

MMFA

Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE MONTGOMERY MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS TO PRESENT THE HARD TRUTH: REPRESENTATION AND THE ARTS

Four-part exhibition and lecture series will engage the complex topics related to diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion.



Bill Traylor (American, 1853–1949), *Man, Woman*, about 1940–1942, watercolor and graphite on cardboard, Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Charles and Eugenia Shannon, 1982.4.28

Montgomery, AL, February 22, 2023 – As part of the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts' three-year Institute of Museum and Library Services-funded diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion (DEAI) initiative, the MMFA will present *The Hard Truth: Representation and the Arts*, a four-part exhibition and lecture series. This year-long series will engage the complex topics related to DEAI—raising

awareness for these issues in the museum field while allowing the MMFA to reflect on its own journey. Each installation, curated by Museum Empowered Fellow Savannah Shaon, consists of works from the Museum's permanent collection that provide a lens through which viewers can contextualize the topics and issues related to DEAI. The accompanying lectures will allow us to elevate community voices and help illuminate a path towards becoming a more welcoming and inclusive community institution.

FIGURATIVE "REAL"ITY

On view February 1 through March 19, 2023

Figurative "Real"ity, on view during Black History Month, will highlight Black and African American artists' contributions to the MMFA's permanent collection while addressing depictions of the Black body. This exhibition includes works by Alabama native Bill Traylor (1853–1949) and the renowned and influential Carrie Mae Weems (born 1953), among others.

Body and Form: Diverse Beauty

Saturday, February 25, 2023; 11 AM to Noon
Free | At the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts

Accompanying the exhibition *Figurative "Real"ity*, this program will investigate the depictions and representations of the Black body in art and media, examining how those representations or misrepresentations lead to stereotypes and misconceptions. Panelists include Dr. Jacqueline Trimble, moderator Dr. Linda Holloway, and ASU professor Cleve Webber.



Mose Tolliver (American, about 1920–2006), *Moose Head with Antlers*, 1981, acrylic and antlers on plywood, Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts Association Purchase, 2015.9.2

BREAKING BARRIERS: ARTFULLY ABLE

On view March 23 through May 14, 2023

Breaking Barriers: Artfully Able will bring together the work of artists with various physical or cognitive conditions in a relatively new and often unexplored segment of art history. Each artist in this exhibition is known to have lived with a cognitive, developmental, or physical impairment. Instead of focusing on stereotypes perpetrated against them, this exhibition will emphasize their contributions to the art historical canon while overcoming limitations.

Breaking Barriers: Panel Discussion

Saturday, April 29, 2023; 11 AM to Noon
Free | At the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts

A panel discussion will accompany the exhibition *Breaking Barriers: Artfully Able* and will bring together art history professor Dr. Kris Belden-Adams and local community leader and advocate Tametria Dantzler to discuss the impact cognitive and physical disabilities have on individuals and

their families. This discussion aims to examine historical and present-day barriers and stereotypes affecting individuals with disabilities.



“The Bias Inside Us” features Spanish photographer Angélica Dass’ *Humanae* project, which reflects on the color of skin that challenges the concept of race. Photo by Science Museum of Minnesota.

THE BIAS INSIDE US

On view June 3 through July 2, 2023

The Bias Inside Us—an exhibition and community engagement project from the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES)—explores the social science, psychology, and consequences of implicit bias. Bias is an innate human trait; we all have it. Awareness of our biases can help us recognize their influence and impact on our behaviors and worldview. *The Bias Inside Us* offers an opportunity to learn how to challenge bias in the world through awareness of one’s own bias.

Bias and Our Everyday Lives

Friday, June 9, 2023; 5–6 PM

Free | At the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts

A panel discussion exploring this innate human trait will accompany *The Bias Inside Us* exhibition. This panel, formed of community

members, will consider questions such as: What does bias look like? How does it shape our perceptions of others? And how do those perceptions affect our community?

Featured Artist Program: Bias Inside Us

June 12–17, 2023; 10 AM to Noon

Free | At the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts

Working with the MMFA’s teen summer camp and facilitated by the Southern Poverty Law Center’s Learning for Justice program, Atlanta-based artist EL Chisolm will create a mural that addresses bias alongside community members.

