- Good evening, folks. Thank you for joining us. This is the second public information session for the Baltimore Museum of Art’s Open Call. My name is Dave Eassa, I’m Director of Public Engagement here at the BMA, and we have Andrea Boston, BMA’s Digital Media Manager running this stream.

- I’m Verónica Betancourt, I’m the Director of Interpretation at the BMA.

- And I’m Cecilia Wichmann, Associate Curator of Contemporary Art.

- This session today is being recorded. Recording and transcription will be posted afterwards at artbma.org/opencall. Later in the Q&A, if we need more time to answer a question that someone asked in this session, we’ll post the question and answer also at artbma.org/opencall. Frequently asked questions posed before the question period closes on June 20th will be posted to the website June 21st at artbma.org/opencall. And this evening, we're gonna start with a brief overview of the BMA commission and the Open Call process. Then we'll open up to questions from you. Please post your questions in the chat and we will address them in the order received. Please keep your question brief and avoid comments that are not questions. You can also email questions to opencall@artbma.org. That email address has been posted in the chat and is on this slide here as well. Next slide, and I’m gonna pass to you, Verónica.

- Thanks, Dave. So we're looking at Artemis/Bast, which is sculpture created by artist Fred Wilson in 1992. This work is currently on extended loan to the BMA from a private collection. Next slide. And looking at Artemis/Bast in context here, you can see it until September of this year on view in the contemporary collection presentation, How Do We Know the World? Next slide. And Fred Wilson originally presented Artemis/Bast as part of his 1992 installation, Panta Rhei: A Gallery of Ancient Classical Art at New York’s Metro Pictures gallery. This year, or rather, that year, the BMA acquired another sculpture from this installation, the Untitled work on screen at right. Wilson juxtaposed mythological figures from ancient Greece and Egypt, with fragments and shard suggesting that a forceful collision has just taken place. His goal was to shatter misconceptions of the ancient world and remind viewers that Africa was an equally present, connected, and compelling source of intellectual, philosophical, and social advancement in antiquity. Next slide.

- Fred Wilson is a conceptual artist whose work investigates museological, cultural, and historical issues, largely overlooked or neglected by museums and cultural institutions. Here in Baltimore, we've often hosted and supported Wilson's work. In 1992, the very same year that he created Artemis/Bast, Fred Wilson's seismic exhibition Mining the Museum was organized by The Contemporary through the pathbreaking work of George Ciscle and Lisa Corrin, right here in Baltimore at the Maryland Historical Society, now the Maryland Center for History and Culture. Nearly a decade later, Wilson's retrospective Objects and Installations 1979 to 2000 was organized by the
- Center for Art, Design, and Visual Culture at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Next slide, please, Andrea. So, this open call invites artists in our region into dialogue with Wilson's work in the BMA galleries. The purpose is to engage and support emerging and mid-career artists, not in a homage to Wilson, but in an open and expansive dialogue around critical questions integral to their own practices, while examining the complex and unresolved legacies of Wilson’s art through the central provocation posed by Artemis/Bast. Next slide, please. And this provocation is, what images and thoughts emerge when myths and histories collide?

- And so, looking at the floor plan here, we’re working with Fred Wilson to install Artemis/Bast in a new location in the museum, the John Waters Rotunda, which you see on screen at center. This gallery sits between the historic European painting and sculpture galleries and the court of sixth century mosaics from Antioch and Dafne. Through the open call and invited proposal process that follows, two artists or artist teams will be selected for commissions to occupy the galleries to either side, Jacobs 3 and 9, setting up a conversation. The resulting exhibition will be on view from April 2023 until March 2024. Next slide, please, Andrea. And so, this open call is the first stage in the BMA commission selection process. Submissions are due by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on the Monday, June 27th. And from there, five artists or teams will be selected to advance to the proposal stage by an interdepartmental project team of BMA staff. Artists invited to develop proposals will be notified by Friday, July 15th. The next slide, please. So, who is eligible to respond to the open call? Our criteria are artists of at least 18 years of age at the time of entry, working in any form of visual arts media. Artists with archival interdisciplinary or research-based practices are encouraged to apply. And artists, or at least one member of each artist’s team, must reside in Maryland or its contiguous states. That would be Virginia, Delaware, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Washington D.C. Priority will be extended to artists living and working in the Baltimore region, which is being defined as Baltimore City and its surrounding five counties. So, Baltimore, Harford, Anne Arundel, Howard, and Carroll Counties. Candidates may not be enrolled in a degree-seeking program, either part-time or full-time, at an institution of higher learning at the time of the application deadline or during the period of the project. So that would be spring 2022 through spring 2023. And finally, people affiliated with the museum during the period of the open call and request for proposals, so, spring and summer 2022, are not eligible to apply. This includes all BMA staff and their family members, BMA board members and their families, BMA volunteers, docents, contractors, and all others working with the museum in any sort of official capacity. Jury members and their families are also not eligible to apply. Next slide, please, and I’ll pass to you, Dave.

