



CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM  
INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ART

4202 East Fowler Avenue CAM 101  
Tampa, Florida 33620

Info Line: 813-974-2849 / fax: 813-974-5130  
[www.ira.usf.edu](http://www.ira.usf.edu)

**PRESS RELEASE**

Contact: Alexa Favata, Associate Director

[favata@usf.edu](mailto:favata@usf.edu)

Tel: 813-974-4133

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*New Weather*

**Diana Al-Hadid**

**Iva Gueorguieva**

**Robyn O'Neil**

**November 6, 2009 – March 6, 2010**

Reception: Friday, November 6, 2009 @7-9pm, USFCAM

Symposium: Friday, November 6, 2009 @ 2pm, USF Marshall Student Center, Plaza Room #2708

Curator's Tour: Thursday, February 4, 2010 @ 12pm, USFCAM

**USFCAM Hours: M-F 10am-5pm, Sat 1-4pm**

Admission to the Museum is free; parking permit (\$5.00) required.

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The University of South Florida Contemporary Art Museum is pleased to present *New Weather* from November 6, 2009 through March 6, 2010. The exhibition is curated by Institute for Research in Art Chief Curator, David Louis Norr, and organized by the USF Contemporary Art Museum.

The monumental sculptures of Diana Al-Hadid, the turbulent paintings of Iva Gueorguieva and the enigmatic drawings of Robyn O'Neil brought together in *New Weather*, explore the atmospheres and forces which characterize our time, presenting us with an apt metaphor for the unpredictability of a rapidly changing world.

New York-based **Diana Al-Hadid's** staggering architectural sculptures, constructed from steel, polystyrene, plaster, wood, resin and wax appear ripped from their origins, dragged through time and space—collapsing from the weight of time and gravity. Born in Aleppo, Syria, in 1981, and raised in Cleveland, Ohio, Al-Hadid inescapably folds her own identity into the reading of her work. The formal and intellectual source of Al-Hadid's structures are informed by the myths and stories from her Syrian heritage to the canon of western progress—from Breughel's *Tower of Babel*, to the labyrinth on the floor of Chartres Cathedral, to the Large Hadron Collider at CERN in Switzerland. In the artist's most recent efforts, she has explored the weighted structure of the tower—a symbol of Western strength and power, in crafted moments of collapse and decay. As the past haunts, so does the future and the ghost-like presence of Al-Hadid's sculptural works suggest that despite our earnest push toward progress, we may lead ourselves, inevitably, to a bleak and catastrophic future.

Los Angeles-based **Iva Gueorguieva's** large-scale, turbulent paintings seamlessly blend abstraction and figuration into a dizzying blur of coagulating bodies of marks, color streams, and strokes. Born in Bulgaria in 1974, Gueorguieva and her family moved to the United States in her teens. This intense shift from a communist bloc country to the U.S., in language and culture, remains a powerful source for

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her paintings, which embody the idea of change in their formal structure and chosen subject. Dusk is the setting for her swirling figures and forms, the time when the atmosphere is rapidly changing from light to dark, an in-between time, erupting with swirling streams of saturated color. The figures that populate Gueorguieva's paintings are presented as if all we could see of people was the sinewy structure of feelings and emotions, in rapturous explosions. Combining strategies of drawing and painting and engaged with both the formal concerns of color and line and the social concerns of power and history, Gueorguieva's paintings are a compositional maelstrom of painted and collaged elements where nothing is static, dissolute or fully formed, but rather in constant flux.

Houston-based **Robyn O'Neil** is well known for her large-scale multi-paneled graphite drawings of painstaking intricacy, depicting the slow and ultimate demise of a multitude of diminutive men beset within the harsh realities of an unforgiving landscape. Born in Omaha, Nebraska in 1977, O'Neil has lived and worked in Texas for the last decade. An unruly North American landscape predominates in O'Neil's intensely detailed drawings. Her inventive works explore the idea that humans may become displaced, out of synch with their most precious resources—land, water, and air—to the point that these resources begin to fight back in a battle for their own survival. Though still engaged in telling stories, in her most recent works, O'Neil has abandoned linear narrative altogether, preferring instead to work in fragments and shards, as if from a dream, suggestive of a world we once knew, only the laws of nature—our most basic assumptions, such as gravity—no longer apply. Images appear in a boundless space without horizons, water becomes sky, and ships float in the atmosphere, elements of our world have become unhinged. O'Neil's is an invented world, a space able to balance our most disturbing projections with contemplative reflection.

