

“Dirty South Scribes”

Curated by Regina N. Bradley, Ph.D.

In 1995, rapper Andre Benjamin adamantly declared “the South got something to say.” The phrase became a rallying cry for Southern hip hop and the region’s emcees and fans have not looked back since.

Why? Because Southern hip hop writers held us down.

“Dirty South Scribes” honors some of the pioneering writers and critics who centered the South in their musings about hip hop culture. These writers used their pens and voices to speak up for the South when mainstream culture and academics tried to disregard what, in fact, the South had to say. “Dirty South Scribes” features Charlie R. Braxton, Drs. Imani Perry and Joycelyn Wilson, Maurice Garland and Rodney Carmichael. Hear their oral histories of documenting Southern hip hop’s early years via the QR codes in front of each portrait.

Further, the exhibit showcases the dynamic talents of artists W. Ellington Felton, Jasmine Nicole Williams, Quake Solo, Claire Alexandre, Darius Quarles and Dedren Snead. This sampling of artists with their unique styles and influences parallels the diversity of Southern hip hop culture. The South ain’t a monolith. Its cultural expressions are also non-monolithic.

Before leaving, please take a moment to jot down what Southern hip hop culture means to you.

The South *still* got something to say, write and create.