

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ACADEMY ART MUSEUM ANNOUNCES THE 16TH ANNUAL JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION

Free Event on Saturday, June 20, 2026 honoring the Hill Community

EASTON, MD – June 2, 2026 – The Academy Art Museum announces its annual Juneteenth Celebration on Saturday, June 20, 2026, from 12–4 p.m. Free and open to all, this year’s annual Juneteenth gathering will honor the history, voices, and lived experiences of Easton’s historic Hill Community—one of the oldest free African American neighborhoods in the United States.

The celebration will begin on Friday, June 19, at Asbury United Methodist Church with three screenings of *Bear Me Into Freedom: Frederick Douglass and the Struggle for America’s Promise*—presented by the Frederick Douglass Honor Society to commemorate America’s 250 celebration on Juneteenth. The screenings will take place at 3 p.m., 6 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Programming will continue on Saturday, June 20, from 12-4 p.m. at the Academy Art Museum, featuring gospel, choir, and solo performances; a DJ; hands-on art activities; local food vendors; oral histories and artifacts from the Chesapeake Heartland African American Humanities Truck; a teen essay showcase in partnership with Shore Lit; and a guided tour of the Hill neighborhood led by Yvonne Freeman—a descendant of The Hill Founding Father James Freeman. The MC for the event will be Jair Devereaux, director of finance and administration at Building African American Minds.

The day will culminate with a featured lecture by artist Tawny Chatmon from 3–4 p.m., alongside an exhibition of her richly layered portraits that celebrate Black life, beauty and history—on loan from the artist’s family and a significant private collector in the region.

Inside the Museum, a special atrium installation will feature artifacts uncovered from the site of the future Freeman Annex & Hormel Research Center, a new facility rooted in the Hill community history that will soon house the Museum’s permanent collection. Additional programming will include a mural project led by Artist-in-Residence Esteban del Valle in collaboration with Talbot Mentors, a scavenger hunt presented by the Talbot Historical Society and an audio version of the closed loop AI Frederick Douglass from the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum’s exhibition "Bear Me Into Freedom: The Talbot County of Frederick Douglass."

The Juneteenth celebration is presented in partnership with Building African American Minds, Frederick Douglass Honor Society, and Talbot County Free Library—reflecting a shared commitment to preserving local history, elevating community voices, and creating spaces for learning, dialogue, and celebration.

Now in its 16th year, the Juneteenth celebration continues a longstanding Easton tradition of gathering in recognition of freedom, resilience, culture, and community—honoring the past while looking toward the future together.

For more information, visit

academyartmuseum.org/juneteenth-celebration-in-partnership-with-the-hill-community/.

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About the Academy Art Museum

Founded in 1958, the Academy Art Museum is the Eastern Shore's leading cultural institution, accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. It combines the dynamism of an ambitious contemporary art museum with the intimacy of a community space. With five working studios, a 24,000 sq. ft. facility, and innovative programs including a robust artist-in-residence initiative and major commissions for its soaring atrium, the Museum is a destination for artists, scholars, collectors, and families alike. For more information, visit academyartmuseum.org.