



| Unravelings |

Ledgers From a Lost Kingdom by La Vaughn Belle

Opening: Friday March 10th at 5-8 pm

Artist talk by La Vaughn Belle: Sunday March 12th at 3 pm at meter

Exhibition period: March 11th – May 14th 2017

2017 is the centenary of Denmark's sale of three Virgin Islands to the US. At meter we mark this through the exhibition *Unravelings*. This is a five-month exhibition in which we look at Denmark as a colonial power, and how this affects today's society and our sense of national identity. The exhibition has not been static but has developed and expanded throughout the first three months. On March 10 we will give way to the next phase of the exhibition with a solo-contribution by artist La Vaughn Belle that will give voice to Danish colonial impact on the people of the Virgin Islands.

There exists an extensive archive of transactional information about Denmark's relations to its former colonies through documents, images and objects. However, since the sale of the Danish West Indies in 1917, most of this information was retrieved by Denmark, stored and archived far from the people of the now named US Virgin Islands.

The upcoming centenary has prompted the digitization of these archives, making them available for public consumption. Yet, when records have been inaccessible to a community for so long, other ways of creating collective memory takes over. Alternative accounts are formed through oral traditions, material culture and architecture that challenge some of the silence inherent in the colonial order of things as seen through its archival productions.

La Vaughn Belle uses her work as a way of adding to the records by creating counter-narratives. She uses the framework of a ledger to challenge the objective authority of the archive by both adding her own subjectivity as well as documenting the agency of the subjects these archives portray. Similarly she looks at how the architecture of the Virgin Islands can be seen as a physical trace of the ways in which people constructed and negotiated their identities and spaces of freedom.

La Vaughn Belle lives and works on the US Virgin Islands. Her artistic practice is driven by her explorations of the colonial and neocolonial narrative and how it shapes identity, memory and reality. She uses her practice as an investigative tool and a means to develop knowledge. The emphasis of her work does not lie in the medium, but in creating a space in which to explore social contexts and collective narratives.

meter is a non-profit exhibition space centred around curatorial experimentation. The first two years are dedicated to creating exhibitions that take an investigative and critical view of society and structures within society through art and artistic practices.

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