

Stephen Towns's Private Paradise: A Figurative Exploration of Black Rest and Recreation opens at The Rockwell Museum

Visual Artist Stephen Towns creates paintings & quilts. His newest series explores Paradise Park a segregated park in mid 20th century Silver Springs, Florida.

CORNING, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, June 18, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Stephen

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On June 19, 2022 I woke up around two in the morning and headed down to my home studio. I couldn't sleep until I put the drawings on canvas that I had been thinking about for at least a week.”

Stephen Towns

Towns Studio and The Rockwell Museum are pleased to jointly announce the exhibition Stephen Towns's Private Paradise: A Figurative Exploration of Black Rest and Recreation. The exhibition will open on September 20, 2024 at The Rockwell Museum in Corning, NY. The exhibition features portraits of African American life in segregated parks in Ocala, Florida. The painted panels in the exhibition are interpolations of photographer Bruce Mozart's images taken as advertisements for Paradise Park, the segregated Black park side of Silver Springs, a park that offered glass-bottom boat rides, on the crystal clear water. The quilted pieces in the exhibition are Towns'

imagined respite for Black beach goers. The quilts Looking for Lorraine and A Taste of Lemonade offer an imagined safe space for two lesbian lovers set in nostalgic settings while the quilts I Will Follow You My Dear and Motown in Motion offer a look into young lovers escaping Jim Crow's watchful eye under a glittering sky.

The exhibition is a departure from Towns' former work that unpacks grittier Black American history. When Towns began making the work in 2022, shortly after making forty works about black day workers for a solo exhibition, he told [Bomb Magazine](#) "I felt wonderful giving reverence to my ancestors, but the labor of creating images of Black laborers gave me fatigue." With this new body of work, Towns explores how these parks and beaches could be places of refuge and recreation for Black Americans dealing with the Jim Crow south. Amanda Lett, Curator of Collections and Exhibitions at The Rockwell, says "We are thrilled to showcase Stephen Towns' work in a full exhibition after recently adding a painting of his to the Museum's collection. In 2024, The Rockwell is exploring the theme of Creating Connections, and Towns' work helps viewers bridge the gap between the past and the present, and who we have been and who we

could be. His art brilliantly elevates the stories of everyday life."

Stephen Towns lives and works in Baltimore, MD. He trained as a painter with a BFA in studio art from the University of South Carolina and has also developed a rigorous, self-taught quilting practice. In 2018 the Baltimore Museum of Art presented his first museum exhibition, Stephen Towns: Ruminations and a Reckoning. In 2021, Towns was an artist-in-residence at the Fallingwater Institute, at Frank Lloyd Wright's renowned Fallingwater house in Pennsylvania. In 2023, Towns wrapped a three-city touring solo museum exhibition Stephen Towns: Declaration & Resistance and released his first monograph of the same name. Towns was recently named [The 2024 Mary Sawyers Imboden Prize and Baker Award prize winner](#).

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A Taste of Lemonade by Stephen Towns. 2024.
57 in x 49.5 in

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