

Installation of New Works by Martine Syms in Milwaukee's Bronzeville District, presented by Bronzeville Center for the Arts and Sculpture Milwaukee

Now on view, a streetside exhibition of new works by Martine Syms explores the artist's dynamic practice and epigrammatic reflections on contemporary life and culture.

Milwaukee, WI, December 10, 2025 — Sculpture Milwaukee and the Bronzeville Center for the Arts (BCA) are delighted to debut a suite of public artworks by Martine Syms, the celebrated multidisciplinary artist who reconsiders Black identity and her own identity as a Black female artist, in the heart of Bronzeville.

A binding principle of the L.A.-native Syms' far-ranging output — a body of work including video, photography, performance, and writing — is to pull apart familiar tropes of language and image-making and rework them, with humor and punch, to open new possibilities.

Contributing to the Milwaukee Art scene

"While Syms has shown work inside many prestigious institutions, she's also embraced public art, showing her work in densely populated places like Times Square," said Phoenix Brown, BCA's curator. "Presenting her work on North Avenue—where we're effectively turning the street into an exhibition space—immediately invites viewers into her creative process."

Part of the reason why Syms chose to present these new pieces in Milwaukee is because she appreciates the city's open and vibrant arts scene, said John Riepenhoff, executive director of Sculpture Milwaukee.

"While she was an undergraduate student at the Art Institute of Chicago, Martine came up to Milwaukee for screenings and openings, and she understood this as a place where the arts community is remarkably open to experimentation. Riepenhoff said. "Presenting her work in Bronzeville not only creates a tight, immediate connection to the local community but puts us in the center of important international art conversations."

About the Exhibition

The exhibition, centered along North Avenue (for a detailed map, click [here](#)), features two new works, *A Short Meditation* (2025) and an untitled photo (2025), as well as two earlier works customized for this site-specific installation, *Find A Way* (2022) and *Belief Strategy XIII* (2016).

In *Find A Way* (2022), a 148-foot fence banner repeating the titular phrase, Syms creates an enlivening mantra for modern worriers. The new untitled photo, mounted on the signpost of the now-defunct Big Load Coin Laundry, emerged from Syms' daily photography and writing practice; a picture of a boardwalk and surrounding foliage Syms took in Brazil, the image is bleached with light leaks to point of abstraction and glows like beacon.

Short Meditation (2025) is another banner with an aphoristic message mounted on the fascia of the vacant Big Load laundromat.

In *Belief Strategy* (2016), a weblike cuculoris dappling light filter fixed to a window of Gallery 507 (BCA's current headquarters), she deploys her signature shade of purple to subliminally remind viewers of *The Color*

Purple, the 1982 novel by Alice Walker, an artist working in a “Black feminist tradition that I’m trying to be part with my own work,” as Syms has said.

About the artist:

Martine Syms is an artist who has earned wide recognition for a practice that combines conceptual grit, humor, and social commentary. She has shown extensively, including in exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. She has also done commissioned work for brands such as Louis Vuitton, Prada, Nike, and Celine, among others. She is a recipient of the Herb Alpert Award, the Creative Capital Award, a United States Artists Fellowship, the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation award, the Future Fields Art Prize, and, in 2023, of a Guggenheim Fellowship. Syms is the writer and director of *The African Desperate* (MUBI), which was the closing night film of New Directors/New Films 2022 festival and nominated in 2023 for an Independent Spirit Award.

ABOUT THE BRONZEVILLE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

The Bronzeville Center for the Arts (BCA) exists to create vibrant spaces that celebrate and empower artists of African descent, nurture emerging talent, and actively engage diverse local, regional, and national audiences. Through the establishment of a major new African American art museum in Milwaukee’s Bronzeville neighborhood, the BCA seeks to expand Bronzeville’s legacy as a vibrant artistic hub of the Midwest and make experiences with the art of the African diaspora accessible to everyone. Learn more at www.BCAMKE.org.

ABOUT SCULPTURE MILWAUKEE

Sculpture Milwaukee hosts a rotating exhibition of art in public spaces of downtown Milwaukee, supporting contemporary artists and serving as a catalyst for community engagement, economic development, and advancing cultural authorship. Through its free outdoor installations, Sculpture Milwaukee honors the arts and celebrates the community with artworks that spark inspiration and conversation, empowering residents, tourists, students, and art lovers alike to experience sculpture in new and profound ways. Sculpture Milwaukee is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization funded through grants, donations, and corporate sponsorships. For more information, visit www.sculpturemilwaukee.com