



BALTIMORE
MUSEUM OF
ART

For media in Baltimore

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BMA Promotes Jessica Bell Brown to Curator and Department Head for Contemporary Art

**News coincides with the opening of *A Movement in Every Direction*,
co-organized by Brown and featuring new commissioned works by some
of today's most acclaimed Black artists**

BALTIMORE, MD (April 6, 2022)—The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) today announces Jessica Bell Brown has been named as Curator and Department Head for Contemporary Art. In this role, she will lead a department comprising two associate curators, two curatorial assistants, and one fellow, as well as manage the rapidly growing collection and presentations of the art of our time. Brown came to the BMA in November 2019 as an Associate Curator for Contemporary Art.

“Since joining the BMA, Jessica has positioned artists’ voices at the core of her curatorial work, creating new platforms to experience art as envisioned by its makers and bridging institutional and artistic visions and approaches. Her vision, keen insights, and commitment to artists will be integral as the BMA continues to diversify its collections and expand the narratives of art through its exhibitions and programs,” said Asma Naeem, Interim Co-Director and The Eddie C. and C. Sylvia Brown Chief Curator.

Brown has co-curated two major projects during her tenure at the BMA. *A Movement in Every Direction: Legacies of the Great Migration* is a nationally traveling exhibition with newly commissioned works by 12 acclaimed artists exploring the profound impact of the Great Migration on the social and cultural life of the United States from historical and personal perspectives. Co-organized with Ryan N. Dennis (she/her), Mississippi Museum of Art (MMA) Chief Curator and Artistic Director of the Center for Art and Public Exchange, *A Movement in Every Direction* debuts at the MMA on April 9 and opens in Baltimore on October 30. The ambitious project also encompasses a two-volume publication that includes a critical reader highlighting pivotal scholarly work around aspects of the Great Migration—from the shaping of American cities to its impact on Black spirituality, music, art, food, and culture—and a second volume capsule presentation of exhibition content with newly commissioned essays by leading scholars. In 2021, Brown co-organized with BMA Associate Curator of Contemporary Art Leila Grothe a complete reinstallation of the museum’s contemporary art galleries titled *How Do We Know the World?* that highlights an expansive range of voices and centers on the ways artists engage with the historic, social, political, and environmental constructs that shape our world. Other BMA exhibitions include *Stephanie Syjuco: Vanishing Point (Overlay)* (2021) co-curated with Grothe, and *Thaddeus Mosley: Forest* (2021-22).

Prior to joining the BMA, Brown served as the Consulting Curator at Gracie Mansion Conservancy in New York, where she curated *She Persists: A Century of Women Artists in New York, 1919-2019* with First Lady Chirlane McCray. Previously, she held roles at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and Creative Time. Brown holds an M.A. in Art History from Princeton University and a B.A. in Art History from Northwestern. Her writing has appeared in various publications including *Flash Art*, *Artforum*, *Art Papers*, *Hyperallergic*, and *The Brooklyn Rail*.

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., and Thursdays until 9 p.m. Timed reservations 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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