



EMORY

MICHAEL C.
CARLOS
MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: **Emily Knight**

Office: 404-727-6117

Emily.Knight@emory.edu

***Come Ruin or Rapture* featuring collage works by La Vaughn Belle opens at the Michael C. Carlos Museum**



La Vaughn Belle, *Storm (how to imagine the tropicalia as monumental – as in a memory that cuts like rivers)*. 2023. Charcoal, ink, and acrylic with cuts and burns on paper mounted on muslin. Image Courtesy of the artist.

[Atlanta, Georgia, August 5, 2024]— *Come Ruin or Rapture*, on view in the Carlos Museum’s John Howett Works on Paper Gallery from September 19 through December 8, features work from two of La Vaughn Belle’s poignant series: *Storm (in the time of spatial and temporal collapse)* and *Storm (how to imagine the tropicalia as monumental)*. In these series, Belle employs materials from her studio that were exposed to Hurricane Maria in 2017. By repurposing these materials, she creates new forms that express the resilience of people of African descent in the U.S. Virgin Islands amidst the challenges posed by both natural disasters and colonial powers.

In addition, the exhibition *A Haunting Between Us*, on view from September 19 through December 13 at the Clark Atlanta University Art Museum, showcases work from Belle’s *Swarm* series. This body of work explores the Danish colonial archives, utilizing photographic images from the Danish West Indies. Through a transformative process of cutting and burning, Belle reimagines these images, fundamentally altering their colonial context by removing black bodies from scenes of servitude and reframing them as subjects of strength and perseverance. The sculpture *Sovereign (How to Pull a Spear from the Throat)* serves as a powerful reminder of the rebellion and resistance waged by both the Indigenous peoples of the West Indies and Africans. As Belle articulates, “The haunting is a call to decolonization and the dismantling of systems that keep us fragmented.”

To further amplify these themes, from September 19 to 21, Emory College, Emory University Libraries, the Carlos Museum, and the Clark Atlanta University Art Museum hosted [dECOlonial Feelin](#), an international symposium aimed at raising awareness of the ongoing effects of coloniality in the Virgin Islands. Led by Emory Professor of English and Creative Writing Tiphany Yanique, this three-day symposium utilized art, poetry, archives, philosophy, storytelling, anthropology, and spiritual practice—facilitated by the Virgin Islands Studies Collective—as critical lenses for engaging with these important discussions. Both exhibitions

opened in conjunction with the symposium, underscoring the relevance and urgency of their themes.

This exhibition is a collaboration between the Carlos Museum and The Clark Atlanta University Art Museum with a companion exhibition *A Haunting Between Us* on display through December 13. Both exhibitions are curated by Clint Fluker, senior director of culture, community, and partner Engagement for the Michael C. Carlos Museum and Emory Libraries.

About the Artist



Through exploring the material culture of coloniality, La Vaughn Belle creates narratives from fragments and silences. Working in a variety of disciplines, her practice includes painting, installation, photography, writing, video, and public interventions. She has exhibited her work in the Caribbean, the USA, and Europe in institutions such as the Museo del Barrio (New York), Casa de las Americas (Cuba), the Museum of the African Diaspora (California), and Kunsthall Charlottenborg (Denmark) with large solo exhibitions at the Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art (South Carolina) and the National Nordic Museum (Washington). She is the co-creator of *I Am Queen Mary*, the artist-led groundbreaking monument that confronted the Danish colonial amnesia while commemorating the legacies of resistance of the African people who were brought to the former Danish West Indies. The project was featured in over 100 media outlets around the world, including the *New York Times*, *Politiken*, *VICE*, the *BBC*, and *Le Monde*. Her work has also

been written about in *Hyperallergic*, *Artforum*, *Small Axe*, and numerous journals and books. Her studio is based in the Virgin Islands.

About the Michael C. Carlos Museum

Set in the heart of Emory's Atlanta campus, the Michael C. Carlos Museum is a dynamic, interdisciplinary center for study of art and culture, with collections from Africa; ancient Egypt; Nubia, and the Near East; ancient Greece and Rome; the Indigenous Americas; and South Asia; as well as American and European Works on Paper.

Through our permanent collection galleries, engaging special exhibitions, and innovative programs for audiences of all ages, the Carlos Museum connects the past with the present and the campus with the community.

Curators and faculty develop original exhibitions, engage in interdisciplinary research and teaching, and host touring exhibitions that complement our collections and support the teaching mission of the university. The museum's conservators collaborate with staff, faculty, and students to conduct research and manage preventive care on the museum's varied collections. Museum educators reach across the museum, campus, and city to develop opportunities to engage the intellect and the imagination of university students and faculty, preK-12 students and teachers, and the larger Atlanta community.

The Michael C. Carlos Museum is open from Tuesday to Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. For more information, visit carlos.emory.edu/visit, call 404.727.4282, or follow @CarlosMuseum on social media.

carlos.emory.edu

#