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## **BMA Debuts *Raúl de Nieves: and imagine you are here* Meyerhoff-Becker Biennial Commission**

Installation features a 27-pane faux stained-glass window and other lavishly adorned works inspired by transformation in the natural world

BALTIMORE, MD (November 14, 2023)—On November 19, the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) debuts *Raúl de Nieves: and imagine you are here*, an exuberant installation by the Mexican-American multimedia artist, performer, and musician that celebrates the beauty, wonder, and power of the natural world. Created especially for the BMA's East Lobby—a primary entrance and gathering space—as part of the museum's second Robert E. Meyerhoff and Rheda Becker Biennial Commission, *and imagine you are here* reflects de Nieves' interest in connecting with audiences through universally accessible themes and inspirations. At the heart of the installation are de Nieves' large-scale, kaleidoscopic faux stained-glass window and flamboyant hybrid figures that capture many aspects of metamorphosis in the natural world from form to gender. The fantastical works bathe the two-level lobby in brilliant color and light and invite visitor engagement through their distinct materiality. *Raúl de Nieves: and imagine you are here* is on view November 19, 2023, through May 4, 2025.

"Raúl de Nieves' transfixing installation for the Meyerhoff-Becker Biennial Commission has transformed the BMA's lobby into an environment that will elicit wonder and awe from our visitors," said Asma Naeem, the BMA's Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director. "The East Lobby is often where our audiences begin their BMA journey, making it an essential place of connection. We are thrilled to offer our community another opportunity to experience a visionary artist in this space with work that is joyful, inviting, and sure to spark conversation and engagement."

De Nieves uses readily available craft materials like beads, tape, colored film, and feathers to evoke the beautiful, vulnerable, and sometimes curious moments of transformation. *No Need For Vistas We Are Seen* (2023) is a 27-pane faux stained-glass window that centers an image of a Crested Caracara falcon that visited the artist in a dream alongside a jumble of molting cicadas and Monarch butterflies whose migratory patterns move fluidly between the United States and Mexico. It is accompanied by *A Beautiful Nightmare* (2023), a colorful chandelier featuring a beaded organism suspended and waiting within a cocoon; and three beaded, feathered, and adorned hybrid human/creature figures. Two opulently decorated figurative sculptures are placed throughout the first floor of the lobby, inviting visitors to sit and engage with them on colorful benches. A swarm of 999 clear resin flies containing colorful beads and strands of the artist's hair hovers on the walls overhead incorporating aspects of the grotesque amongst the overwhelming beauty of nature.

This installation marks the second presentation of the Robert E. Meyerhoff and Rheda Becker Biennial Commission, which was established in 2018 to foster the creation of new works by international contemporary artists, cultivate aspiring curators from underrepresented backgrounds through a parallel fellowship, and activate the BMA's two-floor East Lobby with publicly accessible art.

This exhibition is curated by Leila Grothe, BMA Associate Curator of Contemporary Art with support from former Meyerhoff-Becker Curatorial Fellow Cynthia Hodge-Thorne.

### **Raúl de Nieves**

Raúl de Nieves (b. 1983, Morelia, Mexico) is a New York-based interdisciplinary artist, performer, and musician who draws on both classical Catholic and Mexican vernacular motifs as well as aspects of queer and gender identity to create his own unique mythology. Through processes of accumulation and adornment, the artist transforms readily available materials into spectacular objects, which he then integrates into immersive narrative environments. Recent solo exhibitions of his work have been presented at ICA Boston, MA; Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami, FL; and SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, GA. De Nieves' work has also been featured in group exhibitions at The Highline, MoMA PS1, 2017 Whitney Biennial, Documenta 14, Performa 13, ICA Philadelphia, The Watermill Center, and other venues. Public collections with de Nieves' work include Institute of Contemporary Art Boston, Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. This fall, he also debuts [\*Raúl de Nieves: a window to the see, a spirit star chiming in the wind of wonder...\*](#) at the University of Washington's Henry Art Gallery in Seattle.

### **Robert E. Meyerhoff and Rheda Becker**

Baltimore philanthropists Robert E. Meyerhoff and Rheda Becker are committed to reshaping the city's institutions around access and inclusivity in education and art. They are supporters of Teach for America, Thread, and the Baltimore School for the Arts. They were founding donors of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra's OrchKids program. They initiated the Diversity and Inclusion Fund at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University to build access and diversity in faculty, staff, and student body. They seeded the *Books for Me* program at the Enoch Pratt Free Library to enable families to grow a personal library of free new books for their children.

### **Baltimore Museum of Art**

Founded in 1914, the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) inspires people of all ages and backgrounds through exhibitions, programs, and collections that tell an expansive story of art—challenging long-held narratives and embracing new voices. Our outstanding collection of more than 97,000 objects spans many eras and cultures and includes the world's largest public holding of works by Henri Matisse; one of the nation's finest collections of prints, drawings, and photographs; and a rapidly growing number of works by contemporary artists of diverse backgrounds. The museum is also distinguished by a neoclassical building designed by American architect John Russell Pope and two beautifully landscaped gardens featuring an array of modern and contemporary sculpture. The BMA is located three miles north of the Inner Harbor, adjacent to the main campus of Johns Hopkins University, and has a community branch at Lexington Market. General admission is free so that everyone can enjoy the power of art.

## Visitor Information

General admission to the BMA is free. The BMA is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., with extended hours on Thursdays until 9 p.m. The Sculpture Gardens are open Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to dusk. The museum and gardens are closed New Year's Day, Juneteenth, July 4, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. The BMA is located at 10 Art Museum Drive, three miles north of Baltimore's Inner Harbor. For general museum information, call 443-573-1700 or visit [artbma.org](http://artbma.org).

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