



## BMA Presents *Rachel Lee Hovnanian: Nature Deficit Disorder* in Historic Spring House

Immersion room installation invites visitors to disconnect from digital life and reconnect with nature

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BALTIMORE, MD (January 21, 2026)—The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) announces the presentation of conceptual artist Rachel Lee Hovnanian's immersive installation, *Nature Deficit Disorder*, on view in the museum's historic Spring House from April 1 through May 31, 2026. This evocative work invites visitors to pause, surrender their phones, and step into a simulated nighttime forest—a space designed to encourage mindfulness and reconnection with the natural world. The presentation at the BMA marks Hovnanian's first solo museum installation and continues her decades-long engagement with the effects of technology on our lives.

The installation draws its title from a term coined by journalist Richard Louv to describe the growing disconnection from nature and its impact on mental health and attention spans—a conversation that is growing in urgency as digital overstimulation is increasingly recognized as detrimental to human wellbeing.

The visitor's experience begins prior to entering the Spring House when staff dressed in lab coats collect and lock away each visitor's surrendered phone, then offer a sample of Mountain Dew presented in a urine specimen cup. This is a nod to Hovnanian's investigation of a broader culture that often seeks quick, synthetic fixes over the benefits of more natural approaches. Inside the immersion room, visitors encounter fir trees, live insects, crunching leaves, and a faux campfire, illuminated only by lantern light. By requiring visitors to temporarily give up their phones, the work creates an intentional break from technology, offering a contemplative experience that invites visitors to be present in the moment and connect with the environment. As visitors exit the space, they are given soil and seeds to take with them, transforming the immersive encounter into an ongoing, embodied act of care. This final gesture reinforces the work's central themes, inviting participants to cultivate a living connection to the natural world long after they leave the Spring House.

"My work has long explored how technology shapes attention, mental health, and human connection. This installation emerged from my observations of society's growing digital dependence, alongside my own experience of it," said Hovnanian. "What do we lose when our lives are constantly mediated by screens? I hope to offer a pause—an invitation to rediscover how it feels to be fully present."

Hovnanian's installation is the final exhibition presented as part of the BMA's [Turn Again to the Earth](#) initiative, a multi-year effort that models commitments to sustainability and fosters dialogue on climate change. Through exhibitions, programs, and a citywide eco-challenge, the initiative explores the intersections of art and ecology as well as approaches to a more sustainable future. *Nature Deficit Disorder* amplifies these goals by inviting audiences to consider the psychological and cultural consequences of estrangement from nature and the urgent need to restore balance in an increasingly digitized world.

"For more than a year, the BMA has served as a site of active dialogue about the environment, sustainability, and the important role that art can play in spurring engagement and action. Hovnanian's installation beautifully embodies the vision that has guided our work for Turn Again to the Earth as it offers a powerful and intimate experience for visitors," said Asma Naeem, Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director of the BMA. "It reminds us that sustainability is not only about systems and structures—it begins with our own relationship to the natural environment."

*Rachel Lee Hovnanian: Nature Deficit Disorder* is curated by Katie Cooke, BMA Manager of Curatorial Affairs. The exhibition is supported by the Ford Foundation.

## Ford Foundation

### [Rachel Lee Hovnanian](#)

Rachel Lee Hovnanian is a conceptual artist working across sculpture, installation, painting and performance. Her work engages with universal issues of our time, namely the disconnection and isolation caused by digital addictions and our relentless pursuit of beauty and perfection. Hovnanian explores the inauthentic veneer of contemporary life, with her work consistently exposing the tension between the real and the unreal. Hovnanian received her Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Texas at Austin and completed postgraduate studies at Parsons School of Design in New York. Her work is held in numerous private collections and has been exhibited in galleries and institutions internationally across the United States, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Select venues include the 59th Biennale di Venezia (Venice), Chiesa e Chiostro Di Sant'Agostino (Pietrasanta), The Medici Palace (Seravezza) and the Ann Norton Museum and Sculpture Gardens (West Palm Beach), among others. In February 2026, Hovnanian's work will be included in the group exhibitoin *The Painted Word: Text, Gesture, and Expression in Contemporary Art* at Lehman Art Gallery in New York. Born in Parkersburg, West Virginia, and raised in Houston, Texas, Hovnanian lives between Miami, New York and Italy.

### [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](http://artbma.org).

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