

CAAM California
African American
Museum

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**THE CALIFORNIA AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM TO OPEN
FIVE NEW EXHIBITIONS THIS WINTER AND SPRING**

Featuring solo exhibitions from artists Troy Montes-Michie, Mario Moore, and Matthew Thomas plus an examination of the Buffalo Soldiers' impact in California

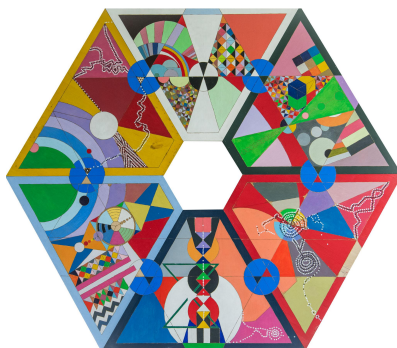
(Los Angeles, CA) — The California African American Museum (CAAM) announced today the presentation of five new exhibitions that will open February through April.

"In the past year and a half, we have welcomed an accomplished group of new curators to the CAAM team and commenced exciting creative collaborations with other cultural organizations. This slate of upcoming exhibitions begins to reflect some of these partnerships as well as the interests, strengths, and vision of CAAM's staff," says Executive Director Cameron Shaw.

CAAM's upcoming exhibitions are:

Matthew Thomas: Enlightenment

February 5 – August 7, 2022



For over five decades, Matthew Thomas has developed a career as an artist and art professor, first in Los Angeles, and since 2011 in rural Thailand. In the late 1960s, Thomas began researching Eastern religions and philosophies and later studied Buddhist Tantra, a system of spiritual practice and meditation that has profoundly impacted his life and art. Inspired by his practice of the Buddhist religion, his multimedia works are filled with complex patterns that express his progress toward enlightenment and provide a path for others to experience the same. His unique visual language of sacred geometric

abstraction, which integrates a variety of symbolic shapes and colors, explores basic life principles and correlates with the five elements of earth, fire, water, wind, and sky. Since moving to Thailand, Thomas has continued to investigate the relationship between art

and the religious philosophies of many cultures, which he believes are all connected to a universal cosmic reality. *Matthew Thomas: Enlightenment* will feature a site-specific installation and selection of recent paintings that function as visual prayers meant to harmonize humanity and the universe.

Matthew Thomas: Enlightenment was conceived by Mar Hollingsworth, former Visual Arts Curator, and organized by Taylor Renee Aldridge, Visual Arts Curator.

Troy Montes-Michie: Rock of Eye

February 16 – September 4, 2022



To tailor a garment by “rock of eye” is to rely on the drape in the fitting process—that is, to rely on experience over mathematical measurement. Draping is a kind of drawing in space: a freehand, an intuition, a trust of materials. *Troy Montes-Michie: Rock of Eye*, the artist’s first museum solo exhibition, brings together collages, drawings, sculptures, and installations that draw the contours of body and place. It begins with, and departs from, his past assemblages and collages that center magazine images of the Black male body and trace the social history and form of the zoot suit, a garment at the center of the 1943 attacks primarily on Mexican American, African American, and Filipino American youth in Los Angeles known as the Zoot Suit

Riots. Montes-Michie was born in El Paso, Texas, and his practice reflects his experience growing up along the United States and Mexico border.

The exhibition is presented in tandem with the artist’s monograph, *Rock of Eye* (co-published by CAAM, Rivers Institute, and Siglio Press), which deconstructs Montes-Michie’s collage practice. In the book and in CAAM’s galleries, repurposed images lead from figure to ground—occupying an ambiguous space between portraiture and landscape—and reveal common threads between borderland subjectivity and geography.

Troy Montes-Michie: Rock of Eye is a collaboration between CAAM and the Rivers Institute for Contemporary Art & Thought in New Orleans. The exhibition is curated by Andrea Andersson, Rivers Institute Founding Director and Chief Curator, with Jordan Amirkhani, Curator, Rivers Institute, and Taylor Renee Aldridge, Visual Arts Curator, CAAM.

Related Program:

Wednesday, February 16, 2022 | 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

In Conversation: Troy Montes-Michie and Tina Campt

Troy Montes-Michie and Black feminist theorist Tina Campt, Owen F. Walker Professor of Humanities and Modern Culture and Media at Brown University, discuss various literal

and conceptual borders that are questioned in Montes-Michie's work, including boundaries surrounding gender, sexuality, class, and ethnicity.

Body + Text: Selections from the Permanent Collection

February 25 – August 7, 2022



Body + Text features works from CAAM's permanent collection that pair representations of the Black body with linguistic and textual elements such as words, musical notations, and other symbols. The many visual codes embedded around or upon these bodily images reinforce, expand, and occasionally challenge interpretation, often invoking social and political contexts that transform the physical depictions into urgent histories and heartfelt stories.

