

**Forecast Form:
Art in the Caribbean
Diaspora, 1990s–Today**

Large Format Text 

Forecast Form: Art in the Caribbean Diaspora, 1990s–Today

On view

Oct 5, 2023 – Feb 25, 2024

Art from the Caribbean – a region of the Americas including the Caribbean Sea, constituted by more than 700 islands, landmasses, and nearby coastal areas – has been the subject of numerous group exhibitions since the 1990s, when debates around identity and difference featured front and center. The emergence of globalization and multiculturalism at that time led to profound social and political transformations even as the impact on the Caribbean and its stereotypical perception as an exotic tropical paradise was uneven and complex. *Forecast Form: Art in the Caribbean Diaspora, 1990s–Today* takes the 1990s as its cultural backdrop, gathering artworks by twenty-eight artists who live in the Caribbean or are of Caribbean heritage, or whose work is connected to the region. The exhibition is anchored in the concept of diaspora, the dispersal of people through migration both forced and voluntary. Here, diaspora is not a longing to return home but a way of understanding that we are always in movement and that our identities are in constant states of transformation. Challenging conventional ideas about the region, the exhibition reveals new ways of understanding the Caribbean as a place defined not by geography, language, or ethnicity, but by constant exchange, displacement, and movement. These ideas are seen in

the artworks shown: they embody cultural exchange and suggest movement and travel through forms, materials, and techniques.

Forecast Form also proposes that the Caribbean is a way of thinking, being, and doing that extends beyond its geographic borders, challenging assumptions about Caribbean culture and its representation, and reframing the relationship between identity and place. The exhibition also presents an idea through its title: that the Caribbean in many ways forecasted the modern world. The Haitian Revolution is widely understood to have been the first insurrection in the world that advanced the concept of human rights, even as the Caribbean more broadly was a laboratory for colonialism and the plantation system in the Americas. As hurricanes continue to be a pressing concern for the islands, the weather and its constantly changing forms is a presence throughout the exhibition. The forms that emerge from the region and their aesthetics allow us to analyze the histories and forces that continue to shape our contemporary moment, from emancipation and human rights to colonialism and climate change.

Forecast Form: Art in the Caribbean Diaspora, 1990s–Today is organized by Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago.



Andy Warhol

The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts

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The exhibition is curated by Carla Acevedo-Yates, Marilyn and Larry Fields Curator, with Iris Colburn, Curatorial Assistant, Isabel Casso, former Susman Curatorial Fellow, and Nolan Jimbo, Susman Curatorial Fellow, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago.

The ICA/Boston presentation is coordinated by Jeffrey De Blois, Associate Curator and Publications Manager. With thanks to Catherine Lennartz, former curatorial intern.

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This exhibition contains works dealing with graphic content. Visitor discretion is advised, particularly for those accompanying children.

Please be advised that this exhibition contains an artwork that features flashing and strobing lights which may not be suitable for all visitors.

Territories

How much of our personal and collective histories do we carry in our bodies? Artist Zilia Sánchez, whose work is in this gallery, responds by declaring, “Soy isla,” or, “I am an island,” conceiving of her own body and identity in relation to the land and water.

Although the word “territory” is often understood as land demarcated under political jurisdiction, it is also a way to describe the inner worlds that inform our shared experiences. Whereas diaspora begins with the physical movement of people, its process results in new personal, cultural, and historical relationships to place. Artists in this section approach these shifting territories using a variety of techniques. Some artists take the body as a point of departure to mark time and space through movement, whereas others create abstract landscapes, both real and imagined.

Suchitra Mattai

(Born 1973 in Georgetown, Guyana; lives in Los Angeles)

An Ocean Cradle, 2022

Vintage saris, fabric, and ghungroo bells

Courtesy of the artist and Roberts Projects, Los Angeles

An oceanic landscape woven together from vintage, handmade saris, Suchitra Mattai's *An Ocean Cradle* alludes to movement in many ways. Collected from family and friends living throughout the South Asian diaspora, the saris not only represent travel and migration, but they also gesture toward movement across lineage. Customarily passed down from generation to generation, saris carry the memories and scents from those who wore them before.

From the 1830s to the early 1900s, waves of Indian migrants—Mattai's family included—migrated across the ocean from India to British Guiana (now Guyana) to work as indentured servants on sugarcane plantations. A significant Indo-Guyanese community remains in Guyana to this day.

