



H I G H

HIGH MUSEUM OF ART ATLANTA

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**VIRGIL ABLOH FASHION, ART AND DESIGN  
ON VIEW AT THE HIGH THIS FALL**

**ATLANTA, Oct. 16, 2019** — This fall, the High Museum of Art presents “Virgil Abloh: ‘Figures of Speech’” (Nov. 12, 2019–March 8, 2020), the first museum exhibition devoted to the work of the modern, genre-bending artist and designer who became creative director of Louis Vuitton’s menswear line in 2018.

Organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, where it debuted in June, the exhibition focuses on Abloh’s creative process, collaborative work and pioneering discipline, which ranges across media and connects visual artists, musicians, graphic designers, fashion designers and architects. The works on view offer an in-depth look at the defining highlights of Abloh’s career, including his recent designs for the Louis Vuitton menswear collection, video documentation of his most iconic fashion shows and his distinctive furniture and graphic design work.

“Abloh is an inspiring creative force who defies often traditional classifications and boundaries while remaining committed to his distinctive vision. When the opportunity came to present his work, we could not say no,” said Rand Suffolk, Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr., director of the High. “Atlanta’s cultural community personifies style, trend-setting and pushing the limits of traditional design. We know Abloh’s work will resonate with our audience, just as it has been celebrated worldwide.”

Raised outside of Chicago by parents who emigrated from Ghana, Abloh trained in engineering and architecture and from an early age cultivated an interest in music, fashion and design. While pursuing a master’s degree in architecture from the Illinois Institute of Technology, he connected with then-emerging Kanye West, joining a fledgling creative team to work on album covers, concert designs and merchandising.

Abloh applied the experience he had gained working with West to his own stand-alone fashion brand, Off-White™, which he established in Milan, Italy, and presented at the seasonal shows of Paris Fashion Week alongside luminaries of the high fashion world.

An artist who is always looking for new inspirations, Abloh takes an approach to fashion that is prompted equally by contemporary art, his architectural training, and the style-conscious world of music. He uses the codes of fashion to deconstruct modes of dress in a playful, Duchampian style. His inspiration began with the readymade of streetwear in urban centers like Chicago, where looks emerge spontaneously and organically from trend-setting youth. Likewise, his work celebrates the ethos of street fashion, where high culture is appropriated, sometimes corrupted, and served up as something fresh and new.

“Abloh’s designs reflect his keen perceptiveness of the world around him and his appreciation for and understanding of the pulse of popular culture in various media,” noted Kevin Tucker, the High’s chief curator. “That he is able to quickly distill these wide-ranging influences into his own distinctive approach is a testament to his abilities and fuels the international appeal of his work.”

Key sections of the exhibition include:

- Abloh’s graphic, music and design work for Kanye West’s creative content company Donda, including his collaborations with West and Jay-Z
- Selections from his Off-White™ fashion line, including designs for women and men from 2015 to the present that embody the essence of urban streetwear
- Examples of his furniture designs in gridded metal and other industrial materials
- Collaborative works realized with artists Jenny Holzer, Arthur Jafa and Ari Marcopoulos
- Designs for manufacturers, including shoes and Serena Williams’ “Queen” dress for Nike, prototypes for a 2019 line of furnishings for IKEA and recent works from his tenure as creative director of Louis Vuitton menswear

A 30-minute audio experience, which may be accessed via smartphone, is available for visitors to the exhibition. Featuring the voices of Abloh’s friends, colleagues, and the designer himself, the sections of the audio guide explore his early work, fashion, music and design careers, and experience as a black artist and designer.

### **Related Programs:**

#### **Curator Talk: Michael Darling**

Feb. 13, 2020, at 7 p.m.

Rich Theatre

Join Michael Darling, James W. Alsdorf chief curator of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, for a special in-depth look at “Virgil Abloh: ‘Figures of Speech’.” Abloh’s artistic endeavors encompass fashion, architecture, music and design. This talk examines how Abloh navigated his groundbreaking ascent into the exclusive world of high fashion as well exploring his unconventional approach to design. The exhibition will be open for guests immediately following the program.

