

Stephen Friedman Gallery

CultureMap Fort Worth

Works by 30 world-famous Black artists come to Arlington in groundbreaking exhibition

Stephanie Allmon Merry

3 February 2021



Works by 30 world-famous Black artists come to Arlington in groundbreaking exhibition

The Arlington Museum of Art is set to host the landmark traveling exhibition "30 Americans" this summer.



Image: A work by Kehinde Wiley will be part of the exhibition — but likely not his portrait of Barack Obama. Image courtesy of Kehinde Wiley

Described in a release as "showcasing works by 30 emerging and established African American artists of the last three decades," the list of artists on display includes marquee names like Kara Walker, Carrie Mae Weems, Nick Cave, Mark Bradford, Glenn Ligon, Jean-Michel Basquiat, and Mickalene Thomas.

Perhaps the most noteworthy of all is Kehinde Wiley, who famously was chosen to paint the official portraits of Barack and Michelle Obama. (The Obamas' portraits won't be in the Arlington exhibition, but they will be on view at a Houston museum in 2022.)

The exhibition is coming to Arlington from the renowned Rubell Museum in Miami, Florida, which also loaned the museum "Keith Haring: Against All Odds," one of the most successful exhibits in AMA's history. "30 Americans" has also traveled to museums in Albuquerque, Honolulu, Philadelphia, Kansas City, and more.

"We decided to bring this exhibit to Arlington to provide more individual access to art that will inspire and engage ever growing audiences," says AMA board president Christopher Hightower in a statement.

According to the release, "30 Americans" focuses on issues of race, sexuality, gender, and historical identity in contemporary culture while exploring the powerful influence of artistic legacy and community across generations. It features works from a variety of mediums: painting, sculpture, photography, video, and installation.

"This is an important exhibit that will undoubtedly spark conversation about race in America," says Tonya Veasey, "30 Americans" Committee Chair and CEO for the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, in the release. "It comes at a time when race and social justice issues are at the top of people's minds on a day-to-day basis."

The AMA's exhibition dates are still somewhat tentative due to COVID-19 considerations, a spokeswoman says, but they're penciling in May 22-August 29. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$5 for seniors 55 and up, \$5 for students, and children and military are free.