

# The E-Griot

*Winter 2009 Edition*

The Amistad Center  
for Art & Culture

We hope you enjoy this issue of *The E-Griot*. A griot is a West African story teller who passes on oral tradition and history of a village or family. We think of you as being part of The Amistad Center's family and we thank you for allowing us to share our stories.

## Dig Deeper this Winter!

*Digging Deeper*

Now On View -April 4, 2010



*Curious Objects from the Now Yet to be Understood* by Willie Cole and Hank Willis Thomas

*Digging Deeper* is a rare and exciting collaborative project that engages artists Willie Cole and Hank Willis Thomas in the exploration of The Amistad Center's important culturally specific collection and the Wadsworth Atheneum's renowned and diverse collections to produce an exhibition, including new works, that enlightens and entertains our public community. The exhibition juxtaposes collection materials and Cole's and Thomas' original works to challenge viewers to think about contemporary art in an historical context, traditional art in a contemporary context, and the capacity of multiple generations and forms of art to document, comment on, and sometimes change history. This exhibition celebrates and demonstrates the perspectives and skills of two extraordinarily talented contemporary artists, through whose eyes we see anew two historic collections.

This exhibition is sponsored by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and the Edward C. and Ann T. Roberts Foundation. With additional support from the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism. Educational programs and materials are supported by GE.

For more information about *Digging Deeper*, visit [AmistadArtandCulture.org](http://AmistadArtandCulture.org).

The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts

The Edward C. & Ann T.  
Roberts  
FOUNDATION



Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism



imagination at work

## Meet a Member: Michele Long continued on page 2

**How long have you been a member of The Amistad Center?**

I joined The Amistad Center as a Contemporary Associates member in 2006, shortly after I moved to Hartford from Chicago, Illinois. The Amistad Center brought a variety of art exhibits and since I was new to Hartford I found that The Amistad Center offered variety of programming that enabled me to learn more about art and history, and meet new people.

**What brought you to Connecticut and how did you find out about The Amistad Center?**

I moved to Connecticut after accepting a job offer with a Hartford based company. I'd just completed graduate school in Chicago, Illinois and I was excited to move back to the East Coast to be closer to family and friends. I learned about The Amistad Center by attending an Urban League of Greater Hartford Young Professionals (YP) meeting. It was Black History Month and The Amistad Center hosted the YP meeting and gave attendees a tour of its current exhibit *Double Exposure: African Americans Before and Behind the Camera*. I thought it was great that I was able to find this gem in Hartford. It reminded me of the DuSable Museum back in Chicago.

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Marlon and Michele Long met at an Amistad Center event in February 2006. They got married in July 2009.

*"...I would grow to love Marlon and Hartford, all thanks to The Amistad Center."*



February 8, 2010

5:30 pm to 9 pm

Wadsworth Atheneum  
600 Main Street  
Downtown Hartford



Presenting Sponsor



KNOW BETTER CARE

## Meet a Member: Michele Long cont.

Would you say that the arts are important to your life?

I love the arts! I consider myself artistically challenged, so I love to see how people use their artistic talents to make a statement or as interpretation. Through The Amistad Center I have had the opportunity to meet many of the artists behind the exhibits and understand what they were thinking when they were working on their piece and what inspired them. I rarely had the opportunity to interact with artists in that way before. I find that with each exhibit I have to view it twice just in case I missed anything the first time.

As you know, membership to The Amistad Center comes with many exciting benefits (discounted tickets to Juneteenth, free museum admission, invitations to special events/private receptions, etc). Which benefit is your favorite?

This is a hard question. I love all the programs brought to the museum by The Amistad Center. I have had the opportunity to go to or volunteer at exhibit openings, Juneteenth, A Taste of History, the Gala and Annual Meeting. It is hard to say one event is better than another. The exhibits are always fascinating and artists that contribute to the exhibits frequently attend the events. The Amistad Center events are always a great way to catch up with friends from the community that share a passion for the arts. The programs are all really great and the staff always does such a wonderful job organizing the events. I can't pick one. Sorry.

I understand that you met your husband, Marlon, because of your membership in TAC. Would you like to tell me about it?

I met Marlon during my very first visit to The Amistad Center. On that day I met many young professionals from the Hartford area. At the time I had no idea Marlon would become my future husband. That day, after leaving the museum and meeting many of my soon to be friends and Marlon, I thought maybe Hartford isn't so bad. Eventually I would grow to love Marlon and Hartford, all thanks to The Amistad Center!

What a great story! Thank you for being a member Michele!

Would you like to become a member? Visit [www.AmistadArtandCulture.org](http://www.AmistadArtandCulture.org). *Join us today!*

## Holiday Greetings from TAC

It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year!

It's a time to celebrate and cherish family and friends...and demonstrate your appreciation for The Amistad Center! We hope you enjoyed the exhibitions and programs we offered this year, like Juneteenth Family Day and The Black List films. If only The Amistad Center's engine could be fueled by dedication, passion, and skill alone. But it takes all of that *and* the support of everyone we enlighten and entertain...especially *your* generosity, to sustain our work.

Please consider making a tax deductible contribution to The Amistad Center today! Visit [www.AmistadArtandCulture.org](http://www.AmistadArtandCulture.org) to start giving.

