

PRESS RELEASE

Minneapolis Institute of Art to Present First Major Museum Exhibition Examining the Relationship between American Artists and the Supernatural

Opening spring 2022, 'Supernatural America' comprises more than 150 works by artists such as Whitfield Lovell, Tony Oursler, Betye Saar, Dorothea Tanning, and Alma Thomas.



Agatha Wojciechowsky. American (born Germany), 1896-1986. aw 0323 (detail), 1963. Watercolor on paper. 11 3/4 x 8 7/8 in. Courtesy the artist's estate and Day Art Consulting LLC.

Minneapolis Institute of Art
2400 Third Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55404
artsmia.org

MINNEAPOLIS—March 3, 2021— In February 2022, the [Minneapolis Institute of Art](https://www.artsmia.org/) (Mia) will present the first major museum exhibition to broadly examine the relationship between artists in the United States and the supernatural. "Supernatural America: The Paranormal in American Art," which will travel nationally, comprises more than 150 works from the early 1800s through the present. The exhibition will feature the work of internationally recognized artists such as Reverend Howard Finster, Whitfield Lovell, Tony Oursler, Howardena Pindell, Betye Saar, Renée Stout, Dorothea Tanning, Alma Thomas, Grant Wood, and Andrew Wyeth, as well as canonical objects, such as John Quidor's depiction of Ichabod Crane. The exhibition will also highlight underrepresented artists whose work is newer to art historical consideration and has never before been included in museum exhibitions of American art, including the creations of 19th- and 20th-century "spirit artists"—who purported to make art by allowing their bodies to be directed by spirits or who acted as mediums to bring forth images during séances without the intervention of a human hand.

Mia

Curated by Robert Cozzolino, PhD, Mia's Patrick and Aimee Butler Curator of Paintings, the multimedia exhibition garnered input from a broad advisory group of artists, academics, and community members. It features painting, sculpture, drawings, sketchbooks and albums, books, prints, photographs, video, and objects such as scientific instruments and Spiritualism material culture, including Ouija boards and planchettes. The exhibition emphasizes personal experiences of the paranormal; most featured artists assert direct encounters with the supernatural. Others find it an important source of inspiration and meaning.

"The mysterious and intangible are integral to American identity for profound and painful reasons, which explains why artists and entertainers across media continue to make art about the supernatural," said Cozzolino, who began research for the exhibition in 2016. "At its heart, this exhibition is about the imaginative capacity of humanity to consider what lies beyond tangible existence, and how this is reflected in visual culture. 'Supernatural America' brings together American artists who have explored even the most incomprehensible or impossible ideas. The exhibition delves into how these works relate to both personal and collective narratives of the haunted, the spiritual, and the cosmic."

The exhibition is organized into four overarching themes:

- **America as a Haunted Place**, including artwork that shows the relationship of haunting to history and place, considering the ways that the unsettled ghosts of the past linger, return, and affect the environment;
- **Apparitions**, showing how artists visualized spirits from literature and firsthand experience to invent an iconography of the spectral;
- **Channeling Spirits/Ritual**, featuring artwork that depicts mediumship and conjuring, was made through the practice of channeling spirits, or was crafted to play a critical role in ritual; and
- **Plural Universes**, presenting the ways artists have attempted to describe other dimensions based on speculation, science, and the translation of personal experiences, including UFO and extraterrestrial sightings.

"This exhibition examines the inherent human impulse to look for meaning beyond the visible realm," said Katie Luber, PhD, Mia's Nivin and Duncan MacMillan Director and President. "No matter our beliefs, we all seek answers of some shape or form, and it is our hope that the artwork and artists highlighted in 'Supernatural America' will encourage empathy and the exploration and discussion of wide perspectives."

"Supernatural America" will premiere at the Toledo Museum of Art (June 12–September 5, 2021). The exhibition will then travel to the Speed Art Museum in Louisville, Kentucky (October 7, 2021–January 2, 2022). The show will end its tour at Mia, where it will be on view February 19 through May 15, 2022.

The exhibition is accompanied by a full-color catalogue published by the Minneapolis Institute of Art and the University of Chicago. The publication will include thematic essays and nearly 300 images, many representing artwork reproduced for the first time.

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This exhibition is organized by the Minneapolis Institute of Art.

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Press Contacts

Minneapolis Institute of Art

Michaela Baltasar-Feyen

+1 612 870 3280

mbaltasar-feyen@artsmia.org

PAVE Communications & Consulting

Aga Sablinska

+1 862 216 6485

aga@paveconsult.com

About the Minneapolis Institute of Art

Home to more than 90,000 works of art representing 5,000 years of world history, the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) inspires wonder, spurs creativity, and nourishes the imagination. With extraordinary exhibitions and one of the finest art collections in the country—from all corners of the globe, and from ancient to contemporary—Mia links the past to the present, enables global conversations, and offers an exceptional setting for inspiration.

General admission to Mia is always free. Some special exhibitions have a nominal admission fee.

Museum Hours

Thursday-Sunday

10am–5pm

Monday-Wednesday

Closed

For more information, call + 1 612 870 3000 or visit artsmia.org

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