

2025

THE GRIOT



The Amistad Center
for Art & Culture

AT THE WADSWORTH ATHENEUM MUSEUM OF ART



AMERICA 250
CONNECTICUT



Cover Image: Daniel Schlossberg, The Schooner AMISTAD 1839 scratch-built in 1/96 scale. 2025 Gift to the Amistad Center for Art & Culture from the artist. Above image: Sheila Pree Bright (American, born 1967), Shanae Rowland, 2007. Chromogenic print. 2008.2

The Griot 2025

DIRECTOR'S WELCOME



CALL AND RESPONSE

Hello Hartford! What an unprecedented year 2025 has been, but we have survived, and we are still standing! This year I have watched the dedication, selflessness and commitment of our amazing staff and our Board of Trustees as we face an uncertain future. This summer and early fall we have put in place strategic planning for how to sustain our programs, planning and events over the coming year in the face of devastating cuts to grants and services from principal granting organizations such as the IMLS and the National Endowment for the Arts. These establishments provide critical funding that organizations like ours rely upon to sustain our community programs and exhibitions.

Many new federal regulations, especially regarding diversity and inclusion initiatives, have created a firestorm of activity for many of our local Hartford and Connecticut corporations which then meant a reprioritization of local funding. As we face the pressure of navigating great uncertainty we have not given up and neither have you. The support of our community has helped to sustain us this year and we thank you for your generosity and for organizations like the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving that committed to a \$6 million investment in Greater Hartford Arts and Cultural organizations.

Through our collections, exhibitions and programs the Amistad has always told the story of American resilience in the face of injustice. As an archive and gallery within a historical museum we are often reminded that art and archive are never neutral. What is created and what is saved is always a declaration of independence, sometimes a protest, other times a prayer. The material culture that we steward here is a response to the world around us and a call to community, an affirmation of the resilience of our ancestors.

As many of you know, our annual Juneteenth Gala fundraiser has been an important part of what we do. In 2026, in honor of America 250 and in keeping with the current local climate, we are taking the opportunity to innovate and pivot to a new event, our first ever Juneteenth Jubilee that will be free and open to the public!

Your continued donations to Juneteenth are essential and directly impact the sustainability of our organization as we face the economic uncertainty of these times. With your generous Juneteenth sponsorships and donations towards the Amistad Annual Appeal we can continue to fundraise and provide programs, events and exhibitions for our community throughout the year. We are especially touched by the gift of a model Amistad schooner from the renowned model ship builder Dan Schlossberg that appears on this issue's cover. You will have a chance to view this ship in person at our upcoming exhibition *Rebel | Revolt | Resist* opening May 7, 2025.

I look forward to continuing to work with our staff, volunteers, Board of Trustees, and The Wadsworth in response to the needs of our donors and our community. We are listening to you and if you call we will respond.

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Dr. Sarah Clunis

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 Chief Advancement
 & Financial Officer

What is a GRIOT?

A griot is an esteemed figure in West African culture, serving as a storyteller, musician and oral historian holding the records of lineage, deaths, marriages and family spanning generations.



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@amistadcenter

communications@amistadcenter.org

www.amistadcenter.org

Amistad Center for Art & Culture is located inside the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art

600 Main St., Hartford CT, 06103



Ambrotype of Frederick Douglass. Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture © Wendel A. White

Mission

To honor, preserve and celebrate in community the art and cultural contributions of all people of African descent.

Promise

We complete the story of America through creative expression and inspiring cross-cultural conversations and experiences.

Vision

We are a haven for discovery, reflection and inspiration.



The Amistad Center for Art & Culture

Founded in 1987, The Amistad Center for Art & Culture is housed in the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, the oldest continuously operating public art museum in America. The Amistad Center uniquely inspires, entertains and educates diverse audiences through a robust array of art, cultural and educational experiences.

Our multidisciplinary collection of more than 7,000 works of fine art, photography, historical artifacts, memorabilia and rare books documents the African American experience from the earliest era of enslavement to contemporary creative achievements. We curate unique cultural experiences that encourage rich one-of-a-kind cross-cultural conversations. Through our efforts to honor and celebrate the history and contributions of all people of African descent in America we seek to inspire the next generation of artists, art enthusiasts and cultural visionaries.



We Enhance EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

- Educational tours for schools
- Learning Modules
- Virtual exhibitions
- Programs for children, teens and young adults



Our *SNAP! Photography* program is an annual four-week summer artist residency program that engages a variety of teens (grades 9-12) from the Greater Hartford community in portfolio creation, the business of fine arts, undergraduate program exploration, curation in a museum setting, exhibition design as practice and a special exhibition in the Wadsworth Atheneum's Avery Court gallery.



