



D I D I E R W I L L I A M

LAKOU

FIGGE ART MUSEUM

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LAKOU

FIGGE ART MUSEUM | DAVENPORT, IOWA

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Figge Art Museum
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In “The Beautiful Condition of Diaspora,” Dr. Jerry Philogene
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Installation image

FOREWORD

As the preeminent cultural hub of the Quad Cities, the Figge Art Museum is privileged to bring outstanding artwork and new experiences to the community it serves, and we are pleased to present *Didier William: Lakou*, the first solo museum exhibition of celebrated Haitian American artist Didier William and the first time his work has been shown in the Midwest. This exhibition speaks to our mission of enriching our community by “bringing art and people together.” The powerful connection between people and art, and the possibilities that lie within that experience, exist at the heart of Didier William’s work.

Born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and raised in Miami, Florida, William uses a variety of artistic techniques to thoughtfully examine his cultural identity. In addition to offering rich visual experiences, his artwork challenges the way in which we view our world and the people in it. Through *Lakou*, we will introduce visitors to William’s recent body of work and hope to initiate conversations surrounding what it means to make art in an increasingly globalized world, the complexities of cultural identity, and the creative potential born from immigration. Importantly, *Lakou* brings with it a new

perspective with which to view the Figge’s renowned Haitian collection.

Vanessa Sage, the exhibition’s curator, organized this catalogue featuring essays by Dr. Jerry Philogene and Edouard Duval-Carrié. Duval-Carrié’s essay explores the cultural history of Haiti and how artists of the past and present grapple with their communal legacies. A Haitian American artist and curator, Duval-Carrié has a long relationship with the Figge Art Museum and has several works in the museum collection. Dr. Jerry Philogene, Professor of American Studies at Dickinson College, specializes in contemporary African American and Afro Caribbean visual arts and cultural history. Her thoughtful text examines the aesthetic and conceptual framework of the artist’s work and demonstrates how William’s compositions initiate new ways of thinking about race, gender, and art. Through this exhibition and catalogue, we hope you will gain new perspectives on the world and your relationship to the communities in which you live.

Michelle Hargrave

Executive Director and CEO, Figge Art Museum



N' ap naje ansamn, n'ap vole ansamn from *Broken Skies: Vertières* (detail), 2019

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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I would like to express my gratitude to Edouard Duval-Carrié and Dr. Jerry Philogene for their insightful texts on Didier William's work. In addition to offering invaluable perspectives on the work presented in *Lakou*, the essays add to the exciting dialogue surrounding contemporary artwork of the Caribbean diaspora.

Thank you also to the talented staff at the Figge Art Museum for their excitement and support for this project. Special recognition should be given to Director of Collections and Exhibitions Andrew

Wallace and to Assistant Registrar and Preparator Joshua Johnson, who gave their time and expertise to realize the exhibition. Leanne Paetz, of Pederson Paetz, deserves a warm thank you for the beautiful design and layout of this catalogue.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Executive Director and CEO Michelle Hargrave for her immediate interest and support for the exhibition following her arrival at the Figge.

I am deeply thankful to Didier William for his work towards the exhibition, his openness to discussion leading up to *Lakou*, and for the opportunity to exhibit the newly finished work, *N' ap naje ansamn, n' ap vole ansamn*. It is an honor to exhibit his stunning artwork at the Figge Art Museum and to share it with our community.

Vanessa Sage

Assistant Curator, Figge Art Museum



M mache toupatou ave I (detail), 2018

VISUALS FROM A “NEW WORLD”

The cultural visual production of the Republic of Haiti has garnered my attention and that of many scholars of the Black Atlantic. It is a relatively recent field of research for materials have been rather scant.

Three decades ago, I met Dr. Marcel Châtillon in Paris.¹ He had invited me to his apartment in the Gare de Lyon neighborhood to view what he said was the most comprehensive collection of visual material from the French Caribbean, including the colonial outpost of Saint Domingue.² I was then a guest of the French government, invited to celebrate the Bicentennial of the French Revolution. However, in my thinking, I could not conceptualize the French Revolution without thinking about the Haitian Revolution and life in the colony before it. This was for me a daunting task, for my historical understanding of Haiti was rather scant. Our history, as presented in most educational manuals, literally starts with our own revolution. Oftentimes,

merely two chapters are devoted to the island nation’s pre-revolutionary period. Thus, I became preoccupied by grappling with the events that prompted the massive slave rebellion and the revolution that created the nation of Haiti.

My colleagues and I had less than a year to formulate what was to be presented in an exhibition titled *La Révolution Française sous les Tropiques*.³ Several Parisian archives were opened to us for consultation. When it became evident, after many visits and increasing frustration, that the visual material concerning the region was rather slim, I was referred to Dr. Châtillon. In his minuscule apartment, he had amassed a trove of documents, mostly visual, concerning the region. To my delight (as Saint Domingue was the crown jewel of the French dominions), he had the most comprehensive set of documents concerning that colony. Maps, prints, illustrated books—some very rare, many paintings and

other “objets d’art” were ensconced everywhere, even under his bed, in that small apartment. From these, I gleaned enough material to help me in configuring our own “French” past, which left a cultural imprint not to be discarded, as it had been in our own historical texts.

Though of great value and interest, Dr. Châtillon’s collection unfortunately ended with the Haitian Revolution. He explained that his interest was in the Ancien Régime of France, specifically the so-called glorious golden age of Louis XIV (r. 1643-1715), which coincided with significant territorial expansion, including the acquisition of a remote Caribbean outpost called Saint Domingue.⁴ That island was responsible for providing the French crown with vast riches through the massive production of sugar, one of the most prized commodities at the time. It can be argued that an industrial revolution occurred on the island of Saint Domingue long before the one that began in England in the 18th century. But contrary to England’s harnessing of the steam engine, sugar production in Saint Domingue was due entirely to the sweat and toil of nearly 10 million African slaves brought to the colony. The life expectancy of these enslaved Africans was no more than five to six years in this horrendous plantation system, with nearly half of all new arrivals dying within their first year on the island.⁵

Though study of the colonial period is of great interest, what ensued after the Haitian Revolution is even more complicated, and research around that history proves to be far more convoluted than one can imagine.

Had our revolutionary forefathers realized that the new Haitian nation as the first Black republic resulting from the first successful slave rebellion in history was the most novel of circumstances, they probably would have made a serious case for understanding the population they were destined to govern. Who were they? Where did they come from? What were their “cultural givens”?⁶ All this was of no importance as the new governing elite had to create a state in a world totally unsympathetic to the plight of the former slaves of Saint Domingue.

The history and evolution of the very novel and complex state of Haiti fills the library shelves of many libraries. Haitian history has indeed been a succession of what can only be described as experimental and tentative socio-political projects that are ongoing to this day. The period after the revolution saw Haiti as a republic, a kingdom, and even in modest terms, an imperial power, since Haiti saw fit for its survival to invade their neighbors and reunite the island of Hispaniola under one banner: a haven for Black freedom.⁷

All of these projects came with their resulting cultural givens, which have yet to be studied properly considering their importance in understanding the current situation. The Kingdom of the North, as King Henri Christophe's territory was called, saw the first attempt at creating a visual vocabulary to represent the cultural givens of the new state of Haiti.⁸ The questions he faced have resonance today. Who are we, what are we and how do we represent ourselves in this modern world? What are *our* cultural givens? Are we Africans? And, if so, from where in that vast continent do we hail from? The novelty of the situation has perhaps escaped many, but by carefully looking at the solutions offered, we realize that it was not an easy task. Furthermore, it is possibly an appropriate starting point for trying to comprehend the whole of what is justifiably called the "New World."

During its apprenticeship in becoming an imperial power, the United States decided to flex its military muscle on its neighbor to the south, Haiti. Initially, the task was as easy as having a few gunboats in the capital Port-au-Prince's harbor. What was not evident was how to organize and make this venture a profitable one. From the profusion of studies done by the U.S. military establishment, it is clear that they did their homework. The United States ultimately had to deploy

an arsenal of researchers in fields such as anthropology and cultural agents such as artists in their quest to understand and dominate this new country—the first Black republic in the world! The task was probably too much, and the resistance from the ground too fierce and determined, for they retired after a nearly 20-year occupation.⁹ Since the middle of the 20th century, the situation on the island has deteriorated for lack of understanding of the cultural givens of the very complex situation that is Haiti. The sad fact is that our governing elites have historically failed to understand and coalesce the myriad of vastly different ethnic Africans into one "Haitian" polity. For most of our history, they have been literally at war with the governed. It might be an overly simplistic assessment of the situation, but the result is that generations of Haitians had to flee the island.

Though we might still be looking for what constitutes the Haitian identity, we can assert that, after many centuries, we do call ourselves Haitians. The burden and singularity of our history is too present to be set aside. Where this phenomenon is most interesting is with our visual artists. As of now, whether in Europe, the Americas and even in Africa, there are probably three to four generations of Haitian artists that have evolved in the diaspora.¹⁰ Their visual production is as varied as the

languages they have adopted or been submerged in. But at some point in their careers, the burning question as to who they are surfaces and sometimes leads them to dig deeply into what their legacy brings to them.

Case in point is Didier William. He followed his family's migration to South Florida while quite young. Brought up in the vicinity of the Little Haiti neighborhood in Miami, Didier was provided with guidance and acknowledged as artistically inclined by his teachers. As such, he accessed the arts magnet school program of Miami and subsequently received a scholarship to an Ivy League school, Yale University. Didier and I met many years ago when his production, though most accomplished and already highly regarded, had no reference in whatever shape or form to his native land.

As part of my visual practice, I sometimes act as curator, and in that regard, I recently organized an exhibition around a Cuban historical figure named José Antonio Aponte. Known as a rebel and instigator of a slave rebellion in Cuba in the 1800s, it is a lesser known fact that he was also an artist. Caught by authorities after his unsuccessful slave rebellion, Aponte's home was searched where an "art book" of his own manufacture was found. When interrogated about his production, he asserted that the "book" was meant to be a gift to the King of Spain to teach him how to

deal with and understand his black subjects.¹¹ Hence it was a history of the "Black World"! To me, such a visual trove is unheard of in the annals of the Black Atlantic. Sadly, the book has disappeared. With the insistence of historian Ada Ferrer, we embarked on a "reconstruction" of the book by inviting artists to consult the legal archives concerning Aponte's interrogation about his "book of painting." In my search for artists that I felt would respond to such a history, I found that Didier's new productions had made a significant turn and, as with both of us, the "burning question" surged!

Our personal histories, the history of the Black Atlantic, which is ours as well, and the "silencing" of all those stories are quite overwhelming as we artists try to make sense of them. Given that these stories were and are "silenced," we feel the urge and responsibility to give them a visual existence, and in our modest and personal way, we find new and different paths to give them life. In the case of Didier William, he accentuates that this is the discourse he is engaging in: he is grappling with the meaning of Haiti in all its complexities. In this regard, his titles are all in Haitian Kreyòl. If this is not a "New World" production, what is?

