

MICHAEL

JANSSEN

LOUIS CAMERON

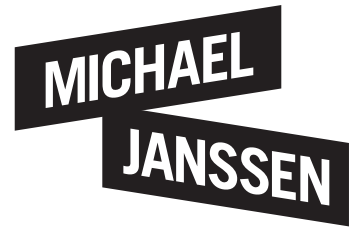
LOUIS CAMERON

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Louis Cameron was born in Columbus, Ohio, USA; lives and works in Berlin, Germany. Cameron has had solo exhibitions and projects at the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis; The Kitchen, New York; The Armory Show, New York; and the Saint Louis Art Museum. He has also participated in group exhibitions in the United States and abroad at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; the Contemporary Art Museum Houston; The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, United Kingdom; Paris Photo, France; and the Dakar Biennial, Senegal.

LOUIS CAMERON



19 February – 16 April 2022

Opening: Friday 18 February, 6–9 pm

Gallery Michael Janssen is pleased to announce the first solo exhibition of Louis Cameron with the gallery. The self-titled exhibition will present the most recent works from the series „Collage paintings“ and „Last words“. The exhibition will open on Friday February 18th and be on view until April 16th. In the interview with Dr. Tiffany E. Barber, the artist explains more about the upcoming show.

Dr. Tiffany E. Barber – Your art practice spans a range of media—painting, printmaking, photography, sculpture, assemblage, video, and poster art—and you’ve spent the bulk of your career making abstract, conceptually driven objects. In the U.S., you are well known for hard-edge abstract paintings and video work that appropriate colors and commodities that circulate in the public sphere, namely Heineken beer, Tide laundry detergent, and Hershey chocolate bars. More recently, your work has turned to issues of surveillance and digital activism. How has your work changed over the years and in relation to place and location?

Louis Cameron – *I was in New York City during 9/11. Like most people in the city at the time I deeply questioned aspects of my life and art. Subsequently, I reaffirmed my commitment to abstraction, an abstraction that engaged the world. When I was an Artist-in-Residence at The Studio Museum in Harlem—2002-2003—this engagement came in the form of an exploration of color I found in my immediate environment—mostly from products in my studio and apartment. Later I worked with color that had cultural significance, as in The African American Flag Project. Now I’m working with color I find on my walks through Berlin.*

Dr. Tiffany E. Barber – This exhibition, your first at Galerie Michael Janssen, builds on concerns you’ve been investigating throughout your twenty-two-year career regarding color, surface, text, and the activation of public and private space, whether physical or online. What ideas are you exploring in this new body of work?

Louis Cameron – *In this exhibition I am presenting two bodies of work. The first is the Collage Paintings, works in which I collage posters with images of color and textures I have taken from around Berlin on canvas in patchwork patterns based on African American quilts—exemplified by the quilters of Gee’s Bend. These works are an exploration of color and place. I am also presenting a couple of works from the Last Words series. Each work is a sequence of vinyl posters—each presenting a letter—that spell out quotes from African Americans that have been killed due to police or vigilante violence. These works are about mourning, remembrance, and expressions of humanity.*

Dr. Tiffany E. Barber – As an African American artist born and raised in the United States and now living in Berlin, does identity play a role in your work at all?

Louis Cameron – *I would say it does in the sense that I feel how American/African American I am living outside the United States. This awareness is present in the Last Words works. However, I am more interested in African American culture with the Collage Paintings.*

Dr. Tiffany E. Barber – In aim, these two bodies of work relate to your online initiative The Poster Project presents, where you invite yourself and others to explore and devise an art that is politically and socially engaged. The 2020 Black Lives Matter uprisings and the COVID-19 pandemic have intensified conversations concerning anti-Black violence, global wellbeing, the limits and possibilities of protest, and how we relate to one another. With Last Words, you directly address the political and cultural landscape of today by crafting a site-responsive memorial for Black lives lost to police and vigilante brutality. How have these events affected your approach to your work?

Louis Cameron – *Witnessing these recent events—especially from afar—has been traumatizing, to the point that I needed to create the Last Words series to mourn and memorialize the lives that have been lost. While the visuals of the violence enacted on these individuals are burned into our collective memory, I found their words compelling.*

Dr. Tiffany E. Barber – Let's talk more about the work's formal and aesthetic innovations. Like Last Words, your other series, Collage Paintings, also incorporates the poster form. They additionally filter the history of abstraction and American modernism through an African American aesthetic that stems from collage and quilting, a cultural specificity you shied away from early in your career. How are you modulating form and history in these works, and what do you hope viewers take away from their encounters with this show?

Louis Cameron – *With the Collage Paintings series, I am putting the authentic African American visual expression of improvised quilts—developed by Black women in parallel to American Modernism—into conversation with painting. So I hope the viewer comes away from these works with a heightened sensitivity to the colors and textures of Berlin, and the enrichment that yields. Last Words functions similarly in terms of how I'm critiquing and expanding the tradition of conceptual text-based art. I am infusing this form with a uniquely Black voice and cultural perspective, and my main concern with this body of work is the creation or reinforcement of empathy.*

Dr. Tiffany E. Barber is an internationally recognized scholar, curator, and critic whose writing and expert commentary have appeared in top-tier academic journals, popular media outlets, and award-winning documentaries. Her work, which spans abstraction, dance, fashion, feminism, and the ethics of representation, focuses on artists of the Black diaspora working in the United States and the broader Atlantic world. Her latest curatorial project, a virtual, multimedia exhibition for Google Arts and Culture, examines the value of Afrofuturism in times of crisis.

Dr. Barber is Assistant Professor of Africana Studies and Art History at the University of Delaware as well as curator-in-residence at the Delaware Contemporary. She has completed fellowships at ArtTable, the Delaware Art Museum, and the University of Virginia's Carter G. Woodson Institute for African-American and African Studies. During the 2021-2022 academic year, Dr. Barber is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Getty Research Institute where she is completing her first book.

