

Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 220

Is your organization a 501(c)3 nonprofit?

Yes

According to your 501(c)3 letter, in what town is your official office located?

Hartford

Where will your project be performed or exhibited?

Hartford

Will this activity occur after February 1, 2023?

Yes

Are you a recent grantee?

Yes

Enter your Report Code

Roberts2020

Organization Name

The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art

Organization's IRS Tax ID #

060653111

Principal Contact Name

Kate Paulo

Title

Grant Manager

Email

kate.paulo@thewadsworth.org

Phone

(860) 838-4033

Address

600 Main Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06103
United States
[Map It](#)

Website

<https://thewadsworth.org>

Amount requested this application

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\$25,000.00

What is the organization's mission/vision statement?

Holding its collection in trust for all people, the Wadsworth Atheneum is dedicated to advancing knowledge and inspiring everyone to experience and appreciate excellence in art and culture. It aims to be the place where contemporary culture meets great masterpieces; where all feel welcome; where diverse groups of the changing populations of our region participate in meaningful ways; and where the vibrancy, character, and well-being of the greater Hartford region are strengthened.

Provide a brief history of your organization and its activities.

Established in 1842, the Wadsworth Atheneum is the oldest continuously operating public art museum in the United States. Founder Daniel Wadsworth opened the museum in 1844 with his collection of about 80 paintings, many purchased directly from the artists. Today the collection exceeds 50,000 works of art spanning more than 5,000 years. Highlights include: 5,000 works of European art from the Middle Ages to the present day; among the most outstanding collections of early Italian Baroque art in the country; an unparalleled collection of Hudson River School paintings; French and American Impressionist paintings and pastels; a pioneering collection of both European and American Surrealist masterpieces; and 7,000 objects of European decorative art. To complement the art on view, the museum also features a wide range of interpretive programs including lectures, gallery talks, art studio events,

lunchtime programs, public and school tours, concerts, and films to enrich and educate participants of all ages. The museum continues to acquire a wide range of works—including contemporary art—to ensure that its encyclopedic collection will stay relevant into the future.

Describe the demographics of your audience/people served by your activities.

The Wadsworth Atheneum serves an average of 100,000 visitors annually. Approximately 20% of our visitors come from the City of Hartford, 65% from Connecticut (excluding Hartford), and 15% from out-of-state. Visitors from Hartford include members of the museum's Wadsworth Welcome program, which provides free year-round admission to the city's residents. Wadsworth Welcome visitors come from 4,600 households representing 54 different languages spoken at home.

Describe your organization's governance.

The Wadsworth's Board of Trustees consists of 26 trustees, 18 honorary trustees, and 6 ex-officio members. Meeting monthly or bimonthly, committees include Audit, Austin House, Curatorial, Education, Executive, Ethics, Facilities, Finance, Governance, Institutional Advancement, and Investment. The trustees meet six times per year. Average board meeting attendance rate is 65%, and 85% of trustees donate to the museum.

Describe the diversity of your board.

Of the Wadsworth's 26 trustees, thirteen (50%) are women. The racial/ethnic makeup of the board is not reported.

What percentage of your board makes personal financial contributions to your organization?

85% of the board of trustees made a contribution in the 2022 fiscal year. Trustees who did not make a contribution in 2022 could be newly elected, representing a donating organization, or have some other consideration that has resulted in them not donating.

Project Name

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Frederick Douglass

Is this project related to the Visual Arts?

Yes

Will the artists associated with this project be financially compensated?

Yes

Project Description

The exhibition Frederick Douglass marks the anniversary of the famed abolitionist's first visit to Connecticut. As the most photographed American in the 19th century, Douglass was keenly aware of the power of images and in many of his lectures, he expressed his vision of how picture-making and photography could offer powerful tools in the fight for social justice. This exhibition will include Isaac Julien's video art installation Lessons of the Hour; an immersive look into the transformative eighteen months Douglass spent in Great Britain, an experience that established him as the world's foremost orator against the evils of slavery. Presented in collaboration with The Amistad Center for Art & Culture, contributing curators include Henry Louis Gates, Jr, Professor and Director of the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research at Harvard University, and Sarah Lewis, Associate Professor History of Art, and African and African American Studies at Harvard University.

Total estimated project budget

\$409,400.00

Project start/opening

05/19/2023

Project end/closing

09/03/2023

Project venue

The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art

Project town

Hartford

Admission fees, attendance, and activity details

Frederick Douglass will draw an audience of approximately 17,500 local, regional, and national visitors across its three-month run, with an estimated 6,500 paid admissions and 11,000 comp admissions. Based on our current hours, the exhibition will be open for 63 days. Admission to the exhibition will be included with general admission to the museum, no additional fees will be charged.

How do you intend to promote/market this project?