Zilia Sánchez

(Born 1926 in Havana, Cuba; lives in San Juan, Puerto Rico)

Soy Isla (I Am an Island), c. 2000

Acrylic on canvas with wood armature

encuentrismo—ofrenda o retorno (encounter—offering or return), 2000

From the series *Soy Isla: Compréndelo y retírate*

(*I Am an Island: Understand and Retreat*)

Video (color, sound; 39:45 minutes)

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

This artwork does not contain transcribable dialogue.

Ana Mendieta

(Born 1948 in Havana, Cuba; died 1985 in New York)

Untitled: Silueta Series, Mexico from *Silueta Works in Mexico, 1973–1977, 1976/91*

Pigmented inkjet print

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; gift from
The Howard and Donna Stone Collection

María Magdalena Campos-Pons

(Born 1959 in La Vega, Matanzas, Cuba; lives in Nashville, TN)

Constellation, 2004

Polaroid Polacolor Pro prints

Courtesy the artist and Gallery Wendi Norris, San Francisco

Formal Rhythms

How do forms, materials, and techniques migrate from one artwork to another?

The works on view here all suggest movement – not only depicting or capturing bodies in motion but also emphasizing movement in many different ways. Some artists in this section express the dynamism and energy of movement using color and gesture while oscillating between recognizable and abstract forms. Others include it as a subject, from dancers in a nightclub moving in unison, to the movement and unpredictability of tropical storms. Each of these artistic strategies is a metaphor for how identities are shaped by constant transformation.

Candida Alvarez

(Born 1955 in Brooklyn, NY; lives in Chicago and Baroda, MI)

Breast, Navel, Eye, 1993

Lithograph on Somerset soft white paper

Courtesy the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago

Engel Leonardo

(Born 1977 in Baní, Dominican Republic; lives in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic)

Jimayaco, 2017

Clay, enamel, guayacan, and alluvial gold

Private collection

This sculptural installation is inspired in part by Engel Leonardo's memory of observing women mine gold from rivers in Jimayaco, a town in the Dominican Republic's central province of La Vega. Sitting atop two of the sculptures are bowls that resemble mining pans, which

the artist has filled with clay, water, and pieces of gold, further evoking a rural way of life that has rapidly disappeared. The sculptures also take inspiration from *Muñecas sin rostro*, the faceless, artisanal dolls that emerged as souvenirs in the Dominican Republic in the 1980s and have since become a recognizable marker and facet of Dominicanity. Contrasting the dark tones of wood from guayacan trees – which are indigenous to the Caribbean – with the sculptures' lighter enamel bodies, Leonardo reflects on how constructions of Dominican identity have been shaped by the denial of Blackness in the Dominican Republic, upheld by legacies of colonialism and Rafael Trujillo's violent dictatorship, which lasted from 1930 until his assassination in 1961.

Peter Doig

(Born 1959 in Edinburgh, Scotland; lives in London and Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago)

***Black Curtain (Towards Monkey Island)*, 2004**

Oil on linen

Mima and César Reyes Collection

Felix Gonzalez-Torres

(Born 1957 in Guáimaro, Cuba; died 1996 in Miami)

“Untitled” (North), 1993

Light bulbs, porcelain light sockets, and electrical cords

Marieluse Hessel Collection, Hessel Museum of Art, Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

“Untitled” (North) is part of a series of twenty-four light string works Felix Gonzalez-Torres made between 1992 and 1994. These works follow an open-installation protocol, meaning the exhibitor or holder of the work is invited to choose how and where it’s installed. In the words of the artist, “Play with it, please. Have fun. Give yourself that freedom.”

While the meaning of these works is also open-ended, the *(North)* in the title offers a way to understand this work. Curator Nancy Spector proposes that the title references the Cuban saying “el norte,” a shorthand description for everything north of the island of Cuba. Interpreted this way, the work — presented here as a curtain of light — imagines the North as an elusive and constantly changing ideal that remains out of reach.