SNAP! PHOTOGRAPHY

The
LEGACY
FOUNDATION
of HARTFORD



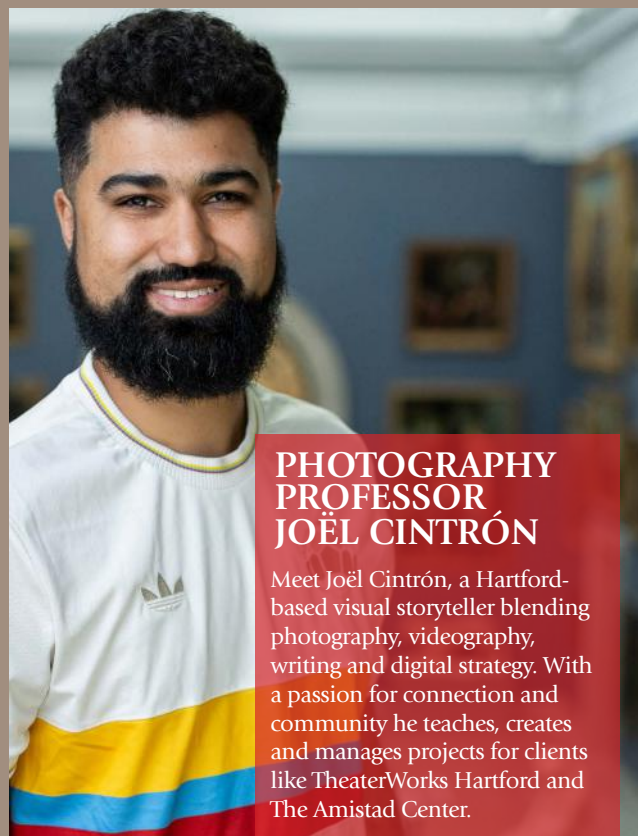
SNAP! PHOTOGRAPHY is the Amistad Center's signature program, nurturing young artists in grades 9–12 and equipping them with the skills and experience to pursue their creative ambitions. **SNAP!** transforms student cohorts' aspirations of becoming professional artists into reality by offering paid opportunities

that affirm their artistic futures. As a community we recognize that talent is abundant—what often limits potential is access to opportunity. With the support of partners such as The Legacy Foundation of Hartford the Amistad Center provides students with immersive exploration of photography through studio practice, critiques and

seminars covering camera techniques, lighting, printing and the history of the medium. The program further enriches participants with field trips, neighborhood photo excursions, portfolio development and preparation for higher education.

SNAP! Photography Hartford Teen Artist-In-Residence Program 2025

This year's paid annual summer artist residency welcomed fourteen students into its 2025 cohort, with classes running July 7–31. Instruction was led by teacher Joel Citron, assistant teacher Royland Clarke, and Curator of the African Diaspora Bethani Blake, alongside guest professionals. The students' efforts culminated in a group exhibition at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, and an accompanying zine on view November 15, 2025–January 11, 2026. An Artist Talk and exhibition reception for **land•SCAPE** will be held in the Hartford Courant Room on Saturday, November 22, 2025, from 1–2:30 PM.



PHOTOGRAPHY PROFESSOR JOËL CINTRÓN

Meet Joël Cintrón, a Hartford-based visual storyteller blending photography, videography, writing and digital strategy. With a passion for connection and community he teaches, creates and manages projects for clients like TheaterWorks Hartford and The Amistad Center.

SNAP! PHOTOGRAPHY

CLASS IS IN SESSION

THE ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE PREPARES HARTFORD PHOTOGRAPHY STUDENTS FOR THE NEXT CHAPTER IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC CAREERS.



Foundational Week #01

Each student receives a camera to use throughout the program. The syllabus details what they should expect and their responsibilities. During this period they learn photography best practices, how to handle, hold and shoot their cameras and an introduction to photo composition, incorporating the essential elements and guiding principles of art and design.



The Second and Third Weeks #02

Students are introduced to street photography and portraiture, both historical and contemporary practices. The following weeks feature still life photography and editing in Adobe Lightroom. The works created during this period are evaluated and discussed collaboratively in the classroom.



Capstone and Finalization #03

After creating and critiquing their artwork students transition to exhibition and professional development and a zine production workshop. This directs their focus toward how their work will be received by the public, empowering them to design, in their own words and images, a small-scale professional museum exhibition and publication that highlights both creativity and critical engagement.



Stella Rojas

I enjoyed the lessons I was taught about photography. The walk arounds gave me plenty of time to take enough photos for my portfolio. All of the other students and the teacher were kind and supportive.

I plan to apply my photography skills in my school's yearbook Club and for my own personal use when I go off to college. These skills will help me take better, more high-quality photos.