LOUIS CAMERON

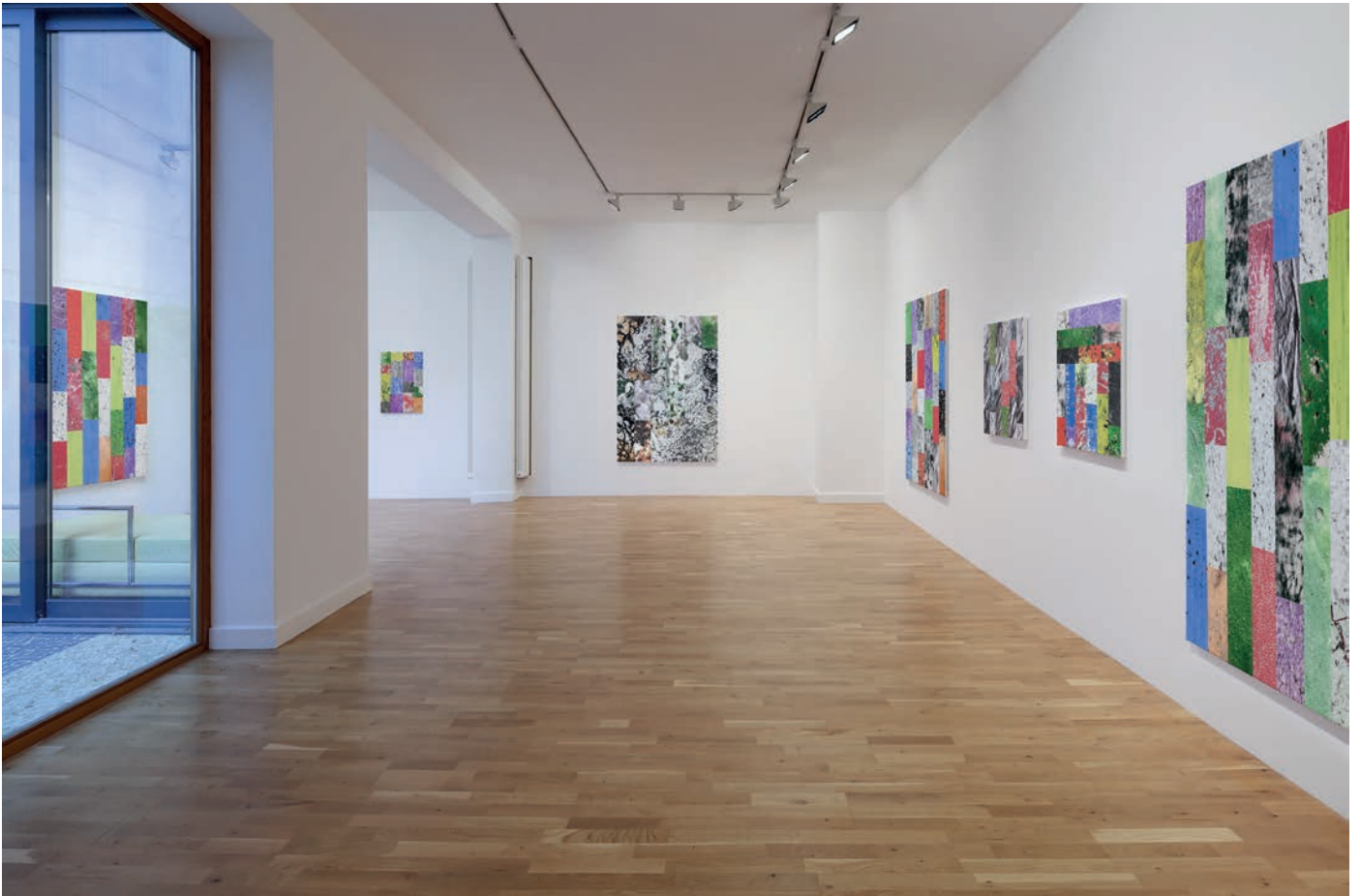


COLLAGE PAINTINGS

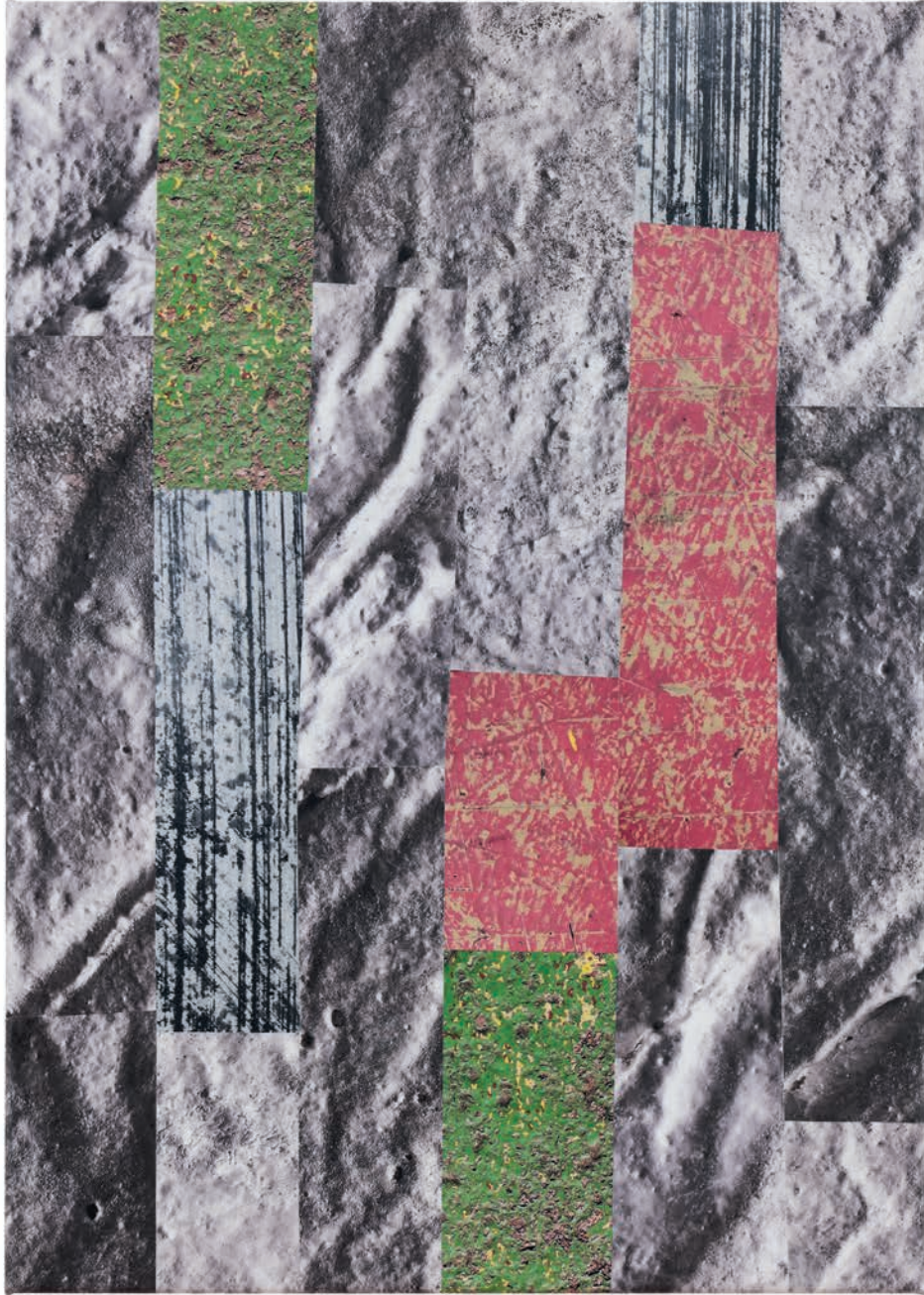
The Collage Paintings are works that process the visual vitality of the city. Color and surface is the main focus of the paintings, based on photographs taken around Berlin. The images are often painterly and potentially indicative of specific places. The patterns of the collages are inspired by African American, or Improvisational, quilts—specifically those of the women of Gee’s Bend. The irregular geometries and syncopated patterns are a culturally specific reference to an abstract tradition that was developed in the American South, parallel to that of American Modernism in New York City.