Deborah Jack

(Born 1970 in Rotterdam, the Netherlands; lives in Saint Martin and Jersey City, NJ)

*the fecund, the lush and the salted land waits for a harvest...
her people...ripe with promise, wait until the next blowing
season, 2022*

Seven-channel HD video projection and vinyl (color, sound;
7:58 minutes)

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; purchased with
funds provided by the Mellon Foundation

In this lyrical and immersive installation by Deborah Jack, shots of lush orange pomegranates mix with the ocean, sky, and shoreline. Filmed by the artist around her mother's home on Saint Martin, these images appear alongside footage of salt mining from a 1948 Dutch documentary about the island. Pomegranates and salt, both emblems of death and rebirth, share a common legacy as commodities of the colonial economy in the region. Using movement, color, and time, Jack's installation serves as a condemnation of the destructive nature of economies based on resource extraction, as well as a reclamation of the Caribbean's visual and material cultures. Her work complicates fixed understandings of the Caribbean,

offering an invitation into the myriad, shifting histories and identities held within the landscape itself.

A transcript for this work is available at: <https://www.icaboston.org/exhibitions/forecast-form-art-caribbean-diaspora-1990s-today/>. The audio consists of a woman speaking about mining salt as a young person, string music, excerpts from a 1948 Dutch documentary on Saint Martin, and the sound of the ocean.

Felix Gonzalez-Torres

(Born 1957 in Guáimaro, Cuba; died 1996 in Miami)

“Untitled” (Passport), 1991

Paper, endless supply

Marieluise Hessel Collection, Hessel Museum of Art, Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

Visitors can take a piece of paper from the stack. Please take only one.

Denzil Forrester

(Born 1956 in Grenada; lives in Cornwall, United Kingdom)

Night Strobe, 1985

Oil on canvas

The Rachofsky Collection

In the late 1970s and 1980s, in the dark, smoky nightclubs of London, Denzil Forrester would sit sketching the scene on paper, recording the energy, lights, and movement of these clubs. Working quickly – each drawing took only the length of a single song to make – Forrester completed upward of forty drawings each night. He then translated some of these drawings into energetic paintings, such as *Night Strobe*.

In the shadow of the racist and xenophobic atmosphere of Thatcherite London in the 1980s, the club, with traces of carnival and sound systems booming with dub, blues, reggae, and dancehall, was a crucial space of belonging for Afro-Caribbeans living in London.

Rafael Ferrer

(Born 1933 in San Juan, Puerto Rico; lives in Long Island, NY)

Ciclón en el Mar de la China, 1977

Oil and enamel on steel, wire, and wood

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; gift of Earl and Betsy Millard

Exchange

How does art-making reflect cross-cultural exchanges?
How do forms migrate and create new understandings
of our entangled world?

Historically, the Caribbean has been a place of cultural exchange and economic exploitation, from the plantations of the colonial era to the tourist and oil industries that support today's global economy. Culturally, the Caribbean is constantly being reconfigured through further migrations and geopolitical relations with the Arab world, Asia, and the Americas, among others. In the works in this section, geographies collapse into one another and images question fixed origins and identities.

Julien Creuzet

(Born 1986 in Le Blanc-Mesnil, France; lives in Paris)

it's a sad day

in Morne à l'eau

volcano body volcano

tumor mood

blood pool

fucking sweet half moon

damn black rotten banana

today no more smile

do you like my english banana

factory,

Pesticide

in my mother's

chest Checkmate

tropical hospital

will you heal in peace

container ship

in the middle of the cluster

cluster body bark

terror will you transport my

Ocean

racher, tout du dedans bien pris

en dedans

racher, tout tout tou pris dans

le dedans (Papua New Guinea), 2021

Laser-cut steel

Courtesy the artist and DOCUMENT, Chicago

Christopher Cozier

(Born 1959 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago; lives in Port of Spain)

Dem things does bite too?, 2014–15

Ink on paper

Courtesy the artist

Christopher Cozier

(Born 1959 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago; lives in Port of Spain)

Gas Men, 2014

Two-channel HD video (color, sound; 2:07 minutes)

Courtesy the artist

Filmed on the shores of Lake Michigan, Christopher Cozier's *Gas Men* shows two men in business suits wielding gas pump nozzles like trick-roping cowboys, performing masculine stereotypes common to early Hollywood Westerns. Much of Cozier's work calls attention to the cross-cultural influences and global economies that have shaped the Caribbean. In this case, the artist examines the environmental impact of extractive oil economies as well as the social conditions resulting from centuries of colonial rule, enslavement, and forced labor, and more recently, postindependence political corruption in Trinidad. The sound accompanying the video, created with London-based musician Caroline Mair-Toby and Trinidad-based sitarist Sharda Patasar, creates a sense of geographic dislocation. The sound of the sitar recalls the dislocation of indentured Indian workers in rural plantations in Trinidad and throughout the Caribbean, while an ambulance

siren further conjures the urban context of Port of Spain (Trinidad's capital), in all its complexity.

