

**THE MENIL COLLECTION TO PRESENT *MONA HATOUM: TERRA INFIRMA*,
OCTOBER 13, 2017 – FEBRUARY 25, 2018, THE ARTIST'S FIRST MAJOR SOLO
EXHIBITION IN THE UNITED STATES IN TWENTY YEARS**

**Following the Menil Presentation, the Exhibition will Travel to the Pulitzer Arts
Foundation in St. Louis from April 6–August 11, 2018**

Press preview October 11, 2017 at 9:00 a.m.



HOUSTON, TX, September 21, 2017 –
The London-based artist Mona Hatoum (b. 1952) creates work that addresses the growing unease of an ever-expanding world, one that is as technologically networked as it is politically fractured by war and exile. Investigating place and the body through a minimalist language of form and a wide range of materials, from glass and steel to light and sand, her sculptures and

installations since the late-1980s are grounded in questions about how shifting geography and the limits of institutional structures can redefine our understanding of the world around us.

Organized by Menil Senior Curator Michelle White, *Mona Hatoum: Terra Infirma* is the internationally-acclaimed artist's first major solo exhibition in the United States in more than twenty years. Opening October 13, 2017, the exhibition will present approximately 30 major sculptures and installations from North American and European collections. The show also includes a number of smaller sculptures and works on paper. Highlights include work imbued with a sense of physical danger that challenge the idea of home as a place of rest and comfort. *Homebound* (1999) is a room-size assemblage of electrified household objects and furniture. Other works depart from the Surrealist notion of the uncanny. *La grande broyeurse (Mouli-Julienne x 17)* (1999) is a monumentally-scaled vegetable processor. Hatoum transforms the familiar object into a strange and menacing creature through a preposterous alteration of scale. The artist wants her work to "create

a situation where reality itself becomes a questionable point, where [viewers] have to reassess their assumptions and their relationship to things around them.”

Said Senior Curator Michelle White, “In 2012, when Mona Hatoum and I began developing this project, we could never have anticipated the current political climate, which is dominated by conversations about walls, borders, refugees, and travel bans. Here, in this strange place, one that has so long defined the experiences of peoples of diaspora, refugees, and displaced populations, Hatoum’s work is situated and finds such urgency. Her cultivation of instability paradoxically provides a tool to find meaning and a sense of home on such a volatile earth.”

Working closely with Hatoum, the Menil Collection will present a selection of her artwork in the museum’s special exhibition galleries. Additional installations by the artist will be displayed in the Menil’s celebrated Surrealism and African galleries. Hatoum has long been interested in the power of unexpected encounters and material juxtapositions. Over the course of her more than forty-year career she has repeatedly used Surrealism as a point of departure. In a time of global migration, displacement and political uncertainty, this provocative connection is particularly relevant.

Said Menil Director Rebecca Rabinow, “The Menil Collection’s strong holdings of Surrealist art have provided a compelling backdrop for the artist’s investigation of the strange and shocking transformations of the ordinary. We are pleased that Hatoum has been inspired to work closely with our collection of early 20th century art. She has placed artworks by René Magritte, Meret Oppenheim, and Marcel Duchamp in conversation with her own pieces, demonstrating the great legacy and resonant strength that the avant-garde language has in contemporary practice, as well as the artist’s astute play with its history.”

Mona Hatoum: Terra Infirma will be accompanied by a copiously illustrated, scholarly catalogue with critical and art historical essays by Michelle White and Anna C. Chave and imaginative texts by Rebecca Solnit and Adania Shibli, which contextualize the artist’s work and its relationship to Surrealism, Minimalism, feminism, politics, and postcolonialism. Illustrations include photographs of Hatoum’s work installed in the Menil’s celebrated Renzo Piano-designed main museum building. The book will be released in January 2018.

The Menil Collection has been awarded a \$100,000 grant from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and has been recommended to receive a \$50,000 Art Works grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to help support both the

exhibition and the accompanying catalogue. The Andy Warhol Foundation's grant activity is focused on serving the needs of artists by funding the institutions that support them. NEA Art Works grants are awarded for the creation of art that meets the highest standards of excellence, public engagement with diverse and excellent art, lifelong learning in the arts, and strengthening of communities through the arts.

Following the Menil's presentation of *Mona Hatoum: Terra Infirma*, the show will travel to the Pulitzer Arts Foundation in St. Louis, where it will be on view beginning April 6, 2018. In anticipation of the exhibition, Hatoum was the inaugural artist-in-residence at the Moody Center for the Arts at Rice University in the spring of 2017.