Louis Cameron, *Collage Paintings*, Installationview at Michael Janssen Berlin



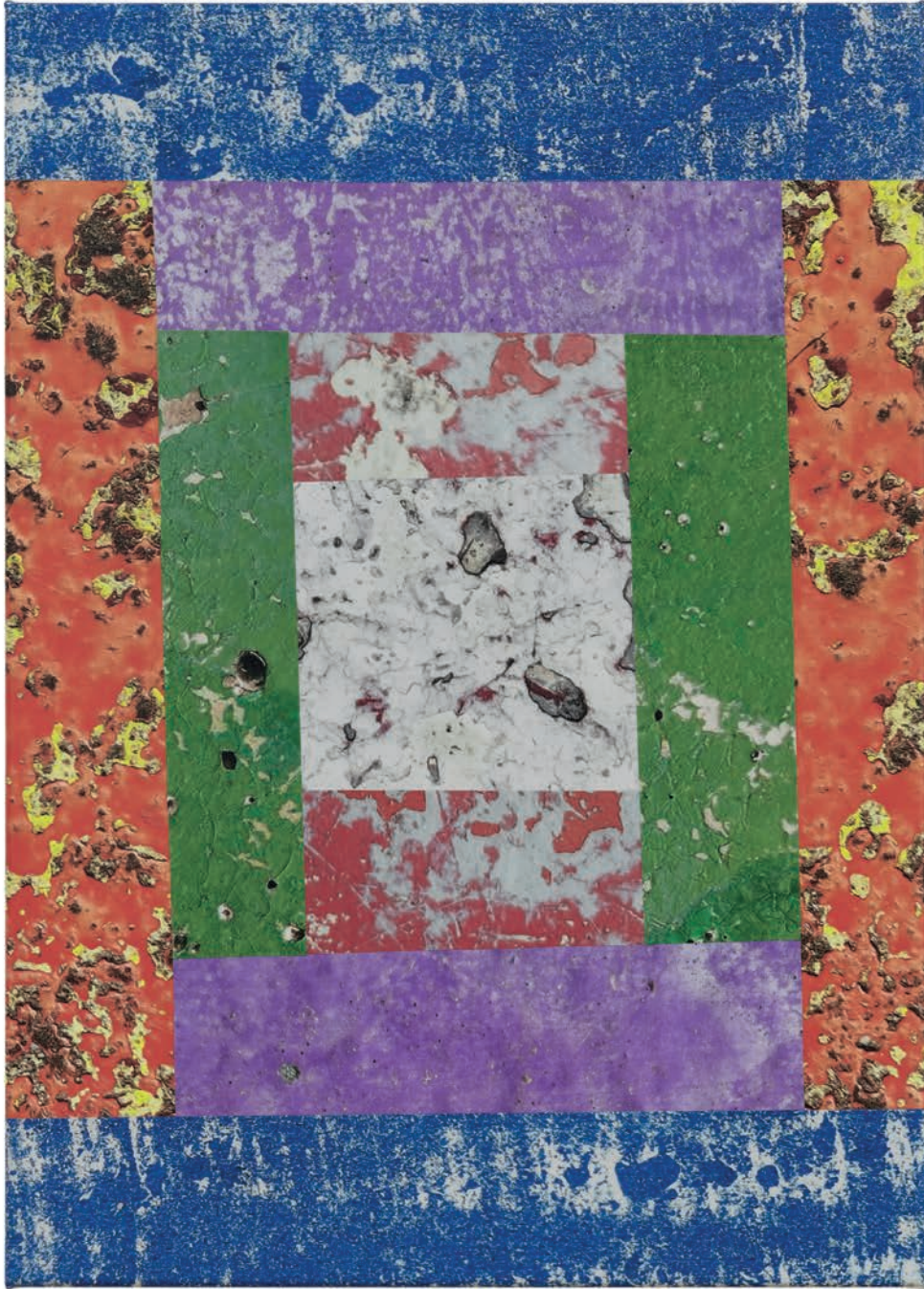
Louis Cameron, *Collage Paintings*, Installationview at Michael Janssen Berlin