The audio for this artwork does not contain transcribable dialogue.

Ana Mendieta

(Born 1948 in Havana, Cuba; died 1985 in New York)

Untitled: Silueta Series, Mexico* from *Silueta Works in Mexico, 1973–1977, 1974/91

Pigmented inkjet print

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; gift from
The Howard and Donna Stone Collection

Alia Farid

(Born 1985 in Kuwait City, Kuwait; lives in Kuwait City and San Juan, Puerto Rico)

Mezquitas de Puerto Rico, 2022

Wool, plant fibers, and natural dyes

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; purchased with funds provided by the Mellon Foundation

The process and subject of *Mezquitas de Puerto Rico* [Mosques of Puerto Rico] highlights the ongoing yet underrecognized migrations of people, ideas, and forms between the Arab world and the Caribbean. The buildings depicted here were first photographed by Alia Farid in various towns in Puerto Rico, after which the images were shared with weavers in Mashhad, Iran. The weavers in turn translated the images into a unique *kilim*, or traditional prayer rug. Without detailed instructions from Farid, the weavers interpreted these images into a tapestry while adding in their own signature stylings, such as the intricate border made of ornamental pomegranates. The final result conveys the dynamic sense of exchange emblematic of Caribbean culture.

Image Making

Who decides what information is saved and passed on to future generations? How can artistic interventions allow for new voices to emerge from the past?

Making and repurposing images from archives are important ways to create and preserve memory. Archival photography and video both serve this purpose, and artists often use them as source materials to create works that question dominant historical narratives. In this gallery, artists either use existing photographs and video or create their own images to examine the history of Black activism, racial categories, and identity formation across different locations in the Caribbean and beyond.

Cosmo Whyte

(Born 1982 in St. Andrew, Jamaica; lives in Los Angeles)

Beyond the Boundary, 2022

Nickel-plated steel ball chain curtain

Studio assistance: Alex Adkinson and Iris Schaer

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago commission

Beyond the Boundary shows a 1984 image of Black spectators watching a cricket match between England and the West Indies. One man holds a sign that reads Black Wash, which is a play on the cricket term “whitewash,” or when a team wins at least three matches in a row. “Blackwash” is often used in reference to the West Indies’ five consecutive wins against England in 1984, an important event for people in the Caribbean and its diaspora.

As influential historian and writer C.L.R. James argues, cricket has been both a real and metaphorical arena where the larger power dynamics of colonialism and anti-Blackness are played out. By transferring archival images, especially those depicting the history of Black protest and activism, onto threads of nickel-plated steel beads, Cosmo Whyte invites visitors to breach the curtain and feel the literal and metaphorical weight conveyed through such images.

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Lorraine O'Grady

(Born 1934 in Boston; lives in New York)

The Strange Taxi: From Africa to Jamaica to Boston in 200 Years, 1991/2019

Archival pigment print on Hahnemühle Baryta Photo Rag pure cotton paper

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; gift of Albert A. Robin, by exchange

Maksaens Denis

(Born 1968 in Port-au-Prince, Haiti; lives in Port-au-Prince and Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic)

Kwa Bawon, 2004

Iron structure with seven monitors (color, sound; 31:56 minutes)
Sound composed by Laurent Lettreer

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; purchased with funds provided by the Mellon Foundation

References to death fill the monitors in *Kwa Bawon* – news

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footage and clippings documenting the presidency of Jean-Bertrand Aristide in Haiti accompany the names of journalists and civil rights advocates who went missing or were slain during this time. The turbulence of Haitian politics bleeds into the volatility of the country's climate, as Maksaens Denis combines scenes from this tumultuous period with abstract analog sequences and images of Hurricane Jeanne, a category three storm that struck the Caribbean in September 2004. The title of the work and the cross-like configuration of the monitors alludes to Baron Samedi, the *loa* (or spirit) of the dead and guardian of cemeteries in Haitian Vodou.

The audio for this artwork does not contain transcribable dialogue. The audio consists of low-frequency electronic noises, Vodou songs, and drumbeats.

This video contains flashing lights and a strobe effect which may not be suitable for visitors with visual sensitivities.

