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THE BMA LAUNCHES THE NECESSITY OF TOMORROW(S) CONVERSATION SERIES THIS FALL WITH MARK BRADFORD

BALTIMORE, MD (October 5, 2017)— On Saturday, November 11, The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) is launching a series of free creative conversations and social events that brings together nationally recognized artists, writers, and thought-leaders to consider key ideas at the intersection of art, race, and social justice—and imagining the futures we want. **The Necessity of Tomorrow(s)** speaker series will kick off with a conversation between acclaimed artist Mark Bradford and BMA Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director Christopher Bedford, who most recently collaborated on the BMA's presentation of the U.S. Pavilion at the 2017 Venice Biennale. Drawing on themes explored in Bradford's installation, *Tomorrow Is Another Day*, their conversation will focus on the topic of making a path to power where none has existed before, a theme often explored in Bradford's work.

The event—which includes live music, light refreshments, art making activities, and community conversation—will be held at the historic Union Baptist Church at 1201 Druid Hill Avenue from 12:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Admission is free and the doors open at 11:30 a.m. The event will also be live-streamed at Morgan State University's Murphy Fine Arts Center Recital Hall to provide broader access. To reserve a free ticket, visit artbma.org.

"As Baltimore's civic museum, we believe it is incumbent upon us to use our exhibitions, collections, and public programs as platforms to engage the most urgent questions of our time," said BMA Director Christopher Bedford. "Mark Bradford's life and work have been an inspiration to me and many others, and I'm certain his activities as an artist, activist, advocate, and philanthropist will resonate deeply across the city of Baltimore as we imagine our futures together."

The Necessity of Tomorrow(s) borrows its title from an essay by science fiction author Samuel Delaney that argues for the role of creative speculation in making a more just future. Artist Mark Bradford's conversation with Christopher Bedford will explore how he changed the course of his life when he was 30 years old to eventually become one of the most accomplished artists of his generation. Bradford will discuss his exhibition for the United States Pavilion at the Venice Biennale and Art + Practice, the nonprofit he co-founded in South Los Angeles to support the needs of local foster youth. The event will also include performances by Baltimore-based musician Clarence Ward III, poet Kondwani Fidel, and DJ Pierre Benu.

The next Necessity of Tomorrow(s) event will take place on Saturday, February 24, 2018. Speakers will be announced in the coming weeks.

The Necessity of Tomorrow(s) is generously sponsored by Suzanne F. Cohen and the Cohen Opportunity Fund.

ABOUT MARK BRADFORD

Mark Bradford was born in 1961 in Los Angeles, where he lives and works. He received a BFA (1995) and MFA (1997) from the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia. Best known for his large-scale abstract paintings that examine the class-, race-, and gender-based economies that structure urban society in the United States, Bradford's richly layered and collaged canvases represent a connection to the social world through materials. Bradford uses fragments of found posters, billboards, newsprint, and custom-printed paper to simultaneously engage with and advance the formal traditions of abstract painting.

Solo exhibitions include *Scorched Earth* at the Hammer Museum (2015), *Sea Monsters* at the Rose Art Museum (2014) and Aspen Art Museum (2011), *Maps and Manifests* at Cincinnati Art Museum (2008), and *Neither New Nor Correct* at the Whitney Museum of American Art (2007). In 2010, *Mark Bradford*, a large-scale survey of his work, was organized by Christopher Bedford and presented at the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, before traveling to the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Dallas Museum of Art; and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Bradford was selected to represent the U.S. at the 2017 Venice Biennale, which presented his solo exhibition *Tomorrow Is Another Day* in the U.S. Pavilion. Beginning November 2017, the artist will present *Pickett's Charge*, a monumental commissioned cyclorama of paintings at the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C. Bradford's work has been widely exhibited and has been included in group shows at LACMA Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2014), Whitney Museum of American Art (2013), the 12th Istanbul Biennial (2011), Seoul Biennial (2010), the Carnegie International (2008), São Paulo Biennial (2006), and Whitney Biennial (2006). In 2009, Mark Bradford was the recipient of the MacArthur Foundation 'Genius' Award, and in 2014, he received the U.S. Department of State's Medal of Arts.

ABOUT CHRISTOPHER BEDFORD

Christopher Bedford is the Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director of The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) and the 10th director to lead the museum, which is renowned for its outstanding collections of 19th-century, modern, and contemporary art. Recognized as an innovative and dynamic leader for building greater community engagement and creating programs of national and international impact, Bedford served as director of the Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University for four years prior to joining the BMA and was appointed as Commissioner for the U.S. Pavilion for the 2017 Venice Biennale, the world's most prestigious contemporary art fair, which debuted an exhibition of new work by American artist Mark Bradford. Previously, Bedford held the positions of chief curator and curator of exhibitions at the Wexner Center for the Arts at The Ohio State University (2008-2012), where he organized a nationally travelling exhibition of the work of Mark Bradford. He also served as assistant curator and curatorial assistant in the Department of Contemporary Art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2006-2008) and consulting curator in the Department of Sculpture and Decorative Arts for the J. Paul Getty Museum (2006-2008). Born in Scotland and raised in the United States and the UK, Bedford has a Bachelor of Arts from Oberlin College, received a master's degree in art history through the joint program at Case Western Reserve University and the Cleveland Museum of Art, and has studied in the doctoral programs in art history at the University of Southern California and the Courtauld Institute of Art at the University of London. Bedford is also a noted author and contributor to publications including *Art in America*, *ArtForum*, and *Frieze*, among others. He is currently a trustee of Art + Practice, Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance, and Maryland Citizens for the Arts.

ABOUT UNION BAPTIST CHURCH

Union Baptist Church was founded in 1852 with a collective of freemen and former slaves who banded together to express the liberating power of God. The church has a rich history in the Civil Rights Movement, including landmark cases that gained equal pay for black teachers and outlawed the identification of African Americans as cargo in interstate commerce. In 1885, the Church established the Mutual United Brotherhood of Liberty that became the forerunner and model for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The church building, which is listed on the National Register of Historical Places, was designed by William Beardsley, Jr. in 1905 with opalescent stained glass windows designed by John LaFarge. Other significant achievements include advocating for the creation of The Frederick Douglass High School and hosting its first graduation classes in 1923, building the Harvey Johnson Community Center in 1955, and founding its nationally known Head Start Program in 1968. Union Baptist Church's reputation for Civil Rights advocacy and political empowerment expanded in the 1960s as they championed the desegregation of Gwynn Oak Park, the election of Congressman Parren J. Mitchell, and the work of the "Goon Squad" civil rights group. Under the current administration of Rev. Dr. Alvin Hathaway, Union Baptist Church continues its leadership in education, workforce development, and community empowerment. In 2007, the church developed a Cyber Center and began a Comcast Essential Learning Zone Center within six schools through its partnership with the University of Maryland School of Social Work and Dr. Richard Barth, Dean, co-chair of Promises Heights.

ABOUT 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.

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