- So like we said, this is the first step in this open call process. And by the June 27th deadline for this first step, the following materials must be uploaded through our form at artbma.org. These four items are as follows, our contact information, which will be used to verify that the artist resides within the eligible region, birthdate will only be used to verify that the artist is over 18, and our contact information will allow us to reach the artist about this particular project. The letter of intent, important to note here that this is not the artist's proposal, it's a preliminary letter of intent with a two-page maximum. It should demonstrate how the artist's existing concerns and practice connect to this project, why the opportunity is of interest, and how the artist would approach the proposal if invited to proceed to the next stage. How would you approach the proposal to commission a site-responsive installation at the BMA that dialogues with Fred Wilson's Artemis/Bast and activates the designated exhibition space? A current resume, three pages maximum. Collectives and teams should include a resume for each member who would actively participate, and a PDF portfolio. So we’re asking that you put together one single PDF that includes representative images, five relevant artworks into that one file. Included in this, we’d like to see the title, date, complete materials list, scale and inches, duration if applicable. This is optional, but you may include if you'd like in the PDF, a brief statement up to 200 words for each artwork if you
wish. Include up to two images for each artwork, if it's a multi-part work like an installation, make sure that we have one overall view and one detail. And for time-based media works, we'll accept video clips under one minute in length. Could I have the next slide, please? So from this deadline, the BMA staff team will review all submissions to the open call with consideration to the project purpose and prompt, as well as feasibility for the space and timeframe in question. From this, five artists or artist teams will be invited to develop proposals and they will be notified by July 15th. Each artist will be paid $1,000 per individual, or if it's an artist team, $1,500 per team to develop the robust proposals. At that time, we'll hold info sessions for invited artists and provide a packet of guidelines to inform their proposals. From this July 15th deadline, those proposals will be due August 5th. In August, a jury, including BMA staff and external experts in the field of contemporary art, will review those five proposals and hold virtual interviews with each artist or team. Two artists or artist teams will then be invited to move forward with the commissions, with work and production between September 2022 and March 2023. Details about the commission fee and the production budget are outlined in the open call document. Links are here in the chat as well as on the website. And I think now what we'll do is if there's any questions coming in from the audience, you can type those into the comments. We are able to then see those and we'll begin answering those in the order that we receive them. Keep in mind, you can always email us questions if something comes up as you've kind of sat with some of the information you've heard here today, and we'll get back to those as well. And then anything submitted before June 20th will go into that public document that we will place all of our FAQs. But let's start with this first one from Virginia. How is each submission going to be viewed? Will it be projected on a wall, on a computer screen, or as a printout?

- It's a great question. I would imagine, so there will be an asynchronous review period where all of the colleagues involved in that review are sort of doing their own thing, will be receiving these submissions through that open call website. So on the computer screen and the myriad different ways computer screens can appear, is the primary mode. It's possible that somebody might print something out, but if you prepare your materials for submission through the web portal and viewing on a screen, we'll be in good shape to review them.

- Great, and I think we have another question asking, "Did you say that the John Waters Rotunda has yet to be built?" And I'm happy to say the John Waters Rotunda exists and if you're in Baltimore or nearby, we would encourage you to come to the BMA and check it out. You can see it. It is currently featuring the artwork of artist, Elle Pérez, the exhibition titled Elle Pérez: Devotions. So that'll give you a sense of what that space could be.

