



Dallas Center
for the Performing Arts™

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**Dallas Center for the Performing Arts Commissions Guillermo Kuitca
to Design Curtain for Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House**

***Curtain Will Be First Designed by the Artist; Center Has Also Acquired Kuitca's
"Dallas Opera House," 16 Works on Paper Based on the Winspear's Seating Plan***

DALLAS (May 12, 2009) – The Dallas Center for the Performing Arts announced today that it has commissioned a curtain designed by renowned Argentine artist Guillermo Kuitca for the Center's new Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House, which will open on October 12, 2009. The Center has also acquired Kuitca's *Dallas Opera House* (2008), consisting of 16 mixed media works on paper based on the seating plans of the Winspear Opera House. These works will be permanently installed at box level of the Opera House.

Kuitca is internationally acclaimed for work inspired by cartography, architecture and theatre. He represented Argentina at the Venice Biennale in 2007, and a major retrospective of his work will premiere at the Miami Art Museum in October 2009 before embarking on a national tour.

This commission will be Kuitca's first design for a stage curtain, but it continues the artist's longtime exploration of theatre as a space and structure. Most recently, this theme was addressed in a series of works-on-paper based on seating charts from renowned performance spaces, such as the Metropolitan Opera House, La Scala and Covent Garden. For this group, Kuitca manipulated printed seating plans, creating surreal and brightly colored abstractions. These works were shown in an exhibition entitled *Stage Fright* (2007), the first one-person show in the Metropolitan Opera House's ground-floor exhibition space. Kuitca's design for the Winspear Opera House continues

this theme, abstracting the seating plan for the Winspear's Margaret McDermott Performance Hall and reproducing this image onto the curtain itself.

After being introduced in 1980 to choreographer Pina Bausch's Tanztheater at a performance in Buenos Aires, Kuitca began to develop an interest in theatre. He went on to write and direct experimental theatre productions in Buenos Aires in the 1980s, and was commissioned to design stage sets for productions of Federico Garcia Lorca's *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (2002) and Richard Wagner's *Der Fliegende Holländer* (2003). Kuitca's ongoing fascination with the stage remains evident in his paintings and drawings today.

In describing the vision for the Winspear Opera House curtain, Kuitca said, "The theatre curtain marks a physical threshold: the limit where the audience abandons the reality of the outside world and lets itself be transported by the machinery of the theatre. I am interested in physically echoing the beating, expectant moment before the curtain rises."

"In large part, the genesis of this project was the desire to further complement our effort to build a 21st century opera house, while incorporating appropriate classic, 19th century European opera house detail," said John Dayton, member of the Board of Directors of the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts and chair of the Winspear Opera House Facilities Committee. "We wanted a grand, decorative curtain—but sought to avoid the traditional 'red velvet curtain with gold brocade.' Commissioning a contemporary artist whose work expressed an appreciation for opera house architecture seemed most appropriate."

Funding for the Guillermo Kuitca curtain commission has been made possible by the McDermott Art Fund, with contributions from Margaret McDermott and the Eugene McDermott Foundation.

In celebration of the Center's opening, the Dallas Museum of Art will present a special exhibition featuring drawings, paintings and studies by Kuitca for the Winspear Opera House curtain. On view from October 10, 2009 through March 21, 2010, the exhibition *Performance /Art* showcases the work of contemporary artists—including David Altmejd, Guillermo Kuitca, and Yinka Shonibare, among others—who have taken inspiration from the theater and opera in the creation of their painting, sculpture, video, and photography.

Also in October 2009, the Miami Art Museum will open the first Guillermo Kuitca retrospective in the United States in more than 15 years: *Everything: Guillermo Kuitca, Paintings and Works on Paper, 1980-2008*. The exhibition will travel to the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, in Washington, D.C.

The Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House, designed by Foster + Partners under the direction of Pritzker Prize-winning architect Norman Foster, is one of the four venues that comprise the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts.

About Guillermo Kuitca

Based in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Guillermo Kuitca (born 1961, Buenos Aires) has garnered international attention since the mid-1980s. His first solo exhibition at age thirteen took place in 1974 at Lirolay Gallery in Buenos Aires. In 1985 he represented Argentina in the XVIII São Paulo Biennial. His work was first seen in the United States in a group exhibition at the Americas Society in New York in 1989, *New Image Painting: Argentina in the Eighties*.

In 1990 he began to exhibit internationally and had solo museum and gallery shows in the Netherlands and the United States, which included a “Projects” show at The Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1992. Also that year, his installation for Documenta IX of a map painting and a large installation of “map-on-mattress” sculptures brought him significant international attention. Since then Kuitca has had solo exhibitions at the Instituto de Arte Moderno (IVAM) in Valencia, Spain (1993) and *Burning Beds: Guillermo Kuitca, A Survey 1982-1994*, which was organized by the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio, and the Contemporary Art Foundation, Amsterdam in 1994. In 1999 he exhibited at the Centro Hélio Oiticica and in 2000 at the Foundation Cartier in Paris.

The most recent survey of Kuitca’s works, *Guillermo Kuitca, Obras 1982 - 2002*, was curated and presented by the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid, and traveled to MALBA – Colección Constantini (Museo de arte latinoamericano de Buenos Aires) in 2003. Kuitca was the chosen representative of Argentina at the Venice Biennale in 2007, where he was one of only three artists with work on view in both a national Pavilion and in the central international Biennale exhibition.

About the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts:

The Dallas Center for the Performing Arts, a new multi-venue Center for music, opera, theatre and dance will open in October 2009, completing the 25-year vision of the Dallas Arts District. The Center will provide multi-state-of-the-art facilities woven together by an urban park covering more than ten acres to create a dynamic cultural destination that will be unparalleled in the world. The Center will feature the following:

- The Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House, designed in a modern horseshoe configuration, will seat 2,200 (with capacity up to 2,300), designed by Foster + Partners.
- The Dee and Charles Wyly Theatre will serve as a gateway to the Dallas Arts District from the downtown Dallas business center and will seat 600, designed by REX/OMA, Joshua Prince-Ramus (partner in charge) and Rem Koolhaas.

- The completely new Annette Strauss Artist Square will be the Center's outdoor entertainment venue, which can accommodate audiences of up to 5,000, designed by Foster + Partners.
- The City Performance Hall will provide main stage production space for many of Dallas' smaller performing arts organizations, designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill.
- The 10-acre Elaine D. and Charles A. Sammons Park will unify the venues and will create a dynamic cultural destination in downtown Dallas.
- Two underground parking structures will accommodate more than 850 vehicles.

More information on the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts is available at www.dallasperformingarts.org.

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