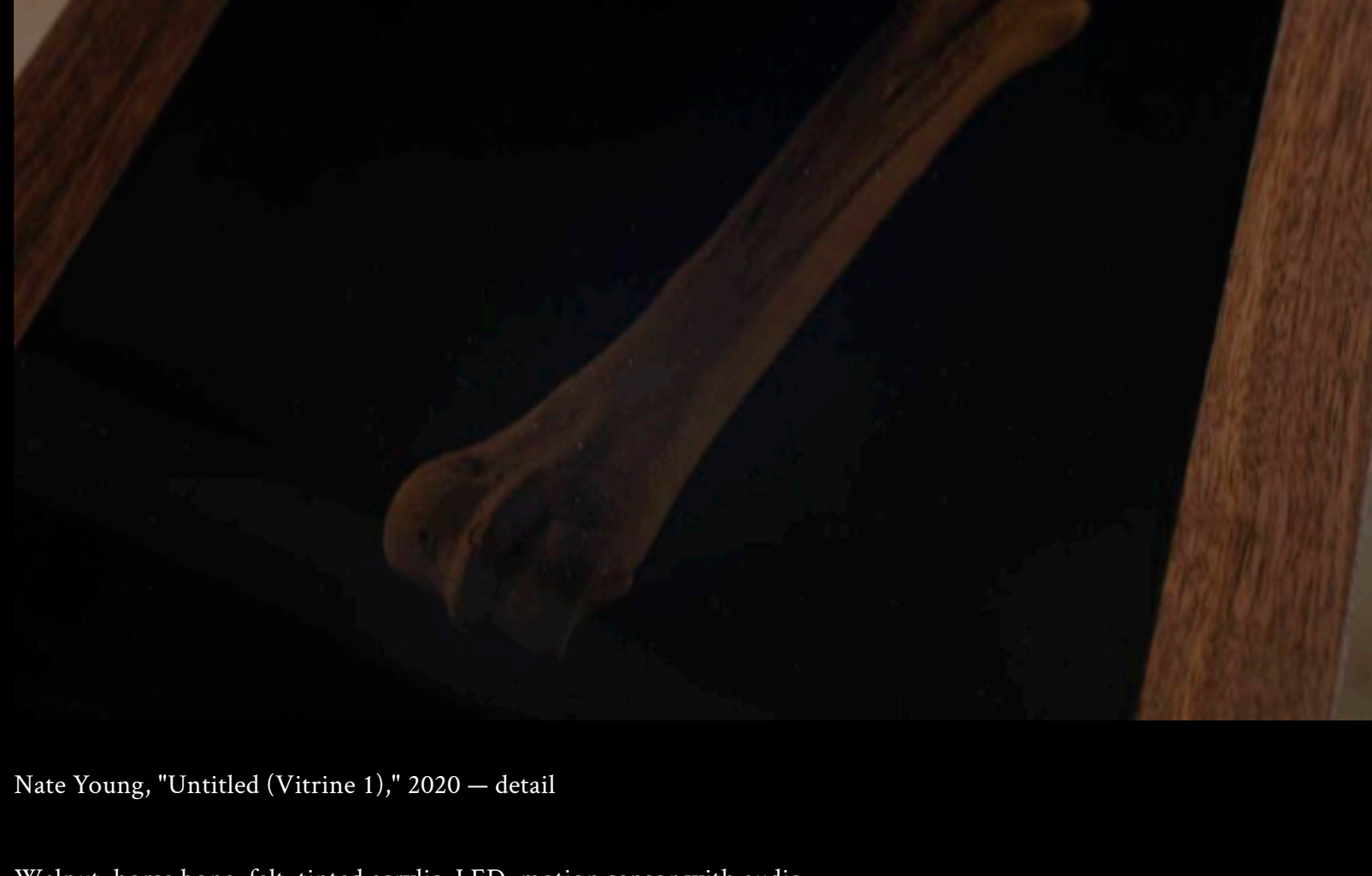


Nate Young: The Transcendence of Time

Art.Royale

During this tumultuous time, celebrations of Juneteenth and the archival presences of newly freed black people are more significant than ever. Not only is it a time to reflect on present circumstances, but to also recall the past and what our ancestors in America survived for us to exist today. To that end, Nate Young's current exhibition at Monique Meloche Gallery, "The Transcendence of Time", is an effort of memorialization that bridges the gap between the past and the present. The exhibition is a deeper investigation into excavated bones from the horse that once carried the artist's great-grandfather from the South to the North during The Great Migration, a 64-year exodus of over 6 million Black Americans. Young explores his family's particular journey and identity, with fidelity to the fluid nature of truth. Influenced by entries in his great-grandfather's journal, Young strives to weave together a shared experience across time.



Nate Young, "Untitled (Vitrine 1)," 2020 — detail

Walnut, horse bone, felt, tinted acrylic, LED, motion sensor with audio

Courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago.

The exhibition is a minimalistic combination of historical relics and intuitive technology. There are bones, held in vitrines, exalted in altars, and represented in graphite drawings. Within this ritualistic setting, the power and sanctity of the bones invoke memories that merge time. Fragments of a suicide note drafted by Young's great-grandfather, imposed onto tinted acrylic in the artist's own handwriting, function almost as protective barriers for the bones they are conceal in shadow boxes constructed of white oak. These words, and their strength, are further actualized based on the orientation of the altar doors: Open, they convey the