

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 4, 2021

Blaffer Art Museum Presents 'Jamal Cyrus: The End of My Beginning'

On view June 5 – September 19, 2021

HOUSTON, June 4, 2021— The Blaffer Art Museum at the University of Houston is proud to present the first museum survey exhibition of celebrated Houston-born artist Jamal Cyrus (b.1973). The exhibition, titled *The End of My Beginning*, will open June 5, 2021 and run until September 19, 2021. It is presented in partnership with Texas Southern University (TSU), which will open a sister exhibition, entitled *Levels and Layers*, featuring vernacular work from Houston's Third Ward, on June 18 at its University Museum. Cyrus is both an alumnus of UH and a professor at TSU, and his work will bring together the two major universities located in the Third Ward to co-present an exhibition for the first time.

As a singular artist, a former member of the pioneering collective Otabenga Jones & Associates, a current professor at TSU, the recipient of the 2017 BMW Art Journey Prize and the 2019 David C. Driskell Prize, an occasional curator, and steadfast mentor, Jamal Cyrus and his influence reverberate throughout his native Houston. And while he has participated in a number of nationally recognized exhibitions, Cyrus's work has not yet had the platform to be comprehensively studied and celebrated on a national scale.

The End of My Beginning will span 15 formative years of Cyrus's practice from 2005-2020, assembling over 50 artworks that include drawings, prints, paintings, and works on both paper and papyrus, as well as sculpture, textiles, and installation. At the University Museum at TSU, Cyrus will marry a selection of historical works from the University's permanent collection with artwork being made in the community of Houston's Third Ward. Cyrus, the Blaffer, and TSU will also orchestrate performances and community-driven events connecting both campuses. Please check our websites in the coming weeks for more details.

This precedent-setting project is co-organized by Blaffer Art Museum Jane Dale Owen Director and Chief Curator Steven Matijcio, and Dr. Alvia Wardlaw, TSU Museum Director and Curator, distinguished professor, and one of the country's leading experts on African American art.

After the Houston presentation, *The End of My Beginning* will travel to the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles in February 2022, and other venues to be announced. The show will be accompanied by a full-color catalogue designed and published by Inventory Press, available in September 2021. This is the first monograph dedicated to the work of Jamal Cyrus, and it will feature essays by Ryan Dennis, Grace Deveney, Ciarán Finlayson, Jamillah James, Steven Matijcio, Ana Tuazon, and an interview conducted by Dr. Alvia Wardlaw.

Lead support for *Jamal Cyrus: The End of My Beginning* is provided by The Ford Foundation. Major support for the exhibition is provided by The Brown Foundation, Inc. and Leah Bennett. Generous support is provided by Inman Gallery, Judy and Scott Nyquist, and Dr. Shirley Rose.

For more information or high-resolution images, please contact infoblaffer@uh.edu.

OPENING EVENTS

Saturday, June 5, 8pm

Jamal Cyrus Live Performance of *Texas Fried Tenor*

[Registration Required](#)

Sunday, June 6, 12:00-2:00pm

Public Reception at Blaffer Art Museum, featuring the music of DJ Flash Gordon Parks and light refreshments

[Registration Required](#)

VISITOR INFORMATION

Open Wed-Sun, 12-5pm

Admissions is always free.

ABOUT BLAFFER ART MUSEUM

Founded in 1973, the Blaffer Art Museum endeavors to further the understanding of contemporary art through exhibitions, publications, and public programs. As the gateway between the University of Houston's Central campus and the City of Houston, Blaffer Art Museum is a catalyst for creative innovation, experimentation, and scholarship. Its exhibitions and programs are free and open to the public, create community through dialogue and participation, and inspire an appreciation for the visual arts as a vital force in shaping contemporary culture.

Lead annual support for exhibitions and programming at the Blaffer Art Museum is provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and The Farrell Family Foundation. Major funding is provided by Leslie & Brad Bucher and the John P. McGovern Foundation. Generous support is provided by Wirt Blaffer, Jo & Jim Furr, Cullen Geiselman, Cecily Horton, Micheline & Dr. German Newall, Andrew Schirrmeister, Transart Foundation for Art and Anthropology, Bridget & Patrick Wade, and Blaffer Art Museum Advisory Board members. The following donors sustain Blaffer Art Museum in perpetuity by giving through endowments: Cecil Amelia Blaffer von Furstenberg Endowment for Exhibitions and Programs, Jane Dale Owen Endowment in the Blaffer Art Museum, Jo and Jim Furr Exhibition Endowment in the Blaffer Art Museum, Sarah C. Morian Endowment, and the Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation Blaffer Gallery Endowment.