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For Immediate Release

THE FRICK PITTSBURGH ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP WITH VANESSA GERMAN

***Homewood-based artist and activist to become multi-year visiting artist
at the Point Breeze museum***

PITTSBURGH, PA, March 15, 2021 – The Frick Pittsburgh is honored to announce a multi-year visiting artist partnership with its celebrated neighbor, American artist, poet, and activist Vanessa German. Over three years, German will create a community-centered body of art exploring the transformative power of love using the Frick’s site as a departure point. The partnership will lead to a large-scale exhibition in 2023. The first phase includes a powerful, multisensory installation of new sculpture on view at The Frick Art Museum beginning March 17, 2021.

Entitled *nothing can separate you from the language you cry in*, the display presents three stunning altarpieces created as a reckoning with the countless deaths of Black citizens killed at the hands of police. Installed among Italian Renaissance devotional paintings, German’s work offers a powerful meditation on grief, reckoning, love, and social healing. It is the first of three series she envisions for her residency at the Frick—Reckoning: Grief and Light, Reckoning: Place and Imagination, and Reckoning: Creativity and Love.

“This is a watershed partnership for the Frick,” remarks executive director Elizabeth Barker. “Vanessa German is a singular and inspiring artist, whose project couldn’t feel more urgent. By choosing to install *nothing can separate you from the language you cry in* within the Frick’s collection of Renaissance paintings, she’s raising important questions about how we mourn and heal, whose experiences belong in museums, and how we experience historical artworks—including what is gained or lost when ritual objects move onto gallery walls.”

Created as an intentional response to the historic and ongoing catastrophes and traumas born out through structural racism and white supremacy, German describes the sculptures as “reckoning works” and “ingredients of social healing.”

“This work is personal,” German says, “How do I grieve, mourn the losses of so many Black people killed by the police? How do I stay whole and safe and creative in an environment where black women are shot and killed by the police in their own homes, while playing video games, cooking, or even sleeping?”

German’s work also speaks to the potential for museums and other public spaces to function as agents for change. “This installation begins in the place of the personal. The citizen artist asking, ‘how can I be whole here? How can WE be whole here? How do WE heal? What role can museums play as spaces of intentional social healing?’ These are the questions that inspire this immersive installation.”

Ornamenting each sculpture are hand-crafted glass objects in a deep cobalt hue, custom-made for German by artisans at the Pittsburgh Glass Center. The cascade of glass evokes a reimagined wailing wall or weeping river, providing a place for visitors to reflect and mourn. “Vanessa’s vision activates this space in such a compelling way,” says associate curator of decorative arts Dawn Brean. “Her exploration of pain and grief, the personal and communal, brings a new and incredibly meaningful perspective to the devotional Italian Renaissance paintings that surround her altarpieces.”

The multisensory installation includes musical selections from *Unburied, Unmourned, Unmarked: Requiem for Rice*, a contemporary classical symphonic work about the history of Africans enslaved on Low Country South Carolina and Georgia rice plantations. The original score is composed by three-time Emmy® Award-winning composer Jonathan Wineglass based on the libretto written by Dr. Edda L. Fields-Black. The Colour of Music Festival Orchestra debuted *Unburied, Unmourned, Unmarked: Requiem for Rice* on February 13, 2019 at Pittsburgh’s Carnegie Music Hall.

MUSEUM ADMISSION AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

ADMISSION

nothing can separate you from the language you cry in is free to all visitors, along with the Frick’s permanent collection and current special installation *Bouke de Vries: War & Pieces*. Timed tickets are required for entry to the exhibition, and will be available for reservation three days in advance of the visit date. Tickets may be purchased online at TheFrickPittsburgh.org/tickets, or by calling 412-371-0600.

