

WHERE
THE
OCEANS
MEET

WHERE THE OCEANS MEET

We often imagine that globalization and technology bring us closer and make us more connected, yet borders increasingly divide us. *Where the Oceans Meet* engages two key figures who devoted their work to thinking through borders, both physical and ideological: the Cuban painter, scholar, and ethnographer Lydia Cabrera (Havana, Cuba 1899-1991 Miami, United States) and the Martinican philosopher, poet, and literary critic Édouard Glissant (Sainte-Marie, Martinique 1928–2011 Paris, France). The exhibition reconsiders the pioneering thought of the two Caribbean writers through the work of forty modern and contemporary artists and collectives who explore the grounds from which art can break through

barriers. The exhibition looks at ideas of geography, nation, culture, society, race, gender, and language, and how crossing frontiers has shaped our world.

Although coming from different parts of the world, the artists in this exhibition create works that echo the literary, anthropological, and philosophical inquiries of Cabrera and Glissant. The artists explore how borders both separate and connect us, while shaping our identities. Their practices resonate across mediums and genres, and attempt to answer urgent political and ethical questions that concern us all today. In addition to a selection of archival materials related to Cabrera and Glissant, *Where the Oceans Meet* includes works by:

- NIV ACOSTA and FANNIE SOSA
- ETEL ADNAN
- CARLOS ALFONZO
- KADER ATTIA
- BELKIS AYÓN
- YTO BARRADA
- DANIEL BOYD
- TANIA BRUGUERA
- SEBASTIÁN CALFUQUEO ALISTE
- AGUSTÍN CÁRDENAS
- MAYA DEREN
- MANTHIA DIAWARA
- MELVIN EDWARDS
- JUAN FRANCISCO ELSO
- ÖYVIND FAHLSTRÖM
- SIMONE FATTAL
- THEASTER GATES
- ANDREA GEYER
- SYLVIE GLISSANT
- DOMINIQUE GONZALEZ-FOERSTER
- FELIX GONZALEZ-TORRES

- KOO JEONG A
- WIFREDO LAM
- GLENN LIGON
- LANI MAESTRO
- ROBERTO MATTA
- JULIE MEHRETU
- ANA MENDIETA
- THE OTOLITH GROUP
- AMELIA PELÁEZ
- ANDRÉ PIERRE
- WALID RAAD
- RAQS MEDIA COLLECTIVE
- ANRI SALA
- ANTONIO SEGUÍ
- ELENA TEJADA-HERRERA
- PIERRE VERGER
- JACK WHITTEN
- ANDROS ZINS-BROWNE

Where the Oceans Meet assembles artists’ and writers’ visions for transforming the world when politics fail. Moving between nations and cultures, the artists in the exhibition help us understand what Glissant termed “Opacity,” a resistance to transparent and objectified representations of migrations, diasporas, language, gender, identity, memory, religious rituals and practices of hospitality.

In her transdisciplinary intellectual and creative work, Cabrera fluidly connected peoples, languages, and genres. Her research made possible a new awareness of culture conceived as a process of social relations. As a writer and ethnographer, she approached the languages, religions, myths, and cosmologies of Afro-Cubans without class prejudice or racial hierarchies. Similarly, her disinterest in academic theorizing and her methods of constructing knowledge led her to imagine a rich space of contamination between fiction and reality, between her own literary work and the testimonies of her informants, which fed her numerous ethnographic studies.

This exhibition puts Cabrera’s ideas into productive communication with those of Glissant, who was similarly committed to preserving and highlighting connections among cultures. For Glissant, the archipelago and the drift of the oceans constitute a pattern for a future territory of the world, where oceans (and cultures) meet. His work transgresses boundaries between theory and poetry to enhance understanding

of language, identity, space, history, and knowledge. He examines the pain historically endured by Caribbean communities, and the sustainability and innovation that derives from survival under duress, to contemplate cultural transformations affecting people today on a global scale.

The title of the exhibition, *Where the Oceans Meet*, comes from a sentence that opens Glissant’s 2006 book *Une nouvelle région du monde* (A New Region of the World). The phrase suggests the geographical interface between Glissant and Cabrera and hints at a transnational and global conception of the world. The oceans meet where colonial conquests, displacement of peoples, and extermination of species have taken place over the course of history; they meet where trade is conducted,

and where the dreams of immigrants get doused. The ebb and flow of the oceans are ambiguous, simultaneously bringing peoples together and separating them, in free flows for some and coercive hurdles for others. *Where the Oceans Meet* implies a constantly shifting border where people encounter and affect each other, in favorable times as well as in times of disaster. This swarm of tides and streams also conjures an image of the mind, where individual and collective subconscious drives and memories meander. More than a metaphor, it names the location where the multiple layers and sedimentations of our global world encounter and dissolve geographic and political frontiers.