- And I can add to that too. I'm seeing that Andrea has posed a question, what are the gallery dimensions? So this sort of suite of spaces is a sort of spread of three galleries with the John Waters Rotunda at the center and the Jacobs 9 gallery to one side and the Jacobs 3 gallery to the other side. It's a highly symmetrical, architectural design. So, the Jacobs 3 and 9 galleries are precisely the same size. They are each eight-sided with sort of four main sides that have faceted corners that create shorter small walls. At the time that artists are invited into the proposal stage, they'll receive detailed packets with specs about those spaces, including all of those specific dimensions of the walls. But overall, each of those galleries are 24 1/2 feet by 24 1/2 feet with the sort of eight-sided wall configuration. If you're familiar with the BMA gallery space, these are galleries that, on two of those four longer walls, there are entries into adjacent galleries. So to one side, each of those galleries leads into the John Waters Rotunda, setting up this kind of contained space in conversation with its adjacent spaces. And in the other direction, there are views out to the historic European painting and sculpture galleries at the BMA. And again, the John Waters Rotunda does exist. It is built. If you visit now, you'll see Elle Pérez's work
with elements of design for that exhibition in particular that will change when Fred Wilson's Artemis/Bast is installed in that space. So you can keep in mind that there is a temporary wall currently there that will change, the case work and platforms will change, the wall color will change.

- And then we have another question asking, "Do you want a letterhead with all of our contact info at the top of the PDFs? Or should we keep it anonymous?"

- Verónica, do you have thoughts?

- I mean, I thought that everybody was providing their contact information as part of the form. So, I think that we'll have all the information... Wait, let me put it this way, we ask for all the information we need. So there's no need to attempt to anonymize.

- Yeah, and for keeping things organized, having some kind of header or connecting comment with your name across all of your materials can only help us in staying organized, but it'll come in through a form that collates your documents anyway. So, no hard and fast rule about that.

- And I think that we've addressed the placement of where the John Waters Rotunda and Jacobs 3 and 9 are at the BMA. But that is... Yeah, if that remains unclear, follow up. And another question is, is there a minimal size for images?

- That's a great question. And we want to make sure that we're getting it 100% right. So that's one that I'm gonna say rather than answering in this moment, we'll post that answer to the site after the fact. I'm surprised that we didn't include that information and thank you for drawing our attention to the need to post it.

- And then Elaine is asking, "Will selected finalists have some access to the museum stores?" I think, Elaine, I'm reading that as maybe the holdings and materials archives. Cecilia, do you want to take that?

- If I'm understanding, and please, Elaine, feel free to rephrase the question if we're getting this wrong, but for those artists or teams who are invited into the more robust proposal stage, whether there will be access to objects in the museum collection and maybe archival materials, we will be working on a fairly accelerated timeline as Dave outlined. So, that invitation will come on July 15th with a deadline for proposals of August 5th. That said, BMA staff will be making ourselves as available as possible through these information sessions to work through questions that pertain to the proposal you're attempting to develop. And if part of the concept is around engaging in certain ways with BMA archives or collection objects, we can't guarantee that there will be, like, deep-dive research sessions with access to objects, but we will certainly do our best to support in providing information about any collection materials that are relevant to your project.

- And I think we have a question from Teema that sort of builds on that idea, asking, "Could you please elaborate a little more about what happens after we submit our initial applications and are selected?"

- Sure, so phase one, the open call request for qualifications is really just that, it's the opportunity to submit a CV, this portfolio of five artworks that give some information about the concerns of your work and the capacity to sort of produce projects feasible within a context like this, as well as the letter of intent. After that June 27th deadline, after sort of scanning through to make sure that all of those submissions are complete and reflect sort of all of the eligibility requirements, that sort of staff review
process will occur and five finalists will be selected. On July 15th, we'll reach out to those five finalists, providing a packet of information that, again, includes gallery specifications, any kinds of guidelines or parameters about what... the need to know facts basically for producing a proposal that can engage with the space in a way that the museum can accommodate. We'll have information sessions within the first two weeks. We'll try to do it as soon as possible after July 15th, which will involve, I'd say a more tailored and custom exchange around each of those five finalist set of ideas for their proposal. We'll include a budget template. It will get very granular and nuts and bolts in that proposal stage. And that, you know, also, it's important to say, we'll be attaching that stipend of 1,000 for individuals or 1,500 for a team fee, understanding that there is considerable labor involved in putting together a proposal like that. So one of the things that will appear in that initial packet when that outreach happens on July 15th is an agreement specifying, you know, the timeline of that payment. From there, there will be a jury that will review, spend time first solo, again, asynchronously, reviewing those proposals in detail, and then virtually, probably over Zoom, meeting collectively with each of the artists or teams for a conversation about the proposal to address questions and the kinds of things that can happen in a relational conversation and don't necessarily jump off the page, so to speak, so that there can be a real back and forth about what each artist or team has in mind. Deliberations will occur within that jury. And then from those five proposals, two artist or teams will be selected for commission. All of this will happen within the month of August. An agreement, again, a contract will be sort of provided along with those invitations to proceed into the commissioning phase. And the goal with this sort of tightly orchestrated timeline is to ensure that those two artists or teams selected for the commission by the beginning of September, have the go-ahead and have all of the sort of feedback from the museum in place to be able to start production of work. It's really important that there be that solid six months from September to March to be producing the work. And then just to wrap it up, in March, there will be the process of receiving that work into the museum, working with the museum's registrars and conservators, to prepare it for installation. Over the course of late March and early April, there will be an installation process including museum installation staff supporting the artists and getting that work on view, and then the show will open in April of 2023.