To accompany this major exhibition, the USFCAM is publishing a fully illustrated catalogue with an essay by the exhibition's curator, David Louis Norr.

### **Public Events**

*New Weather* Symposium, organized by USFCAM, Friday, November 6, 2009, 2pm, in the USF Marshall Student Center, Plaza Room #2708. A panel discussion will focus on works of art and themes addressed in the exhibition. The participants will include exhibition curator David Louis Norr, and the artists, Diana Al-Hadid, Iva Gueorguieva, and Robyn O'Neil.

*New Weather* Curator's Tour, with IRA Chief Curator, David Louis Norr, Thursday, February 4, 2010, 12pm in the USFCAM galleries.

### **Artist Biographies:**

Diana Al-Hadid [Aleppo, Syria 1981]. She currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. She received an MFA in sculpture from Virginia Commonwealth University, a BFA in sculpture and a BA in Art History from Kent State University. She has participated in numerous residencies, most recently at the Skowhegan School for Painting and Sculpture. She was recently named a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellow in Sculpture and was a recipient of the Pollock-Krasner Grant in 2007. In 2009, work has been included in numerous international group exhibitions, including "Unveiled: New Art from the Middle East," Saatchi Gallery, London, the 9th Sharjah Biennial, UAE, "In the Between," curated by Suzanne Egeran, Istanbul Turkey. Past exhibitions include: "Black Bile, Red Humour: Aspects of Melancholy, curated by Oliver Zybok, Center for Arts and Culture, Montabaur, Germany. AIM 26 at the Bronx Museum of Arts (2006), Blood Meridian at Michael Janssen, Berlin, curated by David Hunt (2007), and Agitation and Repose, curated by Gregory Volk and Sabine Russ, at Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York, NY (2007). She has upcoming exhibitions at the BAM Next Wave

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Festival, curated by Dan Cameron (2009), and solo exhibitions at Rice Gallery, Houston TX (2011) and La Conservera Contemporary art Center in Murcia, Spain (2011). Her work is represented by Perry Rubenstein Gallery in New York and Michael Janssen Gallery in Berlin.

Iva Gueorguieva [Bulgaria, 1974] lives and works in Los Angeles. She received an MFA from the Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia. She has participated in residencies at Kaus Australis in Rotterdam and the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. Recent solo exhibitions at Stichting Outline, Amsterdam, NL, Pomona Museum of Art, Claremont, CA (2008), Carl Berg Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2007) and Stephen Stux Gallery, NY, NY. Her paintings and drawings have been exhibited in group exhibitions in a number of cities in the US as well as in Europe, including Western Exhibitions in Chicago, Samson Projects in Boston, 2x2 Projects in Amsterdam, and the Heriard-Cimino Gallery in New Orleans, LA. In 2003 she was included in the Louisiana Biennial at the Contemporary Art Center in New Orleans. In 2006 she received the prestigious Pollock-Krasner Grant. Her work is represented by Angles Gallery in Santa Monica, CA where she had a solo show in early 2009.

Robyn O'Neil [Omaha, Nebraska 1977] lives and works in Houston, Texas. She received her BFA from Texas A&M, Commerce and did graduate work at the University of Illinois, Chicago. In 2005, she received an Artadia Grant from the Artadia Foundation - The Fund for Art and Dialogue in New York City, in 2008, she was a Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant recipient, and in 2009, she received the Hunting Prize - the most generous annual art prize in North America. O'Neil has been included in many prestigious museum exhibitions including the 2004 Whitney Biennial. Solo shows of O'Neil's work have been in Berlin, Paris, New York City, Dallas, Chicago and Houston. In 2006, the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston, Texas organized the artist's first one-person museum survey, which traveled to the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, and the Frye Art Museum, Seattle, Washington. In 2010, The Des Moines Art Center will host a survey of O'Neil's most important work to date. Her work is in the permanent collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, Texas, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas, Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas, and the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. Her work is represented by Dunn and Brown Contemporary in Dallas, TX and Praz-Delavellade Gallery in Paris, France.

The Institute for Research in Art is recognized by the State of Florida as a major cultural Institution and receives funding through the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Council on Arts and Culture, and the National Endowment for the Arts. *New Weather* is sponsored in part by Arts Council of Hillsborough County and the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners, and The Nimoy Foundation. The USFCAM receives funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. The USF Contemporary Art Museum is accredited by the American Association of Museums.

*Press images available:*

Contact Don Fuller, New Media Curator

<mailto:fuller@usf.edu>

Tel: 813-974-4329