

Family Review

*The Dirty South: Contemporary Art,
Material Culture, and the Sonic Impulse*

On view | November 5, 2021–February 6, 2022



El Franco Lee II (American, born 1979), *DJ Screw in Heaven 2*, 2016, acrylic on black canvas with cassette tape. Courtesy of the artist.

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The Dirty South: Contemporary Art, Material Culture, and the Sonic Impulse features work made by multigenerational artists that explores the traditions, artistic impulses, and exchanges between the visual and sonic arts over the last 100 years. The exhibition features over 70 different artists working in a wide array of media including sculpture, photography, video, installation, and sound. The exhibition makes visible the roots of Southern hip-hop culture and reveals how the aesthetic traditions of the African American South have shaped visual art and musical expression over the last century. The exhibition is organized into three thematic sections including: Black Corporality (the Black body), Landscape, and Sinner and Saints (religion and spirituality).

The exhibition deals directly with powerful issues related to the region and American history including: spirituality, violence, and slavery. Caretakers and teachers should be prepared to discuss race when exploring the exhibition with young people. Kara Walker's artwork, *A Warm Summer Evening in 1863* (2008) depicts a silhouette of a hanged woman in the center of the composition.

Please note that none of the artworks in the exhibition can be touched, although we always encourage close looking and curiosity. This is a very dense exhibition with many works of art and a lot to explore. Please be mindful of your and your children's movement throughout the space. Rodney McMillian's installation *From Asterisks in Dockery* (2012) invites visitors to enter and explore and Mel Chin's work *Night Rap* (1993)

invites visitors to speak into the microphone. We suggest visiting the main level Brown Foundation gallery before going down the stairs into the lower level Zilkha gallery.

There are two films throughout the exhibition with dark viewing rooms and the films play on loop. In each space, limited seating is provided for extended viewing. Arthur Jafa's film, *Love Is The Message, The Message Is Death* (2016) is in a viewing room in the lower level Zilkha gallery. This film depicts internalized violence projected on Black bodies in the United States and images played over the song *Ultralight Beam* by Kanye West. There is a short pause and darkness in the viewing room between each loop of the film.

Overall, this is an exhibition with a lot to explore and discuss. We encourage you to spend time with the artwork and to visit the exhibition multiple times.