

November 13, 2021

The Institute for Contemporary Art at VCU Presents *Jeremy Toussaint-Baptiste: Set It Off*

by Institute for Contemporary Art, Virginia Commonwealth University

Using sonic frequencies that register just below human audibility, this exhibition in Richmond, Virginia provides site-specific experiences for sound to be deeply felt.



Jeremy Toussaint-Baptiste, "Get Low (The Fall/The Drop)" (2021); wood, polyethylene, tinted glass, subwoofer, and water from the James River; exhibition view of *Jeremy Toussaint-Baptiste: Set It Off* at the Institute for Contemporary Art at VCU, Markel Center, True Farr Luck Gallery through June 19, 2022 (photo by David Hale)

MARTOS GALLERY

Set It Off is a multi-site exhibition by Jeremy Toussaint-Baptiste consisting of two variations of a monumental, immersive, sonic sculpture installed across both sites. At the Institute for Contemporary Art at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), visitors are invited to enter two large-scale black cubes made of wood, polyethylene, and tinted glass. Just a few blocks away at 1708 Gallery, visitors will encounter a black square pool made of similar materials. Each structure uniquely incorporates the circulation of water from the James River, which flows across the entire state of Virginia, reminding us to consider our bodies as mediums for environmental pollutants.

Since the 1980s, music has been used to push the limits of car audio and sound systems. Music genres like Bounce, Miami Bass, synth bass, and trap intensify cars, clubs, and their surrounding areas. Inescapable in many US cities, bass produces deep affinities but also aversions and sensitivities. While some are conditioned to enjoy the impact of excessive bass, others are given no choice but to experience its intensity. *Set It Off* intends to shake the room, using the car audio system as the most recognizable transmitter of bass.

Coursing through *Set It Off* is a resistance to predetermined representations of Black American experiences, which are most often simplified as experiences of victimhood, violence, and oppression, or worse, as absent, static, and universal, because of selective omission throughout history. Toussaint-Baptiste invites visitors to engage deeply with the site, considering the implications of sound, visibility, and performance.

This exhibition is dually located at 1708 Gallery and the ICA. The ICA is free and open to the public.

To learn more, visit icavcu.org.

Set It Off is co-curated by ICA Curator Amber Esseiva and Park C. Myers, the Royall Family Curator at 1708 Gallery.