

PRESS RELEASE

THE WHITNEY MUSEUM PRESENTS GRACE ROSARIO PERKINS'S FIRST SOLO MUSEUM SHOW IN NEW YORK: CIRCLES, SPOKES, ZIGZAGS, RIVERS



New York, NY, October 9, 2025 — [Grace Rosario Perkins: Circles, Spokes, Zigzags, Rivers](#) marks the first solo museum presentation in New York City for Grace Rosario Perkins (Akimel O'odham/Diné, b. 1986, Santa Fe, New Mexico), an artist whose work is distinguished by its bold material experimentation, layered visual lexicon, and engagement with questions of belonging, place, and memory. On view are ten recent works, the majority of which are large-scale paintings completed between 2022 and the present. Two of these paintings have been created specifically for this exhibition, alongside a new sculpture debuting here for the first time.

The exhibition's title *Circles, Spokes, Zigzags, Rivers*, describes petroglyphs that connect the artist's family to her tribal homelands in the southwestern United States, including the vital, yet threatened, waters of the Gila River and Rio Grande. The influence of such longstanding technologies of visual storytelling is evident in Perkins's symbol-rich art. Flowers, stars, the sun, and spider webs are given significant presence within the systems the artist creates to record her life.

“We are excited to build upon the Whitney’s commitment to presenting emerging artists with this exhibition of Grace Rosario Perkins’s recent work. As an artist who combines diaristic accounts, a do-it-yourself ethos, and spirituality into her process, Grace makes works that are embedded with and thereby index both personal and worldly meaning. Her art examines themes like familial reconciliation, botanical healing, addiction in communities, and embracing one’s power as someone who is queer, Indigenous, and feminine. Influenced by longstanding methodologies of visual ideograms that precede and are beyond the Western art historical canon, she is constantly developing a dynamic and singular language of abstraction. It is especially significant that this exhibition, the first of Grace’s in a New York museum, will be on view for all to see in the John R. Eckel, Jr. Foundation Gallery, which is always free to the public,” said Adrienne Edwards, Engell Speyer Family Senior Curator and Associate Director of Curatorial Programs at the Whitney Museum.

“I use painting to get everything out. I use painting as a way to move a lot of energy— good, bad, highs, and lows. Painting is a healing ritual. When I paint, it’s like singing a song or dancing. It is solitary, but I still find ways to bring people in, always. I believe everyone should have access to their own personal agency and healing. I didn’t go to art school but spent over a decade as an educator working with adults with disabilities, at-risk youth, in rehab centers, and in hospice. Just make something. That’s what this is about... just having the permission to take stuff that feels good or feels bad and moving it,” said Grace Rosario Perkins.

Perkins’s practice is shaped by an intuitive and dynamic process in which acts of addition and redaction become central compositional strategies. Working primarily with acrylic, spray paint, and textual fragments, she incorporates an eclectic range of found and personal materials— family photographs, jewelry, book pages, fake eyelashes, plastic bags, botanicals—each serving as an elegiac vessel of memory, testimony, and cultural inheritance.

Drawing from language, music, and sports, the artist’s references to popular and material culture intersect with intimate meditations on grief, love, and hope, revealing the interwoven nature of personal narrative and collective experience. Her paintings and sculptures are not static objects but living archives—sites where the boundaries between past and present, the individual and the communal, are continually revisited and reimagined.

By foregrounding abstraction, Perkins resists reductive representations of Indigenous identity and situates her work within a lineage of modern and contemporary artists who have utilized unconventional forms to articulate political, cultural, and emotional truths. In her hands, abstraction is both storytelling and a means of engaging with the world—layering histories, symbols, and intentions into surfaces that demand both close looking and expansive interpretation.

Grace Rosario Perkins: Circles, Spokes, Zigzags, Rivers is organized by Adrienne Edwards, Engell Speyer Family Senior Curator and Associate Director of Curatorial Programs, with Rose Pallone, Curatorial Assistant.

PRESS CONTACT

For press materials and image requests, please visit our press site at whitney.org/press or contact:

Ashley Reese, Director of Communications

Whitney Museum of American Art

(212) 671-1846

Ashley_Reese@whitney.org

Whitney Press Office

whitney.org/press

(212) 570-3633

pressoffice@whitney.org

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 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 ninety 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, 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.

Whitney Museum Land Acknowledgment

The Whitney is located in Lenapehoking, the ancestral homeland of the Lenape. The name Manhattan comes from their word Mannahatta, meaning “island of many hills.” The Museum's current site is close to land that was a Lenape fishing and planting site called Saponnkanikan (“tobacco field”). The Whitney acknowledges the displacement of this region's original

inhabitants and the Lenape diaspora that exists today.

As a museum of American art in a city with vital and diverse communities of Indigenous people, the Whitney recognizes the historical exclusion of Indigenous artists from its collection and program. The Museum is committed to addressing these erasures and honoring the perspectives of Indigenous artists and communities as we work for a more equitable future. To read more about the Museum's Land Acknowledgment, [visit the Museum's website](#).

VISITOR INFORMATION

The Whitney Museum of American Art is located at 99 Gansevoort Street between Washington and West Streets, New York City. Public hours are Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 10:30 am–6 pm; Friday, 10:30 am–10 pm; and Saturday and Sunday, 10:30 am–6 pm. Closed Tuesday. Visitors twenty-five years and under and Whitney members: FREE. The Museum offers FREE admission and special programming for visitors of all ages every Friday evening from 5–10 pm and on the second Sunday of every month.

Image credit:

Grace Rosario Perkins, *Now I'm Makin Money and It's Good To Be Single, To Mingle With the Ladies While Their Earrings Jingle*, 2023. Acrylic, spray paint, horsehair, fake eyelashes, paper, rose petals, mirror, datura seeds, sand, bubble packaging, fiber-tipped pen, cut canvas, and adhesive on canvas, 66 1/4 × 67 × 1 1/2 in. (168.3 × 170.2 × 3.8 cm). Collection of Bockley Gallery, Minneapolis. © Grace Rosario Perkins, courtesy the artist and Bockley Gallery

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