



Looking and Discussion Prompts for *Dawoud Bey: Elegy*

These prompts offer visitors helpful tips for visiting the exhibition [Dawoud Bey: Elegy](#).

Collection:	African American Art, Modern and Contemporary Art
Subject Area:	African American, Fine Arts, Visual Arts
Activity Type:	Special Exhibition

Explore [Dawoud Bey: Elegy](#) using this resource which provides prompts for careful looking and discussion of the photographs and films created by Dawoud Bey.

For a large-print version of the exhibition text use the [Dawoud Bey: Elegy Large Print Guide](#).

For copies of the transcripts use the [Exhibition Transcripts](#).

STONY THE ROAD & 350,000

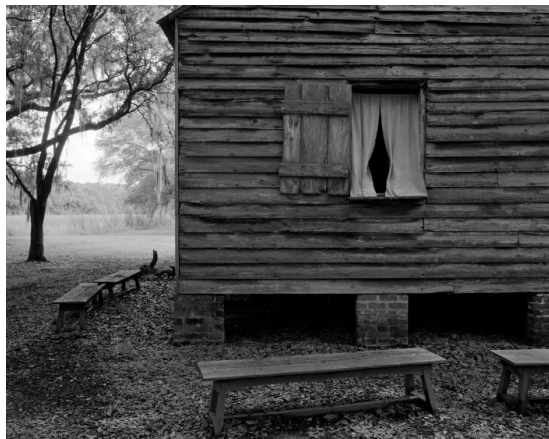


Look at the photographs in this room and view the film in the next gallery. These scenes are of a place in Richmond known as the Richmond Save Trail, a walking trail that documents the history of the trade of enslaved Africans from Africa to Virginia. The 2.5 mile trail follows the path enslaved individuals would have walked from arriving on the docks to the auction blocks to be sold.

Untitled (Trail and Trees), 2022, Dawoud Bey (American, born 1953), gelatin silver print, 48 x 59 in. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Mrs. Alfred duPont, by exchange, 2020.168.1. Image © Dawoud Bey

Think about how landscape can tell a story, even one from long ago. Can you think of a place you visit now where something important happened? Where is that place? What happened there? What kind of things happen there now?

IN THIS HERE PLACE & EVERGREEN



Look at the photographs in this room and view the film in the next gallery.

These artworks show places in Louisiana known as plantations, or large properties that forced enslaved people to work the fields, to tend crops, care for animals, and other jobs. The landscapes in these photographs and the film in the next gallery show trees, water, and buildings that enslaved people lived in. By taking photos of these buildings and settings the artist is asking us to imagine the history that happened here.

Cabin and Benches, 2019, Dawoud Bey
(American, born 1953), gelatin silver print,
Rennie Collection, Vancouver, Image ©
Dawoud Bey

Dawoud Bey often says “History is always present.” How might the photographs and film you saw highlight this idea? Can you think of ways history is present in your life?

NIGHT COMING TENDERLY BLACK



Look at the photographs in this room. In this last gallery, Bey travelled to Ohio, which is close to Canada, and freedom for enslaved people. Ohio was the last stop of the Underground Railroad, a system of secret paths and safe houses that helped enslaved people reach freedom in the North or outside of the U.S

Untitled #1 (Picket Fence and Farmhouse), 2017, Dawoud Bey
(American, born 1953), gelatin silver print,
48 x 59 in. Rennie Collection, Vancouver.
Image © Dawoud Bey

How does Bey’s work encourage you to reflect on the influence of history in our lives today?

Add your voice to the conversation! Make sure you stop by the lounge as you exit and respond to the questions posted there.

AFTER YOUR VISIT TO THE EXHIBITION...

Take a break. Sit in the museum’s sculpture garden or café to share a snack and think about the art you have seen today. Take time to reflect on what you noticed, felt, or thought and share your reflections

with someone you came with or write down your own thoughts.

[Search](#) for other landscapes in the permanent collection.

[Create artwork of your own inspired by Dawoud Bey!](#)

