

## Exhibition Features 30 Of The Most Influential Contemporary Black Artists

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The following artists address race in a variety of ways through their work -- some spark a dialogue in relation to the artistic cannon, others with gender roles, and some not explicitly at all. An exhibition entitled "30 Americans" features 70 works by 30 of the most iconic African American artists of the last 30 years, spanning a vast array of themes, media, perspectives and aesthetics.

Kehinde Wiley revamps the tradition of classical portraiture, retroactively injecting black subjects into the art historical tradition, while Mickalene Thomas addresses understandings of womanhood, identity and desire with her bedazzled interior portraits. Kara Walker's black silhouettes revisit the traumas of slavery while Nick Cave's ornament-happy soundsuits intensify African ceremonial costumes.

"As the show evolved, we decided to call it 30 Americans. 'Americans,' rather than 'African Americans' or 'Black Americans,' because nationality is a statement of fact, while racial identity is a question each artist answers in his or her own way, or not at all," Don and Mera Rubell explain in a Museum statement. "And the number 30 because we acknowledge...that this show does not include everyone who could be in it."

The following 13 artists are of the most important today, each simultaneously shaping contemporary art and our understandings of racial identity.

- 1. Glenn Ligon**
- 2. Iona Rozeal Brown**
- 3. Barkley L. Hendricks**
- 4. Rashid Johnson**
- 5. Mickalene Thomas**
- 6. Nick Cave**
- 7. Hank Willis Thomas**
- 8. Kara Walker**
- 9. Kehinde Wiley**
- 10. Jean-Michel Basquiat**
- 11. Kerry James Marshall**

## 12. Shinique Smith



*Shinique Smith. a bull, a rose, a tempest, 2007. Fabric and found objects, dimensions variable. Rubell Family Collection, Miami*

## 13. Xaviera Simmons



*Xaviera Simmons. One Day and Back Then (Standing), 2007. Color photograph, Ed. 2/5, 30 x 40 in. Rubell Family Collection, Miami*

"30 Americans" will show from October 11 until January 12, 2014 at the *Frist Center* in Nashville. Visit [the exhibition website](#) to see the other 17 artists featured.