

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD) presents

Black Refractions: Highlights from The Studio Museum in Harlem

January 16-April 14, 2019

(San Francisco, CA)— The Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD) in San Francisco will be the inaugural venue for *Black Refractions: Highlights from The Studio Museum in Harlem*, a major traveling exhibition created by the American Federation of Arts (AFA) in collaboration with The Studio Museum in Harlem. *Black Refractions* surveys close to a century of creative achievements by artists of African descent and is the first traveling exhibition in twenty-five years to reveal the breadth and expansive growth of the Studio Museum’s permanent collection. MoAD’s showing of the exhibition includes sixty-four works by over fifty artists across all media dating from the 1920s to the present.

“The Studio Museum in Harlem is a sanctuary, foundation, and steward for artists of African descent around the world,” said Emily Kuhlmann, Director of Exhibitions and Curatorial Affairs at MoAD. “The work that we do at MoAD is inspired and upheld by the legacy of the Studio Museum, and we are so honored to be able to share this work with our audiences in the San Francisco Bay Area.”

The landmark exhibition explores the vital contributions of artists of African descent, proposing a plurality of narratives of black artistic production and multiple approaches to understanding these works. Such an ambitious, multifaceted project is uniquely possible through the use of the Studio Museum’s collection. Through its pioneering exhibitions, public programs, artist residencies, and bold acquisitions, The Studio Museum in Harlem has served as a nexus for artists of African descent locally, nationally, and internationally since its founding in 1968.

Through its groundbreaking *Artist-in-Residence* program, the Studio Museum has supported many distinguished artists at decisive stages in their careers. The exhibition includes artworks by renowned alumni of the residency program such as Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Chakaia Booker, David Hammons, Kerry James Marshall, Mickalene Thomas, and Kehinde Wiley. *Black Refractions* also presents iconic works by artists Beauford Delaney, Barkley Hendricks, Alma Thomas, and James VanDerZee, among others.

The traveling exhibition is an important initiative created to share The Studio Museum in Harlem’s collection with audiences throughout the country during the closure of its galleries, as the Museum prepares for the construction of its new home, designed by Adjaye Associates in collaboration with Cooper Robertson. MoAD is pleased to be the first venue on the exhibition’s national tour that includes Gibbes Museum of Art (SC), Kalamazoo Institute of Arts (MI), Smith College Museum of Art (MA), Frye Art Museum (WA), and Utah Museum of Fine Arts (UT).

“We are delighted to share the incomparable collection of The Studio Museum in Harlem with audiences across the nation,” said Pauline Willis, Director and CEO of the American Federation of Arts. “*Black Refractions* highlights historically significant pieces alongside works by some of the most critically important artists in the field today. The AFA is honored to travel this exhibition and spark dialogue around the artistic contributions by artists of the African diaspora.”

“Over the past fifty years, The Studio Museum in Harlem has played a catalytic role across the United States and the world in advancing the work of visual artists of African descent,” said Thelma Golden, Director and Chief Curator of the Studio Museum. “Now, we are thrilled to collaborate with AFA in sharing works from our collection during an historic moment in the life of the Museum. Though the doors of our former building may be closed, through *Black Refractions* we are able to carry our mission to new audiences, maintaining ourselves as a point of contact between artists of African descent and people across the country.”

“Through our collaboration with AFA and these important institutions, we are able to explore the Studio Museum’s collection in new ways, while continuing to generate interest and scholarship around the work of artists of African descent,” said Connie H. Choi, Associate Curator, Permanent Collection at the Studio Museum. “*Black Refractions* deepens our ability to share works and engage with new audiences in new environments, providing additional contexts in which we can understand the powerful works in our collection.”

Black Refractions is curated by Connie H. Choi, Associate Curator, Permanent Collection at The Studio Museum in Harlem. MoAD’s presentation is organized by Emily Kuhlmann, Director of Exhibitions and Curatorial Affairs, MoAD.

Artists in the MoAD exhibition include:

Terry Adkins, Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Dawoud Bey, McArthur Binion, Chakaia Booker, Mark Bradford, Jordan Casteel, LeRoy Clarke, Noah Davis, Beauford Delaney, Melvin Edwards, Meschac Gaba, David Hammons, Lyle Ashton Harris, Barkley L. Hendricks,

Juliana Huxtable, Steffani Jemison, Isaac Julien, Titus Kaphar, Seydou Keïta, Norman Lewis, Glenn Ligon, Kalup Linzy, Tom Lloyd, Whitfield Lovell, Kerry James Marshall, Adia Millett, Wangechi Mutu, Kori Newkirk, Otobong Nkanga, Odili Donald Odita, Chris Ofili, Jennifer Packer, Howardena Pindell, Faith Ringgold, Betye Saar, Jacolby Satterwhite, Malick Sidibé, Shinique Smith, Henry Taylor, Alma Thomas, Mickalene Thomas, Bill Traylor, James VanDerZee, Nari Ward, Carrie Mae Weems, Stanley Whitney, Jack Whitten, Kehinde Wiley, William T. Williams, Fred Wilson, and Lynette Yiadom-Boakye.

