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30 Americans Exhibition Statement

The Rubell family describes their collection and the impetus for *30 Americans*:

Since we started collecting in the 1960s, we have always collected African American artists as a part of our broader mission to collect the most interesting art of our time. Approximately three years ago, we found there was a critical mass of emerging African American artists, and began the process of understanding what seemed to be a new movement. When we asked these artists about their influences, we heard some of the same names over and over: Robert Colescott, Renée Green, David Hammons, Barkley Hendricks, Kerry James Marshall, Gary Simmons, Lorna Simpson, Kara Walker, and Carrie Mae Weems.

As the show evolved, we decided to call it 30 Americans. "Americans," rather than "African Americans" or "Black Americans," because nationality is a statement of fact, while racial identity is a question each artist answers in his or her own way, or not at all. And the number 30 because we acknowledge, even as it is happening, that this show does not include everyone who could be in it. The truth is, because we do collect right up to the last minute before a show, there are actually 31 artists in 30 Americans.

Rubell Family
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