

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ALBANY INSTITUTE PRESENTS TWO EXHIBITIONS CELEBRATING BLACK ART AND LEGACY

ALBANY, NY—The Albany Institute of History & Art is proud to present two major exhibitions this fall: *For Liberation and For Life: The Legacy of Black Dimensions in Art* opening August 23, 2025, and *Jacob Lawrence: Three Series of Prints* opening September 6, 2025.

For Liberation and For Life celebrates the 50th anniversary of Black Dimensions in Art, Inc. (BDA)—a volunteer-led group of creatives and activists founded in Schenectady in 1975. BDA presents this exhibition in partnership with the Albany Institute, which hosted the organization's first major museum show—*Black Artists in Historical Perspective*—in 1976. For five decades, BDA has uplifted the art and artists of the African Diaspora through exhibitions, workshops, and programs throughout New York's Capital Region, creating vital platforms for Black artists across generations.

Featuring paintings, photographs, film, textiles, sculptures, and mixed-media works, *For Liberation and For Life* honors BDA's legacy and looks to its future. This major group exhibition brings together over 60 contemporary New York artists, nationally and internationally recognized artists, and acclaimed historic works, forming one of the largest exhibitions of Black Artists in the history of the Capital Region. The exhibition draws from works loaned directly from artists and their studios as well as NYS Office of General Services' Harlem Art Collection, the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, and several other institutional and private lenders. Artists represented range from figures such as Romare Bearden, Elizabeth Catlett, Roy DeCarava, and Henry Ossawa Tanner, to contemporary artists like Lola Flash and Stephanie M. Santana, and many artists who live and work in the region, including Marcus Kwame Anderson, Alisa Sikelianos-Carter, and Takeyce Walter. The exhibition title draws inspiration from Elizabeth Catlett's powerful statement: "I have always wanted my art to service my people—to reflect us, to relate to us, to stimulate us, to make us aware of our potential. We have to create an art for liberation and for life."

Presented alongside the BDA exhibition is a monographic collection of prints by Jacob Lawrence (1917–2000), one of the most important American artists of the twentieth century. The exhibition features three series of silkscreen prints created between 1972 and 2000: *Genesis*, a vivid retelling of the biblical creation story, drawing connections between heritage, spiritual resilience, and rebirth; *Toussaint L'Ouverture*, a visual biography of the Haitian revolutionary who led the first successful slave uprising in the Western Hemisphere; and *Hiroshima*, a haunting reflection on the devastation of war and the global need for peace.

Since his first published print in 1963, Jacob Lawrence has produced a body of prints that is both highly dramatic and intensely personal. In his graphic work, as in his paintings, Lawrence has turned to the lessons of history and to his own experience. *Jacob Lawrence: Three Series of Prints* is a nationally traveling exhibition organized by Landau Traveling Exhibitions of Los Angeles and curated by Peter Nesbett, editor of *Jacob Lawrence, The Complete Prints (1963-2000)*, *The Catalogue Raisonné* and founding director of the Jacob and Gwendolyn Lawrence Foundation. The majority of the works in the exhibition come from the collections of Alitash Kebede, who was a friend and associate of Lawrence, and Dr. and Mrs. Leon Banks.

“We are excited to showcase the legacy and ongoing impact of Black Dimensions in Art, the Capital Region’s longest-running Black arts collective,” says Kayla Carlsen, Executive Director, Albany Institute of History & Art. “Presenting the work of BDA and the organization’s extensive community alongside Jacob Lawrence’s prints reinforces the rich networks of artistic innovation and influence that characterize the art of the African diaspora across both local and global contexts.”

For more information, visit the Albany Institute’s [website](#).

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ABOUT BLACK DIMENSIONS IN ART

Black Dimensions in Art, Inc. (BDA) is a volunteer-led group of creatives and activists seeking to address a lack of access and visibility for artists of the African Diaspora, and to encourage youth of African descent in the practice, application, and appreciation of the arts. Energized by the momentum of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements that achieved significant advancements for human rights in America and beyond, BDA's founders, with the same intensity and optimism, focused their efforts on breaking down the systemic barriers fortified by the art world—pushing to establish the recognition of Black artists' significant contributions to the field, supporting their exploration of Blackness and advocating for the ability to earn a living through their craft. BDA's mission is to educate the public about the unique contributions of African Diasporic artists within the American art scene and provide opportunities for the names and talents of Black artists to be seen and acknowledged.

