

The Menil Collection

News Release

The Menil Collection Announces *Tacita Dean: Blind Folly*

Exhibition is the first major museum survey of Tacita Dean's work in the U.S., focusing on her drawings and featuring new works by the artist



HOUSTON—January 25, 2024—The Menil Collection is proud to announce *Tacita Dean: Blind Folly*, the first major museum survey in the United States of work by the British European visual artist Tacita Dean (b. 1965), who lives and works in Berlin and Los Angeles. The exhibition, organized in close collaboration with Dean, spotlights her career-defining approach to creating art through unmediated and chance-based drawing processes across a variety of mediums, from film to printmaking. ***Tacita Dean: Blind Folly* will be on view at the Menil October 11, 2024, through April 20, 2025.**

The show's title reflects Dean's desire to let the behavior of her mediums dictate the results of her work. For the artist, the playful British phrase connoting foolishness, "blind folly," represents her trust in the role chance and fate play in the creative act. She has said that her process is about "how to find by not looking."

The exhibition will include Dean's monumental blackboard drawings about the fragility of nature. For example, a melting iceberg and an avalanche rendered in white chalk comprise her series

of monumental works depicting the collapsing earth, inspired by sublime narratives found in Romantic painting. Equally awe-inspiring are Dean's large-scale "portraits" of trees. In these sprawling drawings on photographic prints, she surrounds cherry blossoms, Jacarandas, and ancient oaks in hand drawn marks. Her drawings of lightning made with carbon paper and cloud formations on Victorian-era slates, will also be displayed, along with groups of rarely shown drawings from her studio on paper, found postcards, and albumen photographs. A separate gallery presents a rotating group of her 16mm films, showcasing how she conceives the analogue medium as "drawing with light." Among them will be Dean's newest film, *Claes Oldenburg draws Blueberry Pie*, 2023. Together, the selection spans Dean's more than three-decade-long career and represents her work's defining themes and subjects related to obsolescence, environmental fragility, and the struggle of the creative process.

Rebecca Rabinow, Director, The Menil Collection, said, "The Menil is proud to have worked closely with Tacita Dean, an artist we deeply admire. Over the past seven years, she has visited the Menil several times to develop an extraordinarily beautiful and thought-provoking exhibition that will include recent pieces created specifically for it. We look forward to sharing her work with our visitors."

Michelle White, Senior Curator, The Menil Collection, said, "Weaving together an array of subjects, from classical mythological narratives to natural phenomena, Tacita Dean's work presents a poignant and urgent reflection on experience in an increasingly virtual and ecologically volatile world. In this anxious moment, she shows us the power of analogue through the act of drawing."

On the occasion of the exhibition, the museum will publish an artist's book by Dean, created in residency at the Menil's Cy Twombly Gallery. A response to her experience in the company of Twombly's paintings, the publication will draw out the influence of Dean's close relationship to the late American artist, who shared her admiration of the classical world. In their works, both Dean and Twombly explore the power of line and gesture and question the primacy of sight in the creation of a work of art.

About the Artist

After completing a BA in art from the Falmouth School of Art, England, Tacita Dean received her postgraduate studies at the Slade School of Fine Art, London, in 1992. The Hugo Boss winner, primarily known for her work in film, has established a prolific body of work with a variety of analogue mediums. She has worked to preserve celluloid film in the entertainment industry and is a founding member of savefilm.org, following the production of her work FILM, shown in the Turbine Hall of Tate Modern, London, in 2011-12. In 2018, her career retrospective was shown concurrently in three venues in London: the National Gallery, the National Portrait Gallery, and the Royal Academy. Major exhibitions of her work have also been organized at the Schaulager, Basel, Museo Tamayo, Mexico City, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney, among many other institutions. Dean was commissioned to create the set design and costumes for the ballet, The Dante Project, which debuted at the Royal Opera House, London, and Opéra de Paris in 2021-22.

About the Menil Collection

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, the Menil Collection consists of a group of art buildings and green spaces

located within a residential neighborhood in central Houston. The Menil remains committed to its founders' belief that art is essential to human experience and welcomes all visitors free of charge to its buildings and surrounding green spaces. menil.org

Image

Tacita Dean, *Beauty*, 2006. Gouache on gelatin silver print mounted on paper, 141 x 147 in. (358.1 x 373.4 cm). San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Purchase through a gift of Raoul Kennedy in memory of Patricia A. Kennedy. © Tacita Dean. Image courtesy of the artist; Frith Street Gallery, London and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York/Paris/Los Angeles

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