FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD) presents a new spring/summer season of exhibitions including David Huffman: Terra Incognita and Elegies: Still Lifes in Contemporary Art

March 30, 2022 through summer 2022 (see below for individual end dates)
Press Preview: March 29, 2022; 10am-12pm

(February 3, 2022, San Francisco, CA)—This spring, the Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD) presents a diverse roster of new exhibitions that include David Huffman: Terra Incognita, the first museum exhibition surveying the Oakland artist’s Traumanaut series; Elegies: Still Lifes in Contemporary Art, a group exhibition of international artists, including Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Sadie Barnette, Awol Erizku, Deana Lawson, and Rashaad Newsome, who have appropriated the still life genre to create work that reflects on Black diasporic identities, histories, and collective experiences; and the latest in MoAD’s Emerging Artists Program series. Sam Vernon’s site-specific installation Impasse of Desires, which debuted in fall 2021, will continue to be exhibited in the Museum’s Lobby through September.

"We are excited to present our spring exhibitions spotlighting some of the most exciting and influential contemporary Black artists working today," says Monetta White, Executive Director, MoAD. “I am proud of what a powerful place MoAD is and how we continue to show up for our communities, both online and in-person, as we all continue to navigate a world with COVID."

David Huffman: Terra Incognita
March 30 - September 18, 2022

Emerging from deep explorations of science fiction, formalist abstraction, and social justice movements of the late-20th century, Terra Incognita brings together three decades of Oakland-based artist David Huffman’s expansive Traumanaut series. The exhibition is the first museum survey of the series and showcases the extensive narrative that Huffman has been designing since the early 1990s across a range of media including large-scale canvas, works on paper, ceramics, video, and printmaking.

The traumanauts are characters who traverse the galaxy—otherworldly yet remarkably human—in a constant search for freedom and home. This crew of explorers represent a cosmic release into the universe and freedom of unencumbered expression. They find themselves in a host of landscapes, both terrestrial and extraterrestrial, including intergalactic basketball courts, the rooftops of New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina, and in the front seats of a fleet of muscle cars during an Oakland sideshow. The works make vivid an unknown land of cultural relics in celebratory urban ruins.
The traumanauts’ immediate predecessors, cyborg characters Trauma Eve and Luxor DX, developed out of Huffman’s investigation of minstrelsy and the psychological effects of racist caricature on Black subjects. This informs his conception of the “traumasmile,” a term coined by the artist describing a survival gesture in response to acts of intentional and institutional anti-Black racism. Huffman looks inside the body, mirroring internal organs and celestial formations in a technicolor abyss. He combines digital and analog concerns, functioning as a cartographer by visually mapping abstracted realms of deep Outerspace through an imagined Innerspace.

David Huffman (b. 1963) studied at the New York Studio School, New York, NY and the California College of the Arts and Crafts in Oakland, CA. He received his MFA at the California College of the Arts in San Francisco in 1999. Huffman has had numerous exhibitions internationally with solo exhibitions presented at Miles McEnery Gallery, New York, NY; Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco, CA; Paulson Fontaine Press, Berkeley, CA; Residency, Palo Alto Art Center, Palo Alto, CA; Roberts and Tilton Gallery, Culver City, CA; Patricia Sweetow Gallery, San Francisco, CA; and San Francisco Art Commission Galleries, San Francisco, CA.

Recent group exhibitions include Personal to Political, Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Detroit, MI; Ordinary Objects / Wild Things, de Young Museum, San Francisco, CA; Counternarratives, Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; See Something, Say Something, Museum of Sonoma County, Santa Rosa, CA; Way Bay, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, CA; Personal to Political: Celebrating African-American Artists of Paulson Fontaine Press, DeVos Art Museum, Northern Michigan University, Marquette, MI; Sidelined, curated by Samuel Levi Jones, Galerie Lelong & Co, New York, NY; Where is Here, curated by Jacqueline Francis and Kathy Zarur, Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco, CA; Public Arts Project, Franz Mayer of Munich, Munich, Germany; March Madness, curated by Hank Willis Thomas and Adam Shopkor, FORT GANSEVOORT, New York, NY; and Place, Art Projects International, New York, NY.

His work may be found in the permanent collections of Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, AL; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA; and The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY, among others. Huffman’s commissioned 2019 work, Rise, is on permanent display at the Chase Center in San Francisco.

David Huffman: Terra Incognita is curated by independent curator Emily Kuhlmann and Elena Gross, Director of Exhibitions and Curatorial Affairs, MoAD.

Elegies: Still Lifes in Contemporary Art
March 30 - August 21, 2022

Elegies: Still Lifes in Contemporary Art is a group exhibition bringing together an international group of more than fifteen artists who have disrupted or extended the traditional presentation of still lifes. The artists have appropriated the genre in order to create works within a framework of Black diasporic identities, histories, and collective experiences. The works are expressed through various mediums,
including painting, photography, sculpture, printmaking, performance, and installation. Many of the artists are primarily known for portraiture, therefore the still lifes are compelling outliers in their practices. A central discourse in this exhibition considers Blackness in relation to the existential question, “How does an artist create work about the body without the body being present?” resulting in political, historical, and art historical interventions. *Elegies* is a thematic exhibition that presents two parallel narratives: one is an art historical examination of still lifes and the other is how that history is connected to Black figuration.

