

***Over My Black Body* at Galerie de l'UQAM: a celebratory and defiant exhibition**

Dates: May 17 – June 22, 2019

Opening: Thursday, May 16, 2019, 5:30 p.m.

Curators: Eunice Bélidor, Anaïs Castro

Artists: Nakeya Brown, Marilou Craft, Stanley Février, Erika DeFreitas, Amartey Golding, Manuel Mathieu, Chloé Savoie-Bernard

Exhibition presented as part of UQAM's 50th anniversary celebrations

Montréal, May 2, 2019 – Galerie de l'UQAM's 2018-2019 season comes to an end with *Over My Black Body*, a fascinating group exhibition that delves into the ways in which black bodies are codified and controlled. Curated by Eunice Bélidor and Anaïs Castro, *Over My Black Body* showcases works by local as well as American and British artists.

THE EXHIBITION

Over My Black Body is a collaborative project that was born out of a conversation between Eunice Bélidor and Anaïs Castro as they observed the ways in which bodies are codified in our contemporary societies. Through this continuous dialogue, *Over My Black Body* has become a tool to support the movement against the control of black bodies, to recognize the costumes imposed on them, while denouncing with insurgence the impunity given to institutionalized violence. The project favors an evolving mode and continues to take different forms and reach different audiences since its first iteration in Berlin in 2018.

The black body is the site of a long battle. Through history it fought for liberation from colonial power structures that exchanged it as a commodity. It is the blood, sweat and tears that built America and its first transnational industries: sugar cane, cotton, tobacco, etc. To this day the media controls the contextualisation of this body, lightening its skin when it is being praised and darkening it to demonize it. While its white peers enjoy popular codes portraying them as rational, sensible and cerebral, the black body is kept aside. The myth of blackness is one of an impulsive, irrational individual, violent in nature. If its body is celebrated for its physical abilities, particularly in the context of sporting events, these same prejudicial attributes serve to reinforce the idea of a powerful and dangerous body, one that is always a potential threat. It is precisely this myth that has cultivated the systemic racism that prevails across the Western world and that is at least responsible for the continued scrutiny and control of black bodies and more severely for the crisis that is the mass killing of black people in America and in the United Kingdom.

At Galerie de l'UQAM, *Over My Black Body* becomes a journey through which the visitor is invited to reflect on the many codes that harm the black body in our society. Despite its political nature, the project is also a celebration of black life, through North American and British manifestations. The participating artists manipulate the codes of their culture in ways that are simultaneously celebratory and defiant.

Over My Black Body is presented by Galerie de l'UQAM in the context of UQAM's 50th anniversary. It is part of a desire to examine increasingly important realities within the university community.

ABOUT THE CURATORS

Eunice Bélidor lives and works in Montréal. A curator, critic and researcher, she specializes in contemporary Haitian art and focusses on fashion design, performance art, post-black studies, and feminism. She questions everything, believing that asking the right questions is the best way to come up with creative and thoughtful answers. Her writing has been published in the Journal of Curatorial Studies, Invitation (Art Mûr), InCirculation, and Espace art actuel. She is the creator of #curatorialtips, a research and help tool for emerging curators. She has curated *Karnaval* (2014) at BAnD in Toronto, exhibitions *Mémoires Futures* (2018) and *Code : corps* (2018) as part of the HTMIlse Festival, and, more recently, *Le Salon* (2018) at articule. She regularly takes part in various juries and committees, such as the Conseil des arts de Montréal. She currently works as programming coordinator at articule, an artist-run centre in Montréal. She was awarded the Emerging Curator prize from the Hnatyshyn Foundation (2018). eunicebee.net

