

LOS ANGELES (34.0397° N, 118.3229° W) —

Water.

Woman.

Moon.

Flow.

Aqueducts.

Flint. Capetown. Compton. Objectless.

Otherness.

Empathy.

Cosmos.

Space.

Phenomenology. Molecules.

Light.

The unseen.

Perseverance. Independence.

Los Angeles.

Sun.

Climate.

Energy.

Exploration.

Conception.

Power.

The Underground Museum (The UM) presents *Water & Power*, the fourth exhibition curated by its founder, the late painter and installation artist Noah Davis. The exhibition features work by artists Olafur Eliasson, Hans Haacke, and James Turrell from the permanent collection of The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA), along with Los Angeles based artist Fred Eversley and Los Angeles' Poet Laureate, Robin Coste-Lewis.

The show is both historical and global in its scope. It includes some of the earliest works by Eliasson, Haacke, and Turrell, when they were just beginning their exploration of natural phenomena as sculptural material: elusive rainbows, ceaseless condensation and minimalist architecture are rendered from light, liquid, and atmosphere. Each artist makes present ecological systems that we humans are intrinsically a part of. A parabolic lens by LA-based Light & Space pioneer, Eversley, demonstrates how energy guides form, and Coste-Lewis's poem maps

geographies of people through her project on the indigenous circumpolar diaspora, Arctic colonialism/exploration, and Matthew Henson.

Water & Power offers an opportunity for engaging community on the topic of our shared environment. The exhibition's title alludes to the ways that natural resources are distributed (and withheld) along social, racial and class lines. The UM is located in a predominantly Black and Latino, working-class neighborhood—demographics too often left out of climate change discussions. Our signature free public programs will bring artists, writers, futurists, and scientists together in conversation on ecology and political systems. The show is fertile ground (pun intended) to discuss strategies for building environmental equity throughout South LA, increasing local green spaces, and sustainability practices.

The iconic Department of Water and Power building in downtown Los Angeles is a corporate tower that appears to levitate in the middle of a massive reflective pool surrounded by fountains. Noah and his wife, Karon Davis, lived for a time directly across the street. When creating this exhibition, perhaps he was remembering a moment, being in that particular apartment, looking at that building, thinking about its history, and its present-day operations. This might have led to his consideration of our place in the universe, the fact that we are one element among many other elements—both organic and manmade. Or the many forms of water: drinking, fountains, rivers, oceans. The water inside, and outside, of our bodies. It's the same, is it all blue? Or how far light had to travel, some of it prehistoric, just to be here now.

Truthfully, we do not know everything Noah wanted to express on water or power. He left us with 18 exhibition titles and corresponding checklists, but no explanation for his shows. And while we wish daily that Noah was with us to share his ideas, serendipitously, his absence means that all viewers—the Davis family, The UM's staff, and audiences alike—are left to individually decide what each exhibition is about. In this process, Noah has made us better observers, better listeners, and better thinkers. We welcome the exploration with you.

Every evening we unfold the light
and every morning fold it back
to return the blue to the sky.
This is the light just passing through,
just beneath that usually seen.
Who owns it?
You who look.

Not to be held, but known.

– James Turrell

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