entire message, and closed, they display a single word, with the bone illuminated. The freestanding vitrines positioned throughout the gallery space serve as both visual and aural stimulus. They are fitted with motion sensors that, once activated, amplify the clear sound of bones shifting and scraping against each other. This sound recalls not just the journey that a solitary horse took across thousands of miles, but also the volatile experience of Black bodies shifting their existences into the unknown. The altars and vitrines, built by the artist's hands, hold much reverence for the weight that they bear.



Nate Young, 3 works on paper, 2020

Left to right: "Causal Loop" (2020); "The Grandfather Paradox" (2020); "Theoretical Proposition of Time" (2020).

Courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago.

The relationship between concrete black geographies and that which is seen and unseen speak to processes of pursuing and uncovering truths via the fragmented documentation that is left behind. Young found his great-grandfather's journals after his grandmother had passed, and never met his great-grandfather, but the stories both passed down and untold assert their presence in the work. He notes that this work is a "synthesis of all the ancestral voices that come before, influenced by their memory, as well as the inconsistencies of his own memory." My hope is that this allows a reading of the work that goes beyond the understanding of the narrative itself and starts to point to ways that narrative is able to manifest", he explained.

This brings to mind the ways we orally transfer memories of past experiences, and how these stories are weavings of fragments that may include or exclude specific details. To Young, the fluidity of Black geographies, histories, and memories must be acknowledged and explored.



Nate Young, "Underneath," 2020.

