

NEWS RELEASE

Exhibition: Dakota Mace: *Sq' Baa Hane' (Story of the Stars)*

Dates: July 7 - September 19, 2026

Address: 45 Main Street #723, Brooklyn, NY 11201

Higher Pictures presents *Sq' Baa Hane' (Story of the Stars)*, the gallery's first exhibition with Diné artist Dakota Mace. The exhibition brings together nine works made between 2023 and 2025 from two series, *Sq'* and *Distorted Landscapes*.

Mace combines traditional and cameraless photographic methods, including cyanotype, chemigram, and natural dyes such as cochineal and osage orange, with hand-applied glass beadwork drawn from motifs in Diné weaving and silversmithing. Working across these process-intensive, labor-dense materials, she translates Diné cosmology and oral history into a visual language in which design itself functions as a carrier of narrative. In both series, land operates not as a pictorial subject but as an archive. Land is a repository of ancestral memory and kinship that, in Mace's framing, resists the proprietary logic of Western land ownership and instead figures place as an extension of the self and a site of intergenerational continuity.

In *Sq'*, Mace honors the tradition of Diné storytelling, told by campfire beneath the night sky and passed on only at specific times of year, especially in winter. Created through cyanotype with cochineal and chemical dyes, each work is unique but tied together, a reflection of the Diné philosophy that all things are connected even as each carries its own texture and design. Drawing on designs passed down through weaving, silversmithing, and the ancestors who came before, Mace offers a way for a younger generation to understand what it means to remain connected to their stories.

Distorted Landscapes turn to places sacred and significant to Diné people, where creation stories and the broader history of the American Southwest converge. In *Tséyi* and *Na'neel'Zhiín*, archival giclée prints meet glass beadwork whose designs come alive in shifting light, much as the land changes with the seasons. *Tséyi*, the Diné name for Canyon de Chelly, marks the starting point of the Long Walk, the 1864 forced removal of Diné people from their homes to Hwéeldi (Bosque Redondo). Its thirteen beaded diamonds echo the thirteen stripes of the American flag, a quiet confrontation with "America's distorted views of what land they claim as theirs and how we, as Diné, see our home." *Na'neel'Zhiín* turns inward toward family and legacy, with each diamond representing Mace's grandparents and their children. The motif itself is a symbol of Dinétah, the homeland, and a way to remember where one comes from so one can always return.

Together, the two series form a single meditation on memory, family, and shared histories. Whether in the stars overhead or the mesas and canyons of the Southwest, Mace insists on the land as a living archive, one that holds her people's legacy and passes it, like beadwork and oral histories, to the next generation.

Dakota Mace (Diné, b. 1991) is an interdisciplinary artist and scholar whose work translates the language of Diné history and belief through photography, textiles, beadwork, and handmade paper. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, including a solo museum exhibition, *DAHODIYINII – Sacred Places*, at SITE SANTA FE, and is held in the collection of the National Gallery of Art, the New York Public Library, the Whitney Museum of American Art, among others.

For more information please contact Milly Cai at Milly@higherpicturesgeneration.com

Diné Translations:

**Sq'* - Star

**Tséyi* - Among the Canyons

**Na'neel'Zhiín* - Dark-Colored Barrier