

PRESS RELEASE

11150 East Boulevard
Cleveland OH 44106-1797
www.clevelandart.org



For more information and images, please contact:
Kelley Notaro Schreiber, 216-707-6898, knotaro@clevelandart.org

The Cleveland Museum of Art Presents *Picturing Motherhood Now*

Exhibition examines interpretations of motherhood by a diverse array of contemporary artists

Cleveland (October 6, 2021) – *Picturing Motherhood Now* brings together work by 33 diverse contemporary artists who interpret *motherhood* as a term with many meanings. The exhibition focuses on art created in the past two decades, including work by Wendy Red Star and LaToya Ruby Frazier, while integrating work by significant pioneers, including Louise Bourgeois, Alice Neel, Betye Saar and others, to narrate an intergenerational and evolving story of motherhood. In their art, made in a variety of media, motherhood becomes a lens through which to examine contemporary social issues—the changing definitions of family and gender, the histories and afterlives of slavery, the legacies of migration and the preservation of matrilineal Indigenous cultures. *Picturing Motherhood Now* is on view in the Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundation Exhibition Gallery from October 16, 2021, through March 13, 2022.

“Picturing Motherhood Now examines contemporary interpretations of motherhood against the backdrop of the CMA’s encyclopedic collections,” said William M. Griswold, director of the CMA. “Visitors to this compelling exhibition will understand how these artists challenge traditional representations of motherhood and how they diverge from historical treatments of the theme.”

“The subject of motherhood touches every human life—and its representation has been a major theme throughout the history of art,” said Emily Liebert, curator of contemporary art. “Images of motherhood reflect the eras and cultures in which they were created, and the art of the present is no exception. The artists whose work is in *Picturing Motherhood Now* cast new light on our own time.”

“This presentation also includes exciting newly commissioned work as well, including new work by artists Wendy Red Star, Carmen Winant and M. Carmen Lane,” said Nadiah Rivera Fellah, associate curator of contemporary art.

Picturing Motherhood Now unfolds in four thematic sections. In each, representations of motherhood explore a different facet of contemporary culture and society.

- *Missing Pictures* features artwork focused on aspects of motherhood that have been absent from traditional images of the subject. The paintings, photographs and sculptures here introduce multiple identities, social realities and humble details of everyday life. In particular, *Missing Pictures* highlights the growing number of artists who have in recent years represented Black and brown motherhood, offering positive and empowered images of these mothers and addressing the inequalities and injustices within their histories.

- The artists in ***Making and Matrilineage*** preserve matrilineal and Indigenous artistic traditions that are passed down from one generation of women to the next. Their work animates and carries forward in time maternal knowledge and histories of making. Some artists use found or family photographs, while others engage with tradition through materials such as clay and thread. All the artists celebrate mothers as the leaders and maintainers of cultural traditions.
- For the artists featured in ***Mother Tongue***, language and narrative are the primary mediums to animate strong female protagonists. The stories that unfold in this section span generations. While they often focus on individual experiences, they point to collective social histories relating to ecology, land use and issues of economic equality.
- ***Kinships*** celebrates unconventional ideas of motherhood and family. The artists in this section give form to maternal lineage that is not necessarily biological, nor even rooted in normative gender identities. They show the ways that heritage can be anchored instead by shared values, politics and artistic ideals.

ArtLens App Tour

A special [ArtLens App](#) tour will highlight 10 objects from the CMA's permanent collection that depict mothers and maternity from antiquity to the 20th century.

Download the FREE App: ArtLens App ([ArtLens Download Instructions](#)) is available to download to iOS9 or higher and to Android devices (5.0+).

Become a Member

See ***Picturing Motherhood Now*** for free when you become a [CMA member](#). Members are admitted free to special exhibitions. Additionally, members enjoy other special discounts and exclusive events throughout the year.

Fall Members Party

Members get the first chance to see the exhibition during the CMA's Fall Members Party **Thursday, October 14, from 6 to 8:30 pm**. Advance tickets are required. Reserve your free tickets [online](#) or by phone at 216-421-7350.

Exhibition Tickets

Adults \$12; seniors, college students with ID, and children ages 12 to 17 \$10; member guests \$6; children ages 11 and under and CMA members FREE.

Combination Ticket Prices:

****Includes admission to [Revealing Krishna: Journey to Cambodia's Sacred Mountain](#), on view November 14, 2021, through January 30, 2022.***

Adults \$25; seniors, college students with ID, and children ages 12 to 17 \$20; member guests \$10; children ages 11 and under and CMA members FREE.

Groups of 10 or more people may reserve tickets for \$10 per person. No guided tours will be offered. To book a group, contact groupsales@clevelandart.org.

