

Mystic Museum of Art and Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center Present Gifts of the Ocean (Kutha Makooôkanash)

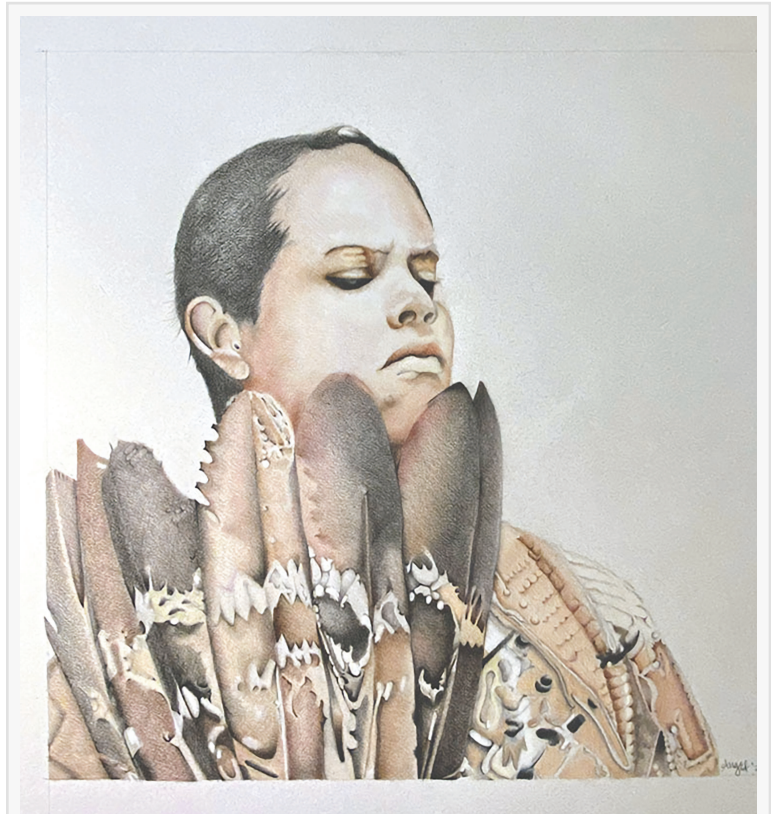
Gifts of the Ocean presents the historical wealth of Pequot culture, its near erasure by colonial conquest, and its vibrant contemporary expression.

MYSTIC, CT, UNITED STATES, May 27, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Mystic Museum of Art (MMoA) and The Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center (MPMRC) announce Gifts of the Ocean (Kutha Makooôkanash), the special exhibition culminating their year-long collaboration on the theme of forced migration. Filling all MMoA galleries, the exhibition illuminates the experience of the Pequot people on whose ancestral homeland MMoA was built.

Gifts of the Ocean (Kutha Makooôkanash) presents the historical wealth of Pequot culture, its near erasure by colonial conquest, and its vibrant contemporary expression through the traditional storytelling form of wampum and contemporary works by Pequot artists today. The exhibition runs from June 27 to October 12.

A summer of gallery talks, tours, and activities invites visitors to relate their own experiences of displacement and resilience to greater understanding of the experience of Pequot people.

Between 1500 and 1940, an estimated 60 million Europeans emigrated to the Americas. This wave of humanity forcibly displaced indigenous populations intimately bound to their millennial homeland.



Angel Bell Smith, Erin Hall, conte crayon on paper, from The Indigenous Peoples Project: The Mashantucket (Western) Pequot Women

Beginning in the early seventeenth century, the Pequot Tribe faced encroachment by English colonists on their land and trade routes. Increasing conflict broke down former native alliances. The ensuing [Pequot War](#) was an armed conflict that took place in 1636 and ended in 1638 between the Pequot Tribe and an alliance of English colonists with the Narragansett and Mohegan tribes. Following the bloody Mystic Massacre, approximately 700 Pequots had been killed and the remainder taken into captivity.

The Treaty of Hartford of 1638 attempted to eradicate Pequot cultural identity by prohibiting the Pequot people from returning to their lands, speaking their language, or referring to themselves as Pequots.

The Pequot War paved the way for English settlement of southern New England and established a framework for future conflicts. It took another 345 years for the tribe to rebuild their nation, achieve Federal recognition, and reclaim their land, in 1983.

The fertility of Pequot land and waterways, so coveted by English and Dutch colonists, shaped the very core of the tribe's culture and traditions. Tribal history and the significance of the land and its waterways are richly expressed in the art form of wampum.

Wampum is a type of bead made from quahog clam and whelk shells. Indigenous peoples wove them into bracelets, necklaces, collars, sashes, and belts. Wampum was traded inland for furs, corn, beans, and squash and also used as currency in Dutch and British colonies until the 1660s.

Gifts of the Ocean (Kutha Makooôkanash) features both the traditional art form of wampum, and contemporary artwork by tribal members, relating their history of forced migration, resilience, and restoration—in the setting of their ancestral home on the Mystic River.

Support for this exhibition was provided by the Kitchings Family Foundation and funding from the Connecticut State Department of Economic and Community Development/Connecticut Office of the Arts (COA) from the Connecticut State Legislature.

About Mystic Museum of Art: Mystic Museum of Art (MMoA) has served as a focal point for the arts in southeastern Connecticut for more than 100 years. Founded in 1913 as the Mystic Art Association, the museum today engages visitors in richly curated exhibitions, interpretive activities, studio classes, and outreach programs. MMoA's mission is to inspire creativity and critical dialogue by engaging the regional community in the understanding, appreciation, and practice of visual art.

About Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center: The Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center (MPMRC) is a 308,000 square foot non-profit educational institution owned and operated by the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, representing the Tribe's history and culture as well as the natural history of Southeastern Connecticut and the richness and diversity

of indigenous cultures and societies throughout North America. Open all year round, the museum offers a variety of educational programs and exciting events for all ages. The facility consists of permanent exhibits, the Mashantucket Gallery, classrooms, a 320-seat auditorium, a restaurant, and museum shop, collections, archives, and archaeology and conservation laboratories.

To learn more about the exhibition and visiting MMoA: [MysticMuseumofArt.org](https://mysticmuseumofart.org)

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