

NEWS RELEASE

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An Evening with Artist Michael Rakowitz *Ghosts, Hosts, Monuments, and Admonishments*

PHILADELPHIA – The [Penn Cultural Heritage Center](#) and [Perry World House](#) present an evening with artist Michael Rakowitz, who will address “The invisible enemy should not exist,” his ongoing works highlighting the pillaging of Iraq’s cultural sites, on Friday, February 21, 2020, at 6:00 pm at the Penn Museum, 3260 South Street.



An Iraqi-American who is now recognized as one of the world’s most powerful political artist-provocateurs, Rakowitz is the 2020 Nasher Sculpture Prize Laureate and Professor of Art Theory and Practice at Northwestern University. He will speak about several projects spanning the last 20 years that address issues of displacement, disappearance, and reappearance.

“The invisible enemy should not exist” tells an intricate story about the objects that were stolen from the National Museum of Iraq, Baghdad, after the U.S.-led invasion in 2003 and their current whereabouts, including the 7,000 pieces that are still missing. The centerpiece of the project is a series of sculptures that represent an attempt to reconstruct looted artifacts.

The Penn Museum will showcase a pop-up exhibition of Rakowitz’s accompanying video, which will run continuously in the Sphinx Gallery for two weeks from Tuesday, February 18 through Tuesday, March 3.

Rakowitz was awarded the Fourth Plinth commission in London’s Trafalgar Square, on view through 2020.

He was commissioned by Creative Time in 2011 for his project “Spoils,” a culinary intervention at a Park Avenue restaurant that invited diners to eat off of plates that were looted from Saddam Hussein’s palaces. It culminated in the return of the former Iraqi President’s flatware to the Republic of Iraq at the behest of Prime Minister Nuri Al Maliki on December 15, 2011—the date the Coalition Forces left Iraq. Another of Rakowitz’s projects, “Enemy Kitchen,” is a food truck that serves Iraqi food to Chicago’s hungry public. Since 2003, veterans of the Iraq War have worked on the project under the leadership of Iraqi chefs.

[The event is free for registered guests.](#)

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Michael Rakowitz
The invisible enemy should not exist (Room G, Northwest Palace of Nimrud), 2018
Found Arabic packaging and newspapers, glue, cardboard, and wood
Photo by Robert Chase Heishman
Courtesy of Galerie Barbara Wien, Berlin

About the Penn Museum

Since 1887, the Museum has transformed understanding of the human experience. Dedicated to building connections between cultures, the Museum welcomes everyone to uncover the ancient past, gain an understanding of our shared humanity, and find one's own place in the arc of human history. For more information, visit www.penn.museum or call 215.898.4000.

About the Penn Cultural Heritage Center

The [Penn Cultural Heritage Center](#) draws upon the expertise of scholars and the research collections of the Penn Museum to work hand-in-hand with communities to protect the past and secure the future. It reframes the preservation of cultural heritage within a context of social, political, and economic development.

About Perry World House

[Perry World House](#) brings the academic knowledge of the University of Pennsylvania to bear on some of the world's most pressing global policy challenges, and fosters international policy engagement within and beyond the Penn community.

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