For Immediate Release
Images upon request
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**Ebony G. Patterson...while the dew is still on the roses...**

June 21, 2019 – January 5, 2020

Louisville, KY (April 26, 2019) The Speed Art Museum is proud to present a major solo exhibition featuring mixed media artist Ebony G. Patterson. Born and raised in Jamaica, Patterson currently splits her time between Chicago and her hometown of Kingston. The artist has a significant history in Kentucky, as the former tenured Associate Professor of Painting and Mixed Media at the University of Kentucky and a former Board of Governors member at the Speed Art Museum.

*Ebony G. Patterson...while the dew is still on the roses...* will travel to the Speed, the second venue in the exhibition’s national tour. Organized by Pérez Art Museum (PAMM) Chief Curator Tobias Ostrander, this exhibition presents a survey of recent work, including artworks from nine years ago to works made within the last year. Patterson’s artworks will be situated within a visually dense environment designed to recall an overgrown, decadent “night garden.” This site-specific installation showcases twilight-colored cloth wallpaper, vegetal growths sprouting from the walls and silk leaves, flowers, butterflies, and vines falling from the ceiling and framing paintings. This setting augments sixteen of the artist’s large-scale works that include videos, sculptures, paintings, and tapestries, six of which were created for the show.

“...while the dew is still on the roses... is by far most expansive presentation of Ebony G. Patterson’s work at the Speed to date,” stated Miranda Lash, Curator of Contemporary Art at the Speed Art Museum. “We have acquired and exhibited her artwork in the past, but this presentation will occupy the entire second floor of our North Building. Taking on this exhibition demonstrates the Speed’s commitment to
engage with challenging issues, exhibit art that is at the forefront of contemporary discourse, and celebrate brilliant artists of color with ties to our region,” added Lash.

Patterson’s works investigate forms of embellishment as they relate to youth culture within disenfranchised communities. Her neo-baroque works address violence, masculinity, “bling,” visibility, and invisibility within the post-colonial context of her native Jamaica and within black youth culture globally. Throughout her career, Patterson has often placed her individual works within constructed environments. Ebony G. Patterson...while the dew is still on the roses... will transform the entire gallery environment into an immersive installation, designed and completed with the artist onsite. First installed at the PAMM in Miami, this exhibition will include all the elements of its initial presentation, with the addition of several new artworks to accommodate a larger floorplan at the Speed Art Museum. These additional artworks include ...a red horse in disbelief...for those who bear/bare witness (2018) and ....among the flowers between the blades...while the dew is on the roses...for those who bear/bare witness (2018), both of which will be debuted in a museum context at the Speed.

“For almost five years I’ve been exploring the idea of the garden as both real as imagined, acknowledging its relationship to post-colonial spaces. I am interested in how gardens operate as sites of social demarcation. I investigate their relationship to beauty, dress, class, race, the body, land, and death,” explains Ebony G. Patterson.

Though her garden is seemingly brimming with life, the exhibition and much of Patterson’s work juxtaposes this vitality with the solemn reality of violence. Using beauty as a tool, she seduces her viewers into bearing witness to social injustices. The title of the exhibition, ...while the dew is still on the roses..., comes from “In the Garden” (1912), a hymn sung as a lament for lost loved ones, a thread woven throughout the exhibition, grounding the splendor of the immersive night garden and its dreamlike finery in outrage and mourning. Says Lash, “The figures in her tapestries and videos raise awareness about the systemic problem of violence experienced by people of color, particularly young black and brown men.” Ostrander explains, “She presents gardens as sites of splendor, danger, and burial. Part survey, part site-specific installation, Patterson attempts to capture, mourn and glorify the passing of too many sparkling lives.”

