



Neal Ambrose-Smith (Salish-Kootenai, Métis-Cree, Sho-Ban)

(Born Texas, 1966)

From Upstream I Caught Fish, 2008

Published by Zanatta Editions

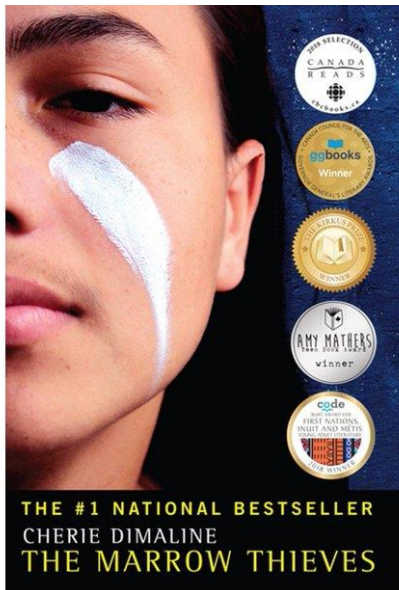
Etching and transfer on paper

KSU, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, gift of Joe and Barb Zanatta, Zanatta Editions, 2009.136

2021 Common Work of Art

Each year, the K-State Book Network selects a common reading for first year students, providing an intellectual experience they can share with other students and members of the university community. The 2021 K-State First Book is *The Marrow Thieves* by Canadian author Cherie Dimaline (Metis). Beach Museum of Art staff have selected this print by Neal Ambrose-Smith to complement Dimaline's story.

Like Dimaline, visual artist Ambrose-Smith (Salish-Kootenai, Métis-Cree, Sho-Ban) addresses loss of culture, abuse and violence by a majority population, and damage to the natural environment, while also celebrating survival and resilience.



Book Summary

In a futuristic world ravaged by global warming, people have lost the ability to dream, and the dreamlessness has led to widespread madness. The only people still able to dream are North America's Indigenous people, and it is their marrow that holds the cure for the rest of the world. However, getting the marrow, and dreams, means death for the unwilling donors. Driven to flight, a fifteen-year-old and his companions struggle for survival, attempt to reunite with loved ones, and take refuge from the "recruiters" who seek them out to bring them to the marrow-stealing "factories."

Ambrose-Smith's work often includes elements drawn from Indigenous knowledge and experience, including medicine bundles, canoes, the Trickster figure Coyote, and trailer homes. Like the character Miigwan in Dimaline's book, Ambrose-Smith tells stories. In his works, the present is overlaid with images from the past since we can only understand our current state by understanding our cultural influences. Ambrose-Smith is a professor and department head at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico.