

MoMA PS1 PRESENTS RETROSPECTIVE OF ARTIST AND ACTIVIST ALANIS OBOMSAWIN OPENING MARCH 27

LONG ISLAND CITY, New York, NOVEMBER 26, 2024—This spring, MoMA PS1 presents a retrospective of artist, activist, and musician Alanis Obomsawin (Abenaki, b. 1932), one of Canada's most renowned filmmakers. Opening March 27, the exhibition spans six decades of her multidisciplinary practice, bringing together a selection of films, sculptures, and sound, as well as rarely seen ephemera that sheds light on their production. Tracing her lasting contributions to social change, *The Children Have to Hear Another Story* brings Obomsawin's innovative model of Indigenous cinema into focus.

Arranged by decade, the exhibition features over ten of Obomsawin's films, including the documentary films created during her tenure at the National Film Board of Canada (NFB), for which she is best known. Her first film, *Christmas at Moose Factory* (1971), depicts the afflictions of residential schools through animated children's drawings, and it is presented alongside the original works on paper. *Incident at Restigouche* (1984) documents police raids on Native salmon fishing in the Mi'kmaq reserve, bringing social protest and environmental activism to the fore. Additionally, the exhibition features prized documentaries like *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance* (1993), which charts the Mohawk resistance against the expansion of a golf course into sacred burial lands. Seen together, Obomsawin's films illustrate her evolving and ongoing commitment to amplifying Native voices across generations.

In Quebec, Obomsawin spent her early years on the Odanak reserve, whose songs and stories she keeps alive through her work. The exhibition includes audio and photographs from the origins of creative practice as a singer, writer, and storyteller in the 1960s. It also highlights her performances presented in universities, residential schools, prisons, museums, and folk festivals across North America and Europe to aid humanitarian causes. In the 1980s, she released the album *Bush Lady*, featuring traditional Abenaki songs and original compositions. The retrospective includes her many engravings and prints, which frequently deploy the motif of the horse, whose strength and compassion she revisits in her more recent film *When All the Leaves Are Gone* (2010).

"The exhibition is a survey of my life's work. I have often said a picture may say a thousand words, but a voice is specific; it says precisely what is intended, with little room for interpretation. I hope this exhibition will communicate my voice, and through my voice visitors will learn about our people," says Obomsawin.

A member of the Abenaki Nation, Alanis Obomsawin is an activist filmmaker and producer. In 2023, she was the first female filmmaker to be awarded the Edward MacDowell Medal. Obomsawin was awarded the Glenn Gould Prize in 2020. She was named a Companion of the Order of Canada in 2019 and has been a Grande Officière of the Ordre national du Québec since 2016. She is also the recipient of over fifteen honorary degrees from universities and colleges across Canada and the US. In 1965, Obomsawin was also named Outstanding Canadian of the Year by *Macleans*'s magazine for spearheading the construction of the municipal pool in Odanak, which still operates today.

This exhibition is accompanied by *Alanis Obomsawin: Lifework*, a monograph edited by Richard William Hill and Hila Peleg. The comprehensive book includes essays, anecdotes, conversations, and an

interview with the artist, as well as her writings, etchings, film stills, photographs, and archival materials. It is distributed by Haus der Kulturen der Welt.

The exhibition is organized by Richard Hill, Smith Jarislowsky Senior Curator of Canadian Art, Vancouver Art Gallery, and Hila Peleg, Independent Curator, and made possible through a partnership between Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW), Berlin, Art Museum at the University of Toronto, and the Vancouver Art Gallery in collaboration with the National Film Board of Canada and CBC/Radio Canada, and with the support from the Canada Council for the Arts.

The presentation at MoMA PS1 is organized by Elena Ketelsen González, Assistant Curator, MoMA PS1.

Exhibition Tour

MoMA PS1, March 27–August 25, 2025

MAC Montréal, September 26, 2024–January 26, 2025

Art Museum at the University of Toronto, September 7–November 25, 2023

Vancouver Art Gallery, April 7–August 7, 2023

Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW), Berlin, February 12–April 18, 2022

SUPPORT

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ABOUT MoMA PS1

MoMA PS1 champions art and artists at the intersection of the social, cultural, and political issues of our time. Providing audiences with the agency to ask questions, access to knowledge, and a forum for public debate, PS1 has offered insight into artists' diverse worldviews for more than 40 years. The institution was a defining force in the alternative space movement in New York City, transforming a nineteenth century public schoolhouse in Long Island City into a site for artistic experimentation and creativity. PS1 has been a member of New York City's Cultural Institutions Group (CIG) since 1982 and affiliated with The Museum of Modern Art since 2000.

Hours: MoMA PS1 is open from 12 to 6 p.m. Thursday, Friday, Sunday, and Monday, and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays. Closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

Admission: \$10 suggested admission; \$5 for students and senior citizens; free for New York State residents and MoMA members. Free admission for New York State residents is made possible by The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation. Tickets may be reserved online at mo.ma/ps1tickets.

Visitor Guide: Discover even more from MoMA PS1 with the Bloomberg Connects app. Read wall text, hear directly from artists, and uncover the building's history with this multimedia visitor guide. This digital experience is made possible through the support of Bloomberg Philanthropies.

MoMA PS1

22-25 Jackson Ave
Long Island City
NY 11101
momaps1.org

Directions: MoMA PS1 is located at 22-25 Jackson Avenue at 46th Ave in Long Island City, Queens, across the Queensboro Bridge from midtown Manhattan. Traveling by subway, take the E, M, or 7 to Court Sq; or the G to Court Sq or 21 St Van Alst. By bus, take the Q67 to Jackson and 46th Ave or the B62 to 46th Ave.

Information: For general inquiries, call (718) 784-2084 or visit moma.org/ps1.

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