



## THE BMA OFFERS VISITS BY APPOINTMENT FOR SMALL GROUPS BEGINNING SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6

BALTIMORE, MD (January 29, 2021)—The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) today announced that small groups of up to eight people will be able to reserve time to see a limited selection of exhibitions and galleries from Saturday, February 6 through Sunday, March 7. Each group will have 90 minutes to see two exhibitions that opened in fall 2020 that will be closing in March: ***A Perfect Power: Motherhood and African Art*** (closing March 7) and ***Stripes and Stars: Reclaiming Lakota Independence*** (closing March 28). Beginning Sunday, February 17, visitors can also see ***Stephanie Syjuco: Vanishing Point (Overlay)***, a three-part installation presented in the front of the building, upper East Lobby, and European Art galleries rotunda. The museum remains otherwise closed to the public to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. A reopening date has not yet been confirmed.

Small group reservations can be made online for BMA Members beginning Monday, February 1 and the general public beginning Wednesday, February 3 at [artbma.org](http://artbma.org). The galleries will be open Wednesdays through Sundays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and appointment times are 10 a.m., 11:45 a.m., 1:30 p.m., and 3:15 p.m. Outside, no reservation is needed to see the BMA's Sculpture Gardens, which will continue to remain open Wednesdays through Sundays, from 10 a.m. to dusk, if weather conditions permit. Visitors can also see ***SHAN Wallace: The Avenue***, a new five-part mural by the Baltimore-based artist that is covering the fence on the west side of the building.

All staff and visitors to the BMA are required to wear masks and answer two questions about their exposure to COVID-19. Visitors who arrive without a mask will be provided one by the museum. Hand sanitizer stations are installed throughout the BMA and signage on the floors and walls have been placed to help visitors maintain six feet of social distance and inform them of capacity limits in different areas. Front-of-house staff will be on hand to answer questions and help visitors move through the museum.

Summaries of the exhibitions on view follow:

### ***A Perfect Power: Motherhood and African Art*** **Through March 7, 2021**

Across central Africa, the most important artworks were those that depicted the female body. In these 19th- and early-20th-century communities, group identity and familial responsibility flowed through the maternal line. Mothers not only created life and nurtured families, but also stood at the center of the moral order, ensuring the continuity of entire communities. Artists responded to this reality by sculpting visual markers of motherhood such as pregnancy, prominent breasts, scarification, a bold gaze, or the presence of a child onto objects associated with status and authority. Nearly 40 objects from public and private collections, ranging from monumental headdresses of elderly mothers to sculptures representing mythic female ancestors, demonstrate the cultural significance and power of maternal imagery. *A Perfect Power* also demonstrates how artworks used maternal symbolism to provide protection, assist in initiation ceremonies that transformed boys into men, and stabilize communities amidst the horrors of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.

*A Perfect Power: Motherhood and African Art* is curated by Kevin Tervalá, BMA Associate Curator of African Art; Oyèrónké Oyèwùmí, Professor of Sociology, Africana, and Women's Studies at Stony Brook University; and Jennifer Kingsley, Director of the Museums & Society Program at Johns Hopkins University (JHU). Additional support was provided by JHU undergraduate students Michael Harper, Hae In Kim, Maria Kyriakakos, Clara Leverenz, and Andrea White, who participated in the Spring 2019 Curatorial Practicum.

This exhibition is generously supported by the Suzanne F. Cohen Exhibition Fund, Transamerica, and Christopher & Pamela Hoehn-Saric. Additional support is provided by The Museums and Society Program at Johns Hopkins University.



***Stripes and Stars: Reclaiming Lakota Independence***  
**Through March 28, 2021**

In the late 1800s, the Lakota people of North and South Dakota faced an existential challenge. The United States government had stripped much of their freedom, limited their ability to practice their religion and cultural traditions, and confined their community to the reservation. To communicate their new relationship with the U.S. and to ward off surveillance of their culture, Lakota women began to incorporate the American flag and other patriotic iconography into their traditional beadwork designs. This approach to survival peaked between 1880 and 1900, coinciding with the passage of the “Code of Indian Offenses,” which formally outlawed important cultural practices like the ceremonial Sun Dance.

*Stripes and Stars: Reclaiming Lakota Independence* highlights the complicated nature of patriotic symbols and illuminates the practices that Lakota women were forced to adopt to maintain their heritage. Through nine striking examples of Lakota clothing and every day and traditional objects, the exhibition explores how patriotic symbols were used as a means of disguising forbidden practices, representing hybrid identities, and preserving Lakota culture. Among the objects featured are a child’s bonnet, a vest and pants crafted for a little boy, and a horse mask. These works—drawn from the BMA’s collection and the Fenimore Art Museum in Cooperstown, New York—capture the intricacy of the beadwork techniques employed by Lakota women and the distinct ways they merged their material culture with the necessities of their changed social and political circumstances. The exhibition also includes reproductions of photographs and ledger drawings that present this practice within the context of the lived experiences of the Lakota people.