The Wadsworth will promote the exhibition and related programming across multiple platforms. Printed materials will include a quarterly calendar of events, postcard invitations to museum members, and print advertising. Exhibitions and programs are featured on the museum's website, and will be boosted by digital advertising as well as content shared with the museum's 30,250 Facebook, 15,600 Instagram, and 11,500 Twitter followers, as well as monthly email newsletters sent to 23,600 subscribers.

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How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?

Funding to be allocated towards the costs of installing the exhibition, which includes creating a five-channel video display of Isaac Julien's work in an immersive viewing environment.

How will Roberts support be recognized?

Support from the Roberts Foundation will be credited on the exhibition title wall; in the exhibition catalogue; on all exhibition-related print materials, including the exhibition brochure, postcards, quarterly programming calendar, and gallery guide; on the museum's website; in social media posts about the exhibition; and in the museum's Annual Report, sent to over 2,400 households annually.

What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?

The Wadsworth Atheneum is committed to engaging the public with artistically and historically significant works of art through its extraordinary collections and by providing world-class exhibitions as well as educational programs, performances, films, and community events. The Wadsworth Atheneum's collections, history, and exhibitions engage local communities, attract visitors from across the globe, and make significant contributions to the broader fields of curation, conservation, museum studies, and art history. The museum publishes landmark scholarly catalogues, offers unique research-based activities such as renowned symposia and lectures with visiting scholars and artists, engages living artists and showcases time-honored masterpieces, and presents highly-regarded exhibitions that create opportunities for meaningful conversations.

How does this project align with that definition, and how does it advance your mission?

Over the past decade, the Wadsworth has made significant efforts to engage a broader, more diverse audience with its offerings. Key examples have included our 2010-2015 Community Engagement Initiative (which initiated an array of new public programs, such as Second Saturdays for Families, designed to draw diverse intergenerational audiences to the museum) and the Wadsworth Welcome program, launched in 2016, designed to eliminate financial barriers to museum access for residents of Hartford. While these efforts have been successful in many ways, the events of the past several years have made it apparent that to be a truly meaningful presence in our community, we must prioritize values of diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion in all we do. The proposed project is the start of a new multi-year initiative to reimagine a Wadsworth experience that is rooted in the expression of these values at all levels of our institution and across our operations.

How will your audience and the community benefit from this project?

This exhibition offers our audience an unparalleled opportunity to view Isaac Julien's video art installation *Lessons of the Hour*, which will be shown for the first time in the United States in its five-channel form, as well as studio portraits of middle-class nineteenth-century African Americans from the Amistad Center's collection. Public programs such as gallery talks and lectures will explore themes from the exhibition, such as image making and early photography, the role of women activists who surrounded Frederick Douglass, and the power of public speech and activism. Prospective speakers include Leigh K. Fought, author of *Women in the World of Frederick Douglass*, and MoMA curator Oluremi Onabanjo, author of *Recent Histories: Contemporary African Photography and Video Art*. The exhibition will be highlighted at our annual Juneteenth Community Day on June 10, 2023, presented in collaboration with The Amistad Center for Art & Culture.

How will this project be evaluated?

To evaluate *Frederick Douglass*, the museum's Visitor Services and Education staff will utilize a variety of evaluation strategies to gather qualitative and quantitative data. These will include:

- A robust e-survey about the exhibition will be sent out to visitors who opt-in

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- Attendance will be tracked for the exhibition and all related public programs
- Usage statistics for the mobile tour of the exhibition and related content on the museum's website

The exhibition survey will contain questions about visitor engagement and interest, program effectiveness, and educational and artistic merit. Program-specific evaluations may also be used to better understand the experiences of particular audiences.

Cover letter

- [Roberts-Foundation-Cover-Letter-SIGNED.pdf](#)

Board list

- [2022-Board-of-Trustees.pdf](#)

IRS 501(c)3 determination letter

- [501c3-determination-letter-Wadsworth-Atheneum.pdf](#)

Financial statement

- [Wadsworth-Atheneum-6.30.2021-Audited-Financial-Statements-002.pdf](#)

Last year operational budget

- [Wadsworth-Atheneum-FY21-Operating-Budget.pdf](#)

Current year operational budget

- [Wadsworth-Atheneum-FY22-Operating-Budget.pdf](#)

Balance sheet

- [Balance-Sheet-June-Preliminary.pdf](#)

Project budget

- [Frederick-Douglass-Budget.pdf](#)

Does your organization produce an annual report?

No

Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?

No

Does your organization have a formal policy or organizational commitment to ensure that visual artists are financially compensated?

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No

Have you contacted the Executive Director by email or phone to discuss this proposal?

Yes

Is your cover letter signed by your senior executive? on your letterhead? with your official office address?

Yes