Born to a Palestinian family in Beirut, Mona Hatoum studied at the Byam Shaw School of Art and the Slade School of Art in London where she settled following the 1975 Civil War in Lebanon. She has had major exhibitions at the Center Georges Pompidou, Paris; Tate Modern, London; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; and the Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha; among other institutions. Hatoum was nominated for the 1995 Turner Prize and was included in important group exhibitions such as Documenta (2002 and 2017) and the Venice Biennale (1995 and 2005). In 2011, Hatoum was awarded the Joan Miró Prize by Fundació Joan Miró, and in 2017, she was awarded the 10th Hiroshima Art Prize.

Organized by the Menil Collection, major funding for this exhibition is provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; National Endowment for the Arts; and The Levant Foundation. Additional support comes from The Brown Foundation, Inc. / Herman L. Stude; Bettie Cartwright; Day for Night; Scott and Judy Nyquist; Clare Casademont and Michael Metz; Franci Neely; Leslie and Shannon Sasser; Anne Schlumberger; and the City of Houston.

Press Preview

Members of the press are invited for an exclusive preview of *Mona Hatoum: Terra Infirma* with a welcome by Menil Director Rebecca Rabinow and a tour with artist Mona Hatoum and Senior Curator Michelle White on Wednesday, October 11, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. Light breakfast and refreshments will be served. Please RSVP to Tommy Napier at tnapier@menil.org or 713-535-3170.

Public Program Highlights

Public Opening of *Mona Hatoum: Terra Infirma*

Thursday, October 12, 7:00 p.m.

The public are invited to attend a reception celebrating the opening of *Mona Hatoum: Terra Infirma*.

Mona Hatoum

Friday, October 13, 7:00 p.m.

Artist Mona Hatoum speaks about the exhibition *Mona Hatoum: Terra Infirma*, her first major solo exhibition in the United States in two decades.

Sculptor Gallery Talks on the Work of Mona Hatoum

Saturday, October 28, 2:00 p.m. with Jillian Conrad, Associate Professor, Sculpture, University of Houston

Saturday, November 11, 2:00 p.m. with Joseph Havel, Director, Glassell School of Art

Saturday, December 9, 2:00 p.m. with Lisa Lapinski, Assistant Professor, Sculpture, Rice University

Three local sculptors will lead gallery talks on Mona Hatoum's work throughout the run of the exhibition.

Films of Mona Hatoum

Friday, November 17, 7:00 p.m.

The Houston Palestine Film Festival offers a screening and discussion of several fascinating short films by Mona Hatoum including *Measures of Distance*, *Roadworks*, *So Much I Want To Say*, and *Changing Parts*.

Rebecca Solnit

Wednesday, January 24, 2018, 7:00 p.m.

Renowned writer, historian, and activist Rebecca Solnit will speak about her current projects and her essay in the exhibition catalogue for *Mona Hatoum: Terra Infirma*. A book signing will follow.

All public programs are free and open to the public. Unless otherwise noted, programs are held in the Menil Collection foyer. Seating is limited. Information is subject to change.

About the Menil Collection

A legacy of the philanthropists John and Dominique de Menil, the Menil Collection opened in 1987. The museum presents regular rotations of artworks from its growing

permanent collection, organizes special exhibitions and programs throughout the year, publishes scholarly books, and conducts research into the conservation of modern and contemporary art. The Menil Collection's main museum building, the first building in the United States designed by Renzo Piano, anchors a parklike 30-acre campus, which also includes the Cy Twombly Gallery, a site-specific Dan Flavin installation, the Byzantine Fresco Chapel—now a venue for long-term installations by contemporary artists—and outdoor sculpture. A new building for the Menil Drawing Institute by Johnston Marklee, opening in the spring of 2018, will be the first freestanding facility in the United States designed expressly for the exhibition and study of modern and contemporary drawings. A celebratory 30th anniversary fundraising gala will be held on December 2, 2017, only the fourth to be held in the Menil's history. The museum is open Wednesday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., and charges no admission fee.

On view at the Menil

Thirty Works for Thirty Years – On view through January 28, 2018

Francis Alijs: The Fabiola Project – On view through October 28, 2018 in the Byzantine Fresco Chapel

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Image: Installation view of Mona Hatoum's *La Grande Broyeuse (Mouli-Julienne x 17)*, 1999, at Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen (MUHKA), Belgium, 2000. Mild steel, 135 × 226 1/2 × 103 1/2 in. (343 × 575 × 263 cm), Discs each: 2 × 67 in. (5 × 170 cm). CGAC Collection, Santiago de Compostella. © Mona Hatoum. Photo: Wim van Neuten, Courtesy MUHKA, Antwerp.

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