



For Immediate Release: August 1, 2019

Contact:

Emma Jacobson-Sive, 323-842-2064,
emma@ejs-media.com
Stacey Ravel Abarbanel, 310-736-5300,
srabarbanel@gmail.com

**THE CALIFORNIA AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM ANNOUNCES FALL SEASON,
FEATURING FIVE NEW EXHIBITIONS THAT EXAMINE
FASHION, IDENTITY, AND VISUAL ART**

Season Launch Party (Can't Stop, Won't Stop!): October 2, 2019 7–9 pm

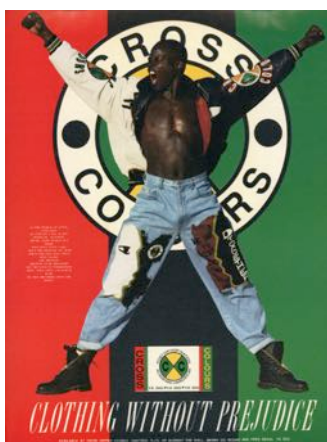
(Los Angeles, CA) — The California African American Museum (CAAM) announced today that it will open five new exhibitions in fall 2019, including a thirtieth anniversary survey of iconic fashion brand Cross Colours, a group show highlighting local artists working in metal, an installation by visionary LA-based artist Timothy Washington, and an incisive examination of the “mammy” caricature in films and popular culture.

George O. Davis, Executive Director of CAAM said, “In true CAAM form, visitors this fall will be immersed in black culture from numerous perspectives and eras. Our galleries will showcase a fascinating range of subjects, from a pioneering Hip Hop clothing brand to mass media to three exhibitions that consider how African American histories and traditions play out in the realm of contemporary art, remaining relevant today.”

CAAM's fall exhibitions are:

Cross Colours: Black Fashion in the 20th Century

September 27, 2019–March 1, 2020



In 1990, on the first season of the hit primetime television show *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*, lead actor Will Smith wore a series of boldly hued and geometric looks designed by a young Los Angeles–based urban apparel line named Cross Colours. African American-owned, founded by Carl Jones and T.J. Walker, the brand quickly skyrocketed, securing a plethora of orders across the country and breaking color barriers in the field of men's apparel. The commercial success of Cross Colours, which Jones and Walker created for black youth with the premise of producing “Clothing Without Prejudice,” had a significant influence on the mainstream fashion industry, inspiring it to take notice of the emerging importance of urban streetwear.

Working in the golden age of Hip Hop in the late 1980s and 1990s, Jones and Walker incorporated bright colors and graphic designs that reflected not just trends in fashion, but also a cultural embrace of Afrocentrism in response to unjust Reagan-era policies, rising poverty, police brutality, and substandard educational opportunities. They appealed unapologetically to a black aesthetic, while strategically using product placement, social justice messaging, and community outreach to address these pressing issues. Thirty years later, Cross Colours continues to engage in the socio-political moment and counter negative portrayals of black youth. The first exhibition to examine this groundbreaking

brand, *Cross Colours: Black Fashion in the 20th Century* showcases vintage textiles, media footage, and rare ephemera that illuminate how Cross Colours has permeated popular culture and how fashion can be used to tell history anew.

This exhibition is curated by Tyree Boyd-Pates, History Curator and Program Manager, and Taylor Bythewood-Porter, Assistant History Curator.

LA Blacksmith

September 10, 2019 – February 16, 2020



For decades black artists in Los Angeles have worked with metal for its historic and symbolic significance, as well as for other sociocultural, political, and practical considerations. *LA Blacksmith* highlights this tradition, from historic Los Angeles metal sculpture that signifies the durability of West African metalsmithing aesthetics to contemporary explorations of iron and steel alloys, bronze, copper, tin, aluminum, and gold. Beginning with Beulah Woodard's homages to African mask making, *LA Blacksmith* examines how the Watts Rebellion and other political and aesthetic ideas shaped midcentury metalwork. Contemporary artists explore metal as appropriation, power, and play in twenty-first century Los Angeles. For these artists, metalwork layers the tension between tradition and resistance, preciousness and posture, as well as the sacred and the profane.

Complete list of artists:

Joseph Beckles, Kendell Carter, Adrienne DeVine, Charles Dickson, Melvin Edwards, Charla Elizabeth, Maren Hassinger, Artis Lane, Ed Love, Kori Newkirk, John Outterbridge, Duane Paul, John Riddle, Alison Saar, Betye Saar, Gerard Basil Stripling, Kehinde Wiley, Glen Wilson, Beulah Woodard, and Suné Woods

LA Blacksmith is guest curated by independent curator jill moniz.

Making Mammy: A Caricature of Black Womanhood, 1840–1940

September 25, 2019 – March 1, 2020



One of the most pervasive stereotypes constructed during the post-Civil War era, and arguably the most enduring image from the days of Jim Crow, the mammy was a staple caricature in the romanticization of the Antebellum South. Popularized into the twentieth century by characters such as “Mammy” in MGM’s hit film *Gone with the Wind* (1939), this archetype of black domestic servitude was often depicted as good-natured, overweight, and loud. Presenting an ahistorical view of black womanhood within southern plantation hierarchies, the mammy not only embellished the realities of black life in the American South, but it also denied African

American women their femininity, beauty, and strength.