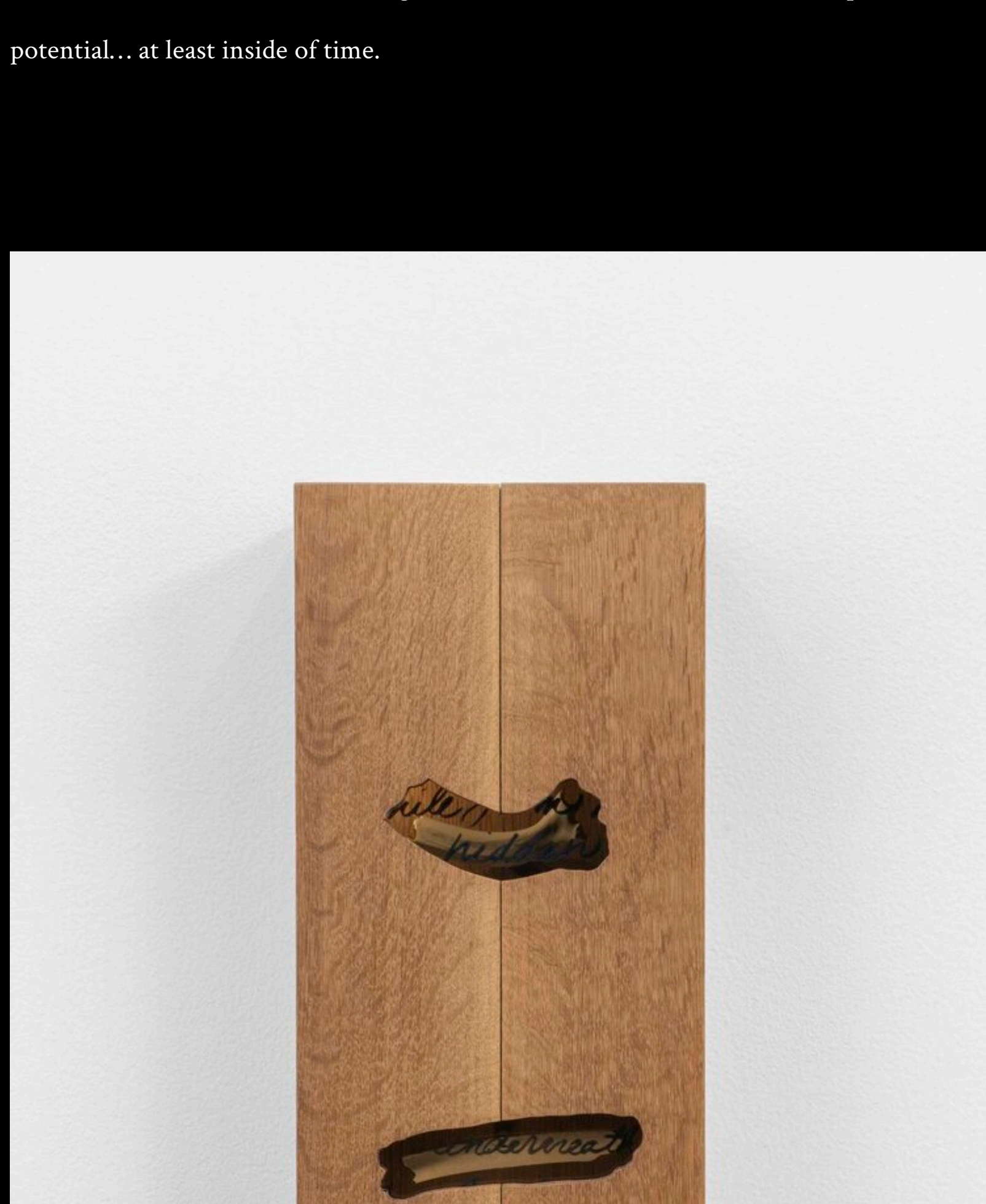
White oak, horse bones, spray enamel on tinted acrylic, LED.

Courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago.

The exhibition can be viewed digitally via the gallery's website, [here](#), and will be on display through the end of June. We highly recommend engaging this body of work, and leave our readers with this reflective thought:

Q: Within the theme of the title, "The Transcendence of Time", there is indication of spatial displacement, and of being simultaneously present and past. Being that these discoveries have put you directly in that displacement, how does that make you feel about your own existence?

NY: I was trying to propose that one might have a different understanding of the kinds of truths you bring up if one were able to understand the whole of time in a synchronized way. This then presented an interesting contradiction to me since that understanding would still exist in time. In the moment of that understanding. So in the end the proposition really makes no sense. But if rational thinking were suspended this might be possible. The only other way that I could start to think about this idea being legible would be to observe it from a space outside of time, that being maybe death. Death may be the most tangible displacement that we can theoretically comprehend. At the same time I was thinking about my great grandfather's displacement. And that blackness is a space from which we can also make metaphoric propositions about what that kind of time transcendence might look like. Blackness is the ultimate space of potential... at least inside of time.



