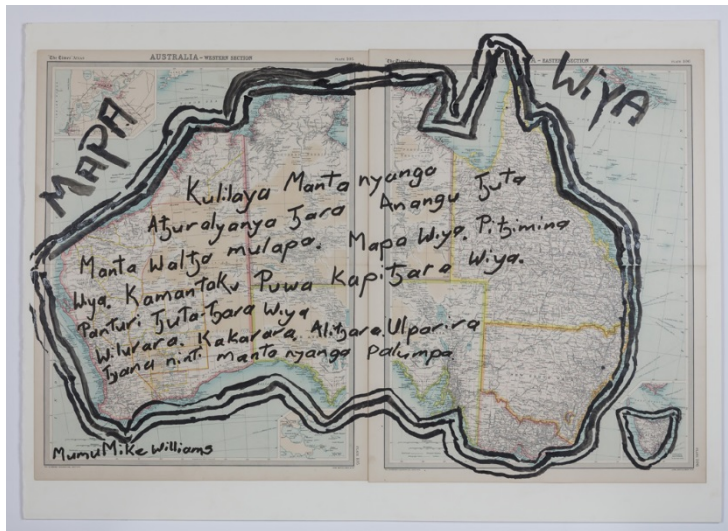


**THE MENIL COLLECTION PRESENTS MAPA WIYA (YOUR MAP'S NOT NEEDED):  
AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL ART FROM THE FONDATION OPALE  
ON VIEW SEPTEMBER 13, 2019 THROUGH FEBRUARY 2, 2020**

Houston's First Major Museum Exhibition of Australian Aboriginal Art  
Includes Over 100 Works by More Than 60 Artists



**HOUSTON, TEXAS, September 12, 2019** – Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples are advised that this document mentions names of deceased people.

The Menil Collection is pleased to present Houston's first major museum exhibition devoted to Australian Aboriginal art: *Mapa Wiya (Your Map's Not Needed): Australian Aboriginal Art from the Fondation Opale*. The show includes more than 100 works created by more

than 60 artists from different regions of rural Australia. These works represent profound recitations of Aboriginal peoples' personhood, their Country, and the different intercultural spaces indigenous peoples occupy in Australia today.

Country is the foundation for the autonomous ways of the Aboriginal peoples. Vast deserts and rainforests with their distinctive rock formations and water holes, and other meaningful spaces, including the land on which cities have been built—these are the diverse terrains of their lives. They are places in which the laws and primordial creations of ancestors are always present, where painfully violent colonial histories are memorialized, and potential futures are reclaimed in song and dance. Knowing the land, moving through it, and living with its deeply embedded song lines animate the rich visual expression of Aboriginal artists.

In the Pitjantjatjara language of the Central Australian desert region, mapa wiya means “no map.” The exhibition title is derived from a recent drawing by artist Kunmanara (Mumu Mike) Williams (b 1952–2019) by that name. The artist's recuperation of official government maps and postal bags is a pointed response to the foreign cartographies of the country that Australian Aboriginal peoples embody.

Said Curator of Collections Paul R. Davis, “Aboriginal peoples are the perpetual custodians of Country, and the works on view in *Mapa Wiya* are topographies of their knowledge—visual accounts of its living history, primordial and recent, ceremonial and secular. When visitors move through the five galleries of this exhibition, they will experience the diverse ways Aboriginal artists share their knowledge of Country with others.”

Reflecting on the long history of art making and different ways of Aboriginal peoples, *Mapa Wiya* highlights work created after the 1950s and includes paintings on bark and canvas, hollow log coffins (larrakitj, lorrkkon, or dupun), pearl shell body ornaments (lonka lonka or riji), and shields held by the Fondation Opale in Lens, Switzerland, one of the most significant collections of Aboriginal art. The exhibition showcases large, vibrant, and at times collaboratively painted works by internationally recognized artists such as Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri (1932–2002), Paddy Nyunkuny Bedford (1922–2007), Emily Kame Kngwarreye (ca. 1910–1996), Gulumbu Yunupingu (1945–2012), Balang John Mawurndjul (b. 1952), and Warlimpirrnga Tjapaltjarri (b. 1950).

