

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **FIGURING HISTORY: ROBERT COLESCOTT, KERRY JAMES MARSHALL, MICKALENE THOMAS OPENS AT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM FEBRUARY 15**

Three generations of contemporary American artists offer bold perspectives on Black culture and representation

Dynamic lineup of public programs includes Marshall and Thomas in conversation at a free opening celebration

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SEATTLE, WA - The Seattle Art Museum presents *Figuring History: Robert Colescott, Kerry James Marshall, Mickalene Thomas* (February 15-May 13, 2018), bringing together for the first time three leading American artists from three different generations whose work challenges a Western painting tradition that historically erases or misrepresents people of color. While each artist's paintings are distinctive in style, subject matter, and the historic moments they reference, collectively they critique and redefine mainstream narratives of history and representation. At the heart of these artists' portrayals are material and cultural histories centered on Black experiences and perspectives.

Organized by the Seattle Art Museum, the exhibition comprises 25 large-scale paintings on loan from institutions and collections across the country. It features a work from SAM's collection—the recently acquired *Les Demoiselles d'Alabama: Vestidas* (1985) by Robert Colescott—as well as three paintings made by Mickalene Thomas specifically for the exhibition. She also presents a staged “living room” installation that visitors can interact with and sit in.

The living artists, Kerry James Marshall and Mickalene Thomas, will appear in conversation about their artistic practices at a free opening celebration.

### **PROGRAMS AND EVENTS**

Art Beyond Sight and docent tours, as well as programs for educators and school groups, will be held in conjunction with the exhibition in addition to the following public and family programs. Details are subject to change; additional programs or events may be added. For the most up-to-date information, go to [visitsam.org/figuringhistory](http://visitsam.org/figuringhistory).

**Thu Feb 15**

### **Figuring History: Community Celebration**

5-9 pm

Seattle Art Museum

The whole community is invited to this free, family-friendly opening celebration featuring music, performances, art-making, an artist talk, and more.



Presented by Delta Air Lines and Target. Sponsored by RealNetworks Foundation.

**Thu Feb 15**

**SAM Talks: Kerry James Marshall and Mickalene Thomas**

7-8 pm

Seattle Art Museum

As part of the opening celebration, *Figuring History* artists Kerry James Marshall and Mickalene Thomas appear in conversation about their artistic practices.

**Wed Feb 28**

**Complex Exchange: Figuring Black Futures Today**

7-9 pm

Northwest African American Museum

Presented in partnership with the Northwest African American Museum, Complex Exchange pairs Seattle community members from varying disciplines in a series of conversations related to issues of race, power, politics, and representation inspired by exhibitions on view at both institutions.

Sponsored by Starbucks Coffee Company.

**Thu Mar 1, Apr 5, May 3**

**Drop-In Studio: Creating History**

6:30-7 pm

Seattle Art Museum

Visit SAM on First Thursdays for a free drop-in art-making session inspired by *Figuring History* and led by local artists.

**Fri Mar 2**

**First Friday Lecture: Catharina Manchanda**

11 am - noon

Seattle Art Museum

Join Catharina Manchanda, Jon and Mary Shirley Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, as she discusses *Figuring History*.

**Sat Mar 10**

**Family Fun Workshop: Home Is Where the Art Is**

10 am-12:30 pm

Seattle Art Museum

What makes a house a home? Reflect on images of home in *Figuring History* and create a diorama of your special place. For ages 3-6 and caregivers.

Presented by Delta Air Lines and Target. Sponsored by RealNetworks Foundation.

**Sat Mar 24**

**Family Fun Workshop: Poses and Postures**

Seattle Art Museum

10 am-12:30 pm

Explore images in *Figuring History* and get an introduction to figure drawing. For ages 6-10 and caregivers. Presented by Delta Air Lines and Target.

Sponsored by RealNetworks Foundation.

**Wed Mar 28**

**Complex Exchange: Figuring Black Futures Today**

7-9 pm

Seattle Art Museum

Presented in partnership with the Northwest African American Museum, Complex Exchange pairs Seattle community members from varying disciplines in a series of conversations related to issues of race, power, politics, and representation inspired by exhibitions on view at both institutions.

