

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Minneapolis Institute of Art Announces Three Major Contemporary Acquisitions by Beau Dick, Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, and Otobong Nkanga**



Transformation Mask, 2017. Beau Dick, Kwakwaka'wakw (Musgamakw Dzawada'enuxw First Nation), 1955–2017  
Red cedar, acrylic, faux fur. Gift of funds from Mary and Bob Mersky and the Jane and James Emison Endowment for Native American Art 2021.38

**Minneapolis Institute of Art**  
2400 Third Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55404  
[artsmia.org](http://artsmia.org)

**MINNEAPOLIS—September 28, 2021**—The Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) today announced the acquisition of three major works of contemporary art: a transformation mask by the First Nations artist Beau Dick, a mirror and painted mosaic sculpture by the Iranian artist Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, and a tapestry by the Nigerian artist Otobong Nkanga. All three are the first by the artists to enter Mia's collection. Acquisition of the mask and sculpture was made possible in part by gifts of funds; the Nigerian textile was purchased outright by Mia. Farmanfarmaian's sculpture, *Fourth Family Octagon*, will make its debut in the reinstalled Art of Islamic Cultures, Asia gallery, opening this fall; the Dick and Nkanga works will go on view in the near future.

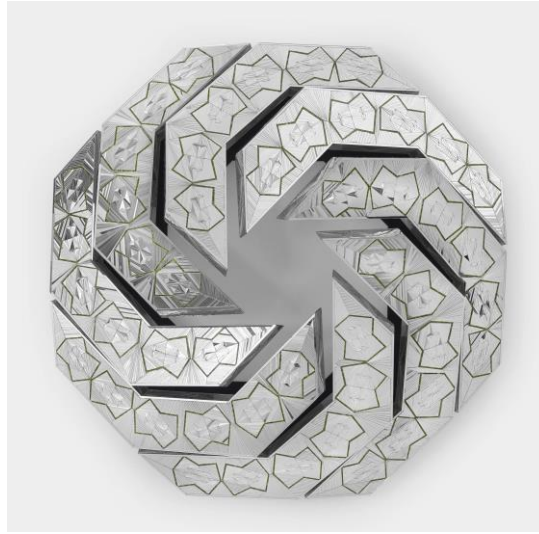
"We're excited to welcome these new voices to Mia as we continue our commitment to diversifying our contemporary art collection," said Katie Luber, PhD, Nivin and Duncan MacMillan Director and President of Mia. "While all three works were created during the past decade, they will also enhance the stories we are able to tell about various cultures and cross-cultural exchanges across time. We are looking forward to the new dialogues that will be generated by introducing these new works to our collection and by studying and displaying them alongside both contemporaneous and historic works."

Additional information on each of the new acquisitions follows below.

### **Beau Dick, Transformation Mask (2017)** Red cedar, acrylic, faux fur

Chief Beau Dick, Walas Gwa'yam (1955–2017), was a Kwakwaka'wakw (Musgamakw Dzawada'enuxw First Nation) artist and activist who was acclaimed as one of the Northwest Coast's most versatile and talented carvers. While Dick's practice was rooted in his Kwakiutl community, he challenged the contemporary art world to accept Indigenous art and explore First Nations' concepts of community and communal sharing of resources as alternatives to Western concepts of material wealth and ownership. Transformation masks like the one acquired by Mia are intended to manifest transformation, usually an animal changing into a mythical being, human, or another animal. Originally created for display at Documenta 14 (2017), this mask, depicting the mythical deity Raven, was ultimately held back to be used during a potlatch ceremony, a Kwakwaka'wakw gift-giving feast in which possessions are given away or destroyed as a show of prominence and to reaffirm community bonds to one another and the supernatural world. The acquisition comes with rare photo and video documentation of the mask being danced in a 2016 potlatch ceremony.

# Mia



Fourth Family Octagon, 2013. Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, Iranian, 1922–2019. Reverse painted glass, mirrored glass, plaster. The William Hood Dunwoody Fund and gift of funds from Mary and Bob Mersky 2021.35.2

**Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, *Fourth Family Octagon* (2013)**

Reverse painted glass, mirrored glass, plaster

Inspired by the architecture and design of her native Iran, Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian (1922 – 2019) was known for merging traditional Persian craftsmanship with her own modernist language. *Fourth Family Octagon* is emblematic of the artist's style and her signature mirror-mosaic forms. The sculpture is part of her "Families" series, begun in 2010, in which she explored the infinite possibilities of geometric shapes, breaking and reconstituting various arrangements of lines, volumes, colors, and planes. Influenced both by the Islamic aesthetic principles of geometric structure and light, as well as Minimalist thinking about probing the possibilities of basic forms, the mesmerizing surface patterns and vortex-like construction of *Fourth Family Octagon* reflect Farmanfarmaian's playful yet profound transnational perspective. In addition to *Fourth Family Octagon*, Mia has acquired a mixed-media drawing by the artist, titled *Geometric*, which reveals the artist's thought process and how she navigated between two- and three-dimensional modes of creation.



Double Plot, 2018. Otobong Nkanga, Nigerian/Belgian, born 1974. Viscose, polyester, cotton, wool, acrylic; 5 inkjet prints on laser cut Forex plates. The Christina N. and Swan J. Turnblad Memorial Fund 2021.47

#### Otobong Nkanga, *Double Plot* (2018)

Viscose, polyester, cotton, wool, acrylic; 5 inkjet prints on laser cut Forex plates

Otobong Nkanga (born 1974) is an artist of Ibibio descent who was born and raised in Nigeria, and now lives and works in Belgium. Using media ranging from textiles to sculpture and performance, Nkanga's practice investigates the environmental and human legacy of European colonialism in Africa. Reflecting Nkanga's interest in these issues, *Double Plot* visualizes the scarification of the landscape. Linear forms throughout the tapestry allude to lines of demarcation, geographical borders, and also the mining industry, indicated by the artist's choice of silver and copper metal threads. It is the first contemporary textile made by a woman artist from the African continent to enter Mia's collection.

---

## Press Contacts

*Minneapolis Institute of Art*

**Michaela Baltasar-Feyen**

+1 612 870 3280

[mbaltasar-feyen@artsmia.org](mailto:mbaltasar-feyen@artsmia.org)

*PAVE Communications & Consulting*

**Aga Sablinska**

+1 862 216 6485

[aga@paveconsult.com](mailto: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](http://artsmia.org)

# Mia