ABOUT JACOB LAWRENCE

Jacob Lawrence was born in Atlantic City, New Jersey, in 1917 and passed his formative years in New York City's Harlem neighborhood. In the mid-1930s, he took art classes sponsored by the College Art Association and the WPA at the Harlem Community Art Center and, following a two-year scholarship to the American Artists School, worked in the easel division of the Federal Art Project. In 1941, Lawrence became the first African American artist included in the permanent collection of New York's Museum of Modern Art, where he had a one-man exhibition in 1944. He lived and worked in New York City, teaching at numerous schools and universities until 1971, when he accepted a full-time faculty appointment at the University of Washington in Seattle, from which he retired as professor emeritus in 1983. Lawrence died in Seattle in 2000.

Jacob Lawrence received numerous awards and honors, including the National Medal of Arts (1990), the NAACP Annual Great Black Artists Award (1988), and the Spingarn Medal (1970). His work has been the subject of several major retrospectives that have traveled nationally, originating in 1986 at Seattle Art Museum, in 1974 at the Whitney Museum of American Art, and in 1960 at the Brooklyn Museum.

ABOUT THE ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART

Founded in 1791, the Albany Institute of History & Art is New York's oldest museum. Its collections document the Hudson Valley as a crossroads of culture, influencing the art and history of the region, the state, and the nation. With more than 25,000 objects in the collection and one million documents in the research library, it is a resource for the region. Permanent exhibitions include one of the largest collections of Hudson River School paintings, a history of Ancient Egypt, and other fine art, ceramics, and furniture, as well as rotating temporary exhibitions.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

The Albany Institute will host a public reception on Saturday, October 25, 2025, celebrating both exhibitions. Throughout the fall, the museum will organize a series of film screenings related to the artists and artwork on display. In addition, Family Free Day on November 11, 2025, from 10AM–5PM and First Friday on December 5, 2025, from 5–7PM will include programs and activities themed to complement the exhibitions. Additional educational programs, workshops, and events for school groups, families, and adults will be offered throughout the duration of the exhibitions, which run through December 31, 2025.

COMPANION EXHIBITION AT THE TANG TEACHING MUSEUM

Up to Us: Black Dimensions in Art, 1975–Tomorrow, organized by The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, is on view through November 2, 2025. The exhibition presents a rich collection of archival material—including publications, posters, photographs, and other ephemera—alongside artwork by BDA members as well as artists from the Tang collection whose work connects to the late 20th-century Black Arts Movement.

Admission to the Tang is free; visitors to the Tang can present proof of their visit at the Albany Institute to redeem free admission through December 31, 2025. In addition, the Tang will host a Curator’s Tour led by exhibition curator Rebecca McNamara on September 18, 2025, at 12PM, in addition to a panel discussion, “Dialogues on Black Dimensions in Art,” on October 9, 2025, at 6PM. Both programs are free and open to the public.

FUNDING

Lead support for *For Liberation and For Life: The Legacy of Black Dimensions in Art* is provided by the **John D. Picotte Family Foundation**. Lead support for *Jacob Lawrence: Three Series of Prints* is provided by the **Carl E. Touhey Foundation**. Major support for both exhibitions is provided by Times Union, Advance Albany County Alliance, and the Albany County Convention and Visitors Bureau Fund of The Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region. Additional support for both exhibitions is provided by Miriam Tremontozzi and James Ayers.

Season exhibition and program support is provided by Phoebe Powell Bender and Christine and George R. Hearst III. Albany Institute programs and exhibitions are made possible in part by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature.

