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THE CALIFORNIA AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM TO REOPEN MARCH 27, 2021

**Featuring new and extended solo exhibitions by artists
Nikita Gale and Sula Bermúdez-Silverman plus three new group exhibitions**

(Los Angeles, CA) — The California African American Museum (CAAM) announced today that it will reopen to the public on Saturday, March 27, 2021. The Museum's galleries will be open Tuesday-Sunday.

In response to COVID-19, numerous new precautions are in place, including:

- Admission remains free, but reservations are now required.
- Capacity is set at 25% per public health and government guidelines.
- Masks, social distancing, and temperature checks are required.
- No large bags. The bag check is closed.

Please visit our website (caamuseum.org) for complete details about CAAM's new visiting protocols.

"This has been a long, hard year for many in our community," says recently appointed Executive Director Cameron Shaw. "As CAAM is an important space of reflection and affirmation, we are pleased to welcome visitors back. Most of the exhibitions on view have never been seen by the public in person since they were initially slated to open during our extended, pandemic-related closure, so all of the artists, curators, and the entire CAAM staff are excited to share them."

CAAM's current exhibitions are:

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

Through May 2, 2021



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

Through May 9, 2021



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, Executive Director.

Men of Change: Power. Triumph. Truth.

Through May 30, 2021



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

Through July 11, 2021



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

Enunciated Life

Through August 15, 2021



In *Enunciated Life*, Black spiritual beliefs—as well as the movements, sounds, and other bodily expressions that have engendered communication within and beyond Black churches—operate as a point of departure for considering modes of surrender. The exhibition's title is derived from the scholarship of Ashon T. Crawley, who recognizes the beauty and power of breathing within Black

Pentecostalism “to enunciate life, life that is exorbitant, capacious, and fundamentally social, though it is also life that is structured through and engulfed by brutal violence.” Enunciated life, in other words, alerts us to the audaciousness of Black breath that endures in the wake of continued anti-Blackness.

The contemporary artists with work in this show, including commissioned works by Shikeith, Billy Mark, and Tiona Nekkia McClodden, draw upon the choreography and sonics of possession found in Black spirituality—the visible signs of embodied surrender, such as sweating, whooping, shouting, back-bending, and chest-opening. Through video, painting, photography, and installation, these artists help us explore the various bodily experiences that transpire through religion; they also make clear the far less legible elements that surround the event of incarnation, such as desire, longing, faith, and vulnerability.

Enunciated Life is curated by Taylor Renee Aldridge, 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; reservations are required and can be made online at caamuseum.org. Call 213-744-2084 for additional assistance.

Hours: Tuesday–Saturday 10 a.m.–5 p.m., Sunday 11 a.m.–5 p.m. Closed Mondays (except MLK Day) and Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. 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 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.

CAAM's neighbors in Exposition Park are also reopening. The California Science Center will open to the general public on March 27, 2021 and the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County on April 1, 2021.

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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: Nikita Gale: *PRIVATE DANCER*; Installation photo: Elon Schoenholz

Page 2: Ja'Tovia Gary, *An Ecstatic Experience*, 2015. Video, color, sound, 6 min. Courtesy the artist

Page 3: 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