



Hank Willis Thomas at Kayne Griffin Corcoran

ART PICK: HANK WILLIS THOMAS



SHANA NYS DAMBROT ([HTTPS://WWW.LAWEEKLY.COM/AUTHOR/SNDAMBROT/](https://www.laweekly.com/author/sndambrot/)). ✕ JANUARY 17, 2020

You could almost think of what Hank Willis Thomas does as making visual and linguistic puns, except his wit goes much deeper than humor. Across some decades and a number of different but strategically related series, Thomas has undertaken to both deconstruct and illustrate with clarity the accepted, unconscious race and gender biases embedded

in how we communicate.

He has repurposed luxury and sports-brand advertisements as critiques on ownership and fetishization of black bodies, exposed more subtle but no less racist tropes encoded even in advertisements aimed at black consumers. He has toyed with the bigotry seething beneath allegedly innocuous words and his perspective on American popular culture is always tethered to its fraught and institutionally unjust history.

In his newest body of work, *An All Colored Cast*, the artist turns his attention to the film industry, in photo-based works fusing aesthetic cues from mid-century abstract painting and appropriating actual iconography from studio cinema — all to highlight the deeper dimensions of terms like “color correction” and the power and portrayal of race in cinema.

Kayne Griffin Corcoran, 1201 S. La Brea Ave., Mid-Wilshire; opening reception: Sat., Jan. 18, 6-8 p.m.; exhibition dates: January 18-March 7; free. [kaynegriffincorcoran.com](http://www.kaynegriffincorcoran.com). (<https://www.kaynegriffincorcoran.com/exhibitions/hank-willis-thomas>).



Hank Willis Thomas, Sundown (Color bar) 2019_ UV print on retroreflective vinyl (Courtesy of Kayne Griffin Corcoran)