Throughout the exhibition, the human form appears whole or in partial view, in mediums that range from drawing, painting, and printing to photography and assemblage. Textual elements also function diversely across *Body + Text*. Where in some works words are descriptive and used to build narratives, in other cases, text forms may initially appear incidental or as formal elements within an artist's composition. Taken together, the works in this exhibition explore the integration of body and text with remarkable creativity and individuality and reveal various modes of artistic expression.

Body + Text: Selections from the Permanent Collection was conceived by Mar Hollingsworth, former Visual Arts Curator, and organized by Taylor Bythewood-Porter, Assistant Curator.

Mario Moore | Enshrined: Presence + Preservation

March 23 – October 2, 2022



Mario Moore, born and based in Detroit, is a figurative painter whose subjects stand tall, gazing confidently at the viewer. They convey a dignified presence without regalia, a type of depiction that places Moore's portraiture within a lineage of artists such as Kerry James Marshall, Barkley L. Hendricks, and one of Moore's earliest influences, the seventeenth-century Spanish painter Diego Velázquez.

Mario Moore | Enshrined: Presence + Preservation, Moore's first solo exhibition in California, brings

together work from early in his career as well as his most recent series, *The Work of Several Lifetimes* (2019), created with the support of Princeton University's esteemed Hodder Fellowship. Together, these works represent the artist's desire to make visible the dedicated work of marginalized groups in this country. For many years, Moore has foregrounded the contributions of essential and frontline workers in his paintings, an effort that has become even more poignant during this time of global pandemic, as their labors have enabled and ensured the well-being of us all. This exhibition brings to light Moore's commitment to celebrating his subjects—both their labor and leisure. His paintings encourage us to question who is deserving of portraiture and, thus, preservation.

Mario Moore | *Enshrined: Presence + Preservation* is curated by Taylor Renee Aldridge, Visual Arts Curator.

For Race and Country: Buffalo Soldiers in California

April 13 – October 30, 2022



Buffalo Soldiers have been mythologized in movies, television programs, and popular songs. Despite this romanticism, the history of Buffalo Soldiers is complex, and their stories are relevant and worthy of deeper understanding.

For Race and Country: Buffalo Soldiers in California explores the surprising history surrounding all-Black US Army regiments whose members—both in and out of uniform—left powerful traces in the Golden State. Venturing beyond myths, the exhibition confronts the role of Black soldiers in the Army's

history of violence against Native American people, explores historical debates in the Black community over participation in wars, and exposes cracks in a society permeated by racism, in which African American soldiers faced the searing conflict between commitment to equality for their people and to the country they chose to serve. Such is the “double life” African Americans live, in the words of scholar W.E.B. Du Bois, including in the armed forces.

Through artifacts, audio interviews, photographs, historical records, period uniforms, newspapers, musical scores, and media representations, the exhibition presents a sweeping narrative of Black soldiers and their families who made California home during the era of government-sanctioned racial segregation in the US military. *For Race*

and Country highlights Californians, from Northern California to the Mexican border, whose little-known influence transformed the state, and the nation.

For Race and Country: Buffalo Soldiers in California is curated by Susan D. Anderson, History Curator, with consultant Anthony J. Powell and researcher Caroline Collins.

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 5,000 works of art, artifacts, and historical documents, and a publicly accessible research library. caamuseum.org

Visitor Information

Admission to CAAM is free. All eligible guests (currently 12+) are required to show proof of vaccination. Those with medical or religious exemptions may present a negative COVID-19 test performed within 72 hours. Visitors 18+ must also show a valid photo ID. Children 11 and under are currently exempt from this mandate. Face masks are required for those 2+.

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. CAAM is located in Exposition Park at the corner of Figueroa Street and Exposition Boulevard, west of the 110 (Harbor) Freeway. Exposition Park parking is available for \$15 (daytime) at 39th and Figueroa Streets. The Metro Expo line Expo Park/USC station is a five-minute walk through the Exposition Park Rose Garden to the Museum.

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Images:

Page 1: Matthew Thomas, *Realms of Intention*, 2016. Acrylic on wood, 72 x 49 in. Courtesy of the artist

Page 2: Troy Montes-Michie, *America Is Woven of Many Threads #1* (detail), 2019. Graphite, colored pencil, grease pencil, and polyester thread on magazine paper, 11 x 18 in. Courtesy the artist and Company Gallery, New York

Page 2: Charles White, *Freedom Now*, 1966–67. Oil on canvas, 40.5 x 50 in. Collection of the California African American Museum. Gift of the California African American Museum Art Circle

Page 3: Mario Moore, *To Amani Minter*, 2018. Oil on copper, 12 x 10 in., Collection of Lisa Pernick and Bruce Israel

Page 4: Inspection of Co. H, 9th Cavalry at Presidio, San Francisco, ca 1903. Courtesy the San Francisco Presidio Trust