30 AMERICANS
EDUCATOR’S GUIDE

Exhibition at the CAC made possible by The Helis Foundation
Organized by the Rubell Family Collection, Miami

On view:
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The 30 Americans Resource Center and Public Programs are presented by:

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Dear Fellow Educator,

The Contemporary Arts Center (CAC) is proud to present *30 Americans* to the New Orleans metropolitan area. This exhibition fills all three floors of our gallery space and includes over 70 rich and varied works of contemporary art by many of the most important African American artists of the last three decades. Selected from the Rubell Family Collection and originally displayed at the Rubell Family Foundation in Miami, Florida, this touring exhibition has attracted record crowds in Milwaukee, Nashville, and Washington, D.C.

*30 Americans* includes works from luminaries such as Jean-Michel Basquiat, Nick Cave, Rashid Johnson, Carrie Mae Weems, Kehinde Wiley, Kara Walker and Iona Rozeal Brown. Though all of the artists featured in this exhibition are of African descent, they represent a wide range of cultural backgrounds and life experiences that address a diverse set of topics—race, sexuality, historical identity, media imagery, and popular culture. This diversity enables *30 Americans* to uniquely illuminate the complex relationships between community, culture, and art that lie at the heart of life in New Orleans, as well as at the heart of life in America.

This resource guide is designed to assist you in preparing your students for their exploration of the *30 Americans* exhibition. It will also facilitate follow-up activities that include discussions, hands-on workshops, writing exercises, and biographical research. Also included in the guide are images of 16 selected works from the exhibition with associated discussion points and vocabulary. This educational resource, along with guided tours of the exhibition and Artist Exchange workshops offered to school groups visiting the CAC, support both the National Standards for the Arts as well as national Common Core Standards.

CAC educators use visual thinking strategies to lead discussions on targeted artwork and to introduce ideas relevant to visual arts, language arts, and social studies. By doing so, the CAC offers integrated learning experiences for students that promote critical thinking and reinforce grade-level skills while supporting the school-based curriculum. If you wish to schedule a field trip for your students, please contact education@cacno.org or 504.528.3805.

Thank you for your support of the arts and for supporting the Contemporary Arts Center.

Best Regards,

Freddi W. Evans  
Director of Education & Public Programs  
Contemporary Arts Center

Mariana Sheppard  
Coordinator of Education & Public Programs  
Contemporary Arts Center

In conjunction with CAC Education programming, the content of this resource guide will address the following National Standards for the Arts, in addition to Common Core Standards at both the State and National levels:

**National Standards for the Arts: Visual Arts:**
Visual Arts Standard 1 — Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes. All grades.
Visual Arts Standard 2 — Using knowledge of structures and functions. All grades.
Visual Arts Standard 4 — Understanding the Visual Arts in relation to history and cultures. All grades.
Visual Arts Standard 6 — Making connections between Visual Arts and other disciplines. All grades.

**Louisiana and National Common Core Standards:**
Comprehension and Collaboration: CCSS.ELA–Literacy.SL. (1–12).1
Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: CCSS.ELA–Literacy.L. (1–12).4
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: CCSS.ELA–Literacy.RH.6–8.7; CCSS.ELA–Literacy.RH.9–10.7; CCSS.ELA–Literacy.RH.11–12.7
Key Ideas and Details: CCSS.ELA–Literacy.RH.6-8.2; CCSS.ELA–Literacy.RH.9-10.2; CCSS.ELA–Literacy.RH.11-12.2
Writing: CCSS.ELA–Literacy.W.4.4; CCSS.ELA–Literacy.W.4.5; CCSS.ELA–Literacy.WHST.6-8.4; CCSS.ELA–Literacy.W.9-10.4 CCSS.ELA–Literacy.WHST.11-12.4
NINA CHANEL ABNEY
(Born in Chicago, IL, 1982; Lives and works in New York, NY)

Class of 2007, 2007
Acrylic on canvas

ABOUT THE ARTIST
Chicago native, Nina Chanel Abney graduated from Augustana College, a small liberal–arts school in Illinois. After college, she spent a year working on an assembly line at Ford in her hometown of Chicago while preparing her art school applications by night. When she arrived at Parsons New School of Design in Manhattan, she was one of the youngest students in her Master of Fine Arts program and had never set foot inside a gallery—but she quickly grew savvy. Her senior thesis was a stunning, enormous painting called Class of 2007. In it, she portrayed her classmates with black skin and sporting orange jumpsuits, and herself, the only African–American in the group, with white skin, wearing a prison guard uniform. The day after she unveiled the piece, Kravets Wehby gallery in New York invited her to join.

The next year, Kravets Wehby gallery featured her first solo show, “Dirty Wash,” in which she used wild, bright colors on extra–large canvases to depict narratives that included political figures in scandalous situations—think Condoleezza Rice posing seductively in a bikini. The show sold out within days, catching the eye of major collectors like Donald and Mera Rubell. They flew to New York to see the exhibition and acquired Class of 2007, among other works, at the time of their visit. The Rubells included Abney in their initial Miami museum’s exhibition of 30 Americans, making her the youngest painter in the show.
Abney is known for fusing the seriousness of portraiture along with the complexities of narrative painting. She places figures based on real people, within imaginary worlds, to create large genre paintings that deal with controversial issues regarding race and gender. She is interested in revealing racism that is hidden in the everyday, and blurs the lines of race and sexuality that are present in everyone.

ABOUT THE ART
Nina Chanel Abney’s colorful canvases address social issues, race, and irony in American culture. While Abney often leaves her works open to individual viewers’ interpretations, she does comment on the meaning of her most common motif, elbow-length yellow gloves. She describes these gloves as a sign of mischief, implying that her figures perform “dirty work,” which gives the scenes an impish, mysterious, and potentially threatening quality. The meaning of other themes in Abney’s works may not be as straightforward; symbolism can often be highly personal.

VOCABULARY
Portraiture: 1) The art of making portraits 2) Portraits considered as a group

Narrative painting: Paintings that tell a story

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION
• Abney has told us what the yellow gloves imply. What do you think the other symbols or motifs in this work infer (i.e. orange jumpsuits, handcuffs and chains, converse sneakers)?

• In Class of 2007, Abney betrays her classmates in orange jumpsuits with chained arms. Yet, they have smiles or pleasant expressions on their faces. What do you think this dichotomy implies? What other contradictions do you notice?

