

# METRO PICTURES

Fateman, Johanna. "At the Galleries," *The New Yorker* (April 1, 2019): 8-9.

## THE NEW YORKER

### Isaac Julien

#### Metro Pictures

**CHELSEA** The British filmmaker's latest installation, "Lessons of the Hour—Frederick Douglass," is a visually opulent, melancholic meditation on the abolitionist, who escaped slavery in Maryland to become the most photographed American man of the nineteenth century. In the image-making technology of his time, Douglass saw such black representation as crucial to social progress. It's fitting, then, that on ten screens of various sizes—a fractured panorama—Julien evokes the miscellaneous formats of a family photo album as he leads viewers through interiors and landscapes haunted by slavery's horrors. Douglass, played by an actor, is accompanied by narration excerpted from his famous speeches. In the front gallery, a striking presentation of images, including large-scale color prints and tintype portraits shot on Julien's set, further elucidates the hybrid, mediated character of contemporary historical memory—and Douglass's prescient grasp of it.—*J.F. (Through April 13.)*