Edouard Duval-Carrié

Artist and Curator

ENDNOTES

1 Dr. Marcel Châtillon (1925–2003) was a surgeon and longtime collector of paintings, engravings, manuscripts and antique books relating to the Antilles and the French presence in America.

“Special Collections: Antillana – Marcel Chatillon,” *The Mazarine Library*, accessed January 8, 2020, <https://www.bibliotheque-mazarine.fr/fr/collections/fonds-particuliers/antillana-marcel-chatillon>.

2 Saint Domingue was a French colony on the island of Hispaniola. Following the successful Haitian Revolution led by former slaves, it became the sovereign nation of Haiti in 1804.

3 “The French Revolution in the Tropics” was an exhibition at the Museum of African and Oceanic Arts, Paris, France, from June 9–September 4, 1989.

“Cultural Patrimony,” *CNMHE*, accessed January 9, 2020, <http://www.cnmhe.fr/spip.php?article245>.

4 The term “Ancien Régime” is French for “old order,” and refers to the period in France prior to the Revolution of 1789 defined by rigid social classes and Monarchic rule. In the early 1600s, French settlers began to colonize Saint Domingue.

“Ancien Regime,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, accessed January 8, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/event/ancien-regime>.

5 Nelly Schmidt, “Slavery and Its Abolition, French Colonies, Research and Transmission of Knowledge,” *UNESCO, The Slave Route Project*, UNESCO, March 18, 2013, http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/pdf/Nelly_Schmidt_Eng_01.pdf

6 “Cultural givens” are the “givens” of social existence within a culture. This includes speaking a certain language, customs surrounding family, as well as elements of communal identity, social structure and behavioral norms.

Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Culture: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1973), 259.

7 The “Unification of Hispaniola” was the annexation of the Dominican Republic by Haiti. Haitian forces invaded and occupied the Dominican Republic from 1822 until 1844 when Dominicans regained their independence.

Anne Eller, *We Dream Together: Dominican Independence, Haiti and the Fight for Caribbean Freedom* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016), 5–7.

8 King Henri Christophe (1767–1820) was a leader during the Haitian Revolution. In 1811, he declared himself King Henri I of northern Haiti. He established a hereditary nobility, elaborate dress codes, formal ceremonies and constructed palaces during his rule.

“Henry Christophe,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, accessed January 8, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Henry-Christophe>.

9 The United States Occupation of Haiti took place from 1915 to 1934. Following a period of civil unrest, U.S. Marines landed on Haiti in 1915. The U.S. Government took control of the nation’s finances, police, infrastructure and medical services. Although military forces withdrew in 1934, the U.S. retained control of Haiti’s external finances until 1947.

Edwidge Danticat, “The Long Legacy of Occupation in Haiti,” *The New Yorker*, July 28, 2015, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/haiti-us-occupation-hundred-year-anniversary>.

10 Diaspora is a word of Greek origin meaning “to be scattered about,” and refers to the dispersion of populations away from their homeland.

11 *Visionary Aponte: Art & Black Freedom*, (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Fine Arts Gallery, 2019) Exhibition catalog, accessed January 9, 2020, https://issuu.com/carla.beals/docs/vandy_aponte_brochure_2020-small.



Dantor a Anais (detail), 2018

THE BEAUTIFUL CONDITION OF DIASPORA

I love thinking about the haunting presence of “home” as something that is immaterial but still very, very effective and present. I think therein lies the beautiful condition of diaspora. You are dealing with something that has very clear corporeal effects, but you can’t quite see it, you can’t quite touch it, you can’t quite feel it. And even if I do go back to Haiti and face that moment of encounter, it’s not going to be the Haiti that I’ve mythologized in my head. It is going to be something different, so that gap will always exist, that gap will also be present. And I think that gap deserves a space in the narrative.¹

Didier William’s large-scale mixed-media paintings explore the relationship between the formal possibilities and the narrative capacities of painting. Replete with bold decorative patterns and cut-through eye-shaped forms, they radiate a perceptible

sensuality. Their titles appear in Haitian Kreyòl, unapologetic most often with no English translations or subtitles. Inspired by memories of growing up in a resilient yet vulnerable Haitian community in Miami and coming of age when black and brown immigrant

bodies have come to symbolize precarious living, his mixed-media pieces are pictorial rather than narrative. As with most of his artworks, the body takes center stage, literally and figuratively. For William, the recurring motif of the stage evokes the unsettled sensation of immigrant life in the diaspora. There is always a performance to be “Black,” a performance to be “West Indian” or “Caribbean,” and a performance to *pale angle kòrèkteman*.² Consequently, for Kreyòl-speaking immigrant people, Blackness, Caribbeanness and language competence are cultural markers that are in constant negotiation in determining belonging.

William’s paintings highlight a deep sense of vulnerability, yet their aestheticization is marked by a profound desire to transcend such vulnerability and become, rather, inherently provocative. These compelling works reconfigure the dynamics of the gaze. The cut-through eye-shapes of the muscular figures embody the authoritative tensions of *looking at, being looked at* and *looking back*, intrepidly shifting the subject/object power dynamic. They encourage an active *seeing* experience, one that reveals the struggles that are tirelessly fought by those who live courageously at the margin, on the

edge, and who constantly attempt to obliterate the variability of such positions. Moreover, the *looking at/back* experience is not simply occurring on the part of the viewer. Explicitly, by their presence, the eye-shapes from these bodies bestow upon the viewer a cross between a defiant *look* and a dismissive *seeing*, one that Haitians refer to as *kout je*: a sharp side-eye that at its boldest and most direct evokes the presence of bodies that were denied the right to look back.