Making Mammy: A Caricature of Black Womanhood, 1840–1940 explores how the mammy figure was produced in an effort to temper the atrocities of enslavement and serve southern interests domestically, economically, and politically. Bringing together films, photographs, and artifacts, it examines the legacy of the institutionalized stereotype, considering a century of complex manufacturing of black femininity, power dynamics, and mass-media messaging that still affects black women’s body image, lack of agency, and sense of self. *Making Mammy* uncovers the nuances behind this figure and illuminates the vestiges of America’s role in enslavement through the mammy’s appearance in literature and cinema.

This exhibition is curated by Tyree Boyd-Pates, History Curator and Program Manager, CAAM, Taylor Bythewood-Porter, Assistant History Curator, CAAM, and Brenda Stevenson, Professor and Nickoll Family Endowed Chair in History at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Timothy Washington: Citizen/Ship

September 25, 2019 – March 1, 2020



Los Angeles–based artist Timothy Washington (b. 1946) has crafted a visionary display of mixed-media works in his Leimert Park residence for over fifty years. A prominent figure during the Black Arts Movement—a key moment in the 1960s and 1970s when African American artists and writers collectively celebrated black culture—Washington has been a pioneer of socio-politically charged work ever since, exhibiting both locally and nationally with renowned fellow artists, such as Charles White and David Hammons. In the late 1970s, after years of creating his celebrated dry point drawings and carved wooden sculptures, he sought to innovate his use of materials and techniques and shifted to producing futuristic assemblage sculptures, which he continues to make today. To create them, Washington dips cotton in white glue, then applies it to shaped wire-hanger armatures, while also embedding myriad objects that he finds in his neighborhood or collects through family and friends.

This exhibition presents Washington’s very first installation project, *Citizen/Ship* (2019), a powerful yet playful collection of works that meld American patriotism with Afrofuturistic narratives of fantasy and science fiction. Through references to technology, utopia, and mysticism, *Timothy Washington: Citizen/Ship* speaks to both the negative and positive aspects of American culture, emphasizing issues that affect black lives: violence, racism, and displacement, but also survival, hope, love, and reconciliation.

This exhibition is curated Mar Hollingsworth, Visual Arts Curator and Program Manager.

Dust My Broom: Southern Vernacular from the Permanent Collection

September 10, 2019 – February 16, 2020



Featuring the largest selection of works by Southern vernacular artists ever displayed at the California African American Museum, *Dust My Broom: Southern Vernacular from the Permanent Collection* examines the remarkable reach and legacy of arts traditions from the American South. The region’s vernacular manifests itself in assemblages and quilts, as well as sculptures, paintings, and drawings, executed from found or repurposed objects by largely self-taught artists who spent their careers excluded by the mainstream art world. Reflecting themes associated with spirituality, social justice, folklore, and daily life among common folk, works by artists such as Sam Doyle, “Missionary” Mary Proctor, and Purvis Young mirror the ingenuity, creativity, and deep sense of community among African Americans.

The exhibition showcases numerous recent acquisitions and places them in the context of other works from the permanent collection—specifically, alongside those connected to the California assemblage movement, including by Noah Purifoy and John Outterbridge, Los Angeles artists who were born in the South. In this regard, *Dust My Broom* explores the affirmation, continuity, and innovation of African American Southern vernacular aesthetics brought into the West through several waves of

migration. Complemented by additional loans from local collections, these compelling works illustrate the breadth of approaches practiced by artists from the South, as well as by contemporary artists, including Dominique Moody, John T. Riddle Jr., and Betye and Alison Saar, who absorbed southern influences through personal experience, family ties, and their peers.

This exhibition is curated Mar Hollingsworth, Visual Arts Curator and Program Manager.

About the California African American Museum

CAAM explores the art, history, and culture of African Americans, with an emphasis on California and the West. Chartered by the State of California in 1977, the Museum began formal operations in 1981 and is a state-supported agency and a Smithsonian Affiliate. In addition to presenting exhibitions and public programs, CAAM houses a permanent collection of more than four thousand works of art, artifacts, and historical documents, and a publicly accessible research library containing more than twenty thousand volumes.

Visitor Information

Admission to the California African American Museum is free. Visit caammuseum.org for current exhibition and program information or call 213-744-7432 for tours or additional assistance.

Hours: Tuesday–Saturday 10 a.m.–5 p.m., Sunday 11 a.m.–5 p.m. Closed Mondays and national holidays. The California African American Museum is located in Exposition Park at the corner of Figueroa Street and Exposition Boulevard, west of the 110 (Harbor) Freeway. Easy parking is available for \$12 (cash only) at 39th and Figueroa Streets. The Metro Expo line stop Expo Park/USC is a five-minute walk through the Exposition Park Rose Garden to the Museum.

###

Images:

Page 1: Cross Colours advertisement in *URB* magazine featuring Djimon Hounsou, ca. 1991. Photo by Michael Segal. Courtesy the Cross Colours Archive

Page 2: Ed Love, *The Big O Series*, Welded chrome. *Monster 9, Horus*, 1973, 98 x 36 x 18 in. *Monster 6, Isis*, 1973, 114 x 75 x 18 in. *Monster 3, Osiris*, 1972, 120 x 60 x 24 in. Collection of Scott Love, Photo: Melanie Aron

Page 2: Publicity photo for MGM's *Gone with the Wind*, 1939. Courtesy Terry Alex

Page 3: Timothy Washington working in his studio

Page 3: "Missionary" Mary Proctor, *Music Heals*, 2009. Mixed media on blue jeans, 42 x 35 in., Collection of the California African American Museum, Gift of Gordon W. Bailey