Seating is limited. Please reserve your tickets in advance.  
Free with Museum admission (\$14.50); Free for members.

## **Exhibition Catalogue**

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated 512-page monograph. For Abloh, the museum catalogue is another opportunity to “question everything.” The publication, produced in collaboration with the artist himself, explores a decade of his creative output in a two-books-in-one format. The catalogue section offers an overview of Abloh’s multi-hyphenate work by exhibition curator Michael Darling and features essays and interviews with key voices in art, fashion, design and architecture, including Samir Bantal, Anja Aronowsky Cronberg, Rem Koolhaas, Michael Rock, Taiye Selasi and Lou Stoppard. In the archives section, hundreds of never-before-seen images pulled from the artist’s personal files reveal the remarkable breadth of his influences and collaborations. Designed by the London-based design firm OK-RM, the volume is published by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, in collaboration with DelMonico Books/Prestel.

## **Exhibition Organization and Support**

“Virgil Abloh: ‘Figures of Speech’” is organized by Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. The exhibition tour is made possible by Kenneth C. Griffin. This exhibition is made possible by Premier Exhibition Series Sponsors Delta Air Lines, Inc. and Invesco; Exhibition Series Sponsors Northside Hospital and WarnerMedia; Premier Exhibition Series Supporters the Antinori Foundation, Sarah and Jim Kennedy, Louise Sams and Jerome Grilhot, and wish foundation; Benefactor Exhibition Series Supporter Anne Cox Chambers Foundation; Ambassador Exhibition Series Supporters Tom and Susan Wardell, and Rod Westmoreland; and Contributing Exhibition Series Supporters Lucinda W. Bunnell, Marcia and John Donnell, W. Daniel Ebersole and Sarah Eby-Ebersole, Peggy Foreman, Robin and Hilton Howell, Mr. and Mrs. Baxter Jones, Margot and Danny McCaul, Joel Knox and Joan Marmo, and The Ron and Lisa Brill Family Charitable Trust. Generous support is also provided by the Alfred and Adele Davis Exhibition Endowment Fund, Anne Cox Chambers Exhibition Fund, Barbara Stewart Exhibition Fund, Dorothy Smith Hopkins Exhibition Endowment Fund, Eleanor McDonald Storza Exhibition Endowment Fund, The Fay and Barrett Howell Exhibition Fund, Forward Arts Foundation Exhibition Endowment Fund, Helen S. Lanier Endowment Fund, Isobel Anne Fraser–Nancy Fraser Parker Exhibition Endowment Fund, John H. and Wilhelmina D. Harland Exhibition Endowment Fund, Katherine Murphy Riley Special Exhibition Endowment Fund, Margaretta Taylor Exhibition Fund, and the RJR Nabisco Exhibition Endowment Fund.

## **About the High Museum of Art**

Located in the heart of Atlanta, Georgia, the High Museum of Art connects with audiences from across the Southeast and around the world through its distinguished collection, dynamic schedule of special exhibitions and engaging community-focused programs. Housed within facilities designed by Pritzker Prize–winning architects Richard Meier and Renzo Piano, the High features a collection of more than 17,000 works of art, including an extensive anthology of 19th- and 20th-century American fine and decorative arts; major holdings of photography and folk and self-taught work, especially that of artists from the American South; burgeoning collections of modern and contemporary art, including paintings, sculpture, new media and design; a growing collection of African art, with work dating from pre-history through the present; and significant holdings of European paintings and works on paper. The High is

dedicated to reflecting the diversity of its communities and offering a variety of exhibitions and educational programs that engage visitors with the world of art, the lives of artists and the creative process. For more information about the High, visit [www.high.org](http://www.high.org).

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**Media contact:**

Marci Tate Davis

Manager of Public Relations

Tel: 404-733-4585

E-mail: [marci.davis@high.org](mailto:marci.davis@high.org)