• Why do you think she separated the two characters on the left from the others?
JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT
(Born in Brooklyn, NY, 1960; Died in New York, NY, 1988)

*Untitled (Self-Portrait), 1982–83*
Oil on wood

ABOUT THE ARTIST
Jean-Michel Basquiat was born in Brooklyn to a Haitian father and Puerto Rican mother. He is said to have been able to read at 4 and could speak and write in Spanish, French and English by 11. His artistic talent surfaced at an early age, prompting his mother to enroll him as a junior member of the Brooklyn Museum at the age of six. He attended City-As-School High School in Brooklyn, but left a year before graduating in 1978 to pursue other opportunities.

Working under the name SAMO meaning “same old same old,” Basquiat began his career in the late 1970s as a graffiti artist, spray-painting the streets of lower Manhattan with messages about commercialization of the art world. Initially supporting himself by selling painted postcards and T-shirts, he quickly rose to prominence in the 1980s and became one of the era’s most famous “art stars.” Exhibiting in Europe and Asia as well as throughout the United States, he became the youngest artist ever to be included in the documenta exhibit in Kassel, Germany in 1982. Even when he shifted his focus away from street art toward more traditional painting, these origins remained apparent.

Basquiat’s work merged figuration, expressionism, and textual references in thick paint, aggressive brushstrokes, and vibrant color. His process often involved pasting a sketch to the canvas—which lent his work a physicality that reflected the urban surfaces of his artistic origins. Although often veiled behind pictographs and seemingly random scrawled phrases or words, his
work is very much a social commentary, addressing such dichotomies as wealth vs. poverty or segregation vs. inclusivity.

ABOUT THE ART
The form and style of Jean-Michel Basquiat’s *Self-Portrait* can be linked to the Cubist developments of Pablo Picasso, as well as the raw and aggressive art brut of Jean Dubuffet. In the 1940s, Dubuffet’s concept of “outsider art” prized graffiti and art by children, criminals, and the insane. He viewed this work as non-conformist creativity in its purest form, unhindered by any social and cultural conventions.

In Basquiat’s expressive painting, the artist stands before a white background and peers keenly toward the viewer with one large black eye outlined in white. Red circles of paint make up the second eye, and vertical red lines, the nose. Basquiat’s right arm and hand are composed of two red and white brushstrokes. He eliminates three-dimensional perspective in favor of flatness, much as the cubists did with their radical restructuring of space into geometric planes.

VOCABULARY
Documenta: An exhibition of modern and contemporary art that occurs every five years in Kassel, Germany. Limited to 100 days, the exhibition is often referred to as the “Museum of 100 Days.”

Pictographs: The use of symbols or pictures to represent data or information.

Outsider art: A term coined in the 1970s that refers to art created outside the boundaries of “official” or mainstream culture 2) Art created by those outside the established or institutionalized art scene such as the self-taught, children, inmates, and the insane.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION
- Basquiat’s self-portrait is not realistic. Yet, the marks, missing body parts and asymmetrical imagery make this painting powerful and evocative. What message do you think Basquiat conveys through this work?

- Images of birds appear in several works by Basquiat, largely due to his admiration of Charlie Parker, a renowned jazz musician known as “Yardbird” and “Bird.” What impact do you think these references may have had on his self-portrait?

VISUAL ARTS ACTIVITY
Basquiat, as well as other artists, sometimes used symbols, abstract images and found objects, instead of realistic images, to make portraits of themselves and others. This is called symbolic portraiture, which was meant to reveal a glimpse of the “self.”

Create a symbolic portraiture of yourself or a family member. Begin by developing a list of images, symbols, found objects, words, phrases, and settings that you will include. Sketch your idea by outlining how objects will appear in the composition. Decide on the materials that you will use and begin to create a work inspired by Basquiat’s style.
IONA ROZEAL BROWN
(Born in Washington, D.C., 1966; Lives and works in New York, NY)

ABOUT THE ARTIST
After earning a Bachelor of Science degree in kinesiological sciences from the University of Maryland College Park in 1991, Iona Rozeal Brown studied at Montgomery Community College in Maryland in 1995 and the Pratt Institute of New York in 1996. She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in painting from the San Francisco Art Institute in 1999 and a Masters of Fine Arts degree in painting from Yale University School of Art in 2002. Brown has received several awards and honors, including the Blair Dickinson Award from Yale in 2002, grants from the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation and Joan Mitchell Foundation in 2007, and the Joyce Foundation Award in 2009.

Brown’s work, which has been exhibited nationwide, aims to articulate contemporary concerns regarding race, gender, and class. A great deal of her subject matter has been informed by her travels to Japan. Also a DJ, Brown believes that her art and her music are similar because they are both “a process of self-sampling and remixing” harmonious subcultures: the samurai and...
geishas depicted in traditional Japanese ukiyo-e printmaking and the contemporary world of hip-hop. Trained in the art of ukiyo-e herself, brown pursues a transcultural aesthetic in both her imagery and her technique by mixing the racial, gender, and class issues in her subject matter with the deftness of a DJ.

ABOUT THE ART
In her mixed-media paintings, iona rozeal brown revamps and revisits art history through her examination of mutual racial stereotyping and the fluidity of cultural identity. In Sacrifice #2: It Has to Last, brown references ganguro, literally translated as “black face,” or the appropriation of African American hip hop style among Japanese teenagers, especially young women. The teens darken their skin, and fashion their hair with braided cornrows and extensions to emulate African American style. Brown’s paintings reflect this cultural hybridization.

Her depictions of women synthesize Asian and African American stereotypes, equal parts geisha and hip hop vixen. The artist’s work simulates this amalgam. She mixes hip hop style—flashy nails, elaborate hairstyles—with design elements of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Japanese woodblock prints, such as white-faced geishas and household cats. But brown takes this sampling further by transforming traditional whiteface makeup to blackface and by incorporating present-day hip hop trappings to explore cross-cultural dialogues.

VOCABULARY
Appropriation: In the visual arts, to appropriate means to adopt, borrow, recycle or sample aspects (or the entire form) of visual culture when creating a new work

Ukiyo-e: A style of Japanese wood-block printing and painting

Ganguro: Japanese youth who alter their appearance (i.e. darken skin, braid hair, use extensions, etc.) to emulate African American hip hop culture

Cultural hybridization: The blending of elements from different cultures

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION
- Discuss the African American hip hop elements and Japanese influences that appear in this image.
- What cultural elements appear to dominate, if any, and why do you say so?
- If you were to blend elements from different cultures in a piece of artwork (cultural hybridization), which cultures would you include and why?
NICK CAVE
(Born in Jefferson City, MO, 1959; Lives and works in Chicago, IL)

Untitled, 2006
Fabric, sequins, fiberglass, and metal

Nick Cave is an American fabric sculptor, dancer, and performance artist. His creativity was encouraged from an early age by his mother, who supported his creativity expressed in the hand–made birthday cards and gifts he constructed as a child. His modest upbringing is one source for his continuing interest in found objects and assemblage. Describing his early creative approach to his clothing, Cave has said,

When you’re raised by a single mother with six brothers and lots of hand-me-downs, you have to figure out how to make those clothes your own. That’s how I started off, using things around the house.

