

PRESS KIT

CURATOR OF THE EXHIBITION: Jean-Marc Prevost

GLENN LIGON

24 JUNE > 20 NOVEMBER

Post-Noir

AMERICAN
WEBICV

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MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN
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PRESS RELEASE
Glenn Ligon
Post-Noir

Exhibition from June 24 to November 20, 2022

Glenn Ligon was born in New York in 1960. Initially, his artistic practice was centered on painting, inspired by the heritage of artists such as Philip Guston, Cy Twombly, Robert Rauschenberg, and Jasper Johns, as well as the legacy of more recent conceptual art.

Ligon began quoting text in his works very early on, using stenciled words that would become a signature of his oeuvre. He uses painted language to highlight the social and political value systems that give these texts meaning and how they are altered or underscored through the work.

A monumental new diptych from the «Stranger» series will be presented at Nimes. It incorporates the entire text of James Baldwin's seminal 1953 essay, «Stranger in the Village», in which Baldwin recounts his stay in a tiny Swiss village, where most of the inhabitants had never encountered a black man before. Ligon uses Baldwin's narrative, which establishes connections between the cultural contexts of the United States and Europe, to think about anti-blackness and the aftermath of colonialism.

One room of the exhibition at Nimes will bring together a selection of « America » neons. Begun in 2008, these neons transform the word "America" by covering it in black paint, flipping, reversing, or animating it, treating it as linguistic material to be manipulated and changed.

Also on view will be paintings inspired by workshops with young children as part of a residency at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis in 1999-2000. Ligon chose Afrocentric illustrations from the 1960s and 70s for the children to color in, and then reproduced the results on large canvases to create a painting series called «Coloring».

Notable for their joyful color and figuration, the «Coloring» works explore the distance between unfettered childhood creativity and conventional notions of portraiture, particularly as it relates to icons such as Malcolm X.

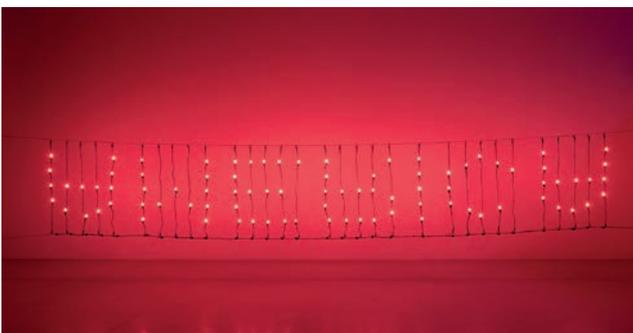
In his large-format oil and serigraph « Debris Field » paintings, the artist focuses his attention on isolated letterforms and non-linguistic mark making rather than legible words. These forms float on the surface of the canvas, generating a series of rhythmic improvised compositions and ultimately create an open-ended system that allows the artist to explore, in his own words, "the possibility of meaning, the elements of meaning." The colors are partially inspired by Andy Warhol's «Death and Disaster» paintings of the 1960s, as well as the book cover of «The Fall of America» by Elijah Muhammad, the former leader of the Nation of Islam, which was published in 1973.

« Post-Noir » at Carré d'Art is Ligon's first solo exhibition at a French institution.



Double America, 2012

With the support of Galerie Chantal Crousel



Untitled (America), 2019



Stranger (Full Text) #1, détail, 2020-21



Debris Field (Red) #20, 2021

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HD visuals downloaded from the Press section : www.carreartmusee.com

PRESENTATION OF THE EXHIBITION

The title of the exhibition, Post-Noir, references Post-Black, terminology introduced by Glenn Ligon and Thelma Golden, Director of the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, in the early 2000s. In her catalogue essay for *Freestyle* at the Studio Museum, a 2001 group exhibition which included work by Mark Bradford, Rashid Johnson, and Julie Mehretu, among others, Golden wrote that these artists were "adamant about not being labeled 'black' artists, though their work was steeped, in fact deeply interested, in redefining complex notions of blackness." Post-Noir is a literal translation of the earlier term but with its reference in French to terms like "film noir," Ligon suggests that any term that has come to define a historical moment, group of artists or a race of people is always subject to revision, especially when presented in a different cultural context than the one it originated in.

