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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**History Center Issues Call for African American Craft Artists**

*Smithsonian cultural heritage collaboration will highlight Central Florida artists*

**ORLANDO, FL (October 30, 2023)** — The Orange County Regional History Center seeks both established and emerging Central Florida-based African American craft artists to participate in an exciting new project in collaboration with the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage and the Craft Emergency Relief Fund.

Based in downtown Orlando, the History Center is one of only four organizations nationally selected to take part in the project, titled Cultural Sustainability and Legacy Planning for Craft Artists. Part of the African American Craft Initiative, the project’s goals include building relationships between elders and youth, and with local cultural institutions.

Participants will have the opportunity to learn best practices in areas including documentation of artists’ processes and stories, digitally archiving artwork, and social media strategy. They will also receive a stipend of \$400.

“We’re seeking up to 10 artisans to participate in this important initiative to preserve African American craft legacies and stories, while also encouraging the growth of their own platforms,” said Pam Schwartz, the museum’s executive director. “We’re excited that the project will also be featured in an issue of *Folklife Magazine*, which will be a terrific opportunity to highlight the extraordinary talent we have in Central Florida.”

The Smithsonian initiative’s goal is to expand the visibility of African American artisans and craftspeople through collaborative research and documentation, public programming, and community building across the United States and international craft communities. For more, visit [folklife.si.edu](http://folklife.si.edu).

Other organizations selected to participate in the project include City Lore in New York City, the Michigan State University Museum in East Lansing, Mich., and the Springfield Museum of Art in Springfield, Ohio. Like the History Center, all are Smithsonian Affiliates. The project seeks to “connect with heritage leaders across the map to share and strengthen our ability to support local African American artists,” notes Dr. Diana Baird N’Diaye, curator and founder of the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage’s African American Craft Initiative.

Interested artists should contact the History Center's curator of education, Katie Kelley, at [mary.kelley@ocfl.net](mailto:mary.kelley@ocfl.net). The deadline for applications is December 1, 2023.

**The Orange County Regional History Center**, housed in a historic courthouse at 65 E. Central Blvd. in downtown Orlando, features four floors of permanent and special exhibitions. The museum is a Smithsonian Institution affiliate and accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. It is funded in part by Orange County Government through the Community & Family Services Department under Orange County Mayor Jerry L. Demings and the Board of County Commissioners. The Historical Society of Central Florida Inc. is supported by United Arts of Central Florida and sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Arts and Culture, and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture. For more information, visit [TheHistoryCenter.org](http://TheHistoryCenter.org).

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