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For immediate release

Black Lunch Table – an oral-history archiving project comes to the Staten Island Museum

November 7-10, 2018

(Staten Island, NY – October 23, 2018) On November 7 – 10, the Staten Island Museum is proud to host **Black Lunch Table**, an ongoing collaboration between artists **Heather Hart and Jina Valentine**. They will facilitate discussions of issues pertaining to race and culture and create an online oral history archive of the recorded conversations.

Since 2005, **Black Lunch Table** has been presented at major institutions including the Brooklyn Museum; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; Storm King Art Center, NY; and now the Staten Island Museum. Organized around literal and metaphorical lunch tables as sites where social connections are made, social hierarchies revealed, and power dynamics are played out, **Black Lunch Table** sessions provide both physical space and allotted time for interdisciplinary and intergenerational discussions, bringing together a diversity of community members and fostering candid conversation among people invested in issues they face.

*“We believe it is important for the Staten Island Museum to host **Black Lunch Table** to provide a forum for deep listening and open discussion about matters affecting our community that also connect with the national conversation about race and equity, guided by the artists and shaped by the participants themselves. We want to extend the specific invitation to bring together and hear more from artists and community members of the African diaspora. This project amplifies their voices and becomes part of a series of documented Black Lunch Table conversations, as well as provides the Museum insights that will inform our efforts,”* Janice Monger, Staten Island Museum, President & CEO.

The Staten Island Museum invites the public to participate in four **Black Lunch Table** events this November. All events are free. Attendees are asked to register at www.StatenIslandMuseum.org.

Artist Lecture and Introduction

Wednesday, November 7, 7:00pm – 9:00pm

Open to the general public

Attend this introductory session to learn more about the project and how to be involved. Space is limited, [registration required](#). No entry fee.

The Artists’ Round Table

Thursday, November 8, 7:00pm – 9:00pm

Open to visual artists and art workers of the African Diaspora

Through intimate conversations, The Artists’ Table seeks to both democratize and expand the dominant

narratives of contemporary art history by animating discourse among the cultural producers of color living it.

Light dinner will be provided. Space is limited, [registration required](#). No entry fee.

The People's Round Table

Saturday, November 10, 12:00pm – 3:00pm

Open to the general public

At The People's Table, discussions center around issues affecting historically disenfranchised populations.

The People's Table catalyzes candid conversations amongst a diversity of people, representing a variety of backgrounds, professions, ages, and perspectives. The goal is to inspire new thinking around critical sociopolitical issues by cross-pollinating discourse and recording the people's history.

Lunch will be provided. Space is limited, [registration required](#). No entry fee.

Wikipedia Edit-a-thon

Saturday, November 10, 3:00pm – 6:00pm

Open to the general public

The **Black Lunch Table** Wikipedia Edit-a-thon mobilizes the creation and improvement of a site-specific set of Wikipedia articles that pertain to the lives and works of Black artists. No prior knowledge of editing is required. **Black Lunch Table** will provide a brief training in order to make quality contributions to Wikipedia addressing issues related to artists of the African Diaspora in Staten Island. As 77% of Wikipedia editors are white, this “Radical archiving” seeks to fill the gaps in this highly accessed archive and the (art) historical record. Bring your own laptop.

Space is limited, [registration required](#). No entry fee.

Black Lunch Table is made possible by an Expanding Audiences and Cultural Participation Regrant from Staten Island Arts, with generous support from New York Community Trust, The Staten Island Foundation, the Altman Foundation, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, and Time Warner.



Photo courtesy of Black Lunch Table

About the Artists:

Based in Brooklyn, NY, **Heather Hart** was an artist in residence at Joan Mitchell Center, McColl Center of Art + Innovation, Bemis Center for Art, LMCC Workspace, Skowhegan, Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, Santa Fe Art Institute, Fine Arts Work Center and at the Whitney ISP. She is interested in creating site-specific liminal spaces for personal reclamation, in questioning dominant narratives and proposing alternatives to them. Hart received grants from Joan Mitchell Foundation, Harpo Foundation, Jerome Foundation and a fellowship from NYFA. Her work has been included in a variety of publications and exhibited worldwide including at Socrates Sculpture Park, Seattle Art Museum's Olympic Sculpture Park, Studio Museum in Harlem, ICA Philadelphia, Art in General, The Drawing Center, PS1 MoMA, Museum of Arts and Craft in Itami, Portland Art Center and the Brooklyn Museum. She studied at Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle, Princeton University, and received her MFA from Rutgers University.

Jina Valentine was born in Pennsylvania and is currently based in North Carolina. Her interdisciplinary practice is informed by the intuitive strategies of American folk artists and traditional craft techniques, and interweaves histories latent within found texts, objects, narratives, and spaces. She has exhibited at venues including The Drawing Center, The Studio Museum in Harlem, the CUE Foundation, the Elizabeth Foundation, the DiRosa Preserve, Southern Exposure, Marlborough Gallery. She has participated in residencies at the Atlantic Center for the Arts, Women's Studio Workshop, Sculpture Space, the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, the Santa Fe Art Institute, and the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris. She was in residence last year at the Joan Mitchell Center in New Orleans, Banff Centre in Alberta, and Frans Masereel Centrum in Belgium. She is a 2016 recipient of the North Carolina Arts Council Grant, a Creative Capital Emerging Genres Grant, and a UNC Institute for Arts and Humanities fellowship. Jina received her BFA from Carnegie Mellon University and her MFA from Stanford University.

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About the Staten Island Museum

Founded in 1881 and celebrating its 137th year, the Staten Island Museum, New York City's only general interest museum, engages visitors with interdisciplinary exhibitions and educational programs that explore the dynamic connections between natural science, art and history based on its diverse collections. The Museum is open Wednesday – Sunday: 11am – 5pm. Universally accessible. For current exhibits, visit StatenIslandMuseum.org.