Glenn Ligon often references American culture and history in his work. For instance, *Hands* is part of a series of works exploring images of the Million Man March (Washington, D.C., October 1995), a demonstration that aimed to bring the socio-economic situation of African-Americans to greater national consciousness. From a small image in a magazine, Ligon created a large-scale silkscreen painting. The enlargement of the original image and the removal of captions caused the information in it to become indistinct, the precision of a political action at a particular historical moment disappearing inexorably when the context of the image is no longer intelligible.

Questions of erasure and loss of clarity can also be found in the paintings of the series *Debris Field*, where text is at the limit of legibility. In these large-scale oil and silkscreen paintings, the artist focuses his attention on isolated letterforms and non-linguistic marks rather than legible words. These forms float on the surface of the canvas, generating a series of improvised rhythmic compositions and ultimately creating an open system that allows the artist to explore, in his own words, "the possibility of meaning, the elements of meaning." The background colors in some of the works are partially inspired by Andy Warhol's *Death and Disaster* paintings from the 1960s as well as the cover of the 1973 book *The Fall of America* by Elijah Muhammad, the former leader of the Nation of Islam.

The first room of the exhibition consists of a set of neon works that the artist began in 2008. In these neons, he plays with the word "America" by covering it with black paint, turning it upside down, or inverting it, treating it as linguistic material to be manipulated and modified. Another work in the show,

Warm Broad Glow II, is a neon sign with the phrase *Negro Sunshine*, which is borrowed from Gertrude Stein's 1909 novel *Three Lives*. By isolating and recontextualizing the term, Ligon reinterprets the often stereotypical and demeaning depictions of blackness in Stein's novel to find new uses for the language.

In 1996 Ligon made his first paintings in the *Stranger* series, which uses fragments of text from James Baldwin's seminal 1953 essay "Stranger in the Village." Ligon has said of his relationship to Baldwin that he has an "intense identification with his queerness, with his Blackness, but also his engagement with what it means to live in America" (*T: The New York Times Style Magazine*, October 21, 2021). This exhibition presents a new monumental diptych from the *Stranger* series featuring the entire text of the essay, in which Baldwin recounts his time in a small Swiss village, where most of the inhabitants had never met a black man. Ligon uses this Baldwin narrative, which draws connections between the cultural contexts of the United States and Europe, as a way of thinking about what it means to be an "other" and questions of cultural hegemony and power.

Glenn Ligon's work puts forward the idea of the world citizen by questioning fixed identities whether they are cultural, racial, national, religious, or sexual. Echoing the thinking of Stuart Hall, Okwui Enwezor or Achille Mbembé, it acknowledges that discrimination is no longer exclusively racial but that the "color line" manifests itself through different forms of domination.

EXTEND THE VISIT

THE DOCUMENTATION CENTRE OFFERS A SELECTION OF RESOURCES SOME OF WHICH WERE CHOSEN BY THE ARTIST HIMSELF.

DOCUMENTATION CENTRE
CARRE D'ART
LEVEL - 1

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE MUSEUM, THE LIBRARY OFFERS A SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY FROM ITS COLLECTIONS AS WELL AS CULTURAL EVENTS OF VALORIZATION (READINGS, MUSICAL PLAYLISTS...).

LIBRARY
CARRE D'ART
LEVEL - 1

BIOGRAPHY

Glenn Ligon (b. 1960) is an artist living and working in New York.

Throughout his career, Ligon has pursued an incisive exploration of American history, literature, and society across bodies of work that build critically on the legacies of modern painting and conceptual art. He is best known for his landmark text-based paintings, made since the late 1980s, which draw on the influential writings and speech of 20th-century cultural figures including James Baldwin, Zora Neale Hurston, Jean Genet, and Richard Pryor.

