

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PAFA and AAMP receive major grants from The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage to support transformative, multi-site exhibition *Rising Sun*

PHILADELPHIA – The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA) and the African American Museum in Philadelphia (AAMP) are the recipients of two grants of \$480,000 each, including both project funding and an additional 20% for general operating support, from The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage. These awards for a major collaboration will support the upcoming, transformative, multi-site contemporary art exhibition *Rising Sun – Artists and an Uncertain America*, scheduled to open at PAFA, AAMP, and additional venues throughout Philadelphia in late 2022.

One of the most ambitious and multifaceted Philadelphia art exhibitions in recent memory, *Rising Sun* will feature newly commissioned work by 30 leading contemporary American artists. The exhibition draws inspiration from the words of Benjamin Franklin, who pondered whether the sun was rising or setting on the country's future during its formative years, and the lyrics "Facing the rising sun of our new day begun" from *Lift Every Voice and Sing* (or "The Black National Anthem"), written by James Weldon Johnson. In the midst of an uncertain and tumultuous contemporary moment, the 30 participating artists will critically engage with Franklin's question – *Is the sun rising or setting on America?* – according to their individual points of view and artistic practices, forging new insights, connections, and discussions on inadequate history, the work of re-appraisal, reformation, reckoning, repair, and, ultimately, a collective way forward: "*Facing the rising sun of our new day begun.*"

In conjunction with this exhibition, PAFA will undertake a number of bold changes to the galleries in its 19th century Historic Landmark Building, including the complete de-installation of its permanent collection of art from the building's galleries, and a fully reimagined re-installation of its historic collection following the conclusion of *Rising Sun*. Further details, including participating artists, additional venues, and cross-institutional programming, will be announced in the coming months.

"In partnership with AAMP, *Rising Sun* is designed to transform how PAFA, and the narrative of American art, is experienced by our audiences," said Brooke Davis Anderson, the Edna S. Tuttleman Director of the Museum at PAFA. "Having our funder, The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, recognize the value of this multi-site exhibition, and supporting the project with such a generous grant, is both gratifying and energizing. We are deeply grateful to the Center and look forward to sharing this exhibition with our communities in 2022."

"*Rising Sun* presents an opportunity for AAMP and PAFA to engage audiences in discourse around the birth and evolution of this country; exploring its legends, ideals, and realities through our partnered display and interpretation of thought-provoking art by an international roster of contemporary masters," said Ivan Henderson, Vice President of Programming at AAMP. "As the nation and world continue to reconcile American values with American actions, this exhibition will welcome diverse audiences to both institutions and the vibrant cultural corridor that connects them. We are grateful to The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage for its support of this exciting work with our partner PAFA. We hope this project will challenge, affirm and broaden our visitors' perspectives, just as we intend for it to deepen and expand our institutional capacities for partnerships and innovative practice."



Pennsylvania Academy
of the Fine Arts



AFRICAN AMERICAN
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“As arts institutions in Philadelphia, popularly known as the ‘birthplace’ of the United States, we have a responsibility to critically examine our nation’s history and ask difficult questions about where we have been, where we are now, and where we are headed,” said Jodi Throckmorton, Curator of Contemporary Art at PAFA. “With the curatorial partnership of Dejay Duckett at AAMP, and the collaboration of 30 of our most extraordinary contemporary artists, that is what *Rising Sun* intends to do. To have such significant support from The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage is immensely valuable, as PAFA and AAMP work to bring this project to life.”

“The impact of the Center’s support of this project cannot be overstated,” said Dejay Duckett, Director of Curatorial Services at AAMP. “AAMP and PAFA audiences and the broader Philadelphia community will experience the works of internationally renowned artists in a way our institutions have never presented them before, reshaping the way we think about our collective past as we head into a (hopefully) post-pandemic world driven by rapid social change.”

About The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage

The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage is a multidisciplinary grantmaker and hub for knowledge-sharing, funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, dedicated to fostering a vibrant cultural community in Greater Philadelphia. The Center invests in ambitious, imaginative, and catalytic work that showcases the region’s cultural vitality and enhances public life, and engages in an exchange of ideas concerning artistic and interpretive practice with a broad network of cultural practitioners and leaders. Learn more about the Center’s grants at www.pewcenterarts.org/2020grants.

About PAFA

Founded in 1805, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts is America’s first school and museum of fine arts. A recipient of the National Medal of Arts, PAFA offers undergraduate and graduate programs in the fine arts, innovative exhibitions of historic and contemporary American art, and a world-class collection of American art. PAFA’s esteemed alumni include Mary Cassatt, Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Thomas Eakins, William Glackens, Barkley L. Hendricks, Violet Oakley, Louis Kahn, David Lynch, and Henry Ossawa Tanner. Learn more at www.PAFA.org.

About AAMP

Founded in 1976 in celebration of the nation’s Bicentennial, the African American Museum in Philadelphia (AAMP) is the first institution funded and built by a major municipality to preserve, interpret and exhibit the heritage of African Americans. Throughout its evolution, the museum has objectively interpreted and presented the achievements and aspirations of African Americans from pre-colonial times to the current day. The museum is committed to telling the story of African Americans in all its permutations: family life, the Civil Rights movement, arts and entertainment, sports, medicine, architecture, politics, religion, law and technology. The AAMP currently houses four galleries and an auditorium, each of which offer exhibitions anchored by one of our three dominant themes: the African Diaspora, the Philadelphia Story, and the Contemporary Narrative. www.aampmuseum.org

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