Medium Web
Date November 23rd, 2026
Event Sheroanawe Hakihiiwe | ICA Miami
Web address https://www.vogue.com/article/sheroanawe-hakihiiwe-ica-miami

Publication Vogue
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VOGUE

ARTS

Sheroanawe Hakihiiwe's Tender Record of a Vanishing Amazon

BY SALOMÉ GÓMEZ-UPEGUI

November 23, 2026



Photo: Courtesy Galería ABRA, Caracas. (Photo: Eloísa Arias.)

To reach his home in Mahekoto, a Yanomami community deep in the Amazon, Sheroanawe Hakihiiwe, one of the most lauded Venezuelan artists working today, first flies from Caracas to the southern town of Puerto Ayacucho. From there, it's an eight-day journey by boat along the Orinoco River.

The village, home to around 300 people, has no electricity and no phone signal. Hakihiiwe spends his days in close communion with nature, fishing, hunting, and gathering. In a notebook, he draws everything he sees.

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For the past 30 years, Hakihiiwe has been devoted to making art about his homeland. "I want to show both the grandeur of the rainforest and the quiet importance of something as delicate as an insect's eyelash," he says. "Every element, no matter how small, contributes to that balance and the way life functions."

We are speaking on the occasion of his first solo museum exhibition in the US, at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami (ICA Miami), in partnership with the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain. On view through March 28, 2027, "Sheroanawe Hakihiiwe" brings together more than 100 works spanning his decades-long career, from his earliest experiments on handmade paper in the 1990s to breathtaking installations and a newly commissioned film shaped by his recent initiation as a shaman.

For the show, Taller de Arquitectura, the Mexico City–based studio led by Mauricio Rocha Iturbide, has transformed the museum's second floor into a space modeled after the *shapono*, the traditional Yanomami communal house. The works are set across modular walls in dark, earthy tones, lit by soft, filtered light, and the gallery windows have been reframed around the tree canopies outside, so "nature isn't just an image on the wall, but an active presence within the space," Rocha Iturbide explains.



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Hakihiiwe began making art in 1992, when the Mexican artist Laura Anderson Barbata held a workshop teaching his community to craft paper by hand. That initiative eventually led to *Shapono* (1996), a book the Yanomami created entirely from recycled paper and thread spun from pineapple leaves. (Today, it is the earliest work in the ICA show.) Yet his relationship to art goes back to his childhood, when he watched his mother, an artisan, weave and paint baskets. "She taught me how to paint," he says, "and words she once shared with me remain deeply important: 'This is the path for you; you must not abandon it. In time, you will see how well things turn out.'"

Heeding his mother's words, Hakihiiwe made art his life's work, slowly shaping a visual language for Yanomami life and culture. To this day, he often creates paintings and prints on paper made from plant fibers or trees from his homeland. He first exhibited in Caracas in 2010, after which his work traveled the world, even reaching both the Venice Biennale and the Biennale of Sydney in 2022.



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At the ICA exhibition, the artist's near-taxonomic approach, rooted in close observation and repetition, is on striking display. One wall is covered with *Kamie ya uriji pi jami Parawa ujame theperekui uriji terimi thepe komi kua (Donde yo vivo también viven todos estos animales en el Orinoco)* (2018), a series of about 60 works on paper, each filled with repeated drawings in red and black ink. At first glance, they appear to be simple lines and symbols, a kind of script. Peer closer, though, and each gesture evokes an animal found in the Orinoco basin: rows of crab eyes, heron feet, ticks. *Tarara (Casa de hormigas grandes)* (2023) plays with perception in a similar way: red acrylic lines branch across cotton paper like a cosmic web or a map of neural pathways. What they actually trace, as the title suggests, is a house of large ants.

The pared-back quality of Hakihiiwe's works conceals an undercurrent of urgency. The Amazon shelters much of Earth's plant and animal life, absorbs vast amounts of carbon, and shapes weather far beyond its borders. But illegal mining, deforestation, pollution, and climate change have left it at serious risk. (Scientists estimate that about 20% of the rainforest has disappeared over the past 50 years.) "Hakihiiwe calls our attention to the ecological crisis affecting the Amazon forest, reminding us that we are all together in this problem, on a planetary scale," says Michela Alessandrini, curator at the Fondation Cartier. "His take on this matter is brave, conscious, yet tender. His work is an important reminder of the fragility of our planet, and a representation of the manifestations it grants humans on a daily basis, if they just pay attention."



Sheroanawe Hakihiiwe, *He hupe (Mountains)*, 2026. Pigmented and pressed pulp on cotton pulp and screen printing, 76 3/8 x 152 3/4 in. (194 x 388 cm), diptych. Courtesy the artist and Galería ABRA, Caracas © Sheroanawe Hakihiiwe. Image courtesy Arte Dos Gráficos and Galería ABRA, Caracas / Fernando Cruz Flores

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Elsewhere in the show, a series of landscapes offers a wider view of the ecosystems that inspire Hakihiiwe's art. A highlight is the sprawling diptych *He hupe (Mountains)* (2026), made of pigmented pressed cotton pulp with screen printing that conjures the mountains of the Orinoco region. "Hakihiiwe always carries his native surroundings with him through his dreams and his art, wherever he goes… These mountains are constructed through layers of different techniques and colors, reading as an accumulation of dreamlike visions, memories, and natural elements separated across time and space," Alessandrini adds.

Since Hakihiiwe assumed the role of shaman in 2024, dreams and visions have taken on a deeper meaning in his work. An important section of the show explores how the initiation has shaped his art. A new film, *Hekura peni ware puhi aupouhe (The Spirits Wash My Face)* (2026), sets kaleidoscopic drawings in motion to the sound of his own chanting, centering his bond with the spirits that visit him as he sleeps. An installation of three red shamanic poles, made on site, also speaks to the increasingly sacred dimension of his practice.



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From the exhibition's smallest ink drawings to the largest installations, the same elements return again and again. For the Yanomami, explains Gean Moreno, co-curator of the exhibition, all forms speak to one another: the cosmos to the patterns of ceremonial body paint, a feather crown to the shape of the communal house. "The pattern in the shamanic poles at the center of the exhibition space appears identical to the alligator skin of the mythical figure Irawire, who brought fire to the Yanomami," Moreno says. "Rather than a logic of originality and representation, we have something like a circular movement of forms reiterating one another and reinforcing the overall cosmological whole at every turn."

For Hakihiiwe, the notion of a world in which everything is part of a whole has only grown more profound since his initiation. "Now I feel a coolness in my chest, like a gentle breeze passing through," he says. "I feel more deeply connected to the spirits, to the wind, and to the living world, and that gives me an even greater desire to create."