He received a Bachelor of Arts from Wesleyan University and attended the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program.

In 2011 the Whitney Museum of American Art held a mid-career retrospective of Ligon's work, *Glenn Ligon: America*, organized by Scott Rothkopf, that traveled nationally.

Important recent shows include *Grief and Grievance* (2021), at the New Museum, where Ligon acted as a curatorial advisor; *Des Parisiens Noirs* at the Musée d'Orsay, Paris (2019); *Blue Black* (2017), an exhibition Ligon curated at the Pulitzer Arts Foundation in St. Louis, inspired by the site-specific Ellsworth Kelly wall sculpture; and *Glenn Ligon: Encounters and Collisions* (2015), a curatorial project organized with Nottingham Contemporary and Tate Liverpool.

Ligon has also been the subject of solo museum exhibitions at the Camden Arts Centre in London, the Power Plant in Toronto, the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, and the Studio Museum in Harlem, among others.

His work has been included in major international exhibitions, including the Venice Biennale (2015 and 1997), Berlin Biennial (2014), Istanbul Biennial (2011, 2019), Documenta XI (2002), and Gwangju Biennale (2000).

Ligon's work is held in the permanent collections of museums worldwide including Tate Modern, London; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Art Institute of Chicago; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

His awards and honors include a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship and the Studio Museum's Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize.

Most recently, Ligon was elected as a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

LIST OF WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

- *Six, Soul, Sun*, undated, silkscreen, oil stick, and gesso on canvas, 121,9 x 91,4 cm. Courtesy of the artist
- *Boy with Tire / Letter C*, 1996, silkscreen and oil crayon on canvas, 121,9 x 91,4 cm. Courtesy of the artist
- *Hands*, 1996, silkscreen ink and gesso on canvas, 208,3 x 365,8 cm. Glenstone Museum, Potomac, Maryland
- *Condition report (AP 6/7)*, 2000, Iris print and iris print with serigraph, two parts, 81,3 x 57,8 cm each. Courtesy of the artist; Hauser & Wirth, New York ; Regen Projects, Los Angeles ; Thomas Dane Gallery, London & Chantal Crousel, Paris
- *Dad (Version 1) #1*, 2000, silkscreen and oil crayon on canvas, 121,9 x 91,4 cm. Courtesy of the artist
- *Furaha (Version 1) #1*, 2000, silkscreen ink, Flashe paint, and gesso on canvas, 121,9 x 91,4 cm. Courtesy of the artist
- *George Washington Carver (Version 1) #1*, 2000, silkscreen and flashe paint primed canvas, 121,9 x 91,4 cm. Courtesy of the artist
- *Harriet Tubman (Version 1) #1*, 2000, silkscreen ink, oil stick, and gesso on canvas, 121,9 x 91,4 cm. Courtesy of the artist
- *Malcolm X (Version 1) #0*, 2000, silkscreen and Flashe paint on canvas, 233,9 x 182,9 cm. Courtesy of the artist
- *Malcolm X (Version 3) #1*, 2000, silkscreen and oil crayon on canvas, 121,9 x 91,4 cm. Courtesy of the artist
- *Frederick Douglass (Version 2) #1*, 2001, oil stick, silkscreen ink, and gesso on canvas, 121,9 x 91,4 cm. Courtesy of the artist
- *Malcolm X (Version 2) unnumbered*, 2001, acrylic and silkscreen on canvas e, 121,9 x 91,4 cm. Courtesy of the artist
- *Malcolm X (Version 3) unnumbered*, 2001, silkscreen and oil crayon on canvas, 121,9 x 91,4 cm. Courtesy of the artist
- *Salimu (Version 1) #2*, 2001, vinyl-based paint, silkscreen ink, and gesso on canvas, 121,9 x 91,4 cm. Courtesy of the artist
- *The Letter B unnumbered 1*, 2001, silkscreen, acrylic, and gesso on canvas, 121,9 x 91,4 cm. Courtesy of the artist
- *The Death of Tom*, 2008, b&w film 16 mm, 23 min. Edition of 3 & 1 AP. Courtesy of the artist; Hauser & Wirth, New York ; Regen Projects, Los Angeles ; Thomas Dane Gallery, London & Chantal Crousel, Paris
- *Untitled*, 2008, neon and paint, 61 x 426,7 cm. Courtesy of the artist; Hauser & Wirth, New York ; Regen Projects, Los Angeles ; Thomas Dane Gallery, London & Chantal Crousel, Paris
- *Ruckenfigur*, 2009, neon and paint, 61 x 368,3 x 10,2 cm. Courtesy of the artist; Hauser & Wirth, New York ; Regen Projects, Los Angeles ; Thomas Dane Gallery, London & Chantal Crousel, Paris
- *Warm Broad Glow II*, 2011, neon, paint and powder-coated aluminium, 73,6 x 614,6 cm. Zabłudowicz Collection
- *Double America*, 2012, neon and paint, 91,4 x 340,8 cm. Courtesy of the artist; Hauser & Wirth, New York ; Regen Projects, Los Angeles ; Thomas Dane Gallery, London & Chantal Crousel, Paris
- *Debris Field #4*, 2018, etching ink on canvas, 289,6 x 223,5 cm. Collection Daniel Palacio
- *Debris Field #6*, 2018, etching ink and ink marker on canvas, 289,6 x 223,5 cm. AMA Collection
- *Debris Field #8*, 2018, etching ink on canvas, 289,5 x 223,5 cm. Collection Ebrahim & Tina Melamed
- *Debris Field #15*, 2018-2021, etching ink, oil stick on canvas, 289,6 x 223,5 cm. Private Collection
- *Untitled (America)*, 2019, Mahya (lightbulbs, paint and wire), ca. 126 x 720 cm. Courtesy of the artist & Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris
- *Stranger (Full Text) #1*, 2020-2021, oil stick, gesso, and coal dust on canvas, two panels, 304,8 x 1371,6 cm. Glenstone Museum, Potomac, Maryland
- *Debris Field (Red) #20*, 2021, etching ink, acrylic, oil stick on canvas, 289,6 x 223,5 cm. Private Collection

