



THE BMA PRESENTS NEW WORKS BY BALTIMORE-BASED ARTISTS LAUREN FRANCES ADAMS, MEQUITTA AHUJA, CINDY CHENG, AND LATOYA M. HOBBS

Joan Mitchell Foundation Award Recipients Presented in Conjunction with Mitchell Retrospective

BALTIMORE, MD (December 8, 2020)—On March 21, The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) will open an exhibition of new works by Lauren Frances Adams, Mequitta Ahuja, Cindy Cheng, and LaToya M. Hobbs. Titled *All Due Respect*, the presentation explores how these four Baltimore-based artists are engaging with some of the critical issues within our current social and political moment, including collective grief and loss, the experience of motherhood, the legacy of the antebellum era, and the growing prevalence of conspiracy theories within our political systems. Formally and conceptually distinct, *All Due Respect* captures the range of media and approaches taken by artists to examine and illuminate the impact of national histories and policies on our identities and personal and collective lives. On view through July 18, 2021, the exhibition is part of the BMA's ongoing *2020 Vision* initiative, which is focused on sharing the achievements of female-identifying artists through time.

All Due Respect is being presented in conjunction with the BMA's opening of *Joan Mitchell*, the much-anticipated retrospective of the artist's work. The four artists featured in *All Due Respect* have been previously recognized with grants from the Joan Mitchell Foundation, which was established by Mitchell in her will to support the changing needs and careers of working artists. The exhibition provides a singular opportunity to highlight the role that Mitchell's legacy of generosity has played in the careers of artists, while also engaging audiences with the dynamic visions of artists with relationships to Baltimore.

"*All Due Respect* continues the BMA's efforts to recognize exceptionally talented artists who live in or have deep connections to Baltimore by showcasing four artists whose voices and visions are important to our creative community as well as broader national dialogues," said Christopher Bedford, the BMA's Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director. "At the same time, this presentation expands the conversations around Joan Mitchell to showcase the impact of her foundation on artists in Baltimore as well as around the country."

All Due Respect is curated by Leila Grothe, BMA Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art. The exhibition is supported by the Joan Mitchell Foundation.

Lauren Frances Adams is a painter and installation artist, whose work engages with historical archives and the decorative arts. For *All Due Respect*, Adams will create an installation that responds to objects in the BMA's collection that have historical ties to the antebellum era in the United States. Through artist-transformed furniture, wallpaper, and other objects, Adams will explore how the country's difficult legacies continue to surround and impact us today. The installation also conceptually and formally engages with other decorative arts displays in the BMA's galleries.

Adams has participated in a 2015 Joan Mitchell Center residency in New Orleans and received a 2007 Joan Mitchell Foundation MFA Award. Her work has been exhibited at the North Carolina Museum of Art (Raleigh, NC), the Warhol Museum and The Mattress Factory (Pittsburgh, PA), Nymans House National Trust (England), EXPO Chicago (with the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis) and Smack Mellon (New York). She holds a BFA from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, an MFA from Carnegie Mellon University, and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. She is also the recipient of a 2016 Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant, and winner of the 2016 Trawick Prize. Originally from North Carolina, Adams lives in Baltimore and teaches in the Painting Department at Maryland Institute College of Art.

Mequitta Ahuja explores issues such as race, gender, and identity by subverting and reimagining the vocabulary of self-portraiture. With her newest body of work, she examines experiences and notions of grief and loss through images of herself with her mother. The emotional tactility of the paintings is further emphasized by the physicality of her paintings, which she produces by sculpting her oil paint on the canvas—applying thick monochromatic coats and then pushing and scraping them across and off the surface. While the subject matter resonates personally with the artist, it also speaks to our collective experiences, especially this year.

Ahuja received a 2009 Painters & Sculptors Grant from the Joan Mitchell Foundation. Her work is currently featured in *Riffs in Relations: African American Artists and the European Modernist Tradition* through January 3, 2021, at the Phillips Collection (Washington, DC), where her work is also in the collection. Her works have been exhibited at the Brooklyn Museum (NY), Studio Museum in Harlem (NY), Minneapolis Institute of Art (MN), Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art (Bentonville, AK), The Baltimore Museum of Art (MD), and Grand Rapids Art Museum (MI), among others. Ahuja holds a BA from Hampshire College and an MFA from the University of Illinois and is the recipient of the 2018 Guggenheim fellowship award. She currently lives in Weston, CT and Baltimore.

Cindy Cheng's recent work investigates the theories of far right-wing conspiracists to further her broader explorations of otherness and systems of belief and belonging. Using projection mapping and a sculptural installation, Cheng examines an episode of the evangelical Christian television program *Eagle's Nest Ministry*, which warns its audiences about the evils of Scooby Doo. The program uses sleight of hand to position itself as exclusively aware of a clandestine reality and captures a misplaced locus of morality. Leveraging concealment and isolation as a metaphor, Cheng questions the veracity of information we use to determine "us" from "them."