Pittsburgh-based Devan Shimoyama’s installations *For Tamir VII* and *For Tamir VIII* (2019) depict swings festooned with flowers and decoration, serving as a poignant monument to twelve year old Tamir Elijah Rice, an African American boy who had been playing outside a recreation center with a toy gun in November of 2014. He was subsequently killed by police responding to an anonymous complaint.


Participating artists include Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Sadie Barnette, LaKela Brown, Elizabeth Colomba, David Antonio Cruz, Awol Erizku, Leslie Hewitt, Yashua Klos, Deana Lawson, Azikiwe Mohammed, Rashaad Newsome, Toyin Ojih Odutola, Paul Mpagi Sepuya, Devan Shimoyama, William Villalongo, and Brittney Leanne Williams.

*Elegies: Still Lifes in Contemporary Art* is curated by Monique Long, a NY-based independent curator of contemporary art, art advisor, educator, and writer. The exhibition will travel to the Telfair Museum in Savannah, Georgia in fall 2022.

*Elegies: Still Lifes in Contemporary Art* is supported by The Kinkade Family Foundation and The Girlfriend Fund.

Related programming includes:

**Performance | green,howiwantyougreen with participating Elegies artist David Antonio Cruz**  
**Thursday, March 31, 2022 | 6:30-8:30pm**  
*green,howiwantyougreen*, is an experimental and interactive, bilingual performance based on the Spanish poet Garcia Lorca’s last eleven poems, *Sonnets of Dark Love*. The multilingual performance clashes high art with queer slang—playing with language, music, and double entendres particular to Latino and Black underground gay culture.

**Panel Discussion | ELEGIES: Recontextualizing Still Life**  
**Thursday, April 28, 2022 | 6:30-8:00pm**  
Artists from ELEGIES discuss how they are expanding the genre of still life with Taylor Aldridge, Visual Arts Curator at the California African American Museum.
**Sam Vernon: Impasse of Desires**
**Continues through September 18, 2022**

Using Matt Richardson’s 2013 publication, *The Queer Limit of Black Memory* as a critical entry point, this site-specific installation by San Francisco-based artist Sam Vernon considers the questions Richardson raises—most urgently, *where is the space for queerness to exist within a collective imagining of blackness?*—and underscores their critical relevance seven years later.

In Richardson’s introduction, he cites the photomosaic of Chester Higgins Jr.’s *Young Girl from Ghana* that adorns two and a half floors of the Museum’s exterior street front as a troubling site of both celebration and erasure: while the mosaic offers a kaleidoscope of Black faces, familial structures, and community, it noticeably underrepresents non-normative gender and sexual expression. Richardson notes, “Standing in MoAD, I seemed to be at an impasse of desires…”

Vernon utilizes the first-floor space to tease out the gaps and imagine the possibilities for queer subjecthood within them. In the hallway, she loosely constructs a constellation of images into a broken grid with holes and inconsistencies, challenging the form’s authoritarian nature, creating what the artist calls “visual friction.” Recognizing loss and messiness as inherent to the diasporic condition, Vernon like Richardson, calls for queering Black time and space.

Sam Vernon earned her MFA in Painting/Printmaking from Yale University in 2015 and her BFA from The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in 2009. Her installations combine xerox collages, photographs, paintings and sculptural components in an exploration of personal narrative, identity and historical memory. Vernon teaches in the Printmedia and Graduate Fine Arts program as an Assistant Professor at California College of the Arts and Bard College as a Visiting Assistant Professor in StudioArts.

**ABOUT MoAD**

The Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD) is a contemporary art museum whose mission is to celebrate Black cultures, ignite challenging conversations, and inspire learning through the global lens of the African Diaspora. MoAD is one of only a few museums in the United States dedicated to the celebration and interpretation of art, artists, and cultures from the African Diaspora. The Museum presents exhibitions highlighting contemporary art and artists of African descent and engages its audience through education and public programs that interpret and enhance the understanding of Black art. Founded in 2005, the Museum continues to be a unique, cultural arts staple in the San Francisco Bay Area community.

For more information about MoAD, visit The Museum’s website at moadsf.org.

For media information or visuals visit our online press gallery or contact:
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Online moadsf.org/press-center/

General Information
The Museum is open Wednesday-Saturday 11am–6pm and Sunday, 12–5pm. Museum admission is $12 for adults, $6 for students and senior citizens with a valid ID. Youth 12 and under always get in free. For general information, the public may visit The Museum's website at moadsf.org or call 415.358.7200. MoAD is located at 685 Mission Street (at Third), San Francisco, CA.

COVID-19 protocol: City and State guidelines will be observed. Please check moadsf.org for details.

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