Lorraine O'Grady

(Born 1934 in Boston; lives in New York)

The Fir-Palm, 1991/2019

Archival pigment print on Hahnemühle Baryta Photo Rag
pure cotton paper

Courtesy the artist and Mariane Ibrahim, Chicago, Paris,
and Mexico City

In *The Fir-Palm*, a slanting tree emerges from the base of a Black woman's back. This tree is a composite of two types: a New England fir and a Caribbean palm. While each of these trees is strongly associated with different geographic regions, their merger and intimate connection to the spine alludes to Lorraine O'Grady's experience as a Boston-born child of Jamaican immigrants.

Ana Mendieta

(Born 1948 in Havana, Cuba; died 1985 in New York)

Untitled: Silueta Series, Mexico* from *Silueta Works in Mexico, 1973–1977, 1976/91

Pigmented inkjet print

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; gift from
The Howard and Donna Stone Collection

Donna Conlon and Jonathan Harker

(Born 1966 in Atlanta, GA; born 1975 in Quito, Ecuador;
live in Panama City, Panama)

Clockwise, from left:

***The Voice Adrift (Voz a la deriva)*, 2017**

HD video (color, sound; 5:41 minutes)

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; purchased with
funds provided by the Mellon Foundation

***Tropical Zinphony (Zincfonía tropical)*, 2013**

HD video (color, sound; 1:45 minutes)

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Courtesy the artists and DiabloRosso, Panamá

Domino Effect (Efecto dominó), 2013

HD video (color, sound; 5:13 minutes)

Courtesy the artists and DiabloRosso, Panamá

The audio for *The Voice Adrift (Voz a la deriva)* does not contain transcribable dialogue. The audio consists of the sound of rain, flowing water, and thunder. An unintelligible whisper can also be heard whenever the water bottle is opened.

The audio for *Tropical Zinphony (Zincfonía tropical)* does not contain transcribable dialogue. The audio consists of the sound of mangoes rolling over corrugated zinc sheets.

The audio for *Domino Effect (Efecto dominó)* does not contain transcribable dialogue. The audio consists of the sound of cascading bricks followed by the splash of the final brick falling into water.

Keith Piper

(Born 1960 in Malta; lives in London)

Trade Winds, 1992

Video, audio, and timber crates

Courtesy the artist

The audio in this artwork consists of howling winds as well as excerpts from Burning Spear's song "Columbus" and the 1984 documentary *Africa: A Voyage of Discovery*. A transcript for this work is available at: <https://www.icaboston.org/exhibitions/forecast-form-art-caribbean-diaspora-1990s-today/>.

Freddy Rodríguez

(Born 1945 in Santiago de los Caballeros, Dominican Republic;
died 2022 in New York)

Mulato de tal, 1974

Acrylic on canvas

Courtesy Hutchinson Modern & Contemporary

In *Mulato de tal*, bold lines coalesce into zigzagging geometric forms that together suggest a twisting head, chest, and legs. Despite a resemblance to hard-edge painting, which aspired to a more impersonal, systematic geometry, Freddy Rodríguez's strokes are far more gestural, leaving traces of his brush that evidence his hand's movements. Painted in New York eleven years after Rodríguez left the Dominican Republic following dictator Rafael Trujillo's assassination, *Mulato de tal* is part of a larger body of work inspired by the writings of Latin American authors on the potential and politics of freedom.

As suggested by its title, *Mulato de tal* [A kind of mulatto] responds to the racial taxonomies imposed by Trujillo's brutal anti-Blackness campaign. If the painting's forms recall a person, then its muddy-red and deep-blue color fields might evoke a landscape of bloodshed, suggesting that genocide, racial violence, and colonialism are held within the body and the land.

Landscape

What does the landscape show, and what does it hide?

The exuberant, colorful, and lush beauty of the tropical landscape often conceals painful and violent histories. Rather than represent these histories in narrative ways, the artists on view in this section use elements of the landscape – often depicting the plant life of the Caribbean region, including trees and flowers, as well as gardens – to reference histories of colonialism, migration, and resource extraction.