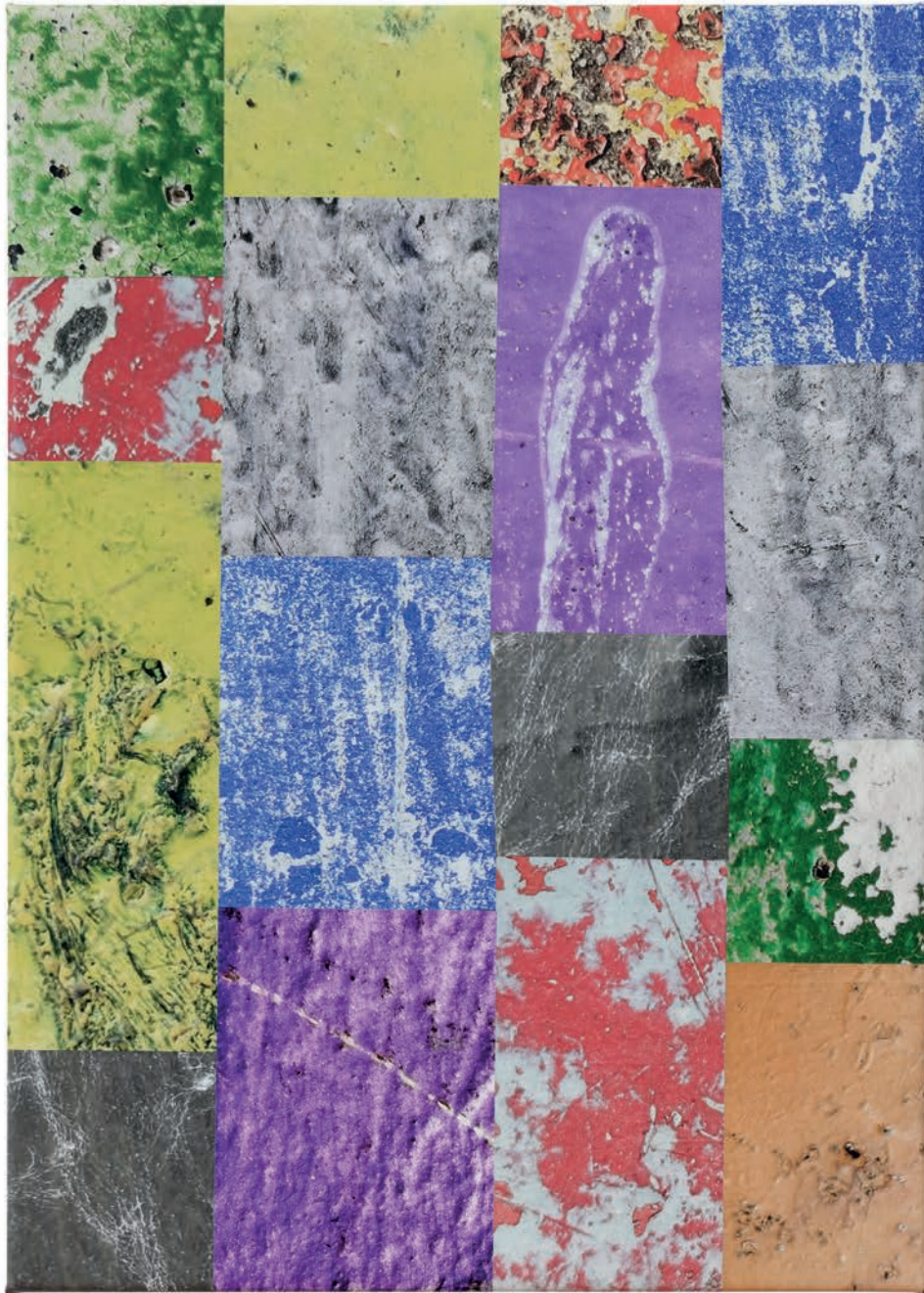
Louis Cameron, *BRLN 32*, 2021, paper on canvas, collage, 70 x 50 cm (27 1/2 x 19 5/8 in)



Louis Cameron, *BRLN 33*, 2021, paper on canvas, collage, 70 x 50 cm (27 1/2 x 19 5/8 in)



Louis Cameron, *BRLN 35*, 2021, paper on canvas, collage, 70 x 50 cm (27 1/2 x 19 5/8 in)



Louis Cameron, *BRLN 44*, 2021, paper on canvas, collage, 70 x 50 cm (27 1/2 x 19 5/8 in)



Louis Cameron, *BRLN 30*, 2021, paper on canvas, collage 40 x 30 cm (15 3/4 x 11 3/4 inch)



Louis Cameron, *BRLN 31*, 2021, paper on canvas, collage 40 x 30 cm (15 3/4 x 11 3/4 inch)



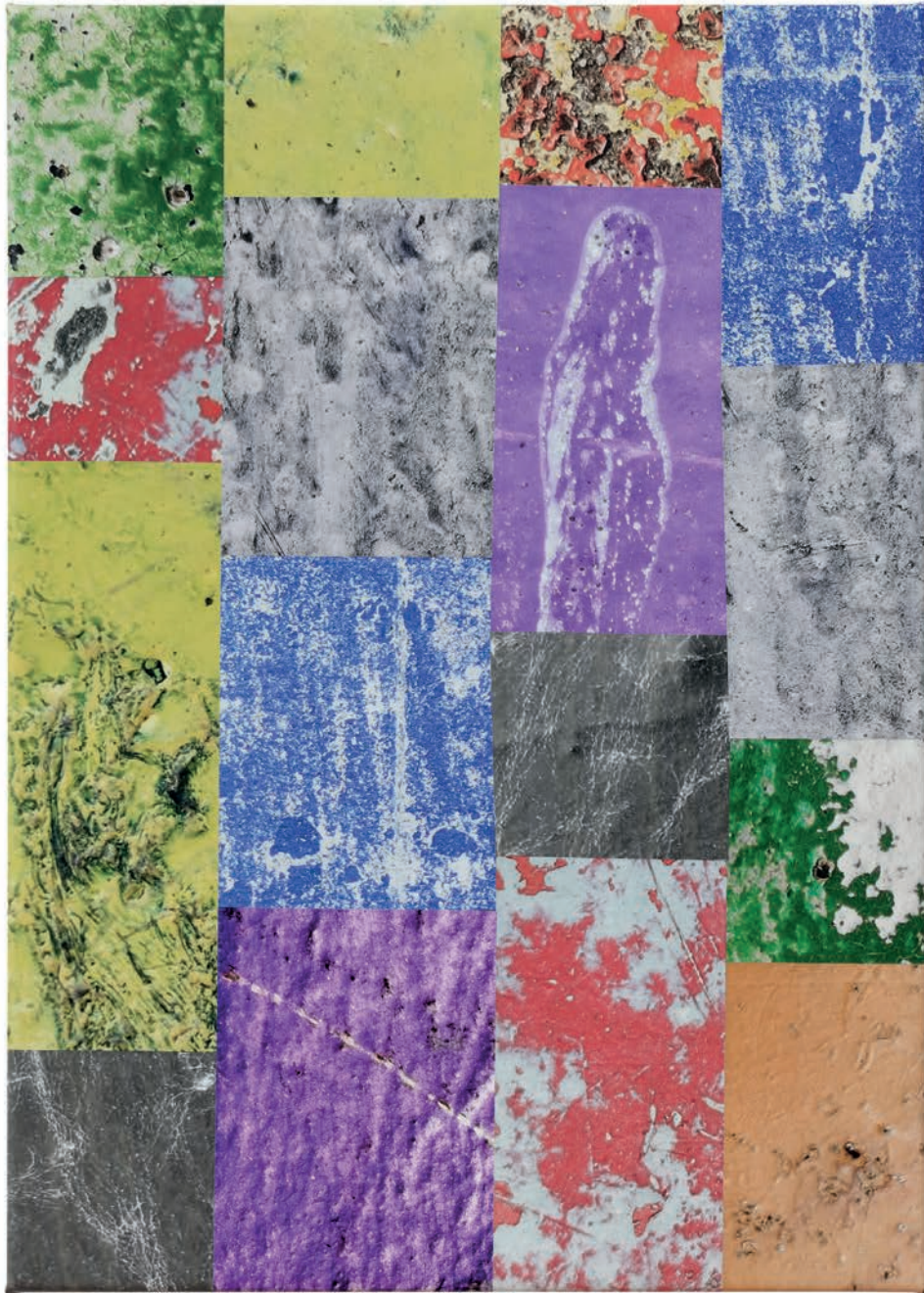
Louis Cameron, *BRLN 34*, 2021, paper on canvas, collage 40 x 30 cm (15 3/4 x 11 3/4 inch)