SNAP! PHOTOGRAPHY

2025 COHORT INTERVIEWS

Vision & Voices of the
2025 SNAP! Students

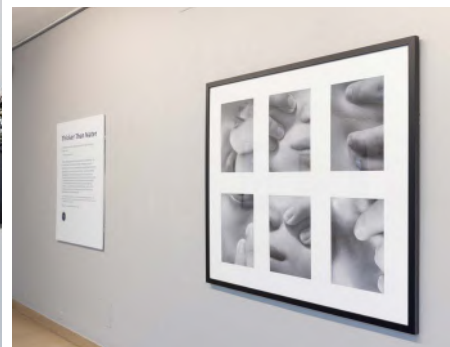


Chance Clarke

I will let these skills bring me to future careers and different pathways. This skill is a great thing to know because there is so much you can do with it. I like how I got to learn how to use a camera and all the things about a camera.



Each year SNAP! Photography cohorts produce an exhibition (above), a zine publication (below) and an Artist Talk & Reception (right) as a capstone project.



STEAM PROGRAMS

Amistad programs for young people inspire lifelong learning and financial, mathematical and artistic literacy.

The Amistad has been in direct contact with local area schools within the Title 1 program, which serves students in low-income households. Our STEAM programs provide educational enrichment and practical application skills for those students. Teaching a diverse demographic of K-12 students by creating community, Amistad's STEAM initiative is how we support advancement and help create a hub of creative community problem-solvers.



MATH IN THE MUSEUM

We are full STEAM ahead in demonstrating that there are multiple ways to understand and interpret the world. Through the Math in the Museum program we connect mathematical concepts with artistic expression, sparking new ways of thinking and encouraging creative problem solving. Our goal is to expand partnerships with regional public schools and families in the community, ensuring increased museum visitation and deeper learning through immersive interdisciplinary engagement.



PROGRAMMING WITH THE WADSWORTH

The Amistad Center and The Wadsworth continue to strengthen our partnership by sharing resources, ideas, and opportunities to grow together. We work collaboratively to ensure our collective impact is greater than the sum of its parts. Our exhibitions often draw from the collections of both organizations. Come visit us and see The Wadsworth's Nick Cave Soundsuit on view in our current exhibition, Yoruba World and get ready for upcoming collaborations for the America250 initiative on view May 7, 2026!

Joint programs include our First Thursdays Caribbean Night Program every August, and recent collaborations include Film & Talk with RaMell Ross, Fine Art & Flowers, Festival of Trees and Traditions, Amistad! For the Culture: MLK Community Day, and family-friendly events like First Thursdays and Second Saturdays. Signature experiences such as the annual Pennington Lecture and Members' Morning Tours further showcase the richness of our partnership. Visit our website for the most up-to-date program offerings.



We Expand Access & Engagement

- Monthly Amistad Center programming
- Creative opportunities for community artists
- Bringing the global diaspora to the Greater Hartford region
- 1987 Society museum tours and trips
- Black history celebrations
- Accessibility for neurodivergent audiences

Our Sensory-Friendly Art Spaces provide our neurodivergent patrons with opportunities to see and experience art from their own unique perspectives. Our goal is to make our galleries and spaces more accessible to these patrons with ongoing programs, events and activities that encourage interactive engagement with art through senses such as sight, sound and touch for enriching learning experiences.



FEATURED FUTURE PROGRAMS

AUG - DEC 2025

AUG

03

Member's Morning Tour

Member Morning Coffee with a Curator- Yoruba World with Dr. Sarah Clunis, Executive Director of the Amistad Center for Art & Culture.

11:30 AM

AUG

07

Caribbean Night

Celebrate freedom, culture, and community at our Caribbean Emancipation Day event! Music, games, food and more on the lawn.

5-8 PM

SEP

24

Comedy Night

Join comedian and storyteller Rob Santos for a powerful night of humor, heart and healing. I Am A Man: Black Men and Boys Mental Health Initiative.

5-7:30 PM

OCT

17

Curator's Corner

Join Dr. Sarah Clunis, Executive Director of The Amistad Center for Art & Culture, for a gallery talk on Wendel A. White: Manifest I Thirteen Colonies.

1-2 PM

OCT

26

Wellness Workshop

Healing & Liberation Counseling Workshop with Clinical Social Worker & Babaláwo Onígbonná: Enroue Halfkenny. I Am A Man: Black Men & Boys Mental Health Initiative.

10 AM-5 PM

NOV

10

Annual Meeting

Join us for an evening of reflection and celebration as we share highlights from the past year and exciting plans for the future.

5:30-7:30 PM

NOV

22

SNAP! Photography

Artist Talk featuring the Teen Artists of *SNAP! Photography*, The Amistad Center's summer residency program.

