

# MMFA

Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## MONTGOMERY MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS ANNOUNCES THE SPECIAL EXHIBITION BLOW UP II: INFLATABLE CONTEMPORARY ART

On view October 31, 2020 through January 31, 2021, this exhibition celebrates humor, play, and wonder with inflatable art.



Photograph of the 2020 installation of the exhibition *BLOW UP II: Inflatable Contemporary Art* at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, Montgomery, Alabama.

Montgomery, AL, October 30, 2020 – *BLOW UP II: Inflatable Contemporary Art* explores the medium of inflatable art with imagery that is figurative, conceptual, and abstract. The 15 large-scale inflatable sculptures, conceived by nine artists and art collectives from around the world, connote fun and whimsy, are familiar yet strange, and challenge the definition of art. Here, in an unusual feat, artists use air as an active tool in their work to subvert our perspective and surprise us.

history, politics, and even our mortality. Holding our attention with wonder and delight, this unique exhibition—at once humorous and whimsical—creates a spectacular, immersive environment that allows for deeper contemplation. By harnessing the power of air, the ideas and possibilities in art making seem endless, and creativity is left to take flight.

Engaging humor, scale, and surprise, the artworks in *BLOW UP II* take us on extraordinary journeys by exploring subjects as varied as anime, superheroes,

Six out of nine of the artists in the exhibition including Jen Stark, Josh Harker, Susan Lee-Chun, Matt Ritchie, FriendsWithYou, and Lizbeth Rossof created new work specifically commissioned for the exhibition. And for several of these artists it was the first time working with inflatable materials.

**Artists Included:** Chromaforms (Oakland, CA), Sharon Engelstein (Houston, TX), FriendsWithYou (Los Angeles, CA), Joshua Harker (Ann Arbor, MI), Susan Lee-Chun (Miami, FL), Matt Ritchie (San

Francisco, CA), Lizabeth Rossof (Denver, CO), Jen Stark (Los Angeles, CA), and Max Streicher (Toronto, Canada).

MMFA Curator Jennifer Jankauskas says, “This exhibition feels particularly timely as it is a much need salve for the incredibly tumultuous year, we have all experienced. We are excited to showcase these whimsical and imaginative sculptures filled with humor and wonder and feel confident that the exhibition will delight our visitors.”

*BLOW UP II: Inflatable Contemporary Art* was organized by Bedford Gallery, Leshner Center for the Arts, Walnut Creek, CA. The MMFA is grateful for sponsors River Region Parents, Laurie J. Weil DVM and Dr. Tommy Wool, and Carolyn and Dr. Alfred J. Newman, Jr. along with co-sponsors Peggy and Maurice Mussafer, Camille Elebash-Hill and Inge Hill, and Harmon Dennis Bradshaw, Inc. Their generous support enabled the MMFA to bring this engaging exhibition to the River Region.

## **RELATED PROGRAMS**

While we are glad to welcome visitors back to the Museum, we also maintain our commitment to supporting and keeping connected with those who are not yet ready to return to the Museum and those who've come to value their online access to the Museum. With that in mind we have designed two virtual programs to accompany *BLOW UP II*.

### **Creative Conversations: BLOW UP II, Part I**

Wednesday, November 18, 5:30 PM

Facebook Live Event ([facebook.com/montgomerymfa](https://www.facebook.com/montgomerymfa))

Free

MMFA Curator, Dr. Jennifer Jankauskas will speak with Susan Lee-Chun and Lizabeth Rossof about their work in the exhibition and their current projects.

### **Creative Conversations: BLOW UP II, Part II**

Wednesday, December 2, 5:30 PM

Facebook Live Event ([facebook.com/montgomerymfa](https://www.facebook.com/montgomerymfa))

Free

MMFA Educator Elisabeth Palmer will talk with FriendsWithYou, the fine art collaborative of Samuel Borkson and Arturo Sandoval III, about their playful installations.

## **FOR YOUR SAFETY | COVID-19**

We remain committed to serving our members and visitors in a safe and responsible manner, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To this end: To facilitate **social distancing**, we have limited the number of people allowed in the building and established new traffic patterns; To address **cleaning and disinfection** of our facility, we have implemented new practices in accordance with CDC, EPA, and OSHA guidelines. Additionally, hand sanitizer will be available for visitors; And, all Museum visitors over the age of six are required to **wear a mask or face covering** during their visit. Please stay at home if you are feeling ill or have been exposed to COVID-19 in the fourteen (14) days prior to your visit. All Museum staff have their temperature taken each day and are required to wear masks.

## **MMFA BACKGROUND**

The Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts was founded in 1930 by a group of local artists as place for both exhibiting art and space for art education. The original intentions of our founders—to exhibit and teach—continue to inspire and inform every action and activity here at the Museum which, since 1988, has shared the 277-acre Blount Cultural Park with our partners across the lake at the celebrated Alabama Shakespeare Festival.

Today's MMFA visitors stroll art-studded grounds and permanent collection galleries. They see compelling changing exhibitions and learn about art by playing in our interactive gallery, Artworks, making art in its bustling studios, or by participating in other engaging events and programs. And, as of late September 2018, MMFA visitors can now relax and recharge in the serenity of our stunning new three-acre sculpture garden.

While the Museum's collection is still home to the art of many of the regional artists who first established it, over time, it has become known for its strength in American art and Old Master Prints. Recent, important acquisitions of art made by African American and Asian artists and works inspired by images and themes related to the experiences of these groups represent the breadth and depth of the lives and concerns of those who now call Montgomery and the River Region home. Through the exhibition of this work as well as the programs and events that help connect our communities with it, the MMFA is recognized as a leading arts and cultural resource here in the state and Southeastern region.

The MMFA is a department of the City of Montgomery and is supported by funds from the City of Montgomery, with additional funds from the Montgomery County Commission and the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts Association. Programs are made possible, in part, by grants from the Alabama State Council on the Arts.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

<b>WHAT:</b>	<i>BLOW UP II: Inflatable Contemporary Art</i>
<b>WHEN:</b>	Exhibition: October 31, 2020 through January 31, 2021 <i>Creative Conversations, Part I:</i> Wednesday, November 18, 2020, 5:30 PM <i>Creative Conversations, Part II:</i> Wednesday, December 2, 2020, 5:30 PM
<b>WHERE:</b>	Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts Wynton M. Blount Cultural Park One Museum Drive Montgomery, AL 36117
<b>INFORMATION:</b>	mmfa.org 334.625.4333 @MontgomeryMFA
<b>HOURS:</b>	
Galleries,	Mondays, Closed
Sculpture Garden,	Tuesdays–Saturdays, 10 AM–5 PM
Terrace, and Store:	Sundays, Noon to 5 PM

Last entry at 4:45 PM

**ADMISSION:** Free! With ample, free parking.

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**MEDIA CONTACT**

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