

## THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART ANNOUNCES PROMISED GIFT OF SIGNIFICANT WORKS FROM JOHN WATERS' FINE ART COLLECTION

*Gift includes works by 125 artists, as well as nearly 90 objects by Waters*

BALTIMORE, MD (November 11, 2020)—The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) today announces a promised gift of approximately 375 works from John Waters' fine art collection. The long-planned bequest is rich in photographs and works on paper with important examples by 125 artists, including Diane Arbus, Richard Artschwager, Thomas Demand, Nan Goldin, Roy Lichtenstein, Lee Lozano, Christian Marclay, Catherine Opie, Richard Prince, Cindy Sherman, Gary Simmons, Cy Twombly, Andy Warhol, and Christopher Wool. The collection also includes nearly 90 prints, sculptures, mixed-media, and video pieces by Waters, making the BMA the greatest repository of the Baltimore-based artist's work. The gift follows Waters' close collaboration with the museum on its major retrospective of his visual art practice, titled *John Waters: Indecent Exposure*, which opened at the BMA in fall 2018. In recognition of Waters' generosity and to capture the spirit that pervades his work and vision, the museum will name The John Waters Restrooms in the East Lobby—per his request—and The John Waters Rotunda in the European art galleries.

"John's generosity, friendship, and commitment to his hometown are boundless. We are deeply grateful to him for entrusting us with his collection and for giving us the opportunity to engage our many audiences with it. We look forward to collaborating with John on the presentation of his collection gift and to finding new ways of sharing the stories and experiences that it holds with our community," said Clair Zamoiski Segal, the BMA's Board Chair.

The BMA is widely recognized for its substantial prints, drawings, and photographs collection, which includes 65,000 works across a broad range of time periods and geographies and encompasses two-thirds of the museum's overall holdings. The John Waters Collection is a restricted gift with works by an incredible array of artists and represents in depth the work of Vincent Fecteau, Peter Fischli & David Weiss, Peter Hujar, Mike Kelley, Jack Pierson, Karin Sander, and Richard Tuttle. These works greatly enrich the BMA's collection and allow the museum to further enhance its focus on an area of scholarship that distinguishes the institution. The gift is further animated by Waters' creative sensibilities and his long-standing personal relationships with many of the featured artists, making it a particularly singular contribution and one that builds on the long legacy of important collection gifts to the museum, including the Cone Collection, Lucas Collection, and Wurtzberger Collection, among others.

The announcement of this important collection follows the BMA's release in September that it has received \$5 million from longtime museum supporters Nancy Dorman and Stanley Mazaroff to establish a center dedicated to the presentation, study, and preservation of its prints, drawings, and photographs collection. The approximately 7,000-square-foot Nancy Dorman and Stanley Mazaroff Center for the Study of Prints, Drawings and Photographs, which will live on the museum's first floor and open in fall 2021, provides new and prominent gallery space for the presentation of this work. The establishment of the center ensures that the works in the John Waters Collection gift will remain in active rotation within the museum's public displays. The BMA plans to present a comprehensive exhibition of works from the gift in the center's galleries within the next five years.

Waters commented, "The first art I ever bought was a two-dollar Miró poster at The Baltimore Museum of Art gift shop back in the '50s when I was a child. After taking it home and hanging it on my bedroom wall at my parents' house, I realized from the hostile reaction of my neighborhood playmates that art could provoke, shock, and cause

trouble. I became a collector for life. It's only fitting that the fruits of my 60-year search for new art that could startle, antagonize, and infuriate even me, ends up where it all began—in my hometown museum.”

Over the course of his five-decade career, Waters has left an indelible mark on filmmaking and popular culture and pushed the boundaries of creative endeavor. His visual arts practice embraces photographs, sculptures, sound and video works, and mixed-media installations that engage with insider knowledge, celebrity culture, consumerism, sex, and identity. His manipulation and subversion of images, symbols, and low-brow references entice viewers to connect with his astute observations about society—conversations that feel ever more prescient and necessary today. With the John Waters Collection gift, which includes a wide selection of his own works—many of which were included in his retrospective—the BMA will be able to provide, in perpetuity, a comprehensive view of Waters' singular vision and approach.

“The BMA is in many ways the story of the individuals whose contributions have shaped the trajectory of the museum's collection—Robert Garrett, Jacob Epstein, Mary Frick Jacobs, Claribel and Etta Cone, Saidie Adler May, George A. Lucas, and many others. The addition of John Waters' collection brings an extraordinary new chapter to these legacies and offers a particular point of pride for the Baltimore community,” said Christopher Bedford, the BMA's Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director. “As with other significant collections with the museum, John's collection is developed through an acute personal sensibility that harnesses the power of art to elicit humor, provoke questions, and challenge long-held traditions and norms. This vision melds seamlessly with the BMA's own mission to upend the standard narrations of art history. We are delighted and indebted to John for helping us further propel this vision through his own collection gift.”

#### **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**

The BMA is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and the Sculpture Gardens are open Tuesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to dusk. The museum and gardens are closed New Year's Day, July 4, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. General admission is free. Special exhibitions may be ticketed. The BMA is located at 10 Art Museum Drive, three miles north of Baltimore's Inner Harbor.

For general information, call 443-573-1700 or visit [artbma.org](http://artbma.org). Connect with us online at [artbma.org](http://artbma.org) and through social media. #ARTBMA • Stories • Facebook • Twitter • Instagram • YouTube

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