- Thank you, Cecilia. That was an impressive recounting of our project timeline and stages. And if it's helpful as a written reference, a lot of those dates and details are also documented on the open call website. So if you click on the... I'm looking at it now, if you click on the button that says, "Download submission details," that PDF will also walk you through a lot of the timeline and phases associated with the project.

- Juliana, I think that... So, just below your comment, Andrea wrote where Artemis/Bast is currently at and the gallery where it will be, and what's in there now. And Elaine, could you please address whether all work for the commission must be new work? I think that it's what I understand. I can take a stab at this, Cecilia, or I can pass to you, whichever you prefer.

- No, go for it.

- But I would say, Elaine, in the ethos of Fred Wilson's work, I don't think that all work needs to be new work, but it's thinking of how this commission would sit within this very particular architectural space in conversation with that process and with the ethos of that piece. So I don't think it needs to be entirely comprised of new work, but a new installation, yeah.

- And we'll wanna see that the central provocation is addressed in whatever is getting put forth as the work. So there does need to be that conceptual connection. And I think that brings us to a question from
Sam who asks, "To get some idea of the scope, how is a budget decided?"

- So this is, to some extent, outlined in the RFQ. We wanted to publish as much information as we could from the outset to help with that kind of scoping consideration. So we've mentioned the stipend that we'll attach to the proposal development, that's before the production of any new work. And then for the two projects selected for the commissions, we will offer a flat fee. So there will be a flat artist fee, whether for an individual or a team, of $10,000, as well as a production budget, which we've indicated is a range from 15 to $30,000. And that there really is no penalty for proposing in that fully fleshed out proposal that happens in the invited cycle in July into early August for fully maximizing that budget. There won't be some kind of priority given to, you know, not saying that you would use the full 30 if that's what your project would need. That being said, and this is also articulated, I hope that the language is helpful in that open call request for qualifications document, that various expenses related to producing the exhibition in those galleries from building out case work to delivering and receiving completed work to the museum will need to be included in that project budget. So it's not just a materials budget, it's an overall project budget, and that's where it will really be a collaborative back-and-forth with the museum project team and each artist developing that proposal to have the information that you need to really demonstrate the funds that would be directed towards your materials and production of work, and also hold the space that will be needed to realize it as an exhibition in that space. And we totally recognize that that's something that we'll need to do in conversation together. Does that answer your question, Sam? Please post a follow-up if anybody has further questions about the budgeting process.

- And maybe while we're waiting to see if Sam is good on that one, we can jump to his second one, which is a continuation a little bit of, is there weight limits as someone considering a sculptural approach? And in that packet that the next stage of artists receive, they will also receive a lot of information about the gallery, what we can do in that space, some of the limitations around that. So, some of those questions will be answered in that next stage. And it looks like we were good on... it looks like his question was answered. So maybe we can pop back up to Elaine, and Cecilia, I'm gonna pass this to you. Could you please address visits to the selected artist studios? And will there be multiple visits?

- Yeah, yeah. And again, this is jumping ahead past the open call stage, past the proposal stage, studio visits would occur at the commissioning stage, so, after those two artists or teams commence work. And we've included in the project timeline in the RFQ document, a mention of this. There will be two touchpoints where the BMA project team visits probably in person, it could be a hybrid, in-person, virtual studio visit depending. But where the team visits to check in and to see the development of work. And often that includes the sort of curatorial liaison, as well as a registrar and a conservator, so that conversations are happening about packing and safe receipt of the work at the end of the phase at various stages in its development. And so there's that moment for feedback and conversation as the work is being developed. And I would say that, you know, we would have those two formal... kind of formalized moments where the team is checking in and there would be more frequent touch points along the way over the course of that six months with the curator and those artists.