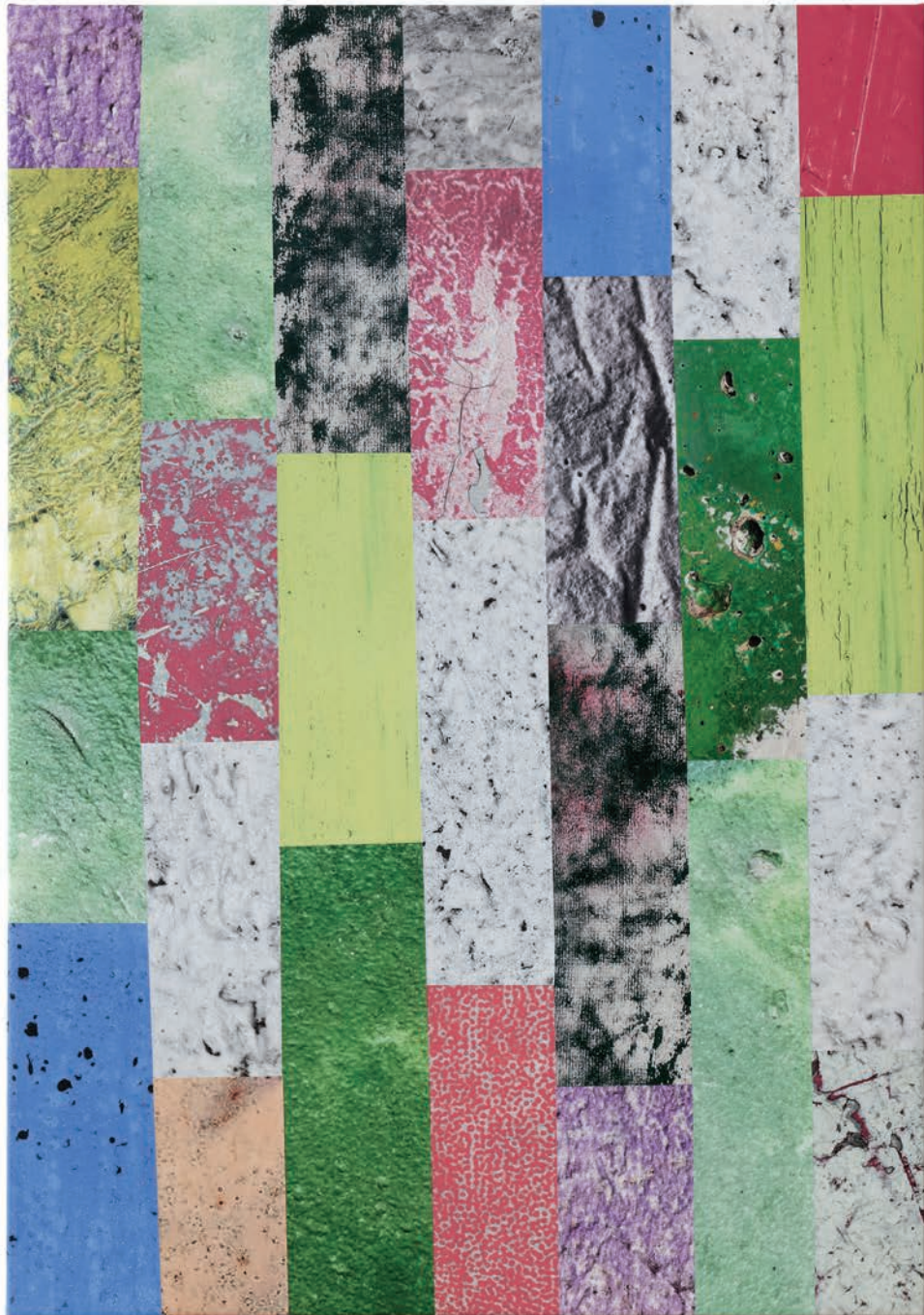
Louis Cameron, *BRLN 46*, 2021, paper on canvas, collage, 70 x 50 cm (27 1/2 x 19 5/8 in)



Louis Cameron, *BRLN 45*, 2021, paper on canvas, collage, 70x 50 cm (27 1/2 x 19 5/8 in)