Black Refractions is accompanied by a new publication of the same title co-published by the American Federation of Arts and Rizzoli Electa. The richly illustrated volume includes essays by Connie H. Choi and Kellie Jones; entries by a range of writers, curators, and scholars (among them Lauren Haynes, Ashley James, Oluremi C. Onabanjo, Larry Ossei-Mensah, and Hallie Ringle) who contextualize the works and provide detailed commentary; and a conversation among Choi, Thelma Golden, and Jones that draws out themes and challenges in collecting and exhibiting modern and contemporary art by artists of African descent.

CURATOR

Connie H. Choi is Associate Curator, Permanent Collection at The Studio Museum in Harlem, where she has worked on the exhibitions *Regarding the Figure* (2017), *Fictions*, and *Their Own Harlems* (both 2017-18). Prior to joining the Museum in 2017, Choi was the Assistant Curator of American Art at the Brooklyn Museum. She is a PhD candidate in art history at Columbia University, and holds a BA in the history of art from Yale University and an EdM in arts education from Harvard University.

CREDIT

This exhibition is organized by the American Federation of Arts and The Studio Museum in Harlem. Major support for *Black Refractions: Highlights from The Studio Museum in Harlem* provided by Art Bridges. Support for the accompanying publication provided by Furthermore: a program of the J.M. Kaplan Fund.

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RELATED PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Artist Talk: Sadie Barnett in conversation with Emily Kuhlmann and Essence Harden at the Untitled Art Fair

Saturday, January 19, 3 - 4pm

Sadie Barnette, 2014-15 Studio Museum Artist-in-Residence, discusses her MoAD exhibition and the role her residency at the Studio Museum played in her practice.

Family Free Day: MLK National Day of Service

Monday, January 21, 11am - 5pm

MoAD celebrates the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday with free entrance and a full day of performance and art activities for children and families.

In Gallery Artist Talk with Njideka Akunyili Crosby

Thursday, January 31, 6:30 - 8pm

Studio Museum artist Njideka Akunyili Crosby discusses her work included in *Black Refractions* and the influences of other artists included in the exhibition on her work.

Artist Talk: William Cordova in conversation with Jeff Chang

Thursday, February 7, 6:30 - 8pm

Studio Museum Resident William Cordova engages with Jeff Chang about the role of ethnic specific museums in supporting artists of color. This program is presented in partnership with Stanford University.

Performance: Time to Talk with the Davalois Fearon Dance Company

Saturday, April 13, 2 - 3:30pm

A multimedia dance piece rooted in research on American history, dance history, racial identity formation, and systemic racism.

SPECIAL SYMPOSIUM

ENGAGE: Symposium 2019

Saturday, February 23

10am - 3:30pm

This day-long symposium is inspired by the artists in *Black Refractions*. Featuring exhibition artists, curators, collectors, gallerists, and art writers who will come together for insightful conversations around identity, politics, and the role of institutions on the works and careers of artists of African descent. The day begins and

ends with keynote addresses, live music and dance performances, inspiring panel discussions with artists and curators, and a catered lunch. For the first time, MoAD will fully livestream the entire event.

Opening Keynote Speaker: Naima Keith, Deputy Director and Chief Curator, California African American Museum

Panel 1: On Artists of African Descent

Moderator: Jacqueline Francis, PhD., California College of Art
Kori Newkirk, Artist
Mariane Ibrahim, Gallerist, Mariane Ibrahim Gallery
Emily Kuhlmann, Director of Exhibitions & Curatorial Affairs, MoAD

Panel 2: Artist as Social Change Agent

Moderator: Leigh Raiford, PhD., UC Berkeley
Henry Taylor, Artist
Erin Christovale, Assistant Curator, Hammer Museum
Bridget R. Cooks, PhD., UC Irvine

Closing Keynote Speaker: Aruna D'Souza

ABOUT MoAD

Opened in 2005 in San Francisco's Yerba Buena arts district, MoAD, a contemporary art museum, celebrates Black cultures, ignites challenging conversations, and inspires learning through the global lens of the African Diaspora.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ARTS

The American Federation of Arts is the leader in traveling exhibitions internationally. A nonprofit organization founded in 1909, the AFA is dedicated to enriching the public's experience and understanding of the visual arts through organizing and touring art exhibitions for presentation in museums around the world, publishing exhibition catalogues featuring important scholarly research, and developing educational programs.

ABOUT THE STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM

Founded in 1968 by a diverse group of artists, community activists and philanthropists, The Studio Museum in Harlem is internationally known for its catalytic role in promoting the work of artists of African descent. As it celebrates its 50th

anniversary, the Studio Museum is preparing to construct a new home at its longtime location on Manhattan's West 125th Street, designed by internationally renowned architect David Adjaye of Adjaye Associates in collaboration with Cooper Robertson. The first building created expressly for the institution's program, the new building will enable the Studio Museum to better serve a growing and diverse audience, provide additional educational opportunities for people of all ages, expand its program of world-renowned exhibitions, effectively display its singular collection and strengthen its trailblazing *Artist-in Residence* program.

For more information about MoAD, visit The Museum's website at moadsf.org.

For media information or visuals visit our online press gallery or contact:

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General Information

The Museum is open Wednesday-Saturday 11am-6pm and Sunday, 12-5pm. Museum admission is \$10 for adults, \$5 for students and senior citizens with a valid ID. Youth 12 and under always get in free. For general information, the public may visit The Museum's website at moadsf.org or call 415.358.7200. MoAD is located at 685 Mission Street (at Third), San Francisco, CA.

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