

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 16, 2024

Media Contacts:

Lauryn Cantrell, 202.387.2151 x235
lcantrell@phillipscollection.org

Third Eye

Tyler Mahowald, 212.335.9009 x311
tyler@hellothirdeye.com

Online Press Room:

www.phillipscollection.org/press

The Phillips Collection Presents *Multiplicity: Blackness in Contemporary American Collage*

Landmark exhibition explores an expansive view of Black identity



WASHINGTON, DC—The Phillips Collection presents ***Multiplicity: Blackness in Contemporary American Collage***, the first major museum exhibition dedicated to contemporary collage reflecting the breadth and complexity of Black identity and experiences in the United States. The monumental exhibition, spread across three floors in two buildings, brings together more than 50 works by an intergenerational group of 49 African American artists to explore diverse Black-constructed narratives through collage and collage-informed works. Organized by the Frist Art Museum in Nashville, Tennessee, ***Multiplicity: Blackness in Contemporary American Collage*** is on view from July 6 through September 22, 2024.

Multiplicity examines how themes of personal and collective history, regional and national heritage, gender and sexual orientation, and racial constructs are expressed in collage. By assembling pieces of paper, photographs, fabric, and other salvaged or repurposed materials, artists create unified compositions that offer poignant expressions of human experience, including fragmentation and reconstruction, shared history and memory, cultural hybridity, gender fluidity, and notions of beauty. As the exhibition's title suggests, most of the works address multiple subjects and defy a fixed interpretation. Featured artists range from established luminaries to emerging and mid-career figures, including **Mark Bradford, Lauren Halsey, Rashid Johnson, Kerry James Marshall, Wangechi**

Mutu, Jamea Richmond-Edwards, Deborah Roberts, Tschabalala Self, Lorna Simpson, Devan Shimoyama, Mickalene Thomas, and Kara Walker.

“The Phillips Collection is pleased to present *Multiplicity*, a bold, thought-provoking exhibition that brings artists together in conversation across time and place to encourage new and more expansive understandings of Black identity,” says **Vradenburg Director & CEO Jonathan P. Binstock**. “This speaks to the Phillips’s tradition of exhibiting artists of our time, with many connected to the Phillips including **Zoë Charlton, Sanford Biggers, McArthur Binion, and Radcliffe Bailey.**”

Using techniques rooted in European and American traditions by canonical figures from Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Hannah Höch, Max Ernst, and Robert Rauschenberg, the artworks featured in *Multiplicity* build upon the rich legacy of African American artists such as Romare Bearden, who experimented with collage in the 1960s to inspire collaboration and community, as well as David C. Driskell, Faith Ringgold, Lois Mailou Jones, and Jacob Lawrence. “Twenty-first-century collage is an arguably understudied and undervalued medium, especially in museum exhibitions,” explains **Katie Delmez, Senior Curator at the Frist Art Museum and curator of *Multiplicity***. “*Multiplicity* is an opportunity to spotlight the formal complexity and vibrancy of the technique and to assert its contributions to the field through the lens of some of today’s leading artists.”

Rather than casting their work solely in terms of a racial discourse that often portrays African Americans as a monolith, the artists employ collage to convey the intersecting facets of their lived experiences that combine to make whole individuals. “The exhibition asserts that collage parallels how identity is constructed with a multitude of elements that create a singular whole,” says **Adrienne L. Childs, Senior Consulting Curator at The Phillips Collection** and organizing curator for the presentation in Washington. “The process of merging form and content aptly represents Black life. The artists create multifaceted works through the meaningful use of objects from their own lives that reflect their experiences and concerns.”

For artists like Roberts and Mutu, collage is their principal strategy, while for others, including Thomas, Johnson, and Marshall, it represents a branch or chapter in their wider practice. They complement one another while remaining distinct, each with the potential to spark thoughtful conversations about Blackness in America today and for future generations. Roberts, whose *Tomorrow, tomorrow, and tomorrow* (2023) is unique to the Phillips’s presentation, asserts, “With collage, I can create a more expansive and inclusive view of the Black cultural experience.”

The exhibition begins with the section “Fragmentation and Reconstruction,” introducing guests to a range of techniques and materials used in contemporary collage. Next, “Excavating History and Memory” examines artists’ use of historical photographs and clippings to highlight overlooked or lost narratives, linking them to the present. “Cultural Hybridity” addresses the challenges of navigating life in a new country while maintaining connections to ancestral homelands. The sections “Notions of Beauty and Power” and “Gender Fluidity and Queer Spaces” challenge traditional constructions of beauty and gender. The exhibition then expands the definition of collage beyond analog practices to include digital stitches—an inevitable evolution in today’s digitally saturated environment.

