

NEW WORK BY ARTIST ADAM PENDLETON BRINGS AN ART OF PROTEST INTO THE MUSEUM

Artist in conversation with activist DeRay Mckesson on Saturday, March 25

BALTIMORE, MD (UPDATED March 28, 2017)— The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) presents *Front Room: Adam Pendleton*, a dramatic installation of new and recent work by the New-York based artist that examines the relationship between abstraction and representation through layered and fragmented texts and images sourced from the artist's personal library. On view March 26–October 1, 2017, the exhibition transforms the wall adjacent to the East Lobby staircase with a monumental Wall Work by Pendleton. The Contemporary Wing's Front Room Gallery will feature three immersive floor-to-ceiling Wall Works overlaid with paintings, collages, and silkscreens on Mylar by the artist.



“Adam Pendleton has created a compelling body of work that deeply connects our country’s past and present issues with race,” said BMA Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director Christopher Bedford. “We are extremely proud to present his new work in a way that will make an impression on everyone who encounters it.”

Pendleton (American, b. 1984) is a voracious reader who uses his personal library of words and images to disrupt and reconsider preconceived notions of history and culture as they relate to the avant-garde and current and past socio-political movements. The animating force of his work is found in Black Dada—the artist's term for a broad conceptualization of blackness. Black Dada combines “Black,” which Pendleton describes as “an open-ended signifier” and “Dada,” a nonsense word which recalls the name of the radical artistic movement that developed in response to the horrors of World War I by producing absurdist artwork that challenged the social order. A core question the artist addresses is: What does Black Dada look like? By fragmenting, layering, and collaging materials he reveals new and unexpected relationships between the past and present, language and image, and abstraction and representation.

Pendleton’s recent work includes language drawn directly from fraught periods in America’s racial and cultural history, including the Black Lives Matter movement. “The political dynamic isn’t new,” said Pendleton of Black Lives Matter. “What’s new is the language that is at once a public mourning, a rallying cry, and a poetic plea.” In the East Lobby and the Front Room Gallery, Pendleton provides historical context by evoking the American Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Several works pull apart the phrase “a victim of American democracy,” derived from a 1964 speech by Malcolm X titled “The Ballot or the Bullet,” including the four large paintings that occupy the main wall of the Front Room Gallery. Although not an exact quotation, the words capture Malcolm X’s conviction that democracy had failed African Americans. The paintings, featuring long linear strokes of black spray-paint, move beyond the significance of the language though and investigate the limits of abstraction and the perceptual potential of figure and ground dynamics. In Pendleton’s choreographed installation the viewer is empowered to decipher personal meaning as they navigate the space of the gallery.

Pendleton's work has been presented in numerous solo exhibitions throughout the U.S. and Europe. His work is also in the collections of The Museum of Modern Art and Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; and Tate, London.

The BMA will host a public program featuring a conversation between Adam Pendleton and activist DeRay Mckesson on Saturday, March 25, 2 p.m. This talk is sponsored by the Friends of Modern and Contemporary Art.

This exhibition is curated by Helene Grabow, Curatorial Assistant for Contemporary Art. The exhibition is generously sponsored by Eddie C. & C. Sylvia Brown.

THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART

The Baltimore Museum of Art is home to an internationally renowned collection of 19th-century, modern, and contemporary art. Founded in 1914 with a single painting, the BMA today has 95,000 objects—including the largest public holding of works by Henri Matisse. Throughout the museum, visitors will find an outstanding selection of American and European painting, sculpture, and decorative arts; works by established and emerging contemporary artists; significant artworks from China; stunning Antioch mosaics; and an exceptional collection of art from Africa. The BMA's galleries also showcase examples from one of the nation's finest collections of prints, drawings, and photographs and exquisite textiles from around the world. The 210,000-square-foot museum is distinguished by a grand historic building designed in the 1920s by renowned American architect John Russell Pope and two beautifully landscaped sculpture gardens. As a major cultural destination for the region, the BMA hosts a dynamic program of exhibitions, events, and educational programs throughout the year. 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 a.m.–5 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.

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Image: Adam Pendleton. *A Victim of American Democracy II (wall work)*, 2015. © Adam Pendleton, courtesy Pace Gallery