Baltimore Museum of Art and Maryland Institute College of Art Announce Elizabeth Talford Scott Exhibition and Community Celebration

MICA Exhibition Development Seminar students to work with cultural organizations and colleges across Baltimore to celebrate Talford Scott from November 2023 through May 2024

BALTIMORE, MD (May 26, 2023)—Twenty-five years ago, the Maryland Institute College of Art’s (MICA) inaugural Exhibition Development Seminar (EDS) organized a landmark retrospective of Elizabeth Talford Scott’s vibrant mixed-media fiber works that brought significant recognition to the artist and modeled innovative community-centered approaches to curation and interpretation. This fall, the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) is partnering with MICA and the Estate of Elizabeth Talford Scott at Goya Contemporary to build upon that legacy with an exhibition guest-curated by MICA Curator-in-Residence Emeritus George Ciscle and organized by BMA Associate Curator of Contemporary Art Cecilia Wichmann in dialogue with a new generation of EDS students. On view November 12, 2023, through April 28, 2024, and borrowing the same title as the original exhibition, Eyewinkers, Tumbleturds, and Candlebugs: The Art of Elizabeth Talford Scott will feature 20 stunning works by the artist that bridge the gap between fine art and craft. Guided by instructor Deyane Moses, EDS students will lead the organization of the Elizabeth Talford Scott Community Celebration, expanding the recognition of Talford Scott’s oeuvre with presentations of her work at eight other institutions that have a significant history with the artist and/or EDS: Cryor Art Gallery at Coppin State University, Johns Hopkins University, Maryland Center for History and Culture, MICA, James E. Lewis Museum of Art at Morgan State University, The Peale, Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture, and the Walters Art Museum. These presentations will be on view February through May 2024.

“Elizabeth Talford Scott’s textiles are more than quilts; they are prayer pillows, healing shawls, and family diaries—artistic creations that incorporate her personal symbolism with motifs of Africa and the Deep South,” said George Ciscle, guest curator and MICA Curator-in-Residence Emeritus. “I am delighted that the BMA and MICA are working collectively to give Talford Scott’s life story and works the time and attention they warrant and command, as well as expanding what inclusion in the arts might look like as a sustained commitment.”

Elizabeth Talford Scott’s creative legacy was inherited from generations of craftspeople in her family who had honed their expertise and persisted in their artistry through the deprivations of slavery and its aftermath in sharecropping, migration, and segregated city life on their quest for a life of freedom. She believed art-making can offer human beings the opportunity to break free of limiting social categories, evolving new ways of communicating and nurturing dreams. Her innovative fiber works incorporate stones, buttons, shells, bones, sequins, beads, knotted material, glass, and other unconventional objects
amassed in bright, bold, and lively compositions that boast heavily layered surfaces and organic, unstructured shapes. Embedded within these lush surfaces are personal and worldly narratives and symbols that reference flowers, animals, astronomy, insects, sea creatures, monsters, dreams, superstitions, and good luck charms. Among the highlights of the BMA’s exhibition are Talford Scott’s majestic *Plantation* (1980), a dazzling quilt in the BMA’s collection that envisions the big dipper as a matriarchal beacon of freedom; *Joyce’s Quilt* (1983), a tribute to her daughter with bold blocks of color; and *Grandfather’s Cabin/Noah’s Ark* (1993–96), an exquisite story quilt that recalls memories of the cabin her grandfather built on Blackstock Plantation in South Carolina.

The Elizabeth Talford Scott Community Celebration brings together five museums and four university sites across Baltimore City for a reunion of the artist’s work from February through May 2024. Each venue will have two EDS students from the participating colleges—Coppin State University, Johns Hopkins University, MICA, and Morgan State University—working on a presentation of Talford Scott’s work for their gallery spaces and organizing a free public program. Under the guidance of 2023-24 EDS Instructor Deyane Moses, the students will determine the curatorial direction of their presentation, drawing out connections to each organization’s collection, space, history, and/or audience. A companion video will provide background on the artist’s life and work as well as information about each of the community partners.

“It is deeply meaningful to expand upon the BMA’s mission of artistic excellence and social equity with this important collaborative project, which revolves around a method and process of working in the community with students at four colleges and these wonderful institutions across Baltimore to co-create an experience that will bring greater recognition to the work of Elizabeth Talford Scott,” said Asma Naeem, BMA Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director. “We are looking forward to sharing her extraordinary textiles and the rich stories embedded in each with our visitors and encourage everyone to discover more of her work in February at every venue.”

**Elizabeth Talford Scott**

Elizabeth Talford Scott’s (1916–2011) quilts and wall hangings have been exhibited at many Baltimore venues, as well as at Florida A&M University, New York’s Studio Museum of Harlem, The Museum of American Folk Art, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Her exhibitions culminated with a retrospective in 1998 titled *Eyewinkers, Tumbleturds, and Candlebugs: The Art of Elizabeth Talford Scott* that opened at the Maryland Institute College of Art and traveled to the Smithsonian Institution’s Anacostia Community Museum in Washington, DC; New England Quilt Museum in Lowell, MA; and Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art in Winston-Salem, NC. She often lectured and taught workshops collaboratively with her daughter Joyce J. Scott, including the Maryland State Art’s Council’s Artist in Education Program; Smithsonian Institution’s Folk Life Festival in Washington, D.C.; Penland School of Craft in North Carolina; and at University of Colorado, Boulder. In 1987, she received the prestigious Women’s Caucus for Art Lifetime Achievement Award.
Maryland Institute College of Art
The Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), founded in 1826, is consistently ranked in the very top tier of visual arts colleges in the nation and enrolls approximately 1,400 undergraduate students and 300 graduate students. MICA offers programs of study leading to the BFA, MA, MAT, and MFA degrees, as well as post-baccalaureate certificate programs and a full slate of credit and noncredit courses for adults, college-bound students, and children. Located in the City of Baltimore, MICA is committed to an expanded understanding of the role of creative citizens in communities and unique approaches to cross-cultural, economic, and political contexts and partnerships. MICA accelerates the knowledge, skills, habits, and work of creatives who are self-reflexive, visionary, and entrepreneurial. MICA is also recognized as an important cultural resource for the Baltimore/Washington region, sponsoring many public and community-based programs, including more than 100 exhibitions by students, faculty, and nationally and internationally known artists annually, as well artists’ residencies, film series, lectures, readings, and performances. Visit the College’s website at mica.edu.

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 97,000 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.

Visitor Information
General admission to the BMA is free. The BMA is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., with extended hours on Thursdays until 9 p.m. 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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