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Norton Museum of Art

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Norton presents timely installation: *Question Bridge: Black Males*

ARTISTS CHRIS JOHNSON, HANK WILLIS THOMAS, AND OTHERS CREATED MULTI-CHANNEL VIDEO OF MORE THAN 160 MEN DISCUSSING BEING BLACK IN AMERICA

WEST PALM BEACH, FL (Sept. 28, 2016) – Art and current events meet at the Norton Museum of Art when it exhibits the innovative, transmedia art project, *Question Bridge: Black Males*. The installation was initiated in 2012 to provide a platform for an authentic exchange about life in America for black men. It reveals the rarely seen diversity of thought, character, and identity in the black male population, and is on view from Oct. 18 through Dec. 18, 2016. Hank Willis Thomas, one of the artists behind *Question Bridge*, will discuss the project at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 4, 2016 at the Museum.

This five-channel video display of black men in conversation stems from a 1996 video installation by artist Chris Johnson. In his original project, Johnson filmed members of the San Diego African-American community asking and answering questions regarding class and generational divides within their community. Ten years later, artist Hank Willis Thomas contacted Johnson about widening the scope to encompass black males across the country to create *Question Bridge: Black Males*, a collaborative art installation created by Johnson, Thomas, and artists Bayeté Ross Smith, and Kamal Sinclair. Between 2008 and 2011, the artists travelled the country collecting more than 1,600 question-and-answer videos from more than 150 men.

One of the project's executive producers, actor Jesse Williams, describes *Question Bridge* as an attempt to redefine the narrative surrounding "the country's most opaque and feared demographic." *Question Bridge* aims to expose the diversity within the group labelled "black" and further prove that no group can be defined by a single word. As Hank Willis Thomas says, "our greatest hope for this project is to complicate any simple definition of a group to the point where people no longer feel comfortable saying 'black men are...' If we are successful in this broad endeavor, then we believe the *Question Bridge* methodology can be replicated and applied to address a broad range of human issues."

In conjunction with *Question Bridge*, the Norton will present educational programs, including lectures, a Book + Art discussion and tour, and a "Blueprint Roundtable," a program designed by project organizers as a way to involve the local community. As an art installation that changes with each venue, *Question Bridge* provides critical ground for crucial community engagement.

ABOUT THE NORTON MUSEUM

Founded in 1941, the Norton Museum of Art is recognized for its distinguished holdings in American, European, and Chinese art, and a continually expanding presence for Photography and Contemporary art. Its masterpieces of 19th century and 20th century European painting and sculpture include works by Brancusi, Gauguin, Matisse, and Picasso, and American works by Stuart Davis, Hopper, O'Keeffe, Pollock, and Sheeler.

The Norton presents special exhibitions, lectures, tours, and programs for adults and children throughout the year. In 2011, the Norton launched RAW (Recognition of Art by Women), featuring the work of a living female painter or sculptor and funded by the Leonard and Sophie Davis Fund/MLDauray Arts Initiative. In 2012, the Norton established the biennial, international Rudin Prize for Emerging Photographers in partnership with Beth Rudin DeWoody, named in honor of her late father, Lewis Rudin.

In 2016, the Norton broke ground for a visionary expansion designed by architecture firm Foster + Partners, under the direction of Pritzker Prize-winning architect Lord Norman Foster. The project reorients the Norton's entrance to the main thoroughfare of South Dixie Highway, restoring the symmetry of the museum's original 1941 design, and includes a new 42,000-square-foot West Wing that doubles education space, and increases gallery space for the Norton's renowned collection. The transformation of the Museum's 6.3-acre campus will create a museum in a garden, featuring new, verdant spaces and a sculpture garden.

The Norton is located at 1451 S. Olive Ave. in West Palm Beach, FL., and during construction through December 2018 is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday noon to 5 p.m. and Thursday, noon to 9 p.m., and is **free to the public**. The Museum is closed on Mondays and major holidays. For additional information, please call (561) 832-5196, or visit www.norton.org.

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