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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Set It Off

Jeremy Toussaint-Baptiste

1708 Gallery and The Institute for Contemporary Art at VCU

October 29, 2021 - January 23, 2022 at 1708 (continues through June 19, 2022 at ICA)



RICHMOND — 1708 Gallery and The Institute for Contemporary Art at Virginia Commonwealth University (ICA) and are excited to announce *Set It Off*, a multi-site, sound-based exhibition by artist and composer Jeremy Toussaint-Baptiste.

Set It Off opens Friday, October 29, with a reception from 6 to 10 p.m. The event will take place at both the ICA and 1708. It will feature DJ sets and remarks from the artist, co-curators Amber Esseiva and Park C. Myers, and executive directors Emily Smith (1708) and Dominic Willsdon (ICA). On Saturday, October 30, the artist will guide participants for two soundwalks referred to as “pushes” throughout Jackson Ward and Monroe Ward. More information about the evening’s program and future events can be found on our website.

Set It Off consists of two variations of a monumental, immersive, sonic sculpture installed across both sites, an outdoor project and walking sound performances. At 1708, visitors will encounter a subwoofer suspended above a square black pool made of wood and polyethylene, and at the ICA visitors will be invited to enter two large-scale black cubes built of similar materials. Each structure uniquely incorporates the circulation of water from the James River, reminding us to consider our bodies as mediums for environmental pollutants.

Since the 1980s, music has been used to push the limits of car audio and sound systems. Music genres like Bounce, Miami Bass, synth bass, and trap intensify cars, clubs, and their surrounding areas. Inescapable in many U.S. cities, bass produces deep affinities but also aversions and sensitivities. While some are conditioned to enjoy the impact of excessive bass, others are given no choice but to experience its intensity. *Set It Off* intends to shake the room, using the car audio system as the most recognizable transmitter of bass.

Using sonic frequencies that register just below human audibility, the installations provide a series of site-specific experiences for sound to be deeply felt. Coursing through *Set it Off* is a resistance to predetermined representations of Black American experiences, which is most often simplified as either a victim of violence and oppression or worse, as absent, static, and universal from selective omission throughout history. Toussaint-Baptiste invites visitors to deeply engage with each site, considering the implications of sound, visibility, and performance. A publication will accompany the exhibition and text contributions will become available throughout the exhibition's duration. The first contributions come from Benjamin Krusling and Kodwo Eshun.

On the occasion of this milestone collaboration between 1708 and the ICA and this important exhibition for artist Jeremy Toussaint-Baptiste, we celebrate the tremendous guidance, support and friendship that Bill Royall offered to arts organizations across the city and to artists everywhere, and that Pam Royall, his partner in all things, continues today.

Set It Off is co-curated by Park C. Myers, the Royall Family Curator at 1708 Gallery and Amber Esseiva, ICA Curator. Special thanks to the Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation.

For more information, please visit 1708GALLERY.ORG.

CONTACT: Park C. Myers, Curator at 804.643.1708 or pmyers@1708gallery.org

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