

# NORTON MUSEUM OF ART

1450 S. Dixie Highway  
West Palm Beach, Florida 33401

norton.org

## *Strike Fast, Dance Lightly: Artists on Boxing* to Open at the Norton Museum of Art

On view from October 26, 2024, to March 9, 2025, the exhibition features artists including Derrick Adams, Hernan Bas, Katherine Bradford, Jeffrey Gibson, and Gary Simmons among dozens of others, highlighting themes relating to the body, race and culture, sexuality, and the artist as boxer, among others.



LEFT: Chase Hall (American, born 1993), *Champion*, 2023, Acrylic and coffee on canvas, 72 x 60 1/8 x 1 3/4 in. (182.9 x 152.7 x 4.4 cm) © Chase Hall, Photo: Jeff McLane, courtesy of the artist and David Kordansky Gallery. RIGHT: Andres Serrano (American, born 1950), *Floyd Joy Mayweather Jr.*, 2006, Cibachrome and plexiglass, 35 x 45 in. (88.9 x 114.3 cm), Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Brussels

**WEST PALM BEACH, FL (May 15, 2024)** — The Norton Museum of Art will host *Strike Fast, Dance Lightly: Artists on Boxing*, the largest comprehensive survey of artistic representations of boxing in more than 20 years, featuring paintings, videos, sculptures, and works on paper by artists such as Jean-Michel Basquiat, Edward Hopper, Ed Ruscha, and Alison Saar. The exhibition explores the global sport and its cultural impact through the lens of over 80 artists. It is on view from Saturday, October 26, 2024, through Sunday, March 9, 2025.

The Norton's exhibition is a collaboration with two New York arts organizations, The FLAG Art Foundation, New York, and The Church, Sag Harbor, where three unique exhibitions were created around one comprehensive theme of boxing. The Norton's presentation will include 60 new works, bringing the exhibition total to more than 110 artworks, including pieces by Hernan Bas, Amoako Bofo, Katherine Bradford, Zoë Buckman, Rosalyn Drexler, Jeffrey Gibson, and Gary Simmons, all of whom have never showcased work at the Norton prior to *Strike Fast, Dance Lightly*.

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“*Strike Fast, Dance Lightly: Artists on Boxing* is unlike anything we’ve done at the Norton,” said Ghislain d’Humières, Kenneth C. Griffin Director and CEO of the Norton Museum of Art. “The exhibition has a raw intensity that visitors will feel the minute they step into the galleries, exploring themes such as power and resilience that will speak to both sports fanatics and art lovers alike.”

Featuring more than 100 artworks from the 1870s through the present day, the Norton’s one-of-a-kind presentation will illuminate the connections between boxing and society, while underscoring the rich history of a centuries-old sport and its participants, through all its complexities. The exhibition showcases artworks that lend boxing, and its legends, nuance and intimacy. Within *Strike Fast, Dance Lightly*, the boxer and the act of boxing serve as a metaphor for a wide range of socio-political issues through a series of distinct categories: the body, “in the ring,” the artist as boxer, tools, and ephemera.

One of the oldest works in the exhibition is a short film of two cats “boxing” by William K.L. Dickson and William Heise, 1894, showing the humor in the sport. Edward Hopper’s *Study of a Boxer*, 1899 - 1906, highlights the power and athleticism of competitors. George Bellows’ *Introducing John L. Sullivan*, 1923, depicts a ring announcer and evokes the theatrical energy infused between the four corners of the ring ahead of a match-up.

Among the roster of cutting-edge and leading contemporary artists, the exhibition features drawings by famed boxer and activist Muhammad Ali, offering an insider’s perspective that most have not experienced. Additional highlights include thought-provoking pieces like Jeffrey Gibson’s *Manifest Destiny*, 2016, a repurposed punching bag inspired by Native American visual culture. Gibson, a Colorado-born, New York-based artist, is a member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and is of Cherokee descent. Harry Benson’s iconic photo of Muhammad Ali with the Beatles in 1964 introduces the intersection of the sport and celebrity fame. The exhibition will also showcase an example of Zoë Buckman’s popular series in which she adorns boxing gloves with textiles associated with femininity and domestic settings. The embroidered additions to the objects evoke a contrast between the hard and soft, strength and vulnerability, and violence and protection.

An accompanying publication for *Strike Fast, Dance Lightly*—a collaborative effort among The Church, The FLAG Art Foundation, and the Norton Museum of Art—will include essays by American artist Eric Fischl and Sara Cochran, Chief Curator at The Church, Sag Harbor; a photo essay by Arden Sherman, Glenn W. and Cornelia T. Bailey Senior Curator of Contemporary Art at the Norton; an essay by award-winning *New York Times* sports journalist Robert Lipsyte, who extensively covered Ali’s career; and a panel interview with featured artists Alvin Armstrong, Angela Dufresne, and Caleb Hahne Quintana, moderated by FLAG’s director, Jonathan Rider.

“The intersection of art and boxing presents a new avenue of exploration for our community,” said Sherman, reflecting on the sport’s global, multi-cultural presence. “Pairing artmaking with boxing locates the Norton as a site for constructive discussions around our human instinct to fight and prevail, and there is no better metaphor to engage in during the current moment of American history.”

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*Strike Fast, Dance Lightly: Artists on Boxing* at the Norton Museum of Art was curated by Arden Sherman, Glenn W. and Cornelia T. Bailey Senior Curator of Contemporary Art, with Tiera Ndlovu, Curatorial Research Associate.

The exhibition is organized in partnership among The Church, Sag Harbor, NY, The FLAG Art Foundation, New York, NY, and the Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, FL.

Support for this exhibition at the Norton was provided by the Priscilla and John Richman Endowment for American Art, The Lunder Foundation - Peter and Paula Lunder Family, and the Milton and Sheila Fine Endowment for Contemporary Art.

## **ABOUT THE NORTON MUSEUM OF ART**

Founded in 1941 by Ralph Hubbard Norton and his wife, Elizabeth Calhoun Norton, The Norton Museum of Art collects, preserves, and exhibits art, and engages the public through diverse special exhibitions, publications, and events. Programs, lectures, and workshops are held year-round, with an emphasis on activating works on view and inspiring the public through the power of art. The Museum is internationally known for its collection of more than 8,500 works of art in American Art, Chinese Art, Contemporary Art, European Art, and Photography.

In 2019, The Museum underwent a comprehensive expansion and renovation, designed by London-based architecture firm Foster + Partners, adding a building which includes over 12,000 square feet of new gallery space, an educational center, a store and restaurant, a sculpture garden, and a Great Hall, serving as the Museum's "living room." The new campus also features renovated, Museum-owned, 1920s-era cottages that house artists-in-residence.

Visit the Museum's website [www.norton.org](http://www.norton.org) or see them on [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#).

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