

ARTNEWS

New Solange Video Features Rothko Chapel, Work by Jacolby Satterwhite, Robert Pruitt, More

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Solange in 2018.
LEXIE MORELAND/WWD/SHUTTERSTOCK

Well, this is quite a Friday night surprise. Solange just released a 33-minute music video to accompany her new album, *When I Get Home*, and it is a full-on contemporary-art feast.

The dramatically shot piece opens and—spoiler alert—closes inside the Rothko Chapel in Houston, and, in between, includes majestic animated portraits by [Robert Pruitt](#) (who was born in Houston, like Solange) and delirious computer-generated dance scenes by [Jacolby Satterwhite](#), who's a contributing director on the project.

Solange edited and directed the work, and was joined by three more contributing directors, Alan Ferguson (her husband), Terence Nance, and Ray Tintori. [Autumn Knight](#), the New York-based artist who was just tapped for the [2019 Whitney Biennial](#), also contributed to the project.

Last year, the singer told *T: The New York Times Style Magazine*, that, growing up in Houston, the Menil Collection “was one of the first art spaces I had access to. I would go into the Rothko Chapel,” which is located next door to the museum’s main space, “and sit in there for hours.”

The Rothko Chapel was conceived by the storied collectors and philanthropists [John and Dominique de Menil](#), with the idea of having Mark Rothko create paintings for a space that would be designed by Philip Johnson. But the artist and architect disagreed about aspects of the building, and Howard Barnstone and then Eugene Aubry went on to work its design.

Rothko ended his life in 1970, at the age of 66. The non-denominational chapel opened a year later, and has become a treasured site in Houston, hosting interfaith religious meetings, musical performances, and a variety of other gatherings. A pool out front frames Barnett Newman’s *Broken Obelisk* (1963–67), which was dedicated by the Menils to Martin Luther King, Jr. When they proposed giving the work to the city in the honor of the murdered civil-rights leader, their gift was rejected.

(An important note for those wanting to visit the remarkable site: After this weekend, the Rothko Chapel is [shuttering for renovations](#) that will keep it closed for eight months, so if you are eager to visit, move quickly.)

Johnson, as it happens, also figures elsewhere in the *When I Get Home* video. The Fort Worth Water Gardens, which he designed with John Burgee, and which were built in 1974 in that Texas city, make an appearance, with a large group of performers on its steps amid flowing water.

Those seeking more shots of dancing outside divisive examples of 1970s architecture are in luck: some of the video’s most striking scenes take place at night outside Dallas’s I.M. Pei–designed city hall, which opened in 1978.

The video also goes through stretches that suggest the retro-futurism of a Nam June Paik or Trisha Baga, and it includes sumptuous shots of the American landscape, nodding to the Land Art movement of the 1960s and ’70s. Other scenes follow black men, women, and children as they ride horses through those environs, recalling photographs by Deana Lawson, Brad Trent, and others that have appeared in, among other exhibitions, the Studio

MITCHELL-INNES & NASH

Museum in Harlem's 2016–17 show "Black Cowboy," which Solange's video provides a nice excuse to revisit.

This is far from the first foray that Solange has made into contemporary art. In recent years she has also orchestrated performances at the Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas, the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, and the Guggenheim Museum in New York.

She has also been critical of the culture of the art industry, telling an audience at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago in 2017, "The art world definitely has its own set of issues, and in my opinion there is a tonality in certain of the spaces and institutions that as a black artist you should just be happy to be here. I'm not interested in that conversation."

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