwe) produces multidisciplinary projects and writes cultural criticism. She is based in Chicago and grew up in Minnesota where she has spent most of her career. Carlson holds an MFA from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design and a BA from the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. Her work is currently on view in *Don't let this be easy* at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, and was recently featured in two major traveling group exhibitions: *Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artists*, Minneapolis Institute of Art (2019–20) and *Art for a New Understanding: Native Voices, 1950s to Now*, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR (2018–20). Solo exhibitions include Bockley Gallery, Minneapolis (2020, 2014, and 2011); Minneapolis Institute of Art (2016); and Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, New York (2009–10). Her work is in numerous museum collections including the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Minneapolis Institute of Art; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario; Plains Art Museum, Fargo, ND; and The British Museum, London. Carlson was a 2008 McKnight Fellow, a 2016 Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors Grant recipient, and in 2020, she was awarded a residency at the Joan Mitchell Center in New Orleans and a 3Arts Make a Wave fellowship.

**Curatorial Credit**

*Andrea Carlson: Red Exit* is organized by Melinda Lang, senior curatorial assistant.

**Exhibition Support**

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About the Whitney
The Whitney Museum of American Art, founded in 1930 by the artist and philanthropist Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney (1875–1942), houses the foremost collection of American art from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Mrs. Whitney, an early and ardent supporter of modern American art, nurtured groundbreaking artists at a time when audiences were still largely preoccupied with the Old Masters. From her vision arose the Whitney Museum of American Art, which has been championing the most innovative art of the United States for more than eighty years. The core of the Whitney's mission is to collect, preserve, interpret, and exhibit American art of our time and serve a wide variety of audiences in celebration of the complexity and diversity of art and culture in the United States. Through this mission and a steadfast commitment to artists themselves, the Whitney has long been a powerful force in support of modern and contemporary art and continues to help define what is innovative and influential in American art today.

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