Nate Young, "Underneath," 2020

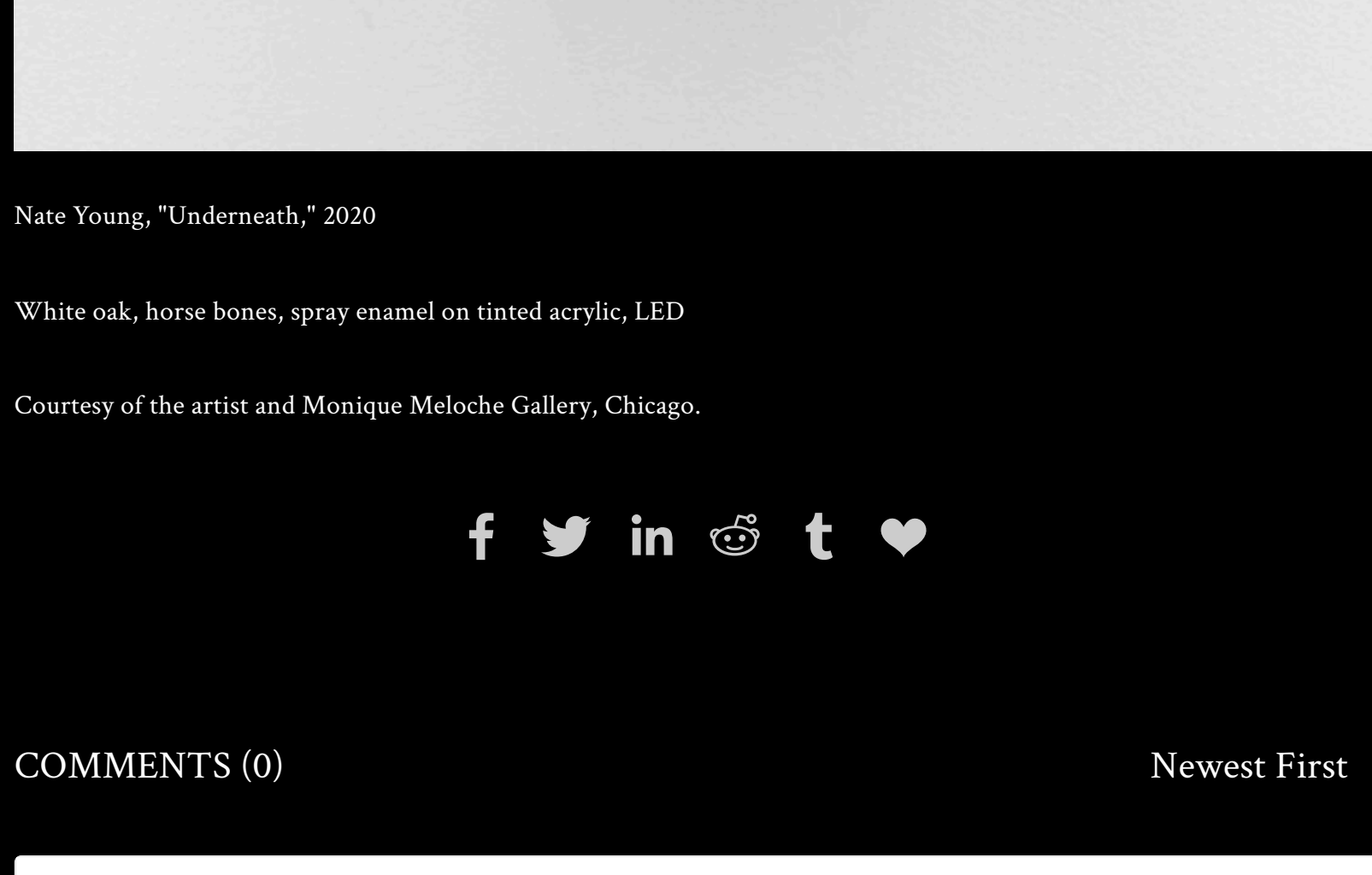
White oak, horse bones, spray enamel on tinted acrylic, LED

Courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago.

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