

**NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale Announces New Exhibition:  
*Cici McMonigle: Creatures for the Divine***

*On view from November 17, 2024, through May 4, 2025, this exhibition is the first solo museum presentation dedicated to the work of the Miami artist.*

**FORT LAUDERDALE, FLA.** — Beginning November 17, 2024, through April 27, 2025, [NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale](#) will present *Cici McMonigle: Creatures for the Divine*, the first solo exhibition of Miami artist Cici McMonigle (b. 2001, Tianjin, China). The exhibition showcases her exuberant and colorful paintings of fabulous beasts and monstrous creatures derived from Chinese and American western fables and tales, and a new series of painted wood cutouts inspired by traditional Chinese folk toys, which symbolize peace and prosperity. She notes that her work is a “distinctive and exaggerated blend of cultural spiritualism.”

McMonigle’s creatures emerged from her exploration of her multicultural experience as an artist of half-Chinese and half-American heritage. Although South Florida is known for its diversity, McMonigle stands out as part-Chinese, as Asians represent less than two percent of Miami’s population. She contends that through her paintings she can create characters with ten legs, a thousand horns, and giant teeth, that still feel familiar and relatable to a broad audience. These paintings not only celebrate the coexistence of her diverse background, but also invite viewers to embark on their journey of storytelling. McMonigle’s fantastical paintings are a natural fit with NSU Art Museum’s extensive collection of works by artists of the post-war European art movement Cobra, who similarly plumbed the subconscious and appropriated mythology to create grotesques that critique ideas about human and collective cultures.

Monsters seem to be everywhere these days in the work of South Florida artists, a number of whom have been featured in solo exhibitions at NSU Art Museum in recent years, including Susan Kim Alvarez, Matthew Carone, Joel Gaiten, Jaime Grant, Emilio Martinez, and Zoe Schweiger. From whence did these creatures emerge? Could it be South Florida’s geography as the Southernmost point of the East Coast of the continental United States instills fear of falling off the map? Sixteenth-century cartographers drew scary sea monsters in the oceans as signs of the great unknown, adding the inscription “Here there be Monsters.” The unknown also encompasses the subconscious, and in this centenary year of the founding of Surrealism, there is a renewed fascination with the Surrealists’ techniques of pure automatism that bypass their conscious mind, and the monstrous creatures they unleash. The recent proliferation of monsters in work by South Florida artists also diverges from the figurative art that was pervasive during the last two decades. These artists’ Chimeras are universal and free of human restraints. They can speak in coded and veiled messages to express the unmentionable and unburdened buried anxieties. The monster is the “other” in a land where foreigners are everywhere.

Cici McMonigle studied fine art at Parsons School of Art and Design, New York, and psychology at Polk State College, Winter Haven, Florida. Solo exhibition: *Wild West Circus*, Mulberry Cultural Center, Mulberry, Florida. Group exhibitions include *Florida Room 3: Snowbirds*, KDR, Miami, 2024; *Seeing is Believing*, Mulberry Cultural Center, Mulberry, Florida, 2024; *But Naked: A Collection of Soul Bearing Work*, Polk Museum of Art, 2018, among others. Studio Residencies: Bakehouse Art Complex, Miami, 2024; Laundromat Art Space, Miami, 2023.

Curated by Bonnie Clearwater, Director and Chief Curator, NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale.

Situated midway between Miami and Palm Beach, NSU Art Museum is located in the heart of Downtown Fort Lauderdale. The Museum is a premier destination for exhibitions and programs encompassing all

facets of civilization's visual history and is widely known for its significant collection of Latin American art, contemporary art with an emphasis on art by Black, Latin American and women artists, as well as works by American artist William Glackens and the European CoBrA group of artists. For more information, please visit <https://nsuartmuseum.org>.

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### **About NSU Art Museum**

Founded in 1958, NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale is a premier destination for exhibitions and programs encompassing many facets of civilization's visual history. Located midway between Miami and Palm Beach in downtown Fort Lauderdale's arts and entertainment district, the Museum's 83,000 square-foot building, which opened in 1986, was designed by architect Edward Larrabee Barnes and contains over 25,000 square feet of exhibition space, the 256 -seat Horvitz auditorium, a museum store and café. In 2008, the Museum became part of Nova Southeastern University (NSU), one of the largest private research universities in the United States. NSU Art Museum is known for its significant collection of Latin American art, contemporary art with an emphasis on art by Black, Latinx and women artists, African art that spans the 19th to the 21st century, as well as works by American artist William Glackens, and the European CoBrA group of artists. Two scholarly research centers complement the collections: The Dr. Stanley and Pearl Goodman Latin American Art Study Center and the William J. Glackens Study Center.

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