PRESS IMAGES

GLENN LIGON

High resolution visuals can be uploaded from the Press section of our website:
<http://carreartmusee.com/fr/espace-presse/>



Hands, 1996



Malcolm X (Version 3) #1, 2000



Warm Broad Glow II, 2011



Double America, 2012



Debris Field #6, 2018



Untitled (America), 2019



Debris Field (Red) #20, 2021



Stranger (Full Text) #1, 2020-2021



Stranger (Full Text) #1, detail, 2020-2021

PRACTICAL INFORMATIONS

(subject to modification for health reasons)

Open from Tuesday to Friday from 10 AM to 6PM

Saturday & Sunday from 10 AM to 6:30PM

Carré d'Art-Musée d'art contemporain. Place de la Maison Carrée. 30000 Nîmes. France
Tel.: + 33 (0)4 66 76 35 70 - Email: info@carreartmusee.com. Website: www.carreartmusee.com/en/

Admission Fees

Full fee: 8 €; reduced fee*: 6 €

1st Sunday of the month

Free entrance

* reduced fee*: those eligible include groups of more than 20 people, people seeking employment, students (upon presentation of written proof), members of the association Amis des Musées de la Région Occitanie (Friends of the Museum of the Region of Occitania).

FREE ADMISSION (upon presentation of written proof): see <http://carreartmusee.com/fr/infos-pratiques/>

Guided Tours

(fee, added to admission fee): 3€

Individuals

- Every Saturday and Sunday at 3PM and 4:30 PM
- During School vacations, every day at 3PM and 4:30 PM
- The first Sunday of each month, guided tours at 3PM and 4:30 PM (free)

Groups not affiliated with schools: By appointment only.

