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'Dress Up, Speak Up' Exhibition Explores Costuming, Iconography, And Performance

By BWW News Desk

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21c Museum Hotels has announced a major multimedia exhibition exploring the role of costuming, iconography, and performance in constructing Identity and confronting history. With over 35 participating artists representing 22 nationalities, Dress Up, Speak Up delivers a global investigation of these concepts, while reconfiguring, reimagining, and reconstituting history to explore the legacy of European colonialism.

Bedecked and bejeweled, the figures populating Dress Up, Speak Up occupy fluid space and time, evoking past and present, fact and fiction, memory and desire, to illuminate the complexity of contemporary identity. From Ebony G. Patterson's families, dancers, gangstas, and deceased; to the philosophers, dandies, and faerie conjured by Yinka Shonibare MBE; to portraits derived from allegory, autobiography, and the art canon by Titus Kaphar, Firelei Báez, Berni Searle, Vivek Vilasini, Fahamu Pecou, and others; this pantheon of provocative and prophetic personages are costumed to enact and confront the legacy of embedded experience.

"Whether clad in the stylized garb of Enlightenment-era Europe, the traditional coverings of ancient religious tradition, or the gender-bending bling of popular culture, these representations of self and other role-play in real time, reaching back through history to address prevailing personal, social, and political challenges," says Chief Curator Alice Gray Stites. "For those who inherit a legacy of resisting cultural erasure, telling untold tales-lived, remembered, or imagined-remains vital."

Participating artists include: Ravi Agarwal, Daphne Arthur, Firelei Báez, Nick Cave, Kudzanai Chiurai, Nathalia Edenmont, Jeannette Ehlers, Gaela Erwin, Eri Imamura, Bae Joonsung, Kim Joon, Titus Kaphar, Vinhay Keo, Dinh Q. Le, Hew Locke, Beverly McIver, Raúl de Nieves, Erwin Olaf, Mariú Palacios, Ebony G. Patterson, Jody Paulsen, Fahamu Pecou, Jefferson Pinder, Athi-Patra Ruga, Berni Searle, Quentin Shih, Yinka Shonibare MBE, Patrick Smith, Stephanie Syjuco, Drew Tal, Frohawk Two Feathers, Vivek Vilasini, Kehinde Wiley, and Wilmer Wilson.

21c Museum is a multi-venue museum located in seven cities, with an eighth location debuting in Kansas City in summer 2018. One of the largest contemporary art museums in the U.S., and North America's only collecting museum dedicated solely to art of the 21st century, each property features exhibition space open free of charge to the public, combined with a boutique hotel and chef-driven restaurant. It was founded in 2006 by Laura Lee Brown and Steve Wilson; philanthropists, preservationists, and collectors, committed to expanding access to contemporary art as a means of catalyzing urban revitalization and civic connection. 21c presents a range of arts programming curated by Museum Director, Chief Curator Alice Gray Stites, including both solo and group exhibitions that reflect the global nature of art today, as well as site-specific, commissioned installations, and a variety of cultural events. The organization collaborates on arts initiatives with artists and organizations worldwide, including North Carolina Museum of Art, MASS MoCA, Contemporary Art Museum Houston, The Barnes Foundation, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, Creative Capital Foundation, Creative Time, and others. For more information visit 21cMuseumHotels.com and follow us on social media at [@21cHotels](https://twitter.com/21cHotels) or [#21cMuseumHotel](https://twitter.com/21cMuseumHotel).