

# ARTFORUM

## CRITICS' PICKS

### “Unholding”

Artist's Space  
55 Walker Street  
November 18–January 21

Long before there was a Manhattan, the epicenter of savage capitalism all dolled up with shimmering lights and unyielding skyscrapers, there was Mannahatta—a Lenape place-name that means “island of many hills.” As an institution that “acknowledges its location on Indigenous land,” this nonprofit gallery brings together several artists, including Jolene Rickard, Kay WalkingStick, David Martine, and Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, for an exhibition that examines, through beauty and bloodshed, ideas surrounding American Indian heritage.

The show starts off with Pena Bonita’s *Stalled on the Way to Rosebud, 2017*, a work made up of four framed photomontages. Each part features a man, who functions as a kind of backdrop, examining his car engine in the middle of South Dakota’s Badlands. He is surrounded by an assortment of characters, such as “wanton” women, a baying ghost coyote, and hitchhiking Indian youths. Bonita’s kitsch nightmare is a real slice of frightening wilderness—a natural landscape poisoned by native stereotypes and white culture’s stupidity.

In G. Peter Jemison’s *Buffalo Road III Choices, 1987–90*, the titular animal—an extraordinary source of food, a symbol of divine abundance—is seen here as a great beast embellished with China marker. On its right side, the creature is imprisoned by collaged images of George H. W. Bush, gas masks, and other violent or inauspicious emblems. The left side of the work, however, has pictures of indigenous women, kayaks, and river views: an altogether calmer environment. Started during Ronald Reagan’s presidency and finished in Bush’s, *Buffalo Road* offers up dark commentary on rapacious American politics and expansionism: an extraordinary centerpiece for a richly complicated show.



Pena Bonita, *Stalled on the Way to Rosebud, 2017*, mixed media, 33 x 42".

— Lara Atallah