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**USF Contemporary Art Museum announces significant exhibition  
by leading Irish painter and human rights advocate, Brian Maguire.**

***BRIAN MAGUIRE: LA GRANDE ILLUSION***  
**September 5, 2025 – March 7, 2026**  
**USF Contemporary Art Museum**

(TAMPA, FL – August 20, 2025) ***Brian Maguire: La Grande Illusion*** opens Friday, September 5, with an Artist Conversation and Opening Reception. The exhibition is on view through March 7, 2026. Admission is Free.

A major exhibition of works by internationally acclaimed artist, Brian Maguire, will open at USFCAM. Entitled *La Grande Illusion*, the exhibition spans two decades of work that spotlights the artist's lifelong quest to draw attention to global injustices, war, and human rights. One of Ireland's leading cultural figures, Maguire has turned the practice and tradition of painting into acts of visual testimony.

Maguire's paintings are global in scope and are derived from projects undertaken between 2007 and 2024 in Mexico, the Mediterranean, Syria, Sudan, the United States, and the Amazon. Maguire's artworks are painted from direct experience and involve the artist spending extensive time on the ground with the communities that welcome him. The results are, plainly put, paintings that visualize the commonality of human suffering and dramatize the plight of people in need.

*La Grande Illusion* examines a period of intense productivity for Maguire. It explores his activism through large-scale paintings made in response to time spent in Juárez, Mexico (2012–15), the Mediterranean (2016), Aleppo (2017), South Sudan (2018), the Amazon (2022), Arizona (2022) and Brazil (2022–23). His paintings track global themes. Among these are migration, economic inequality, the drug and gun trades, sexual violence, and ongoing damage to the environment. By embedding himself in the communities he paints—from Juárez's streets to the war-torn neighborhoods of Aleppo—Maguire uses his canvases' large format to represent populations that have been silenced and forgotten.

Maguire's work has been celebrated in museums and galleries worldwide, igniting critical conversations on human rights through his intimate and visceral canvases. In representing populations erased by textbook history, official art, the media, and state institutions, Maguire reminds us of how the practice of painting can be made to matter. As he explains:

*"The image carries the present, the medium carries the hope. The perpetrators of the injustice are worldwide and singular and that's what makes the stories the same. The individual painting is anecdotal but when taken as a body of work, it represents a global order which, while invisible, is at the same time all pervasive."*



Brian Maguire, *Over Our Heads the Hollow Seas Closed Up*, 2016. acrylic on linen, 114-1/8 x 106-1/4 inches. Tia Collection, Sante Fe, NM. © Brian Maguire. Image courtesy of Kerlin Gallery, Dublin.



Brian Maguire, *Bentiu International Displacement Camp, South Sudan 1*, 2018. acrylic on linen, 78-3/4 x 157-1/2 inches. © Brian Maguire. Image courtesy of Kerlin Gallery, Dublin.

*Brian Maguire: La Grande Illusion* has been adapted by USFCAM Curator-at-Large Christian Viveros-Fauné from the Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin's exhibition of the same name (it was originally co-curated by Barbara Dawson, Hugh Lane Gallery Director, and Michael Dempsey, Head of Exhibitions). It is accompanied by a brochure and a full-length catalog featuring essays by writers Lucy Cotter, Marc Donnadiou, Michael Dempsey and Viveros-Fauné. Also on view inside USFCAM's galleries: the 2025 documentary *The Life of Brian (Maguire)* described in the press as "The incredible life story of an internationally renowned artist who goes to the frontline to tell the real story of the world." *The Life of Brian (Maguire)* was directed by Mark Mc Loughlin for Bang Bang Teo and supported by RTÉ, Hugh Lane Gallery and Creative Ireland.



Brian with a grandmother from Missoula whose granddaughter Brian painted for the family. Still from the documentary *The Life of Brian (Maguire)*. Image courtesy of Bang Bang Teo.

## **OPENING CELEBRATION**

**Friday, September 5**

### **ARTIST CONVERSATION**

**6pm, USF Theatre 2 (THR) - 3829 USF Holly Drive, Tampa, FL 33620**

Join us in USF Theatre 2, adjacent to the museum, at 6pm for a conversation with artist Brian Maguire, film director Mark Mc Loughlin, and CAM Curator-at-Large Christian Viveros-Fauné. Free and open to all.

### **OPENING RECEPTION**

**7–9pm, USF Contemporary Art Museum (CAM) - 3821 USF Holly Drive, Tampa, FL 33620**

An opening reception follows the conversation until 9pm at USFCAM. Free and open to all. For questions or more information send us a DM, an email at [caminfo@usf.edu](mailto:caminfo@usf.edu), or call 813-974-4133.

**Additional events will be presented throughout the exhibition.**

## **MUSEUM VISITOR INFO**

**Admission:** Exhibitions are free and open to all.

**Hours:** Monday–Friday 10am–5pm; Thursday 10am–8pm; Saturday 1–4pm. Closed Sundays and USF Holidays. Special Hours September 5: 7–9pm.

**Address:** 3821 USF Holly Drive, Tampa, FL 33620.

**Parking:** Visitor parking in lot 3B. USF parking permits required, and available at the pay station in the CAM parking lot. Payment is via the ParkMobile app (use zone 9302), or by Visa, MasterCard, or Discover.

**Contact:** 813-974-4133; [caminfo@usf.edu](mailto:caminfo@usf.edu); [www.cam.usf.edu](http://www.cam.usf.edu).

**Linktree:** Please visit <https://linktr.ee/irausf> for the latest info, additional events, and to connect with our social media.

## **ABOUT USF CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM**

USF Contemporary Art Museum (USFCAM) organizes and presents significant and investigative exhibitions of contemporary art from Florida, the United States and around the world. Serving as a teaching laboratory, USFCAM's curatorial initiatives and educational programs are designed to present the students, faculty, and community with current issues of contemporary art practice, and to explore the role of the arts in society. USFCAM publishes relevant catalogues, presents critically recognized traveling exhibitions and commissions new projects by national and international artists. USFCAM maintains the university's art collection, comprising more than 5000 contemporary art works. The Contemporary Art Museum is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums.

## **SUPPORT**

*Brian Maguire: La Grande Illusion* is organized by the USF Contemporary Art Museum, Tampa. Support for the exhibition is provided by a grant from Culture Ireland, The Stanton Storer Embrace the Arts Foundation, Shumaker Inc. / Ronald Christaldi, the Lee and Victor Leavengood Contemporary Art Museum Endowment Fund, the Kathleen Binnicker Swann Endowment, and the Allen W. and Janet G. Root CAM Endowment.