Said Director of the Menil Collection Rebecca Rabinow, “The Menil Collection and the Fondation Opale share the understanding that since the beginning, humankind has attempted to express its place in the universe through the representation of art. We are pleased to be partnering to present a museum exhibition of Australian Aboriginal art in Houston for the first time. Not only will visitors enjoy the energetic, dynamic, and wholly unique works on view, but also find that the display is aligned with the Menil’s mission to present works of art that address the day’s most pressing issues, just as our founders John and Dominique de Menil did for many decades.”

*Mapa Wiya (Your Map’s Not Needed): Australian Aboriginal Art from the Fondation Opale* is curated by Curator of Collections Paul R. Davis.

Major funding for this exhibition is provided by BHP; The Anchorage Foundation of Texas; Olivia and Peter Farrell; George and Mary Josephine Hamman Foundation; and Melza and Ted Barr. Additional support comes from United Airlines; Henrietta Alexander; Nana Booker AM and M. David Lowe/Booker-Lowe Gallery; Clare Casademont and Michael Metz; Robert J. Kleberg, Jr. and Helen C. Kleberg Foundation; Australian Consulate-General, Houston; Mark Wawro and Melanie Gray; Suzanne Deal Booth; Cindy and David Fitch; Linda and George Kelly; Adelaide de Menil; Susan and Francois de Menil; Franci Neely; Marilyn Oshman; Bill Stewart; Taub Foundation/Marcy Taub Wessel; Australian American Chamber of Commerce – Houston; Salon 94; and the City of Houston.

## **Public Programs**

### **Public Opening Celebration**

**Friday, September 13, 6–9 p.m.**

Music and dance performances by Stanley Gawurra Gaykamangu (singer-songwriter), Amrita Hepi (dancer and choreographer), and David Williams (didgeridoo musician)

### **Community Day**

**Saturday, September 14, 11 a.m.–3 p.m.**

Performances and cultural workshops by the Alabama–Coushatta Tribe of Texas, Stanley Gawurra Gaykamangu, and Amrita Hepi

### **Panel Discussion**

**Thursday, November 7, 7–8 p.m.**

Professors Howard and Frances Morphy in conversation with Curator of Collections Paul R. Davis

### **Curator Talk**

**Sunday, November 10, 3–4 p.m.**

Paul R. Davis on the work of artist Kunmanara (Mumu Mike) Williams

### **Musical Performance**

**Saturday, November 16, 3 p.m.**

Da Camera Young Artists reflect on the exhibition as part of the *Stop, Look and Listen!* series

### **Lecture**

**Thursday, December 5, 7 p.m.**

Fred Myers, *Inspiration in Place: The Gift and Invitation of Indigenous Australian Art*

### **About the Menil Collection**

Houston philanthropists and art patrons John and Dominique de Menil established the Menil Foundation in 1954 to foster greater public understanding and appreciation of art, architecture, culture, religion, and philosophy. In 1987, the Menil Collection's main building opened to the public. Today, some thirty years later, the Menil Collection consists of a group of five art buildings and greenspaces located within a residential neighborhood. The Menil embodies the ideals and values of its founders, in particular, that art is vital to human life and should be readily accessible to all persons.

### **On view at the Menil**

*Collection Close-up: The Graphic Work of Dorothea Tanning* – on view through October 13, 2019

*Jean-Jacques Lequeu: Visionary Architect* – opening October 4, 2019

*Collection Close-Up: Of Heaven and Earth* – opening November 15, 2019

*Photography and the Surreal Imagination* – opening February 5, 2020

*Think of Them as Spaces: Brice Marden's Drawings* – opening February 21, 2020

*Si Lewen: The Parade* – opening April 24, 2020

*Allora & Calzadilla: Specters of Noon* – opening May 15, 2020

### **Find the Menil Online**

[www.menil.org](http://www.menil.org)

[www.facebook.com/menilcollection](https://www.facebook.com/menilcollection)

[www.twitter.com/menilcollection](https://www.twitter.com/menilcollection)

[www.instagram.com/menilcollection](https://www.instagram.com/menilcollection)

[www.youtube.com/themenilcollection](https://www.youtube.com/themenilcollection)

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**Image:** Kunmanara (Mumu Mike) Williams, Pitjantjatjara language group, *Mapa Wiya (We Don't Need a Map)*, 2017. Ink and acrylic on found map, 23 1/4 × 35 1/2 in. (59 × 90 cm). Fondation Opale, Switzerland. © Kunmanara (Mumu Mike) Williams. Image courtesy of Fondation Opale, Lens, Switzerland

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