Julien Creuzet

(Born 1986 in Le Blanc-Mesnil, France; lives in Paris)

Center of room, floor

it's a sad day

in Morne à l'eau

volcano body volcano

tumor mood

blood pool

fucking sweet half moon

damn black rotten banana

today no more smile

do you like my english banana

factory,

Pesticide

in my mother's

chest Checkmate

tropical hospital

will you heal in peace

container ship

in the middle of the cluster

cluster body bark

terror will you transport my

Ocean

racher, tout du dedans bien pris

en dedans

racher, tout tout tou pris

dans le dedans (Virginia), 2021

Laser-cut steel

Courtesy the artist and DOCUMENT, Chicago

Adán Vallecillo

(Born 1977 in Danlí, Honduras; lives in Tegucigalpa, Honduras)

Saturación #00, 2017

Graphite on recycled filter paper

Courtesy the artist

Saturación #00 is part of Adán Vallecillo's larger body of work involving repurposed air and oil filters sourced from auto repair shops and machinery stationed around the Panama Canal during its 2009–16 expansion. These filters trapped the pollution generated in the city as well as from the canal's construction. Appearing on the gallery wall like a scar or vein, *Saturación #00* gives form to the often violent practices of U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean. By titling the work after oxygen saturation (or the level of oxygen in the blood stream), Vallecillo invokes the region itself as a body and describes extraction as a draining of life.

Didier William

(Born 1983 in Port-au-Prince, Haiti; lives in Philadelphia, PA)

Cursed Grounds: Cursed Borders, 2021

Acrylic, oil, ink, and wood carving on panel

Private collection

Ebony G. Patterson

(Born 1981 in Kingston, Jamaica; lives in Chicago and Kingston)

... the wailing... guides us home... and there is a bellying on the land..., 2021

Mixed media on Jacquard woven photo tapestry and custom vinyl wallpaper

Courtesy the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago

Julien Creuzet

(Born 1986 in Le Blanc-Mesnil, France; lives in Paris)

Center of room, floor

Crossroads, 2022

HD video (color, sound; 7:35 minutes)

Courtesy the artist and DOCUMENT, Chicago

The audio in this artwork consists of music produced by the artist and someone reciting spoken word in Martinican Creole.

Joscelyn Gardner

(Born 1961 in Barbados; lives in Ontario, Canada)

***Coffea Arabica (Clarissa)* from Creole Portraits III: “bringing down the flowers...”, 2011**

***Manihot flabellifolia (Old Catalina)* from Creole Portraits III: “bringing down the flowers...”, 2011**

***Convolvulus jalapa (Yara)* from Creole Portraits III: “bringing down the flowers...”, 2010**

***Poinciana pulcherrima (Lilith)* from Creole Portraits III:**

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“bringing down the flowers...”, 2009

Veronica frutescens (Mazerine) from Creole Portraits III:

“bringing down the flowers...”, 2009

All works hand-colored lithograph on frosted Mylar

Colección Chocolate Cortés

These five works are part of Joscelyn Gardner’s Creole Portraits III: “bringing down the flowers...”, a series of thirteen symbolic portraits based on real, enslaved Afro-Caribbean women. Here, the women – Clarissa, Catalina, Yara, Lilith, and Mazerine – are each represented by a unique entanglement of braided hair, a slave collar, and a plant capable of inducing abortion.

Creole Portraits III is centered around Gardner’s discovery of a brief note in Maria Sibylla Merian’s 1705 natural history publication that details the use of *Caesalpinia pulcherrima* (or *Poinciana pulcherrima*, the peacock flower) by enslaved women to end unwanted pregnancies. Further, she is responding to the diaries of eighteenth-century English plantation overseer Thomas Thistlewood, who detailed the thousands of horrific acts of sexual assault, rape, and other forms of torture he committed against people enslaved at the Egypt plantation in Westmoreland, Jamaica. Each portrait

is titled after a plant that induces abortion — the kind of botanical knowledge that is often passed down between generations of women — and an enslaved woman named in the diaries. Printing the portraits onto frosted Mylar, a surface that resists taking an image from lithographic stone, Gardner enacts a material metaphor for the histories of resistance, refusal, and fugitivity embodied by the women who consumed these plants and exerted control over their own bodies.

Ana Mendieta

(Born 1948 in Havana, Cuba; died 1985 in New York)

Untitled: Silueta Series, Mexico* from *Silueta Works in Mexico, 1973–1977, 1976/91

Pigmented inkjet print

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; gift from
The Howard and Donna Stone Collection

Traces

People and places are shaped by the passage of time, leaving traces both seen and unseen. What traces remain from colonial histories, etched in the memory of objects, places, and peoples' bodies?

