ALMINE RECH

American Vignettes: Symbols, Society, and Satire

Sep 27, 2024 - Fall 2025 | Rubell Museum, Miami, FL, US

Washington, DC – August 27, 2024 – The Rubell Museum DC announced today that it will open a new exhibition of contemporary art as part of a museum-wide reinstallation on September 27, 2024. *American Vignettes: Symbols, Society, and Satire* showcases nearly 100 artworks spanning painting, photography, sculpture, installation, and mixed media by over 40 emerging and established artists, all drawn from the Rubells' unparalleled and ever-growing collection of contemporary art of more than 7,700 works. Each artwork viewed separately stands alone, a vignette within one or more of the three exhibition themes. When considered together, the artworks compose a larger narrative, that of contemporary artists—some born in America, some who made America their home—and their compelling and varied approaches to artmaking. *American Vignettes* will be on view through Fall 2025.

"Symbols" begins in the museum's largest gallery, where iterations of flags, eagles, and banners are reimagined, speaking to collective and individual relationships with these symbols and to the artists' calling to interpret them as their own. The theme of symbols extends to the museum's lower level, where artists use as metaphor statuary, candle flames, illuminated text, and video to evoke the ephemeral (time) and the eternal (memory). References to historical figures—JFK, John Henry, Sojourner Truth—are attached to several of the works. Artists presented in this section include Natalie Ball, Urs Fischer, David Hammons, Mark Handforth, Glenn Ligon, Damián Ortega, Rob Pruitt, Sterling Ruby, Vaughn Spann, Piotr Ukla□ski, and William E. Jones.

The central floor focuses on "Society" and breaks the theme down to its most elemental parts, representing the familial, platonic, and intimate ties that create, enrich, and sometimes bind. Photographic portraits, figurative sculpture, and scenes of gatherings on canvas and paper depict connections, some fleeting and others everlasting, all contributing to the makings of society—one community at a time. Featured artists are John Ahearn, Danie Cansino, Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Karon Davis, Noah Davis, Alfonso Gonzalez Jr., Doron Langberg, Kerry James Marshall, Reginald O'Neal, Catherine Opie, Dana Schutz, Tschabalala Self, and Henry Taylor.

"Satire" permeates the works presented on the top floor. Via pointed criticism of society's norms and ills, the artists use text and imagery, at times grotesque, at times more subdued, to edify and inspire change. To quote the late artist Robert Colescott, who served as inspiration for this floor and whose works are featured prominently: "It's the satire that kills the serpent, you know." Works by Mario Ayala, Hernan Bas, Nehemiah Cisneros, Robert Colescott, Rubén Esparza, Sharif Farrag, Naomi Fisher, Christian Holstad, Mike Kelley, Josh Kline, Savannah Claudia Levin, Glenn Ligon, Adam McEwen, William Pope.L, Richard Prince, Henry Taylor, Tseng Kwong Chi, and Kara Walker comprise this section.

"We're honored to champion these artists and engage our visitors with their diverse perspectives, which reflect the variedness of the American experience," said Mera Rubell.

American Vignettes marks the third installation at the Rubell Museum DC, which opened in Fall 2022 in the 1906 building of the former Randall Junior High School in Southwest DC, whose alumni included the American icon Marvin Gaye prior to ceasing operations in 1978. The exhibition extends throughout the museum's 32,000 square feet, which preserves the original layout of the historic school, with classrooms, teacher's offices, the auditorium, and foyers transformed into galleries. The setting reinforces the role of artists as students and teachers making meaning of our world, and encourages audiences to reflect upon the insights and perspectives communicated through their work.