HOURS

In order to address increased demand and expand opportunities for visitation, The Frick Pittsburgh will expand its current, limited hours of operation beginning March 17 to Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Beginning Tuesday, April 6, the Frick will resume regular operating hours: Tuesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

COVID-19 SAFETY

The Frick requires that all visitors wear a close-fitting face mask and maintain social distancing from those not in their party for the duration of their visit. The Frick maintains established safety precautions on campus including enhanced cleaning procedures, Plexiglass barriers at The Frick Art Museum admission desk and Grable Visitor Center customer service counters, and the provision of hand sanitizer across campus.

Detailed information regarding the Frick’s COVID-19 safety guidelines for visitors is available at TheFrickPittsburgh.org/COVID-19.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

This initial installation will be accompanied by a series of three free online programs in April and May, including a film screening of the 1998 documentary *The Language You Cry In*, which inspired the title of German’s sculptures; a conversation with Dr. Edda Fields-Black; and a poetry reading by the artist.

Registration for programs can be done through the Frick’s website at TheFrickPittsburgh.org or by calling 412-371-0600.

Thursday, April 22, 7:00 p.m.

Film Screening: *The Language You Cry In*

Join us for a screening of *The Language You Cry In*, the film that inspired the title of Vanessa German’s new multisensory installation of sculpture and sound on view at The Frick Art Museum. The film presents the story of a search for meaningful links between African Americans and their ancestral past. The film dramatically demonstrates the contribution of contemporary scholarship to restoring what narrator Vertamae Grosvenor calls the “non-history” imposed on African Americans: “This is a story of memory, how the memory of a family was pieced together through a song with legendary powers to connect those who sang it with their roots.” 52 min.

Thursday, April 29, 7:00 p.m.

In Conversation: Vanessa German and Dr. Edda Fields-Black

The Frick Pittsburgh is honored to host Dr. Edda L. Fields-Black in conversation with citizen artist Vanessa German discussing collective trauma, loss, and grief. Dr. Fields-Black is Associate Professor in the Department of History at Carnegie Mellon University and the creative force behind *Requiem for Rice*, a contemporary symphonic tribute to Africans enslaved on Lowcountry South Carolina and Georgia rice plantations who remain “unburied, unmourned, and unmarked.”

Thursday, May 13 , 7:00 p.m.

Grief and Light: Poetry Reading with Vanessa German

Join us for an electrifying performance by renowned citizen artist and poet Vanessa German. The artist will read original poems exploring grief, light, and love inspired by “ingredients” submitted from the public. The performance will be livestreamed from The Frick Art Museum in front of her compelling installation *nothing can separate you from the language you cry in*.

ABOUT VANESSA GERMAN

Vanessa German is a citizen artist who centers the exploration of human technologies. These technologies are a vital force in her artistic work that reckons and contends with the historical and ongoing dimensional catastrophes of structural racism, white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, resource extraction, and misogynoir. German creates sculpture, performance, communal rituals, immersive installation and photographic works that repair and reshape disrupted human systems, spaces, and connections.

ABOUT THE FRICK PITTSBURGH

Located on the estate of 19th-century industrialist Henry Clay Frick, The Frick Pittsburgh offers authentic experiences with art, history and nature that inspire and delight. Visitors of all ages and backgrounds are warmly welcomed to explore The Frick Art Museum, offering world-class collections of European art and Chinese porcelain alongside an active schedule of temporary exhibitions; Clayton, the Frick family’s French chateau-style mansion (remodeled by architect Frederick J. Osterling in the 1890s); the Car and Carriage Museum; and a large working greenhouse designed by architects Alden & Harlow—all nestled on six acres of beautifully landscaped lawns and gardens in Pittsburgh’s East End. Amenities include an Education Center, the Frick children’s playhouse (also designed by Alden & Harlow), The Café at the Frick, and the Grable Visitor Center, which houses the Frick Museum Store. Information about The Frick Pittsburgh is available online at TheFrickPittsburgh.org.

For additional information or images, please contact Kaitlyn Clem, Marketing and Communications Associate, at KClem@TheFrickPittsburgh.org or 412-342-4025.

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