Sponsored by Starbucks Coffee Company.

**Fri Mar 30**

**SAM Remix**

8 pm - midnight

Seattle Art Museum

#SAMRemix returns, jam-packed with eclectic performances, tours, dancing, creating, and exploring SAM's collection and special exhibitions. Revive at Remix, a lively late-night out inspired by *Figuring History*.

Remix is sponsored by Delta Air Lines and Starbucks Coffee Company. Media sponsors are The Stranger and KEXP 90.3 FM.

**Sat Apr 7**

**Family Fun Workshop: All That Glitters**

10 am-12:30 pm

Seattle Art Museum

Roll up your sleeves and get arty with unconventional materials to create a mixed-media masterpiece inspired by *Figuring History*. For ages 3-6 and caregivers.

Presented by Delta Air Lines and Target. Sponsored by RealNetworks Foundation.

**Sat Apr 14**

**Legendary Children**

8-11 pm

Seattle Art Museum

Join us for a night of the beautiful, transgressive, and unique as we celebrate QTPOC communities. Featuring some of Seattle's most talented queer artists, this event invites you to join in conversations sparked by *Figuring History*.

**Sat Apr 21**

**Family Fun Workshop: Collage and Construct**

10 am-12:30 pm

Seattle Art Museum

Step outside the box and construct your own 3-D sculpture inspired by materials you see in *Figuring History*. For ages 6-10 and caregivers.

Presented by Delta Air Lines and Target. Sponsored by RealNetworks Foundation.

**Fri May 4**

**Teen Night Out**

7-10 pm

Seattle Art Museum

For teens by teens! Make the museum yours during this action-packed night for high school-age teens only. Inspired by *Figuring History*, this free event features DJs, teen art tours, and art-making led by local contemporary artists.

Support for teen programs is provided by Hearst Foundations.

**EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION AND SUPPORT**

*Figuring History: Robert Colescott, Kerry James Marshall, Mickalene Thomas* is organized by the Seattle Art Museum.

Special exhibitions at SAM are made possible by donors to

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FOR SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS**

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**Image credits:** *George Washington Carver Crossing the Delaware: Page from an American History Textbook*, 1975, Robert Colescott, acrylic on canvas, 84 x 108 in., Private collection, Saint Louis, © 2017 Estate of Robert Colescott / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, photo: Jean Paul Torno. *School of Beauty, School of Culture*, 2012, Kerry James Marshall, acrylic and glitter on unstretched canvas, 108 x 158 in., Birmingham Museum of Art, Museum purchase with funds provided by Elizabeth (Bibby) Smith, the Collectors Circle for Contemporary Art, Jane Comer, the Sankofa Society, and general acquisition funds, 2012.57, © Kerry James Marshall. *Tamika sur une chaise longue avec Monet*, 2012, Mickalene Thomas, rhinestones, acrylic, oil, and enamel on wood panel, 108 x 144 x 2 in., Sydney & Walda Besthoff, Courtesy of the artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York and Hong Kong, © Mickalene Thomas.

**ABOUT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM**

As the leading visual art institution in the Pacific Northwest, SAM draws on its global collections, powerful exhibitions, and dynamic programs to provide unique educational resources benefiting the Seattle region, the Pacific Northwest, and beyond. SAM was founded in 1933 with a focus on Asian art. By the late 1980s the museum had outgrown its original home, and in 1991 a new 155,000-square-foot downtown building, designed by Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, opened to the public. The 1933 building was renovated and reopened as the Asian Art Museum in 1994. SAM's desire to further serve its community was realized in 2007 with the opening of two stunning new facilities: the nine-acre Olympic Sculpture Park (designed by Weiss/Manfredi Architects)—a “museum without walls,” free and open to all—and the Allied Works Architecture designed 118,000-square-foot expansion of its main, downtown location, including 232,000 square feet of additional space built for future expansion. The Olympic Sculpture Park and SAM's downtown expansion celebrate their tenth anniversary in 2017.

From a strong foundation of Asian art to noteworthy collections of African and Oceanic art, Northwest Coast Native American art, European and American art, and modern and contemporary art, the strength of SAM's collection of approximately 25,000 objects lies in its diversity of media, cultures, and time periods.