For Liberation and For Life: The Legacy of Black Dimensions in Art

August 23–December 31, 2025

Co-organized by Black Dimensions in Art, Inc., and Albany Institute of History & Art
Curated by Jacqueline Lake-Sample, Stephen J. Tyson, and Daesha Devón Harris

Works by Jamal Ademola, Marcus Kwame Anderson, Romare Bearden, April Bey, Diana Blain Fine, Julia Bottoms, Kwame Brathwaite, Aleathia Brown, R. Guy Brown, Royal G. Brown, Jillian Marie Browning, Michael A. Butler, Raúl Ayala Carasquillo, William PK Carter, Elizabeth Catlett, Mika Chante, Peter M. Clarke Jr., Ja'Deana Cognetta-Whitfield, Cornelia Cole, D. Colin, Miki Conn, Robert Cooper, David Cottés, James Counts, Ernest Crichlow, Stanwyck Cromwell, Margaret Cunningham, Fern Cunningham-Terry, I. Joseph Daniel, Francelise Dawkins, Avel de Knight, Roy DeCarava, James Denmark, Sean Desiree, B.A. DiLella, Emory Douglas, Paula Drysdale Frazell, Robert S. Duncanson, Mikel Elam, Patricia Encarnación, Lola Flash, Raè Frasier, Laura R. Gadson, Tamika Galanis, Daesha Devón Harris, Kim Vincent Harris, Lucia Hierro, Candace Hill Montgomery, Clementine Hunter, Linda Jackson-Chalmers, LeRoi Johnson, Benjamin Jones, Danny Killion, Jacqueline Lake-Sample, Hughie Lee-Smith, David R. MacDonald, Anina Major, Kerry James Marshall, Eugene J. Martin, Barry L. Mason, Leita Mitchell, Zanele Muholi, Woodrow Nash, Otto Neals, Nefertiti, Clifford Oliver, Gordon Parks, Curtis Patterson, Charlese Annette Phillips, Tina Raggio, ransome, Stacey A. Robinson, Alison Saar, Stephanie M. Santana, Charles Searles, Yvonne Shortt, Alisa Sikelianos-Carter, George W. Simmons, Winosha Steele, Jean-Marc Superville Sovak, Taitan, Henry Ossawa Tanner, Eric Treece, Stephen J. Tyson, James Van Der Zee, Takeyce Walter, Jade Warrick, Pheoris West, Deborah Willis, Fred Wilson, Michael K. Wilson, Paula Wilson, Hale Woodruff, Barbara Zuber, Elizabeth Zunon.

Lenders: Fenimore Art Museum; Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College; The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, Skidmore College; New York State Office of General Services; New York State Museum.

[Click here for a PDF of the artist bios and statements.](#)

Jacob Lawrence: Three Series of Prints

September 6–December 31, 2025

Exhibition credit: *Jacob Lawrence: Three Series of Prints*. From the Collections of Dr. & Mrs. Leon Banks & Alitash Kebede. The exhibition and museum tour were organized by Landau Traveling Exhibitions of Los Angeles, CA.

Curated by Peter Nesbett, editor of *Jacob Lawrence, The Complete Prints (1963-2000)*, *The Catalogue Raisonné* and founding director of the Jacob and Gwendolyn Lawrence Foundation

Lenders: Dr. & Mrs. Leon Banks & Alitash Kebede

For Liberation and For Life: The Legacy of Black Dimensions in Art

August 23–December 31, 2025

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Out Chorus

Romare Bearden

1979–1980, print

New York State Museum, H-1981.29.1

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Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY



Catsup bottles, table and coat

Roy DeCarava

1952–1953, silver gelatin print

NYS Office of General Services, Harlem Art Collection, H77.23.1



Summer Marsh

Takeyce Walter

2023, pastel on paper

Courtesy of the artist

Jacob Lawrence: Three Series of Prints

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Forward Together

Jacob Lawrence

1997, silkscreen, edition 116/125

Courtesy of Landau Traveling Exhibitions

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Lawrence Foundation, Seattle / Artists
Rights Society (ARS), New York



The Library

Jacob Lawrence

1978, silkscreen

Courtesy of Landau Traveling Exhibitions

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Lawrence Foundation, Seattle / Artists
Rights Society (ARS), New York



The Opener

Jacob Lawrence

1997, silkscreen

Courtesy of Landau Traveling Exhibitions

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General Toussaint L'Ouverture

Jacob Lawrence

1986, silkscreen

Courtesy of Landau Traveling Exhibitions

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Rights Society (ARS), New York