



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Artist Michael Menchaca to Debut Work Based On the Chrysler Museum of Art's Collection in *Dioses Nuevos***

— *The San Antonio-based artist draws inspiration from the Museum's Mesoamerican collection for the mixed media installation* —



Michael Menchaca (American, b. 1985),  
Part of *Histrionic Mestizaje II* installation, 2018,  
Animation images in process, Courtesy of the artist

**NORFOLK, Va. (Dec. 12, 2018)** – [The Chrysler Museum of Art](#) is excited to premiere [Dioses Nuevos](#), a new mixed media exhibition by San Antonio-based artist Michael Menchaca. On view Jan. 25–June 30, 2019, the installation entitled *Histrionic Mestizaje II* is a commission based on the Chrysler's incredible collection of Mesoamerican objects and Menchaca's ongoing practice of reconceptualizing Mesoamerican deities within contemporary society. "This exhibition is about heritage. It has encouraged me to reexamine my interest in ancient Mesoamerican expression and philosophy. After experiencing my installation, I hope that viewers will gain a greater appreciation for the Mesoamerican ideologies depicted in the Chrysler Museum's collection," Menchaca said.

Menchaca's creative process is a complex collaboration. He draws contemporary deities based on those from Aztec pictorial maps and records, which he finds in history books and museum collections. He often animates the figures, presenting videos that place his deities in conflicts or current sociopolitical situations, such as immigration and political bias, that impact Latinx, Chicanx and Mexican immigrant communities. The videos are then placed into a multisensory environment where Menchaca reconceives a temple filled with brightly colored, patterned wallpaper, soft material sculptures and an ambient

soundtrack. He uses the unique combination of objects, animation and sound to entice and excite viewers. Initially, the imagery seems to be a fun video game. However, upon closer inspection, viewers realize he is not creating entertainment. Instead, he is sparking a discussion about the issues facing immigrant communities today.

“Museum visitors will enjoy a sensory-rich experience in this dazzling exhibition. Menchaca’s immersive space brings the past forward to remind us that history is never truly the past,” said Kimberli Gant, Ph.D., the Chrysler Museum’s McKinnon Curator of Modern & Contemporary Art.

To create *Histrionic Mestizaje II*, Menchaca spent several days at the Chrysler examining the Museum’s collection of ancient ceramic sculptures and vessels from Mexico, Central America and Latin America. He then selected several works, each of which has amazing depictions of animals and warriors, and took reference images. Upon returning to his studio, Menchaca digitally drew over the figures, manipulating the images to enhance their presence and to elaborate on facial or body details. Those drawings became animations for the exhibition.

Menchaca also created a temple that visitors will find near the Mesoamerican collection at the Chrysler, presenting an entrance that is both menacing and comical. Most of the pieces within the Mesoamerican collection would have been ritual objects placed within a sacred temple. “This is a wonderful opportunity for our visitors to connect some of the oldest pieces in the Chrysler collection to issues and ideas that are very relevant today. We are excited to welcome this exhibition created especially for our Museum visitors,” Gant said.

## Programming

### Third Thursday with Michael Menchaca

**Thursday, April 18, 2019**

8 p.m. | Free for Museum Members and \$5 for all others

San-Antonio based artist Michael Menchaca will present a hot glass performance during the Chrysler Museum’s monthly Third Thursday event. Advance tickets are required. Register at [reservations.chrysler.org](https://reservations.chrysler.org).

#DiosesNuevos

## ABOUT THE CHRYSLER MUSEUM OF ART

The Chrysler Museum of Art is one of America’s most distinguished mid-sized art museums, with a nationally recognized collection of more than 30,000 objects, including one of the great glass collections in America. The core of the Chrysler’s collection comes from Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., an avid art collector who donated thousands of objects from his private collection to the Museum. The Museum has growing collections in many areas and mounts an ambitious schedule of visiting exhibitions and educational programs each season. The Chrysler has also been recognized nationally for its unique commitment to hospitality with its innovative gallery host program.

The Perry Glass Studio is a state-of-art facility on the Museum’s campus. The studio offers programming for aspiring and master artists alike in a variety of processes including glassblowing, fusing,

flameworking, coldworking and neon. The studio has also cultivated a reputation for its cutting-edge performance evenings, and was the host venue of the 2017 Glass Arts Society Conference.

In addition, the Chrysler Museum of Art administers two historic houses in downtown Norfolk: the Moses Myers House and the Willoughby-Baylor House, as well as the Jean Outland Chrysler Library on the campus of Old Dominion University. General admission is free at all venues. For more information on the Chrysler Museum of Art, visit [chrysler.org](http://chrysler.org).

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