

## Three year Smithsonian exhibition to highlight men of colour and their impact on history



LeBron James, 2009. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of Walter Iooss, © Walter Iooss

### MUST SEE - Exhibitions

By **Katherine Keener** Published on 8 July 2019 at 10 h 24 min



In August, the Smithsonian will launch a long-term travelling exhibition highlighting African American men. Titled 'Men of Change: Power. Triumph. Truth.', the exhibition will feature men of colour who are historic and contemporary icons linked to US history. The exhibition will kick off its 10-city tour at Cincinnati's National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, an affiliate of the Smithsonian, on August 17<sup>th</sup> and will then move from city to city over the course of three years.



The Mu-So-Lit Club's Lincoln-Douglass Dinner, 1940. Scurlock Studio Records, ca. 1905-1994, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.



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The exhibition sets out to highlight men of colour whose lives have been influential and revolutionary throughout the US's political, sports, scientific, business, religious, and entertainment history. A diverse panel of museum professionals, artists, advisors, curators, and academics contributed to the exhibition to determine who to focus on in the exhibition. In the end, just over 20 men have been selected including Muhammad Ali, James Baldwin, Ta-Nehisi Coates, W.E.B Du Bois, and Kendrick Lamar. These men, and others, represent the achievements of men of colour within the context of American history 'in spite of society's barriers.' Their stories are told through original artworks by artists of note, like Nina Chanel Abney, Derrick Adams, Robert Pruitt, Tariku Shiferaw, and Devan Shimoyama, alongside their biographies.

'We hope that by experiencing "Men of Change" visitors will see a lesson for us all, regardless of gender, race or nationality,' stated Myriam Springuel, director of Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) and Smithsonian Affiliations in a press release. 'In these men we see an absolute ideal and a well of inspiration that encourages us to become our best selves.'



Home Team – original artwork of Hollywood director Ryan Coogler by Alfred Conteh. Home Team/Courtesy artist Alfred Conteh and Galerie Myrtis.

The Smithsonian's exhibition comes at an integral time in making space for the **underrepresented**. In the past months, there has been a trend towards female only exhibitions, recognizing artists of colour, and artists who identify as part of the **LGBTQ+** community. 'Men of Change' offers a longer-term investment in highlighting men of colour and their role in history. Though a singular exhibition does not make up for the severe lack of diversity within museum collections, shows, and artists making it to auction, it is a step in the right direction.

The exhibition also follows the installation of the Smithsonian's first ever African American secretary, **Lonnie G. Bunch III**. Bunch will be at the helm of the Smithsonian, leading its 19 museums, 21 libraries, and even the National Zoo, as the institution navigates its 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Prior to taking his place as secretary of the historic institution, Bunch spearheaded plans for the National Museum of African American History and Culture and served as a co-founder of the museum until recently in June.

'Men of Change' is part of the **SITES** and has received funding from the Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services. After showing in Cincinnati, the exhibition will travel to Washington State Historical Museum in Tacoma from December 21<sup>st</sup> through February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 before moving on to other cities on the exhibition's docket.

'Men of Change: Power. Triumph. Truth.'		'Men of Change'		Derrick Adams	Devan Shimoyama	diversity
James Baldwin	Kendrick Lamar	Muhammed Ali	National Underground Railroad Freedom Center			Nina Chanel
Abney	Robert Pruitt	Smithsonian	Ta-Nehisi Coates	Tariku Shiferaw	travelling exhibition	
underrepresentation		W.E.B Du Bois				



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#### Theatrical trigger warnings and culpability

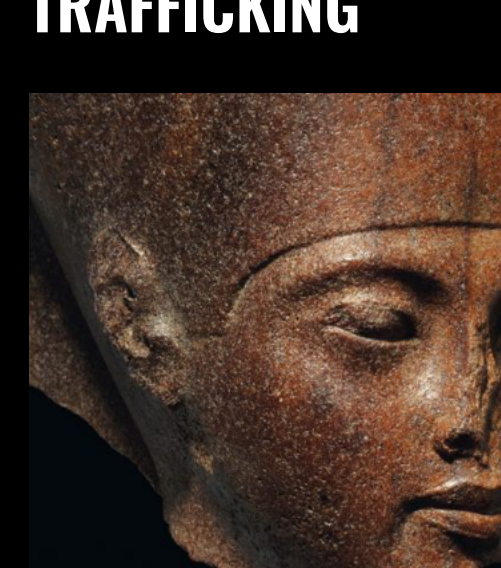
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On June 27th, the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) recognised 54



#### Famed NASA mission control:

Houston, we have... guests? Just a few weeks ahead of the 50th anniversary of



#### Monet's 'Water Lilies' hidden in plain sight

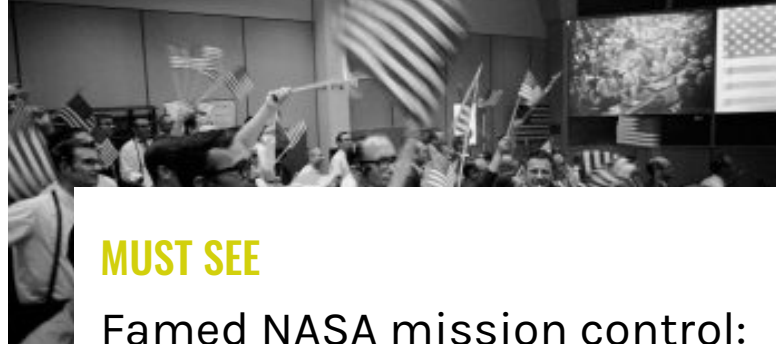
Water lilies and Claude Monet (1840-1926) more or less go hand-in-hand. One



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