

BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART TO HOST FREE EVENT WITH RAPPER/ACTIVIST BOOTS RILEY AND ARTIST MICKALENE THOMAS

BALTIMORE, MD (April 2, 2019)—On April 24, The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) will host a conversation with the celebrated musician, activist, and filmmaker Boots Riley and acclaimed artist Mickalene Thomas moderated by BMA Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director Christopher Bedford. The event is part of the BMA's *The Necessity of Tomorrow(s)* series, which bring together artists, writers, and thought-leaders to examine and discuss issues and ideas at the intersections of art, race, and social justice. For the event, Riley and Thomas will discuss how ongoing systemic injustices inspire and influence their work, as well as the broader role of the arts in spurring dialogue, understanding, and, ultimately, change. *The Necessity of Tomorrow(s): Boots Riley & Mickalene Thomas* is free and open to the public from 6 to 10 p.m. Seating is first come, first seated in the BMA Auditorium and the program will also be live-streamed in locations throughout the museum. The event includes free admission to the BMA's *Monsters & Myths* exhibition and cocktail reception with live music, cash bar, and light bites.



The event is being organized in conjunction with *Monsters & Myths: Surrealism and War in the 1930s and 1940s*, currently on view at the BMA through May 26, 2019. Much as many contemporary artists are grappling with our current sociopolitical landscape, European and American artists of the 1930s and 1940s used art as means to examine and reflect on the traumas of the world wars. *Monsters & Myths* provides an in-depth look at how atrocities in real life bred monsters and myths in painting, sculpture, books, and film. Taken together, the exhibition and upcoming event highlight the importance of artistic practice to assessing and dealing with real-life happenings.



The April 24 event will begin at 7 p.m. with a moderated discussion followed by a Q&A with the audience. The evening will then continue with a cocktail reception with drinks from Gertrude's, light fare from Blacksauce Kitchen, and live music by Al Rogers, Jr. Participants will have opportunities before and after the program to walk through *Monsters & Myths*, as well as *Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg / Delights of an Undirected Mind*, an installation of Surrealist-inspired artworks and films by the Berlin-based Swedish artists. The BMA's galleries will be open from 6 to 10 p.m.

Launched in 2017, *The Necessity of Tomorrow(s)* borrows its title from an essay by science fiction author Samuel Delany that argues for the role for creative speculation in making a more just future. The series has previously hosted talks with artists Mark Bradford and Hank Willis Thomas and author Ta-Nehisi Coates.

The Necessity of Tomorrow(s) is generously sponsored by Suzanne F. Cohen and the Cohen Opportunity Fund. Boots Riley appears courtesy of Evil Twin Booking Agency.

AT A GLANCE

The Necessity of Tomorrow(s): Boots Riley & Mickalene Thomas

Wednesday, April 24, 2019

Musician and filmmaker Boots Riley and artist Mickalene Thomas examine the role of the arts in reflecting on and addressing systemic injustices. The event is part of the BMA's *The Necessity of Tomorrow(s)* series and produced in conjunction with *Monsters & Myths: Surrealism and War in the 1930s and 1940s*, on view at the museum through May 26, 2019. The event is free and open to the public. Seating is first come, first seated.

6:00 p.m.: BMA galleries open

6:30 p.m.: Doors to the BMA Auditorium open. Seating is first come, first seated.

7:00 p.m.: Program begins and is live-streamed in other locations throughout the museum

8:00 p.m.: Q&A with the audience in the BMA Auditorium

8:30 p.m.: Cocktail reception with live music, cash bar, and light bites

10:00 p.m.: Galleries close

Sorry to Bother You

Saturday, April 13, and Wednesday, April 17

Free screenings of Boots Riley's film [Sorry to Bother You](#) (2018) will be held in the BMA Auditorium at 7 p.m. both days. This science fiction comedy film written and directed by Riley is set in an alternate present-day version of Oakland, where telemarketer Cassius Green discovers a magical key to professional success, propelling him into a macabre universe. (1 hour, 52 minutes)

ABOUT

Boots Riley

Riley is an American poet, rapper, songwriter, and activist. In 2018, he made his directorial debut with *Sorry to Bother You* (2018). In the film, which has received critical acclaim, Riley leveraged seemingly absurd scenarios and fantastical situations to lay bare the inextricable connections between capitalism, race, and sexuality. In its conceptual approach, the film belongs to the growing genre of Afro-Surrealism, which uses bizarre images, situations, and spaces to explore racial inequality and the experiences of Black people and communities.

Mickalene Thomas

Thomas, whose work spans paintings, collages, photography, video, and installations, examines concepts of power and beauty through a feminist lens. Drawing on iconography rooted in both art history and popular culture, Thomas creates new visual vocabularies that speak to the ways in which identity is constructed and perceived and provides fresh constructs through which to consider femininity. In fall 2019, Thomas will create a large-scale, site-specific installation in the BMA's East Lobby as part of the inaugural Robert E. Meyerhoff and Rheda Becker Biennial Commission.

[Monsters & Myths: Surrealism and War in the 1930s and 1940s](#)

During the pivotal years between the world wars, European and American avant-garde artists responded to the rise of Hitler and the spread of Fascism by creating some of the most compelling images of the Surrealist movement. Monstrosities in the real world bred monsters in paintings and sculpture, on film, and in the pages of journals and artist's books. *Monsters & Myths* is the first major exhibition to examine how 20th-century European and American Surrealist artists used monsters and mythic figures to depict their experiences of war, violence, and exile. It includes 90 works by artists Salvador Dalí, Max Ernst, André Masson, Pablo Picasso, and Dorothea Tanning,

among others. Their visions and practices brought together threads from Sigmund Freud's theories of the unconscious, dream analysis, and free association with vivid manifestations of violence and the experience of trauma and war, creating work that was, and continues to be, at once deeply personal and universally relevant. The exhibition is on view through May 26, 2019.

[Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg / Delights of an Undirected Mind](#)

The psychologically charged installations and films by Berlin-based artists Nathalie Djurberg (Swedish, b. 1978) and Hans Berg (Swedish, b. 1978) are intended to spark our deepest fears and desires. Their painstakingly created stop-motion animations, set to a blend of psychedelic and techno music, along with fantastical large-scale installations, embrace Surrealist motifs, playing on the unnerving and illogical, all while tapping into the subconscious and absurd. The three featured contemporary fables introduce seemingly innocent characters, who transform into nightmarish beings—from a sly smoking wolf to a sexually uninhibited giraffe. The exhibition is on view through May 26, 2019.

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.

Connect with us: [#ARTBMA](#) • [Blog](#) • [Facebook](#) • [Twitter](#) • [Instagram](#) • [YouTube](#)

###

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 of Baltimore:

Sascha Freudenheim/Alina Sumajin
PAVE Communications & Consulting
917-544-6057 / 646-369-2050
sascha@paveconsult.com / alina@paveconsult.com