

**CAAM** California  
African American  
Museum

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**THE CALIFORNIA AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM ANNOUNCES  
SPRING SEASON FEATURING FOUR NEW EXHIBITIONS**

**Season Launch Party (Can't Stop, Won't Stop!): April 7, 2020, 7–9 pm**

(Los Angeles, CA) — The California African American Museum (CAAM) announced today that it will open four new exhibitions in spring 2020, including solo projects by Los Angeles-based artists Nikita Gale and Sula Bermúdez-Silverman as well as *Men of Change: Power. Triumph. Truth.*, a travelling exhibition that features contemporary art, photography, and more in a dynamic installation that highlights revolutionary African American men.

George O. Davis, Executive Director of CAAM said, “We eagerly anticipate this new suite of exhibitions, organized under the leadership of our new deputy director and chief curator, Cameron Shaw. Visitors will engage with works by both emerging and established artists that illuminate a range of subjects, including identity, history, and society.”

**CAAM's new spring exhibitions are:**

***Sula Bermúdez-Silverman: Neither Fish, Flesh, nor Fowl***

February 28 – August 23, 2020



Los Angeles-based artist Sula Bermúdez-Silverman investigates and critiques social structures through a conceptual and multidisciplinary practice that examines economic, racial, religious, and gendered systems of power. In her first solo museum exhibition in Los Angeles, the artist unites several bodies of work created since 2014, including a new series of sculptures made exclusively for CAAM. Bermúdez-Silverman mines her personal and familial histories as a woman of Afro-Puerto Rican and Jewish descent, transforming genetic data into colorful pie charts that call to mind hard-edged abstractions. Elsewhere, she embroiders vintage doilies with her own hair to depict the human body, as well as language that references the legacy of colorism and passing in the African diaspora. In another series, she

creates quilts of clear plastic grids filled with found trash fragments from neighborhoods where she has lived, which function as markers of specific times and geographical locations. In the works debuting at CAAM, Bermúdez-Silverman addresses early global trade, the beginnings of commodification, and economic hierarchies by taking molds of her childhood dollhouse and creating casts of it in sugar, a material whose history has dictated that of her ancestors.

*Sula Bermúdez-Silverman: Neither Fish, Flesh, nor Fowl* is curated by Mar Hollingsworth, Visual Arts Curator and Program Manager, CAAM, and presented in conjunction with *afroLATinidad: mi casa, my city*, curated by Mariah Berlanga-Shevchuk and Walter Thompson-Hernández at LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes.

### ***Nikita Gale: PRIVATE DANCER***

March 18 – September 6, 2020



For Nikita Gale's first solo museum exhibition, the Los Angeles-based artist takes the common, shared experience of music concerts as a starting point for questioning more abstract ideas of spectacle, desire, and refusal. Gale's research-based practice frequently centers on readily available objects and ubiquitous consumer technologies assembled in unexpected ways. In the installation at CAAM, theatrical lighting trusses are transformed into sculpture, and programmed lights "dance" to an unheard soundtrack of music by Tina Turner, an icon the artist has been referencing for over six years. By isolating the visual language of live performance in the gallery and separating it from the expectation of audio, Gale creates an uncanny experience that serves as a meditation on the limits of the body, the demands of celebrity, and silence as a political position.

*Nikita Gale: PRIVATE DANCER* is curated by Cameron Shaw, Deputy Director and Chief Curator.

### ***Men of Change: Power. Triumph. Truth.***

April 8–August 23, 2020



*Men of Change: Power. Triumph. Truth.* profiles revolutionary men—including Muhammad Ali, James Baldwin, Ta-Nehisi Coates, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Kendrick Lamar—whose journeys have altered the history and culture of the country. Their achievements are woven within the legacy and traditions of the African American experience, becoming emblems of excellence in spite of society's barriers.

