

The Columbus Dispatch

ARTS

Thought-provoking Wexner Center exhibits explore human interaction with the environment

Nancy Gilson Special to The Columbus Dispatch

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Four new exhibits at the Wexner Center for the Arts pay heed to issues of land and water, but the crowd pleaser is an immersive experience of meditation under the sea.

Hope Ginsburg: 'Meditation Ocean: M.O. Turtlegrass Meadow'

This hour-long video shot in the Florida Keys at Biscayne National Park is presented in one gallery on six huge (10 by 16 feet) screens. Eight scuba divers, often sitting cross-legged with their flippers extended like crab legs, meditate amidst waving sea grasses and swimming schools of fish. A soundtrack of tinkling water and soft musical chords enhances the serene environment. Visitors may meditate themselves — a speaker offers soft-spoken scripts — and they may sit on aqua-colored cushions made from recycled ocean waste.

This beautiful, interactive exhibit — offering land-locked central Ohioans a special glimpse of ocean life — is part of the larger “Meditation Ocean” exhibit and was conceived and directed by Richmond, Va., artist Hope Ginsburg. It is the culmination of her two-year artist residency and an even longer relationship with the Wexner Center.

Anna Tsouhlarakis: 'The Native Guide Project: Columbus'

As visitors enter the Wexner Galleries — and as they travel around Columbus and spy Orange Barrel Media banners — they’ll see statements pertaining to the forced migration of those who first lived on the land we now occupy.

'Current' coming soon: Longest piece of public art in Columbus to hang above High Street in June

The phrases, created by former teacher and Colorado artist Anna Tsouhlarakis, are examples of positive reinforcement. For example: “When you listen closely you can hear their stories,” “Respect is a simple gesture to the land” and “It’s True! There was a voice before Columbus.”

Nearly 100 more phrases can be found on kiosks throughout Columbus, especially on High Street in the Short North neighborhood.

Sa'dia Rehman: 'The river runs slow ...'

In 1974, the family of Sa'dia Rehman, as well as others in their Pakistan community, were displaced from their homes to make way for the flooding of the area and the Tarbela Dam on the Indus River.

Wexner artist-in-residence and Columbus artist Rehman's multimedia exhibit reflects on this event and is titled for a poem written by their sister: "the river runs slow and deep and all the bones of my ancestors/have risen to the surface to knock and click like the sounds of trees in the air."

Included are prints, works on paper, a wave-like wall installation created from family members' blue jeans, videos of the waterways created by the artist during her visit there in 2022, and a striking multimedia installation recalling the family's home.

A.K. Burns: 'Of space we are'

In her large survey exhibit, New York artist A.K. Burns uses recycled materials to pay attention to the fragile nature of the earth. Prints, sculptures and installations are present, but the showpiece of this exhibit is her science-fiction series "Negative Space."

Dive into Disney: Immersive Disney experience open at Lighthouse ArtSpace Columbus

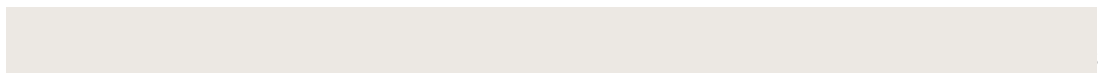
The four videos take place in alternate versions of our world. In one, naked hikers wearing backpacks trudge along paths and near soupy swamps. The most stunning video is "Leave No Trace," presented on a huge cube in a black box theater. On the cube's sides, the videos show a group of people scavenging in a desert near a military base — they're subjected to and dealing with threatening boundaries. Propped up by a fake human skull, the cube is surrounded by recycled car tires.

Thought-provoking and often mesmerizing, the diverse but complementary exhibits pose questions about the environment and its sometimes threatening, sometimes gentle but always impactful relationship with the humans who co-exist with it.

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At a glance

"Meditation Ocean Constellation: Meditation Ocean," "Anna Tsouhlarakis: The Native Guide Project: Columbus," "Sa'dia Rehman: The river runs slow..." and "A.K. Burns: Of space we are" all continue through July 9 at Ohio State University's Wexner Center for the Arts, 1871 N. High St. Gallery hours: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays; 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays. Admission is free. Numerous special events are programmed in conjunction with these exhibits. Call 614-292-3535 or visit wexarts.org.





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to take back our rights.**

