

BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART RECEIVES MAJOR GIFT TO ENDOW CHIEF CURATOR POSITION FROM PHILANTHROPISTS EDDIE C. AND C. SYLVIA BROWN

*Position to be Renamed The Eddie C. and C. Sylvia Brown Chief Curator
In Recognition of Their Significant Contribution*

BALTIMORE, MD (February 8, 2019)—The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) today announced a gift of \$3.5 million from Baltimore-based philanthropists Eddie C. and C. Sylvia Brown to endow the position of chief curator at the museum. The Browns' support and advocacy for the BMA spans more than two decades and includes important contributions of both art and funds to expand the museum's presentations and collections of works by African American artists. This most recent gift underscores the Browns' ongoing generosity and commitment to the BMA and marks a critical development for the museum as it continues to enact its vision to position social equity at the core of its mission.

The announcement of the newly endowed Eddie C. and C. Sylvia Brown Chief Curator—one of the few curatorial positions in the United States named for an African American couple—follows the August 2018 chief curatorial appointment of Dr. Asma Naeem, whose background includes extensive new scholarship into the work of female artists and artists of color. Together, these two milestones highlight the BMA's commitment to addressing the need for increased diversity in the museum field not only through its exhibitions and programs but also through its internal composition and structures.

"The Browns are visionary philanthropists, who have long understood that access to and experience of the arts has a profound impact on the vitality of a city and its many communities. Their support for a wide range of cultural institutions and initiatives in Baltimore has ensured the ongoing growth of our city's cultural fabric and a greater level of opportunity and participation among a spectrum of audiences. We are deeply honored that they have once again chosen to support the BMA, through both this generous gift and through their continued leadership and engagement with the museum. Their vision and voices are invaluable," said Clair Zamoiski Segal, Chair of the BMA's Board of Trustees.

Eddie C. Brown is founder, chairman, and CEO of Brown Capital Management, Inc. in Baltimore, one of the country's leading investment-management firms. Both he and his wife Sylvia have been actively involved with the BMA since 1997. They have each served for many years on the Board of Trustees and founded the museum's Collectors Circle Fund for Art by African Americans with a challenge gift of \$150,000. Their partial and promised gift of Henry Ossawa Tanner's portrait of his father, Bishop Benjamin Tucker Tanner, is among the most important single gifts of art to the museum in the previous decade. The Browns also generously supported the 2012 reinstallation of the BMA's Contemporary Wing, an exhibition and site-specific installation of work by Adam Pendleton, and the recent landmark exhibition *Odyssey: Jack Whitten Sculpture, 1963–2017*.

"We have always been compelled and inspired by the depth and interest of the BMA's curatorial program. In recent years, the museum's commitment to excellence has been joined with a vision to examine and present a more fulsome picture of art history, giving a platform to those artists that have previously been underrepresented or left entirely out of our cultural dialogues. With the appointment of Dr. Naeem and the exciting exhibitions and initiatives to come, this seemed the perfect moment to expand our support for the museum and for the important role of chief curator.

We are thrilled to have been able to work with BMA leadership to make this happen, and look forward to an exciting roster of exhibitions, acquisitions, and scholarship, driven by Dr. Naeem and future chief curators,” said Eddie C. and C. Sylvia Brown.

In 2016, the BMA committed to expanding the scope of its presentations by African American artists, in alignment with changing dialogues on diversity and a desire to represent and connect more directly with the community in which the museum lives. This focus has led to the development of critically acclaimed solo exhibitions of the work of Mark Bradford and Jack Whitten; dynamic thematic exhibitions including *Generations: A History of Black Abstract Art*, which examines the critical contributions of artists of African descent to the development of abstract art; and projects and events with artists such as Adam Pendleton and Hank Willis Thomas, and writer Ta-Nehisi Coates. The museum has also invested in acquiring works by artists of color and has over the past year purchased works by Melvin Edwards, Norman Lewis, Zanele Muholi, Wangechi Mutu, Senga Nengudi, Amy Sherald, and Carrie Mae Weems, among others. In fall 2019, the BMA will open a large-scale, site-specific installation in its East Lobby by Mickalene Thomas, with many more projects and exhibitions to come. These programmatic shifts are further supported by changes in the BMA’s leadership composition, in particular the hiring of Dr. Naeem, who is one of the very few chief curators of color at a major U.S. institution.

“The Board and I are incredibly grateful to the Browns for this historic gift, and equally thrilled to title the chief curator position in their name in recognition of their steadfast support and commitment to creative endeavor in its many forms,” said Christopher Bedford, BMA Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director. “We are also heartened by their active participation in the ongoing evolution of the BMA, as we take systematic steps to alter what diversity can and should mean within a museum. Shifts in curatorial and programmatic priorities are crucial, but equally important is the makeup and structure of our leadership. We very much look forward to continuing to collaborate with the Browns on these initiatives and thank them for sharing in our bold vision for the future.”

The Browns’ philanthropic activity extends well beyond the BMA. Through the Eddie C. and C. Sylvia Brown Family Foundation, the couple launched the Turning the Corner Achievement Program, which focuses on improving educational and social outcomes for inner-city Baltimore youth. Other Baltimore cultural and educational institutions that have benefitted from the Browns’ philanthropy are the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra’s OrchKids program, Center Stage, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health, Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture, Walters Art Museum, and the Maryland Institute College of Art, which has a futuristic concrete-and-glass media studies building that bears their name.

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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