1 PM

DEC

18

Radiance: Festival of Lights

A special Chanukah event featuring a public menorah lighting, latkes, donuts, hot chocolate and traditions that honor the spirit of light and resilience.

4:30-6:30 PM

*Check the amistadcenter.org website for the most comprehensive and up to date information.



SELECT FEATURED PROGRAMS

JAN - JUL 2026

JAN

19

MLK Community Day

Celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at Amistad! For the Culture and the Wadsworth's Community Day—where art, history and activism meet in a joyful day of togetherness and inspiration.

12-4 PM

FEB

05

Truth Under Glass

Join an intimate gallery conversation that confronts the scrutiny faced by Black museums as they boldly tell our nation's unvarnished truths—because truth deserves to be seen, not silenced.

2-3 PM



FEB

19

Pennington Lecture

Hear from Dr. Anthony Jack, author of *The Privileged Poor* and *Class Dismissed*, as he reveals what schools can truly do to level the playing field for every student striving to rise.

6 PM

MAR

12

Divine Design: Ramadan

Break your fast with The Amistad Center at a special evening blending spirituality, art and halal cuisine. Celebrate Ramadan surrounded by community, reflection and creative light.

6 PM

MAR

19

Dr. Lawal Lecture

Explore the power and beauty of Yoruba visual culture as Dr. Babatunde Lawal illuminates the Gelede tradition—revealing how art, ritual and performance shape meaning across time and space.

6 PM

MAR

26

Matriarchs & Menopause

Join a bold conversation on art, womanhood and power within Yoruba World. In honor of Women's Month, we celebrate health, aging and the beauty of a life lived fully and fearlessly.

1 PM

MAY

19

I Am A Man

For Mental Health Month The Amistad Center centers Black men and boys—and those in community with them—through programs focused on healing, visibility and evidence-based pathways to wellness.

6 PM

JUN

13

Juneteenth Jubilee

Reimagine Juneteenth with Amistad! Join us at our free public celebration for all ages with sensory-friendly artmaking, family wellness, live music and a VIP experience for our generous sponsors.

12 PM-4 PM

*Check the amistadcenter.org website for the most comprehensive and up to date information.



AMISTAD CENTER'S PROGRAMS

We're all about making art accessible to everyone! The Amistad hosts fun events and activities to help you engage with art through your senses. We are all about making learning fun and creating a welcoming environment for our visitors.



*"Absolutely
Amazing! Peaceful
& Fulfilling"*

Love It,
Cestlavia



join us for



RADIANCE: FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS



The Amistad Center for Art & Culture joined the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in 2024 to present *Radiance: Festival of Lights*, a joyful celebration uniting the traditions of Chanukah and Kwanzaa. The program illuminated the museum with music, storytelling and artmaking inspired by the shared values of light, hope and community. Visitors explored cultural connections through hands-on activities and family-friendly experiences that honored both Jewish and African American heritages. *Radiance 2024* reflected the beauty of unity in diversity—celebrating resilience, faith and the warmth of togetherness during the holiday season. Join us December 18, 2025, for this year's *Radiance: Festival of Lights* celebration for a public menorah lighting and gelt drop, with kosher latkes, donuts and hot chocolate.



Divine Design: Break the Fast Celebration

Divine Design 2024 filled the Wadsworth Atheneum with great joy and luminous wonder. Presented by The Amistad Center for Art & Culture, this special evening celebrating Ramadan blended spirituality art and community. This event featured a curator-led tour of the Divine Geometry exhibition, led by Hamid Hemat, who explored the spiritual significance of geometric patterns in Islamic Art.

**"RAMADAN MUBARAK! MAY
YOUR HEART BE AT PEACE,"**

The celebration included remarks from Director Ebony Jackson-Shaheed, evening prayer and a halal meal to break the fast. It was a night filled with inspiration, cultural connection and reflection, honoring the spirit of Ramadan through art and community.



Join us on March 12, 2026, from 6-8 PM for another special evening that blends spirituality, art and community during Ramadan. Brought to you by the City of Hartford and Amistad Center for Art & Culture.



34TH JUNETEENTH GALA

PEOPLE GET READY!

SATURDAY, JUNE 7, 2025

*A special thank you to this year's
Gala Chair, Francine Austin and
her hard-working Gala committee!*



AMISTAD CENTER'S “PEOPLE GET READY!” 34TH JUNETEENTH GALA



FRANCINE AUSTIN

2025 GALA CHAIR
ENTREPRENEUR,
PHILANTHROPIST

In 2025, The Amistad Center for Art & Culture hosted an extraordinary Juneteenth celebration that beautifully captured the spirit of the holiday while showcasing a rich blend of cultural experiences. Guests enjoyed vibrant music, cuisine and dance rooted in the diverse traditions of the African diaspora.