Tickets can be reserved online at cma.org, at the box office or by calling 216-421-7350.

Catalogue

Picturing Motherhood Now is richly illustrated and includes six scholarly essays that enhance the understanding of motherhood in contemporary culture. The catalogue also includes a roundtable discussion among artists and thinkers that animates the themes of the exhibition in a dynamic, real-time exchange.

The essays are authored by the exhibition's curators, Emily Liebert, curator of contemporary art, and Nadiah Rivera Fellah, associate curator of contemporary art, both at the Cleveland Museum of Art, as well as Rosalyn Deutsche, professor of art history at Barnard College; Naima J. Keith, vice president of education and public programs at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Thomas J. Lax, curator of performance and media at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; and Laura Wexler, professor of American studies, film and media studies, and women's, gender, and sexuality studies as well as director of the Photographic Memory Workshop at Yale University.

Picturing Motherhood Now is published by the CMA in association with Yale University Press. It's available for purchase [online](#) or at the Cleveland Museum of Art store for \$40 (hardcover).

Complementary Programming

[In Theory, In Practice: Picturing Motherhood Now](#)

Wednesday, November 3, 6:30–8:30 pm. [Virtual event](#); [reserve free tickets](#)

Saturday, November 6, 1–3 pm. [In-person event](#); [reserve free tickets](#)

The Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundation Exhibition Gallery

Join the CMA and [ATNSC: Center for Healing and Creative Leadership](#) for an intimate group discussion about topics and themes related to the exhibition *Picturing Motherhood Now*, utilizing literature from ATNSC's John D. Carter Resource Library for Consciousness and Change—a gift from the founder of the Gestalt OSD Center.

“In Theory, In Practice” is a reading group organized by ATNSC—pronounced *Ata-en-sic*—that aims to foster critical conversation and collective interventionist practices among artists, community leaders and educators. The meetings focus on exploring the histories and futures of socially engaged art.

In-person and virtual reading group sessions are available on separate dates but feature the same content. The in-person session is limited to 15 people and includes free admission to *Picturing Motherhood Now*.

For virtual:

Participants will receive links to access readings and join the virtual program prior to the session.

For in-person:

Participants will receive free admission to *Picturing Motherhood Now* and a link to access readings prior to the session.

[Picturing ATNSC: Tours of the ATNSC Home](#)

Tuesday, November 9, noon

Sunday, November 14, 2 pm.

Tuesday, December 14, 2 pm.

Sunday, December 19, 2 pm.

11808 Cromwell Ave, Cleveland, OH 44120

[Reserve free tickets](#)

Artist M. Carmen Lane's photographic series *Original Instructions*, on view in the CMA exhibition *Picturing Motherhood Now*, documents a Cleveland home in the Buckeye-Shaker neighborhood that Lane has transformed into [ATNSC](#)—pronounced *Ata-en-sic*—a socially engaged, artist-run urban retreat, residency and exhibition space at the intersections of contemporary art, healing and equity leadership.

Join Lane on an intimate tour of ATNSC's gallery and residency spaces, resource library and growing collection of artworks.

Participants meet at ATNSC, 11808 Cromwell Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44120. For directions, [visit ATNSC's website](#).

Major support is provided in memory of Myrlin von Glahn. Additional support is provided by Cathy Lincoln. Generous support is provided by the Cleveland Society for Contemporary Art, and Joanne Cohen and Morris Wheeler.

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All exhibitions at the Cleveland Museum of Art are underwritten by the CMA Fund for Exhibitions. Generous annual support is provided by Mr. and Mrs. Walter R. Chapman Jr., the Jeffery Wallace Ellis Trust in memory of Lloyd H. Ellis Jr., Janice Hammond and Edward Hemmelgarn, Eva and Rudolf Linnebach, William S. and Margaret F. Lipscomb, Tim O'Brien and Breck Platner, Anne H. Weil, and the Womens Council of the Cleveland Museum of Art.

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About the Cleveland Museum of Art

The Cleveland Museum of Art is renowned for the quality and breadth of its collection, which includes more than 63,000 artworks and spans 6,000 years of achievement in the arts. The museum is a significant international forum for exhibitions, scholarship and performing arts and is a leader in digital innovations. One of the top comprehensive art museums in the nation, recognized for its award-winning Open Access program and free of charge to all, the Cleveland Museum of Art is located in the University Circle neighborhood.

The museum is supported in part by residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture and made possible in part by the Ohio Arts Council (OAC), which receives support from the State of Ohio and the National Endowment for the Arts. The OAC is a state agency that funds and supports quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally and economically. For more information about the museum and its holdings, programs and events, call 888-CMA-0033 or visit cma.org.