- All right, and we have a question from Juliana asking, "Is there an electrical plug that can be used?"

- There is electrical and I wanna check that and get a really clear answer on what electrical availability there is in these galleries. But that's precisely the kind of information that will be in the specs packet that comes with the proposal invitations.
- All right, and while we have sort of made a note to ask about the electrical plugin, and double check and see what's actually there, we have another question from Elaine as a follow-up saying that, in other words, we should estimate costs for installing using BMA staff for the commission exhibit, correct.

- Yeah and that's part of that back and forth that will happen in that stage.

- There will be professional installers working on behalf of the museum for that particular part of the process of designing and producing, and building out the space, installing the work is something that artists will absolutely have museum support in doing. Costs of things like case work should be factored into the project budget. So that, again, I think the best way to handle it is in that back-and-forth exchange information session at the proposal stage.

- And I guess another way of putting that is that at this RFQ stage, we are not asking for budget information.

- Yes.

- Okay. For those of us who are in the moment and not onto the next stage.

- And then Teema, we can jump to this question. If we need help with one or a few aspects of our execution, could we get help from the museum? For example, if I would need a sculpture team to help execute part of the project. So I think in the fabrication, that would be not something that our team would be involved with, but I think the collaboration would be as things are coming into the museum and working with that team to ensure safety of the works, proper procedures and installation. I don't know if you wanna add anything to that, Cecilia.

- No, I think that captures.

- And then our next question is from Virginia, noting that there is no place to put a website address for the RFQ. Will the staff take any time to look at any information that is not put into the application? And I would start by saying that we're going to prioritize the information that is required to be in the application. You know, I think that looking beyond the application materials is something that may happen, but is not necessarily going to be considered as part of the overall consideration of each proposal.

- And I would just add, I think we'll take really seriously the artists' efforts to draw our attention to the most relevant aspects of your work. So, a portfolio with five samples hopefully allows space to show different ways that your work whether in a conceptual sense, in a sort of production and feasibility sense, ties back into the project that you could imagine proposing if you moved into the next phase. And so we'll be sort of looking and thinking in that sense, understanding that you are really specifically drawing our attention to the key examples among your work. We'll understand that there's a larger universe of your practice that we're not seeing all together there, but that it's refined to the point where you really want us to focus on those connections that you're drawing.

- So, folks online with us tonight, if you've got anything else that comes up, please type that into the chat now so we can address those. We do have a couple things that we're gonna return to get some further information and clarification on. We will also be posting these, like we said, on the open call website, and we are available by email throughout this process for anything that comes up. It looks like
we might... I'm not sure. We'll hang for a moment.

- You know, we'll hold, we'll be on standby.

- It's so great to have you all with us. And we really appreciate these questions and all of the thought and care. And we'll be collating those frequently asked questions that come in through the email address, opencall@artbma.org, as well as in both of these info sessions, as we said, to make sure that everybody is in receipt of the same answers and same information. That will be posted on the 21st, giving about a week until that submission deadline on the 27th.

- And if you want to refer back to this specific presentation, it'll be recorded and posted as well as transcribed and captioned. So you can watch it again and review in more detail soon, likewise, the session that we had yesterday morning.

- Okay, y'all, I think that might be it. Thank you, Sam.

- Yes.

- Folks, again, appreciate it from all of us. This is an exciting time, exciting project. Can't wait to see what people are bringing forth. Thank you. Oh.

- Oh, one last one.

- Elaine asks, "I had a crazy thought. I realize you will be calling RFQs received for the specific commission, but might the BMA staff also be watching for future installations?"

- I think that's one of the things that's really important to us about an open call and exciting to all of us about an open call is the opportunity to learn and become acquainted with work maybe we haven't seen, either aspects of an artist's work we haven't seen or practices that we're not familiar with yet. So it will absolutely be a learning and listening process as much as a selection process, and I'm grateful that you raised that point.

- Oh, and actually I just noticed a question that popped up as well. It says mid-career artists, would an older artist be considered?

- I think the call says emerging and mid-career, and I think we take the most expansive, possible definition of those terms. I think that somebody can be emerging or mid-career at any age, and we absolutely don't draw sort of classifications or boundaries around those terms, except to say that it's an open call and anybody who meets the eligibility requirements will receive equal attention and consideration.

- Okay, folks, we are signing off. Thank you all. Enjoy your Wednesday.

- Thanks so much for the enthusiasm and the questions, everybody.

- Take care, everybody. Goodnight.