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Russell, Grace. "EXHIBITION REVIEW: DAWOUD BE." *Musée Magazine*. September 22, 2021.

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VANGUARD OF PHOTOGRAPHY CULTURE



Swamp, 2019 © Dawoud Bey, Courtesy: Sean Kelly, New York

Dawoud Bey is widely known for his portraits depicting underrepresented communities. His latest project, *In This Here Place* — on view at the Sean Kelly Gallery until Oct. 23 — features large-scale landscape photographs, shining the light on the remains of some of the most prominent plantations in Louisiana.

Bey's work focuses on uncovering hidden histories, with an emphasis on power, visibility and race. Through this project, he was determined to overcome the challenge of depicting history in the present by using photography to make the past resonate within the modern day.

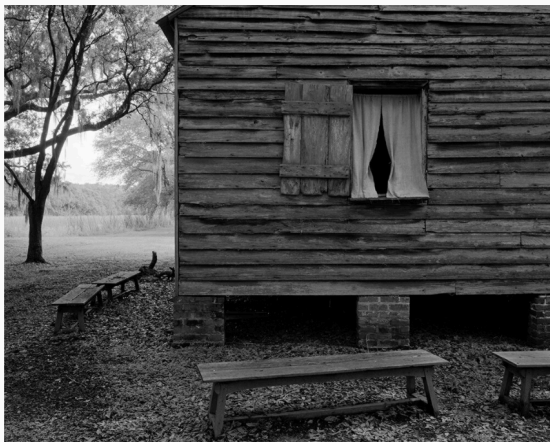
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Cabin and Palm Trees, 2019 © Dawoud Bey, Courtesy: Sean Kelly, New York

A continuation of Bey's exploration of African American history, *In This Here Place* is the third project in the series. It follows *The Birmingham Project* (2012), a photographic tribute to the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing victims in Birmingham, Alabama, and *Night Coming Tenderly, Black* (2017), which explored real and imagined areas along the Underground Railroad through landscape images.

For this new body of work, Bey traveled along the west banks of the Mississippi River. He visited the Evergreen, Laura, Whitney, Oak Alley and Destrehan plantations to photograph the now uninhabited sites where more than a thousand people were enslaved over the years.



Cabin and Benches, 2019 © Dawoud Bey, Courtesy: Sean Kelly, New York



Irrigation Ditch, 2019 © Dawoud Bey, Courtesy: Sean Kelly, New York

Cutting through each plantation's eerily calm demeanor, Bey visualizes the traumatic past through the lens. In *Cabin and Benches* (2019), a long-forgotten cabin stands over a bleak landscape. In *Irrigation Ditch* (2019), a stream of water pierces through the fields. The history of captivity is conveyed through Bey's various camera angles, shifts in the distance and use of black and white.

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Accompanying the images in the exhibition, a three-channel video titled *Evergreen* presents a poetically moving exploration of its namesake plantation. The unpopulated film conveys a human presence using exceptional vocals from Imani Uzuri. The video sets a somber atmosphere in the gallery, intimately drawing the viewer in.



Sugarcane I, 2019 © Dawoud Bey, Courtesy: Sean Kelly, New York

In This Here Place is a chillingly honest and emotional exhibit. The remarkable way that Bey shares this history through photographs of the present makes this project an incredibly constructed stand-out in his career.

An online viewing room of Dawoud Bey's *In This Here Place* can be found [here](#)



Open Window, 2019 © Dawoud Bey, Courtesy: Sean Kelly, New York