

## THE BMA AND ART + PRACTICE PRESENT THE WORK OF EXPERIMENTAL SCULPTOR AND PERFORMANCE ARTIST SENG NENGUDI



**BALTIMORE, MD** (December 15, 2017) — The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) presents a focused exhibition of works by Senga Nengudi, one of the most inventive artists to combine abstract sculpture and performance art. *Head Back & High: Senga Nengudi, Performance Objects (1976–2015)*, on view at the BMA through May 27, 2018, features a selection of eight works that span the artist’s career and underscore her continued ability to construct poetic environments out of salvaged materials. The exhibition is presented in collaboration with the Los Angeles-based arts and education nonprofit, Art + Practice (A+P). The second presentation will be hosted by A+P in Los Angeles from June 23 through August 25, 2018.

In the 1970s, Senga Nengudi (American, b. 1943) emerged as a leader at the forefront of conceptual and action art. She became known for experimenting with movement and sound and for reimagining inexpensive materials—such as discarded pantyhose, sand, masking tape, and deflated inner tubes—into symbolic meanings that relate to the human body. *Head Back & High: Senga Nengudi, Performance Objects (1976–2015)* highlights Nengudi’s achievements through a series of photographs documenting four early performances, three recent sculptures, and a video honoring her extensive collaborations with fellow African American conceptual artist Maren Hassinger.

*Head Back & High* is the second in a series of four exhibitions to be presented by the BMA and A+P, two vastly different institutions at opposite ends of the country who share a conviction that museum-curated contemporary art must be made accessible to the broadest demographic.

“Senga Nengudi’s work is known for inviting viewers to participate and respond, and we welcome the opportunity to host the dialogue and discovery that’s sure to come during *Head Back & High*,” said Christopher Bedford, BMA Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director. “Partnering with A+P on this exhibition presents yet another chance to redefine the meaning and impact of art.”

*Head Back & High: Senga Nengudi, Performance Objects (1976–2015)* is curated by BMA Director Christopher Bedford and Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art Cecilia Wichmann.

### SENGA NENGUDI

Senga Nengudi was born in Chicago in 1943 and grew up in Los Angeles and Pasadena. She trained in art and dance at California State University (CSU), spent a year at Waseda University in Tokyo, then returned to CSU to complete a master’s degree in sculpture. She lived in New York City in the early 1970s, where her work was presented by the pioneering Just Above Midtown Gallery in Harlem. In 1974, back in Los Angeles, she formed the vanguard Studio Z collective with fellow artists, including Maren Hassinger and David Hammons. Nengudi is committed to arts education and has taught at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs since 1998.

Solo exhibitions of her work include *Senga Nengudi: Improvisational Gestures* shown at the DePaul Art Museum, Chicago, and Contemporary Arts Center New Orleans in 2017, and traveling to the USC Fisher Museum of Art, Los Angeles in 2018. Other solo exhibitions have been presented at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami; White Cube, London; Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver; Thomas Erben Gallery, New York; and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art, Philadelphia. Her recent group exhibitions are *Viva Arte Viva* at the 2017 Venice Biennale; *Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art* at the Contemporary Art Museum Houston and Grey Art Gallery and Studio Museum in New York; *Now Dig This! Art and Black Los Angeles 1960–1980* at the Hammer Museum, MoMA PS1, and Williams College Art Museum; and *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and MoMA PS1. In 1998, her work was included in the groundbreaking exhibition *Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object, 1949–1979* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

Nengudi's work is in the collections of the Tate, London; Centre Pompidou; Studio Museum in Harlem; Museum of Modern Art; Whitney Museum of American Art; Brooklyn Museum; Carnegie Museum of Art; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; and Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, among others.

#### **ART + PRACTICE**

Conceived and founded by artist Mark Bradford, philanthropist and collector Eileen Harris Norton, and community activist Allan DiCastro, Art + Practice (A+P) is an arts and education private operating foundation based in Leimert Park, Los Angeles. A+P's mandate is to create a developmental platform that, on one hand, supports the acquisition of practical skills for foster youth, and, on the other, stresses the importance of creative activity within a larger social context. Admission to all exhibitions and public programs are free and available to the public. To learn more, visit [www.artandpractice.org](http://www.artandpractice.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**

General admission to the BMA is free. Special exhibitions may be ticketed. The BMA is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. The museum is closed Monday, Tuesday, New Year's Day, July 4, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. The BMA is located at 10 Art Museum Drive, three miles north of Baltimore's Inner Harbor. For general museum information, call 443-573-1700 or visit [artbma.org](http://artbma.org).

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**Image:** Senga Nengudi. *Performance Piece* (detail). 1978. © Senga Nengudi; Thomas Erben Gallery, New York; and Lévy Gorvy, New York, London