Everyday Words, Everyday Objects

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith uses collage, juxtaposition, and found objects in her artwork. Most often her compositions feature a large central image painted over a field of mixed media that incorporates collaged text and images. By painting large scale, Smith amplifies her message and defines her subject.

There are everyday things and everyday sayings. Smith uses the common phrase, “I see red,” as the title for a series of artworks. The color red plays a role in the paintings themselves and the word “red” is a derogatory reference to Native Americans. The phrase “I see red” is used to express the onset of sudden anger and the paintings address areas of distress in culture and the environment. Smith invites the viewer to think about how images of Native Americans and their culture have been misused or misappropriated. There are four paintings from the I See Red series including I See Red: Indian Head Nickel and I See Red: A Nickel for Your Thoughts in this exhibition. Look at the works of art on view.

- The U.S. Treasury first circulated the Buffalo nickel in 1913 and stopped minting it in 1938. Why do you think the artist chose to paint this out-of-date nickel and why?

- How do the collage elements contribute to the visual composition?

- How do the collage elements help define the subject of the painting?


I See Red: McFlag includes found objects. The artist incorporates two round speakers at the upper corners and a power cord in the lower left corner of the painting. What associations do the found-object elements add to this artwork?

What do you think makes the artist “see red” in these paintings?

AT HOME ACTIVITY

All you need is your imagination and a few everyday objects. Bring together a few objects that attract you in some way. Think about what they suggest or represent individually. Now pair two or more of these found objects together to suggest a new meaning.

I SEE WORDS

Scale refers to the physical size of an artwork or size of objects within an artwork.

Series is a set of related items or artworks.

Mixed media is the combining of multiple art materials in one composition.

Composition refers to the overall relationship of all the elements in an artwork to one another.