WASHINGTON, DC—The Phillips Collection launches its first digital Intersections project, *Picture: Present*, by Italian-born, New York-based artist Luca Buvoli, building on the contemporary art series in which artists are invited to create new work in dialogue with the Phillips's collection and architecture. *Picture: Present* is part of the artist’s ongoing series *Astrodoubt and The Quarantine Chronicles* that features tragicomic visual narratives commenting on the current covid-19 health and social crisis. The 12 scenes from *Picture: Present* will be unveiled simultaneously on the Phillips’s website and Instagram account from July 20–August 7, 2020.

Created for the Phillips, *Picture: Present* is the most recent episode from Buvoli’s *Astrodoubt and The Quarantine Chronicles* series. By utilizing images of works from the Phillips’s permanent collection, it reads like a 12-scene storyboard, reflecting on the emotional unrest and social constraints caused by the pandemic. Buvoli plays with pieces from the collection, including Allan Rohan Crite’s *Parade on Hammond Street*, Barbara Hepworth’s *Operation Drawing*; Pierre Bonnard’s *Boulevard*; Edouard Vuillard’s *Woman Sweeping*; Horace Pippin’s *Domino Players*; Pierre-Auguste Renoir’s *Luncheon of the Boating Party*; Lois Mailou Jones’s *Coin de la Rue Medard, Paris*; Paul Klee’s *Arrival of the Jugglers*; Alma Thomas’s *Breeze Rustling Through Fall Flowers*; Forrest Bess’s *Prophesy*; and Albert Pinkham Ryder’s *Dead Bird*.

With lively texts integrated within the pictures and written in a style mostly reflective of the time period, the Phillips artworks are re-contextualized as individual panels to tell a fluid story about the pandemic,
offering “safety messages” for survival through art. The narrative crosses feelings of isolation, anxiety, and fear, as well as disillusionment in how the crisis has been handled, and ends with a focus on the restorative power of art.

“In sum, Buvoli’s digital Intersections is a utopian-dystopian meditation where dreams intersect with reality through art and humor,” says Dr. Vesela Sretenović, Senior Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art. “Moreover, it is about museums—and specifically the Phillips—becoming beacons of solace, healing, and hope.”

Buvoli began The Quarantine Chronicles—his daily practice of expression and communication—while living in isolation during quarantine, posting them on Instagram (@astrodoubt_). The protagonist is Astrodoubt (a fictitious astronaut) who imagines drifting into space to escape ecological disaster but instead, he/she/they is grounded on this planet by the deadly pandemic. Astrodoubt’s only hope for survival is “humor and creativity.”

The series is part of the artist’s Space Doubt Expedition Project, which began in 2009 in collaboration with NASA scientists and other institutions, including the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC. Over more than one decade, the project evolved from sculpture and drawing to painting, video animations, installations, and most recently social media. He describes this ongoing project as a “reflection on science, modernist utopias, geo-political fantasies, illness, environmental crises, and paranoia.”

ABOUT LUCA BUVOli
Luca Buvoli (b. 1963, Italy) is a multimedia artist who has exhibited internationally for 30 years. His work intertwines mythology, science, and ideology with daily life and humor. Major institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and the Guggenheim Museum in New York have acquired his sculptures, and his animated films and videos have been screened internationally at the Lincoln Center, New York; MoMA, New York; and the British Library, London. His expanded multimedia projects have been presented at the 2007 Venice Biennale, the 1997 Johannesburg Biennale, and other biennials in Asia and Europe. He has had solo shows at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (2001); the M.I.T. List Center, Cambridge (2000); Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia (2007); John Weber Gallery, New York (1995, 1997, 1999); and Hyundai Gallery, Seoul, Korea (2012), among others.

Buvoli is the Director of the Mount Royal School of Art Multidisciplinary Master of Fine Arts Program at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, Maryland.

INTERSECTIONS AT THE PHILLIPS
The exhibition is part of Intersections, the Phillips’s ongoing series of contemporary art projects in which artists are invited to produce work that engages the museum’s architecture and/or permanent collection, exploring the intriguing intersections between past and present. Inaugurated in 2009 and led by Senior Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art Vesela Sretenović, the Phillips’s Intersections series has presented 28 projects from the US and abroad. Luca Buvoli: Picture: Present marks the first digital iteration of the series. The artists have created diverse projects—both aesthetically and conceptually—and employed various media, from wall-drawing, rubber-painting, and digital photography to video projection and yarn installation.

Intersections is presented by University of Maryland
ABOUT THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION
The Phillips Collection, America’s first museum of Modern art, presents one of the world’s most distinguished Impressionist and American Modern art collections. Including paintings by Renoir and Rothko, Bonnard and O’Keeffe, van Gogh, Diebenkorn, Daumier and Lawrence, among others, the museum continues to actively collect new acquisitions, many by contemporary artists such as John Akomfrah, Benny Andrews, Poul Gernes, Wolfgang Laib, Simone Leigh, Whitfield Lovell, Zilia Sánchez, and Leo Villareal. Its distinctive building combines extensive new galleries with the former home of its founder, Duncan Phillips. The Phillips’s impact spreads nationally and internationally through its highly distinguished special exhibitions, programs, and events that catalyze dialogue surrounding the continuity between art of the past and the present. Among the Phillips’s esteemed programs are its award-winning education programs for educators, students, and adults; well-established Phillips Music series; and sell-out Phillips after 5 events. The museum contributes to the art conversation on a global scale with events like Conversations with Artists and the International Forum. The Phillips Collection values its community partnerships with the University of Maryland—the museum’s nexus for academic work, scholarly exchange, and interdisciplinary collaborations—and THEARC—the museum’s new campus serving the Southeast DC community. The Phillips Collection is a private, non-government museum, supported primarily by donations.

As a health precaution, both locations at 21st Street, NW, and Phillips@THEARC are temporarily closed to the public until further notice. We will continue to monitor and reassess future event plans on an ongoing basis as the situation continues to develop and adhere to the guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the D.C. Department of Health. During this time a number of resources are available through our website and social media channels. Please visit phillipscollection.org/stay-connected to learn more.

IMAGE: Luca Buvoli, Scene 2: Picture: Present (from Astro doubt and The Quarantine Chronicles), Based on Barbara Hepworth, Operation, c. 1947, Pastel on paper, 10 x 14 in., The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, Gift of the Hepworth Estate, 2007

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