These paintings draw our attention to the provocative overtures made by the encounters among distinctive shapes, unexpected forms, lush textures and brilliant colors. Thus, the method of looking is different. It needs to be decidedly sensorial. It needs to be deliberately engaging. It needs to be mindful of the resonances created at the points of encounter between the composition of painting, the materiality of printmaking, and the precision of drawing and carving. It is in this context that we see the raw beauty of William’s work, see the ways in which he deliberately “antagonizes painting with other mediums.”³ The paintings capture the essence of power, sensuality and presence while not shying away from the challenges hidden within the shadows.

These non-gendered, non-racialized bodies strikingly document an intuitive sense of resilience and profundity, visualizing universal elements of the human condition that are without regard for race, sexual orientation or gender expression. We may be mesmerized by the beauty of their sensuous shape, but we are also transfixed by their shadows as they appear on the vividly colored and patterned curtains, share the stage and dwell on the ornate, painterly abstract backgrounds. Sinewy lines, seemingly frenetic curvilinear marks, guide our eyes to the ways in which William balances abstract sensibilities with expressive organic qualities. It is in this context that William's work captivates us through its verdant affect, a hapticality that suggests movement, color, form and, most importantly, a harmonious textured sensuality. A hapticality that allows "the capacity to feel through others, for others to feel through you, for you to feel them feeling you..."⁴ His mixed-media works possess a compositional logic that examines how painting, drawing, collage, woodcarving and printmaking energetically coalesce on the surface of the stained wood. In these decidedly detail-oriented works, William explores the role of painting as a process that intertwines the



Nou Tout Ansanm, 2018

hand with the mechanical nature of woodcarving and printmaking. This intermedial expertise allows the viewer to relish in William's deft control and skill in emotive mark making.

There is a tension in the works: a certain yearning to go against the limiting constructs of the everyday coupled with a hopefulness that longs for a different possible future. In *Nou Tout Ansanm*, 2018, a piece exhibited in *Curtains, Stages, and Shadows*

simultaneously held at the Anna Zorina Gallery and the James Fuentes Gallery in 2018, the urban eccentric landscape of the global Caribbean city that is Miami coalesces within the familiar conventionality of painting. The black and blue curtains that descend over the suspended bodies are reminiscent, for William, of the blue plastic tarps that covered the booths of *Ti Mache*, an outdoor flea market held in Opa-locka in Miami-Dade County. The booths were operated by Haitian men and women who sold sundries and food goods that they had procured from Haiti. *Ti Mache*, a rich tapestry of aromas, scenes and vibrations, William remembers, was a space that was “packed with Haitians at their most Haitian. Nobody was trying to acquiesce to anything or change their behavior...a place where everyone spoke Kreyòl.”⁵

While this sense of community and of a shared identity is suggested in the title of the piece, the groundlessness of the bodies reminds the viewer of the destabilizing and precarious nature of immigrant living. An imprecise shadow of the body graces the stage floor, hinting to the presence of unrecognizable bodies teetering between an untethered space where light is obstructed by an opaque object. Images of machetes grouped together form a

decorative configuration in the background, perhaps alluding to a vanishing tradition of *tire machèt*, a martial art still practiced in parts of Haiti. Drawing on personal memories, William visually articulates the complex social dynamics of contemporary immigrant urban living. We can almost feel the reverence for materiality generated by collage and the interiority of Black life generated by the vivid areas of color and patterning. The works gathered in *Lakou* provide further demonstration of the wonder and ingenuity of William’s unique visual harmony and compositional dynamism.

In *Kolan get manman yo*, 2018, (page 30), a disembodied figure struggles to regain its balance and rejoin its arms, fingers and legs on stage. Or does it hang precariously on the edge of a ledge, not giving a damn, as the title suggests—a most salacious and well-understood Kreyòl expletive—as to what might be found on the unfamiliar landing. Through compositions like these, William creates a metaphoric language out of images. There is a deliberate intention to fashion the body into a language, so that its corporeality expresses both its racial and gender malleability. While there is no clear narrative visible in the works, we have instead beautiful allegories pregnant with memories



Ezili toujours konnen, 2015

long forgotten and stories never spoken or afraid to be spoken. Look closely at the imprecise shadows projected on the stage and the kaleidoscope-patterned curtains and you will see their refusal to be hidden, a desire to proclaim their existence and offer an aesthetic resistance to silences and absences.

In the abstracted organic shapes and forms that compose *Dantor and Anais*, 2018, (page 28),

the presence of the Haitian-Vodou *lwa* and fiery mother-protector Ezili Dantor is illustrated by her heart-shaped *vèvè* drawn on the green, yellow, purple and blue of her veil and cloak, while the arm of her daughter, Anais, juts out against the wood-stain patterned background. Dantor's halo is evident by the bright orange dots that form a luminous arch above her head. Such works, in their chaotic vibrancy, resonate with a sense of familiarity of image, of language and of culture. As with all his layered and methodically composed paintings, William's work constitutes an artistic language filled with imaginative networks of rhythmical organisms. Building on and around his familiar cut-through eye-shaped forms, he creates compositions of voluminous bodies and imagery that suggest a rhythmic interplay between the energetic forces that reside in the human body and the *lwa*, effectively exploring color, texture, spirituality, materiality and what it means to be human.

The otherworldliness so effortlessly evoked in William's recent work is brilliantly captured in *N'ap naje ansamn, n'ap vole ansamn*, 2019, (page 23), a painting from his most recent body of work, *Broken Skies: Vertières*. Three bodies descend from the clouds, tumbling through the iridescent sky.