In many ways, the Caribbean was shaped as a geographic region by the movement of groups of people exploited and mistreated due to their race and gender. It is a place made and remade by the people living there who are working against historical and contemporary forces that attempt to define, control, and extract from it. Rather than directly representing colonial histories, the artists in this section call attention to the traces they left behind through objects, materials, and gestures, which speak just as much of the past as they do the present and future.

Jeannette Ehlers

(Born 1973 in Holstebro, Denmark; lives in Copenhagen, Denmark)

Black Bullets, 2012

Video (black-and-white, sound; 4:33 minutes)

Sound: Trevor Mathison; Technical Assistance: Markus von Platen; Camera: Jette Ellgaard and Jeannette Ehlers

Private collection

The audio for this artwork does not contain transcribable dialogue. The audio contains bass-heavy electronic music.

Daniel Lind-Ramos

(Born 1953 in Loíza, Puerto Rico; lives in Loíza)

Figura de Cangrejos, 2018–19

Steel, aluminum, nails, palm tree branches, dried coconuts, branches, palm tree trunks, burlap, machete, leather, ropes, sequin, awning, plastic ropes, fabric, pins, duct tape, and acrylic

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Benedicta M. Badia Nordenstahl Collection

Figura de Cangrejos is a humanlike assemblage of everyday objects gathered in the artist's hometown of Loíza, a Maroon-founded community on the northeastern coast of Puerto Rico. A coconut grater serves as a head, and painted claw hammers and palm leaves extend outward like appendages, while elements like the drum refer more broadly to Afro-Caribbean rhythmic traditions. Daniel Lind-Ramos collected these objects in a variety of ways: scavenging them from the streets and the shore, purchasing them from local vendors, and receiving them as gifts from friends and acquaintances. These objects all function as repositories of both personal and historical memory, forming a material portrait of Loíza that reaffirms the vibrancy of Black community spaces.

María Magdalena Campos-Pons

(Born 1959 in La Vega, Matanzas, Cuba; lives in Nashville, TN)

Sugar/Bittersweet, 2010

Wood, glass, and raw sugar

Collection of the Ethelbert Cooper Gallery of African and African American Art at the Hutchins Center, Harvard University

This installation consists of a landscape of Yoruba spears that sit atop traditional Chinese and African stools. A large portion of Cuba's Black population are descended from the Yoruba, a West African ethnic group recognized as accomplished blacksmiths. Together the sculptures resemble a field of sugarcane stalks, forming a scene that suggests the violence of the plantation system and the sugar trade against enslaved Black people, and later, Chinese laborers who the colonial government brought to work on the sugar plantations in Cuba. At the base of each spear, discs of panela (or unrefined cane sugar) appear in various states of production, from dark molasses to brown sugar to refined white, serving as metaphors for imposed racial categories.

Ana Mendieta

(Born 1948 in Havana, Cuba; died 1985 in New York)

Untitled: Silueta Series, Mexico* from *Silueta Works in Mexico, 1973–1977, 1976/91

Pigmented inkjet print

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; gift from
The Howard and Donna Stone Collection

Teresita Fernández

(Born 1968 in Miami; lives in New York)

Manigua(Mirror), 2023

Solid charcoal, black sand, and mixed media on aluminum
panel

Courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York,
Hong Kong, London, and Seoul

Through evocative materials such as charcoal and black
sand, and wielding the symbolic power of the palm tree,
Manigua(Mirror) conjures an image of a Caribbean landscape

Forecast Form: Art in the Caribbean Diaspora, 1990s–Today

as a site of resistance. This landscape's sculptural surface comprises palm trees made from dimensional layers of charcoal — a material itself produced by burning trees — and agglomerations of black sand from the Kalahari Desert on top of a reflective aluminum panel. *Manigua* is a word used in Cuba and elsewhere to describe a dense forest or swamp, or, more metaphorically, a chaotic entanglement or an impenetrable place.

Manigua(Mirror) is inspired in part by Wifredo Lam's painting *The Jungle (La Jungla)* (1943). In *The Jungle*, a group of figures with crescent-shaped faces resembling African or Pacific Islander masks is gathered before a junglelike field of sugarcane as a meditation on the history and ongoing legacy of slavery and colonialism in Lam's native Cuba. *Manigua(Mirror)* takes up Lam's meditation and locates the viewer within a similar entanglement in a seemingly impenetrable place. Fernandez's *manigua*, though, is also a space of refuge, of hiding; it is an alternative place at the periphery to gather and draw energy from the force of nature.