

MMFA

Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MMFA SEEKS COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT FOR GOT THE POWER: BOOMBOXES INSTALLATION

Towering sculpture to be constructed in the Caddell Sculpture Garden using boomboxes donated by the community—on view beginning May 21, 2022.



Got the Power: Minnesota, Photograph courtesy of the artist

Montgomery, AL, March 1, 2022 – The Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts is excited to announce an upcoming installation in the John and Joyce Caddell Sculpture Garden by New York-based interdisciplinary artist Bayeté Ross Smith. For his project in Montgomery, Ross Smith will construct a site-specific work, from his *Got the Power: Boomboxes* series. Opening May 21, 2022, the installation at the MMFA will be a 14-foot tall and 8-foot wide tower constructed from hundreds of boomboxes. This tower explores how boomboxes have been an important element in urban communities and also within popular culture. As part of the project, Ross Smith will collaborate with local residents to collect stories about Montgomery and community members' favorite songs to form a playlist. The sculptural installation will broadcast this audio story and oral history of our city. Together, the sculpture and the soundscape function, as he says, as “a symbol of pride, power, and autonomy.”

This installation is organized by the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts. Special thanks to our partners, Alabama Power, Leadership Montgomery, and MAX Credit Union for helping make this project possible.

CALLS FOR DONATIONS AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

We need your help! The MMFA requires 500 boomboxes and 600–1000 cassette tapes to construct the sculpture. Please check your closets, attics, and garages for any boomboxes you are willing to part with—we are happy to accept donations of both working and non-working boomboxes that are in relatively good physical condition and preferably ones from the 1980s or 1990s, or in that style. Are

you still holding on to a collection of cassette tapes that you no longer have the right equipment to play? We need those too! Please donate and be a part of this significant sculptural installation.

How to Participate

Bring your boombox and/or cassette tapes to the locations below by Thursday, March 31, 2022. Additionally, if you want to be a part of the project by sharing your story and favorite songs, let us know by submitting your information for consideration at mmfa.org/boomboxes

21 Dreams Arts & Culture

Farmers Insurance – Dwayne Farris Agency

1731 W. 3rd St., Montgomery, AL 36106

Wednesday–Friday, Noon to 5 PM

Learn more at <https://agents.farmers.com/al/montgomery/dwayne-farris>

MAX Credit Union

Zelda Road Branch

2785 Zelda Road, Montgomery, AL 36106

Open Monday–Thursday, 9 AM–4 PM, and Friday, 9 AM–6 PM

Learn more at mymax.com/about-max/locations-and-atms

Eastdale Branch

400 Eastdale Circle, Montgomery, AL 36117

Open Monday–Thursday, 9 AM–4 PM, and Friday, 9 AM–6 PM

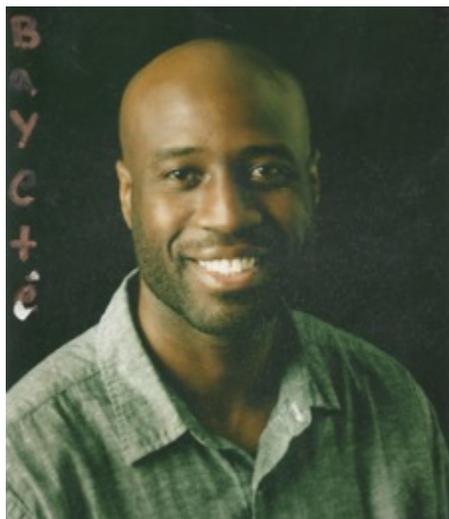
Learn more at mymax.com/about-max/locations-and-atms

Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts

One Museum Drive, Montgomery, AL 36117

Open Tuesday–Sunday, 10 AM–5 PM

Learn more at mmfa.org



Photograph of artist Bayeté Ross Smith by Mike Berlin and Karl Peterson, Courtesy of the Artist

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Bayeté Ross Smith is an interdisciplinary artist, photographer, filmmaker, and educator working at the intersection of photography, film and video, visual journalism, 3D objects, and new media. He lives in Harlem, New York.

Ross Smith is Columbia Law School's inaugural Artist-In-Residence, a [Presidential Leadership Scholar](#), a [TED Resident](#), a [Creative Capital Awardee](#), an [Art For Justice Fund Fellow](#), a BPMP Plus Grantee, and a [POV NY Times](#) embedded media maker.

His art is in the collections of The Smithsonian Institution, the Oakland Museum of California, the Birmingham Museum of Art, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, and The Brooklyn Museum. He has exhibited internationally with

the Goethe Institute (Ghana), Foto Museum (Belgium), [the Lianzhou Foto Festival](#) (China), and [America House](#) in (Ukraine), among others. His collaborative projects "Along The Way" and "[Question Bridge: Black Males](#)" have shown at the 2008 and 2012 Sundance Film Festival, respectively. His work has also been featured at the Sheffield Doc Fest and the L.A. Film Festival.

Ross Smith has also created a series of public art projects with organizations such as the Jerome Foundation, BRIC Arts Media, The Amistad Center, The Laundromat Project, the NYC Parks Department, the Hartford YMCA, San Francisco District Attorney's Office, and The California Judicial Council. His work has been published in numerous publications including *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *National Geographic Learning*, *Question Bridge: Black Males in America* (2015), *Dis:Integration: The Splintering of Black America* (2010), *Posing Beauty: African American Images from the 1890s to the Present* (2009), *Black: A Celebration of A Culture* (2005), *The Spirit Of Family* (2002), and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

In addition to his creative work in art and media, Bayeté helped launch and continues to work with the [Kings Against Violence Initiative \(KAVI\)](#), a hospital and school-based violence prevention organization in Brooklyn, New York, that partners with Kings County Hospital. He is also a faculty member at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts.

[Watch Bayeté Ross Smith's Ted Talk: Why America Has Always Been Great](#)

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: all Museum visitors over the age of five **must wear a mask or face covering** while inside during their visit. **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. 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.

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 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 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 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

- WHAT:** *Got the Power: Boomboxes*
- WHEN:** Public Opening, May 21, 2022
Donations of Boomboxes and Cassette Tapes through March 31
- WHERE:** Installation:
Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts
Wynton M. Blount Cultural Park
One Museum Drive
Montgomery, AL 36117
- Donations:
21 Dreams, Farmers Insurance – Dwayne Farrior Agency
MAX Credit Union, Zelda Road Branch
MAX Credit Union, Eastdale Branch
Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts
- INFORMATION:** mmfa.org
334.625.4333
@MontgomeryMFA
- HOURS:**
Galleries, Mondays, Closed
Sculpture Garden, Tuesdays–Sundays, 10 AM–5 PM
Terrace, and Shop: Last entry at 4:45 PM
- ADMISSION:** Free! With ample, free parking.

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MEDIA CONTACT

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