Cave graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Kansas City Art Institute in 1982 and continued on to earn a Masters of Fine Arts degree from the Cranbrook Academy of Art 1989. During that time he learned to sew—a skill that remains crucial in his work. Cave also studied dance through Alvin Ailey in Kansas and New York. Cave currently serves as the director of the graduate fashion program at the School of the Art Institute Chicago. Concerning his teaching, he once said,
I hope to provide my students with the knowledge that their art making holds the possibility for acting as a vehicle for change on a larger, global scale.

He is a two-time winner of the Creative Capital grant—in 2002 and 2004—as well as a recipient of the Joyce Foundation Award in 2006, and the Joan Mitchell Foundation Award in 2008. Cave’s primary concern is to ensure that his art reaches a broad community, or as he puts it in his personal mission statement: “I MATTER.”

ABOUT THE ART
Nick Cave creates elaborate costumes composed of a wide variety of materials, often found or commonplace objects, densely assembled into garments that may be both exhibited and performed. These “soundsuits” provide a multisensory experience: color, texture, and—when performed—sound and movement. Among Cave’s influences are African masquerades, in which the performer’s individual identity is concealed and taken over by the costume he or she wears. In the same way masquerade ensembles are defined in large part by the accompanying music and dance, Cave’s soundsuits depend on movement and sound for the full experience. They remain visually compelling at rest and suggest the body even in its absence. In this context, discarded, repurposed, and familiar objects come to life and evoke an unanticipated sense of wonder. Their departure from our everyday environment suggests a time and place where race and gender do not really matter—where people are simply people.

VOCABULARY
Alvin Ailey: World-renowned modern dance company based in New York, founded in 1958 by dancer and choreographer Alvin Ailey

Found/commonplace objects: Objects, often discarded, that are not originally designated as artistic materials

African masquerades: A performing art form characterized by masks and special costumes that conceal the identities of the performers

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION
- How do you think it feels to wear one of these soundsuits?
- Describe some ways in which Nick Cave’s soundsuits compare to African masquerades and Mardi Gras Indian suits (i.e. full body coverage, materials used, and dance/ritual performance, etc.)?
ROBERT COLESCOTT
(Born in Oakland, CA, 1925; Died in Tucson, AZ, 2009)

Sunset on the Bayou, 1993
Acrylic on canvas

ABOUT THE ARTIST
Robert Colescott was born and raised in Oakland, California where he spent much of his early years drawing and playing drums with local bands while developing a love for art and music. One of his early inspirations was the sculpture of the African American artist Sargent Johnson.

After serving four years in the United States Army in France and Germany during World War II, Colescott earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 1949 and a Master of Fine Arts degree in 1952 from the University of California, Berkeley. While studying with the French artist Fernand Léger from 1949–1950, Colescott explored several different styles of painting. According to Colescott, it was Léger’s influence that encouraged him to employ a monumental scale and forgo abstraction in favor of strong drawings, black line, and pure color applied to figurative work. He spent the mid–1960s in Cairo, Egypt, where he developed his ideas about creating narrative scenes that differed from the pictorial traditions of Western arts. It was also at this time that race became ingrained in Colescott’s subject matter. He stated,

I had put black people in my paintings, the same way I’d put in a guitar or a bottle, but they had no real significance until I went to Egypt.

From 1970 to 1985, Colescott taught painting at Cal State Stanislaus, UC Berkeley, and the San Francisco Art Institute. He was appointed professor of art at the University of Arizona, Tucson in 1983. In 1997, Colescott became the first African American artist to represent the
United States in the Venice Biennale. Frequently, the appropriation of icons from Colescott’s irreverent take on tradition in the art world has been a foundational element in the work of generations of artists after him.

ABOUT THE ART
In his large–scale compositions, Colescott often includes strange shifts in scale. *Sunset on the Bayou* displays conveys several motifs within the work, with each telling its own tale. Warm colors offer strong visual stimulant, pulling the eyes around the canvas. A splash of cool blue offers a counterbalance. Shifting light gives the painting a sense of motion. There is a huge disparity in proportion, with the main subject hovering over the others. Blurred shapes, jagged brushwork, and overlapping figures add to this strangely intriguing appearance. Unpredictable and raucous, Colescott’s painting is by turns amusing and unsettling, a melding of surprising elements that pushes viewers to confront the underlying racial inequity and stereotypes parodied in his work.

VOCABULARY
**Louisiana Purchase**: As used in the piece: Land deal between the United States and France in 1803, in which the U.S. acquired approximately 827,000 square miles of land west of the Mississippi River for $15 million dollars

** Appropriation**: In the visual arts, to appropriate means to adopt, borrow, recycle or sample aspects (or the entire form) of visual culture when creating a new work

**Venice Biennale**: A major contemporary art exhibition that takes place every two years (odd years) in Venice, Italy

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION
- How does Colescott represent Louisiana history and culture in this work?
- The words “Louisiana Purchase” and imagery associated with the event are prominent in this work, yet the artist gave the title *Sunset on the Bayou*. Why do you think so?
- The mathematical fractions that appear in the work—1/4 and 1/32—refer to people who have mixed heritage also known as mulattos. How else has Colescott alluded to this mixed heritage in his work?
- What images connect this painting about a 210 year-old event to the present day?

VISUAL ARTS ACTIVITY
The Louisiana Purchase took place 210 years ago. Create a new piece of work that includes symbols, images and/or phrases that represent contemporary Louisiana.
LEONARDO DREW
(Born in Tallahassee, FL, 1961; Lives and works in New York and San Antonio, TX)

Untitled #25, 1992
Cotton and wax

ABOUT THE ARTIST
Born in Tallahassee, Florida, Leonardo Drew was named after the Renaissance artist and inventor, Leonardo da Vinci. At the age of six, his family moved to Bridgeport, Connecticut where they resided in a housing project. Drew loved to draw and became a prolific artist at a very young age and first exhibited his work at the age of 13. In his teen years, Drew often displayed his drawings and paintings in local banks and community centers. His first solo show, held at the State National Bank in Bridgeport, exhibited his paintings of swans and clouds.

