FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BOUNDLESS COMES OFF THE WALLS AT THE MONTGOMERY MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

On view this fall, BOUNDLESS demonstrates the transformative power of art through six stunning site-specific installations.

Montgomery, AL, November 29, 2022 – BOUNDLESS demonstrates how artists and their works of art can expand our world and evoke a sense of joy—becoming a needed balm for the continued changes we are all experiencing.

Jamele Wright, Sr. (American, born 1970), Roberta’s Song, 2022, mixed media with Georgia red clay on Dutch wax cloth and found wood, photograph by Nick Drollette Photography
BOUNDLESS features the work of six artists from around the country: Lillian Blades from Atlanta, Georgia; Ashley V. Blalock from El Cajon, California; Dave Eppley, from New Paltz, New York; Olga Lah from Long Beach, California; Melissa Vandenberg from Richmond, Kentucky; and Jamele Wright, Sr., from Decatur, Georgia. Each of these artists created a site-specific installation for BOUNDLESS that pushes beyond the frame, bounding into room-sized works of art and transforming into new environments that surround us or immerse the viewer in the work of art itself.

Using everyday materials, including yarn, house paint, glass vases, fabric, and other items, the works of art transcend these materials’ ordinary roots to become catalysts that invite viewers in, engaging both our minds and bodies. All the artists work by employing assemblage and accumulation of these materials in some format, and they employ repetition to create complex patterns that form rhythmic, dynamic movement throughout their pieces. Vacillating between abstraction and representation, the installations are visually intriguing while also encompassing and exploring different issues such as consumerism, identity, memory, and place.

Featured John and Joyce Caddell Sculpture Garden artist Ashley V. Blalock returns to the MMFA with her work Keeping Up Appearances, 2022. This piece calls into question how we portray ourselves through the objects we use to adorn our spaces. By recreating old-fashioned doilies on a massive scale and in vivid red, Blalock shrouded the space to encompass the viewer while challenging them to consider how the way we decorate our homes reflects how we want others to perceive us. Looking more inwardly, Lillian Blades’ mixed-media assemblage, An Effort to Make a Connection, 2022, is an oblique self-portrait, combining elements that reference cultural traditions in her homeland of The Bahamas and her ancestral background of West Africa into lacy tapestries. Jamele Wright, Sr. also references the African diaspora while alluding to the Great Migration in the United States in his installation, Roberta’s Song, 2022. His sculptural painted assemblages incorporate found materials—many of them personal items, including his own clothing—combined with Georgia red clay and Dutch wax fabric. In large canvases and sculptural pieces layered with meaning, Wright’s installation explores family, cultural traditions, linkages between Africa and the American South, and in his exuberance in making lively and colorful work, the concept of Black joy.

Made from commonplace objects—aluminum mesh, popcorn ceiling material, and paint—manipulated into a long repetitive form, Olga Lah’s The Near and Bright Expanse, 2022, conjures up the haze and collective disorientation that characterized the COVID-19 pandemic and for the artist, the difficulties of watching friends and family succumb to the virus. At the same time, the addition of bright yellow paint across the surface offers a moment of hope, contemplation, and stillness in the ongoing ambiguity of these strange times. Also evoking COVID-19, Melissa Vandenberg’s installation Glorya, 2022, is a meditation on mourning—represented by empty florist vases that were perhaps used in sympathy arrangements. It also initiates conversations about manufacturing, consumerism, and (over)abundance.
Dave Eppley also explores consumerism, planned obsolescence, and the mass accumulation of objects in our society in his work *Alabama Swag*, 2022. He photographed the “stuff” of our lives, printed it in repeated patterns on vinyl, and applied it to the gallery walls. The mass of objects streams down the walls and puddles on the floor in a blur of objects—demonstrating the enormity of our refuse while also alluding to its environmentally destructive nature.

Curator Jennifer Jankauskas shares, “Because each artist crafted their installation to respond to the Museum’s galleries, the artworks will never embody these same forms again. They are specific to this particular time and place, and their value lies not only in our experience of them but in what we take away. All of the works of art in *BOUNDLESS* are stunning and invite wonder and delight, but they also ask us to stretch our boundaries and imaginations and think about our place in the world.”

MMFA Board President Laurie J. Weil, D.V.M. says, “How often in our lives are we encouraged to ‘think outside the box?’ How often do we consider what or how we would experience life if our thinking or movement were unimpeded by conventional limitations? The works in this exhibition excite me to see and experience, wonder about, and contemplate boundlessness.”

Director Angie Dodson agrees, “We urge you to accept these artists’ invitations to explore and celebrate boundlessness, the unbridled nature of imagination. In doing so, a memory of a past experience might return to you; perhaps your sense of wonder from childhood will be stirred; you may be able to solve a long-stuck problem. Encounters with creativity and creatives can do that for us...when we let them.”
ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Lillian Blades (Bahamian, born 1973) currently resides in Atlanta, Georgia. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in painting from the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) and a Master of Fine Arts in painting from Georgia State University. In addition, she has studied at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine and Caversham in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. Blades has exhibited in both solo and group exhibitions throughout various galleries in the United States, The Bahamas, Trinidad, Germany, and South Africa. The locations of her public commissions include Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport and Jean Childs Young Middle School in Atlanta, Georgia.