TO TELL THE TRUTH: THE MMFA’S HISTORY

August 3 through October 15, 2023

On view this fall, *To Tell the Truth: The MMFA’s History* will feature works of art by artists that were instrumental in the history of the Museum. In addition to these works of art, the exhibition will present documents from the Museum’s first 30 years of archives, including pages from scrapbooks and excerpts from former directors’ diaries.

To Tell the Truth: Panel Discussion

Saturday, August 19, 2023; 11 AM to Noon

Free | At the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts

A panel discussion examining the history of the MMFA will accompany the exhibition. Led by Museum Empowered Fellow Savannah Shaon, panelists will discuss the social, cultural, and political currents surrounding the Museum's early years, how those currents shaped the Museum, and the lingering impact on the Museum today. Panelists include lead humanities scholar Rev. Dr. Joan Harrell from Auburn University and Director of the Birmingham Museum of Art, Dr. Graham Boettcher, along with other community voices.

MMFA DEAI PRACTICE / IMLS

In October 2021, the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts was awarded a three-year grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to create a comprehensive practice to address diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion (DEAI) within the organization. Now in our second year of this institutional development program, the MMFA remains committed to achieving the goals laid out in this initiative:

- 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.
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SUPPORT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Series Support

This exhibition and program series is funded by a grant from Alabama Humanities Alliance in partnership with the National Endowment for the Humanities.

***Bias Inside Us* Support**

The *Bias Inside Us* is organized by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service.

Major support is provided by The Otto Bremer Trust.

Major support for "The Bias Inside Us" is provided by the Otto Bremer Trust. Additional support provided by Acton Family Giving, Anonymous donors, the Beverly Foundation, Steve and Sheri Lear, Target, the Margaret A. Cargill Foundation Fund of the Minneapolis Foundation, Thomson Reuters, Allianz of America, Valerie E. and William A. Anders, Julie and David Burton, the Dreier Family, Lennart Ehn and Ginger Lew, Expedia, Trevor and Melissa Fetter, the Roger S. Firestone Foundation, Brenda J. Gaines, Myra Hart and Kent Hewitt, Charlie and Nancy Hogan, Dr. Christine C. Jenkins and Mr. Pierre A. France, KNOCK, inc., Sarah Lawer and Frank Guanco, Kathleen Mason, Elyse Rabinowitz and Jim Porter, Dr. Philip S. and Alice Hoolihan Randall, Gloria del C. Rodriguez, and the Family of Leona Roen, and Naoma Tate.

Based on an original concept developed by Tolerance in Motion: Steve Lear, Laura Zelle, and Elyse Rabinowitz, founders; Ellen Glatstein, Laura Lipshutz, Alice Randall, Joanne Jones-Rizzi, and Susan Shapiro, directors; Don Shelby, founding advisor; and the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas, Steve Hunegs, executive director.

General Support

Annual support for exhibitions was made possible by the following sponsors and grantors. Lead sponsors and grantors Alabama State Council on the Arts, Alabama Power Foundation, The Ford Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. Barrie H. Harmon III, Lamar, Medical Properties Trust, Inc., MGMWERX, Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Regions Bank, and Rheem Manufacturing, with additional support from sponsors Dr. and Mrs. Mark H. LeQuire, PowerSouth, The S. Adam Schloss Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. Ken Williams, and Laurie J. Weil, D.V.M. and Dr. Tommy Wool, and co-sponsors AmeriFirst Bank, Balch & Bingham, LLP, Borganier Davis Williams Architects Associated, AIA, Captrust, Ms. Camille Elebash-Hill, Mrs. Ann Hubbert, Jernigan & Jernigan, LLC., Morgan Stanley Wealth Management, Mr. and Mrs. L. Daniel Morris, Jr., Harmon Dennis Bradshaw, Inc., Dr. and Mrs. Alfred J. Newman, Jr., River Bank & Trust, Russell Construction of Alabama, Inc., Ms. Micki Beth Stiller, Valley Bank, and Warren Averett, LLC.

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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 founders' original intentions—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 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, 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 them,

the MMFA has become recognized as a leading arts and cultural resource here in the state and the 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: *The Hard Truth: Representation and the Arts*

WHEN: February 1 through October 15, 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