After graduating from high school, Drew moved to New York City and enrolled in the Parsons School of Design. The following year, he transferred to the Cooper Union for Advancement of Science and Art, where he earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in painting in 1985. After graduation, Drew abandoned two-dimensional work in favor of large-scale sculptural forms made of cut paper. He described his change by explaining the “the brush and the pencil were crutches that prevented me from finding that I was looking for. It seems a paradox, but sometimes crutches can indeed prevent a man from learning how to walk.”

ABOUT THE ART
Recalling the grid-like stacks by conceptual artist Sol Le Witt, Leonardo Drew’s Untitled #25 is a powerful commentary on labor. The creation of this monumental structure, composed of bales of raw cotton melded with wax, was labor intensive and required the binding and stacking of over sixty “blocks.” Drew’s choice of primary material—raw cotton—evokes associations with slave
history in the American South and reminds viewers that the cotton industry in the 1800s was
dependent upon slave labor. With this sobering history, the imposing, wall-like sculpture
functions as a physical and emotional barrier. Through this work, Drew asserts the ongoing
separation and psychological pain caused by America’s slave history and its lingering effects on
identity in the present day. For him art provides an outlet for coming to terms with this history
and memory, and for reinforcing these concerns for a wider audience.

VOCABULARY
Conceptual art: Art in which the concept or idea represented in the work takes precedence over
traditional aesthetic and material concerns

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION
- What historical associations come to your mind when viewing this work, and when
  considering the title?
- Why do you think Drew compounded cotton into blocks and stacked them in rows and
columns rather than leave it in one large pile?
- What impact do you think this piece would convey if the cotton bales were dyed a series
  of bright colors and then arranged in unique designs?
- Why do you think the artist did not the make those kinds of changes?

VISUAL ARTS ACTIVITY
Examine your outfit. What items are you wearing that are made of cotton? What other items do
you own or use that are made of cotton?
BARKLEY L. HENDRICKS
(Born in Philadelphia, PA, 1945; Lives and works in New London, CT)

Noir, 1978
Oil and acrylic on canvas

ABOUT THE ARTIST
With exposure to a wealth of art resources and museums in his native hometown of Philadelphia, Barkley Hendricks fell in love with art and museums at an early age. However, he was constantly curious as to why there were no works by African American artists exhibited in the institutions that he frequented. Hendricks’s formal artistic education began when he attended the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, where he received a certificate in 1967. He continued on to earn his Bachelor of Fine Arts and Masters of Fine Arts degrees from Yale University. During that time, his interest in photography was cultivated by one of his professors, the renowned photographer Walker Evans, and remains important in his work today.

Hendricks’s first solo exhibition was held at the Philadelphia Art Alliance in 1968. He has served as a professor at Connecticut College since 1972 and teaches representational painting and drawing, watercolor, and photography, among other subjects. Hendricks has been honored with several awards, including the Joan Mitchell Foundation Award in 2008 and the Connecticut Governor’s Awards for Excellence in 2010.

While he has worked in a variety of media and genres throughout his career—from photography to landscape painting, Hendricks’ best known work takes the form of life-sized painted oil
portraits. In these portraits, he attempts to imbue a proud, dignified presence upon his subjects, most frequently urban people of color. Hendricks’ work has been noted as unique for its matrimony of both American realism and Postmodernism. Hendricks also has incorporated his interests in jazz, basketball, and travel into his work. His unique style of realism and mastery of color have appealed to younger artists such as Kehinde Wiley, Jeff Sonhouse, and Rashid Johnson.

ABOUT THE ART
Barkley Hendricks’s canvases focus on themes of identity, fashion, and style, and document the flourishing urban cultural scene of the 1960s and 1970s. He is best known for creating life-size paintings of African Americans dressed in the clothing of their day against flat, monochromatic backgrounds. In Noir Hendricks portrays a 1970s male whose clothes embody that decade’s interpretation of cool. Dressed in a three-piece suit with a blue-collared shirt, he stands in a strong, confident position; yet his stance and expression also suggest a nonchalant attitude. This calm demeanor, emphasized by the lingering cigarette in his right hand, conveys self-assurance. By paying close attention to his subject’s attitude and appearance, Hendricks emphasizes their dignity, strength, and self-awareness without succumbing to stereotyping.

VOCABULARY
American realism: A 20th-century idea in art, music and literature where different types of work gave a contemporary and “real” view of what was happening

Postmodernism: Late-20th-century movement in the arts that was a departure from modernism—the idea that traditional forms of art were becoming outdated

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION
- What adjectives would you use to describe the character in this work?
- If this character represents what is meant to be “cool” in the 1970s, what are some of the qualities of coolness?
- If you were to create a portrait of a “cool” person today, what type of clothing would the person wear?

VISUAL ARTS ACTIVITY
Create a portrait of an individual who represents what it means to be “cool” in 2014.
RASHID JOHNSON
(Born in Chicago, IL, 1977; Lives and works in New York, NY)

The New Negro Escapist Social and Athletic Club (Thurgood), 2008
Lambda print, Ed. 2/5

ABOUT THE ARTIST
Born and reared in Chicago, Rashid Johnson earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Columbia College in 2000, and then a Master of Fine Arts degree at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He first received critical attention in 2001, at the age of 24, when examples of his work were included in the exhibition “Freestyle,” curated by Thelma Golden at the Studio Museum in Harlem. This exhibition is often considered to be the founding of the post-black art movement. A year later, he had his first solo exhibition, at the Museum of Contemporary Arts in Chicago.

Johnson is the two-time winner of the Presidential Purchase Award for Photography from Columbia College—in 1997 and 1998—and is also a recipient of the 1998 Albert P. Weisman grant. A photographer and sculptor, Johnson often works with everyday materials such as shea butter and found objects such as VHS tapes. His work raises questions of personal, racial, and cultural identity while referencing African American art history, cosmology, and mysticism. Johnson has exhibited nationwide and internationally over the course of his career, including at the Venice Biennale.
ABOUT THE ART
Rashid Johnson exposes the contradictions found in the public exploitation and glamorization of stereotypical characters of African American culture. *The New Negro Escapist Social and Athletic Club (Thurgood)* imitates a photographic portrait of the abolitionist Frederick Douglass. This work is one of several in which Johnson photographs African American men shrouded or partially enveloped in mist or smoke, imbuing them with an air of mystery and dignity.

Johnson’s title for the series—*Thurgood*—references another highly regarded figure, Thurgood Marshall, the first African American Supreme Court Justice, as well as his own fictional “hall of fame,” a secret society of African Americans of status and power. Johnson’s sometimes tongue–in–cheek approach to subverting stereotypes reinvents the language used to address race and identity and creates a new context for examining history.

