

**Dallas Museum of Art and High Museum of Art to Present  
Pioneering Design Exhibition Exploring the Spectrum of Sensory Experience**

**Debut of New Works by International Designers  
Ini Archibong, Matt Checkowski, Misha Kahn, the Ladd Brothers,  
Laurie Haycock Makela, and Yuri Suzuki**

***Speechless* Opens at the Dallas Museum of Art in November 2019,  
Travels to the High Museum of Art in April 2020**

Dallas, TX—June 13, 2019—The Dallas Museum of Art (DMA) (Dallas, TX) and the High Museum of Art (High) (Atlanta, GA) today announced the co-organization of *Speechless*, an exhibition that merges research, aesthetics, and innovative new design to explore the vast spectrum of sensory experiences and new approaches to accessibility and modes of communication in the museum setting. *Speechless* will debut new work by six leading and emerging international designers and design teams—**Ini Archibong, Matt Checkowski, Misha Kahn, Steven and William Ladd, Laurie Haycock Makela, and Yuri Suzuki**—whose projects were informed by conversations with specialists from prominent academic and medical institutions. Their site-specific installations and new commissions will create participatory environments and distinct situations in which senses merge or are substituted for one another.

Curated by Sarah Schleuning, The Margot B. Perot Senior Curator of Decorative Arts and Design and Interim Chief Curator at the DMA, *Speechless* will open at the DMA on November 10, 2019, and remain on view through February 23, 2020. The exhibition is presented in Dallas by Texas Instruments. The High will present the exhibition in Atlanta from April 25 through September 6, 2020.

“This exhibition is about blurring the boundaries between senses, media, disciplines, and environments to encourage visitors to interact and communicate through design,” said Schleuning. “*Speechless* is about what makes us as individuals unique—the challenges we experience through ourselves and others—ultimately defining the interconnections among all of us. Our perceptions, experiences, and differences should unite us instead of divide us, heightening our understandings and creating a greater sense of empathy in ourselves and our community.”

“The DMA is committed to offering our audiences opportunities for discovery and for learning about different perspectives and cultures through our exhibitions and collections, and the intersections between them,” said Agustín Arteaga, the DMA’s Eugene McDermott Director. “In line with this approach, Sarah’s work on this groundbreaking project—involving years of cross-disciplinary study and collaboration with designers, scholars, and scientists at the forefront of innovation in art and accessibility—is truly pioneering within our field and creates an incredible opportunity to provide a truly distinct museum experience to our audiences. We are pleased to partner with the High in presenting *Speechless*, an exhibition that creates meaningful experiences for visitors of all backgrounds and abilities, and also contributes important scholarship and insight about how museums can innovate with everything from installation to the visitor experience.”

“Sarah Schleuning began to develop this important project while serving as our curator of decorative arts and design, so it feels very fitting, and full circle, to co-organize this exhibition with our esteemed colleagues at the DMA,” said Rand Suffolk, Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr., Director of the High. “This exhibition dovetails perfectly with our ongoing and evolving commitment to access. Consequently, we’re excited to welcome audiences with wide-ranging abilities to experience these unique and immersive installations. We hope to learn something important about how such a diverse group of visitors interacts with these works as well as engages with each other within the spaces.”

Harnessing the power and impact of design, *Speechless* offers audiences unconventional multisensory experiences that foster understanding of the varied ways in which we experience the world through our senses. The exhibition presents opportunities for new modes of communicating ideas beyond speech and words. Organized in five major sections, the exhibition is connected by a central introductory space and sensory de-escalation area, through which visitors must pass to move between sections. Six contemporary designers will create spaces that fuse multiple sensory experiences—for instance, rendering sound visible or language tactile. The works include:

