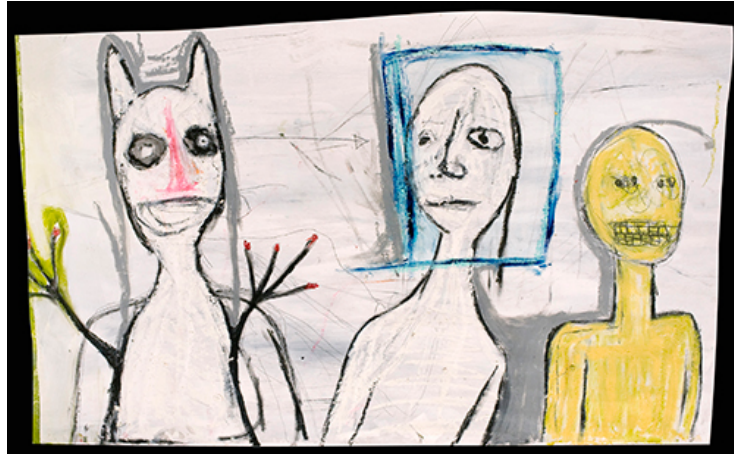


NEWS

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Upcoming WAM exhibition *The Talking Cure* explores the power of art to draw out stories, trigger emotions, and inspire participation.



Melissa Stern, *Family*, 2012, oil paint, pastel, graphite.

MINNEAPOLIS – The Weisman Art Museum at the University of Minnesota presents *The Talking Cure* (September 3, 2016, through April 30, 2017), a unique collection of sculptures and drawings by New York-based artist Melissa Stern. This menagerie of quirky, quasi-human figures teeters between funny and serious, familiar and strange. By giving the impression of being slightly off-kilter, they call to mind life’s balancing acts.

Like all balancing acts, Stern’s figures can inspire amusement and delight, while also touching a tender nerve. The artist created these endearingly imperfect figures from her imagination with the goal that they “speak” to viewers, triggering emotions and memories, and drawing out personal stories and reflections.

These tactics are similar to those used in psychoanalysis, a set of therapeutic methods and theories developed by Sigmund Freud to relieve patients of psychological ailments. This exhibition takes its name from Freud’s descriptive term for psychoanalysis, the “talking cure.”

Although not a devotee of psychoanalysis, Stern embraces the process of letting go, whether of “emotional baggage” or things we can’t control. She “let go” of her artwork by inviting twelve writers to contribute monologues and give voice to a particular sculpture in *The Talking Cure* that “spoke” to them. Representing diverse literary genres and backgrounds, the writers shared



Melissa Stern, *If the Shoe Fits*, 2012, clay, pastel, oil, copper, shoe, paper.

a sensitivity to the fact that Stern captures in her art those “fleeting, fugitive emotions” we often want to damp down.

Stern requested the writers “let go” of their monologues by giving them to twelve actors, who then performed them without directional cues. Recordings of these performances accompany the sculptures on view and are accessible to visitors through different platforms, including a smartphone app developed for the exhibition.

Participants in the project include Emmy Award-winning producer, Janet Grillo, three-time Bram Stoker Award-winning novelist, Sarah Langan, and National Book Award winner Valeria Luiseilli, who will speak at WAM in conjunction with the exhibition.

The gallery includes a workshop space designed to encourage viewers to share and reflect on the power of stories. Complete with a Freud-inspired couch and other comfortable furnishings, provided by BluDot, this space features a library of exhibition-inspired books. Among the materials available is a hand-bound “WAM Wellness Toolkit,” a multimedia compilation of wellness-related ideas and resources made for U of M students by the

Weisman Art Museum’s student group, the WAM Collective.

The workshop space also has a participatory installation by Rebecca Krinke, UMN faculty member and Target Studio artist-in-residence. Krinke’s sculptural object, “*What Needs to Be Said?*,” invites visitors to respond to *The Talking Cure* by exploring the cathartic possibilities of “speaking up.” Contributions can be kept private or made public. Public contributions will be pinned on a wall within the installation, visible for all to see, while those to remain private will be burned without reading during a ceremony at the close of the exhibition.

Visitors are invited to select the sculpture that speaks to them, and imagine their own monologues; to read, write, reflect, convene, converse. No matter how people participate, *The Talking Cure* is an evolving platform, and its audience plays a vital part in its development.

The Talking Cure was curated by guest curator Laura Wertheim Joseph.

RELATED PROGRAMMING

The Talking Cure: Conversations

Wednesday, September 14, 2016 | 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Melissa Stern, creative writer Madelon Sprengnether, and theater artist Michael Sommers will convene to discuss “*The Talking Cure*,” and Stern’s creative process in the production of the exhibition. The artist, writer, and actor will be moderated by Gloria A. Levin, a practicing Minneapolis psychoanalyst, and will talk about the questions raised by Stern’s work and Freud’s original description of psychoanalysis, as a “talking cure.” In partnership with the University of Minnesota’s Department of Art.

Register to attend this free event at Z.UMN.EDU/WAMCONVO

***The Story of My Teeth* Reading by Valeria Luiselli**

Thursday, October 13, 2016 | 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Valeria Luiselli, described as “one of the most exciting new writers working today,” by the *Los Angeles Times*, will be at WAM for a reading, conversation, and signing event. Luiselli will read from her novel, “*The Story of My Teeth*,” written in collaboration with the workers at a Jumex juice factory in Mexico City and hailed as one of the best books of 2015 by the *New York Times*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Buzzfeed*, and more. Luiselli’s work is in WAM’s exhibition *The Talking Cure*. In partnership with the University of Minnesota’s Creative Writing Program and Coffee House Press.

Register to attend this free event at Z.UMN.EDU/MYTEETH

Writing Back with Valeria Luiselli

Friday, October 14, 2016 | 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Celebrated author Valeria Luiselli will lead workshop participants through creative writing exercises, making connections between WAM’s exhibitions *Pan American Modernism* and *The Talking Cure*, and exploring a range of themes, from identity to storytelling. The event is free for University of Minnesota students; limited space for the general public (\$25). In partnership with the University of Minnesota’s Creative Writing Program and professor Peter Champion’s MFA class.

Learn more about this event at Z.UMN.EDU/WRITEWAM

Reflections on the Unspoken with Rebecca Krinke, Leslie Morris, and Ryland Angel

Wednesday, November 2, 2016 | 7:00 p.m.

“Unspoken” is an experimental, interdisciplinary event that brings together scholar Leslie Morris, renowned countertenor Ryland Angel, and visual artist Rebecca Krinke. Attendees will hear excerpts of Morris’s memoir “*She Did Not Speak*,” which reflects on her unexplained coma brought on by learning of her mother’s complicated Holocaust family history; hear the world -

premiere performance of Angel's libretto composition inspired by Morris's experience, and be invited to contribute to Krinke's participatory art installation, "*What Needs to Be Said?*"

Register to attend this free event at Z.UMN.EDU/UNSPOKEN

In partnership with: Center for Jewish Studies, Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Department of Art History, Department of German, Scandinavian, and Dutch, and the Institute for Advanced Study at the University of Minnesota.

ABOUT WAM

Since its origin in 1934, the Weisman Art Museum has been a teaching museum for the University of Minnesota. Today, education remains central to the museum's mission to create art experiences that spark discovery, critical thinking, and transformation, linking the University and the community. The Weisman Art Museum is located at 333 East River Road, Minneapolis, on the University of Minnesota campus. Admission to exhibition galleries is always free.

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