VOCABULARY
*Post–black art movement*: Coined by Thelma Golden (The Studio Museum) refers to a group of artists who were adamant about not being labeled “black artists” although their work contains definitive notions of blackness

*Venice Biennale*: A major contemporary art exhibition that takes place every two years in Venice, Italy

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION
- Rashid Johnson pays homage to the abolitionist Frederick Douglass by crafting an artistic self–creation that reflects aspects of Douglass’ character. What preparation do you think was necessary for him to do this?

- If you could pay homage to a historical icon in this manner, who would you select and why?
GLENN LIGON
(Born in Bronx, NY, 1960; Lives and works in New York, NY)

America, 2008
Neon sign and paint, Ed. AP

ABOUT THE ARTIST
Glenn Ligon is a conceptual artist whose work explores race, language, desire, sexuality, and identity and includes sculptures, prints, drawings, mixed media and even neon signs and paintings. The New York native earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut in 1982. After graduation, he worked as a proof–reader for a law firm. In his spare time, Ligon painted in the abstract Expressionist style of Willem de Kooning and Jackson Pollock.

In 1985, Ligon participated in the Whitney Museum Independent Study program in New York. His first solo show, How It Feels to be Colored Me, which opened in Brooklyn in 1989, presented large text–based works that have come to define his style. He has been granted several accolades, including a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1991 that allowed him to concentrate on being an artist. He described this experience by saying,

I thought, I can either put the money in the bank…or use it to try to be an artist full time. I knew my only love was making art. I thought I might as well go for it.

He later received a 2006 Skowhegan Award for painting and the 2010 United States Artists Fellowship in Los Angeles.
ABOUT THE ART

America was inspired by the well-known opening line of Charles Dickens’s novel A Tale of Two Cities (1859): “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness…” The neon work was created in 2008 and America had just elected its first African American president; yet it was embroiled in two controversial wars and had come close to complete financial collapse. The flickering of the light and the choice to paint the white neon black is meant to evoke this national dichotomy—serving as a beacon on a hill with this landmark election while simultaneously harboring a much darker underside. It also symbolizes a black and white America.

VOCABULARY

Conceptual art: Art in which the concept or idea represented in the work takes precedence over traditional aesthetic and material concerns

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION

- What thoughts come to mind when you first see this sign?
- How would you define the American dream?
- How do you think people from different backgrounds and experiences (i.e. different socio-economic backgrounds, cultures, ethnicities, etc.) view this sign?
- If you could put one word in neon lights, what would it be?
LORNA SIMPSON
(Born in Brooklyn, NY, 1960; Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY)

Wigs (Portfolio), 1994
Waterless lithograph and felt

ABOUT THE ARTIST
Lorna Simpson creates conceptual photographs and video art that explore issues related to identity, history, gender, and race. She frequently uses images of African American women to consider these ideas and to address stereotypes associated with African American culture. In her photographic work, Simpson often incorporates words as a way to question cultural assumptions that surround her imagery. She encourages viewers to consider the open-ended meanings that result with fragments of text are paired with images. Within the last ten years, Simpson has also turned to video as a medium for examining notions of race and gender.

Simpson attended the High School of Art and Design in New York. She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in photography from the School of Visual Arts in New York in 1983 and her Master of Fine Arts in visual arts from the University of California, San Diego in 1985. She rose to prominence in the 1980s with her large-scale photographs that combine image and text. In many of these images, the faces of female subjects are deliberately obscured. In the 1990s Simpson began printing on materials other than standard glossy paper, such as felt and silk screen. She was the first African American woman to exhibit at the Venice Biennale. Simpson has been awarded several honors, including the Hugo Boss Prize from the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation in 1998, the Whitney Museum of American Art Award in 2001, and the Infinity Award in Art from the International Center of Photography in 2010. Her work is featured in many major collections, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Wadsworth Athenaeum in Hartford, the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, and the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.
ABOUT THE ART
Lorna Simpson’s *Wigs (Portfolio)* explores the role of hair as a signifier of race, gender, and the way people—particularly black women—are identified, classified, and judged based on their physical attributes and personal styles.

In her twenty-one **lithographs** of varying hairstyles or hairpieces, Simpson subtly implies stories or personalities, leading the viewer to create opinions and ideas based on this single physical characteristic. What can be inferred about a person from each image? The words or phrases that Simpson pairs with the prints should not be considered descriptions or captions, but rather free-associative phrases to guide the viewer’s personal interpretations. Because Simpson chooses to obscure the faces and bodies of the bearers of the hair, her work allows visitors to speculate about stereotyping and the many unspoken assumptions or questions surrounding the body. What is the relationship between what is displayed and what is hidden? How are we complicit in constructing who, and what, we see?

**VOCABULARY**

*Conceptual photographs and videos:* Photographs and videos in which the concept or idea represented in the work takes precedence over traditional aesthetic and material concerns

*Venice Biennale:* A major contemporary art exhibition that takes place every two years (odd years) in Venice, Italy

*Lithographs:* A method of printing from flat stone, metal, or plastic plate in which the drawing is made on the stone or plate with a greasy crayon or tusche, and then rinsed with water. When ink is applied to the surface, it sticks to the greasy drawing but runs off, or resists, the wet surface. This allows a print—or lithograph—to be made of the drawing

**SUGGESTED DISCUSSION**

- Why do you think the artist displays these wigs without showing a person’s face?

- Which hair styles do you think would be worn by a younger person or an older person, and why?

- This image is printed on a grid of felt panels. Why do you think Simpson chose to use a grid format? Do you think the grid symbolizes anything?

**VISUAL ARTS ACTIVITY**

Think about the things in your life that are very personal and/or important to you. Choose things around you that you feel help to define who you are. Take photographs of each of these things. Arrange them in a collage that symbolically creates a self-portrait.
SHINIQUE SMITH
(Born 1972, Baltimore, Maryland; Lives and works in Brooklyn, New York)

A bull, a rose, a tempest, 2007
Fabric and found objects

ABOUT THE ARTIST
Drawing from cast–off materials that litter the urban landscape, Shinique Smith's sculptures compress the lives of the objects that she ties together with twine, ribbon, and the like. Found objects such as clothing, old fabrics, shoes, stuffed toys, discarded picture frames, sneakers, and t-shirts make up examples of Shinique Smith's intriguing art. She sometimes incorporates street graffiti and Japan calligraphy in works that are, at once, both a commentary on public consumption and personal reflection.

Her sensibility is influenced by Abstract Expressionism, graffiti and Japanese calligraphy. From bales to bundles of items that range in scale from human–sized towers to more petite and portable assemblages, Smith’s works refer specifically to the inequities of a global economy in which thrown–away items from the First World is shipped, in bales, to the Third. Her larger bale variants memorialize what is lost along the way. Her more recent projects have shifted towards immersive installations that reflect on the economies of excess and need.