*Stripes and Stars: Reclaiming Lakota Independence* is curated by Darienne Turner, BMA Assistant Curator of Indigenous Art of the Americas.

The exhibition is supported by the Estate of Margaret Hammond Cooke.

***Stephanie Syjuco: Vanishing Point (Overlay)***  
**February 17 – May 21, 2021**

Filipino-American artist Stephanie Syjuco is creating a three-part installation for the BMA that examines how image-making is implicated in the construction of white supremacy and exclusionary narratives of history and citizenship. The artist’s first gesture is *To the Person Sitting in Darkness* (2019), a reinterpretation of the U.S. flag that will be installed near the façade of the museum. The design is based on Mark Twain’s 1901 essay for the *North American Review* that condemned efforts by Western nations to lay claim to the non-Western world. Twain remarked, “And as for a flag for the Philippine Province,... [w]e can just have our usual flag, with the white stripes painted black and the stars replaced by the skull and crossbones.” Syjuco has constructed the flag on a grand scale exactly as Twain described it. For a new work developed especially for the BMA, titled *Vanishing Point* (2020), Syjuco drapes five historically charged 19th-century objects from the museum’s collection in a semi-sheer pixelated cloth. The draping works to deny the power of display previously afforded to these objects, which are identified only as Founding Father, Collaborator, Confederate, Sympathizer, and Secessionist. For the final installation, *Rogue States* (2018), the artist has

recreated a group of fictional flags drawn from film and television programs that depicted countries outside of the U.S. and Western Europe as terrorist, backward, or unstable. The flags are hung vertically from the ceiling in a grid, as a United Nations-style convention of collective anxiety.

Stephanie Syjuco (born 1974, Manila, Philippines) lives and works in Berkeley, California. Solo exhibitions of her work have been presented at the Blaffer Art Museum, Houston, TX (2020); Hartell Gallery, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY (2020); Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, MO (2019); University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY; and Cantor Art Center at Stanford University, CA (2018). A long-time arts educator, Syjuco taught at Stanford University, California College of the Arts, San Francisco Art Institute, Mills College, and Carnegie Mellon University before joining the faculty at University of California, Berkeley in 2014. She received an MFA from Stanford University and a BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute.

This exhibition is curated by Jessica Bell Brown, BMA Associate Curator of Contemporary Art, and Leila Grothe, BMA Associate Curator of Contemporary Art.

The exhibition is supported by Clair Zamoiski Segal and Thomas H. Segal Contemporary Art Endowment Fund and the Estate of Margaret Hammond Cooke.

***SHAN Wallace: The Avenue***  
**Through November 2021**

This new five-part mural by Baltimore-based artist SHAN Wallace is named for Baltimore's storied Pennsylvania Avenue, a long-standing Black cultural hub where bandleader Cab Calloway and singer Billie Holiday once performed. This outdoor installation grows out of Wallace's ongoing research into the foundational roles Black Americans have played in U.S. food culture: how food has been a means of finding freedom, communion, and joy from the colonial era to the present. Wallace composed the mural in response to the nearby Spring House, a structure in the BMA collection originally used for cold food storage on a nearby plantation. She reinterprets its architecture as a backdrop for Black entrepreneurship, companionship, and home, taking advantage of the digital collage format to collapse time and create an artistic space of memory and imagination that blends the personal and historical.

SHAN Wallace (born 1991, Maryland) is an award-winning photographer, artist, and freedom fighter who lives and works in Los Angeles and Baltimore. Her work was featured as part of the BMA's *2020 Vision* initiative last year and will be featured in *W|ALLS: Defend, Divide, and the Divine* at The Mint Museum in Charlotte, NC in February 2021. Previous exhibitions have been at the New Gallery of Modern Art in Charlotte, NC; Mariano Arts Center in Havana, Cuba; Prince George's African American Museum and Cultural Center in North Brentwood, MD; and the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture, The Contemporary, and The Peale Center in Baltimore.

This installation is curated by Leslie Cozzi, BMA Associate Curator of Prints, Drawings & Photographs, and Cecilia Wichmann, BMA Associate Curator of Contemporary Art.

The *2020 Vision* installation of the Contemporary Wing is generously sponsored by BGE, Constellation, and Exelon.



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**VISITOR INFORMATION**

The BMA's galleries are closed to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The BMA's Sculpture Gardens are open Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to dusk, weather permitting. For general museum information, call 443-573-1700 or visit [artbma.org](http://artbma.org). Connect with us online at [artbma.org](http://artbma.org) and through social media. #ARTBMA • [Stories](#) • [Facebook](#) • [Twitter](#) • [Instagram](#) • [YouTube](#)

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