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**MoMA Photography Curator Presents “Frances Benjamin Johnston: The Hampton Album”
At The Hampton History Museum on December 2**

Hampton, VA—Sarah Hermanson Meister, photography curator at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, presents her illustrated talk “Frances Benjamin Johnston: The Hampton Album,” as part of the Hampton History Museum’s Port Hampton Lecture Series on Monday, December 2, 7:00-8:00 pm. This program is presented in partnership with the Hampton University Museum.

In the winter of 1899, Frances Benjamin Johnston (1864–1952) was commissioned to photograph the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (now Hampton University) in Hampton, Virginia, a school for young African American and Native American men and women founded shortly after the end of the Civil War. Johnston’s mesmerizing depictions of Hampton’s students learning ancient history, composing music, or measuring the combined draft of horses embody a sense of promise and possibility far from the cruelties and injustices of the post-Reconstruction South. Acclaimed upon its debut at the American Negro Exhibit at the 1900 Paris Exposition, Johnston’s work fell into obscurity until the impresario and philanthropist Lincoln Kirstein stumbled across the album in a Washington, D.C. bookstore when he was stationed nearby during World War II, and later donated it to The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA).

A selection from “The Hampton Album” was first shown at MoMA in 1966, marking the beginning of its recognition as a landmark in the history of photography as well as a touchstone for the divergent visions of African American progress espoused by W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington (himself a Hampton alumnus).

MoMA recently published “The Hampton Album” in its entirety for the first time in two editions: a deluxe edition that adheres to the generous scale and format of the original album for \$175.00, and a smaller hardcover edition for \$50.00. Along with a contextualizing essay by curator Sarah Hermanson Meister, both editions include a reflection on the contemporary resonances of Johnston’s work from artist LaToya Ruby Frazier.

Both editions of “Frances Benjamin Johnston: The Hampton Album” are published by The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and will be available at MoMA stores and online at store.moma.org. They are distributed to the trade through ARTBOOK|D.A.P. in the United States and Canada and through Thames & Hudson outside the United States and Canada.

Special guests from the Hampton University museum, director Vanessa D. Thaxton-Ward, former curator and director Mary Lou Hultgren and archives manager Donzella D. Maupin will be there to answer questions in reference to the historical narrative of the images.

About the Artist/Authors

Frances Benjamin Johnston (American, 1864–1952) achieved acclaim as a photojournalist and studio photographer based in Washington, D.C., and is recognized as a pioneer for women in photography. Johnston’s career spanned nearly seven decades, and her projects varied from documenting educational institutions to a survey of Southern American vernacular architecture.

Sarah Hermanson Meister is a Curator in the Department of Photography at The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

LaToya Ruby Frazier is an artist and Associate Professor of Photography at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Hampton History Museum

Admission to the talk is free for museum members, \$5.00 for non-members.

The Hampton History Museum is located at 120 Old Hampton Lane in Downtown Hampton. There is free parking in the garage across the street from the museum. For more information call 757/727-1102, or visit www.hamptonhistorymuseum.org.

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Images attached:

Frances Benjamin Johnston, Untitled (self-portrait in her Washington, D.C., studio), 1896, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

Frances Benjamin Johnston, History. Class in American History from The Hampton Album, 1899-1900 (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2019)

Frances Benjamin Johnston, Stairway of Treasurer's Residence. Students at work from The Hampton Album, 1899-1900 (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2019)