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BMA to Unveil New Immersive Moving Image and Sound Installation by Acclaimed Artist John Akomfrah

The work was co-commissioned by the BMA and the Menil Collection and reflects the artist's engagement with the power and resonance of the Civil Rights Movement

BALTIMORE, MD (November 5, 2025)—On November 16, the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) will open ***John Akomfrah: The Hour Of The Dog***, a new immersive installation by the acclaimed artist and filmmaker that creates a dynamic dialogue between the powerful history of the Civil Rights Movement and contemporary experience. Co-commissioned by the BMA and the Menil Collection in Houston, and formally added to the BMA's collection in 2021, the work engages viewers through moving images across six screens and a multi-channel soundscape. Drawing on archival materials as well as newly filmed footage, *The Hour Of The Dog* radiates the palpable energy of activist movements and invites reflection on memory, cultural authorship, and the fluidity between past and present. The installation will remain on view at the BMA through February 1, 2026, and then travel to the Menil Collection later in 2026. At the BMA, the presentation will be accompanied by interpretation and programs that highlight Civil Rights activists and campaigns in the Baltimore region, unearthing the global legacies of local actions.

"The 1960s in the U.S. have always featured heavily on the edges of my imagination," said Akomfrah. "I grew up reading about figures from the Civil Rights Movement—people I absolutely idolized. It was not merely a time of protest, but a moment when Blackness articulated itself with a radical clarity. Returning to that moment, to those voices, is less about nostalgia and more about listening again—and differently."

The Hour Of The Dog blends archival materials of events and collective actions undertaken by activists, especially young people, across the United States in the Civil Rights era with new footage captured across a range of locales, including fields at dawn, derelict civic buildings, and constructed interiors. The visual narrative, which flickers across time and experience, is amplified by an original soundscape composed of archival audio, fragments of music and people speaking, ambient sounds drawn from natural and urban environments, and original scores by the artist. Together, the six-channel installation creates a textured and encompassing environment that brings historical narratives into active conversation with the present moment.

As a contextual companion to Akomfrah's work, the exhibition also includes a timeline created by the BMA and in collaboration with community partners, including Afro Charities, the Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum, the Maryland Center for History and Culture, and the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture, documenting how civil rights activism in Baltimore and Maryland has sparked national change.

“The power of John Akomfrah’s work lives in his ability to leverage the moving image to bend time and place to capture the raw essence and emotion of a subject. *The Hour Of The Dog* is a brilliant reflection of his artistic prowess and speaks poignantly to the significance of the Civil Rights Movement within its historical moment and in the context of today’s socio-political climate,” said Asma Naeem, the BMA’s Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director. “We are thrilled to have partnered with John and our colleagues at the Menil Collection to help bring this incredible work to fruition, and to now share it with our communities. I am also proud that Baltimore’s own rich history of civil rights activism will be featured as part of our ongoing commitment to celebrate the many people who have shaped this place.”

John Akomfrah: The Hour Of The Dog is co-curated by Cecilia Wichmann, BMA Curator and Department Head of Contemporary Art, and Michelle White, the Menil Collection Senior Curator, with Oscar Flores-Montero, BMA Curatorial Assistant of Contemporary Art.

Major support for this exhibition has been generously provided by Nancy Dorman and Stanley Mazaroff and the Suzanne F. Cohen Exhibition Fund. Free admission to this exhibition is provided by Nancy Dorman and Stanley Mazaroff.

About John Akomfrah

John Akomfrah (b. 1957) is a celebrated artist and filmmaker, whose practice is characterized by investigations into memory, post-colonialism, temporality, and aesthetics. His work also often explores the experiences of migrant diasporas globally. Akomfrah was a founding member of the influential Black Audio Film Collective, which started in London in 1982 alongside artist Lina Gopaul, later joined by David Lawson who he still collaborates with today alongside Ashitey Akomfrah as Smoking Dogs Films. His work has been shown in museums and exhibitions around the world, including at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the New Museum, New York; Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, Michigan; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Serpentine Gallery, London; Tate Britain, London; Southbank Centre, London; Bildmuseet Umeå, Sweden; and in the 56th Venice Biennale. Akomfrah was awarded the Artes Mundi Prize in 2017, a Knighthood for services to the Arts in the 2023 New Year Honours, and an Artist Who Inspires award at the BMA Ball in 2024. He lives and works in London.

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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