

In *Lessons of the Hour* (2019), British artist and filmmaker Sir Isaac Julien presents an immersive, multifaceted portrait of American abolitionist Frederick Douglass, who liberated himself from chattel slavery in 1838 and became one of the most important orators, writers, and statespersons of the nineteenth century.

Displayed across ten video screens, *Lessons of the Hour* composes a nonlinear narrative about Douglass's life and work using excerpts from several of his orations, autobiographies, personal correspondence, and theories about photography. As the most photographed American of his era, Douglass profoundly understood portraiture's ability to challenge racist stereotypes and advance the freedom of Black Americans and subjugated peoples around the world. His ideas about civil rights, citizenship, and democracy offer, Julien notes, "a historical lineage to all the debates we're involved in ourselves."

This presentation of *Lessons of the Hour* brings together for the first time a select group of nineteenth-century objects related to its main scenes, including photographic portraits of Douglass, pamphlets of his orations, first-edition memoirs, and a facsimile of one of his rare manuscripts on photography. A specially designed wallpaper comprising reproductions of period newspapers and magazine illustrations, among other materials, is also featured. Together with the photographs and assorted ephemera, *Lessons of the Hour* attests to how Douglass's image continues to resonate as powerfully as his words.

Organized by Ugochukwu-Smooth C. Nzewi, The Steven and Lisa Tananbaum Curator, with Erica DiBenedetto, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Painting and Sculpture.

Leadership support for the exhibition is provided by the Xin Zhang and Shiyi Pan Endowment Fund.

Major funding is provided by the Wallis Annenberg Director's Fund for Innovation in Contemporary Art.

Additional support is provided by the Annual Exhibition Fund. Leadership contributions to the Annual Exhibition Fund, in support of the Museum's collection and collection exhibitions, are generously provided by the Sandra and Tony Tamer Exhibition Fund, Sue and Edgar Wachenheim III, Jerry I. Speyer and Katherine G. Farley, Eva and Glenn Dubin, the Kate W. Cassidy Foundation, Kenneth C. Griffin, Alice and Tom Tisch, the Marella and Giovanni Agnelli Fund for Exhibitions, Mimi Haas, The David Rockefeller Council, The Contemporary Arts Council of The Museum of Modern Art, Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz, Kathy and Richard S. Fuld, Jr., The International Council of The Museum of Modern Art, Marie-Josée and Henry R. Kravis, Jo Carole and Ronald S. Lauder, and The Young Patrons Council of The Museum of Modern Art. Major contributions to the Annual Exhibition Fund are provided by The Sundheim Family Foundation.

For related content, programs, and a transcript of *Lessons of the Hour*, visit moma.org/isaacjulien.