Among the vaporous clouds, limbs intertwined, they cascade among tiny, colored, dot-shaped “stars,” “completely irreverential to gravity.”⁶ Continuing with the rich ornamentation comprised in *Ezili toujours konnen*, 2015, (page 19), *N’ ap naje ansamn, n’ ap vole ansamn*, (page 23), is a more densely complex composition replete with a hypnotic lushness. Possessing an atmospheric quality, it is in this mixed-media piece that we can truly garner the affective nature of his work, a deft visual articulation of the vulnerability of the body as it is surrounded by an “atmosphere of certain uncertainty.” One that creates, according to Martinican psychiatrist and theorist Frantz Fanon, “a definitive structuring of the self and of the world—definitive because it creates a real dialectic between the body and the world.”⁷

Yet in that uncertainty, in that vulnerability, William introduces a complex abstraction in this series whose subtitle references the final battle fought under Jean Jacques Dessalines between the Haitian revolutionaries and the French troops during the Haitian Revolution; a revolution occurring under the same turbulent skies that nurtured the Age of Enlightenment. Clearly, *Broken Skies: Vertières* expounds upon a passionate determination for

humanity intertwined with a legacy of resistance. Borne through creative processes and interpretations of histories and memories that reside in a *knowing* of Haiti that is both imaginative and realistic, William’s paintings provide new avenues for thinking about the temporality of racialization, gender expressions, and the effective tensions between formal established artistic genres and unconventional modes of artistic production.

Often and perhaps strategically, artists of color find themselves at moments when they must create alternative histories, emboldened by impulses to claim and rework certain imagery or assert their relevance. Those moments can be described as *moments of time* or as *moments in time* that symbolically and literally evoke or represent contemporary life. These visually temporal inquiries can no longer simply be about what an artwork means or represents; perhaps it might be more effective if we think about if and how an artwork might slow us down and “draw us beyond ourselves and throw us back upon our own subjectivity and agency.”⁸ Perhaps that is the function of writing and visualizing these memories as concepts that are bedeviled by fits and breaks, erasures and gaps, discontinuities, crooked mappings

and eventual creation of a broader, active *present/presence* radiating with futurity. A future that is not conceived through an *alternative* history of Haiti, but through new interpretations that capture the critical and creative potentialities of its cultural history that allows for what it means to be human.

The works gathered in this exhibition create a dynamic synergy that, in profound ways, highlight the meditative nature of creative practices that

tell us about the livability of the human condition. Namely, a futurity that imagines the world in a different way and in that imagination, Haiti's spiritual traditions and its symbolisms are central to Black visual and cultural aesthetics.

Jerry Philogene, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of American Studies
Dickinson College

ENDNOTES

1 Interview with artist, December 14, 2019.

2 Loosely translated from Kreyòl, into English, "speak English correctly."

3 Interview with artist, December 14, 2019.

4 Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study*, New York: Minor Compositions, 2013, 98.

5 Interview with artist, July 13, 2018.

6 Interview with artist, December 14, 2019.

7 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, New York: Grove Press, 1967, 110-111.

8 Stephen Melville and Bill Readings, eds. *Vision and Textuality*, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1995, 14.

Inset, page 17: *Nou Tout Ansanm*, 2018, wood carving, collage, ink, and acrylic, 64 x 90 x 2½", Carnegie Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Richard M. Scaife, by exchange, 2019.27

Inset, page 19: *Ezili toujous konnen*, 2015, wood carving, collage, ink, and acrylic, 36 x 48 x 2½"

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Azil Politik, 2017
Collage and acrylic
26 x 36"
Private Collection

Dantor a Anais, 2018
Wood carving, collage, ink and acrylic
on panel
90 x 64 x 2 1/8"
Loan Courtesy of
Doreen and Gilbert Bassin

Depi nan vant manman m, 2018
Wood carving, collage, ink and acrylic
on panel
64 x 50 x 2 1/8"
Loan Courtesy of the Artist and
Anna Zorina Gallery, New York, NY

Griot, 2018
Edition 1 of 10
Copper etching on paper
11 x 13"
Loan Courtesy of the Artist and
Anna Zorina Gallery, New York, NY

Kochon, 2018
Edition 1 of 10
Copper etching on paper
13 x 11"
Loan Courtesy of the Artist and
Anna Zorina Gallery, New York, NY

Kolan get manman yo, 2018
Wood carving, collage, ink and acrylic
on panel
64 x 90 x 2 1/8"
Loan Courtesy of the Artist and
Anna Zorina Gallery, New York, NY

M mache toupatou ave l, 2018
Wood carving, collage, ink and acrylic
on panel
60 x 48 x 2 1/8"
Loan Courtesy of Jennifer Fan

M'ap manje kochon sa a, 2017
Collage and acrylic
26 7/8 x 43 1/2"
Loan Courtesy of Union College
Permanent Collection, Schenectady, NY

N' ap naje ansamn, n' ap vole ansamn
from *Broken Skies: Vertières*, 2019
Wood carving, collage, ink, oil and
acrylic on panel
65 x 102 x 2 1/8"
Loan Courtesy of the Artist and
Anna Zorina Gallery, New York, NY

Nou poko rive, men y ap tann nou, 2018
Wood carving, collage, ink and acrylic
on panel
64 x 90 x 2 1/8"
Private Collection