Growing up in Baltimore, Smith was reared by her grandmother while her mother studied fashion in New York and Paris. After high school, Smith received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore and Masters of Arts in teaching from Tufts University and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in 2000. She studied at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture and has participated in residencies at the Aljira Center for Contemporary Art,
Newark, New Jersey (2005); Henry Street Settlement, New York (2004–2005); the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (2003); and the Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, Vermont (2002).

ABOUT THE ART
Like Jean-Michel Basquiat, Shinique Smith was a graffiti artist while a high school student in Baltimore. A street sensibility remains in her bound sculptures of found, often discarded, everyday objects. This piece incorporates memorabilia of the deceased rapper Tupac Shakur, who also attended the Baltimore School of the Arts. The bundles of clothing and fabric suggest an interest in fashion and the economy of excess that plagues wealthier nations today. This body of work was inspired by a newspaper article detailing the shipment of massive bales of discarded clothing to impoverished countries in Africa.

Smith’s creation chaotically emphasizes the wasteful attitudes behind this act of charity. Many of the elements found in a bull, a rose, a tempest—shoes, handbags, clustered clothing—were abandoned objects that the artist acquired in coin laundries and garbage cans. Smith does not exempt herself from this commentary on consumerism and waste; in many of these works, she amasses pieces of her own wardrobe, cast away not for the sake of charity, but for the sake of art.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION
- Find the “found objects.” What objects are identifiable?
- Smith named this sculpture “A bull, a rose, a tempest.” Why do you think she chose these three unrelated nouns for the title?
- In this work, how might the artist have evoked a bull, a rose, a storm? How does the artist use abstraction to reference the ideas found in this work?
- If you created a bundled sculpture about your life, what would you include?

CREATIVE WRITING ACTIVITY
Write an essay that describes the objects you would bundle together to tell a story about your school, city, or family. Tell why you would include each object and give a title to your work (ex. 504: A Sculpture for NOLA). Feel free to include what you would use to tie the sculpture together and why; how you would display your sculpture (i.e. hang from the ceiling, place on a table or stand, sit on the floor); and the words that you would incorporate, if any.
JEFF SONHOUSE
(Born in New York, NY, 1968; Lives and works in New York, NY)

Exhibit A: Cardinal Francis Arinze, 2005
Oil and mixed media on wooden panel

ABOUT THE ARTIST
Jeff Sonhouse was born in 1968 in New York. He received his training at the School of Visual Arts in New York and at Hunter College of the City of New York. His work was included in “Legacies: Contemporary Artists Reflect on Slavery,” New York Historical Society, New York, NY, 2006, and “Frequency,” The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY, 2005. In 2004 he was the recipient of a Joan Mitchell Foundation grant and received the New York Foundation for the Arts prize.

Sonhouse concentrates on themes of black masculinity in his striking paintings that often find his subjects donning menacing, multi-patterned masks and vivid, dandy-like suits. At times focusing on political, anonymous, and even controversial figures, Sonhouse has created portraits of Colin Powell, Michael Jackson, and Diddy. In 2008, Sonhouse broke the mode of depicting only men with his exhibition Pawnography, which included a portrait of former U.S. Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice.

Sonhouse uses a flamboyant palette and likes to clash fields of flat color up against planes of wallpaper pattern or harlequin-esque diamond print. He often adds collage touches to his cartoon- portraits—a signature Sonhouse move is to use layers of painted matchsticks or clumps of steel wool to convey the kinky texture of African American hair.
ABOUT THE ART
In *Cardinal Francis Arinze*, the artist represents the Nigerian cardinal, a candidate for pope in 2005, enthroned and wearing ecclesiastical robes, with his identity cloaked by a harlequin-patterned mask. Like numerous artists featured in *30 Americans*, Jeff Sonhouse draws on art-historical precedents—seen here as a series of traditional papal representations by Francis Bacon and Diego Velázquez. Sonhouse’s evocation of portraiture tradition at once empowers the religious candidate from Nigeria and criticizes the white-dominated institution of the Catholic Church through the clownish facial disguise.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION
- The ecclesiastical robe and head piece worn by the model that represents a cardinal is contradicted by his harlequin-patterned mask. What other contradictions exist in this work?
- Why do you think the artist includes such contradictions?
- Sonhouse frequently used matchsticks to convey a certain dimension to his artwork. If you were to create a portrait, name some household objects you would use.
MICKALENE THOMAS
(Born in Camden, NJ, 1971; Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY)

Baby I Am Ready Now, 2007
Acrylic, rhinestone, and enamel on wooden panel

ABOUT THE ARTIST
Mickalene Thomas is known for her elaborate paintings adorned with rhinestones, enamel and colorful acrylics. Thomas introduces a complex vision of what it means to be a woman and expands common definitions of beauty. Her work stems from her long study of art history and the classical genres of portraiture, landscape, and still life. Inspired by various sources that range from the 19th century Hudson River School to Édouard Manet, Henri Matisse, and Romare Bearden, she continues to explore notions of beauty from a contemporary perspective that is infused with the more recent influences of popular culture and Pop Art.

Thomas earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts in painting at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn in 2000 and a Master of Fine Arts at the Yale University School of Art in 2002. From 2000 to 2003, Thomas participated in a residency at the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York and a residency at the Versailles Foundation Munn Artists Program in Giverny, France in 2011.

Thomas has been included in numerous exhibitions worldwide. Her work is part of dozens of significant public collections. Her portrait of Michelle Obama was the first individual portrait done of the First Lady and was exhibited in the National Portrait Gallery’s Americans Now show.

ABOUT THE ART
Bold, glitzy, and exaggerated, Mickalene Thomas’s paintings highlight the confidence and overt sensuality of the women she portrays. Inspired by the social awareness and feminist liberation of the 1970s, Thomas’s subjects, such as the woman featured in Baby I Am Ready Now, are
empowered, emotive, and fearless. They seem to know what they want and are unafraid to acknowledge it to the viewer. Thomas formally emphasizes this self-assuredness through the brash colors and patterns that surround these women, as well as in their seductive postures and clothing choices. The rhinestone accents amplify the sexual appeal and seductive glitter of the artist’s subjects and add a little bling to her works. As Thomas has noted, “I’ve always been interested in…dressing up and beautifying…and what that meant to black women.” In her portraits she positions sensuality and seductiveness as positive attributes, tools of strength and power.

**SUGGESTED DISCUSSION**

- What is the story? We see the main character and the setting, what do you think is the plot?

- What influences of popular culture and Pop Art appear in this work?

