



BMA Presents New Works by Baltimore Artists Lauren Frances Adams, Mequitta Ahuja, Cindy Cheng, and LaToya Hobbs

[Joan Mitchell Foundation Award Recipients Presented in Conjunction with Mitchell Retrospective](#)

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BALTIMORE, MD (August 18, 2021)—On November 14, 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 Baltimore-connected 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* reflects 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 April 3, 2022, the exhibition is part of the BMA's ongoing *2020 Vision* initiative, which focuses on the achievements of women artists and leaders.

All Due Respect is organized in conjunction with the much-anticipated Joan Mitchell retrospective that will open at the BMA on March 6, 2022. The four artists featured in the exhibition have been previously recognized with grants or residency awards from the Joan Mitchell Foundation, which was established by Mitchell in her will to support the changing needs and careers of working artists. *All Due Respect* 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. The exhibition opening coincides with a new installation of the museum's contemporary art collection that focuses on the ways in which artists have produced new forms of knowledge about the world. The contemporary wing will feature nearly 100 works made primarily by Black and female artists—many new to the collection—and will reframe stories told with the museum's holdings.

"*All Due Respect* continues the BMA's efforts to recognize outstanding artists with deep connections to Baltimore, as well as voices and visions that are important to both our creative community as well as broader national dialogues," said Christopher Bedford, the BMA's Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director. "I am very pleased these new works also demonstrate the broad impact of the Joan Mitchell Foundation as we prepare for the opening of the Joan Mitchell retrospective this spring."

All Due Respect is curated by Leila Grothe, BMA Associate 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 has created an installation that responds to objects in the BMA's collection that have historical ties to the 19th century in the United States, between the Revolutionary War and Civil War. Through painting, installation, custom wallpaper, and other objects, Adams explores 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 (b. 1979, Snow Hill, NC) 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 widely in artist-run spaces, historic houses, university galleries, and regional museums, including at the North Carolina Museum of Art, the Warhol Museum, Nymans House National Trust in England, EXPO Chicago (with the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis) and Smack Mellon. 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 consistently and innovatively reimagines the vocabulary of self-portraiture. This new body of work directly addresses grief and death, having been created while the artist accompanied the final months and days of her mother's life. Ahuja experiments with a novel technique using the medium of oil paint sculpturally. The artist lays a thick monochromatic coat of paint onto the surfaces, which she then pushes, shapes, and scrapes away, using loss and removal to depict images of herself and her mother together. While these works are deeply meaningful for the artist, they also speak to our collective mourning prompted by our moment of pandemic and global crisis. In equal measure, this work is replete with anguish and with love.

Ahuja (b. 1974, Grand Rapids, MI) 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), 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 (b. 1981, Hong Kong) 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 has produced 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 painter and printmaker and overtime she has fused these practices together, transforming 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 (b. 1983, Little Rock, AR) 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 cultivates the study and appreciation of artist Joan Mitchell's life and work, while fulfilling her wish to provide resources and 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, sketchbooks, and other historical materials. Fulfilling Mitchell's mandate to "aid and assist" living artists, over the past 28 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 Joan Mitchell Fellowship gives annual unrestricted awards of \$60,000 directly to artists, with funds distributed over a five-year period alongside dedicated and flexible professional development. The New Orleans-based Joan Mitchell Center traditionally 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 program is focused on local

artists for 2021. The Creating a Living Legacy (CALL) initiative provides free and essential resources to help artists of all ages organize, document, and manage their artworks and careers. Together, these programs actively engage with working artists as they develop and expand their practices. For more information, visit joanmitchellfoundation.org.

Baltimore Museum of Art

Founded in 1914, the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) inspires people of all ages and backgrounds through exhibitions, programs, and collections that tell an expansive story of art—challenging long-held narratives and embracing new voices. Our outstanding collection of more than 95,000 objects spans many eras and cultures and includes the world’s largest public holding of works by Henri Matisse; one of the nation’s finest collections of prints, drawings, and photographs; and a rapidly growing number of works by contemporary artists of diverse backgrounds. The museum is also distinguished by a neoclassical building designed by American architect John Russell Pope and two beautifully landscaped gardens featuring an array of modern and contemporary sculpture. The BMA is located three miles north of the Inner Harbor, adjacent to the main campus of Johns Hopkins University, and has a community branch at Lexington Market. General admission is free so that everyone can enjoy the power of art. artbma.org

Visitor Information

General admission to the BMA is free. The BMA is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Timed reservations, face masks, and answering two questions about COVID-19 exposure are required for all visitors. The Sculpture Gardens are open Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to dusk. The museum and gardens are closed New Year’s Day, Juneteenth, July 4, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. 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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