



Houston Museum of African American Culture reopens with ‘Souls of Black Folk’

The Houston Museum of African American Culture reopens with limited hours and a show of more than 40 works by black artists past and present, national and local

Molly Glentzer June 19, 2020 Updated: June 22, 2020, 10:11 am



The Houston Museum of African American Culture reopened on June 19 — Juneteenth — with “The Souls of Black Folk.”

I N M A N G A L L E R Y

The show draws its title from W.E.B. DuBois' seminal 1903 book of essays on early 20th century black life and race relations in the U.S. DuBois describes the inability of whites to see their privilege from the perspective of blacks as a kind of one-way veil, but his essays also celebrate black spiritual and interior life.

Curator John Guess, museum's CEO emeritus, says the show emphasizes a statement black artists have been making for the past century: "We are here and we are resilient with our complicated souls intact."

Guess originally planned HMAAC's exhibition as an independent adjunct to the big touring show "The Soul of A Nation" at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. The pandemic shutdown derailed everyone's timing, although the exhibitions will still overlap. (The MFAH show opens June 27.)

HMAAC's "Souls of Black Folk" features more than 40 works on loan from private collections. The constellation ranges from legendary to emerging and national to local modern and contemporary artists — among them John Biggers, Rick Lowe, Floyd Newsum, Earlie Hudnall, Jr., Jamal Cyrus, Robert Pruitt, Jacob Lawrence, Elizabeth Catlett, Vicki Meek, Delita Martin, Kermit Oliver, Dominic Clay, Kaneem Smith, Danny Simmons, David McGee, Bert Long, Jr., Cedric Ingram, Michael Ray Charles, Carrie Mae Weems and Alonzo Williams.

"We wanted to reopen the museum with an exhibit for the times, with artists from the past but of these times too," said HMAAC board president Cindy Miles.