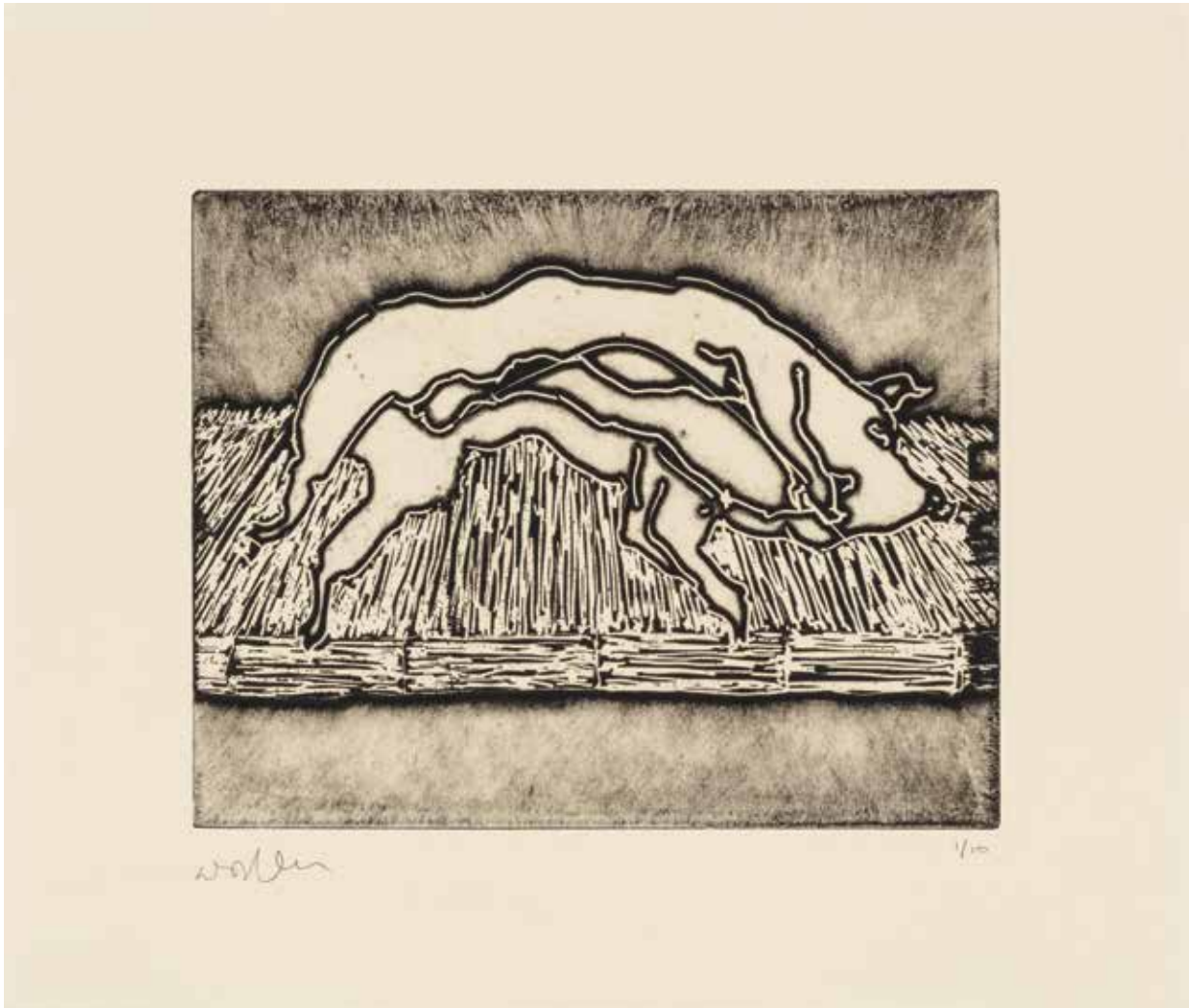
Pa fouye tet you nan afe moun yo tande,
2018
Wood carving, collage, ink and acrylic
on panel
60 x 48 x 2 1/8"
Loan Courtesy of
Emily and Mike Cavanagh

Sa a selman m bezwen, 2018
Wood carving and ink on panel
46 x 90 x 2 1/8"
Loan Courtesy of the Artist and
James Fuentes, LLC, New York, NY

