



## *Press Release*

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### **Artist Kerry James Marshall Is the American Academy in Berlin's Inaugural Max Beckmann Distinguished Visitor**

BERLIN—April 24, 2017—The American Academy in Berlin is thrilled to welcome Chicago-based artist Kerry James Marshall for a two-week residency as its first Max Beckmann Distinguished Visitor. Two important recent works by Marshall will be generously loaned to the Academy for this occasion. Marshall is best known for his stark, large-scale narrative paintings that focus on African-American subjects and thereby comment on the exclusion of black identity from Western art.

The Max Beckmann Distinguished Visitorship honors the great Leipzig-born artist who worked and taught in St. Louis and New York during the immediate postwar years. The Beckmann program is conceived to bring to Berlin eminent visual artists from the U.S. for sustained interaction with students, the art world, and the general public.

Mayen Beckmann states: "As Max Beckmann's granddaughter, I am very grateful that such a Distinguished Visitorship has been established in his memory. May it spur exchange between experienced, prominent artists and the next generation, as well as between America and Germany, and, with God's help, inspire the creation of great art."

American Academy President Michael P. Steinberg states: "Kerry James Marshall's work brings black experience into the history of the Western visual canon. It is particularly exciting and appropriate for the American Academy in Berlin to welcome him as the inaugural Max Beckmann Distinguished Visitor at a moment when we most need an invigoration of our capacity to *see* and respond to a legacy of absence with the insistence on visibility and knowledge. Marshall's genius and generosity powerfully represent the kind of American voice and presence that the Academy strives to share in Germany."

In addition to giving Kerry James Marshall the opportunity to connect with key Berlin art institutions and representatives in smaller personal meetings, the 2017 Max Beckmann Distinguished Visitorship is comprised of four events:

- On Friday, April 21, 2017 in collaboration with Bard College Berlin, Kerry James Marshall will give an invitation-only master class at the American Academy entitled "The End of Criticality." It will be attended by students from Bard, the Universität der Künste Berlin, and the Freie Universität Berlin.
- On Wednesday, April 26, 2017, a private reception will be held in Marshall's honor at the American Academy with artists, patrons, and members of its board of trustees.
- On Thursday, April 27, 2017 at 6:00 PM, a free public event will be held at the Universität der Künste (Lecture Hall 158, Hardenbergstrasse 33, 10623 Berlin) at which Kerry James Marshall will present a range of his paintings of African-American life and discuss his work and its impact with Universität der Künste Professor Karlheinz Lüdeking.

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- On Saturday, April 29, 2017 at 4:30 PM, a free public conversation will be held at GRISEBACH (Villa Grisebach, Fasanenstrasse 25, 10719 Berlin) between Kerry James Marshall and Chris Decron, soon-to-be director of the Volksbühne theater in Berlin and former director of the Tate Modern in London, where he acquired Marshall's work. Two important recent paintings of Kerry James Marshall, generously loaned to the American Academy on the occasion of his residency, will be on display.

**Kerry James Marshall** was born in Alabama in 1955, and grew up in Watts, Los Angeles. He graduated from the Otis College of Art and Design, in Los Angeles, in 1978. Employing figuration, abstraction, and images from pop culture, Marshall's works often subtly reference stylistic pioneers in Western arts and letters—from Hans Holbein to Ralph Ellison. Marshall's major retrospective, *Mastry*, can currently be seen at the Los Angeles MOCA, after successful runs and rave reviews at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and New York's Met Breuer. The show is a celebration of the artist's 35-year career in which he has depicted black lives in painting.

**The Max Beckmann Distinguished Visitorship** This annual Visitorship was made possible by a group of leading artists and patrons, many of whom gave their initial support through an auction hosted at GRISEBACH on November 29, 2012. Eminent American, British, and German artists generously donated artworks to the cause, among them Richard Artschwager, Tacita Dean, Thomas Demand, Jenny Holzer, Alex Katz, Julie Mehretu, Alice Neel, Paul Pfeiffer, James Rosenquist, Ed Ruscha, Günther Uecker, and Xu Bing.

**The American Academy in Berlin** was established in 1994 by Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke and other distinguished Germans and Americans to foster greater understanding and dialogue between the United States and Germany. A private, nonprofit, nonpartisan center for advanced research in a range of academic and cultural fields, the Academy awards semester-long fellowships to emerging or established scholars, writers, and professionals each year. It also brings American thought leaders to Berlin for briefer visits for a robust exchange of views between the peoples of Germany and the United States.

#### **Details: 2017 Inaugural Max Beckmann Distinguished Visitorship**

Recipient: Kerry James Marshall

Duration: April 21 through May 1, 2017

#### **For additional information, please contact:**

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