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**Contact:**

Alexa Chavarria , EFK Group Public Relations

Phone: 201-668-4994, e-mail: [alexa.chavarria@efkgroup.com](mailto:alexa.chavarria@efkgroup.com)

**New Solo Exhibition, Showcasing Work of New York-Based Artist  
Saya Woolfalk, Debuts this Fall**

*Artist Creates New Works Responding to Museum's Landscape  
and Natural Science Collections*

**NEWARK, NJ – October 7, 2021** – This fall, The Newark Museum of Art will launch a new exhibition featuring a series of new works by renowned multi-media artist Saya Woolfalk. Designed to extend beyond the gallery walls, the exhibition is two related shows installed across two floors of the Museum's permanent galleries. *Saya Woolfalk: Field Notes from the Empathic Universe* and *Saya Woolfalk: Tumbling Into Landscape* will feature an immersive four channel video installation, a life-size abstracted self-portrait, the artist's first ever self-portrait, and one of eleven new collages on paper.

Nationally recognized for her mixed media constructions and luminous installations, Woolfalk combines science fiction, anthropology, and autobiography to explore issues of identity and cultural difference. As a result of an extended residency at the Museum, Woolfalk took her studio practice in a new direction, responding to historical landscape paintings and plant specimens in the Museum's collection. Both exhibits will be open October 21, 2021 and remain on view through December 2022.

“Saya has been an artist in residence at The Newark Museum of Art since 2019, and we are so proud to present her work in its many different and unique forms,” said Catherine Evans, Deputy Director of Collections and Curatorial Strategies. “Her use of science fiction and masquerade, and her innate ability to reimagine the world in ‘multiple dimensions,’ makes her a distinctive and amazingly diverse artist. We are proud to bring this collection of her works to Newark as a long-term exhibition.”

Featuring more than 20 works in a dazzling range of media, *Saya Woolfalk: Field Notes from the Empathic Universe* transforms the Museum's newly renovated Global Contemporary galleries. Visitors will enter the exhibit through the North Wing elevator, which features a wall-to-wall mural designed by Woolfalk, before emerging into a dark space with vibrantly animated projections. Titled *Cloudscape*, this four channel immersive video installation creates a luminous environment of plant forms, digitally constructed portraits and landscape fragments. In adjacent galleries, visitors explore the world of the Empathics, a running narrative Woolfalk has developed through a series of exhibitions over the past nine years. The Empathics are fictional beings who can time travel and shape-shift

across the multiverse. They are not merely culturally heterogeneous, they also cross species and share genetic material with plants. Woolfalk created new works related to the Museum's herbaria (plant specimens) and landscape paintings from the perspective of the Empathics.

Downstairs, in the Museum's historical landscape gallery, Woolfalk has created a related intervention designed to disrupt and reconsider the paintings of the Hudson River School. In *Saya Woolfalk: Tumbling Into Landscape*, the artist's full-sized abstracted self-portrait, titled *Portrait of the Artist (Words by Sojourner Truth)*, hovers, surrounded by three landscape paintings on either side. The six paintings were selected by the artist and were recently conserved and restored. Drawing on her own intersectional identity as a person of African American, European-American and Japanese heritage, Woolfalk created this installation to raise issues of belonging, cultural power, and the multiple histories of the United States.

"Saya is a dazzling artist. We are so proud to spotlight her work on such a broad scale," said Linda C. Harrison, the Director and CEO of The Newark Museum of Art. "An integral part of our mission at The Newark Museum of Art is to introduce guests to the work of the imaginative and dynamic artists who are working today. These artists are to be applauded for using their creativity to interpret the world around us in new and innovative ways. Saya has a brilliant future ahead of her. We are very excited to show her work here."

Woolfalk's work can be seen in museums, galleries, and alternative spaces throughout Asia, Europe and the United States. Solo art exhibitions of her work have been seen at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (2014); Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York (2016) and the Sheldon Museum of Art, Lincoln, Nebraska (2016). She has also been featured in art shows at the Studio Museum in Harlem, MoMA PS1 in Long Island City, New York, the Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh and The Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, among many others.

Woolfalk is the recipient of numerous honors, awards, and commissions. She has delivered numerous public lectures at museums and universities throughout the United States, including a recent TED X Talk. She teaches in the master in fine arts program at Yale School of Art, as well as in the bachelor in fine arts and master of fine arts programs at Parsons: The New School for Design.

This solo exhibition is supported in part by an award from The National Endowment for the Arts, with additional support from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, The Ryan Family Foundation, The Elizabeth Richards Family Exhibition Endowment Fund, The Marie and Joe Melone Exhibition Fund for American Art, and generous individual donors.

A richly illustrated catalogue, documenting both exhibitions and related activations, will be published by The Newark Museum of Art in 2022.

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### **About The Newark Museum of Art**

Founded in 1909, The Newark Museum of Art is the largest art and education institution in New Jersey and one of the most influential museums in the United States. Its renowned global art collections, supported by significant holdings of science, technology and natural history, rank 12th among North America's art museums. The Museum is dedicated to artistic excellence, education, and

community engagement with an overarching commitment to broadening and diversifying arts participation. As it has for over a century, the Museum responds to the evolving needs and interests of the diverse audiences it serves by providing exhibitions, programming and resources designed to improve and enrich people's lives.

The Museum also encompasses the 1885 Ballantine House mansion, the Victoria Hall of Science, the Alice and Leonard Dreyfuss Planetarium, the MakerSPACE, the Billy Johnson Auditorium, the Alice Ransom Dreyfuss Memorial Garden, an authentic 1784 Schoolhouse, and the Newark Fire Museum.

The Newark Museum of Art, a not-for-profit museum of art and education, receives operating support from the City of Newark, the State of New Jersey, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State (a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts), the New Jersey Cultural Trust, the Prudential Foundation, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the Victoria Foundation, the Estate of William J. Dane, the Estate of Ruth C. Flanagan, the Wallace Foundation, and other corporations, foundations, and individuals. Funds for acquisitions and activities other than operations are provided by members and other contributors.