We hope your holidays are warm and truly wonderful and that your New Year is filled with art and culture!!!

## A Taste of History is back!

Join us for an evening of art, food and music!

Enjoy 'tastings' from Grants, Cuvec, Max Amore, Jordan Caterers and many more elite chefs!

*Ticket and Sponsorship Prices*

Event Sponsorship - \$1500 (Receive two reserved table of 10.)

Reserved Table of 8 - \$550

Individual Premier Reserved Seat - \$75

Individual General Admission Ticket (no reserved seating) - \$50

Individual General Admission Ticket for Amistad Center members - \$40

To purchase tickets

Visit—[www.AmistadArtandCulture.org](http://www.AmistadArtandCulture.org)

## Upcoming Exhibition

*High Water Marks: Art & Renewal After Katrina*

May 1, 2010 - September 19, 2010

Five years after the horrific hurricane hit, the arts remain an essential aspect of New Orleans and central to its post-Katrina renewal effort. From May-September 2010 the exhibition, *High Water Marks: Art & Renewal After Katrina*, will present the achievements of a range of artists who have documented the city's devastation and are committed to the city's recovery. With a foundation of Amistad Center collection material, especially trade cards and photographs, the introductory section establishes the importance of Black artisans in colonial New Orleans and references the emergence of iconic cultural forms including jazz, vernacular architecture, politically significant moments in New Orleans racial history (Plessy v. Ferguson), and food. On view will be an excerpt from Benjamin Henry Latrobe's *Impressions Respecting New Orleans*, 1820, published 1951 and high caliber work by contemporary artists such as local favorite, Donald Boudreaux.

This exhibition is generously supported by the J. Walton Bissell Foundation, the Greater Hartford Arts Council and the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism.

For more information about *High Water Marks*, visit [AmistadArtandCulture.org](http://AmistadArtandCulture.org).



## Event Calendar

January 18, 2010—MLK Community Day, FREE museum admission

February 8, 2010—*A Taste of History* - Tickets on sale now! (Severe Weather Date: February 9, 2010)

April 10, 2010—*Digging Deeper* closes

May 1, 2010—*High Water Marks: Art & Renewal After Katrina* opens

May 6, 2009—Phoenix Art After Hours Celebrating the Opening of *High Water Marks*

June 12, 2010—Juneteenth Family Day, FREE museum admission

June 13, 2010—Juneteenth Luncheon at The Bushnell with matinee performance of *Porgy and Bess*

June 18, 2010—Juneteenth Celebration Gala



Juneteenth Celebration Gala  
2009

## The Amistad Center Celebrates: The Fall Gala

On November 7, 2009 we presented our seventh annual black-tie gala, *The Celebration of Art & Culture*, at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art. We recognized the accomplishments and contributions of three very special people: Robert L. Johnson, founder and chairman of RLJ Companies and *Digging Deeper* artists Willie Cole, and Hank Willis Thomas.

Funds raised by this gala provide substantial support for The Amistad Center's collection care and development, exhibitions, public programs and general operations.

Thank you to all of our corporate gala sponsors and individual patrons.

**We want to hear from you!**

Questions? Comments?

Contact us at (860) 838-4133, [AmistadCenter@WadsworthAtheneum.org](mailto:AmistadCenter@WadsworthAtheneum.org) or  
[AmistadArtandCulture.org](http://AmistadArtandCulture.org).



Amistad Center Board President, JoAnn Price  
and Honoree Bob Johnson.



Congratulations to our Consulting Curator, Frank Mitchell for receiving the *Enduring Spirit Award* from the Arts Council of Greater New Haven



*Recent Acquisition: Study—The Uncertainty of Air*  
By Shinique Smith

The 2009 Annual Report of the Amistad Center is now available **ONLINE!**

Visit [AmistadArtandCulture.org](http://AmistadArtandCulture.org) to view and download.

## Young Americans in North Carolina

*Young Americans Photographs* by Sheila Pree Bright

October 16, 2009—May 13, 2010

*Young Americans* is a dynamic new series of photographs by Atlanta-based photographer Sheila Pree Bright. The project explores the identities of U.S. citizens and immigrants pursuing citizenship by present portraits of Americans aged 18–25, each posing with an American flag. The exhibition at the Diggs Gallery will feature 44 large format chromogenic prints, several accompanied by statements from the subjects revealing their unique perceptions of patriotism. The project began in 2006 and features WSSU students. The exhibition debuted at the High Museum in Atlanta before traveling to the Wadsworth Atheneum and the University of California, Irvine.

*Young Americans: Photographs* by Sheila Pree Bright is organized by The Amistad Center for Art & Culture, Inc., Hartford, Connecticut, in collaboration with the High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia. Made possible by a generous grant from Aetna and the North Carolina Arts Council.

For more information about *Young Americans*, visit [wssu.edu](http://wssu.edu).



Charles Cautben, Age 19.  
African-American, 2007.  
Chromogenic print



### Attention Teachers and Educators!



The Amistad Center's Traveling Education Display is available for rental.

This unique installation traces the history of African American imagery in beautiful high-quality full size reproductions. Teaching materials and poster available.

For more information or to make your reservation, contact us at [AmistadCenter@WadsworthAtheneum.org](mailto:AmistadCenter@WadsworthAtheneum.org) or (860) 838-4133.