

# PRESS RELEASE FLEMING MUSEUM OF ART

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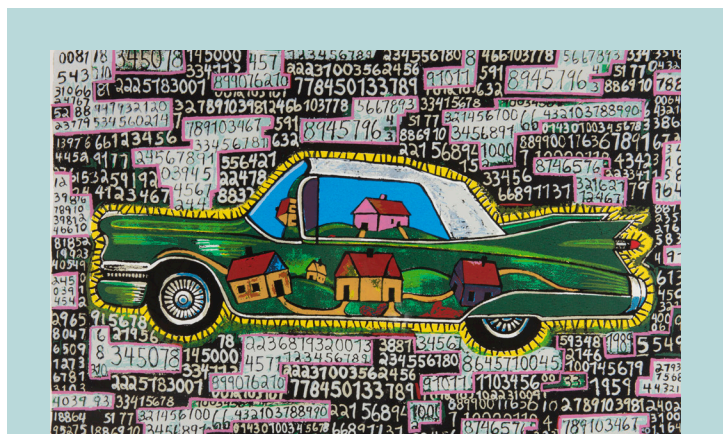
## Fleming Museum reopens with new exhibition that considers our current moment

BURLINGTON, VT - Following a five-month closure due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Fleming Museum of Art is reopening its doors to the public on Tuesday, September 15 with limited hours (Tuesday-Saturday: 10:00am - 2:00pm) and new exhibitions that contemplate and respond to our challenging times. Museum staff have been preparing to safely open its doors and have implemented a suite of policies and procedures to keep both guests and staff safe.

Following state, national, and university-wide mandates on mask wearing and social distancing, the Museum has set the maximum occupancy of all areas at 50% and has created a visitor flow map through the galleries and open spaces. In addition, multiple sanitizer stations are located throughout the building and all common areas have been prepared for efficient and safe distancing.

The Fleming opens this semester with a unique exhibition crafted out of consideration of our challenging times. The exhibition, titled *Reckonings: Fleming Staff reflect on the collection and our current moment*, includes over 30 works that have inspired Museum staff members and student interns to share their reactions to the events of 2020 by engaging with art and objects from the Museum's permanent collection.

Staff members have written and signed their own labels about the artworks they've selected, with responses that are by turns thoughtful, vulnerable, creative, angry, sad, and hopeful—echoing the range of emotions we have all felt in these past months. Sometimes these objects take on new meanings as staff members draw inspired connections to other historic moments of rupture. In other instances, the artworks are beacons for the kind of attention to care and racial justice that this moment demands of us. Through this process, the staff participated in the work they do with students and faculty when they bring them into conversation with the Fleming's collection: how we use art to communicate to others what feels urgent to us. The exhibition will be on view throughout the Fall semester, ending on November 21, as students return home.



Luis Cruz Azaceta (American, born Cuba, 1942). *Lotto: The American Dream* from 10: Artist as Catalyst, 1992. Screen print on paper. Museum purchase 1993.11.3

*“The intertwining of geography and race determine access to quality education, healthcare, jobs, food, and shelter—the essential elements of the American Dream of safety and comfort. If geography is a lottery system, it’s a rigged one.”*

-ANDREA ROSEN, curator, from label for *Reckonings*

Upstairs from this exhibition, visitors will find a bold new introduction to the Fleming's African and Ancient Egyptian Gallery, with a banner announcing an *Intervention: toward an anti-racist, anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist African and Ancient Egyptian Gallery*.

The Museum's current African and Ancient Egyptian Gallery was installed almost thirty years ago, and displays outdated maps and labels that reflect legacies of colonial collecting and scholarship. Throughout the Fall 2020 semester, the Museum will be rolling out a series of new labels and quotes that acknowledge and share these critiques with Museum visitors. This intervention is a first step toward being transparent about the racist and imperialist foundations of the Fleming Museum, common to museums across the country whose global collections were formed in the 19th and early 20th century. "Toward" is a key part of the title of this intervention; much work remains to be done in advance of an ambitious reinstatement of these collections in the coming few years, with input from multiple perspectives.



View of the mummy in the African and Ancient Egyptian Gallery.

The critiques on view in the gallery are drawn from the Fleming staff's own examination of the Museum's history, as well as the work of UVM students in Professor Vicki Brennan's Spring 2020 course "African Gods/Western Museums." Their pointed comments and questions reflect the key role the UVM community plays in the intellectual work of the Museum. Visitors will be able to add their own questions, responses, and ideas about this critical intervention, which will inform the future reinstatement of the gallery.

Since current conditions prevent the Fleming from hosting traditional events and programs, the Museum will be creating remote content—accessible through our website—that will accompany both exhibitions, including videos, slideshows, and other digitally produced content.

Also remaining on view this fall in the Museum's European and American gallery is the student-curated exhibition, *Animal Transformations*, which displays an array of animal-related objects from the Fleming's extensive collections. Led by Professor Jennifer Dickinson and Manager of Collections & Exhibitions Margaret Tamulonis, UVM's Spring 2019 Museum Anthropology class (ANTH 250) took on the topic of human/animal relations, deciding which objects from the Fleming's collections would best represent the spectrum of ways cultural meanings come alive through animal objects.

The University of Vermont's Fleming Museum of Art serves as a gateway for active cultural exchange and critical thinking and has presented diverse artistic traditions for over 85 years. The Museum is Vermont's premier public showplace for exhibitions, education, and scholarship about local and world cultures, both historical and contemporary. For more information regarding the Fleming Museum's exhibitions, programs, and location call (802) 656-0750 or go to the Fleming Museum website at [www.flemingmuseum.org](http://www.flemingmuseum.org).

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