

**RESIDENT ARTIST KERRY JAMES MARSHALL TO WORK WITH
LOCAL TEENS IN CROSS-CULTURAL GALLERY PROJECT**

**EPIC STORY RHYTHM MASTR, FEATURING INNER-CITY AFRICAN-AMERICAN
SUPERHEROES, TO BE BROUGHT TO LIFE IN EXHIBITION SPACE**

Columbus, OH—As part of a Wexner Center Residency Award project, internationally renowned artist **Kerry James Marshall** will be engaging a group of local teens for an extended period this fall and winter to help bring his latest project to fruition. Marshall, who creates work in a multitude of media but who is best known as a painter, explores the everyday lived reality of African Americans and the relative dearth of images of black people in the history of Western art. Marshall's expansive narrative *Rythm Mastr*—a story of love, vengeance, and redemption in the inner city and featuring African-American superheroes based on traditional African sculpture and stories—has been realized in comic strip form and exhibited previously at the Carnegie International biennial exhibition in Pittsburgh. **For his Wexner Center Residency Award project, he will work with local youth to bring *Rythm Mastr* to life in the Wexner Center galleries.**



To achieve this, Marshall is currently creating large-scale **puppets in the Japanese tradition of Bunraku**; in this tradition, the puppets are attached to rods and manipulated by multiple puppeteers. This summer, as part of his Residency Award, Marshall will travel to Japan for about a month to observe and learn this ancient craft. In late September, Marshall will select 20 teenagers from the Columbus community to be trained as puppeteers and to rehearse and perform *Rythm Mastr*. Students are encouraged to apply regardless of their previous level of experience with the arts, and Marshall is looking especially (but not exclusively) for urban youth and African-American teens; click [here](http://www.wexarts.org/learn/for_teens/Rythm_Mastr/) (http://www.wexarts.org/learn/for_teens/Rythm_Mastr/) for the application and details (**applications are due by September 14**). This group, selected by Marshall after going through a set of “challenges” that will serve as auditions, will work intensely with Marshall **in rehearsal beginning in November** and will perform the piece for the public with the puppets in a Wexner Center gallery in **February**. Students will be paid a stipend of \$1,000 for their participation. From **February 2 through April 13**, the puppets will be displayed in the Wexner Center gallery as sculpture, alongside drawings and video documentation of the live performance, in the exhibition ***Kerry James Marshall: Every Beat of My Heart***.

Notes Shelly Casto, the Wexner Center's Director of Education and curator of this project, “We are excited by both the scope of Kerry James Marshall's project as well as his commitment to working with teens in the community over the course of several months. This cross-disciplinary project—focused as much on the process as on the final outcome—affords an exceptional opportunity for

Columbus youth and, because it's the work of someone of Marshall's stature, will be watched by the international art world as well."

This project is supported by a **Wexner Center Residency Award**, given annually in the three programming areas at the Wexner Center: visual art (including architecture and design), performing arts, and media arts (film and video). Marshall's Residency Award is presented with support from the **Nimoy Foundation** and **Greater Columbus Arts Council**.

MORE ABOUT KERRY JAMES MARSHALL

Marshall is an internationally known painter, photographer, master draftsman, cartoonist, video maker, and sculptor whose work explores contemporary issues in urban America and highlights the invisibility of African Americans in the history of Western art. The *New York Times*—in a June review of *Documenta*, the contemporary art show in Kassel, Germany held every five years and where Marshall's works are on view this summer—wrote that Marshall



"addresses the complicated and compromised position of African-Americans today in pictures of direct but subtle force. In a show intent on destabilizing stardom, he comes through as a star." His works are in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, The Museum of Modern Art, The Museum of Contemporary Art (Los Angeles), the Studio Museum of Harlem, the Walker Arts Center, and the Columbus Museum of Art, among many other museums. His work has also been shown at the Whitney Biennial, the 2003 Venice Biennale, and in other exhibitions from coast to coast and overseas—including *Splat Boom Pow! The Influence of Cartoons in Contemporary Art*, which was on view at the Wexner Center in 2004. A recipient of a MacArthur Foundation "genius" grant, Marshall was born in Birmingham and is based in Chicago.

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