- ***The Oracle***, designed and engineered by California-born, Switzerland-based multi-disciplinary designer **Ini Archibong**, will explore non-traditional ways of experiencing sound. The space occupied by Archibong’s work will be infused with a soothing, harmonious soundscape created by a custom synthesizer, which removes discordant sound and produces pure sound waves. The installation will feature an array of interactive elements designed to illustrate sound through movement, shape, light, and color, including a pool with an obelisk that visitors can rotate to tune the sound to various bass tones, thereby changing the shape and movement of the water as well; a gridlike shelving system holding handblown glass shapes that pivot to initiate shifts in light and color; and knobs throughout the room that visitors can turn to communally alter the sound in the space.
- ***Glyph***, by designer and filmmaker **Matt Checkowski**, will explore the creativity behind each designer’s work in *Speechless* and the role of empathy that informs it through a series of narrative and intimate short film portraits of each artist. He is developing a method of word and image translation whereby the filmed speech of each artist will be transformed live into images, offering a new, universal visual language for the ideas conveyed by the creative minds involved with this project.
- Brooklyn-based designer and artist **Misha Kahn** will create a meandering coral garden composed of vibrant, dynamic inflatables that will move in multiple ways, inflating and deflating over the course of each day. Visitors can touch, sit, squeeze, and otherwise interact with the inflatable forms, both observing the landscape change around them and themselves participating in the alteration.
- ***Scroll Space***, presented by New York-based brothers and artists **Steven and William Ladd**, will be a vibrant and tactile room created entirely of tens of thousands of hand-rolled textile “scrolls.” These scrolls will be made in collaboration with 2,000 community members in Dallas and Atlanta through the Ladd Brothers’ community engagement program Scrollathon®, which brings the arts to underserved populations through hands-on creative workshops. The Dallas program will include participants from the Center for BrainHealth and the Callier Center for Communication Disorders at the University of Texas at Dallas.
- The exhibition’s graphic identity and corresponding publication ***Speechless: Beyond Sense*** is created by **Laurie Haycock Makela**, a leader in the field of experimental, transdisciplinary graphic design. Playing with the multiple meanings of the word “speechless,” the publication will explore the evolution of the project, document the installations, and feature conversations

between the designers and the curator. Both innovative and accessible, her work contributes to the foundation of total inclusive and interactive experience of the project.

- ***Sound Of The Earth Chapter 2***, a sound installation by London-based sound artist and designer **Yuri Suzuki**, will integrate audio crowdsourced from around the world. The work will take the form of a spherical sculpture with which visitors can interact by placing their ears against the surface. Each spot on the sphere represents a different area of the world and will “whisper” back a corresponding sound sourced from that region, enabling visitors to experience the globe in a fresh way, beyond text and words. Anyone around the world can submit audio via the DMA’s website at [earthsounds.dma.org](http://earthsounds.dma.org).

### About the Artists

**Ini Archibong** was born and raised in Pasadena, California, where he graduated from the Art Center College of Design. After a period living and working in Singapore and traveling widely, he moved to Switzerland, where he is currently based, to pursue further studies in luxury design and craftsmanship and received a master’s degree from École cantonale d’art de Lausanne (ECAL). He has designed furniture for such luxury brands as Hermès, de Sede, Bernhardt Design, Ruinart, Christofle and Vacheron Constantin. He is currently collaborating with the Friedman Benda Gallery in New York and Sé Collections in London, with whom he released the second installment of the *Below the Heavens* during this year’s Salone del Mobile in Milan.

**Matt Checkowski** is a designer and filmmaker based in Los Angeles. He has served as the creative force behind the dream sequences in Steven Spielberg’s *Minority Report*; The Sensorium, a first-of-its-kind interactive perfume museum in New York; and the digital media content for a science fiction opera at l’Opera de Monte Carlo; and he was the co-director of *Lies & Alibis*, a feature film starring Steve Coogan, Sam Elliott, James Marsden, and Rebecca Romijn. In 2006 Checkowski established the Department of the 4th Dimension, a multi-disciplinary studio working at the intersection of storytelling, technology, and branding with clients that include the Walker Art Center, MIT, Victoria’s Secret, Sephora, Unilever, Electrolux, and the University of California. His work has been profiled in the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Wired*, and *Popular Science*, among others.

**Misha Kahn** was born in Duluth, Minnesota, and graduated from the Rhode Island school of Design with a BFA in furniture design in 2011. His work exists at the intersection of design and sculpture, exploring a wide variety of media and scales from mouse to house. Kahn’s approach melds an array of processes, from casting, carving, welding, and weaving, to imaginative and singular modes of production. According to former president of the Rhode Island School of Design John Maeda, “Misha creates work for a parallel wonderland, where traditional perception of material and structure is pushed to the edges of the room to make space for one big party.” His work has been exhibited internationally and is in the permanent collection of numerous museums and public collections, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and the Corning Museum of Glass.

Brothers **Steven and William Ladd** have created multi-disciplinary works combining sculpture, performance, design, and social activism since they began collaborating in 2000. They have exhibited at the Musée des arts décoratifs and had solo exhibitions at numerous American institutions, including their hometown institution the Saint Louis Art Museum. Their work is labor-intensive and has varied from large three-dimensional murals to book bindings. Through their Scrollathon® they have worked with over 7,000 people, including children, hospital patients, and special needs individuals. Their work is

in the collections of the Musée des arts décoratifs at the Louvre, the Honolulu Museum of Art, the Corning Museum of Glass, and Mingei International Museum.