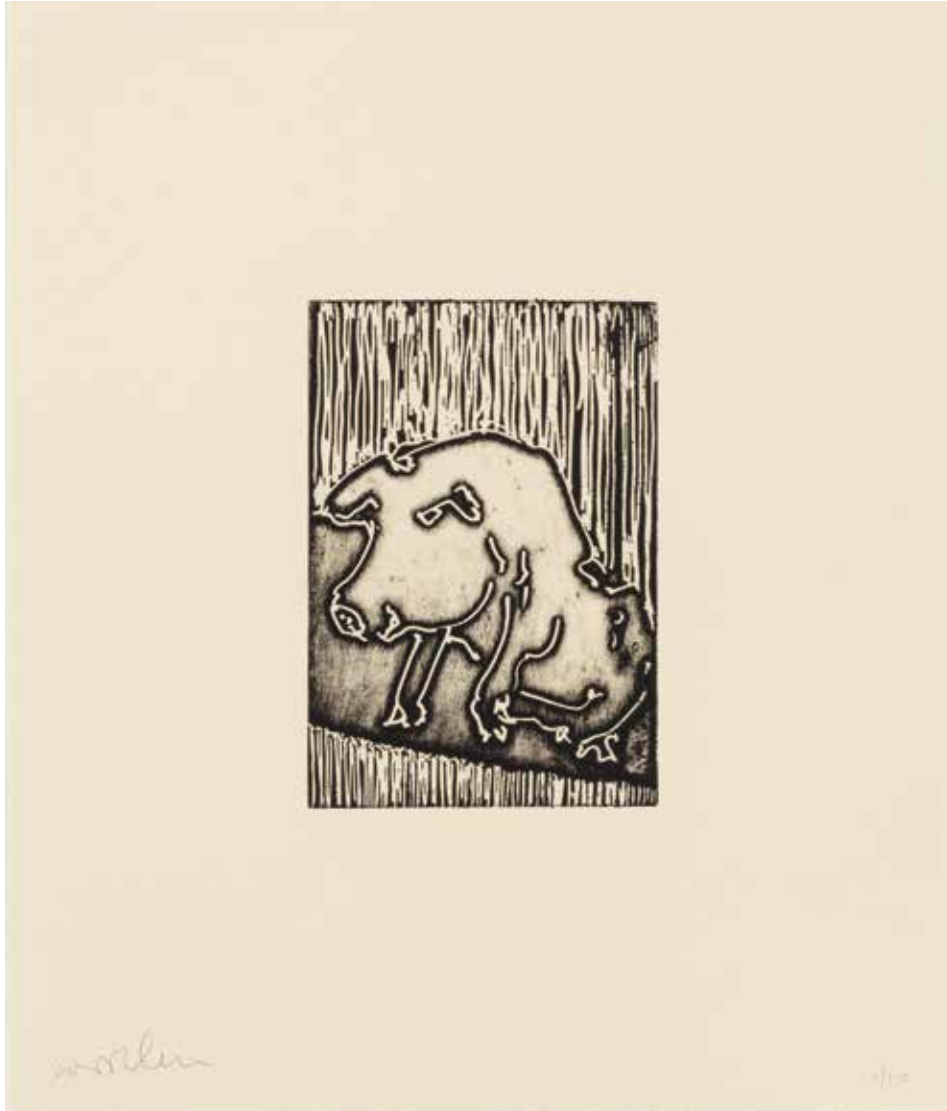
Telefòn sa a pa janm pa p sonnen, 2018
24 x 18 x 2 1/8"
Wood carving, collage, ink and acrylic
on panel
Loan Courtesy of Noel E.D. Kirnon



