For immediate release

*Sweet Sticky Things*

Zeal Harris, Lili Bernard, Loren Holland

April 8th – May 6th, 2017

OPENING RECEPTION: Saturday, April 8th, 4 - 7pm, Gallery Hours: Wednesday – Saturday 12-6pm

RSVP Essential to: rsvp@launchla.org

In this current climate of escalating women’s marches and violence against Black people, three artists come together to present views of society through the lens of Black womanhood. Launch LA is proud to present *Sweet Sticky Things,* a historic three-woman exhibition featuring artists Zeal Harris, Lili Bernard, and Loren Holland. As a shared vision, *Sweet Sticky Things* explores collective Black women’s identities, while also acknowledging the hybridity and nuances of the Black female narrative. The works are relatable and relevant to broad audiences. Collectively these three artists tackle topics of sexuality, beauty, love, motherhood, race, class, violence, rape and resilience. In the annals of art history, Harris, Bernard and Holland can be positioned, respectively, alongside Faith Ringgold, Kara Walker and Mickalene Thomas.

**Zeal Harris** blends eclectic traditions such as Black folk art painting, caricature, quilting, illustration, storyboarding and Asian scroll painting to create paintings that are autobiographical or told to her by others. In this exhibit, Harris presents new paintings on fabric that reflect Black women’s attitudes about the current times. She also presents work that completes her series, *Home Remedies for Driving While Black*. Four paintings in this series are about four men she personally knew who were killed by police. Other paintings in the series illustrate the impact of police violence on everyday people and their relationships.

**Lili Bernard** codifies her multi-media sensuous artwork with Afro-Caribbean folklore and religious iconography. Fundamentally rooted in the traumatic experience of sexual assault, slavery, and the effectual resilience of the human spirit, Bernard’s work liberates and honors the Black female body as sacred space. Bernard’s artwork also challenges perceptions of identity, specifically negative stereotypes and perceptions of Black people within a post-colonial paradigm.

**Loren Holland** visualizes a counter-narrative to the Eurocentric framework of art history. Juxtaposing Eurocentric notions of beauty with contemporary mythology, Holland subverts the notion that women of color are ‘exotic’, ‘sexually deviant’ or ‘other’. Including both pop cultural references and cross-cultural symbolism, the works also focus on the lack of control women of color have over their own social representation, as well as the potential lack of control of their physical bodies, as seen in “The Bathers”. The beauty and wild perfection of nature in many of the compositions act as a metaphor for women of color: pristine, perfect, natural beauty, often damaged or intruded upon by society, expectations and patriarchal ideals of women.

An homage to the empowerment of Black womanhood, the title *Sweet Sticky Things* is taken from a title track by the Ohio Players, a 1970s Funk band.

Zeal Harris, who organized the exhibition, holds an MFA in Studio Art from Otis College of Art and Design and a BFA in Theater Technology from Howard University. Lili Bernard has an MFA from Otis College of Art and Design, did her undergraduate studies at Cornell University and City University of New York, and has a B.A. in German. Loren Holland has an MFA in Painting from Yale University, and both a BA in Visual Arts and BS in Neuroscience from Brown University. Harris, Bernard, and Holland have all lectured or taught at the college level, won prestigious awards, been favorably reviewed in major art periodicals, and have been featured in numerous gallery and museum exhibitions.