MAY 26, 2019 — JAN. 12, 2020

THE MUSEUM OF ART AND DESIGN AT MIAMI DADE COLLEGE

WHERE THE OCEANS MEET

We may also understand *Where the Oceans Meet* as referring to an aesthetics generated within and from the encounters. Creative processes, their unpredictable shapes and transformations, can result from displacement of peoples’ social, political, and cultural practices. The displaced communities’ resilience, and their attempts to restructure a sense of belonging, can also shape the artists’ aesthetic experiences.

Miami, a city where oceans meet, so often imagined as a crossroads of the Americas and a site of transition par excellence, offers an evocative platform for this exhibition that questions colonial and modern thought, placing it into perspective.

Organized by MOAD and Americas Society, New York, *Where the Oceans Meet* is curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist, Asad Raza, Gabriela Rangel, and Rina Carvajal. The exhibition is made possible by the support of the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, and the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners. We gratefully acknowledge the collaboration of the Cuban Heritage Collection of the University of Miami Libraries; the Library of Glissant Studies; Diana Flatto, Assistant Curator of Visual Arts, Americas Society; Jose Antonio Navarrete; and Nadia Naami; as well as the generosity of all the lenders to the exhibition.

Where the Oceans Meet is the third iteration of an exhibition project that began in 2017 as *Mondialité* at the Boghossian Foundation-Villa Empain in Brussels, and was reconceived as *Lydia Cabrera and Édouard Glissant: Trembling Thinking* at Americas Society in New York in 2018.

M . O . A . D . . .

Museum of Art and Design Miami Dade College
 Freedom Tower, 2nd floor, 600 Biscayne Boulevard, Miami, FL 33132
 Hours are
 Wednesday 1:00–6:00 PM
 Thursday 1:00–8:00 PM
 Friday 1:00–6:00 PM
 Saturday 1:00–6:00 PM
 Sunday 1:00–6:00 PM

Where the Oceans Meet is dedicated to Eduardo J. Padrón, President of Miami Dade College since 1995. His steadfast leadership and unwavering belief in MDC and MOAD have enabled us to undertake programming such as this exhibition and laid the foundation for our renewed sense of mission. The curators also dedicate this exhibition to the memory of their dear friend Okwui Enwezor (1963–2019), who regularly crossed borders and broke barriers in his life and in his pioneering curatorial projects.

Museum admission: \$12 adults; \$8 seniors and military; \$5 students (13–17) and college students (with valid ID); free for MOAD MDC members, MDC students, faculty, and staff, and children 12 and under. Accessibility challenges: please call (305) 237 7700 for details. For updates and a full schedule of events, please visit <http://www.mdcmoad.org>. Stay connected: #moadmdc








Ana Mendieta
El Laberinto De Venus (Labyrinth of Venus), 1982
 Photo Credit: Vieri Tomaselli
 © The Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection, LLC
 Courtesy Galerie Lelong & Co.
 Courtesy of The Ella Fontanals Cisneros Collection, Miami



Yto Barrada
 Film stills of *Faux départ (False start)*, 2015
 16 mm, digital video, colour, sound. 22 minutes, 43 seconds
 © Yto Barrada, courtesy Pace Gallery; Sfeir-Semler Gallery, Hamburg, Beirut; and Galerie Polaris, Paris



Anri Sala
 Film still from *Làk-kat*, 2004
 Courtesy of the artist



Tania Bruguera
Destierro (Displacement), 1998 [2005 version]
 Courtesy of the artist

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Theaster Gates
A Casual Evening Leaning From My Room
To Performances Below Me, 2013
 Photo Credit: Oriol Tarridas
 Courtesy of Theaster Gates and The Ella Fontanals Cisneros Collection, Miami



Kader Attia
The Repair, 2012
 Courtesy Galleria Continua, San Gimignano/Beijing/Le Moulin
 Photo by M. Monestier
 Courtesy Collection Martin Z. Margulies, Miami



Sebastian Caluqueo
 Film still from *Asentamiento (Settlement)*, 2015
 Photo courtesy of the artist

Walid Raad / The Atlas Group
Civilizationally, we do not dig holes to bury ourselves, 1958-59/2003
 © Walid Raad. Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York



Lani Maestro
A Book Thick Of Ocean, 1993
 Photo by Lincoln Mulcahy
 Courtesy of the artist
 Collection of the Canada Council Art Bank /
 Collection de la Banque d'art du Conseil des arts du Canada

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