N' ap naje ansamn, n'ap vole ansamn from *Broken Skies: Vertières*, 2019



Griot, 2018, Edition 1 of 10



Kochon, 2018, Edition 1 of 10



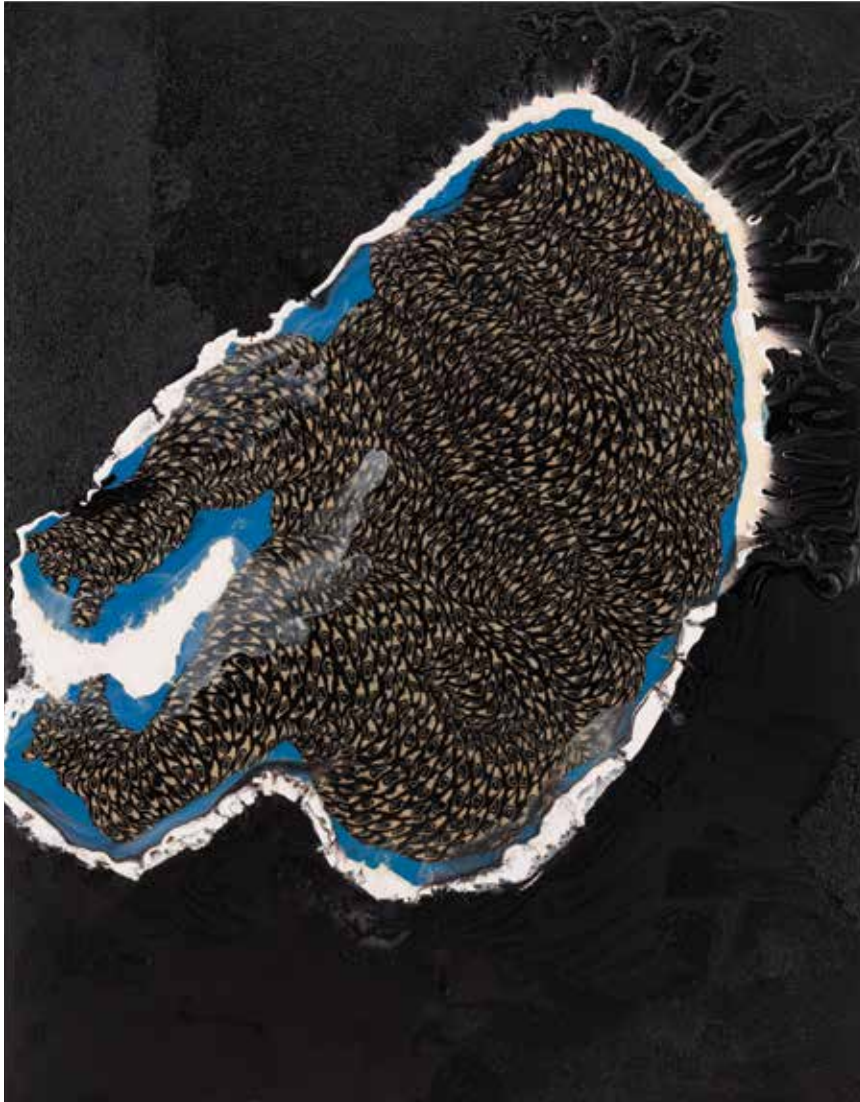
Nou poko rive, men y ap tann nou, 2018



Telefôn sa a pa janm pa p sonnen, 2018



Dantor a Anais, 2018



Depi nan vant manman m, 2018



Kolan get manman yo, 2018



Sa a selman m bezwen, 2018



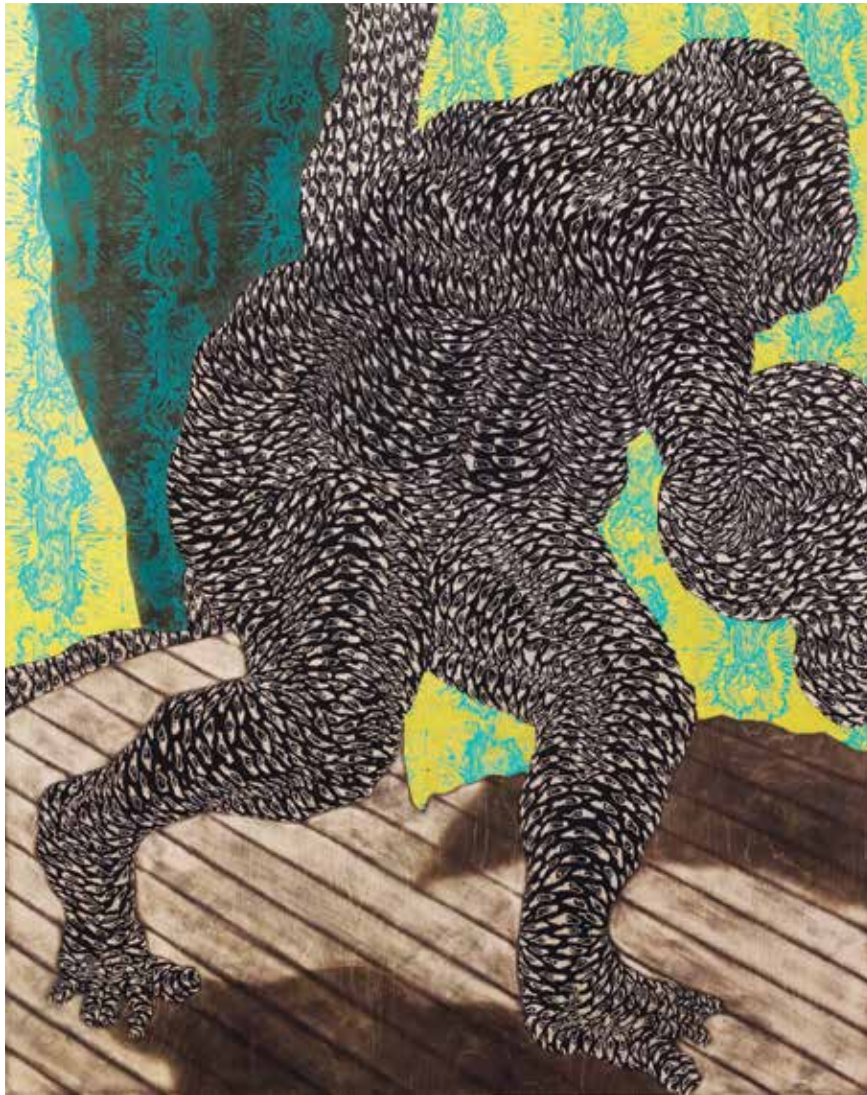
Azil Politik, 2017



M mache toupatou ave I, 2018



M'ap manje kochon sa a, 2017



Pa fouye tet you nan afe moun yo tande, 2018

THE ARTIST

Didier William is originally from Port-au-Prince, Haiti. He earned a BFA in painting from The Maryland Institute College of Art and an MFA in painting and printmaking from Yale University School of Art. He has been featured in exhibitions at institutions such as the Bronx Museum of Art, The Museum of Latin American Art in Long Beach, The Frost Museum in Miami, The Museum at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, The Fraenkel Gallery, Frederick and Freiser Gallery, James Fuentes Gallery, DC Moore Gallery, and Anna Zorina Gallery in New York. His work has received critical acclaim from the *Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, *Hyperallergic*, *Harper's Magazine*, *New York Magazine*, and *Art In America*. He was an artist-in-residence at the Marie Walsh Sharpe Art Foundation in Brooklyn as well as the Fountainhead Residency in Miami. He was a 2018 recipient of the Rosenthal Family Foundation Award in Art from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He has taught at Yale School of Art, Vassar College, Columbia University, University of Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and SUNY Purchase. He is currently the assistant professor of Expanded Print at Mason Gross School of the Arts.

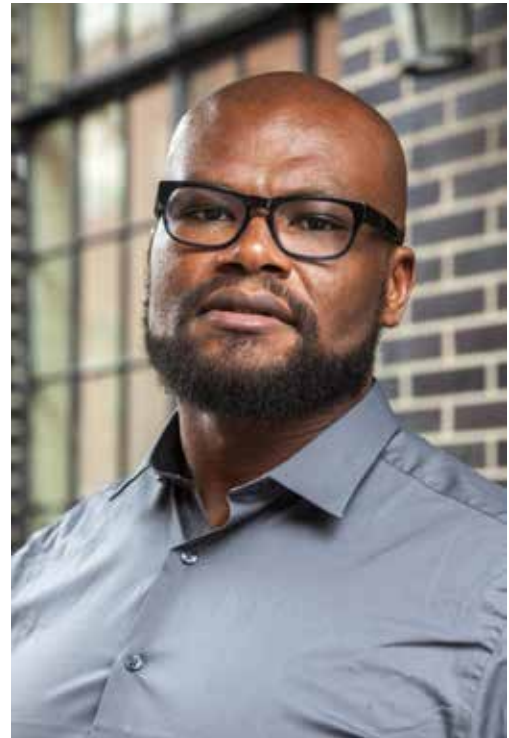


Photo credit: Mengwen Cao

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