

The Museum of Modern Art

MoMA ANNOUNCES *AMANDA WILLIAMS: EMBODIED SENSATIONS*, A PARTICIPATORY ARTWORK AND INSTALLATION IN THE MARRON ATRIUM

Project Uses Online Survey to Choreograph Participants' Movements in the Space

NEW YORK, NY, March 11, 2021—The Museum of Modern Art announces *Amanda Williams: Embodied Sensations*, a participatory artwork that considers the transformation of public space during the global pandemic—and the stark inequities and systemic injustices that underlie such shifts. On view in The Donald B. and Catherine C. Marron Atrium from April 10 through June 20, 2021, the installation will be activated through both an online survey and a series of participatory, in-person performances. The work expands on Chicago-based artist and architect Amanda Williams's decades-long interrogation of the complex intersections of race, place, violence, and value. *Amanda Williams: Embodied Sensations* is a collaborative project organized by both Education and Curatorial departments. It draws on Williams's work as a 2019–20 Catalyst artist with the Museum's Department of Education.

At a moment when COVID-19 regulations have reshaped how everyone must move—and relate to one another—Williams asks visitors to reflect on experiences of control and freedom, isolation and community, love and fear. She explores feelings of loss but also of privilege; the sensations we may share, but also the prejudices that divide us. Who has the freedom to move, and why? Who has never been free to move at all? The work forces us to confront a society in which some have never experienced isolation and immobility, while others have had to endure these constraints their entire lives, due to disability, housing insecurity, gender, sexuality, race, or mental health.

The installation is composed of stacked Museum furniture—modernist benches, chairs, and couches—that had been removed from use at MoMA to facilitate social distancing. By bringing these items back to the center of the Museum, and echoing the arbitrary arrangement in which they were stored, Williams highlights the urgency and abruptness with which public space was reconfigured at the onset of the pandemic—and the precariousness of our moment in general.

This installation is, in turn, activated through an online survey and participatory performance in the Marron Atrium. Anyone is free to participate, whether they are Museum visitors or digital users. The online survey asks participants to reflect on four keywords: *care, knowledge, access, and power*. Questions range from the intimate (“How much

personal space do you need?” “What are you afraid of?”) to the ethical (“Who should come first?”). Participants’ responses will then generate sets of instructions for physical movement (“Curl up in a ball”; “Lift your hands up”). These instructions will be projected on the walls of the Marron Atrium for visitors to follow, creating an exchange between online and on-site, virtual and physical. As each visitor interprets the movements through their own identities and lived experience, navigating the stacks of furniture and social distancing protocols, their embodied sensations become part of the project.

The online survey will go live during the first weeks of April on moma.org. Audiences may also register in advance on moma.org to participate in timed, participatory performances that will take place on Thursdays and Sundays. Registration is limited.

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