



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## *Toronto's Bata Shoe Museum Goes FUTURISTIC in New Exhibition*

**May 11, 2022 (TORONTO):** The Bata Shoe Museum is excited to announce the opening of its newest exhibition, *FUTURE NOW: Virtual Sneakers to Cutting-Edge Kicks* on Thursday, May 26. Featuring futuristic footwear designs, from the auto-lacing Nike MAG to the virtual RTFKT x Staple Meta-Pigeon, FUTURE NOW explores how cutting-edge technologies, unexpected materials and new ideas are transforming footwear today. This provocative exhibition includes digitally designed and 3D printed shoes, sneakers made from mushroom leather and reclaimed ocean plastics and footwear created for the metaverse. Featured designers and brands include: Salehe Bembury, Steven Smith, RTFKT, Mr. Bailey, Zaha Hadid, Nike ISPA, Safa Şahin, Tom Sachs, EKTO VR, Saysh, Benoit Méléard, SCRY, Yeezy, and many more.

"The future is always being shaped by the present," says Elizabeth Semmelhack, Director and Senior Curator of the Bata Shoe Museum. "The exhibition includes the many incredible and innovative new footwear designs that are promising to transform what we wear tomorrow. From sneakers created to address issues related to sustainability and inclusion, to shoes that blur the line between the real world and the metaverse, this exhibition explores how forward-looking creators are helping us step into the future."

In the nineteenth century, shoemaking in the West was transformed from an artisanal craft into an industry driven by the invention of new methods and materials. The mass production of footwear made a variety of shoes accessible and affordable to more people, and footwear consumption began to rise. However, industrialization also introduced new limitations. Feet suddenly had to fit into predetermined sizes, and consumer choice was limited to the styles and colors determined by manufacturers. Other impacts of mass production were ever-increasing levels of exploitation and waste as both production and consumption grew. Today, many shoe designers and companies are grappling with this history. And while innovation remains at the forefront of the industry, the goals have begun to shift.

Divided into the four areas of innovation, sustainability, transformation and the virtual world, and designed by the award-winning agency Arc + Co. Design Collective, FUTURE NOW showcases over 50 futuristic designs from the museum's holdings, as well as loans from prominent collectors, designers and inventors.

Highlights in the exhibition include:

- **INNOVATION** ~ The **Nike MAG**, the pair of self-lacing sneakers first imagined in the 1989 film *Back to the Future II* and made real in 2015; the **NOVA**, the first shoe to ever be made using rotation moulding, a collab between Rem D. Koolhaas and renowned architect Zaha Hadid

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- SUSTAINABLE - Streetwear brand FW\_D XP4\_Mavy sneaker made of recycled and recyclable materials and PETA approved; a digitally designed and printed otherworldly **biomorphic boot** by SCRY designer Zixiong Wei
- TRANSFORMATIVE - **Salehe Bembury**, inspired by his own finger print, create the first Croc to break the mould; independent designer Daniel Bailey, aka Mr. Bailey's **Octopus shoe**, created for Takashi Murakami's ComplexCon exhibition "Sneakers for Breakfast,"
- VIRTUAL - EKTO VR's motorized boots for wear by VR users give users the sensation of walking naturally through virtual spaces; **RTFKT's** in-real-life version of their collaboration with Jeff Staple to create the NFT **RTFKT x Staple Meta-Pigeon** blurs the line between the real and virtual worlds

In addition to the exhibition, the BSM is excited to announce an accompanying book also titled *FUTURE NOW*, which features in-depth interviews with of-the-moment creatives and design teams, including Salehe Bembury, Benoit Pagotto, Steven Vasilev and Chris Le from RTFKT, Steven Smith, Alexander Taylor, Jeff Staple, Mr. Bailey, Zixiong Wei from SCRY, D'Wayne Edwards from Pensole, and Darryl Matthews and Shamees Aden from Nike ISPA. Published by Rizzoli Electa, the 224-page book comes in hardcover and includes 150 stunning colour images. Available at the museum beginning May 26<sup>th</sup> and worldwide beginning June 21.

The Bata Shoe Museum is hosting a FREE community weekend on May 28 + 29, along with a new bold Bloor Street window unveiling. A virtual Salon Series featuring conversations with innovative designers, including Jeff Staple, Chris Dixon and Mr. Bailey, continues throughout the run of the exhibition. For more information on the exhibition, community weekend, programming and to purchase tickets, please visit [www.batashoemuseum.ca](http://www.batashoemuseum.ca).

*FUTURE NOW: Virtual Sneakers to Cutting-Edge Kicks* opens May 26 and will be on view until next October 2023.

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#### ABOUT THE BATA SHOE MUSEUM

*Celebrating over 25 years of the World at Your Feet.* With a growing international collection of nearly 15,000 shoes and related artefacts, the Bata Shoe Museum showcases 4,500 years of footwear history in four distinctive rotating galleries. Through the creation of its innovative exhibitions, the BSM strives to enlighten and entertain visitors of all ages. For every shoe there's a story. Discover thousands at the Bata Shoe Museum. Further information is available at [batashoemuseum.ca](http://batashoemuseum.ca), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/batashoemuseum), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/batashoemuseum), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/batashoemuseum) and our [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/batashoemuseum) channel.

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