

Cincinnati Art Museum to present powerful African-American art in "30 Americans"

January 28, 2016



(ArtfixDaily.com) CINCINNATI – The [Cincinnati Art Museum](http://CincinnatiArtMuseum.com) will present *30 Americans*, an exhibition featuring artworks by many of the most important African-American artists of the last three decades, from March 19 – August 28, 2016.

This conversation-starting and sometimes provocative exhibition focuses on issues of race, gender, and historical identity in contemporary culture, while exploring the powerful influence of artistic legacy and community across generations. The approximately 60 artworks are drawn primarily from the acclaimed Rubell Family Collection, Miami, as well as from the Cincinnati Art Museum's permanent collection.

Diverse in medium, subject matter, and perspective, the exhibition highlights a wide range of cultural backgrounds and life experiences as expressed by contemporary African-American artists, including Nick Cave, Kara Walker, Kehinde Wiley, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Mickalene Thomas, and Glenn Ligon. Paintings, photography, sculptures, videos, and installations from these and other influential artists will fill the largest temporary-exhibition galleries and spread throughout the art museum.

In describing the origins and development of the exhibition, Don and Mera Rubell said, "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."

30 Americans has traveled to locations including the Detroit Institute of Arts; the Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Va.; the Milwaukee Art Museum; and the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Curators reconceive the exhibition at each venue, selecting different artworks by the same group of artists. This presentation of the exhibition is co-curated by Rehema C. Barber, Director and Chief

Curator, Tarble Arts Center at Eastern Illinois University, and Brian Sholis, Curator of Photography, Cincinnati Art Museum. At the Cincinnati Art Museum *30 Americans* is on view **free of charge**.

“The exhibition’s layout is open-ended, but certain themes will arise organically,” said Sholis. “These include economic issues, in particular the commodification of African-American culture; the characters people play and how they are caricatured; and how individual rights are shaped by politics.”

Adds Barber, “*30 Americans* demonstrates the rich, multi-layered contributions of artists of African descent to contemporary art practice and social conversations. The Cincinnati Art Museum’s presentation of this important show demonstrates the institution’s commitment to being an advocate for art’s place in community life.”

30 Americans offers visitors an opportunity to engage in dialogue with the art and with each other. A community day to celebrate the show’s opening will be held on Saturday, April 2. In addition, every Sunday during the run of the show, the Art Museum will host events dedicated to exploring the themes in the exhibition, starting March 20 at 2 p.m. A full list of programming will be available at cincinnatiartmuseum.org in February. On social media, posts related to the exhibition will use the hashtag **#CAM30**.

Starting in May, a community resource room for *30 Americans* will open at the Cincinnati Art Museum to provide additional space for repose and reflection. Nicknamed “The Forum” and located in the Sara M. and Michelle Vance Waddell Gallery (G125), it will contain books, artist videos, and other resources for those who wish to further engage the art—and the social issues these artworks address.

This exhibition has been organized by the Rubell Family Collection, Miami, and is supported by LPK. *30 Americans* is presented on the second floor in the Western & Southern exhibition space (G232–233), the Albert E. Heekin and Bertha E. Heekin Gallery (G212), and on the first-floor Manuel D. and Rhoda Mayerson Gallery (G124). Additional artworks from the exhibition can be found in the Schmidlapp Gallery and in prominent spaces near the Art Museum’s Great Hall.

About the Cincinnati Art Museum

The Cincinnati Art Museum is supported by the generosity of individuals and businesses that give annually to ArtsWave. The Ohio Arts Council helps fund the Cincinnati Art Museum with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. The Cincinnati Art Museum gratefully acknowledges operating support from the City of Cincinnati, as well as our members.

General admission to the Cincinnati Art Museum is always free. The museum is open Tuesday – Sunday, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. and is closed Monday.

Press Contact:

Jill Dunne

Cincinnati Art Museum

jill.dunne@cincyart.org