

BMA PRESENTS TWO MAJOR VIDEO INSTALLATIONS BY ACCLAIMED ARTIST CANDICE BREITZ AS PART OF THE 2020 VISION INITIATIVE

*Works Exploring the Dynamics of Power, Privilege, and Celebrity in
Modern Culture Shown Together for the First Time*

BALTIMORE, MD (February 6, 2020)—Critically acclaimed artist Candice Breitz is recognized around the world for her unflinching questioning of power and influence, especially as it relates to individual identity. In March, The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) will present *Candice Breitz: Too Long, Didn't Read*, the spring season anchor of the museum's year-long *2020 Vision* initiative highlighting works by female-identifying artists. The exhibition features two of Breitz's powerful multi-channel video installations, *TLDR* and *Love Story*, both of which examine how our contemporary obsession with celebrity and the explosion of media have distorted our ability to connect with real-world humanitarian issues and empathize with the experiences of those living on the margins of society. Presented side-by-side for the first time, the works represent more than 35 hours of content that captures Breitz's essential voice as an artist and interrogator of contemporary culture.



Candice Breitz: Too Long, Didn't Read is on view at the BMA March 15–July 12, 2020. This major ticketed exhibition is curated by Asma Naeem, the BMA's Eddie C. and C. Sylvia Brown Chief Curator, and will be accompanied by a range of public programs that delve more deeply into the human rights issues highlighted in Breitz's works. The exhibition is generously sponsored by the Alvin and Fanny B. Thalheimer Exhibition Endowment Fund and The Hardiman Family Endowment Fund.

“Candice Breitz’s installations ask critical questions about whose voices matter, whose are to be believed, and how we should respond. In a moment when discussions about ‘fake news’ and the impact of social media on civil discourse are proliferating our national dialogues, Breitz’s installations feel ever more prescient, relevant, and illuminating,” said Christopher Bedford, BMA Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director. “We hope that these installations will engage our visitors and encourage them to connect with Breitz’s practice and also with each other—and that they will return to the exhibition more than once to experience the full scope of the presentation.”

In the two-part multi-channel installation *TLDR* (2017), Breitz captures the stories of a community of sex workers in Cape Town, South Africa, and the bitter, often misplaced, cultural debates surrounding sex work and the rights of those working in the trade. In the first gallery, a 12-year-old narrator shares the story of a clash between Amnesty International, which began advocating for the global decriminalization of sex work in 2015, and a coalition of Hollywood celebrities and sex work abolitionists. A modern Greek chorus of sex workers further animates the narration through dance movements and the use of protest signs. The story is also accompanied by a soundtrack rich in protest songs and emoji-inflected digital imagery, drawing on the alluring visual tactics employed by the Internet.

This stylized presentation is contrasted with 10 intimate interviews that capture the real-life struggle of sex workers to attain basic human rights. Through this intense juxtaposition, Breitz highlights the incredible ability of celebrities to

assert power in a dialogue in which they have no experience or study, thus distorting the public conversation and leaving those most affected to deal with the ramifications. *TLDR*, the acronym for “too long; didn’t read,” which lends its name to the BMA’s exhibition, also speaks to our limited capacity to engage with complicated and layered subject matter—choosing instead to absorb only short-form and glossed-over information.

Love Story (2016) features two distinct presentations of the experiences of six individuals who have been through the atrocities of war, been forced to flee their homes, and deeply impacted by the international response, or lack thereof, to the growing global refugee crisis. In the first version, actors Alec Baldwin and Julianne Moore, each seated in front of a green screen, perform a series of fragments excerpted from a set of first-person accounts, totaling approximately 74 minutes. The second iteration includes nearly 22 hours of interviews with the subjects themselves: José Maria João, a former child soldier from Angola; Mamy Maloba Langa, a survivor of torture and abuse from the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Dr. Shabeena Saveri, a transgender activist from India; Professor Luis Nava, a political dissident from Venezuela; Farah Abdi Mohamed, a young atheist from Somalia; and Sarah Ezzat Mardini, a young woman who escaped war-torn Syria.

Together, the two versions encapsulate the dissonance between how, and by whom, stories are often told in the media. The installation asks the viewer to consider how we are so easily moved by fictionalized depictions of horrific events, and yet seem unable to connect with or mobilize to help those actually affected by these tragedies. At the same time, it underscores the sanitization, framing, and packaging of world events to fit the entertainment frameworks on which we thrive, posing broader questions about our sense of truth and reality.

