



Legislation Text

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A resolution thanking the Philadelphia Museum of Art for presenting *The Time is Always Now: Artists Reframe the Black Figure*, an impactful exhibit that honors and celebrates the rich contributions of the Black and African diasporic experience.

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Museum of Art is one of the country's oldest art museums and has long been recognized as one of its finest; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Museum of Art has long served as a platform for showcasing diverse cultures and fostering an inclusive background; and

WHEREAS, *The Time is Always Now: Artists Reframe the Black Figure*, features 28 Black and African diasporic contemporary artists who use figurative painting, drawing, and sculpture to illuminate and celebrate the nuance and richness of Black contemporary life; and

WHEREAS, Ekow Eshun, the trailblazing British writer, journalist, broadcaster, and curator, handpicked art pieces for this exhibit, the title of which derives from an essay on desegregation by renowned author and social rights activist James Baldwin. The exhibition emphasizes the urgency of contemporary artistic expression, serving as a reminder that Black artists exist within an always-evolving artistic lineage; and

WHEREAS, This exhibit delves into themes of Double Consciousness, Past and Presence, and Our Aliveness, all reflecting various facets of the Black experience; and

WHEREAS, Double Consciousness, a theory introduced in 1897 by W.E.B. Du Bois, explores concepts of being, belonging, and Blackness as a psychological state. The works in the exhibit explore how artists perceive themselves and how they are perceived and framed by others, navigating the complexities of real and imagined identities; and

WHEREAS, Past and Presence addresses the absence of Black figures in many mainstream narratives and highlights how artists have responded to this erasure; and

WHEREAS, Our Aliveness features assertions and celebrations of Black assembly and gathering, including a painting by Hurvin Anderson, unpacking the cultural significance of the barbershop to the Caribbean diasporic community; and

WHEREAS, This exhibit is essential because it illuminates the richness and complexity of Black life through figuration, and simultaneously prompts deep reflection about race, identity, and history; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Museum of Art supported this exhibition with programming such as panel discussions, student tours, live choral performances, and film screenings, all of which provided participants with new and enriching cultural perspectives; and

WHEREAS, Exhibitions like *The Time is Always Now* are critical, especially in times when Black History is under threat and being systematically undermined; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Museum of Art is encouraged to continue bringing such exhibitions to its venue, allowing visitors to experience diverse cultural settings they may not otherwise encounter; now, therefore

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby thanks the Philadelphia Museum of Art for presenting *The Time is Always Now: Artists Reframe the Black Figure*, an impactful exhibit that honors and celebrates the rich contributions of the Black and African diasporic experience.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Sasha Suda, Director and CEO of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.