Through inspiring quotes, original works of art, dramatic photographs, and a dynamic space that encourages self-reflection, this innovative exhibition brings together the historical and the contemporary to illuminate the importance of these men within the context of rich community traditions. It invites visitors to consider predominant narratives of black male identity and engage in authentic stories from multiple perspectives. While these groundbreaking individuals made their mark in a variety of disciplines—politics, sports, science, entertainment, business, religion, and more—all understood the value of asserting their agency by owning their stories. Twenty-five contemporary artists were invited to reflect upon and celebrate the significance of these men through their own creative vision. These works of art serve as a counterpoint to sumptuously backlit photographs and evocative storytelling, and together they honor the truth of the African American experience in history and today.

*Men of Change* was developed by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service and made possible through the generous support of the Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services.

## ***Sanctuary: Recent Acquisitions to the Permanent Collection***

March 18–September 6, 2020



*Sanctuary* features recently acquired works that explore the concepts of safety and refuge as they relate to the African American experience. Whether real, staged, or imagined, the worlds depicted in these photographs and mixed-media works support complex narratives and assert the importance of claiming a place of one's own. Each artist in the exhibition presents a unique perspective on the creation of space, inhabiting actual physical locations, evoking emotional ties and affiliations, or manifesting dream-like havens through digital manipulation.

In several instances, photographs are displayed alongside three-dimensional sculptural works by the same artist, forming expressive installations that speak to the artists' material versatility and to the creative potentials of the media in which they work. For example, Gary Simmons's photograph of an empty academic setting appears in tandem with one of his ghostly erased drawings of coniferous trees on a school chalkboard, while Janna Ireland's impeccably staged self-portrait complements a small still-life assemblage that suggests the fragility of her own domestic construct.

*Sanctuary* includes works by Sadie Barnette, April Bey, Carla Jay Harris, Lyle Ashton Harris, Janna Ireland, Adia Millett, Yinka Shonibare, Gary Simmons, and Sam Vernon.

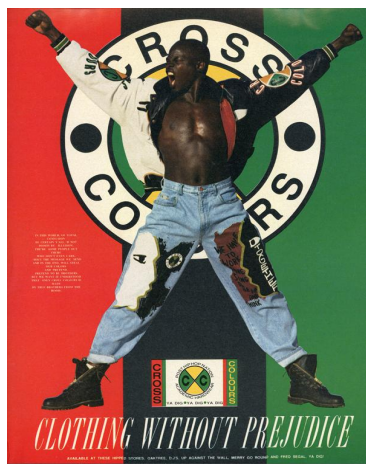
*Sanctuary: Recent Acquisitions to the Permanent Collection* is curated by Mar Hollingsworth, Visual Arts Curator and Program Manager.

## **Continuing**

Due to popular demand, *Cross Colours: Black Fashion in the 20th Century* has been extended through the summer of 2020.

## ***Cross Colours: Black Fashion in the 20th Century***

Extended through August 23, 2020



The first exhibition to examine this groundbreaking brand, *Cross Colours: Black Fashion in the 20th Century* marks the brand's thirtieth anniversary by showcasing vintage textiles, media footage, and rare ephemera that illuminate how Cross Colours—known for its boldly hued, geometric looks and social justice messaging—has permeated popular culture and how fashion can be used to tell history anew.

This exhibition is curated by Tyree Boyd-Pates, Associate Curator of Western History, Autry Museum of the American West, and Taylor Bythewood-Porter, Assistant History Curator, CAAM.

## **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](http://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 39<sup>th</sup> 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.

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Images:

Page 1: Sula Bermúdez-Silverman, *3c/4a*, 2017. Wood and artist's hair, 42 x 36 x 36 in. Courtesy the artist

Page 2: Tina Turner concert in Germany, 1990; Photo: Ralf-Udo Hartmann

Page 2: Devan Shimoyama, *Kehinde*, 2018. Courtesy the artist

Page 3: Carla Jay Harris, *Sphinx*, 2019. Archival pigment print, two panels, 40 x 30 in. each. Courtesy the artist

Page 3: Cross Colours advertisement in *URB* magazine featuring Djimon Hounsou, ca. 1991. Photo by Michael Segal. Courtesy the Cross Colours Archive