

NEW  
NEW  
NEWNEW ART.  
NEW IDEAS.  
NEW EXPERIENCES.

## MEDIA CONTACTS:

The Baltimore Museum of Art

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**MORRIS LOUIS UNVEILED DEBUTS IN THE  
BMA'S CONTEMPORARY WING ON SEPTEMBER 8***Exhibition includes recent gift of rarely shown paintings and ink drawings*10 ART MUSEUM DRIVE  
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**BALTIMORE, MD** (July 23, 2013)—The Baltimore Museum of Art's newly reopened Contemporary Wing is the setting for an exhibition of more than 25 works that illuminate seldom seen aspects of Baltimore-born painter Morris Louis' artistic practice. On view September 8, 2013-February 9, 2014, *Morris Louis Unveiled* includes Louis' iconic *Dalet Beth* (1958) 'veil' painting and *Silver III* (1953) and *Untitled 5-76* (1956), two bold gestural paintings that reveal the artist's little-known exploration of Abstract Expressionism. Louis' range of influences is also vividly shown through related works on paper by Paul Klee, Henri Matisse, Joan Miró, Pablo Picasso, and Jackson Pollock.

The exhibition was inspired by a gift of two large-scale paintings and a number of surprising drawings that came to the BMA last year from the estate of the artist's widow. These are presented along with other works drawn from the BMA's collection and from a Baltimore private collection. In conjunction with the exhibition, the BMA will present important examples of works by Louis's influences, peers, and followers, including Helen Frankenthaler's majestic *Madridscape* (1959). The era of the Washington Color School is represented through works by Sam Gilliam, Kenneth Noland, Howard Mehring, and Anne Truitt.

*Morris Louis Unveiled* is curated by BMA Curator of Contemporary Art Kristen Hileman with guest scholar Antonia Pocock, a Ph.D. candidate at New York University's Institute of Fine Arts, who conducted new in-depth research on Louis through the project. The exhibition is generously sponsored by the Morris Louis Art Trust, the Morris Louis Conservation Fund, and the Marcella Brenner Revocable Trust.

"Louis' commitment to experimenting moved painting in a new direction, and his art ever forward," said curator Kristen Hileman. "We see in these beautiful, expansive paintings the artist reconciling two very different approaches to abstraction—chaotic layers of spontaneous expressive marks, and flat expanses of pure, pulsating color at times taken to a radically minimal extreme."

Pocock has been investigating Louis' approach to abstraction in the late 1940s through the mid-1950s and wrote the essay for a small publication that accompanies the exhibition. She will also hold a free lecture about her research on Saturday, November 9 at 2 p.m. in the BMA's Woodward Gallery.

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**Morris Louis** (1912–1962) is considered an influential originator of the Washington Color School, a group of mid-20th century painters who explored the language of abstraction using new materials and a focus on color. A pioneer of Color Field painting, Louis gained renown for his innovative method of staining raw canvases with washes of newly developed acrylic paint to create vibrant, large-scale works. Born in Baltimore and a graduate of what is now known as the Maryland Institute College of Art, Louis had a long history with the BMA, having exhibited in the museum's annual Maryland artist exhibitions four times in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and having served on the BMA's advisory artists' committee.

### **CONTEMPORARY ART AT THE BMA**

The BMA's nearly 100-year dedication to the acquiring and presenting works by the artists of our time has resulted in a significant collection of contemporary art. Among the highlights are major late paintings by Andy Warhol; important works by Grace Hartigan, Jasper Johns, Donald Judd, Glenn Ligon, and Anne Truitt; an outstanding group of works by influential international artists such as Olafur Eliasson, Thomas Hirschhorn, and Franz West; and artists whose work makes a profound social statement, including David Hammons, General Idea, Zoe Leonard, and Felix Gonzalez-Torres. In 1994, the museum added a wing with 16,000 square feet of gallery space for its growing collection of post-1945 art. The 2012 renovation of the wing was designed to enhance the visitor experience and the BMA's presentation of contemporary art across all media. Improvements included a dedicated space for changing exhibitions; a black box gallery for the presentation of light, sound, and moving image works; a gallery dedicated to contemporary prints, drawings, and photographs; two new interactive galleries; and the museum's first mobile guide for the collection. More than 100 objects—including paintings, sculpture, photography, works on paper, and video—are presented thematically with state-of-the-art lighting and include recent acquisitions of works by Walead Beshty, Julie Mehretu, Sarah Oppenheimer, Sarah Sze, Rirkrit Tiravanija, and Nari Ward. The BMA's ongoing commitment to cultivating emerging artists continues with a strong artistic program that highlights local, national, and international contemporary artists.

### **ABOUT 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 90,000 works of art—including the largest holding of works by Henri Matisse in the world. The BMA has a long tradition of collecting the art of the day, beginning with the Cone sisters, whose avid acquisitions from living artists signaled the Museum's commitment to collecting contemporary art. Other outstanding collections include European and American fine and decorative arts, 15th- through 19th-century prints and drawings, works by established and emerging contemporary artists, and objects from Africa, Asia, the Ancient Americas, and Pacific Islands. Two beautifully landscaped gardens display an array of 20th-century sculpture that is an oasis in the city. The Museum is located in the heart of Charles Village and adjacent to the main campus of The Johns Hopkins University. The BMA's building encompasses 210,000 square feet and is distinguished by a grand historic building designed in the 1920s by renowned American architect John Russell Pope. Two beautifully landscaped gardens display an array of 20th-century sculpture that is an oasis in the city. Since 2006, the BMA has eliminated general admission fees so that everyone can enjoy the power of art.

### **VISITOR INFORMATION**

General admission to the BMA is free. The BMA is open Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 11a.m.-6p.m. (except major holidays). The Museum is closed Monday, Tuesday, New Year's Day, July 4, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. The BMA is located on Art Museum Drive at North Charles and 31<sup>st</sup> Streets, three miles north of Baltimore's Inner Harbor. For general Museum information, call 443-573-1700 or visit [artbma.org](http://artbma.org).