

Press contact: Eddie Silva  
314.446.7496  
[esilva@camstl.org](mailto:esilva@camstl.org)



Contemporary Art  
Museum St. Louis

3750 Washington Blvd  
St. Louis, MO 63108  
314.535.4660 [camstl.org](http://camstl.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Ebony G. Patterson explores the garden as symbol at CAM**



Ebony G. Patterson, *...a possum rises...a black bear falls...a pattoo takes watch...as children whisper through the leaves...*, 2019. Digital print on archival watercolor paper with hand-cut and torn elements, fabric, poster board, acrylic gel medium, feathered butterflies, costume jewelry. 110 x 117 x 7 inches. Courtesy the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago and Hales Gallery, New York.

**February 19, 2020 (St. Louis, MO)** - The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (CAM) presents an exhibition of works by Ebony G. Patterson, reflecting on her evolving exploration of the garden as recurring motif throughout her practice. For CAM, Patterson reimagines her floor sculpture *Root and Shrub, Root and Shrubz* (2014), as a new immersive installation in the Front Gallery. This early garden installation is juxtaposed by a new work, which Patterson is creating for CAM's 60-foot-long Project Wall: a monumental, multilayered paper collage that extends out of wallpaper designed by the artist. *Ebony G. Patterson: ...when the cuts erupt...the garden rings...and the warning is a wailing...* is on view at CAM from May 8 through August 16, 2020.

Gardens provide Patterson with a rich concentration of metaphorical possibilities and inspire complex discourses on beauty. Patterson's landscape-themed installations depict gardens of seductive colors and textures, which draw the eye toward images of fragmented human figures emerging from the shadows of leaves, trees, and

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shrubs. For Patterson, the garden serves as a postcolonial symbol of a past that is never fully buried and barely visible. Gardens grow out of decomposing matter, insistent upon survival in even the harshest circumstances. Within Patterson's schema, gardens are places of internment as well as hiding places.



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Patterson blurs lines between painting, photography, sculpture, and collage, emphasizing the artworks' materiality. Lush, sumptuous, and festive, Patterson's immersive gardens emerge out of a complex entanglement of race, gender, class, and violence. "Beauty, for me, is a tool of seduction," the artist has said, "a trap." The coexistence of beauty and horror in Patterson's environments parallel the abundant plant-life she conjures through an excess of embellished materials. The artist titles her new, large-scale Project Wall piece, *...and the dew cracks the earth, in five acts of lamentation...between the cuts...beneath the leaves...below the soil....* To construct the work, Patterson shreds and tears paper by hand, damaging the material in the process of making new forms, parallel to the act of gardening when living things are shredded, torn, and cut. A garden is never far from notions of violence, of memorial, of blood and tears.

**Ebony G. Patterson** (b. 1981 in Kingston, Jamaica; lives and works in Kingston and Chicago, IL) received the prestigious Stone & DeGuire Contemporary Art Award from her alma mater, Washington University in St. Louis, in 2018. At the time, Patterson said she planned to use the \$25,000 prize "to challenge my process in terms of scale and materiality" toward immersive garden tableaux. Patterson's solo exhibitions and projects have been shown at many U.S. institutions including the Baltimore Museum of Art (2019), and The Studio Museum in Harlem, Atlanta Center for Contemporary Art, and SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, GA, in 2016. Her touring exhibition *...while the dew is still on the roses...* premiered at Pérez Art Museum Miami (2018–19); traveled to Speed Art Museum, Louisville, KY (2019); and opens on February 27, 2020 at Nasher Museum of Art, Duke University, Durham, NC. Upcoming exhibitions include biennials in Liverpool and Athens, and her first solo European exhibition at Kunsthall Aarhus in Denmark, all in 2020. Patterson's work is included in a number of public collections, including The Studio Museum in Harlem; Pérez Art Museum Miami; Museum of Arts and Design, NY; Nasher Museum of Art; Speed Art Museum; Brooklyn Museum; Virginia Museum of Fine Art, Richmond, VA; Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts; Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; and the National Gallery of Jamaica. Patterson received a United States Artists Fellowship in 2018, and is the resident artist at the Joan Mitchell Center in New Orleans in the fall of 2020. Prior to receiving her MFA at the Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Arts, Washington University in St. Louis (2006), Patterson attended the Edna Manley College, in Kingston, Jamaica, receiving a BFA in painting (2004).

The exhibition is generously supported by Carol and Michael Staenberg.

*Ebony G. Patterson: ...when the cuts erupt...the garden rings...and the warning is a wailing...* is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Wassan Al-Khudhairi, Chief Curator.

## Related Events

### Press & Patron Preview

Friday, May 8, 10:00–11:00 am

Join artists and curators for an exclusive introduction to the exhibitions. RSVP to Eddie Silva at [esilva@camstl.org](mailto:esilva@camstl.org).

**Opening Night**

Friday, May 8

Member Preview 6:00–7:00 pm

Public Reception 7:00–9:00 pm

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The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis works to enrich lives and inspire curiosity, creativity, and learning through experiences with contemporary art. Focused on a dynamic array of changing exhibitions, the Museum reflects and contributes to the global cultural landscape while engaging thousands of visitors through a wide array of public programs. CAM nurtures the creative minds of our city's youth through free, in-depth art education, making a long-lasting impact on the community. We are a site for discovery, a welcoming space, free and open to all.

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