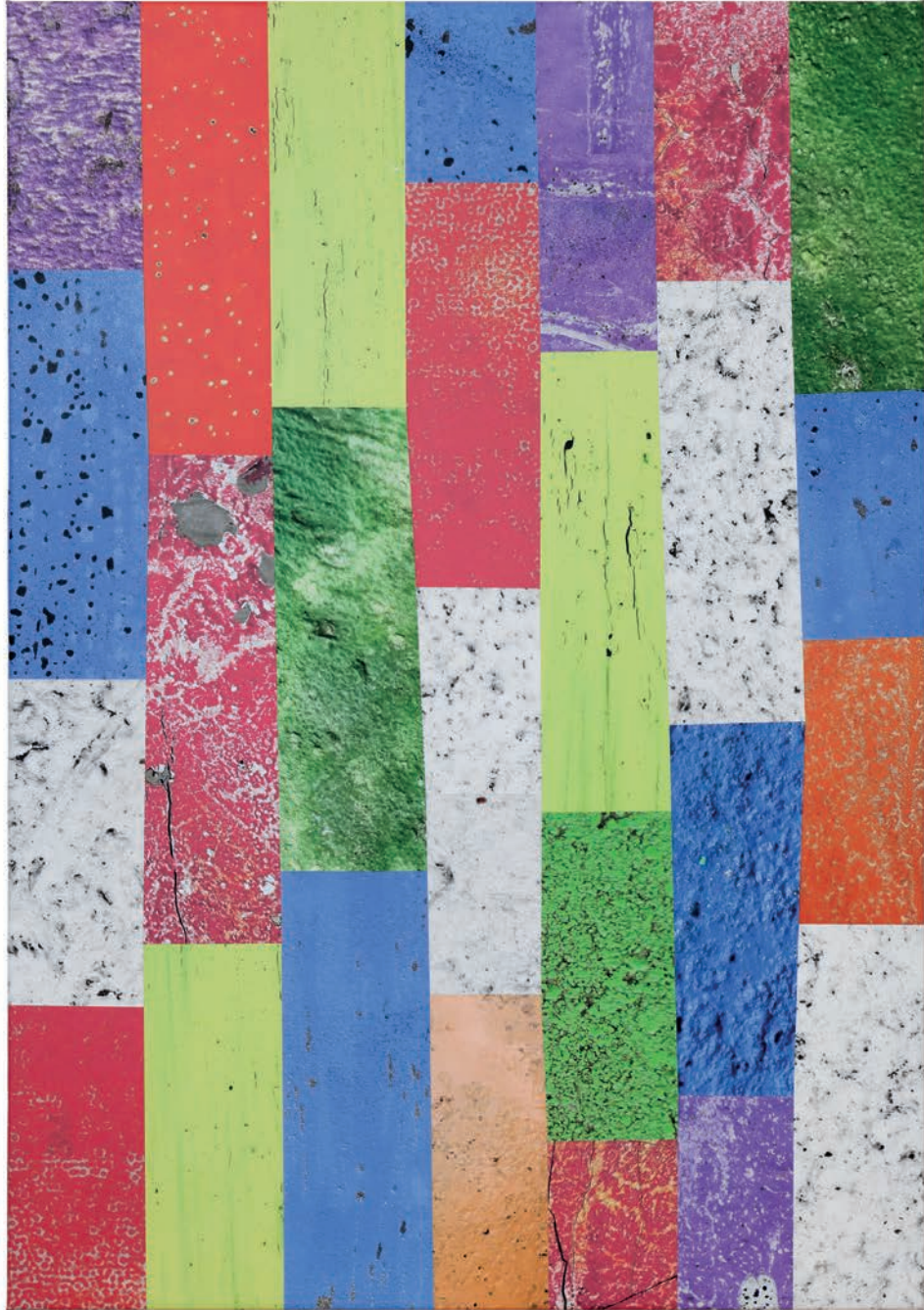
Louis Cameron, *BRLN 47*, 2021, paper on canvas, collage, 165x 115 cm (65 x 45 1/4 in)



Louis Cameron, *BRLN 48*, 2021, paper on canvas, collage, 165x 115 cm (65 x 45 1/4 in)



Louis Cameron , *BRLN 49*, 2021, paper on canvas, collage, 165x 115 cm (65 x 45 1/4 in)



Louis Cameron, *BRLN 50*, 2021, paper on canvas, collage, 165x 115 cm (65 x 45 1/4 in)



LAST WORDS

Last Words is a series of poster installations quoting the “last words” of Black people in the United States unjustly killed by police and others. The killing of George Floyd was a catalyst for the project. The phrases in the works are taken from individuals, starting with Trayvon Martin, killed in 2012 to George Floyd, killed in 2020—the climax of the Black Lives Matter movement thus far. This time frame allows for the project to focus on this specific moment in time. The phrases are taken from moments before individuals are killed to those spoken up to a week or two before. Out of context many of the phrases appear banal. It is only after reading the title of the works that the context is revealed for the phrases.

ARTFORUM

“Starless Midnight”

BALTIC CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

South Shore Road

October 20, 2017–January 21, 2018

In November 1967, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. accepted an honorary doctorate from Newcastle University with a powerful improvised speech that railed against three “great and grave problems that pervade our world”: racism, poverty, and war. On the fiftieth anniversary of this speech, “Starless Midnight” confronts King’s hard-won insights with contemporary realities. Curated by Edgar Arceneaux and Laurence Sillars, the nine-artist show opens with the heart-rending juxtaposition of Louis Cameron’s *NOW!*, 2016, a black wall branded with the one-word call to arms, against Karon Davis’s *Waiting Room*, 2016, a painstaking re-creation of a public clinic—the poor man’s purgatory—down to the shoddy wooden play set and a coffee-stained copy of *Us Weekly*.

For all its unflinching blows—from Charles Gaines’s musical manifestos to Cauleen Smith’s “maladjusted cinema”—the exhibition belongs to Barby Asante’s iron-veined, two-part film, *The Queen and the Black-Eyed Squint*, 2017. Drawing from Ama Ata Aidoo’s searing 1977 novel, *Our Sister Killjoy*, Asante restages the 1957 visit of the first Miss Ghana to England, just months after her country had wrangled its independence from the British Empire. As Miss Ghana, Asante is a picture of forbearance against the obsequious hospitality of her chaperone, Miss Britain, who proudly points out the monument to Earl Grey and cathedral frescos of Jesus and his snow-white saints, blissfully immune to the tactical omissions that make up her own heritage. Lest this history belong solely to the past, in the accompanying South Kensington segment (filmed just days before the exhibition opened) the beauty queens make their rounds in the shadow of Grenfell Tower—the public-housing complex that caught fire this past summer, killing seventy-one people—and the lingering logic of empire it carries in its darkness.

— Kate Sutton



Louis Cameron, IC OUR ILLS, 2017 Installation view, Baltic Centre for the Arts

IC OUR ILLS, 2017 is a redaction of the landmark lettering on the side of the Baltic Centre for the Arts building, that functioned in the past as a flour mill. Letters in the original building title that read „BALTIC FLOUR MILLS“ were covered to reveal an imbedded text, „IC OUR ILLS.“ The latent phrase is meant to be a recognition of the troubles in the world as identified by the viewer.



Louis Cameron, I AM, 2018 Installation view, Baltic Centre for the Arts

The I AM ... portfolio is a suite of posters by Black male artists addressing the recent violence against Black men and disregard for their lives in the United States. The title refers to rally calls and protest chants from the 1960's to the present: I AM A MAN, I am Somebody, I am Trayvon Martin. Trayvon Martin's death is important in that it, in addition to the lack of indictment of his killer, has sparked a national conversation on the violence against and disregard for Black people's lives.

