

TheAmistadCenter forArt&Culture

AT THE WADSWORTH ATHENEUM MUSEUM OF ART

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The Amistad Center for Art & Culture Appoints New Associate Curator

HARTFORD, Conn. (May 8, 2024) – The Amistad Center for Art & Culture has appointed Bethani Blake as Associate Curator, a new position created in collaboration with the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art. Blake, who was previously the Programs Manager for the African Diaspora at the Atheneum and Center in 2023, will assume this role effective immediately.

As Programs Manager, Blake implemented youth and African diaspora-centered programming, curated exhibitions, and contributed to exhibition-related content. She also managed curatorial projects and exhibition-related programs, such as gallery talks and art-making activities.

“Bethani has an amazing ability to see things through myriad perspectives, activating art, community, and site in dynamic ways,” said Dr. Sarah Clunis, Executive Director of the Amistad Center for Art & Culture. “We are so fortunate to have her on our team as the inaugural Amistad Associate Curator.”

In her new role, Blake will manage and develop the African Diaspora collections at the Wadsworth Atheneum and the Amistad Center. She will work directly with descendant communities regionally and globally to foster community engagement and facilitate the ethical stewardship of Diaspora Collections.

Blake, whose fascination with institutional infrastructure along with her professional ethos rooted in the advocacy of contemporary art and artists, said she is excited to take on this new position. She facilitates her interest by exploring the gaps between the art world, artist and viewer.

“I hope to empower a new generation of young people to reclaim space within the museum and organize exhibitions which recognize the ambiguity within the world we are currently experiencing,” said Blake. “I am humbled to step into this next chapter with both the Atheneum and The Amistad Center.”

Blake’s achievements at both the Amistad Center and Wadsworth Atheneum include her revival and elevation of the SNAP! *Photography* artist residency, which engages Black and Latino artists from the Greater Hartford area in the cultivation of individual studio and professional practices and the creation and oversight of *AFROgenius*, a multidisciplinary art-making program in which teens examined works by various Afro-artists and reinterpreted them. Blake has also contributed interpretive programming around various exhibitions including *Love Overflowing: Home and the Décor of Freedom*; *There is Always Something Left to Love*; *Styling Identities: Hair's Tangled Histories*; and *Yvonne Wells: Stitched Stories*, as well as public programs, such as Juneteenth Family Day.

An Ohio native, Blake received her BFA in Painting and Performing Arts from the Savannah College of Art and Design in 2021. She has exhibited work and curated exhibitions in Ohio, Georgia, and Connecticut, and held positions at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, New York, the Wexner Center for the Arts, and the Martin Luther King Jr. Performing and Cultural Arts Complex, both in Columbus, Ohio.

About The Amistad Center for Art & Culture

Founded in 1987, The Amistad Center for Art & Culture (TAC) 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 and 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.

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