

NEWS RELEASE

**CLARK
ART
INSTITUTE**

Williamstown
Massachusetts 01267
413 458 2303
clarkart.edu

For Immediate Release
February 9, 2024

[Download Images](#)

CLARK ART INSTITUTE PRESENTS SOLO EXHIBITION OF WORKS BY CONTEMPORARY ARTIST DAVID-JEREMIAH

David-Jeremiah: I Drive Thee opens on February 10, 2024

Williamstown, Massachusetts—The Clark Art Institute’s fifth installment of its art in public spaces program presents a year-long installation of works by contemporary artist David-Jeremiah (b. 1985, Oak Cliff, Texas; lives and works in Dallas). *David-Jeremiah: I Drive Thee* is on view in the Clark Center’s lower level and in the reading room of the Manton Research Center through January 26, 2025.

“We look forward to introducing David-Jeremiah’s powerful work to our visitors,” said Olivier Meslay, Hardymon Director of the Clark. “The Clark is the first museum to present his artwork outside his home state and we think our audience will be intrigued to study this exciting new artist.”

I Drive Thee is an overview of and conclusion to David-Jeremiah’s cycle of works of the same name. The Lamborghini has long been David-Jeremiah’s muse—a fascination that is as much about the Italian sports car’s muscular design as its mythology, which is steeped in the tradition of Spanish bullfighting. Most Lamborghini models are named after famous fighting bulls and its logo shows the animal charging. For the artist, both the car and the bullfight reflect on Black masculinity in America, the first as a symbol of status and performance, the second as a spectacle of power and persecution. With the series title, David-Jeremiah imagines a human-bull dialogue about agency and appetite, asking both who drives and who is driven.

In addition to a new, site-specific installation, the exhibition includes three circular panels, also known as tondos. Each is five feet in diameter and its monochrome, semi-abstract design is rendered in enamel paint and rope on wood panel. The textured surfaces of each work range from thick impasto to low relief; their forms are based on the steering wheels of different models of Lamborghini as well as



orchid blossom and collarbone motifs, each of which plays a role in the artist's highly developed symbolic universe. While matadors are typically granted flowers for their bravery, David-Jeremiah imagines a gift specific to the bull—the orchid blossom. With their distinctly testicular tubers, orchids are an ancient symbol of virility, even as their flowers have represented fertility. Similar dualities define the frilly, feminized costume of the matador, a paragon of masculinity. The collarbone, anatomy that bulls lack, is for David-Jeremiah like a fingerprint at a crime scene, a sign of human culpability for the bull's demise.

“David-Jeremiah makes formally inventive and conceptually rich artworks that turn on a dime between visceral gravitas and mordant humor. His voice—on the wall and on the page—is unique,” said Robert Wiesenberger, curator of contemporary projects.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

In the *I Drive Thee* series, David-Jeremiah reads the ritualized violence of the bullfight as a lens on Black masculinity in America, drawing out themes of nobility, cowardice, and glory. The artist saw these themes contested during his four years of incarceration, a period whose material constraints shaped him into the conceptual artist that he is today.

The four sets of seven works that comprise the complete *I Drive Thee* series are mostly in shades of red, with a contrasting tondo in each set. The Clark's exhibition represents an overview of the series by assembling these contrasting tondos—in black, yellow, and orange—from both public and private collections. The black tondo, which appears on the double height granite wall of the Clark Center's lower level, stands for nobility, a virtue prized in bullfighting. A yellow tondo nearby represents cowardice, a trait in animals that can result in either survival or destruction. An orange tondo, in the Manton Research Center's reading room, stands for the blazing glory of the victor in the bullfight.



The centerpiece of the installation in the Manton Research Center is a site-specific installation which marks the conclusion to the *I Drive Thee* series. In this new commission, *L'Anima*, a white tondo, which represents the soul that survives the vanquished bull, has been ceremonially cremated by the artist. Its ashes will be presented in seven artist-designed urns, modeled on the single-spoke steering wheel of the Lamborghini Athon, along with photographs and a video documenting the work prior to and during its destruction.

The works in *David-Jeremiah: I Drive Thee* are installed in public areas of the Clark and can be viewed without paying admission.

This installation is accompanied by a publication featuring an essay by the curator, a text by the artist, and illustrations of all works in the exhibition.

David-Jeremiah: I Drive Thee is organized by the Clark Art Institute and curated by Robert Wiesenberger, curator of contemporary projects.

Generous support is provided by Agnes Gund.

ABOUT THE ARTIST



David-Jeremiah is a conceptual, multidisciplinary artist. He is a recipient of the 2020 Nasher Sculpture Center Artist Grant Award and his work is included in the collection of the Dallas Museum of Art. He was the subject of a solo presentation at the Houston Museum of African American Culture in 2022.

RELATED EVENTS

Publication Launch: David-Jeremiah, *I Drive Thee*

Thursday, May 23, 6 pm
Auditorium, Manton Research Center

In celebration of David-Jeremiah's first publication, the artist joins Robert Wiesenberger, the Clark's curator of contemporary projects, for a discussion of his work and his installation at the Clark.

Free. A public reception and publication signing will follow the conversation. Copies of *David-Jeremiah: I Drive Thee* will be available for purchase at the event and in the Museum Store.

ABOUT THE CLARK

The Clark Art Institute, located in the Berkshires of western Massachusetts, is one of a small number of institutions globally that is both an art museum and a center for research, critical discussion, and higher education in the visual arts. Opened in 1955, the Clark houses exceptional European and American paintings and sculpture, extensive collections of master prints and drawings, English silver, and early photography. Acting as convener through its Research and Academic Program, the Clark gathers an international community of scholars to participate in a lively program of conferences, colloquia, and workshops on topics of vital importance to the visual arts. The Clark library, consisting of some 300,000 volumes, is one of the nation's premier art history libraries. The Clark also houses and co-sponsors the Williams College Graduate Program in the History of Art.

The Clark, which has a three-star rating in the Michelin Green Guide, is located at 225 South Street in Williamstown, Massachusetts. Its 140-acre campus includes miles of hiking and walking trails through woodlands and meadows, providing an exceptional experience of art in nature. Galleries are open 10 am to 5 pm Tuesday through Sunday, from September through June, and daily in July and August. Admission is free January through March and is \$20 from March through December; admission is free year-round for Clark members, all visitors age 21 and under, and students with a valid student ID. Free admission is also available through several programs, including First Sundays Free; a local library pass program; and EBT Card to Culture. For information on these programs and more, visit clarkart.edu or call 413 458 2303.

Press contact:

Carolynn McCormack
cmccormack@clarkart.edu
413 458 0588