LOUIS CAMERON

Born in 1973, in Columbus, Ohio, USA
Lives and works in Berlin, Germany

EDUCATION

- 1997 M.F.A., Painting, Tyler School of Art, Temple University, Elkins Park, PA
- 1996 Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Skowhegan, ME
- 1995 B.F.A., Fine Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2022 **Louis Cameron**, Galerie Michael Janssen, Berlin, Germany
- 2017 **Louis Cameron**, Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis St. Louis, MO
- 2014 **Times Square Ring of Steel**, curated by Suzy Spence, The Gallery@1GAP Brooklyn, New York
- 2010 **The Lift Series (project)**, The Kitchen, New York, NY
- The African American Flag Project**, The Armory Show (with I-20 Gallery), New York, NY
- The African American Flag Project**, I-20 Gallery, New York, NY
- 2009 **New Media Series: Louis Cameron**, Heineken, St. Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, MO
- Louis Cameron: Recent Videos**, Jersey City Museum, Jersey City, NJ
- 2008 **Louis Cameron: Recent Painting, Collage, and Video**, Schmidt Contemporary Art, St. Louis, MO
- 2007 **Louis Cameron**, I-20 Gallery, New York, NY
- 2006 **Severe, High, Elevated, Guarded, Low**, G Fine Art, Washington, D.C.
- Louis Cameron: Projected Works**, E. Bronson Ingram Studio Arts Center, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN
- 2005 **Schwarz Project 2: Louis Cameron**, The Richard and Dolly Maas Gallery, Purchase College, Purchase, NY
- Pop Secret**, I-20 Gallery, New York, NY
- 2004 **Camouflage (Project Room)**, Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects, Los Angeles, CA
- 2003 **Web #7**, Art in General, New York, NY
- Web #4 (Project)**, I-20 Gallery, New York, NY
- 2000 **Transfixed**, (two person exhibition with Mary Temple), ARTPLACE, Los Angeles, CA
- Grid #10**, Schmidt Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2021 **An Overwhelming Illusion**, Paris Photo 2021, New York, NY
- Confessions of the Century**, Broodthaers Society of America, New York, NY
- Works on Paper**, Philip Slein Gallery, St. Louis, MO
- Proximity**, curated by Lindsay Preston Zappas and Wilding Cran, Wilding Cran Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- Imagining Data** (virtual exhibition), curated by curatorsquared, <https://curatorsquaredvirtualviews.com/imagining-data>, Museum of Craft and Design, San Francisco, CA
- 2020 **Net Works** (online exhibition), <https://hub.link/CzLogZ5>, KORA AGORA
- 2018 **This Must Be the Place**, curated by Charlotte Eyeran, Paris Photo, Paris, France
- 2017 **Starless Midnight**, curated by Edgar Arceneaux and Laurence Sillars, Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, UK
- 2016 **The Poster Remediated, 25th International Poster Biennale**, curated by David Crowley, Poster Museum at Vilanów, Warsaw, Poland
- 2014 **INTERWEB**, curated by Ana Torok, Grand Art Haus, Brooklyn, NY
- The Appearance of Clarity: Works in Black and White**, curated by Amy Rahn, Helen Day Art Center, Stowe, VT
- For Whom It Stands**, curated by Michelle Joan Wilkinson, Reginald F. Lewis Museum, Baltimore, MD
- Stocked: Contemporary Art from the Grocery Aisles**, University of Wyoming Art Museum, Laramie, WY
- 2013 **Stocked: Contemporary Art from the Grocery Aisles**, Faulconer Gallery, Grinnell, IA
- Pulp 3**, Beta Pictoris Gallery, Birmingham, AL
- A New View: Contemporary Art**, St. Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, MO
- OCCUPRINT – We are the 99%**, ar/ge kunst Galerie Museum, Bolzano, Italy
- Stocked: Contemporary Art from the Grocery Aisles**, Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Scottsdale, AZ
- Stocked: Contemporary Art from the Grocery Aisles**, Ulrich Museum, Wichita, KS
- 2012 **The Bearden Project**, The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY

- 2011 **Dead in August**, curated by Meaghan Kent, Pentagon, Brooklyn, NY
Jim Schmidt Presents: Abstraction, Philip Slein Gallery, St. Louis, MO
COLORFORMS, Praxis International Art, Miami, FL
- 2010 **COLORFORMS**, Praxis International Art, New York, NY
ECHO: Sampling Visual Culture, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY
Portugal Arte 10, curated by Stefan Simchowicz, Lisbon, Portugal
American Ship ("A Merry Kinship"), curated by SOL'SAX, Junto Meeting Center, Brooklyn, NY
- 2009 **Born in the USA**, Pete's Motors, Great Barrington, MA
Branded and on Display, curated by Judith Hoos Fox, Salt Lake Art Center, Salt Lake City, UT
- 2008 **2008 Taiwan International Video Art Exhibition**, Hong-Gah Museum, Taipei, Taiwan
Psychedelic: Carlos Amorales / Jeremy Blake / Louis Cameron / Shazia Sikander, curated by Steven Matijcio, Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, Winston-Salem, NC
Opportunity as Community, Artists Select Artists, Part Two, Dieu Donn , New York, NY
Branded and on Display, curated by Judith Hoos Fox, Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Scottsdale, AZ
Branded and on Display, curated by Judith Hoos Fox, Tufts University Art Gallery, Medford, MA
- 2007 **REMIX Color and Light**, curated by Claire Schneider, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY
Branded and on Display, curated by Judith Hoos Fox, Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita, KS
Black Light/White Noise: Sound and Light in Contemporary Art, curated by Valerie Cassel Oliver, Contemporary Art Museum Houston, Houston, TX
Branded and on Display, curated by Judith Hoos Fox, Krannert Art Museum, Urbana-Champaign, IL
- 2006 **Unlearn**, curated by Steven Matijcio, Plug In ICA, Winnipeg, Canada
Bearable Lightness...Likeness, Curated by Franklin Sirmans, P.S.1/MoMA, Long Island City, NY
Collection in Context: Gesture, The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY
Dak 'Art 2006, Curated by Amy Horschak, The Biennial of Contemporary African Art, Dakar, Senegal
- 2005 **Harlem Postcard: Fall 2005**, Curated by Christine Kim, The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY
BLASTS, Curated by Paul Brewer, G Fine Art, Washington, D.C.
PpAaliNnTliiNnGg, Curated by Karlos Carcamo, ParaSite, Beacon, NY
Musical Modes, Curated by Rachel Howe, Clifford Change/Dinaburg Arts, New York, NY
Extreme Abstraction, Curated by Louis Grachos and Claire Schneider, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY
Art Digital 2004: "I Click, Therefore I Am", Parallel Program of The First Moscow Biennale, M'ARS Centre for Contemporary Arts, Moscow, Russia
- 2004 **NextNext Visual Art**, Curated by Dan Cameron, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn, NY
Abstract, Curated by LouAnne Greenwald, F-Space, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA
Open House: Working in Brooklyn, Curated by Charlotta Kotik and Tumelo Mosaka, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, NY
superSalon, Samson Projects, Boston, MA
Buy American, Curated by Joe Scanlan, Galerie Chez Valentin, Paris, France
- 2003 **Hands On Hands Down: Artists-In-Residence 2002-2003**, The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY
- 2002 **No Greater Love, Abstraction**, Jack Tilton / Anna Kustera Gallery, New York, NY
Tract: systemic sprawl, Curated by Amanda Church and Courtney Martin, Plus Ultra Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
REACTIONS, Exit Art, New York, NY
Group Exhibition, OSP gallery, Boston, MA
- 2001 **Freestyle**, Curated by Thelma Golden and Christine Kim, Santa Monica Museum of Art, Santa Monica, CA
Freestyle, Curated by Thelma Golden and Christine Kim, Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY
Made, POST, Los Angeles, CA
- 2000 **Snapshot**, Contemporary Museum, Baltimore, MD
Fresh Cut Afros, Watts Towers Art Center, Los Angeles, CA
Go Ask Alice, POSTwilshire, Los Angeles, CA
One Night Stand 1.2000, Curated by Leonardo Bravo & Annetta Kappon, Park Plaza Lodge Hotel, Los Angeles, CA
- 1999 **LACPS Annual**, Juror: Glenn Kaino, Los Angeles Center for Photographic Studies, Los Angeles, CA
- 1998 **Skowhegan Decade 1987-1997: Alumni Exhibition and Auction**, David Bietzel Gallery, New York, NY
Bank Holiday, Old Key Bank, Skowhegan, ME
Dwellings, Curated by Sandra Jackson, RUSH Arts Gallery, New York, NY

