

METRO PICTURES

Cohen, Alina. "5 Standout New York Exhibitions to See This April," *Artsy.net* (April 5, 2019).

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Isaac Julien, *The North Star (Lessons of The Hour)*, 2019.

In a red-carpeted theater at Metro Pictures, Isaac Julien's gorgeous new film *Lessons of the Hour* (2019) plays across 10 screens; the piece offers reimagined and reenacted scenes from the life of Frederick Douglass. In addition to portrayals of Douglass speaking at a podium, traveling, and walking through the woods, some channels simply focus on lush atmospheric shots: orange leaves in an autumnal forest; ornate interiors; a train chugging along a barren landscape. Importantly, Julien's work gives viewers a creative new depiction of a historical subject; Douglass himself prized photography and the popularization of his own image. On a purely aesthetic level, *Lessons of the Hour* provides a beautiful study in color and form. Julien asks viewers, at any given time, to contemplate the 10 different vignettes as one coherent narrative about an iconic figure—while relating Douglass's struggles to the current moment. (While at the gallery, be sure to head upstairs to also see Jim Shaw's dreamy, bizarre paintings—one of which features a family of potatoes.)