“Breitz’s art mines the registers of human feelings buried within such seemingly insignificant online transactions as viewing, liking, posting, commenting, sharing, and the deluge of images and information about the profoundly unjust social conditions existing all around us. Even though her practice is deeply layered and complex, there is an incredible clarity to her work—an undeniable way that it reflects our daily reality back to us,” said Naeem. “We recognize it immediately, as well as our own complicity in the highly saturated culture of social media. She is posing essential questions, and ultimately it is on the viewer to determine how to engage and respond.”

Exhibition Tickets

Tickets are available beginning February 17. Prices are \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors, \$7 for groups of 10 or more, and \$5 for students with ID and youth ages 7 and older. As Breitz's art encourages visitors to engage with it during multiple visits, the BMA is offering free return entry to all visitors after the first ticket purchase. Free admission is also offered on opening day Sunday, March 15. BMA Members and children age 6 and under are always admitted free. For more information, call 443-573-1701.

Community Day

Sunday, March 15, 1–5 p.m.

Celebrate the opening of *Candice Breitz: Too Long, Didn’t Read* and the presentation of *2020 Vision* in the Contemporary Wing. Enjoy free admission, artmaking, interactive demonstrations, performances, and more.

Candice Breitz

Candice Breitz (b. 1972, South Africa) is an acclaimed Berlin-based artist whose moving-image installations have been shown internationally. Breitz’s work has been presented in numerous solo exhibitions, including the Kunstmuseum Stuttgart (Germany); National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Palais de Tokyo (Paris); The Power Plant (Toronto); Moderna Museet (Stockholm); White Cube (London), Wexner Center for the Arts

(Ohio); ACMI / The Australian Centre for the Moving Image (Melbourne); and the South African National Gallery (Cape Town). Breitz's work has been included in many group exhibitions as well as biennales in Johannesburg (1997), São Paulo (1998), Istanbul (1999), Taipei (2000), Kwangju (2000), Tirana (2001), Venice (2005 and 2017), New Orleans (2008), Göteborg (2003 and 2009), Singapore (2011), and Dakar (2014). Her work has also been featured at the Sundance Film Festival (*New Frontier*, 2009) and the Toronto International Film Festival (*David Cronenberg: Transformation*, 2013). Among the many museum collections that have acquired Breitz's works are the Museum of Modern Art and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (both in New York), San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa), Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus (Munich, Germany), Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto), FNAC / Fonds national d'art contemporain (France), M+ / Museum of Visual Culture (Hong Kong), National Gallery of Victoria (Melbourne), Milwaukee Art Museum, MONA / Museum of Old and New Art (Tasmania, Australia), Museum of Fine Arts (Boston), and MAXXI / Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo (Rome, Italy). Breitz holds degrees from the University of the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg, South Africa), the University of Chicago, and Columbia University (NY) and has participated in the Whitney Museum's Independent Studio Program and led the Palais de Tokyo's Le Pavillon residency as a visiting artist in 2005-06. She has been a tenured professor at the Hochschule für bildende Künste in Braunschweig since 2007.

THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART

Founded in 1914, The Baltimore Museum of Art is a major cultural destination recognized for engaging diverse audiences through dynamic exhibitions and innovative educational and community outreach programs. The BMA's internationally renowned collection of 95,000 objects encompasses more than 1,000 works by Henri Matisse anchored by the famed Cone Collection of modern art, as well as one of the nation's finest holdings of prints, drawings, and photographs. The galleries showcase an exceptional collection of art from Africa; important works by established and emerging contemporary artists; outstanding European and American paintings, sculpture, and decorative arts; significant artworks from China; ancient Antioch mosaics; and exquisite textiles from around the world. The 210,000- square-foot museum is also distinguished by a grand historic building designed in the 1920s by renowned American architect John Russell Pope and two beautifully landscaped gardens featuring an array of 20th-century sculpture. The BMA is located in Charles Village, three miles north of the Inner Harbor, and is adjacent to the main campus of Johns Hopkins University. General admission to the BMA is free so that everyone can enjoy the power of art.

VISITOR INFORMATION

General admission to the BMA is free. Special exhibitions may be ticketed. The BMA is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. The museum is closed Monday, Tuesday, New Year's Day, July 4, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. The BMA is located at 10 Art Museum Drive, three miles north of Baltimore's Inner Harbor. For general museum information, call 443-573-1700 or visit artbma.org.

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For media in Baltimore:

Anne Mannix Brown / Sarah Pedroni
The Baltimore Museum of Art
443-573-1870
abrown@artbma.org / spedroni@artbma.org

For media outside Baltimore:

Alina E. Sumajin
PAVE Communications & Consulting
646-369-2050
alina@paveconsult.com