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MICA'S CONGREGATE EXHIBITION CONNECTS ARTS AND FAITH COMMUNITIES

Exhibition, Born From Yearlong Dialogue Between M.F.A. in Curatorial Practice Curators, Artists and Station North Church Congregations, On Display Sept. 6–25

BALTIMORE—The M.F.A. in Curatorial Practice program at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) will present commissioned sculptures, installations and participatory works created with five church congregations throughout the Station North Arts & Entertainment District in a culminating exhibition titled *CONGREGATE Art + Faith + Community*. The exhibition, which explores creative expressions developed at the intersection of art and spirituality, will take place **Friday, Sept. 6–Wednesday, Sept. 25***, in the **Sheila & Richard Riggs and Leidy galleries** inside MICA's Graduate Studio Center (131 W. North Ave.). A press preview will take place on Thursday, Sept. 5, 9:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m., and the exhibition's opening reception will be held on Friday, Sept. 6, 5 p.m.–7 p.m.

“This exhibition encourages artists to create brand new artworks with local congregation members from the faith communities in the Station North Arts & Entertainment District,” said **Qianfei Wang**, M.F.A. in Curatorial Practice candidate and co-curator. “Through this project, we hope to inspire deeper connections between the art and faith communities in the district.”

CONGREGATE is the outcome of a yearlong dialogue between the curators, artists and congregations to develop welcoming spaces that contribute to a more inclusive arts district. The exhibition will showcase a dynamic range of artistic practices, such as performance, photography and sculpture, to represent the diverse voices in Station North. Participating artists and congregations were paired together during 3-month residencies from June to August based on shared creative interest and each church's desire to enhance its congregation through creative expression.

“Based on the communities' interests, each artist will create specific artworks that embody the relationships between congregation members and the artists themselves,” said **Michelle Gomez**, M.F.A. in Curatorial Practice candidate and co-curator.

Baltimore artist **Laure Drogoul** '81 (Rinehart School of Sculpture) has partnered with Spiritual Empowerment Center (2129 N. Charles St.) to explore how spiritual perspectives influence daily life; Leo Hussey, known for his light-based sculpture artworks, is working with the historic architectural space of St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church (1900 St. Paul St.); photographer **Tiffany Jones** '12 (photography) is telling the stories of congregants in New Second Missionary Baptist Church (214 E. Lanvale St.); MICA faculty member **Katherine Kavanaugh** is developing a project detailing the relationships between Station North and St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal

Church (2013 St. Paul St.); and performing artist Bashi Rose is engaging with youth members of Seventh Metro Church (30 E. North Ave.). New York artist Leigh Davis, who has a history of working with urban communities, was selected as a roving artist to create connections between the five partnering congregations.

Four local organizations are scheduled to partner on this exhibition to deliver public programs for *CONGREGATE* throughout the run of the exhibition. Baltimore Print Studios plans to offer a series of screen-printing and letterpress workshops for youth; Baltimore Performance Kitchen is inviting volunteers from each congregation to create and perform a collaborative theater piece; Akimbo, a Baltimore dance collective, plans to host its annual interactive site-specific dance festival in Station North; and the activist artist collaborative FORCE: Upsetting Rape Culture composed of community artist **Hannah Brancato** '07 '10 '11 (fiber, M.A. and M.F.A. in Community Arts) and fiber artist **Rebecca Nagle** '08 (fiber) looks to offer performance events, community conversations and collaborative public artworks.

The work by MICA's M.F.A. in Curatorial Practice program highlights the College's active role in community revitalization, ensuring all businesses and residents in nearby Station North—one of the nation's first state-endorsed Arts & Entertainment Districts—embrace and are engaged with the unique artistic nature of the district.

CONGREGATE is presented by MICA's M.F.A. in Curatorial Practice program class of 2014, under the guidance of faculty members **Jeffrey Cudlin** and **Gerald Ross**, who also serves as the College's director of exhibitions. Designed to forge connections among art, artists and the community, the graduate program's collaborative and individual curatorial projects allow students to explore new methods of exhibition presentation—thinking outside of traditional models and training to create relevant, timely and accessible exhibitions for their audiences. The graduate program is the first M.F.A. in Curatorial Practice in the United States and benefits from being shaped by the work of **George Ciscle**, MICA's curator-in-residence and creator of the College's groundbreaking Exhibition Development Seminar.

The Graduate Studio Center's Sheila & Richard Riggs and Leidy galleries are free and open to the public Mondays–Saturdays, 10 a.m.–5 p.m., and Sundays, noon–5 p.m., except on major holidays.

Updates on *CONGREGATE* and its programs will become available on congregatebaltimore.com. An exhibition catalog is scheduled to become available closer to the opening.

CONGREGATE is made possible partially through generous support from Mr. and Mrs. Eugene H. Robinson and the Friends of the M.F.A. in Curatorial Practice.

For high-resolution images or interview requests, contact the Office of Communications at 410.225.2300.

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Founded in 1826, Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) is the oldest continuously degree-granting college of art and design in the nation. The College enrolls nearly 3,500 undergraduate, graduate and continuing studies students from all 50 states and 57 countries in fine arts, design, electronic media, art education, liberal arts, and professional studies degree and non-credit programs. Redefining art and design education, MICA is pioneering interdisciplinary approaches to innovation, research, and community and social engagement. Alumni and programming reach around the globe, even as MICA remains a cultural cornerstone in the Baltimore/Washington region, hosting hundreds of exhibitions and events annually by students, faculty and other established artists.

Image captions (left-right): Bashi Rose, Vincent Thomas, LOVE the poet, *Red Flags*, Baltimore Performance Kitchen Original Commission, Baltimore, 2012; Leigh Davis, *Secular Columbarium for the Island*, site specific installation, E(merge) Art Fair, Capitol Skyline Hotel, DC, 2012; and Tiffany Jones, Unidentified photographer 1956, *Black series*, Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, 2012.