

The Museum of Modern Art

MoMA ANNOUNCES PROJECTS: GABRIELLE L'HIRONDELLE HILL, THE ARTIST'S FIRST SOLO MUSEUM EXHIBITION IN THE UNITED STATES

NEW YORK, February 11, 2020 [Updated on September 30, 2020]— The Museum of Modern Art presents *Projects: Gabrielle L'Hirondelle Hill*, the artist's first solo museum exhibition in the United States, on view in the Museum's street-level galleries from April 25 through August 15, 2021. For the exhibition, part of MoMA's Elaine Dannheisser Projects Series, Hill, a Métis artist and writer, has assembled multiple works in which her use of tobacco as a key material alludes to the plant's complex indigenous and colonial histories. The exhibition features sculptures and drawings, including several new works, constructed primarily from tobacco along with other sourced and found materials, such as pantyhose, Crisco, wildflowers, and other tokens collected from her Vancouver neighborhood. *Projects: Gabrielle L'Hirondelle Hill* is organized by Lucy Gallun, Associate Curator, Department of Photography.

Prior to colonization, tobacco was among the most widely traded materials in the Americas. Later, tobacco became the first currency in the colonies of North America, before the dollars in use today. English settlers established a system in which promissory notes representing amounts of tobacco—“Tobacco Notes”—could be used to purchase goods, as well as to leverage wages, taxes, and fines. The propagation of tobacco as an abstract form of value allowed it to function as a measure of debt and undermined local indigenous economies in which tobacco already played a central role through forms of exchange. Hill's use of tobacco as material at once critiques settler colonial economic systems and celebrates the indigenous history of the gift economy—in which tobacco remains a key component.

Projects: Gabrielle L'Hirondelle Hill includes figurative sculptures, of both humans and animals, such as several bunnies that refer to reproductive labor as well as the feminized work of trapping and raising rabbits. As Hill has observed, “When labor is feminized and racialized, it is also often devalued.” The largest sculpture approximates the size of the artist's own body. Four flags, their proportions borrowed from the dimensions of the current United States dollar bill, hang high on the gallery walls. Two flags—*Dispersal and Disintegration* (both 2019)—are sewn directly from tobacco, while the other two are constructed through a labor-intensive process in which Hill coats paper in homemade tobacco-infused Crisco oil and applied pigments, which must dry over several months, after which additional materials are sewn or glued to the surface. Her *Spells*—which take the form of small, delicate, richly-colored drawings adorned with charms, flowers, beer tabs, and other collected ephemera—have also been produced through this months-long process. These cast spells, some of which have been made for Hill's friends, likewise represent the power of reciprocity, interdependence, and dispersal, attributes also central in a gift economy.

ARTIST BIO

Gabrielle L'Hirondelle Hill (b. 1979, Comox, BC, Canada) is a Métis artist and writer who lives and works on the unceded lands of the Sḵwxwú7mesh, Musqueam, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples. Hill's interdisciplinary artwork—encompassing sculpture, installation, video, and photography, among other mediums—uses found materials to probe concepts of land, property, and economy. Her work has been exhibited extensively in Canada, where she is represented by Cooper Cole (Toronto) and Unit 17 (Vancouver). Hill is a member of BUSH gallery, an Indigenous artist collective. Her writing has also been published widely, and she is co-editor of the anthology *The Land We Are: Artists and Writers Unsettle the Politics of*

Reconciliation (2015). She holds an MFA from California College of the Arts and a BFA and BA from Simon Fraser University, Vancouver.

SPONSORSHIP:

The Elaine Dannheisser Projects Series is made possible in part by the Elaine Dannheisser Foundation and The Junior Associates of The Museum of Modern Art.

PRESS CONTACTS:

Olivia Oramas, olivia_oramas@moma.org

Press Office, pressoffice@moma.org

For downloadable high-resolution images, visit moma.org/press.