Contact Fabien Garcin : serviceculturel@carreartmusee.com

Experimental Art Workshop: *by appointment.*

Contact: Fabien Garcin (04.66.76.35.74)

Individuals (fee: 5 €) Children from 2PM to 4PM some Wednesdays and during holiday periods.

Adults, 2nd Saturday of the month from 10AM to 1PM

Groups: From Tuesday to Friday, by appointment. For rates see <http://carreartmusee.com/fr/infos-pratiques/>

Centre de documentation en art contemporain, Level -1

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, from 2PM to 6PM; mornings by appointment only.

04 66 76 35 88 - documentation@carreartmusee.com

Online catalogue: <http://carreartmusee.centredoc.fr/opac/>

UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

RENCONTRES D'ARLES

As part of the Rencontres de la Photographie, in the summer of 2022, Carré d'Art will host two exhibitions. The program is being created in tandem with the Director of the Rencontres. It will take up the Carré d'Art's Project Room space and the Chapelle des Jésuites in Nîmes.

➔ **SAM CONTIS - Project Room, Carré d'Art (July 5 - December 4)**

Her first solo exhibition at a French institution, Sam Contis's *Transit* presents new and recent works from three series, including large scale color photographs, intimately scaled gelatin silver prints, and a two-channel video projection. Contis's recurring interest is in the body in flux – in motion through the landscape and through transitional states of identity. In her images of a high school girls' cross-country team, she examines the passage of time (photographic time, biographical time, cultural time) while referencing art historical depictions of women and the early motion studies of Eadweard Muybridge and Étienne-Jules Marey. Her teenage subjects run against the backdrop of a fraught, politically divided Pennsylvania landscape – a landscape in which a woman's control over her body is newly threatened. A second gallery presents work made while walking along a vast network of footpaths through the English countryside, which allow public access across privately owned land. She focuses on the stiles found on these paths, the simple structures offering a means of passage over walls and fences. In her images the stiles become repeating sculptural forms in the landscape, an invitation to free movement on one hand and a reminder of the history of enclosure on the other. The final two galleries present work from the series *Deep Springs*, made between 2013–2017 in the California high desert. In this work Contis engages with the pervasive mythology of the American West. Her protagonists are the students of a small, isolated men's college; a female artist picturing a traditionally all-male space, she reveals a landscape that is not static but full of possibility, allowing for the emergence of a more expansive, fluid conception of masculinity.

➔ **JULIEN CREUZET Chapelle des Jésuites, Nîmes (Projection from July 1 to September 4, 2022)**

The works of Julien Creuzet (born in 1986 in France) suggest painful stories, both personal and more universal, without it being possible to separate one from the other. He places at the heart of his installations the link between identities and economies, whether it be the transatlantic trajectories of the West Indians or those of migrants from the South. If the terms "archipelagic" and "creolization" come back like mantras in his vocabulary or in articles written about him, it is because it is indeed a way of doing and being in the world, fragmentary and crossed by a multiplicity of identities. In this video he subtly and poetically probes another aspect of colonization, trade, the exploitation of natural resources, living creatures, fauna and flora, men and women. Black and white photographs of various plants are superimposed on color images of birds and objects. He has drawn on these images, hiding certain elements under a thick mass of large black and red lines that look like foliage. Sometimes these collages are interspersed with floating images of small figures, such as the cowboy giving way to a stereotypical representation of a native man. These haunting images are accompanied by melancholy and soft music written and composed by the artist. Entitled *Blogodo* after a Creole onomatopoeia that evokes brutality and speed, this sound piece blends English lyrics with Creole pieces. Like the hybrid forms that Julien Creuzet sculpts, the language in which he writes is composite. We find the idea of creolization by which Edouard Glissant describes the unpredictable results of intercultural crossings. "I present to you as an offering the word creolisation, to signify these extraordinary unpredictable results, which prevent us from being convinced of an essence" (Edouard Glissant).

"Cloud Cloudy Glory" is a trance, a tale where different imaginations meet. Julien Creuzet's works are also offerings, signifying unexpected possibilities and other possibilities of the world.