

CULTURED

HOW THESE SEVEN ARTISTS USE THEIR WORK TO CALL FOR CHANGE

EXPLORING IDENTITY, HISTORY AND PRIVACY, THESE ARTISTS ARE USING THEIR WORK AS ACTIVISM TO SUBVERT HISTORIC NARRATIVES, REVEAL THE INADEQUACIES OF CONTEMPORARY CULTURE AND PROPOSE A MORE JUST WORLD.

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Art is an opportunity to share, but what it shares is up to its maker. The interests of these seven creatives lie beyond the purely visual. Addressing topics that range from government surveillance to the historicization of colonialism, their work is activism—it challenges viewers to ponder, discuss and create change. As artist Sanford Biggers summed for *Cultured* in 2016: “My work is a platform. I am not trying to be overly didactic and instead take a nuanced and layered approach. One of those layers has to do with social justice and re-righting history.”



SANFORD BIGGERS. PORTRAIT BY ALEXANDER STEIN.

Sanford Biggers

“The entirety of my career has been devoted to touching on aspects of African-American history and culture that aren’t necessarily well-known facts—instances that we don’t talk about because America is in a state of racial denial,” said artist Sanford Biggers to *Cultured* in 2016. Manipulating items vaguely associated with domesticity (quilts, decoupage fabrics, African figures covered in wax), his deceptively quiet, prescient work reveals the dark corners and complexity of African-American and American history such as police brutality and systematic racism—struggles that still persist today. As he explains: “The material I like the most is history, as opposed to any physical material.”

Umar Rashid

Sable Elyse Smith

Puppies Puppies (Jade Kuriki Olivo)

Simone Leigh

Elia Alba