Anais Castro is an art critic and curator based in Montréal and Berlin. She holds a BFA in Art History from Concordia University and a Master in Contemporary Art: History, Curating, Criticism from the University of Edinburgh. She has worked as Curatorial Assistant at Stills Scotland's Centre for Photography, helping produce *Allan Sekula: Ship of Fools* (2012) and a group exhibition titled *ECONOMY* (2013), with Hito Steyerl, Martha Rosler, Jeremy Deller, among others. In the past years, she has curated a number of exhibitions in Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany and China, including *Moving Still | Still Moving* at Art Mûr Montréal (2015), *#self* for Art Souterrain (Montréal, 2016), *Self-Abstractions* at Canada House (London, 2017) and *The Department of Love* at SAFA (Shanghai, 2018). She was part of the inaugural Shanghai Curators Lab (2018), was a Curator-in-Residence at Art in General (Brooklyn, 2019), Titanik (Turku, 2017) and a Visiting Curator at BCA (Burlington, 2016). She is an editorial member of Daily Lazy and publishes regularly in *esse arts + opinion*, *Espace art actuel* and *This Is Tomorrow*.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Nakeya Brown is an African-American conceptual photographer born in Santa Maria, California, in 1988. She lives and works in Maryland. A 2017 Snider Prize award winner, Brown has generated a vast body of work that uses photography to explore the complexities of race, beauty politics, and gender. She received her Bachelor of Art from Rutgers University and her Master of Fine Arts from The George Washington University. Her work was featured in recent solo exhibitions at the Catherine Eldman Gallery (Chicago, 2017), the Urban Institute for Contemporary Art (Grand Rapids, 2017), and the McKenna Museum of African American Art (New Orleans, 2012). Brown's work has been published in *New York Magazine*, *Dazed & Confused*, *The Fader*, *TIME*, and *Vice*. Her work has also been included in photography books *Babe* (edited by Petra Collins, 2015) and *Girl on Girl: Art and Photography in the Age of the Female Gaze* (Charlotte Jansen, 2017). nakeyab.com

Marilou Craft works in the performing arts sector as a dramaturgical consultant, in addition to codirecting *projets hybris*, an interdisciplinary, feminist, and queer creation company. She has published articles, columns, and cultural commentary through diverse platforms, whilst also being interested in law and translation. As a creator, she interprets her own writing in performative contexts. Her first literary works were published by *Ta Mère* (*Des nouvelles nouvelles de Ta Mère*, 2016), *La Mèche* (*Cartographies II : Couronne Nord*, 2017), *Triptyque* (*Corps*, 2018), and *Möbius* magazine (no. 159, 2018). mariloucraft.com

Erika DeFreitas lives and works in Toronto. Guided by a conceptual approach, she explores the influence of language, loss and culture on the formation of identity with public interventions, textile-based works, and performative actions that are photographed, placing an emphasis on process, gesture and documentation. DeFreitas has shown in Canada and overseas, including at Project Row Houses (2015) and at the Museum of African American Culture (Houston, 2017), as well as at the Art Gallery of Mississauga, the Art Gallery of York University (Toronto, 2015) and at the Platform Centre for Photographic and Digital Arts (Winnipeg, 2015). In 2016, DeFreitas was a finalist for the Toronto

Friends of Visual Arts Prize as well as a recipient of the John Hartman Award. A finalist for the 2017 Sobey Art Award, she was an artist-in-residence at Alice Yard (Trinity and Tobago, 2017). DeFreitas is a graduate of the Master of Visual Studies Program at the University of Toronto. erikadefreitas.com

Stanley Février lives and works in Montréal, where he is pursuing a master's degree in Visual and Media Arts (MFA) at UQAM. An artist, he questions and analyzes human tragedies, in particular mass shootings, attacks, migratory movements, and the impact of consumerism on the environment. He delves into the abundance of recent tragedies, their incoherence and contradictions. His works have been presented in Canada and Europe, as well as in Bulgaria (*Pulse*, 2016) and Prague (*Silent Rain*, 2016). His more recent exhibitions include *Strange Fruit* at Arsenal (2018) and *An Invisible Minority* at Artexpte (2018). fevrierstanley.wixsite.com/stanleyfevrier

Amartey Golding is a multimedia artist based in London, preferring to work with mediums that he is untrained in. For the last three years, Golding has incorporated fashion, chainmail, film, and ballet into his practice. Often looking at how contradictory ideas coexist within individual and ideological conflicts, Amartey's work is usually self-implicating, exploring our inability to avoid blame or apology. He started focusing fully on his art at 17, whilst living in the YMCA in Cambridge, before completing a Foundation Art degree at Central St Martins (London). His work has been shown in multiple exhibitions in Denmark, Germany and the United Kingdom, including the Cynthia Corbett Gallery (London, 2018), *is it just me, or is it you?* at the Jack House Gallery (Hampshire, 2018), and at University College London (2019). amarteygolding.com

