

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**The National Football League and Artist Hank Willis Thomas  
Present: *Opportunity (reflection)*, 2022  
A large scale sculptural work on view during Super Bowl LVII, Arizona 2023**



Above: Hank Willis Thomas, *Opportunity (reflection)*, 2022. Courtesy the artist.

***Over the past century the NFL has been one of the most transformative platforms for civic and cultural engagement. For this reason, it is no wonder that the Super Bowl is watched by more people at one time than any other event. I see the ball as a metaphor for the present moment and what each of us can do or will do to cherish it and use it towards achieving our collective goals. This sculpture is dedicated to those who put everything into reaching for their dreams. – Hank Willis Thomas***

**ARIZONA** – World-renowned artist Hank Willis Thomas is unveiling a monumental 10-foot tall stainless steel sculpture that will be given pride of place first within the iconic Super Bowl Experience at the Phoenix Convention Center and then in the Great Lawn outside the State Farm Stadium during Super Bowl LVII. Capturing the essence of Thomas' artistic practice, this latest sculpture draws from his 2015 sculpture *Opportunity*, which was inspired by the NFL, and as part of his interest in photographic history, popular culture, and sports as a metaphor for individual and collective struggle or hope.

The artwork falls within Thomas' *Punctum* series, which is based on Roland Barthes' photographic theory of the *punctum* referring to the detail in an image that pierces or wounds the viewer, creating a direct relationship between them and the pictured object or person. Thomas uses this concept to select or reframe areas of images, which he then

transforms into large-scale sculptures. *Opportunity (reflection)* portrays a snapshot of an anonymous player whose arm extends outward to catch the football. The viewer is reflected back in the mirrored surface and invited to imagine these tense few moments, filled with great anticipation, the successful catch leading to success and celebration, as well as the continuation of the infinite game.

The NFL commissioned the piece for Super Bowl LVII as a continuation of its commitment to amplifying diverse voices through artistic expression at its tentpole events.

“Hank’s powerful sculpture showcased during Super Bowl week beautifully represents the passion, strength, and hope at the heart of our game,” said Peter O’Reilly, NFL Executive Vice President of Club Business & League Events. “The NFL thanks Hank for his tremendous work, and we hope the sculpture inspires the thousands of individuals who experience it throughout the week and well beyond.”

*Opportunity (reflection)* will be on view at the Super Bowl Experience at the Phoenix Convention Center on Saturday, February 4 – Sunday, February 5, and from Thursday, February 9 – Friday, February 10. It will then be moved to the Great Lawn outside State Farm Stadium, accessible to Super Bowl ticket holders on Sunday, February 12.

Following its initial presentation at the Super Bowl Experience, *Opportunity (reflection)* will be on loan to Arizona State University’s (ASU) Art Museum through February 2024. Its prominent positioning at the entrance to ASU Art Museum, *Opportunity (reflection)* will welcome visitors to the museum for over a year and further complement the museum’s month-long celebrations during Black History Month in 2024, which is also set to include the participation of several artists, academics and nonprofit organizations.

## **ABOUT HANK WILLIS THOMAS**

**Hank Willis Thomas** (b. 1976, Plainfield, NJ; lives and works in Brooklyn, NY) is a conceptual artist working primarily with themes related to perspective, identity, commodity, media, and popular culture. Thomas’ work has been exhibited throughout the United States and abroad including the International Center of Photography, New York; Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Spain; Musée du quai Branly, Paris; Hong Kong Arts Centre, Hong Kong and the Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Netherlands. His work is included in numerous public collections including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Brooklyn Museum, New York; High Museum of Art, Atlanta and the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. Collaborative projects include Question Bridge: Black Males, In Search Of The Truth (The Truth Booth) and For Freedoms, which was awarded the 2017 ICP Infinity Award for New Media and Online Platform. In 2012, Question Bridge: Black Males debuted at the Sundance Film Festival and was selected for the New Media Grant from the Tribeca Film Institute. Thomas is also the recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowship (2018), AIMIA | AGO Photography Prize (2017), Soros Equality Fellowship (2017), and is a former member of the New York City Public Design Commission, and represented by Jack Shainman Gallery, New York; Pace, Los Angeles; Ben Brown Fine Arts, London and Hong Kong; Goodman Gallery, South Africa; and Marauni Mercier, Belgium.

## **ABOUT ASU ART MUSEUM**

As a learning-centered cultural institution, Arizona State University Art Museum centers art and artists in the service of community well-being and social good. It believes in the power of the visual arts to promote democratic values, social justice and empathy. ASU Art Museum is proud of its abiding dedication to representing a plurality of voices. The museum acts as a bridge between university scholarship and community well-being and endeavors to convene a plurality of voices to foster arts and culture that is both relevant and transformative in its approach.