

Best of 2018: Our Top 20 Exhibitions Across the United States

Art visualizing identity and community took center stage in our top 20 exhibitions across the United States for 2018.

December 20, 2018



Of 72 by Ebony Patterson (detail view) (image by Sarah Rose Sharp)

In 2018, artists and curators across the United States have been crafting brilliant exhibitions across the US, exploring themes of identity and community in innovative ways. Ebony G. Patterson made a maximalist tribute to victims of violence in her home country of Jamaica, while Joel Otterson crafted work recalling his parents' professions as a seamstress and plumber. Indigenous artists took the stage at the Anchorage Museum's *Unsettled* and Jeffrey Gibson's *This is the Day* at the Wellin Museum. The enthralling official Obama portraits, painted by Kehinde Wiley and Amy Serrano, were revealed at the National Gallery in DC, putting Black fine artists into the national consciousness. This list is an insight into the tastes of our US writers and the shows that moved them.

17. *Nine Moments for Now* at Cooper Gallery



October 31, 2018–January 21, 2019

Nine Moments for Now, curated by Dell Marie Hamilton, was an unexpected whammy of a show — a broad investigation of predominately Boston-based artists responding to, resisting, coping with, and exposing the violence of structural and outright racism. And a profound questioning of the integrity of the democratic process. The show's themes range from the funerary — an entire corridor is lined with photography covering Martin Luther King's death, activists lost to AIDS, and the mourning of some of the most iconic murders fueling the Black Lives Matter movement — to the infuriating, like Joy Buolamwini's "AI, Ain't I a Woman" — an exploration of how emerging technology is hard-coding a combination of racial and gender biases into machine learning. There are also celebrations of strength like L'Merchie Frazier's sparkling quilted portrait, "Ericka Huggins: Liberation Groceries." — *Heather Kapplow*