



Office of General Services

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OGS ANNOUNCES EVENTS TO COMMEMORATE THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE EMPIRE STATE PLAZA ART COLLECTION

Celebration Commences with Black History Month Event on February 2

New York State Office of General Services (OGS) Commissioner RoAnn Destito today announced a number of events and exhibits to be held commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Empire State Plaza Art Collection. A display and panel discussion of African American artists during Black History Month, an exhibition of contemporary New York artist Phil Frost's work, a special exhibit at the New York State Museum, and a student art show will take place.

"Having just spent a year commemorating the 50th anniversary of the cornerstone laying at the Empire State Plaza, we are excited to begin celebrating the semicentennial of one of the plaza's most distinguishing features, its art collection," Commissioner Destito said. "The Empire State Plaza Art Collection has been described as the greatest collection of modern American art not in a museum, and it helps define the plaza as a model for presenting art in a public space. We welcome everyone to attend the upcoming events and discover or reacquaint themselves with this amazing collection."

"The State Education Department and the Board of Regents are excited to host an exhibition featuring selected works from the Empire State Plaza Art Collection this fall," said State Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia. "We look forward to working with the Office of General Services to create an exhibition for New Yorkers to learn about the collection, which is a great reflection of these noted New York artists."

"The Empire State Plaza Art Collection is the most extraordinary collection of significant modern American art in any public holding. It is truly the people's collection of works by mid-twentieth century American masters," said State Museum Director Mark Schaming. "We are collaborating with the Office of General Services to highlight the collection in an exhibition this fall, giving State Museum visitors an opportunity to see these works in a new light as we celebrate this milestone in New York State."

The Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza Art Collection was formed between 1966 and 1972 under the vision and direction of Governor Rockefeller during construction of the Empire State Plaza. Ninety-two works of primarily Abstract Expressionist art were purchased by the state for permanent display throughout the Plaza on behalf of the people of New York. The collection was intended to bring to fruition Governor Rockefeller's desire "to collect contemporary art that reflects the period" and includes works by Alexander Calder, Jackson Pollock, Franz Kline, Joan Mitchell, and Mark Rothko.

Events scheduled as part of the commemoration include:

African American Artists: Highlights from the Empire State Plaza Art Collection and New York State Harlem Art Collection, a panel discussion will take place Tuesday, February 2, 2016 from 6 to 8 p.m. in the south concourse of the Empire State Plaza near the Madison Avenue Entrance. The art will be on display in the concourse through February 29.

As part of New York State's 2016 observance of Black History Month, an exhibit and panel discussion highlighting selections from these two significant art collections: The Empire State Plaza Art Collection and The New York State Harlem Art Collection. Both of these collections contain examples of work created by black artists between the mid-1950s and the mid-1970s, such as Al Loving Jr. and William T. Williams in the Plaza collection and Kay Brown, Joseph Delaney, Palmer Hayden, Howardena Pindell and Hale Woodruff in the Harlem collection, which was started in 1976 and originally housed in the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building.

The panel discussion, will be moderated by visual artist, educator, and curator Stephen J. Tyson, with panelists: Mara Loving, an artist and executor of the Loving Estate; Danny Simmons, an artist, poet, author, and founder and vice chairman of the Rush Philanthropic Arts Foundation and Gallery; and Barbara Zuber, an artist, art historian, children's book illustrator, and inaugural board member of Black Dimensions in Art, as well as the first black woman admitted to the Yale School of Art.

The panel discussion will precede the **Black History Month Cultural Expo and Vendor Fair**, which will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 pm on Wednesday, February 3 at the south end of the of the Empire State Plaza concourse closest to Madison Avenue. The expo and fair will feature an Underground Railroad exhibit, performances, a historical reenactment, craft vendors, food, and exhibits by community organizations.

Seventh Annual Empire State Plaza Art Collection Student Exhibition, March 2016.

The student exhibit is the result of a collaboration between the OGS Plaza Art Collection Office and the Capital Area Art Supervisors. Through special tours and educational resources, the program introduces the Plaza Art Collection into the curriculum of local elementary and middle schools where the students are invited to create their own works of art by interpreting the Plaza Art Collection. Each year approximately 1,000 works of student art from nearly a dozen Capital Region school districts are placed on display in the Empire State Plaza during the month of March.

Special Exhibit at the New York State Museum, Fall 2016

The New York State Museum will host a special exhibition featuring a selection of works from the Empire State Plaza Art Collection.

Phil Frost, Guest Artist Exhibit, Fall 2016

Following the opening of the special exhibit in the New York State Museum, the works of Phil Frost will be displayed in the Corning Tower. Frost is a New York artist who was inspired by the Plaza Art Collection. He creates work that combines the raw, gritty edge of the street with an elegant, painterly aesthetic.

For event updates, visit www.ogs.ny.gov and follow @plazaevents on Twitter and Empire State Plaza Events on Facebook

Sponsors of the Black History Month Observance include Austin's School of Spa Technology, Time Warner Cable, and TownePlace Suites – Albany Medical Center.

Attached Images:

Palmer Hayden, *The Subway*, ca. 1960, oil on canvas, 30" x 26" from the Harlem Collection

William T. Williams, *Sweets Crane*, 1969, acrylic on canvas, 9'-7" x 9'-2" from the Empire State Plaza Art Collection

Alvin D. Loving, Jr., *New Morning I*, 1973, acrylic on canvas, 7'-6" x 55'-7" from the Empire State Plaza Art Collection

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