California-based artist Ashley V. Blalock (American, born 1978) holds a Bachelor of Arts in painting and printmaking from San Diego State University, a Master in Fine Art in sculpture from the San Francisco Art Institute, and a Master of Arts in art history from the University of California. She was a resident at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, the Wassaic Project, and the Vermont Studio Center, as well as a visiting teacher at the Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts. Blalock has exhibited her installations at venues that include Franconia Sculpture Park in Shafer, Minnesota; the Hunter Museum of American Art in Chattanooga, Tennessee; and the Nevada Museum of Art in Reno, Nevada.

Based in New York, Dave Eppley (American, born 1974), holds a Master of Fine Arts from Massachusetts College of Art and Design (MassArt) and has installed site-specific artworks at such institutions as the Des Moines Art Center in Iowa, the John Michael Kohler Arts Center in Wisconsin, OBORO in Montreal, Canada, and the Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College in New York. Eppley’s public commissions are located at Bloomberg L.P.’s New York headquarters and Memorial Sloan Kettering Brooklyn Infusion Center New York.
Olga Lah (American, born 1980) lives and works in California. She received a double Bachelors of Art in studio art and art history from the University of California, Riverside and went on to receive her Master of Arts in theology from Fuller Theological Seminary. Lah has exhibited extensively at the Orange County Museum of Art in Newport Beach, California; Craft and Folk Art Museum in Los Angeles; Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions; and Los Angeles International Airport. Her awards include an Artist Fellowship with the Arts Council for Long Beach, the Korea Arts Foundation of America Biennial Award, and the Goldman Fellowship for residency at the Djerassi Resident Artist Program.

Melissa Vandenberg (American, born 1977) is a multidisciplinary artist, educator, and curator living in eastern Kentucky, where she is a professor at Eastern Kentucky University. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the College for Creative Studies in Detroit and a Master of Fine Arts from Southern Illinois University Carbondale. Vandenberg has exhibited her work internationally and throughout the United States, including at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Krakow, Poland, and the Birmingham Museum of Art in Birmingham, Alabama. She is the recipient of numerous grants, including a Kentucky Foundation for Women grant, the Al Smith Fellowship, and a Great Meadows Foundation grant. She was also shortlisted for the Luxembourg Art Prize in 2016.

Originally from Ohio, Jamele Wright, Sr. (American, born 1970) has called Georgia his home for almost 30 years. Wright graduated from Georgia State University with a Bachelor of Arts in art history with a concentration on African and African American contemporary art and a Master of Fine Arts from the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan, New York. He completed a fellowship at Project for Empty Spaces in Newark, New Jersey. He has shown his work at the Gibbes Museum of Art in Charleston, South Carolina, and the Zuckerman Museum of Art in Kennesaw, Georgia.

**RELATED EXHIBITION**

*Beyond the Wall*
ArtWorks Gallery
November 26, 2022, through February 26, 2023
Artwork created by pre-kindergarten through high school students inspired by the theme of boundlessness.
RELATED PROGRAMS

Opening and Gallery Talk
Thursday, December 8, 2022; 5:30–7 PM
Free
All are invited to a gallery talk of BOUNDLESS at 5:45 PM led by MMFA curator Jennifer Jankauskas and artists Lillian Blades and Jamele Wright, Sr., of Atlanta, GA. Following the talk, enjoy drinks and snacks.

Opening Dinner
Thursday, December 8, 2022; 7–9:30 PM
$65 per person; Reserve your table at mmfa.org
In celebration of the exhibition BOUNDLESS, proprietors Nick and Davena Jernigan of Verde Café will curate a culinary show of seasonal bounty. We will come together as friends and a community for an artful experience with our plates and palates as the canvas.

Open Studios with Featured Artist Jamele Wright, Sr.
Saturday, December 10, 2022; 10 AM–1 PM
Free
Featured artist Jamele Wright, Sr. will guide participants through the steps to create an art installation inspired by our individual histories and stories. Together these individual contributions will be combined to create a large-scale assemblage that reflects our diverse community identity to be installed near the Museum’s studio workshops.

Art After Five: Boundless Opportunities
Tuesday, January 10, 2023; 5:30–7 PM
Free
Join the Museum’s Montgomery Modern young adults and the Mayor’s Young Professional Council for an evening exploring the boundless possibilities that the new year brings with a vision board party.

PUBLICATION
Accompanying the exhibition is a 36-page fully illustrated catalogue featuring an essay by curator Jennifer Jankauskas along with artist biographies. The catalogue will be available for purchase at the Museum Shop or to print on demand through Reischling Press, Inc via Blurb.com. Learn more at mmfa.org.

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ABOUT THE MMFA
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 the founders—to exhibit and teach—continue to inspire and inform every action and activity at the Museum. Since 1988, the MMFA has shared the 175-acre Blount Cultural Park with 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 the interactive gallery, ArtWorks; making art in the bustling studios, and by participating in other engaging events and programs. In addition, MMFA visitors can relax and recharge in the serenity of the Museum’s 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.

GENERAL INFORMATION

WHAT:  BOUNDLESS

WHEN:  November 26, 2022 through February 26, 2023

WHERE:  Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts
Wynton M. Blount Cultural Park
One Museum Drive
Montgomery, AL 36117
INFORMATION:  mmfa.org
334.625.4333
@MontgomeryMFA

HOURS:
Galleries, ArtWorks,  Mondays, Closed
Sculpture Garden,  Tuesdays–Sunday, 10 AM–5 PM
Terrace, and Store:  Last entry at 4:45 PM

ADMISSION:  Free! With ample, free parking.

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MEDIA CONTACT
Stephen Hayes: shayes@mmfa.org | 334.625.4347