**Laurie Haycock Makela** has been a recognized voice of experimental graphic and trans-disciplinary design practice and education for over 30 years in the United States and Europe. She has taught at prestigious institutions in Sweden, Germany, and Los Angeles. She was designer-in-residence and co-chair of the department of 2-D design at the Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, from 1996 to 2001 with the late P. Scott Makela. Their studio, Words and Pictures for Business and Culture, produced print and new media for clients such as NIKE, MTV and Warner Bros. She was awarded the AIGA (American Institute of Graphic Arts) Medal, the profession's highest honor, in 2000. Most recently, she became the first designer-in-residence at USC's Roski School of Art and Design.

**Yuri Suzuki** is a sound artist, designer, and electronic musician who explores the realms of sound through exquisitely designed pieces. His work looks into the way people experience sound, and how music and sound affect their minds. His sound, art, and installations have been internationally exhibited and he has work in several permanent collections across the world. He began his own design studio in 2013, working alongside Disney, Google, and Yamaha, among others.

*Speechless* is organized by the Dallas Museum of Art and the High Museum of Art, Atlanta. The exhibition in Dallas is presented by Texas Instruments.

"As a presenting sponsor of *Speechless*, Texas Instruments is honored to continue a more than 50-year partnership with the DMA," said Andy Smith, Executive Director of the TI Foundation and Director of Corporate Philanthropy. "This is another stellar example of the forward-thinking, unconventional exhibits the DMA continues to curate and bring to the North Texas community. As a company that thrives on innovation and inclusion, we are proud to partner with an organization that contributes to our renowned arts and culture scene."

Support for the exhibition in Atlanta is provided by wish foundation. This exhibition in Atlanta is made possible by Exhibition Series Sponsors Delta Air Lines, Inc., Northside Hospital, and WarnerMedia; Premier Exhibition Series Supporters the Antinori Foundation, Sarah and Jim Kennedy, and Louise Sams and Jerome Grilhot; Benefactor Exhibition Series Supporter Anne Cox Chambers Foundation; Ambassador Exhibition Series Supporters Tom and Susan Wardell, and Rod Westmoreland; and Contributing Exhibition Series Supporters Lucinda W. Bunnen, Marcia and John Donnell, W. Daniel Ebersole and Sarah Eby-Ebersole, Peggy Foreman, Robin and Hilton Howell, Mr. and Mrs. Baxter Jones, Margot and Danny McCaul, Joel Knox and Joan Marmo, and The Ron and Lisa Brill Family Charitable Trust. Generous support is also provided by the Alfred and Adele Davis Exhibition Endowment Fund, Anne Cox Chambers Exhibition Fund, Barbara Stewart Exhibition Fund, Dorothy Smith Hopkins Exhibition Endowment Fund, Eleanor McDonald Storza Exhibition Endowment Fund, The Fay and Barrett Howell Exhibition Fund, Forward Arts Foundation Exhibition Endowment Fund, Helen S. Lanier Endowment Fund, Isobel Anne Fraser–Nancy Fraser Parker Exhibition Endowment Fund, John H. and Wilhelmina D. Harland Exhibition Endowment Fund, Katherine Murphy Riley Special Exhibition Endowment Fund, Margaretta Taylor Exhibition Fund, and the RJR Nabisco Exhibition Endowment Fund.

#### **About the Dallas Museum of Art**

Established in 1903, the Dallas Museum of Art (DMA) is among the 10 largest art museums in the country and is distinguished by its commitment to research, innovation, and public engagement. At the heart of the Museum and its programs is its global collection, which encompasses more than 24,000

works and spans 5,000 years of history, representing a full range of world cultures. Located in the nation's largest arts district, the Museum acts as a catalyst for community creativity, engaging people of all ages and backgrounds with a diverse spectrum of programming, from exhibitions and lectures to concerts, literary events, and dramatic and dance presentations. Since the Museum's return to free general admission in 2013, the DMA has welcomed more than 4 million visitors, including more than 800,000 in 2018. For more information, visit [DMA.org](http://DMA.org).

The Dallas Museum of Art is supported, in part, by the generosity of DMA Members and donors, the citizens of Dallas through the City of Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs, and the Texas Commission on the Arts.

### **About the High Museum of Art**

Located in the heart of Atlanta, Georgia, the High Museum of Art connects with audiences from across the Southeast and around the world through its distinguished collection, dynamic schedule of special exhibitions, and engaging community-focused programs. Housed within facilities designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architects Richard Meier and Renzo Piano, the High features a collection of more than 17,000 works of art, including an extensive anthology of 19th- and 20th-century American fine and decorative arts; major holdings of photography and folk and self-taught work, especially that of artists from the American South; burgeoning collections of modern and contemporary art, including paintings, sculpture, new media, and design; a growing collection of African art, with work dating from pre-history through the present; and significant holdings of European paintings and works on paper. The High is dedicated to reflecting the diversity of its communities and offering a variety of exhibitions and educational programs that engage visitors with the world of art, the lives of artists, and the creative process. For more information about the High, visit [high.org](http://high.org).

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