

Shaddock, Lisa Collins. "Powerful Artist Takes an Emotional Texas Homecoming Trip for New Fort Worth Exhibition," *Paper City*, 22 November 2019.

# PAPER CITY.



Robyn O'Neil, Susan Inglett

The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth's exhibition "Robyn O'Neil: We, The Masses" (through February 9, 2020) was touted as a 20-year survey of the American artist's work – an impressive span covering nearly half of her life. To viewers' pleasant surprise, the retrospective goes back even further, beginning with a piece O'Neil drew when she was in kindergarten (*Ride in the Ni[gh]t*, c. 1985, pastel on paper).

This – one of her earliest drawings – depicts her family's experience living through Hurricane Alicia, having just moved to Houston from Omaha, Nebraska. The resulting influence cataclysmic weather had on her artistic psyche is clearly seen throughout the rest of O'Neil's oeuvre, primarily comprised of large-scale works of graphite on paper.

Contrary to the stormy weather that inspires her work, the night of the patron dinner celebrating O'Neil's opening was perfectly calm and beautiful. As the sun set over the reflecting pool outside the Tadao Ando-designed, O'Neil gave heartfelt thanks to everyone involved in her career, from her parents to the director of the Modern, **Dr. Marla Price**, to the exhibition's curator **Alison Hearst**, whom she said made her feel more appreciated, understood and celebrated as an artist than she ever has.

O'Neil also offered words of gratitude to the museum docents of the world.

"Every time I see one of them talking about my work in a museum I start crying like a weirdo," she said.

O'Neil, who spent her formative years in Texas, says her art education truly began around the age of 14, when she discovered the museums in Fort Worth and began spending as much time in them as possible. The connection made her exhibition at the Modern all the more surreal.

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