

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Jessica Kelley Boucher
(860) 838-4081, jessica.kelley@thewadsworth.org

Wadsworth Atheneum and The Amistad Center for Art & Culture Hire Programs Manager for the African Diaspora



Hartford, Conn. (July 17, 2023)—The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art acting in partnership with The Amistad Center for Art & Culture has hired Bethani Blake in the newly-created position of Programs Manager for the African Diaspora. Funded by The Amistad Center, the programs manager will serve both institutions, located under the same roof at 600 Main Street in Hartford.

In her new role, Blake will deliver creative arts experiences and programs that promote the art, history, and culture of the African diaspora through community engagement activities and education. Reporting to the director of learning and engagement at the Wadsworth, and working closely with the staff at The Amistad Center, these programs will amplify the collections of the Wadsworth and The Amistad Center.

“Bethani is a terrific addition to the team. We look forward to engaging everyone with the unique and enjoyable programs she will develop,” said Olivia White, Interim Executive Director of The Amistad Center.

“This new model of sharing programmatic activity is full of potential for both organizations and Bethani brings great creativity and ambition to the role,” said Anne Butler Rice, Director of Learning and Engagement at the Wadsworth. “We are excited to be working so closely together with The Amistad Center as we move forward.”

Blake comes to Hartford, Conn. from Columbus, Ohio, where she worked in the curatorial departments at the Wexner Center for the Arts and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Performing and Cultural Arts Complex. She began her career in museum work at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. Blake has a BFA in Painting and Performing Arts from the Savannah College of Art and Design and brings experience as a practicing artist and educator in museum spaces.

“I not only hope to bridge the gap between the Wadsworth Atheneum and The Amistad Center, but to create robust and supportive programming for the West Indian and Puerto Rican communities in and outside of Hartford,” says Blake. “The urgency regarding the recognition and uplifting of these audiences is my mission as I begin my role as Programs Manager of the African Diaspora.”

About The Amistad Center for Art & Culture

Founded in 1987, The Amistad Center for Art & Culture (TAC) is a "museum within a museum" 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 for all members of the Greater Hartford community and New England region. 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.

About the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art

Founded in 1842 with a vision for infusing art into the American experience, the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art is home to a collection of nearly 50,000 works of art spanning 5,000 years and encompassing European art from antiquity through contemporary as well as American art from the 1600s to today. The Wadsworth Atheneum's five connected buildings—representing architectural styles including Gothic Revival, modern International Style, and 1960s Brutalism—are located at 600 Main Street in Hartford, Conn.

Current hours are noon–5pm Thursday–Sunday. Admission: \$5–15; discounts for members, students, and seniors. Free admission for Hartford residents with Wadsworth Welcome registration. Free “happy hour” admission 4–5pm. Advance ticket registration via thewadsworth.org is encouraged, not required. Phone: (860) 278- 2670; website: thewadsworth.org.

###