

THE UCLA DEPARTMENT OF EUROPEAN LANGUAGES &
TRANSCULTURAL STUDIES PRESENTS:



Photography on Tilt

A Virtual Lecture by Professor Kalani Michell

In 1968, after several disappointing years in Europe where he wanted to trace his white aristocratic family tree, Frank Walter returns to his native Antigua and opens a portrait studio. He didn't anticipate being seen in Europe as only Black, rather than mixed, and contemplates how to materialize this complex history. Upon his return, the studio was key for 1,250+ miniature paintings he made before his death: He painted them on the back of unwanted studio photographs. The versos of Walter's paintings offer a speculative media history. This is where images of his Antiguan community materialize and remain adamantly untitled, as if they were always destined to be written out of history, even as they assume the common place of the painting's title. But to see this, one first has to take hold of them - tilt, turn and flip them. This talk explores the overlooked role of speculation within the history of photography through Walter's studio photographs/paintings as flip-objects. These works speculate that these different modes and histories of visual representation can only be seen through one another, like a thaumatropic image, therein repositioning photography's association with the past to understand it as future-oriented.

DATE: FRIDAY, MAY 14, 2021
TIME: 11:00AM - 12:30PM (PST)
LOCATION: VIA ZOOM
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