



PRESS RELEASE

Black History, Identity & the James Baldwin Centennial Easton, CT: February 12th - March 16th, 2024

Inspired by Black History, Identity & the James Baldwin Centennial, a spoken word performance, art exhibition and reception will be hosted by the Easton Arts Council on Saturday, March 2nd, from 5-8PM in the Community Room of the Easton Public Library.

Why James Baldwin? To quote Morgan Overton, whose portrait of the world-famous author/civil rights activist is part of this exhibition, "To me, James Baldwin is timeless. He speaks to the urgency of today ... and to the essence of the human spirit."

James Baldwin OutLoud, a spoken word performance of Baldwin quotes interwoven with archival film clips, will be performed by EAC artists Kit Briner & Larry Morse. The film clips will be excerpted from the award-winning documentary by Easton filmmakers Karen Thorsen & Douglas K. Dempsey, *James Baldwin: The Price of The Ticket*.

As part of this celebration, from February 12th to March 16th, Baldwin-related artwork is currently on display in the Easton Public Library. Featured exhibits include:

- *The Underground Railroad: A Journey by Quilt* by The BOLT Sisters, a national group of quilting artists
- *Black Men Reading*, a series of oil paintings by Larry Morse
- *The James Baldwin Review*, a decade of multimedia cover art from the international journal, 2015-2024
- *Red, White & Baldwin*, acrylic-on-cotton art by imprisoned quilter Kenya Baleech Alkebu, Louisiana State Penitentiary
- *Inspired by Baldwin*, multimedia portraits by Columbia University art student Mikka Kabugo; visual artist Morgan Overton; photographer Steve Schapiro
- *Inspired by Ancestors*, two art history group projects by Mural Club students from Joel Barlow High School
- *My Favorite Historical Figure*, a collection of Black History dolls made by third-graders from the Discovery Magnet School.

A selection of Baldwin quotations will illuminate the art on display — and for viewers who want to learn more about a particular work of art, exhibits will be accompanied by QR codes which will link personal phone-screens to descriptive texts. Several artworks will be available for commission or purchase.

Curated by Easton residents Sheila Weaver and Karen Thorsen, this Easton Arts Council event will be co-hosted by the Easton Public Library, the Easton Diversity & Inclusion Taskforce (EDIT) and The James Baldwin Project. Funders include CT Humanities, CT Cultural Fund and the National Endowment for the Arts.

For more information, please contact info@JamesBaldwinProject.org

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