

# DAVID McGEE biography

Born in 1962, Lockhart, Louisiana  
Resides in Houston, Texas

## SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2018 *New Paintings*, South Texas College, McAllen, Texas  
2017-18 *The Telling and The Told* (traveling), HMAAC, Houston, Texas, The Gallery of University of Texas Arlington, Arlington, Texas  
2017 *Urban Dread and The Complications of Water*, Texas Gallery Houston, Texas  
2014 *The Return of MOFO*, Texas Gallery, Houston, Texas  
2010 *Ready Made Africans*, Menil Collection Houston, Texas  
2007 *El Sonador Elegante*, DiverseWorks, Houston, Texas  
2005 *Black Narcissus*, Texas Gallery, Houston, Texas  
*Black Rider*, Weber State University, Ogden, Utah  
2004 *Tetelestai: Notebooks From the Black Sea*, DiverseWorks, Houston, Texas (catalogue)  
2001 *15 Minutes*, RISD Museum, Providence, Rhode Island  
2000 *Black Flies and Socialites*, David Beitzel Gallery, New York, New York  
1998 *Black Comedies and Night Music*, (traveling) Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, Texas; Southeast Center for Contemporary Art, Winston Salem, North Carolina (catalogue)  
1996 *Stepin Fetchit Amongst the Nobles*, Galveston Arts Center, Galveston, Texas  
1994 *The Wastelands*, Texas Gallery, Houston, Texas  
*Landscape of the Soul*, Project Row Houses, Houston, Texas  
1988 *Jazz and Other Serious Matters*, Midtown Art Center, Houston, Texas

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2017 *The Big Show*, Lawndale Art Center Houston, Texas  
2016 *Contemporary Portraiture*, The Gallery at The University Of Texas Arlington, Arlington, Texas  
2015 *The Secret of The Hanging Egg*, The Menil Collection Houston, Texas  
*Defining The Body; Contemporary Figuration on Paper*, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Houston, Texas  
*Abstraction vs. Figurative*, HMAAC, Houston, Texas  
*Point By Point*, galleryHOMELAND, Houston, Texas  
2012 *About Face*, ACME Gallery, Los Angeles, California  
2011 *Go West*, UNESCO, Paris, France  
*Silver-25th Anniversary Exhibition*, The Menil Collection, Houston, Texas  
2010 *Recent acquisitions*, Menil Collection Houston, Texas  
2005 *Double Consciousness: Black Conceptual Art Since 1970*, Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, Texas

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS (contd.)

- 2002 *Art, Artist, and the Addison*, Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, Massachusetts  
1999 *Re-Righting History: Counternarratives by Contemporary African American Artists*, Katonah Museum of Art, Katonah, New York  
1996 *Breaking into the Mainstream: Texas African American Artists*, Irving Arts Center, Irving, Texas  
1993 *Texas Between Two Worlds* (traveling), Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, Texas; Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth and The Art Museum of South Texas, Corpus Christi, Texas  
1992 *Fresh Visions/New Voices* (traveling), Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas; Galveston Arts Center, Galveston, Texas, and Arlington Museum of Art, Arlington, Texas

## SELECTED AWARDS & GRANTS

- 2014-15 CALL Project Artist, Joan Mitchell Foundation, New York, New York; DiverseWorks, Houston, Texas  
2006 Joan Mitchell Painters & Sculptors Grant, New York, New York  
2011 Texan-French Alliance for the Arts Award, Houston, Texas  
2005 Texas Accountant and Lawyers for the Arts (TALA) Artist of the Year  
1994 Mid-America Arts Alliance

## SELECTED PERMANENT COLLECTIONS

- Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, Texas  
Houston Museum of African American Art, Houston, Texas  
Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, Massachusetts  
Art Museum of Southeast Texas, Beaumont, Texas  
Boston Museum of Art, Boston, Massachusetts  
Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas  
The Menil Collection, Houston, Texas  
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Houston, Texas  
Rhode Island School of Design Museum, Providence, Rhode Island  
Seattle Arts Council, Seattle, Washington  
University of Texas, Austin, Texas  
W.E.B. DuBois Institute for Afro-American Studies, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts  
University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington, Texas

Front: *Viking* (detail), 2016-17, oil, wax and mixed media on canvas, 73 x 70 in.  
Loan courtesy of the artist and Texas Gallery

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# DAVID McGEE BLACK PAINTINGS

On view December 14, 2019 - March 1, 2020

# BLACK PAINTINGS



*Ragnar*, 2016, oil, wire and glue on canvas, 60 x 48 in.  
Loan courtesy of the artist and Texas Gallery

## Move

*verb*

1. go in a specified direction or manner; change position.
2. make progress; develop in a particular manner or direction.

*What is it to move from the only place you've known since birth, forcibly removed from the land of your ancestors, packed onto a boat, tightly packed, sleeping in filth for months, next to the sick and the dead, with no sense of where/why you are being taken, chained. Bound. Beaten down from the chaos. Left with no room for movement...*

David Wayne McGee is a painter of things. An artist of precise talent, well-trained and thoughtful in his approach, McGee makes good use of intentional brush strokes of political satire and wit. He plays in the shadows with critical commentary hidden inside whimsical portraits about class structures, race and the American way.

*The boat lands. Strange lands. The unknown is present. Broken and bound. Watching others go before you, filled with anticipation, a growing sense of dread. One familiar sight: the vast, ever-present, undulating ocean. The sirens call, sounds rippling forth from the foam like an answered prayer. Solutions present themselves as clear as the golden light blinding your eyes as you turn and fly towards the sun...*

*Black Paintings* from a Black man living in America. Black life, Black politics, Black love. Most of the pieces in this show come from McGee's ongoing series *Urban Dread*, white and black treatises on the stark realities of life. The paintings themselves consist of oil, wax and sand on burlap. Their rough, gritty texture represents graffiti, white flight and (sub)urban angst. Street life, nappy hair, the systemic condemnation of such life and hair. McGee in this role plays the conductor of a ghetto opera. He places each painting side by side, forcing the audience to move through the series, experiencing these images as chapters in a book.

Where the journey of *Urban Dread* through the present day ends, the internal emotional exploration of *Black Star* begins. Rugged compositions give way to velvet darkness, falling into the minds of the ancestral souls who survived the Middle Passage. *Black Star* takes the observer into a dream state, playing concrete images of hope, future and transformation like a silent movie. The powerful starkness of the white and black remain; voodoo bones, Shiva, a star—images reveal themselves as tools, a hymn to the slave, a lyrical prayer.

Transformation is the theme. Meditation is the key. Stilled thoughts on long ago lost lives and stolen legacies. These works are a departure from the elitist satire that McGee is known for; they are a trip into the Akashic abyss. They come from the time that circles around the Tree of No Return. They remind us that genetic memory runs deep and speaks loudly. They remind us of the strength that lies within. They remind us that we are always trying to get back home.

*Felicia Johnson, November 2019*

*Felicia Johnson is a writer and filmmaker based in Houston, Texas*



From left: *Target*; *Cuff & Rope #2*; *Cuff & Rope #3*,  
2016, mixed medium on burlap, 24 x 18 in., Loan courtesy of the artist and Texas Gallery