This year we were especially proud to honor our 2025 Spirit of Juneteenth Award recipients: CT Senator Doug McCrory, The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving's Black Giving Circle Fund, ActUp Theater's Executive Director Faithlyn Johnson and Keith & Chinenye Clayton of TimeFrozen Photography. It was a true privilege to recognize these pillars of our cultural community.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our Legacy Sponsor and community partner, The Hartford, whose generous support made the Juneteenth Gala and Family Day possible.



The Hartford

The **Amistad** Center
for **Art & Culture**

AT THE WADSWORTH ATHENEUM MUSEUM OF ART

JUNETEENTH GALA

PEOPLE GET READY!



**The Hartford
EVERSOURCE**

Munich RE 

TRAVELERS 



**DR. DIANE B. CLOUD &
SANFORD CLOUD JR.**



ESTHER PRYOR



**Hartford
HealthCare**



Robinson+Cole

**DR. DUFFIELD ASHMEAD IV
AND MR. ERIC ORT**



**EMILIE & RAUL
DE BRIGARD**



VOICEPAINTVO, LLC

**McCarter
English &**

2025 JUNETEENTH GALA

PEOPLE GET READY!

 The Hartford







2025 AMISTAD CENTER'S JUNETEENTH FAMILY DAY *Celebration*

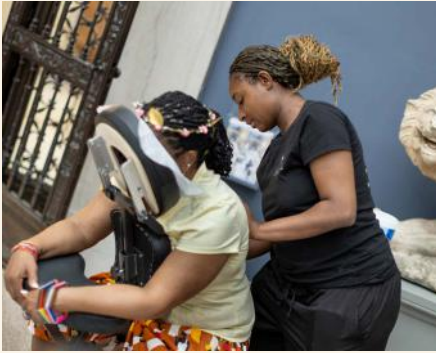


The Amistad Center for Art & Culture and The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art teamed up to celebrate Juneteenth and honor the contributions of Black artists and creative voices with family-friendly art-making and fun activities. Juneteenth Family Day 2025 also featured our signature Sensory-Friendly Art Space for neuro-divergent youth and adults, wellness activities in Morgan Great Hall, stilt walkers and a special chill room with Pressing Plant.



JUNETEENTH FAMILY DAY'S HEALTH OASIS

➔ Massage



➔ Yoga



➔ Soundbath Meditation



THE AMISTAD IS GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH

The Amistad Center for Art & Culture is committed to ensuring everyone can fully participate in all our programming. At this year's Juneteenth Family Day our sensory-friendly art-making space provided a welcoming, calm and inclusive space for all. In addition to the family-friendly craft projects we also expanded our offerings to include a wellness oasis with massages, yoga instruction and sound bath meditation.

The Amistad Center is excited to reimagine our Juneteenth celebration as a marquee public event for our city—one that is free, accessible and unifying. This year's *Juneteenth Jubilee* brings an expanded vision, transforming the celebration into a cultural festival where thousands can engage in sensory-friendly art-making, participate in family-oriented wellness activities and experience the joy of community connection while honoring the delayed freedom of our ancestors. For our partners and supporters this evolution presents a powerful opportunity that goes beyond a traditional gala. It's a chance to be part of a historic gathering that highlights Black history, promotes inclusion and celebrates freedom in a unique way. Our sponsors will receive prominent recognition and extraordinary access, ensuring that they are acknowledged as key investors in this exciting new chapter.



The Amistad Center for Art & Culture

AT THE WADSWORTH ATHENEUM MUSEUM OF ART

I AM A MAN

Black Men & Boys Mental Health Initiative



The I Am A Man initiative centers the mental health and well-being of Black men and boys through community, creativity and culturally grounded care. This three-part series is offered free of charge due to the generosity of a grant from The Hartford Foundation Black Giving Circle Fund and creates intentional spaces for healing, reflection and connection—inviting participants to engage in bold conversations, transformative art and restorative practices.

Exhibiting Forgiveness | An Evening with Titus Kahpar, Tuesday, May 20, 2025. An evening with renowned artist and filmmaker Titus Kaphar featuring his critically acclaimed film, *Exhibiting Forgiveness*, and a deep discussion on its mental health focus and overcoming generational trauma. This program is offered in partnership with the Brother Carl Hardrick Institute.

*"Come as you are. Leave seen,
supported, and stronger."*



Comedy Night with Rob Santos, Wednesday, September 24, 2025, 5:30 - 7:30 PM. Comedian, filmmaker and storyteller Rob Santos offers a powerful night of humor, heart and healing. Through laughter and lived experience, Rob shares his project "Beige," which explores his identity, resilience and mental health journey in a performance that's as real as it is uplifting.