The exhibition will include a range of mixed media pieces, including Patterson’s signature embellished wall hangings, wherein she overlaps fabric with beads, reflective materials, brooches, and tassels, to create glittering, texturized tapestries. Sculptural pieces hang overhead, including ...stars... (2018), comprised of over 700 women’s shoes (many of which the artist found at Goodwill stores across Lexington, Kentucky), dipped in sparkling black paint and hovering above the garden like a murder of hungry crows. The exhibition begins and ends with video installations; the first, The Observation: The Bush Cockerel Project, A Fictitious Historical Narrative (2012), is set within a lush, junglelike garden, and serves to welcomes the viewer into the exhibition space. At the Speed, this video artwork will be presented in a three-screen projection room, recapturing for the first time since 2012 its original format at the National Gallery of Jamaica. The last video, ...three kings weep... (2018), depicts the dressing of three young, black men in floral-patterned finery, weeping as they hold an unbroken gaze with the viewer, a binding together of viewer and subject in a final act of eulogy as Claude McKay’s poem “If We Must Die” is read aloud.
“The Speed is proud to celebrate an artist who represents the best of what Kentucky can attract and then reflect to the world. Ebony’s timely work uses a memorializing spirit to convey a complicated world, one that is both painful and beautiful,” says Museum Director Stephen Reily. The Speed Art Museum invites the community to come celebrate the exhibition’s opening night on Friday, June 21 from 5 – 10 pm as a part of After Hours at the Speed. The evening will include a panel discussion with artist Ebony G. Patterson, Tobias Ostrander, and local poet and activist Hannah Drake, moderated by Curator Miranda Lash. Hannah Drake will perform in response to themes presented within the exhibition following the discussion, and the evening will conclude with a special performance from Louisville rapper and activist Jecorey “1200” Arthur.

*Ebony G. Patterson...while the dew is still on the roses...* opens at the Speed Art Museum on June 21, 2019 and will close on January 5, 2020.

**About the artist:**

Ebony G. Patterson (b. 1981 in Kingston, Jamaica; lives and works in Kingston and Chicago, IL) received her BFA from Edna Manley College, Kingston, Jamaica (2004) and MFA from Sam Fox College of Design & Visual Arts, Washington University, St. Louis, MO (2006). Patterson has had solo exhibitions and projects at many US institutions including The Studio Museum in Harlem, NY (2016); Atlanta Center for Contemporary Art, GA (2016); and SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, GA (2016). *Dead Treez*, Patterson’s large-scale solo show, originated at the Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, WI (2015) and traveled to Museum of Art and Design, NY (2015); Boston University Art Galleries, MA (2016); and UB Art Galleries, University at Buffalo, NY (2017). Her work was included in the 32nd São Paulo Bienal: *Live Uncertainty* (2016); the 12th Havana Biennial: *Between the Idea and the Experience*, Cuba (2015); *Prospect.3: Notes for Now*, New Orleans (2014), and the Jamaica Biennial 2014, National Gallery of Jamaica, Kingston. She was a 2017 Artist-in-Residence at the Rauschenberg Foundation, a 2015 recipient of the Joan Mitchell Foundation Art Grant, and her work is included in a number of public collections, including The Studio Museum in Harlem, NY; Museum of Art and Design, NY; Nasher Museum of Art, Duke University, Durham, NC; Speed Art Museum, Louisville, KY; Birmingham Museum of Art, Seattle Art Museum, 21c Museum Hotels; and the National Gallery of Jamaica, Kingston. Patterson served on the Artistic Director’s Council for Prospect.4, New Orleans (2017), and presented solo exhibitions at Pérez Art Museum, Miami and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago in 2018. She is a former tenured Associate Professor in Painting and Mixed Media at the University of Kentucky and served on the Speed Art Museum Board of Governors from 2017-2018.

*For more information on *Ebony G. Patterson ...while the dew is still on the roses..., as well as current exhibitions on view at the Speed Art Museum, visit [speedmuseum.org](http://speedmuseum.org).*

**Image Credit:**

Ebony G. Patterson
Born in Jamaica, 1981
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. . . . they stood in a time of unknowing . . . for those who bear/bare witness*, 2018
Hand-cut jacquard photo tapestry with glitter, appliques, pins, embellishments, fabric, tassels, brooches, acrylic, glass, pearls, beads, and hand-cast heliconias
108 x 132 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago

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**About the Speed Art Museum**

The Speed Art Museum is Kentucky’s largest art museum. Its mission is to “invite everyone to celebrate art forever.” An independent and encyclopedic museum located on the campus of the University of Louisville. In 1927, Louisville philanthropist Hattie Bishop Speed founded the Speed Art Museum, with a belief in the power of art to change people’s lives.

The Speed Art Museum is free on Sunday through March of 2021, thanks in part to Brown-Forman. **After Hours @ the Speed** draw large and diverse crowds every third Friday of the month with music, drinks, and of course art. For more information, visit [www.speedmuseum.org/events-programs](http://www.speedmuseum.org/events-programs).

The Speed’s current exhibitions are *Making Time: The Art of the Kentucky Tall Case Clock* and *Yinka Shonibare CBE: The American Library*. More information at [www.speedmuseum.org/exhibitions](http://www.speedmuseum.org/exhibitions).

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