THE BMA HOSTS WORKS BY 2014 & 2015 BAKER ARTIST AWARD WINNERS

Free opening event features live performances on Thursday, September 17, 6-8:30 p.m.

BALTIMORE, MD (September 9, 2015)—The Baltimore Museum of Art celebrates the Baker Artist Awards with a multi-disciplinary showcase of works by the prestigious $25,000 Mary Sawyers Baker winners of 2014 and 2015: Eric Dyer, Wendel Patrick, Paul Rucker, Chris Bathgate, Brent Crothers, and Todd Marcus. On view September 16 through November 15, 2015, the exhibition will also feature examples of works by the six $5,000 b-grant winners from 2014 and 2015: Jowita Wyszomirska, Ed Gross, David Paul Bacharach, Renée Rendine, Dominique Zeltzman, and Timmy Reed. The artworks presented embrace a diverse range of media that includes sculpture, video, photography, music, and mixed media installations, some of which reference the difficult issues of our time. The Baker Artist Awards were established by The William G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund and are a program of the Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance.

Please join us on Thursday, September 17, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. in the BMA’s special exhibition galleries to experience the works and meet the artists. The evening will feature light fare, drinks, and live performances in the BMA auditorium featuring Todd Marcus, Timmy Reed, Paul Rucker and Wendel Patrick, as well as an ongoing performance in the gallery by Renee Rendine. The event is free and open to the public, but RSVP is required. To attend, email rsvp@baltimoreculture.org.

2015 Mary Sawyers Baker Prize Winners

- **Eric Dyer** recaptures the excitement of the moving image by replicating the optical effects of the zoetrope—an early form of animation and continues to innovate with drone technology and nanobots for two short films.
- **Wendel Patrick** creates a unique blend of jazz, electronica, and hip hop. His photography documents Baltimore during the recent unrest that followed the death of Freddie Gray in police custody.
- **Paul Rucker** confronts America’s history of racism and violence through an installation of figures in Ku Klux Klan robes, historical objects, textiles, and multi-media works referencing recent and past events. Many of these were shown as part of his *REWIND* exhibition at the Creative Alliance in February 2015.

2014 Mary Sawyers Baker Prize Winners

- **Chris Bathgate** applies his machinist and programming skills to produce metal sculptures based in geometric forms and symmetry. They are accompanied by meticulous drawings with an aesthetic value of their own.
- **Brent Crothers’** sculptures show the artist’s inventive use of found materials—copper wire, rusty nails, and keys—while referencing his personal experience and concern for the environment.
- **Todd Marcus** changes perceptions of the bass clarinet by performing and arranging the horn as the lead instrument in jazz compositions. Influenced by his Egyptian heritage and the uprisings of the Arab Spring, he recently fused aspects of traditional Middle Eastern music with jazz.

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MEDIA CONTACTS:
Anne Brown, BMA, 443-573-1870
David London, GBCA, 410-230-0200
The Baker Prize winners are selected by an anonymous jury and announced by Maryland Public Television each spring. The BMA has hosted an exhibition of the winners of the Mary Sawyers Baker Prize since 2009. This year’s exhibition is organized by Curatorial Assistant for Contemporary Art Helene Grabow.

BAKER ARTIST AWARDS
The Baker Artist Awards were created in 2009 to support artists and promote Greater Baltimore as a strong creative community. Through a sophisticated online portfolio and significant monetary prizes for the winners, the Baker Artist Awards serve artists of all disciplines who live and work in Baltimore City and its five surrounding counties. The online self-nomination process exposes area artists’ work to regional, national, and international audiences. The site has been viewed by hundreds of thousands of art lovers, critics, gallery owners, academics, and leaders in creative business in nearly every country around the globe. Each year, awards are made in two categories: the Mary Sawyers Baker Prizes and the b-grants.

Up to three Mary Sawyers Baker Prizes are awarded annually for up to $25,000 each. These awards recognize established artists who demonstrate a dedication to their art, a mastery of craft, and a commitment to excellence. Mary Sawyers Baker, one of Baltimore’s early philanthropists, studied voice as a young girl in Paris and embraced the arts throughout her life. She established the William G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund in 1964 to honor her husband, a well-known Baltimore civic leader.

The b-grants were established in 2010 to promote the quality, diversity, and depth of the region’s arts scene. These prizes recognize both emerging and established artists exploring new directions. In 2014 and 2015, three b-grants were awarded for $5,000 each.

The nominations of the prize winners as well as all of the nominees for the 2014 and 2015 prizes may be viewed at www.BakerArtistAwards.org.

WILLIAM G. BAKER, JR. MEMORIAL FUND
The William G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund believes that arts and culture play a central role in the development and growth of healthy individuals and thriving communities and commits its resources to promote and sustain a vibrant arts and culture sector in metropolitan Baltimore. Its grants support organizational effectiveness and provide cultural experiences that welcome people of all backgrounds, enrich residents’ lives, strengthen the region’s sense of cohesion and identity, promote local artists and their work, and make the metropolitan area a desirable place to live.

GREATER BALTIMORE CULTURAL ALLIANCE
The Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance (GBCA) is an inclusive and independent organization that believes that arts and culture are key to a vibrant community, the future of our children, and a thriving economy. GBCA promotes, convenes, and leverages resources for the Baltimore region’s extraordinary arts, culture, history, heritage, and humanities organizations, as well as attractions and individual artists who are all strengthened by working together. Conceived in 1997 and incorporated in 2001, GBCA is a membership and service organization for artists and organizations in Baltimore City and, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties in Maryland.

THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART
The Baltimore Museum of Art is home to an internationally renowned collection of 19th-century, modern, and contemporary art. Founded in 1914 with a single painting, the BMA today has 95,000 works of art—including the largest holding of works by Henri Matisse in the world. Throughout the museum, visitors will find an outstanding selection of American and European painting, sculpture, and decorative arts; prints and drawings from the 15th century to the present; works by established and emerging contemporary artists; and exceptional objects from Africa and Asia. Two
beautifully landscaped gardens display an array of 20th-century sculpture that is an oasis in the city. The 210,000-square-foot museum is distinguished by a grand historic building designed in the 1920s by renowned American architect John Russell Pope. A $28 million multi-year renovation that began in 2010 has transformed galleries for contemporary, American, African, and Asian art, and improved visitor amenities and essential infrastructure. The renovation will conclude with a new Center for People & Art in fall 2015 that will offer innovative ways of engaging and interacting with art. Since 2006, the BMA has provided free general admission so that everyone can enjoy the power of art.

VISITOR INFORMATION
General admission to the BMA is free. The BMA is open Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m.–6 p.m. (except major holidays). 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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*Image credit: Installation view of 2014 Baker Artist Award winner Chris Bathgate’s artworks. Photo by Mitro Hood.*