AWARDS/HONORS

- 2012 Fellow in Painting for the New York Foundation for the Arts, New York, NY
- 2006 Fellow in Painting for the New York Foundation for the Arts, New York, NY
- 2002/03 The Studio Museum in Harlem, Artist-In-Residence, New York, NY
- 1996 Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture/ New York, NY, Tyler School of Art Matching Fellowship, NYC

SCREENINGS

2018 **Film Sector**, Paris Photo Paris, France

COLLECTIONS

Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY
International Center of Photography, New York, NY
JPMorgan Chase Art Collection, New York, NY
St. Louis Museum of Art, St. Louis, MO

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- 2011 • Raha, Maria. "Drawing Distinction," *Temple Review*, Fall 2011, p. 26-31.
- 2010 • Robinson, Walter. "Armory Week 2010." *Artnet*, <http://www.artnet.com/magazineus/reviews/robinson/2010-armory-week3-9-10.asp>
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- 2007 • Colpitt, Frances. "Black Light/White Noise," *artUS*, Winter 2007, p. 58-59.
• Ludwin, Victoria. "Black Light/White Noise: Sound and Light in Contemporary Art, Contemporary Art Museum," *artshouston*, July 2007.
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- 2006 • Dawson, Jessica. "Spectrum of Warnings," *The Washington Post*, September 30, 2006, C2.
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• Cotter, Holland. "Energy and Abstraction at The Studio Museum in Harlem," *New York Times*, April 7, 2006, B27.
• Genocchio, Benjamin. "Exploring the Circle From Every Angle," *New York Times*, January 1, 2006.
- 2005 • Cudlin, Jeffry. "Digital Distortion," *Washington City Paper*, December 30 – January 5, 2006.
• Nichols, Matthew Guy. "Louis Cameron at I-20," *Art in America*, September 2005, p.156.
• Murray, Soraya and Derek Conrad. "A Rising Generation & the Pleasures of Freedom," *International Review of African American Art*, Volume 20, Number 2, p. 3.
• Church, Amanda. "Louis Cameron: 'Pop Secret' at I-20 Gallery," *Art on Paper*, May-June 2005, p. 75.
- 2004 • Beyer, Charles G. "Working in Brooklyn," *Flash Art*, July – September 2004, p. 65.
• Bey, Dawoud. "The Ironies of Diversity, or the Disappearing Black Artist," *Artnet*, April 8, 2004, <http://www.artnet.com/Magazine/features/bey/bey4-8-04.asp>
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- 2003 • "Hands On Hands Down," *The New Yorker*, September 1, 2003, p.16.
• Rubinstein, Raphael. "A Quiet Crisis," *Art in America*, March 2003, p. 39.
- 2002 • Brockington, Horace. "Paint It Black: Abstraction/ A Trans-History," *NY Arts Magazine*, September 2002, p. 63.

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- New American Paintings, March 2002, Number 38, p. 30-33. Juror: Lilian Tone
- "Plus Ultra," The New Yorker, July 8, 2002, p.14.
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- "The New Masters," VIBE, May 2001, p. 138-43.
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- 2000 • Harvey, Doug. "Gender, Race," LA WEEKLY, August 4-10, 2000, p.47.
- 1999 • Ise, Claudine. "Framing the Many Possibilities of Photography in the Tech Age," Los Angeles Times, March 5, 1999, F34.

CATALOGS

- 2014 • Spence, Suzy. "Louis Cameron Times Square Ring of Steel," Louis Cameron Times Square Ring of Steel. Exhibition booklet. Brooklyn, New York: The Gallery@1GAP.
- 2013 • Stamey, Emily. Stocked: Contemporary Art from the Grocery Aisles. Exh. cat. Wichita: Ulrich Museum of Art, 2013.
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2013 – present Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture New York, NY/ Board of Governors Skowhegan, ME

ARTFORUM

Critic's pick

BERLIN

Louis Cameron

GALERIE MICHAEL JANSSEN

Bleibtreustr. 1

February 19–April 16, 2022

Louis Cameron's debut at Michael Janssen is divided into two sections, one for each of the gallery's floors. Flanking the L-shaped spaces of the ground level are Cameron's "Collage Paintings," 2021–22, which he has been assembling in parts ever since relocating to Berlin from the United States in 2015. The source materials are photographs that Cameron has been taking as he perambulates through the city, their compositional logic derived from African American quilting. The dimensions of each work conform to the standard printing sizes for posters, providing a formal constraint for the long vertical cuts of paper that make up these rich, abstract collages. Mounted on canvas, the resulting "quilts" are situated equally between the artist's own biographical trajectory and the much longer purview of the migration of Black Americans from the South into urban centers. Cameron assiduously reanimates the design and intelligence of found and discarded materials from the nineteenth century to the present, while consciously coupling African American quilting with the history of early modernism.

Turning to the here and now, the second floor features two wall-mounted pieces from Cameron's ongoing series "Last Words," 2020–, in which the artist spells out the final utterances of Black Americans who have died as a result of police violence. Together, the two series weave through each other, routing the personal and biographical into the language of the everyday, which, for some, is always experienced against a horizon of eradication.

— Colin Lang