**VISUAL ARTS ACTIVITY**

Thomas creates portraits that reflect the diverse appearances and personalities of her sitters—people who pose or model for a portrait. Working with a partner, identify a mood or feeling—such as melancholy, joy, anxiety, frustration, or humor—that you want to convey. Decide who will be the sitter and who will be the photographer. Using a cell phone or camera, the photographer snaps the sitter, and then the two will reverse roles so that both partners have a photograph from which to work. Each person then uses either a copy of the photo, or a rendering of it, along with various art supplies and found objects to create a collage portrait.
HANK WILLIS THOMAS
(Born in Plainfield, NJ, 1976; Lives and works in New York, NY, and San Francisco, CA)

Branded Head, 2003
Digital chromogenic print, Ed. AP

ABOUT THE ARTIST
Hank Willis Thomas is a conceptual photographer working primarily with themes of identity, history, and popular culture. He was raised in an environment of art and cultural criticism by his mother Deborah Willis, a photographer and historian. Thomas received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in photography and African studies from New York University’s Tisch School of Arts in 1998. In 2004, he earned a Masters of Fine Arts degree in photography and another in visual criticism from the California College of the Arts in San Francisco.

In 2000, Thomas’ cousin, Songha Thomas Willis, was murdered outside of a club by a group of men who were trying to steal his companion’s gold chain. This random act of violence informs much of Thomas’ work, as does his continuing effort to understand our country’s complicated view of black male identity.

I think that the irony of the ideal of the black male body is interesting…It is fetishized and adored in advertising but in reality black men are in many ways the most feared and hated bodies of the 21st century.
Thomas’s work has been displayed in several one–artist and group exhibitions in the United States as well as in Europe and South Africa.

ABOUT THE ART
In his series B@NDED, Hank Willis Thomas continues his critique of consumerism within popular culture specifically through the frequent exploitation of athletes to sell material goods. Thomas references popular advertising, here removing identifying traits to distill images that promote his own themes. In these images from the series, he examines the imprint of corporate branding on stereotypes of African American men to highlight tensions between commodity and race. In Branded Head, the black male body is literally branded and scarred with the Nike “swoosh” logo. About this series, Thomas has said, “I believe that...advertising’s success rests on its ability to reinforce generalizations about race, gender, and ethnicity which can be sometimes true and sometimes horrifying, but which at a core level are a reflection of the way a culture views itself or its aspirations.”

VOCABULARY
Conceptual photography: Photographs in which the concept or idea represented in the work takes precedence over traditional aesthetic and material concerns

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION
- Advertisements inform as well as persuade people to buy products. Would you consider this a successful advertisement? If so, what makes it successful?
- This photo is cropped so that the person’s face is not shown. What difference do you think this makes to the influence, or strength, of the advertisement?
- Explore the layers of meaning in this photo. What meaning first comes to mind? As you continue to think about this image, what other meanings become apparent?

VISUAL ARTS ACTIVITY
Select a popular television advertisement/commercial and dissect it. What is the targeted market? Is age, race, and/or gender a factor? What different meanings exist? What stereotypical inferences do you notice?
CARRIE MAE WEEMS
(Born in Portland, OR, 1953; Lives and works in Syracuse, NY)

You Became Mammie, Mama, Mother & Then, Yes, Confidant-Ha/Descending the Throne You Became Foot Soldier & Cook (from From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried series), 1995–96
Two monochrome chromogenic prints with sandblasted text on glass in artist frames

ABOUT THE ARTIST
Born and raised in Portland, Oregon, Carrie Mae Weems is internationally recognized for her powerful photography–based art that investigates issues that face African Americans today, such as racism, gender relations, politics, and personal identity. On her 21st birthday, she received a camera as a gift and quickly realized its potential to express abstract political and social theories and incite change.

During the past 30 years, Weems’ work has explored a variety of issues, providing a complex picture of humanity and creating greater awareness and compassion for difference. Her signature works include—Ain’t Joking (1987), The Kitchen Table Series (1990), From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried (1995), The Louisiana Project (2004), Roaming (2006)—which juxtapose the harsh realities of race, class, and gender discrimination with the dignity and resilience of the human character in everyday life.

Weems enriches the traditional black–and–white cinéma vérité style with African American folklore, multimedia collage, and experimental printing methods. In many of her prints, she casts herself as silent witness and guiding avatar through “fictional documentaries” in contemporary
surroundings or historical recreations. Resurrecting lives and legacies invisible in plain sight, familiar but unseen, Weems creates a poignant and revealing visual archive of the human condition.

Weems received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1981 from the California Institute of the Arts and a Master of Fine Arts in 1984 from the University of California at San Diego. She also studied at the University of California at Berkeley from 1984 to 1987. Her work has been exhibited at such national and international venues as the Guggenheim Museum, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, the Tate Liverpool, and the Bilbao Fine Arts Museum.

In recent years, she extended her talent to social reform efforts in Syracuse, New York, with projects such as Operation Activate—public art campaign to create awareness of an initiative to stop gun violence, and also to the Institute of Sound and Style—a pilot summer program that engages local youth in experiential training in visual art. An extraordinary photographer and social activist, Weems is demonstrating the power of art to directly and broadly impact a community beyond patrons of museums or private exhibitions. In 2013, Weems received the prestigious MacArthur “Genius” Award.

ABOUT THE ART
In You Became A Scientific Profile, Weems draws on imagery associated with the problematic history of anthropology, a discipline devoted to the study of humankind. In the 19th century, European explorers took photographs of distant peoples for documentary purposes, turning their subjects into objects in the process. These images informed early anthropological research—resulting studies exploited people of color in the name of science. Weems appropriates these historical images and integrates her own text, giving a voice to the individual portrayed. In doing so she reveals the reality of the images, which were used to create and perpetuate stereotypes associated with race and the body.

VOCABULARY
Conceptual photography: Photographs in which the concept or idea represented in the work takes precedence over traditional aesthetic and material concerns

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION
- Before the American Civil War, these archival photographs and others like them were used to denigrate people who were enslaved. Today, however, we use these photographs to pay homage to those who were enslaved for their stamina and fortitude. What changes in our country created this shift of consciousness?

- Without the color and text that Weems added, do you think these photos would have the same impact on our thoughts about these subjects and what they went through as enslaved people?
KEHINDE WILEY
(Born in Los Angeles, CA, 1977; Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY)

Equestrian Portrait of the Count Duke Olivares, 2005
Oil on canvas

ABOUT THE ARTIST
Kehinde Wiley’s mother supported his interest in art and began enrolling him in after school art classes at the age of 11. He also spent a short time at an art school in Russia and visited museums to broaden his education. Wiley did not grow up with his father, who is Yoruba from Nigeria, but traveled to Nigeria at the age of 20 to meet him and explore his roots. He earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the San Francisco Art Institute in 1999, which was followed by a Masters of Fine Arts degree from Yale University School of Art in 2001. Shortly after graduation, Wiley became an Artist-in-Residence at the Studio Museum in Harlem.