Multiplicity concludes with the section “Toward Abstraction,” which features layered and deeply personal abstractions created with various materials. The exhibition also includes film interviews with 11

artists focusing on their particular technique. Public programs will spotlight artists Deborah Roberts and Rashaad Newsome in conversation with organizing curator Adrienne Childs, and Mickalene Thomas with curator Katie Delmez, among others, as well as a series of artist-led collage-making sessions.

ARTISTS

Nina Chanel Abney	Tomashi Jackson	Howardena Pindell
Derrick Adams	Rashid Johnson	Jamea Richmond-Edwards
Njideka Akunyili Crosby	Yashua Klos	Deborah Roberts
Radcliffe Bailey	YoYo Lander	Lanecia A. Rouse
Sanford Biggers	Kerry James Marshall	Tschabalala Self
McArthur Binion	Rod McGaha	Devan Shimoyama
Brittney Boyd Bullock	Lester Julian Merriweather	David Shrobe
Mark Bradford	Helina Metaferia	Lorna Simpson
Tay Butler	Wardell Milan	Nyugen E. Smith
Zoë Charlton	Joiri Minaya	Paul Anthony Smith
Andrea Chung	Troy Montes-Michie	Shinique Smith
Jamal Cyrus	Devin N. Morris	Mickalene Thomas
M. Florine Démosthène	Wangechi Mutu	Kara Walker
Derek Fordjour	Narcissister	Didier William
Genevieve Gaignard	Rashaad Newsome	Kandis Williams
Lauren Halsey	Lovie Olivia	
Kahlil Robert Irving	Ebony G. Patterson	

EXHIBITION SUPPORT

The exhibition is organized by the Frist Art Museum, Nashville, TN.

The presentation at The Phillips Collection is made possible by The Frauke and Willem de Looper Fund.

Additional support is provided by Reid Walker.

Support for the national exhibition tour is provided by generous grants from the Henry Luce Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.



EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

The accompanying catalogue is designed by Polymode Studio, a LGBTQIA+ and minority-owned design firm; produced by Marquand Books; and distributed by Yale University Press. The fully illustrated 264-page publication was edited by Kathryn E. Delmez with contributions from Dr. Richard J. Powell, John Spencer Bassett Professor of Art and Art History at Duke University; Dr. Patricia Hills, professor emerita of American Art at Boston University; Dr. Tiffany E. Barber, assistant professor of African American Art at UCLA; Dr. Anita N. Bateman, associate curator of modern and contemporary art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Valerie Cassel Oliver, Sydney and Frances Lewis Family Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts; María Elena Ortiz, curator at the Museum of Modern Art Fort Worth; and Dr. Rebecca VanDiver, associate professor of African American Art at

Vanderbilt University. Students at Fisk University and 2022–23 Frist Art Museum curatorial fellow Chase Williamson wrote the artist biographies.

IMAGES: (L to R) Yashua Klos, *Uncle Scott*, 2022, Woodblock prints on archival paper, Japanese rice paper, acrylic, spray paint, colored pencil, and wood mounted on canvas, 72 x 60 in. Collection of Marc Rockford and Carrie Gish, courtesy of the artist and Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York, © Yashua Klos; Derek Fordjour, *Airborne Double*, 2022, Acrylic, charcoal, cardboard, oil pastel, and foil on newspaper mounted on canvas, 60 x 100 in., Frances Fine Art Collection, Courtesy of the artist, David Kordansky Gallery, and Petzel Gallery, New York, Photo: Daniel Greer, © Derek Fordjour; Jamea Richmond-Edwards, *Archetype of a 5 Star*, 2018, acrylic, spray paint, glitter, ink, and cut paper on canvas, 60 x 48 in., Rubell Museum.

IMAGE GALLERY

High-resolution press images are available upon request. Please contact lcantrell@phillipscollection.org.

ABOUT THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION

The Phillips Collection, America's first museum of modern art, was founded in 1921. The museum houses one of the world's most celebrated Impressionist and American modern art collections and continues to grow its collection with important contemporary voices. Its distinctive building combines extensive new galleries with the former home of its founder, Duncan Phillips. The Phillips's impact spreads nationally and internationally through its diverse and experimental special exhibitions and events, including its award-winning education programs for educators, students, and adults; renowned Phillips Music series; and dynamic art and wellness and Phillips after 5 events. The Phillips Collection's extensive community partnerships include Phillips@THEARC, the museum's satellite campus in Southeast DC. The Phillips Collection is a private, non-government museum, supported primarily by donations.

###