

Exhibition Guide

**Alberta Whittle:
between a whisper
and a cry**

June 10–September 10, 2023



Alberta Whittle: between a whisper and a cry

Originally from Barbados and currently based in Scotland, **Alberta Whittle** (b. 1980, Bridgetown, Barbados) directly engages her diasporic heritage to create works that meditate on the journeys, both historical and present, of Black communities across the Caribbean Sea and beyond. Challenging the ongoing erasure of Black bodies, voices, and narratives, Whittle’s research-driven practice is informed by an active process of remembering, often resulting in choreographed installations that invoke self-compassion and collective care as integral to building a decolonized future.

This presentation, the artist’s first in Los Angeles, features Whittle’s 2019 multimedia installation *between a whisper and a cry*. Projected onto the remnants of a sunken chattel house—an architectural structure ubiquitous to the artist’s native homeland—the featured video is composed of archival and filmed footage with a narrative that traverses month by month through the hurricane season. From “June too soon” to “October all over,” Whittle’s work summons the ever-present ghosts of colonialism, the transatlantic slave trade, and the climate crisis as she chronicles the entangled histories of empire and environmental catastrophe across bodies and borders. Whether in drought or flood, water is revealed as a site to absorb, sink, and hold these hauntings.

In its narrative, the work references the writings of Black studies scholar Christina Sharpe, undertaking her description of anti-Blackness as a kind of “weather”—an almost atmospheric phenomenon—that oscillates and submerges, washing over entire communities like the waves of blue that envelop the gallery visitor. Interrogating the memories and life that these waters hold, *between a whisper and a cry* asks audiences to consider their own bodies and their relationship to the ongoing effects of colonialism and slavery still rippling outward. In this way, Whittle’s work is an offering, an act towards repair, an insistence on survival, and an invitation to release.

Alberta Whittle: between a whisper and a cry is organized by Amanda Sroka, Senior Curator, with Caroline Ellen Liou, Curatorial Assistant.

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About the Artist

Alberta Whittle (b. 1980, Bridgetown, Barbados; lives and works in Glasgow) works across several mediums, including drawing, digital collage, film and video installation, sculpture, performance, and writing. Whittle’s practice prioritizes questions of self-care and compassion, while considering the historic legacies and contemporary expressions of anti-Blackness, colonialism, and migration. She often utilizes archival materials and found footage in her work, which is frequently produced in collaboration with her accomplices—a network of artists, choreographers, and performers.

Whittle received her MFA from Glasgow School of Art in 2011 and is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Edinburgh. Most recently, she represented Scotland at the 59th Venice Biennale and has exhibited in a number of solo and group shows, including those held at National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh (2023); The Holburne Museum, Bath (2023); Hessel Museum of Art, Bard College, Annandale-On-Hudson, New York (2022); Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow (2022); Kunsthall Trondheim (2021); Somerset House, London (2021); Tate Britain, London (2021); Dundee Contemporary Arts (2019); RAW Material, Dakar (2018); and Apartheid Museum, Johannesburg (2017), among others. Whittle is the recipient of a Paul Hamlyn Foundation Award (2022), the Turner Bursary (2020), the Frieze Artist Award (2020), a Henry Moore Foundation Artist Award (2020), as well as the Margaret Tait Award (2018/2019).



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Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles

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between a whisper and a cry, 2019

HD video (color, sound) on screen with painted wood, corrugated metal, chairs and found chains

41 minutes, installation dimensions variable

Courtesy the artist and Nicola Vassell Gallery, New York

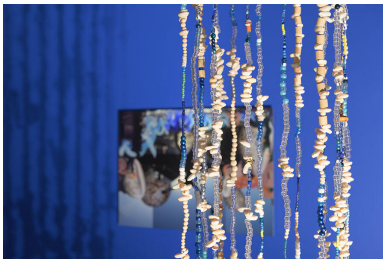


Exhibition copy of *Memorial for “The Great Carew” aka Neville Denis Blackman*, 2019

Sunken chattel house made from painted wood and corrugated metal

Installation dimensions variable

Courtesy the artist



Coiling beneath the waves, the sand reminds us to believe..., 2023

Cowrie shells, glass beads, pony beads, cotton, denim, jewelry wire, spider conch and shackles

Approx. 435 x 28 x 28 cm, installation dimensions variable

Courtesy the artist and Nicola Vassell Gallery, New York

Artist Reading List

Black & Blues (1971)
Kamau Brathwaite

A Small Place (1988)
Jamaica Kincaid

1492: What Is It Like to Be Discovered? (1991)
Deborah Small with Maggie Jaffe

Middle Passages (1992)
Kamau Brathwaite

Parable of the Sower (1993)
Octavia E. Butler

Art on My Mind: Visual Politics (1995)
bell hooks

all about love: New Visions (2000)
bell hooks

A Map to the Door of No Return: Notes to Belonging (2001)
Dionne Brand

An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography, and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque (2007)
Krista A. Thompson

Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route (2008)
Saidiya Hartman

Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist at Work (2010)
Edwidge Danticat

On Being Human as Praxis (2014)
Sylvia Wynter

Shine: The Visual Economy of Light in African Diasporic Aesthetic Practice (2015)
Krista A. Thompson

Decolonizing Nature: Contemporary Art and the Politics of Ecology (2016)
TJ Demos

In the Wake: On Blackness and Being (2016)
Christina Sharpe

Your Silence Will Not Protect You (2017)
Audre Lorde

Bodies of Water: Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology (2017)
Astrida Neimanis

M Archive: After the End of the World (2018)
Alexis Pauline Gumbs

Of Sirens, Body & Faultlines (2018)
Nat Raha

Decolonial Ecology: Thinking from the Caribbean World (2019)
Malcolm Ferdinand

Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval (2019)
Saidiya Hartman

Jet Stream: A Journey Through our Changing Climate (2019)
Tim Woolings

The Nutmeg's Curse: Parables for a Planet in Crisis (2021)
Amitav Ghosh

The Pyrocene: How We Created an Age of Fire, and What Happens Next (2021)
Stephen J. Pyne