Cheng was selected for a 2020 Joan Mitchell Center residency in New Orleans (deferred due to COVID-19) and received a 2018 Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors Grant. Her work has been presented in solo and group shows at School 33 Art Center (Baltimore), Fjord Gallery (Philadelphia, in collaboration with Cheeny Celebrado-Royer), Ditch Projects (Eugene, OR), St Charles Projects (Baltimore), and 'Sindikit Project (Baltimore, in collaboration with Cheeny-Celebrado Royer). She has participated in residencies at the Vermont Studio Center and Anderson Ranch. She won the 2017 Sondheim Artscape Prize. Cindy has a BA from Mount Holyoke College, and an MFA from Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). Cheng lives and works in Baltimore and teaches at MICA in the Drawing Department.

LaToya M. Hobbs is producing her largest and most ambitious work to-date for this exhibition. Inspired by her own experiences with motherhood, Hobbs chronicles the waking hours in a single day of a mother across 15 larger-than-life scaled wood panels. She began her career as a printmaker and for this work she transforms the woodblock print matrix into a painting surface, carving into the wood and later applying paint and other media to the surface—a technique that is singularly her own. In these works, as she has throughout her career, Hobbs presents the Black woman as triumphant, empowered, and in control of her identity and its expression. The works capture her distinct visual vocabulary, which uses figurative imagery to address the ideas of beauty and cultural identity while reexamining the traditional triadic artist, model, viewer relationship.

Hobbs was selected for a 2020 Joan Mitchell Center residency in New Orleans (deferred due to COVID-19) and received a Joan Mitchell Foundation Emergency Grant in 2018. Her work has been exhibited at National Art Gallery of Namibia (Namibia, Africa), Prizm Art Fair (Miami, FL), Community Folk Arts Center (Syracuse, NY), Woman Made Gallery (Chicago, IL) and Sophia Wananmaker Galleries (San Jose, Costa Rica), among others. Hobbs' work was also featured in *Transition: An International Review*, a publication of the W.E.B. Dubois Institute for African and African American Research at Harvard University. Hobbs is the winner of the 2020 Janet & Walter Sondheim Artscape Prize

from the Baltimore Office of Promotion and the Arts. She received her BA from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and MFA from Purdue University. A native of North Little Rock, AR, Hobbs currently lives and works in Baltimore, and teaches at the Maryland Institute College of Art.

JOAN MITCHELL FOUNDATION

The Joan Mitchell Foundation expands awareness of abstract artist Joan Mitchell's life and pioneering work and fulfills her wish to support and provide opportunities for visual artists. As the chief steward of Joan Mitchell's legacy, the Foundation manages a collection of Mitchell's artwork and archives containing her personal papers, photographs, and ephemera. Fulfilling Mitchell's mandate to "aid and assist" living artists, over the past 27 years the Foundation has evolved a range of initiatives that have directly supported more than 1,000 visual artists at varying stages of their careers. The Foundation's programs include the annual Painters & Sculptors Grants and Emergency Grants for disaster recovery, the latter committed for 2020 to the national Artist Relief initiative and Creative Response New Orleans in response to the COVID-19 crisis. The New Orleans-based Joan Mitchell Center hosts residencies for national and local artists, as well as artist talks, open studio events, and other public programs that encourage dialogue and exchange with the local community. Due to COVID-19, the residency program is focused on New Orleans-based artists through the end of 2021. The Creating a Living Legacy (CALL) initiative provides free and essential resources to assist artists with career documentation, inventory management, and estate planning. For more information, visit joanmitchellfoundation.org.

THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART

Founded in 1914, The Baltimore Museum of Art is a major cultural destination recognized for engaging diverse audiences through dynamic exhibitions and innovative educational and community outreach programs. The BMA's internationally renowned collection of 95,000 objects encompasses more than 1,000 works by Henri Matisse anchored by the famed Cone Collection of modern art, as well as one of the nation's finest holdings of prints, drawings, and photographs. The galleries showcase an exceptional collection of art from Africa; important works by established and emerging contemporary artists; outstanding European and American paintings, sculpture, and decorative arts; significant artworks from China; ancient Antioch mosaics; and exquisite textiles from around the world. The 210,000-square-foot museum is also distinguished by a grand historic building designed in the 1920s by renowned American architect John Russell Pope and two beautifully landscaped gardens featuring an array of 20th-century sculpture. The BMA is located in Charles Village, three miles north of the Inner Harbor, and is adjacent to the main campus of Johns Hopkins University. General admission to the BMA is free so that everyone can enjoy the power of art.

VISITOR INFORMATION

The BMA's galleries are closed until January 6, 2021, to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The BMA's Sculpture Gardens are open Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to dusk and the BMA Shop is open Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Both are closed Christmas Day and New Year's Day. For general museum information, call 443-573-1700 or visit artbma.org.

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