Day-Long Healing & Liberation Counseling Discussion & Workshop for Black men and boys and those in community with them. Sunday, October 26, 2025, 10 AM - 5 PM. Led by licensed therapist and Yoruba practitioner Enroue Halfkenny, this immersive workshop offers tools for emotional wellness, ancestral grounding and community healing.



Black
Giving
Circle Fund



**BROTHER
CARL**
HARDRICK INSTITUTE

“Forgiveness, like art, is never finished. It is a daily practice of revision, a constant reconstructing of our understanding of both ourselves and those who have hurt us.”

-- EXHIBITING FORGIVENESS (2024)



HELP US BRING HISTORY TO LIFE

The Amistad Center invites individuals, foundations and community leaders to join us in our work to ensure the preservation of a powerful local legacy.



The Amistad Center for Art & Culture a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. No goods or services were provided in exchange for this contribution. Your donation is tax-deductible to the full extent permitted by law



SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

HERITAGE CIRCLE - \$5,000+

- Invitation to a private dinner in Amistad's Motley Study with the Executive Director and Board Leadership
- VIP Premium Access to exhibitions
- Yearly recognition on the donor wall, website and in the next publication of The Griot
- An exclusive invitation to The 1987 Society membership
- All listed benefits below

LEGACY CIRCLE - \$2,500-\$4,999

- Invitation to the executive "Collections & Curators" salon events hosted by the Amistad Center for Art & Culture's Executive Director
- Recognition in exhibition materials
- Two complementary tickets to a signature VIP event
- All listed benefits below

VISIONARY CIRCLE - \$1,000-\$2,499

- Invitation to private gallery tours with curators and guest artists
- Amistad Membership
- Recognition in the annual appeal honor roll

MEET WITH THE CHIEF ADVANCEMENT & FINANCIAL OFFICER

Phillip Albert, originally from New Roads, LA, has a distinguished career in museum management and financial leadership. As the youngest African American Appointed Official for the Louisiana State Museum system he developed expertise in fiscal guidance, collections management and preserving cultural heritage, with a degree in Business from Southern University.

Phillip is available for meetings to discuss how your support can make an impact.
palbert@amistadcenter.org

A man in an orange jacket is seen in profile, looking at a circular artwork mounted on a white gallery wall. The background is slightly blurred, showing other art pieces and a person in the distance.

WE ANIMATE COLLECTIONS & EXHIBITIONS

- Innovative and educational exhibitions
- Loans from African American and HBCU Collections
- Exhibition tours for schools
- Virtual exhibitions
- Exhibition programming



Our current exhibitions, Yoruba World and Manifest | 13 Colonies, continue to explore the variety of ways that people of African descent have created and utilized material culture to tell their personal and communal stories and to archive their histories and traditions. Both exhibitions feature collections from a diverse array of public and private institutions as well as private collections. The Amistad Center highlights loans from neighboring institutions as well as Historically Black Colleges and Universities and African American collectors to enhance the material culture we steward in our archives and to demonstrate the benefit of community collaborations. The exhibitions on view this year hold works of art and exhibitions on loan or generated from The Mead Art Museum at Amherst College, Xavier University of Louisiana and The Peabody Museum at Harvard University. A visit to our galleries will introduce visitors to the long trajectory of material culture that begins in Africa and flows throughout the Diaspora.



CELEBRATING THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

The Amistad Center highlights 250 years of the Black American experience

On July 4, 2026, the United States will mark a monumental milestone—250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Across the nation cultural institutions, artists and historians are preparing to tell the story of America anew through exhibitions, performances and public programs that honor both triumph and truth. The AMERICA250 initiative, embraced by federal, state and municipal commissions and supported by a bipartisan Congressional Caucus, invites every community to participate in shaping this collective reflection. Here in Connecticut all 169 cities and towns are called to join in, with The Amistad Center for Art & Culture at the forefront of the Capitol Region's efforts. Through exhibitions such as *Wendel A. White: Manifest | Thirteen Colonies and Rebel | Revolt | Resist*, The Amistad Center shines a necessary light on how the nation's founding ideals—freedom, equality and justice—remain an unfinished promise for many. The highlight of the program will be our guest speaker, Wendel A. White, who will take center stage for a free lecture on his exhibition and its prevailing themes.

Telling inclusive stories

AMERICA250 | CT centers its work on three overarching themes: telling inclusive stories, honoring the power of place and acting for the common good. By “telling inclusive stories” the Commission honors the lived experiences of all Connecticut residents, sharing both well-known and overlooked narratives that together weave the fabric of our community. The “power of place” highlights how people across every era—before, during and after the Revolutionary period—shaped the identity and legacy of our state. And by “doing history for the common good” AMERICA250 | CT calls us to move beyond acknowledgment toward active engagement, celebrating Connecticut's role in the nation's formation while reaffirming the democratic ideals embedded in our founding documents and their relevance today.

