

NORTON MUSEUM OF ART

1450 S. Dixie Highway
West Palm Beach, Florida 33401

norton.org

Norton Museum of Art to Host First Solo Museum Exhibition of Experimental Photographer Fabiola Menchelli

certain silence features several never-before-seen photographs
from the artist's experimental, abstract oeuvre

The exhibition is on view from December 7, 2024, to March 23, 2025



FABIOLA MENCHELLI (Mexican, born 1983), *Untitled*, 2024. Unique C-Print photogram folded inside custom wood frame. Courtesy of the artist, Arroniz Arte Contemporáneo and Marshall Gallery

WEST PALM BEACH, FL (October 15, 2024) — The Norton Museum of Art will host artist Fabiola Menchelli's first solo museum show in the United States, *certain silence*, from December 7, 2024, through March 23, 2025.

Menchelli's work engages with photography's materiality, and the works showcased in the exhibition will consider a range of conceptual theories, including visual perception, the relationship between viewer and artwork, the language of abstraction, poetry, and more.

Comprised of more than 20 works, including a selection of previously unseen pieces, her atmospheric photographs test the limits of perception as she folds, exposes, and develops works that may appear straightforward but contain complexities brought forth by chance and accident, all created without a camera or negatives.

The exhibition's final month coincides with Menchelli's tenure next March as the Norton's Mary Lucille Dauray 2025 Artist-in-Residence, when she will engage with the West Palm Beach community for a slate of public programming.

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“Fabiola Menchelli’s unique approach to photography engages a sense of wonder and discovery, and it is an honor to host her debut museum exhibition and award her the Mary Lucille Dauray 2025 Artist in Residence,” said Ghislain d’Humières, Kenneth C. Griffin Director and CEO of the Norton Museum of Art. “When viewing *certain silence*, audiences should allow themselves to be physically and emotionally transported by Menchelli’s work; for a few moments, the metaphysical nature of light, color, and sculptural form may wash over the concerns of everyday life.”

Through abstraction, Menchelli’s work engages in conversation with the history of photography and pushes the limits of the medium through her experimental, camera-less creative approach. Menchelli’s photographs are visually all-consuming, both atmospheric and ethereal, powerful and focused, and her artistic process involves a keen understanding of guiding light, the essential practice of photography. She has spent her career investigating theories on light, color, and perception, including how to master light-sensitive chemistry in the color darkroom, an often-unforgiving place.

Menchelli creates these colorful, abstract, and sculptural photographs without the use of negatives or a camera, both pointing out and acting against the norms of the medium. To do so, she must work in complete blindness in her color darkroom, guided by touch, memory, and sound. She has created a coding system for each transparent color gel, so she knows exactly what she is picking up to insert into the photographic enlarger, which acts as her only light source. Though her process is highly complex, the artist prefers that viewers approach each work with their own reference points to create an experience that is completely singular to them.

"For me, the darkroom is not just a room in my studio, it’s more like a state of mind, a meditative space where I can stop thinking logically and make images via a negotiation of movements and exposures between the paper and my body,” Menchelli said. “The process of making this work is laborious; it becomes a physical way of locating meaning that requires a reorientation of my body. All other senses compensate for the lack of vision, creating a sense of deep concentration. It feels like a kind of ritual that requires a calm and steady flow in order to deal with the unexpected."

certain silence was curated by Lauren Richman, William and Sarah Ross Soter Curator of Photography at the Norton Museum of Art.

“I hope visitors take away a new awareness and recognition of experimental photography — that the medium is not simply upheld by its representational and reproducible qualities, but also its capacity for the unexpected and unknown. Light transforms from tool to material in Menchelli’s work, and beauty is expressed through her embrace of chance and accident.” Richman said.

certain silence | *Fabiola Menchelli* is organized by the Norton Museum of Art.

Support for this exhibition was provided by the William and Sarah Ross Soter Photography Fund.

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ABOUT FABIOLA MENCHELLI

Fabiola Menchelli holds a Master of Visual Arts from the Massachusetts College of Art (2013). Her most recent exhibitions include *Cromosfera: Fabiola Menchelli and Dannielle Tegeder* at Arróniz Contemporáneo (CDMX, 2024), *we are not what we have seen* at Angstroms offsite Arróniz Arte Contemporáneo (CDMX, 2024), *Dark Moves: Fabiola Menchelli & Heather Watkins* at The Cooley Gallery (Portland, OR 2022), *I carry all the names I'm given* at Arróniz Arte Contemporáneo (CDMX, 2022), *Parallax* at ProxyCo Gallery (New York, 2021), *Under the Blue Sun at Marshall Contemporary* (Los Angeles, 2021), among others. She has participated in collective exhibitions in Jinan, Venice, Houston, CDMX, London, Paris, Bogotá, and Dubai, among others.

Menchelli has been invited to participate in various artistic residencies such as the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Casa Wabi, and Casa Nano. She received the Fulbright-García Robles Scholarship (2011-2013), FONCA-CONACYT for studies abroad (2011-2013), MassArt Dean's Award (2012-2013), the FONCA Young Creators grant (2014), the Acquisition Award of the XVI Photography Biennial of the Center for Image (2014), and the National System of Art Creators of FONCA (2019-2022). Her work has been featured in books such as *Dark Moves* (2024), released by the Cooley Gallery, and *Desdoble* (2022), published by ESPAC México. She has been a visiting artist in both Mexico and U.S. institutions. She is the founder and director of *Circulo de Critica de Obra*, an alternative art education program.

ABOUT THE NORTON'S ARTIST IN RESIDENCE PROGRAM

As part of the Norton's campus masterplan, three residences on Cranesnest Way, running alongside the Museum's sculpture garden on the south side of campus, were renovated and transformed into housing and a shared studio for up to two artists at a time. Each artist (and their family) receives their own house during the residency. Another house features two open, flexible studio spaces for the artists to work in. Past artists in residence at the Norton include Nora Maité Nieves (2023), María Berrío (2021), Addoley Dzegede (2020), Jessica Ingram (2021), Lavar Munroe (2020), and Jaye Rhee (2020).

The program began in January 2019 and demonstrates the Norton's deep commitment to fostering creative and intellectual growth for mid- to late-career artists whose work warrants greater attention, and emphasizes the promotion of gender, racial, and ethnic parity in the arts through dedication of two residencies annually for women artists. The Mary Lucille Dauray Artist-in-Residence, made possible through the support of the Leonard and Sophie Davis Fund/MLDauray Arts Initiative, is exclusively for an African American or Latina woman.

ABOUT THE NORTON MUSEUM OF ART

The Norton Museum of Art, Florida's largest art museum, was founded in 1941 by Ralph Hubbard Norton and his wife, Elizabeth Calhoun Norton. The Museum collects, preserves, and exhibits art, and engages the public through diverse special

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exhibitions, publications, and events. Programs, lectures, and workshops are held year-round, with an emphasis on activating works on view and inspiring the public through the power of art. The Museum is internationally known for its collection of more than 8,500 works of art in American Art, Chinese Art, Contemporary Art, European Art, and Photography.

In 2019, the Museum underwent a comprehensive expansion and renovation, designed by London-based architecture firm Foster + Partners, adding a building which includes over 12,000 square feet of new gallery space, an educational center, a store and restaurant, a sculpture garden, and a Great Hall, serving as the Museum's "living room." The campus also features renovated, Museum-owned, 1920s-era cottages that house artists-in-residence.

Visit the Museum's [website](#) or see them on [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#).

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