



Bravo, Tony, "Exclusive: Acclaimed 'Broken Spectre' video installation on Amazon deforestation to open new art space in S.F.," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 13, 2023

ART & EXHIBITS

Exclusive: Acclaimed 'Broken Spectre' video installation on Amazon deforestation to open new art space in S.F.



Tony Bravo | April 13, 2023 Updated: April 13, 2023, 9:36 am



Richard Mosse, "Broken Spectre," 2018 -2022. Four channel video installation with 12.2 surround sound, 74 minutes and 11 seconds. Produced in Brazil and Ecuador. Installation view, 180 Studios, London, October 12, 2022. Photo: Jack Hems

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An immersive video installation on the deforestation of the Amazon and issues of climate peril will be the first exhibition at the Minnesota Street Project Foundation's new exhibition space, the organization announced Thursday, April 13.

"Broken Spectre," by Irish-born New York artist Richard Mosse, is scheduled to open at 1201 Minnesota St., a former warehouse on the same block as MSP's existing gallery hub at 1275 Minnesota St., on May 11.

The 74-minute, four-channel, surround-sound video installation was acquired by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art this year through a gift from Mosse and support from the New York-based VIA Art Fund. The MSP Foundation, SFMOMA and Altman Siegel gallery are co-presenting the work, making its North American debut in San Francisco.

The presentation will be free to the public, with registration required, through June 30.

"All three organizations sensed the urgency with which we needed to move to present this work and meet this critical moment that we're in," Rachel Sample, director of the Minnesota Street Project Foundation, told The Chronicle. "We have in this new space created an unparalleled, state-of-the-art screening gallery that doesn't exist anywhere else in the city. There's a huge potential for collaboration. It's an asset for everyone who's looking to present this kind of work. It was an easy yes."

"Broken Spectre" has received critical acclaim since its simultaneous debut at London's 180 The Strand and Melbourne's National Gallery Victoria in October 2022. The work features images of the ongoing destruction of the Amazon rainforest. Issues like the theft of Indigenous lands and species extinction through industrialized cattle farming are addressed, as is the larger existential threat to humanity of climate change.

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Mosse uses tools like fluorescent microscopic imagery to illustrate the scientific complexity of the Amazon and cinematic monochrome infrared footage to show the impact of illegal logging, mass burning, wildcat gold mining, flooding and the damming of rivers, industrial agriculture as well as indigenous activism. Multispectral aerial footage shows the large areas of cleared land in contrast to the green bounty of the rainforest.

“For decades, scientists have harnessed advanced forms of remote sensing photography to understand the forest’s degradation, model tipping points, and reveal impending environmental catastrophe underway in the Amazon,” Mosse said in a statement. “In ‘Broken Spectre,’ I have tried to dial in on these opaque subjects using similar scientific imaging technologies.”

Mosse compared the installation to a movie Western “because the nostalgic iconography of the Western film carries uncanny echoes of the reality that I encountered in the field – a natural paradise and its Indigenous population being colonized by pioneer settlers with the righteous zeal of Manifest Destiny and a distinctly Texan style of cowboy culture.”

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Part of what attracted Sample to presenting the work was the way it made the big themes of the climate crisis accessible without becoming too pedantic.

More Information

“Broken Spectre”: 11 a.m. 5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday. May 11-June 30. Free. 1201 Minnesota St., S.F.

<https://minnesotastreetproject.org>

“Occidental”: 10 a.m.- 6 p.m. Tuesday-Friday. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday. May 11-June 30. Free. Altman Siegel, 1150 25th St., Building B, S.F. <https://altmansiegel.com>

“I often find that climate crisis feels so overwhelming to people that (we) almost can't logically wrap our minds around the depths of the devastation,” she said. “Statistics don't necessarily help you understand it in the same way that visuals created and curated by a master artist do.”

The renovation required to present “Broken Spectre” is phase one of a multi-year project that the MSP Foundation is seeking funding for.

The new MSP Foundation space, gallerist Claudia Altman-Siegel said in a statement, will provide “the perfect venue to present exceptionally ambitious installations, and I can think of nothing more urgent to share with the public than this breathtaking film about humanity’s delicate balance with nature.”

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In tandem, Altman-Siegel will be presenting an exhibition of Mosse's related photography in the show "Occidental" at her gallery in the MSP contemporary art campus at 1150 25th St. during the run of the "Broken Spectre."

For its part, SFMOMA, which presented Mosse's immigration-themed video "Incoming" in 2019, is excited to continue embracing works "that engage our senses when addressing the urgent environmental crisis," museum director Christopher Bedford said in a statement.

"Focusing on environmental sustainability and deepening SFMOMA's relationships with organizations in our community are two major institutional priorities," he added.

The space at 1201 Minnesota St. was leased by the MSP Foundation in December, and was most recently home to Thatcher's Gourmet Popcorn. The Rappaport Family Foundation, founded by MSP co-founders Deborah and Andy Rappaport, seeded the initial \$500,000 in funds needed for the construction, equipping and operation of the venue to allow for the presentation of "Broken Spectre."

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Sample said future exhibitions are currently being explored and stressed that collaborations with both private galleries and nonprofit arts organizations would be essential to presenting work in the space. The MSP Foundation recently presented the exhibition “The Mail Art Club 2.0” with San Francisco’s Creativity Explored at the MSP campus hub at 1275 Minnesota St.

“The foundation is really interested in presenting work that is meeting the moment,” said Sample. “I think that’s what all good art does. It makes you reflect and feel and think. This is such a timely piece and is emblematic of what we would like to continue to do in this space.”



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