At its heart, AMERICA250 | CT is a true community initiative drawing strength from every corner of Connecticut's cultural and creative landscape.



*Slave Shackles, Smithsonian National Museums of African
American History and Culture. © Wendel A. White*

Museums, libraries, archives, community centers, schools and municipal offices are joining forces to ensure diverse voices are heard and new partnerships are forged. Each program builds a welcoming space for inclusivity—mindful of barriers such as cost, access and language—while celebrating the full range of Connecticut's stories.

As part of this statewide effort The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art and The Amistad Center for Art & Culture will collaborate on an immersive museum-wide exhibition examining “the dream deferred.” This reflective and critical project explores how far the nation has come in realizing the promises of the Declaration of Independence—and how far there is still to go in forming “a more perfect union.” Echoing Frederick Douglass's question, “What, to the slave, is your Fourth of July?” the initiative reminds us that to truly appreciate freedom we must boldly exercise it.

YORUBA WORLD

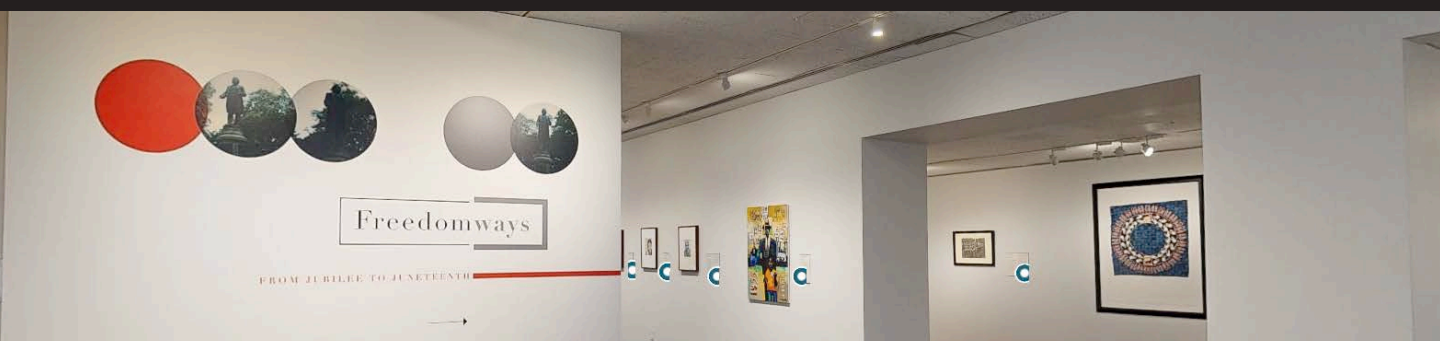


Study of Python Crested Figure, 2021, Wole Lagunju, Nigerian, b. 1966, Oil on canvas, Collection of the Artist



The exhibition, *Yoruba World* looks at traditional sculpture and masquerade practices of the Yoruba culture of Nigeria and its influence on the formation of Yoruba Atlantic religions and the visual iconography of the arts of the African Diaspora. The exhibition features selected works from the Amistad Center's collection as well as traditional Yoruba material culture and works by contemporary Diaspora artists that reflect on the diffusion and vitality of Yoruba culture. Programming will focus on explorations of Yoruba influence and identity in the Americas with a special focus on the Brazilian, Cuban, Haitian, Puerto Rican and Jamaican descendant communities of the Greater Hartford region.

Dr. Sarah Clunis has a rich curatorial background in African and African diaspora art and culture. She is currently the Executive Director of The Amistad Center for Art & Culture at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art. Prior to this, she served as the Director of Academic Partnerships and Curator of African Collections at the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University. She also held the positions of Director of Xavier University Art Gallery and Assistant Professor of Art History at Xavier University of Louisiana. Her work is characterized by a focus on the history and display of African art, the impact of African aesthetics on diaspora cultures, and the exploration of themes like gender, race and migration. She emphasizes oral histories, Indigenous knowledge, descendant communities and repatriation in her curatorial practice.



EXPANDING TECHNOLOGY CAPABILITIES

Through new Matterport 3D archiving technology, The Amistad Center can now digitally preserve and share its exhibitions with audiences around the world, ensuring access far beyond the museum's walls. These immersive virtual tours will serve as powerful educational tools—reaching classrooms, scholars and communities who might never experience our galleries in person. By investing in this technology, supporters help expand The Amistad Center's mission of accessibility, preservation and cultural continuity for generations to come.

WENDEL A. WHITE | MANIFEST: THIRTEEN COLONIES

Infusing objects with humanity and the gravity of their presence.