Haiti-born, Montréal-based multidisciplinary artist **Manuel Mathieu** is known for his paintings, which investigate themes of historical violence, erasure, as well as Haitian visual cultures of physicality, nature, and religious symbolism. Marrying abstract and figurative techniques, his compositions carve out space for us to reflect on Haiti's transformative history while inviting us to consider the different futures the act of remembering creates. Drawing from a wide-range of subjects, Manuel's practice combines his Haitian heritage and his formal arts education, which culminated in an MFA Degree from Goldsmiths University (London, 2016) and a BFA from UQAM (2010). His works have been exhibited in Europe, Asia and North America, notably in Chicago (*Nobody is Watching*, Kavi Gupta, 2018), in China (*Wu Ji*, HdM gallery, Beijing 2019) and in the UK (*Truth to Power*, Tiwani Contemporary, London, 2019). manuelmathieu.com

Chloé Savoie-Bernard is a Montréal-based writer. She has published books *Royaume Scotch Tape* (Éditions de l'Hexagone, 2015), *Des femmes savantes* (Triptyque, 2016), and *Fastes* (Éditions de l'Hexagone, 2018). She has also codirected a collective book entitled *Corps* (Triptyque, 2017). She holds a master's degree in French Literature (Université de Montréal, 2015) and is pursuing a PhD on how history is portrayed in Québec's women's literature, from 1970 to 1990. She studies forms of interdisciplinary expression as well as notions of corporeality and identity.

PUBLIC ACTIVITIES

Guided tour

With the curators and a few artists from the exhibition

Thursday, May 16, 2019, 4:30 p.m. (just before the opening which will take place at 5:30 p.m.)

Galerie de l'UQAM

In French and English

Free admission

Discover *Over My Black Body* during this casual tour of the exhibition. The curators and some artists will be on hand to present the issues underlying the exhibition and to interact with the public.

Opening

Thursday, May 16, 2019, 5:30 p.m.
Galerie de l'UQAM
Free admission

Round table

Moderators: Eunice Béliador, Anaïs Castro
Guests: Erika DeFreitas, Stanley Février, Amartey Golding
Saturday, May 18, 2019, 3 – 4:30 p.m.
Galerie de l'UQAM
In English
Free admission

Take advantage of the presence in Montréal of some artists from *Over My Black Body* to explore the themes raised by the exhibition during this round table. In a friendly and engaging atmosphere, guests will discuss their respective contributions to the exhibition, while anchoring their interventions in their personal experiences. The dialogue will also be an opportunity to observe the similarities and disparities between Canadian and British contexts.

À la racine

Performance by Marilou Craft and Chloé Savoie-Bernard
Saturday, June 1, 2019, 1 - 3 p.m.
Galerie de l'UQAM
In French
Free admission

Presented in the context of OFFTA – live art festival, simultaneously with the performance *L'algue flotte dans une rivière, amenée par le débit de l'eau, elle s'agrippe à la pierre, elle y reste longtemps* by Maude Arès.

Marilou Craft and Chloé Savoie-Bernard were born the same year. They both spent their youth looking for their own reflection in the media and collecting model figures of similar-looking women. Now young adults, both feel sometimes trapped in a forced sorority, as mixed race identities often come with a common but uncharted background. Their encounter is one of distinct beings, which also reveals the common feeling of restraint brought upon marginalized bodies by structural power.

Guided tour

With Eunice Béliador, curator of the exhibition
Thursday, June 6, 2019, 5:30 – 7 p.m.
Galerie de l'UQAM
In French
Free admission

Deepen your understanding of the exhibition *Over My Black Body* during this informal tour led by curator Eunice Béliador.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Our mediators look forward to taking you and your group on guided tours of *Over My Black Body*. The tours are flexible and open to all school and community groups. Their content can be adapted to meet your particular needs and to complement material covered in the classroom. These activities are available anytime, in French or English, free of charge.

+ more information: <https://galerie.uqam.ca/en/educational-program/>

Reservations required:

Philippe Dumaine

Cultural mediation manager, Galerie de l'UQAM

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ADDRESS AND OPENING HOURS**Galerie de l'UQAM**

Judith-Jasmin Pavilion, room J-R120

1400 Berri, corner of Sainte-Catherine East

Montréal

Berri-UQAM metro

Tuesday – Saturday, 12 – 6 p.m.

Free admission

Information

Phone: (514) 987-6150

galerie.uqam.ca

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SOURCE

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