

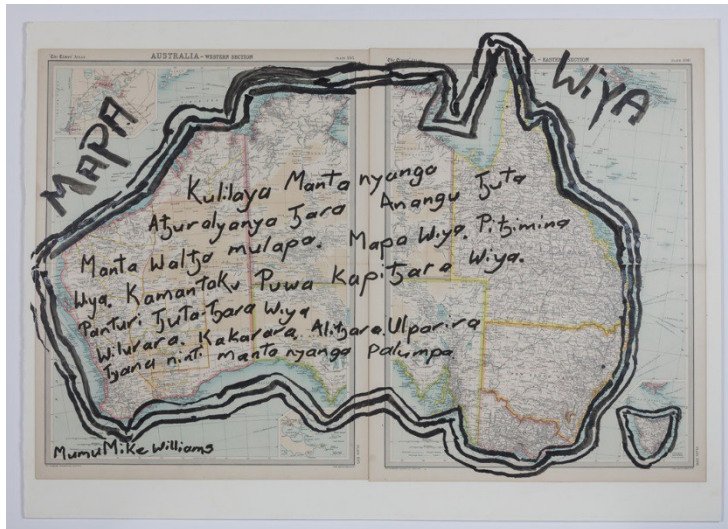
THE MENIL COLLECTION ANNOUNCES MAJOR EXHIBITIONS FOR 2019–20 SEASON

Mapa Wiya features more than 100 works of Australian Aboriginal art

Specters of Noon is comprised of seven newly-created works by Puerto Rico-based artistic duo Allora & Calzadilla

HOUSTON, TEXAS, May 1, 2019 – The Menil Collection is pleased to announce two upcoming exhibitions in its main museum building scheduled for the 2019–20 season.

Mapa Wiya (Your Map's Not Needed): Australian Aboriginal Art from the Fondation Opale
 September 13, 2019–February 2, 2020



Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples are advised that this document mentions names of deceased people.

This fall, the Menil will present *Mapa Wiya (Your Map's Not Needed): Australian Aboriginal Art from the Fondation Opale*. Meaning “no map” in the Pitjantjatjara language of the Central Australian desert region, the exhibition title is drawn from a recent drawing by artist Kunmanara (Mumu Mike) Williams (b 1952–2019), the

first showing of his work in an American art museum. His recuperation of official government maps and postal bags is a pointed response to the foreign cartographies of the country that Australian Aboriginal peoples embody.

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 storylines animate the rich visual expression of Aboriginal artists.

Reflecting on the long history of art making and different ways of Aboriginal peoples, *Mapa Wiya* highlights work created after the 1950s and includes more than 100 contemporary paintings, shields, hollow log coffins (larrakitj or lorrkkon), and engraved mother of pearl (lonka lonka or riji) 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).

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

Lead funding for this exhibition is provided by Anne Schlumberger and BHP Billiton Petroleum. Additional support comes from The City of Houston.

Allora & Calzadilla: Specters of Noon
May 15–October 11, 2020



In the spring of 2020, the Menil will present seven newly-created works by Puerto Rico-based, collaborative artistic duo Allora & Calzadilla (Jennifer Allora, b. 1974, and Guillermo Calzadilla b. 1971) for their solo exhibition *Specters of Noon*. Working at the museum over the course of several years, the artists have studied the Menil's renowned holdings of Surrealist art and archives as a point of

entre for exploring the relationship of Surrealism and the Caribbean.

The new works are inspired by early-20th century Surrealist texts that probe the pre-Christian mythology of noon, the time of day when shadows disappear and delirious visions momentarily reign. As the Surrealist writer Roger Caillois described in 1936, "This is the moment when the sun, at its zenith, divides the day into equal parts, each governed by the opposing signs of rise and decline. This then is the moment when the forces of life and light yield to the powers of death and darkness."

The exhibition will address conflicting phenomena of light and darkness from the point of view of the sunny Caribbean, a place of paradox rooted in the instability of environmental and colonial politics. Allora & Calzadilla's dreamlike environment will include light projections, live vocal performance, bat guano, ship engines, and coal. These contradictory materials, surprising sounds, and disconcerting sensations encourage visitors to ponder the social and economic inequities of our increasingly fragile world. The centerpiece of the exhibition, an artwork titled *Mains Hum*, will be fabricated in 2019 and consists of a Puerto Rican Electrical Authority power transformer damaged during an island-wide blackout which the artists have partly encased in bright copper. The deep hum of reverberating electricity buried in the relic will serve as a tuning device for a live vocal performance composed by David Lang that will take place throughout the duration of the exhibition.

The relationship of Houston and Puerto Rico, through shared history of energy commerce in the Gulf of Mexico as well as recent climate-related catastrophes, also provides a compelling and timely backdrop for this exhibition.

Allora & Calzadilla: Specters of Noon is curated by Michelle White, Senior Curator.

Major funding for this exhibition is provided by Brad and Leslie Bucher. Additional support comes from the City of Houston.

Exhibition dates are subject to change.

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.

Following a seven-month renovation, the Menil Collection's main building, the first United States museum designed by Renzo Piano, reopened to the public in September 2018. Currently, the building is hosting rotating displays drawn entirely from the museum's growing permanent collection.

On view at the Menil

Roni Horn: When I Breathe, I Draw, Part I – On view through May 5, 2019

Collection Close-Up: John Cage – On view through May 11, 2019

Contemporary Focus: Trenton Doyle Hancock – On view through May 19, 2019

Contemporary Focus: Mineko Grimmer – Opening May 31, 2019

Roni Horn: When I Breathe, I Draw, Part II – Opening June 7, 2019

Collection Close-Up: Dorothea Tanning – Opening June 28, 2019

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Images

Mapa Wiya Image: Kunmanara (Mumu Mike) Williams, Pitjantjatjara language group. *We Don't Need a Map (Mapa Wiya)*, 2017. Ink and acrylic on found map, 23 1/4 × 35 7/16 in. (59 × 90 cm). Image courtesy of Fondation Opale, Lens, Switzerland

Allora & Calzadilla Image: Guillermo Calzadilla and Jennifer Allora. Image courtesy the artists.

Press Contact

Menil Press Office

Tommy Napier

713.535.3170 / press@menil.org