

## [Intro Wall]

### In Frequencies

This exhibition—primarily drawn from the Museum’s permanent collection—presents work that taps into various kinds of ancestral transmissions. Ranging from Indigenous artists of the Great Basin to Australia, as well as those examining their African and Latin American roots, the participants in the show explore different modes of creative expression that spark connections to diverse social histories and forms of inherited knowledge. The double meaning of the title further underscores how considerations of cultural belonging, specifically the human relationship to the environment, have become irregular and displaced as a result of the industrial revolution and modernization. What was once a natural part of human life has become more and more infrequent.

Sydney Cain’s monumental picture *And They Are Not Afraid of the Night Because They Are the Color of It* anchors the exhibition formally and conceptually, largely informing the selection of work displayed in the gallery. Covered by the fabrics of her forebears, a reclining person is surrounded by ancestral figures that conjure African spirits from a distant past. Nearby, in Lynette Yiadom-Boakye’s dark canvas *Godly Governance*, a woman stands in an undefined space. Like the individual in Cain’s piece, she appears unmoored from a given time and place, evoking a mythical realm. The dreamscape continues in maplike drawings by Umar Rashid (Frohawk Two Feathers), who renders invented worlds that playfully collapse and reconfigure geography and history.

In contrast, work by Indigenous artists of territories now known as Australia, Nevada, and Canada refers to more specific landscapes that highlight the disconnection between ancient and contemporary ideals. The artists Lily Kelly Napangardi, Johnny Yungut Tjupurrula, and Djardie Ashley locate Dreaming, or creation, stories in relation to their familial homes and topographies. Ancestral deities of the sacred Wandjina figures, from the Kimberley region of Australia, appear in compositions by Lily Karedada and an unknown artist. Similarly, Ester Hernandez presents the Mexica (Aztec) figure of Coatlicue, the earth-mother goddess, whose head assumes its shape from two entwined serpents. Other important pre-Columbian gods, sites, and artifacts appear in photographs by Manuel Álvarez Bravo and Ana Mendieta. Together the objects in the exhibition inspire us to listen for and tune in to the frequencies and ancestral wisdoms of the past.

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