

## 30 Americans at the Rubell Family Collection next to close!

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Since the [Rubell Family](#) started collecting art in the 1960's, they have always collected [African-American](#) artists as a part of their broader mission to collect the most interesting art of our time. Approximately three years ago, they found there was a critical mass of emerging African-American artists, and began the process of understanding what seemed to be a new movement. When they asked these artists about their influences, they heard some of the same names over and over: Robert Colescott, Renée Green, David Hammons, Barkley Hendricks, Kerry James Marshall, Gary Simmons, Lorna Simpson, Kara Walker, and Carrie Mae Weems. They had been collecting almost all of those artists for decades. Perfect conditions for 30 Americans.

The exhibition now close to his end is the result of years of research towards the most complete portrait of contemporary Afro-American art. As a result, 30 Americans, compiles 200 artworks.



Lorna Simpson. Wigs (Portfolio) Waterless lithograph and felt 72 x 162 1/2 in overall Rubell Family collection, Miami.

The title of the exhibition does not emphasize the idea of ethnicity, prevailing then the interest of national integration. The show brings together –paradoxically- 31 creators and several generations of artists. Among them, figures whose influence on new generations of artists in general and African Americans in specific is vital, such as Lorna Simpson, Gary Simmons, David Hammons, Kara Walker, L. Barkley Hendricks, Robert Colescott, Renée Green, Kerry James Marshall, Jean Michel Basquiat.





Jean-Michel Basquiat. Bird On Money, 1981. Acrylic and oil on canvas. 66 x90 in. Courtesy of Rubell Family Collection

The exhibition highlights the quality and variety of proposals where the subject is approached from the most diverse points of view in order to explore deep in the History, myths, stereotypes and social conventions.



In this sense, highlights the work of David Hammons (Illinois, 1943). His minimalist sculpture Esquire (or John Henry), 1990, is essential. Conformed by four sufficient elements this work is not only the portrait of an individual ([John Henry](#)) but the entire historical background and stereotypical cultural identity of the African-Americans during at the end of the XIX century.

The word that gives title to the work, Esquire, refers in obsolete British English to a nobility status. In Hammons' sculpture a rail train becomes the pedestal to Henri's portrait, made up from a can of shoe polish and a simple oval stone with no facial features that is crowned by a hair collected from several

barber shops in Harlem.

David Hammons. Esquire (or John Henry), 1990. Steel, rock, human hair, tin and cloth. 45 x 9 x5in. Rubell Family Collection.

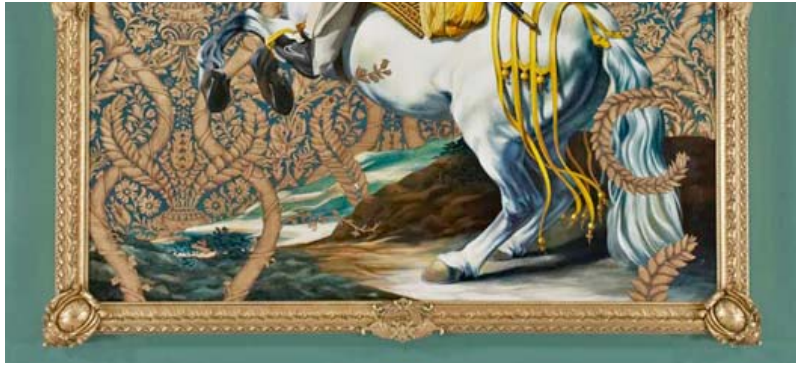
*Duck, Duck, Noose*, 1992, the installation presented by Gary Simmons (New York, 1964), is a masterpiece of synthesis and efficacy. The title refers to the very well known children game [Duck, Duck, Goose](#) to signify the absurd of racist ideologies, but changing the ending word to emphasize the contrast between innocence, game, life and murder makes *Duck, Duck, Noose* an accurate and spine-chilling artwork.



Gary Simmons. Duck, Duck, Noose, 1992. Wood, cloth, metal and hemp. Dimensions variable. Courtesy of Rubell Family Collection

Among the younger figures, highlights the work of Kehinde Wiley (Los Angeles, 1977). Wiley who lives in New York based his work in portrait. Wiley takes pictures of typical characters of the Bronx who later the artist integrates into a neo-baroque atmosphere. Models dressed in everyday clothes inhabit fictional and neobaroc worlds, always in accordance with the notions of representation and power associated to this genre in Western art. Sometimes, his portrayed borrow aristocracy titles. *Equestrian Portrait of the Court-Duke Olivares*, 2005, included in this exhibit is an excellent example.





Kehinde Wiley. Equestrian Portrait of the Court-Duke Olivares, 2005. Oil on canvas. 108 x 108 in framed. Courtesy of Rubell Fam

Several new acquisitions have been added to the “30 Americans” exhibition since its opening in December, including a massive, sumptuous painting by Kehinde Wiley and a new painting by Jeff Sonhouse.

Other artists featured in the exhibit include Nina Chanel Abney, John Bankston, Mark Bradford, Iona Rozeal Brown, Nick Cave, Noah Davis, Leonardo Drew, Rashid Johnson, Glenn Ligon, Kalup Linzy, Rodney McMillian, Wangechi Mutu, William Pope.L, Xaviera Simmons, Shinique Smith, Henry Taylor, Hank Willis Thomas, Mickalene Thomas, Carrie Mae Weems and Purvis Young.

Open through May 30, *30 Americans* is absolutely a must see.

#### Author: Janet Batet



Janet Batet is an Examiner from Miami. You can see Janet's articles on [Janet's Home Page](#).

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