Kehinde Wiley is known for his highly naturalistic paintings of people with black and brown skin in heroic poses. His work is layered with references to the history of art, politics, religion, sexuality, and explores the rich potential of paint and scale. He integrates traditional European portraiture with contemporary hip hop culture by rendering his subjects—typically black men from his neighborhood, people he meets while travelling, or music celebrities in conventional poses for elite subjects—against decorative backgrounds inspired by Celtic manuscript illumination, Islamic metalwork, and Baroque and Rococo architecture.
Wiley has travelled to Brazil, Nigeria, and New Delhi, among other locations, to broaden his process of “casting from the streets.” His latest investigation of the genre of portraiture is an examination of mug shots as portraits. Among his many honors are a Rema Hort Mann Foundation grant in 2002 and the Americans for the Arts Young Artist Award for Artistic Excellence in 2008. In early 2011, two of Wiley’s paintings were featured on the top of 500 New York City taxi cabs in collaboration with the Art Production Fund. Patterns from his paintings have been incorporated into Puma athletic gear.

ABOUT THE ART
Kehinde Wiley’s canvases reference Western European portraiture in what he calls “urban–meets–classical” style. He places subjects from the streets of Harlem, Brooklyn, and other urban locales into historical poses or settings that are typically associated with portrayals of wealthy, powerful white men. Each work alludes to Old Master paintings: Equestrian Portrait of the Count Duke Olivares owes its composition to a painting of the same name by Diego Velázquez (1599–1660). The lush details, such as the rococo–style wallpaper or floral backdrop seen in both works, emphasize a dichotomy between past and present. By presenting his contemporary subjects in these formats, Wiley purposefully departs from a style of portraiture that was historically reserved for elites. He inserts modern urban culture within art–historical conventions to make a provocative statement about history and society.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION
- What types of message do you think Wiley sends when he recreates old master works using young African American male subjects?
- If Wiley selected you as a subject for one of his paintings, what setting, pose, or work from an art history book would you want him to use?
- Wiley creates very large-scale oil paintings. Other than size, what features and qualities make this work so impactful and impressive?
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

30 AMERICANS EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS
Presented by 
(Dates, times, and participants subject to change)

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

30 Americans Special Viewing for Educators
February 6, 2014, 6:00pm – 8:00pm
During this free reception and viewing, educators are taken on a private tour by 30 Americans Curatorial Advisor and former Chief Curator of Savannah College of Art and Design, Isolde Brielmaier. Teachers who participate will have an opportunity to receive a special 30 Americans Resource Guide and information on field-trip opportunities. Limited space available. To participate, contact education@cacno.org by Monday, January 27, 2014

30 Americans Resource Center
Presented by 
February 8 – June 15, 2014
The 30 Americans Resource Center will orient gallery visitors who arrive to experience the exhibition and contextualize its content. Audiences of all ages will have access to video interviews with 30 Americans artists and interpretative materials by CAC Educators. Free printed materials including an Interactive Visitor’s Guide will further illuminate the exhibition. The Resource Center will provide a variety of methods through which visitors can share their responses to the exhibition.

30 Americans Artist Exchange
Weekdays, February 10 – June 13, 2014
A tailored field trip that includes a guided tour of the 30 Americans exhibition followed by a hands-on workshop, led by a professional artist, that reflects selected artwork and themes presented in the exhibition.
- 9:30am-1:00pm
- Available for upper elementary through 12th grade
- Students bring their own lunches
- Groups of 20 - 60 students
- $7 per student (Chaperones free)
For more information or to request a date, contact education@cacno.org.

30 Americans Guided Tours
February 10 – June 13, 2014
Docent-led tours for public groups of up to 25 people with a walkthrough of the exhibition including access to the 30 Americans Resource Center for deeper exploration about the exhibition artists and the issues reflected in their artwork. Guided tours are held during gallery hours and must be scheduled through the Education Department at least two weeks in advance. For fee information or to schedule a guided tour, contact education@cacno.org
PUBLIC PROGRAMS

The Art of Collecting, Part I: New Orleans Collectors
April 4, 2014, 4:00pm – 6:00pm
Have you ever thought about starting your own art collection? This panel discussion brings together local art collectors and gallerists for an insightful conversation on the process of investing in and building personal and private art collections. Admission is free; seating is limited.

The Art of Collecting, Part II: An Evening with the Rubells and Franklin Sirmans
Date: TBD; Details forthcoming
30 Americans is a wide-ranging survey of work by many of the most important African American artists of the last three decades. Selected from the Rubell Family Collection, the exhibition brings together seminal figures such as Jean-Michel Basquiat and David Hammons with younger and emerging artists such as Kehinde Wiley and Shinique Smith. On what is sure to be a captivating evening, the Rubells join Franklin Sirmans, Chief Curator of Contemporary Art at Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Artistic Director of Prospect.3, to discuss the cultivation and expansion of their collection. Admission is free.

Literally Speaking: Do You Feel Me?
April 18, 2014, 7:00pm – 9:00pm
Join the CAC and Junebug Productions for an evening of poetry, during National Poetry Month, as members of spoken word teams, Melanated Writers and Team SNO (Slam New Orleans) respond to the 30 Americans exhibition with original works. Admission is free.

In The Name of Street Art
May 17, 2014, 10:00am – 12:00pm
You don’t need to step inside a museum to experience art in New Orleans—neighborhood to neighborhood, the cityscape is bursting with street compositions. This workshop brings together the styles, techniques, and spirit of street art into a fun and engaging experience suitable for family members and budding artists of all ages. Participants work alongside local artist Brandan Odums to create their very own three-dimensional masterpiece that draws inspiration from 30 Americans. Registration opens March 1, 2014.

- CAC Members: $5 (Ages 6-18)/$10 (Adults)
- Non-members: $8 (Ages 6-18)/$12 (Adults)

IN THE WORKS

Conversation at the Contemporary: 30 Americans Artist
Date: TBD; Details forthcoming

Art + Film: Film Screening
Date: TBD; Details forthcoming

Visit http://cacno.org/exhibitions/30-americans for updates and additions to events and programs during 30 Americans or subscribe to our newsletter to receive information.
IMAGE CREDITS


Pages 4-34: Rubell Family Collection, Miami.
SUPPORT

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