

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## THE MONTGOMERY MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS RECEIVES A MAJOR IMLS GRANT IN SUPPORT OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The award will provide crucial capital for the Museum's diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion work.

**Montgomery, AL, October 28, 2021** – The Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts has been awarded \$162,970 by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) as part of their Museums Empowered: Professional Development Opportunities for Museum Staff grant. The award will enable the MMFA to create a comprehensive practice to address diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion (DEAI) within the organization. This funding is a special initiative of the Museums for America grant program, which is designed to support projects that use the transformative power of professional development and training to generate systemic change within museums.

Using these funds, the MMFA will launch the Towards Inclusivity and Diversity Initiative, a three-year institutional development program with the goal of:

- increasing cultural awareness and empathy in staff, board members, and docents;
- creating training and engagement opportunities for underrepresented museum professionals;
- developing an industry guidebook that documents our process and highlights the necessity of this type of introspective work; and
- building more meaningful relationships between the MMFA and the underrepresented communities that we serve.

Crosby Kemper, Director of IMLS, offered his congratulations to all of the recipients, stating, "Our current round of grants for the museum world reflects the important work of our nation's cultural institutions during the pandemic and the deep thinking about the future of our culture in a post-pandemic world." Kemper added that "as pillars of our communities, libraries and museums bring people together by providing important programs, services, and collections. These institutions are trusted spaces where people can learn, explore and grow and IMLS is proud to support their initiatives through our grants as they educate and enhance their communities."

MMFA Director Angie Dodson says, "Since the 1980s, this Museum has offered exhibitions and programs meant to push in the direction of diversity and inclusion. This grant funding, though,

positions us to expand our commitment to this work exponentially. Our partners and planned actions will help us better understand our internal history and correct the current culture so that it bends more towards justice. It is our hope that doing that work allows us to engage with the community at its heart and to have them engage more fully in the life of the Museum."

MMFA Board President Cathy Martin adds, "As diversity and inclusion work is a priority of my administration, I could not be more pleased that the Museum sought this grant and has been selected as one of just 23 museums across the US to receive Museums Empowered support from the IMLS. And to be the only museum in the Southeast...and to be in the company of some of our nation's greatest cultural institutions...that just speaks to the strength of the program that the staff has created for vital Board and staff work as well as to the importance of that work happening here in Montgomery, AL—the intersection of the Cradle of the Confederacy and the Birthplace of the Civil Rights Movement."

The Initiative will begin with a public program that helps our community understand some of the MMFA's recent DEAI efforts to acquire artwork for its permanent collection. On Wednesday, November 3 at noon, and on Saturday, November 13 at 11 AM, the MMFA will host *Embracing Diversity*, a program centered around the increasing diversity of the Museum's collection. During these times, MMFA curators Margaret Lynne Ausfeld and Jennifer Jankauskas, Ph.D., will lead gallery talks discussing how our recent acquisitions—such as Amy Sherald's *Handsome* (2020) and Cheonae Kim's *Barb Bondy* (2018) acquired earlier this year and Thornton Dial Sr.'s *Lost Americans* (2008) acquired in 2019—help the MMFA tell the broader Alabama story. The event is free to attend, but registration is required. Learn more and register at [mmfa.org](http://mmfa.org).

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## FOR YOUR SAFETY | COVID-19

We remain committed to serving our members and visitors safely and responsibly, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To this end: **Face masks are required for all visitors** over the age of five to comply with the City of Montgomery mandate. **Social distancing is encouraged** and indicated by signage throughout the Garden and the Galleries. Following CDC and ADPH guidelines, we have increased the frequency that we **clean and disinfect high-touch areas**. Additionally, hand sanitizer is readily available for visitors. If you feel sick or have possibly been exposed to COVID-19 in the last fourteen (14) days, please visit another time.

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## MMFA BACKGROUND

The Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts was founded in 1930 by a group of local artists as a place for both exhibiting art and a 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. Since 1988, the MMFA has shared the 175-acre Blount Cultural Park with our partners across the lake at the celebrated Alabama Shakespeare Festival.

Today's MMFA visitors stroll through 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 our bustling studios, or by participating in other engaging events and programs. In addition, as of September 2018, MMFA visitors can now relax and recharge in the serenity of our stunning three-acre John and Joyce Caddell 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 strengths in American art and Old Master prints. Recent, important acquisitions of art made by African American and Asian American 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 call Montgomery and the River Region home. Through the exhibition of these works and the programs and events that help connect our communities with it, the MMFA has become 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.

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

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| <b>WHAT:</b>        | Embracing Diversity  |
| <b>WHEN:</b>        | Wednesday, November 3, 2021 from noon to 1 PM<br>Saturday, November 13, 2021 from 11 AM to noon              |
| <b>WHERE:</b>       | Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts<br>Wynton M. Blount Cultural Park<br>One Museum Drive<br>Montgomery, AL 36117 |
| <b>INFORMATION:</b> | mmfa.org<br>334.625.4333<br>@MontgomeryMFA   |
| <b>HOURS:</b>       |  |
| Galleries,          | Mondays, Closed  |
| Sculpture Garden,   | Tuesdays–Sundays, 10 AM–5 PM   |
| Terrace, and Shop:  | Last entry at 4:45 PM  |
| <b>ADMISSION:</b>   | Free! With ample, free parking.  |

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## MEDIA CONTACT

Stephen Hayes: shayes@mmfa.org | 334.625.4347