The Amistad Center for Art & Culture presents Wendel A. White | Manifest: Thirteen Colonies, curated by Ilisa Barbash, Visual Anthropologist at the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology. This striking exhibition reveals the often-overlooked history of Black presence and impact in the original colonies and Washington, D.C. White's photographs draw objects from archival obscurity into vivid, almost theatrical light: stark compositions set against deep blackness where material culture emerges with clarity and tension. Each image reframes its subject, compelling viewers to confront the weight of history and the lives embodied in these objects—lives that profoundly shaped the world yet too often remain unacknowledged.

Join the Amistad Center in conjunction with AMERICA250 | CT Capital Area, for a special lecture presentation by Wendel A. White.



Frederick Douglass' hair. Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester © Wendel A. White

REBEL | REVOLT | RESIST



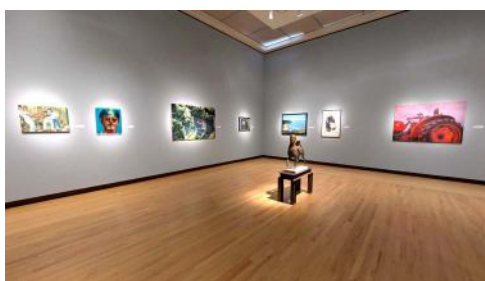
Sheila Pree Bright (American, born 1967), "Shanae Rowland," 2007. Chromogenic print. 2008.2 Next Page: Jacob Lawrence, Revolt on the Amistad, 1989, Print, 1998.1.1

You see the flag is drenched with our blood.
Because you see so many of our ancestors was
killed because we never have accepted slavery.

Fannie Lou Hamer, 1968, Charleston, South Carolina

Across time and geography, wherever systems of domination have existed they have been met with resistance. Those subjected to oppression have never accepted their condition in silence; rather, they have asserted their agency through organized uprisings, collective struggle and quiet acts of defiance. The historical record affirms that rebellion, resistance and revolution are not disruptions of the human story but essential forces within it—expressions of a universal impulse toward freedom and self-determination that affirm humanity's collective demand for freedom as an inalienable right. The exhibition *Rebel | Revolt | Resist*, will open on May 7, 2026, with a reception on that day in celebration of the museum-wide AMERICA250 exhibitions and will run through April 2027.





*Nor'Easter Exhibition, Photo Courtesy of
The New Britain Museum of Art*

COMMUNITY CURATING

Serving as the juror for the 2025 *Nor'Easter: Annual Juried Members Exhibition* at the New Britain Museum of American Art was both an honor and a privilege for Rodneya Hart, Deputy Director of The Amistad Center. This prominent showcase in the Northeast celebrates the exceptional work of emerging and established artists across all media, offering audiences a vibrant snapshot of contemporary visual art today. The exhibition's selected works reflect not only technical mastery but also the spirit of creativity that defines our region.

This year's winners embody that diversity and excellence: First Prize—Francis Estrada, whose artwork *One Last Dance for Fermin Tobera* beautifully encapsulates an ethereal memorial of the 1930 Anti-Filipino Riot in California; Second Prize—Rosalind Shaffer; Third Prize—Len Swec; and Juror's Choice—Andres Montiel, whose painting *Family Tree* vividly portrays a family whose members are each formed with unique detail and importance. The Visitor's Choice Award went to Rashmi Talpade for her evocative photo-collage *Urban Legends 5*.

At The Amistad Center we embrace opportunities to participate in public lectures, panels and educational engagements with The Wadsworth and throughout the community, such as being

a panelist for the *Celebrating Black Philanthropy 2025: Sankofa Now! Remember. Reclaim. Rise. Across Connecticut!* program representing a grant recipient from The Hartford Foundation Black Giving Circle Fund. Museums are no longer the sole keepers of knowledge—they are trusted collaborators in cultural storytelling. Through exhibitions like the *Nor'Easter* we reaffirm our shared role in shaping how art, history and community continue to engage, evolve and inspire.

Rodneya Hart, MBA, boasts almost 20 years of experience in the museum sector. Her background includes directing art nonprofits, managing exhibitions, gallery curation and serving as Museum Division Director for the Louisiana State Museum system. She is currently the Deputy Director at The Amistad Center for Art & Culture where her responsibilities include exhibition development and other initiatives aligned with their educational mission. Hart's curatorial endeavors extend to freelance work and her tenure at various galleries and museums in Louisiana. She holds both a BFA in studio art and an MBA, combining artistic and business acumen.





Find Me
Representation matters. Find this work by
Harmonia Rosales in the Morgan Great Hall,
on view until Spring 2026.

DONATE



*The Amistad depends on community support.
Your donation helps us build resilient and
empowered communities through programming,
art exhibitions and educational initiatives.*