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The main sound installation of American Monument by artist lauren woods at The Beall Center for Art + Technology at UC Irvine. Tuesday, Oct. 15. Photo by Asia Morris.

DO THIS!

OCT 16 2019 6:00 AM

Today, you should... analyze the complex relationship between race, power and violence

Asia Morris



WEDNESDAY, OCT. 16

It's a strange feeling, reading a detailed description of what Sandra Bland's cell looked like, from the placement of the sink to the color of her bedding, in a report printed out and displayed in American Monument, artist lauren woods' and co-leader Kimberli Meyer's traveling installation examining the "cultural conditions under which African-Americans lose their lives to police brutality."

Never fully realized at Cal State Long Beach's campus museum (now called the Kleefeld Contemporary), American Monument opened at the Beall Center for Art + Technology at UC Irvine on Oct. 5. The turntables are on this time; the records that were paused for the duration of their stay last year in Long Beach can be played, you'll just have to drive 30-40 minutes down the 405 to hear them (that's sans traffic, mind you).

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The "Today You Shauld" Newsletter is now "Do This!" Subscribe and we'll let you know whenever there's something great to do in or around Long Beach.

Though it's been a year since the Long Beach exhibit—you can learn more about why woods placed her own artwork on pause <u>here</u>—the installation's reason for being remains timely in the wake of another highprofile police shooting, this time the killing of 28-year-old Atatiana Jefferson, an African American woman shot while sitting inside a Fort Worth house, playing video games with her 8-year-old nephew.



After firing of museum director, artist walks out of exhibit on opening night at CSULB



Artist lauren woods said the museum is not capable of hosting this first iteration of the artwork and that it can only resume its "cocreative process" if Meyer is brought back as director of the museum.

the Hi-lo

The legal document on Bland—an African American woman found dead, hanged, in her Waller County, Texas jail cell three days after being arrested during a traffic stop—is just one of hundreds, maybe thousands of pages viewers can read at the Beall Center gleaned from an extensive Freedom of Information Act request process. This particular document read like a set design, sterile, emotionless, removed. A lot of us receive word of these deaths as news clips, Facebook videos, waves of angry tweets on a screen, a phone, computer, television, often from the comfort of our own homes; removed.

Perhaps the beauty of the artwork's main sound installation, each turntable representing a police killing, the audio materials from record requests, is that it takes you out of that comfort and creates an environment where you can choose, by placing down the needle, to allow sounds of fear and violence to play throughout the gallery. Maybe you'll feel less removed, more present, a modicum of what it was like to bear witness to any of the 22 deaths highlighted, from Alton Sterling to Philando Castile to Trayvon Martin to Bland.

Viewers are even given a sticker upon entrance to the space that reads, "WITNESS."



Stickers with the word "WITNESS" are given to viewers of American Monument to wear at the Beal Center for Art + Technology at UC Irvine. Tuesday, Oct. 15. Photo by Asia Morris.

The installation encourages contemplation of what woods found through

close readings of use-of-force reports, prosecutor reports, witness testimonies, 911 calls and video footage, that "police use of white dominant cultural constructions and stereotypes of 'Blackness,' mined from pop culture, to justify fatal violence," according to the press material. She wants you to "ponder how the law is created, interpreted, enacted and perpetuated."

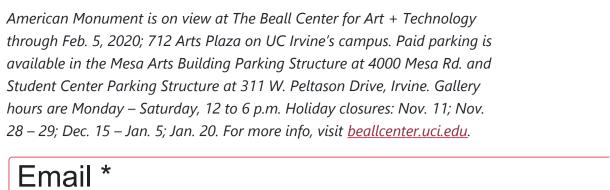
It's likely you'll want to stay awhile. Go alone, and pay for more than an hour of parking. You'll want to listen, sit and read without having to worry if the friend you brought along with you wants to leave and you're not ready to go yet. Fair warning, American Monument contains language and content that may be disturbing and traumatizing. Please be mindful.

Another great thing: We're good.

Giving us a moment's pause: Please, no more pauses.



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Asia Morris 🔰 🖸

Asia Morris has been with the Long Beach Post for five years, specializing in coverage of the arts. Her parents gave her the name because they wanted her to be a world traveler and they got their wish. She has obliged pursuing art, journalism and a second career as a competitive cyclist.

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