



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Lewis Takes a Look Inside East Baltimore

April 3, 2009 – (Baltimore, MD) From April 25 to July 26, visitors to the Lewis Museum can view 120 photographs that document the shifting landscape of Baltimore’s East Side in the *East Side Stories: Portraits of a Baltimore Neighborhood, Then and Now* photography exhibition. Situated on the East Side of Baltimore, the museum is the ideal venue to tell the story of how East Side neighborhoods and longtime residents are currently living through massive redevelopment projects. The exhibition begins with depictions of the East Side in the early part of the 20th century, but focuses primarily on the community at the turn of the 21st century and throughout the past 10 years. Photographers featured in the exhibition include: **Ken Royster, Elizabeth Barbush of Art on Purpose, Ellis L. Marsalis, III, and Michela Caudill.**

Historically, East Baltimore has housed significant populations of African Americans, Jews, Italian Americans, and Greek Americans. Whites from Central and Eastern Europe—Germany, Poland, Ukraine, and the Czech Republic—also settled in the area’s neighborhoods. In recent decades, East Baltimore has also become home to immigrants from Latin America. With this mixture of backgrounds, languages, and customs, East Baltimore is distinctly diverse compared with other parts of the city. In keeping with the museum’s stated mission to document and interpret Maryland’s African American history, the exhibition gives voice and vision to African Americans and other communities of Baltimore’s East Side and their stories of family, home, neighbors, and belonging.

The exhibition is organized by Dr. Michelle Joan Wilkinson, Director of Collections and Exhibitions at the museum. Dr. Wilkinson says, “This exhibition has been exceptionally important to both myself and the museum in that we worked closely with arts, educational, and community organizations located in or serving East Baltimore. Their knowledge has been instrumental in assisting us to present an exhibition that is reflective of our neighbors on the East Side.”

A highlight of the exhibition is its use of audio recordings from interviews with Middle East residents. These “audio portraits” were conducted by Art on Purpose, a community arts organization, and are included as part of a cell phone audio tour for the exhibition, as well as in a state-of-the-art interactive sound wall where museum visitors can hear East Side residents reflect on how their neighborhood has changed over time. Through images and audio recordings, *East Side Stories* highlights how residents are preserving their local history and forging a place for their own stories amidst the cultural shifts and commercial revitalization in East Baltimore.

East Side Baltimore: Portraits of a Baltimore Neighborhood, Then and Now is made possible through the generous support of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and PNC Bank.

MORE

SPECIAL EXHIBITION - PROGRAMS

Saturday, May 9

Community Day

The museum hosts a community day to view the exhibition. Activities will include gallery tours, a craft activity for children, an artist talk and a community fair for the family.

11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Story Hour: Something Beautiful

Discover what makes one little girl's urban community beautiful through the story, *Something Beautiful* by Sharon Dennis Wyeth. Following the reading, children will visit the special exhibition, and paint a portrait of a city neighborhood. Recommended for ages 6 to 10.

3 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Artist Talk: Ken Royster

Join photographer Ken Royster for a discussion of his photos in the special exhibition. Mr. Royster will present slides of his works from past exhibitions and converse about the direction of photography today. His artistic works includes photography, print making and mixed media.

All events are free with Museum Admission

Saturday, June 13

11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Story Hour: City Green

Children will listen to the story, *City Green* by Dyane Disalvo-Ryan and explore landscaping by creating a garden. Recommended for ages 6 to 10.

Free with Museum Admission

Saturday, July 11

12 Noon to 1 p.m.

Cultural Performance

Celebrate Hispanic culture with dance performances by the Latin American Folkloric Dance Group. This ethnic dance group will perform traditional dances from Central and South America and discuss local customs from the region. Children will learn to step to the popular dance, the meringue. Recommended for ages 6 and up.

3 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Lecture: African American Experiences on the West Side

Explore the history of black neighborhoods in West Baltimore with sociologist Edward Orser who discusses his book, *Blockbusting in Baltimore: The Edmondson Village Story*, which tells the story of racial succession and white flight that occurred between 1955 and 1965 due to real estate practices. He will also talk about historic black neighborhoods in the Gwynns Fall community. Orser is a professor of American Studies at UMBC.

Both events are free with Museum Admission

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July 18

2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Film & Discussion: Community Activism

Kenya Asli, Director of Leadership and Community for Citizens Planning and Housing Association discusses steps to increase advocacy in neighborhoods, along with a screening of *The New Neighbors*, a documentary film that features stories about people on the frontlines engaged in revitalizing their community.

Free with Museum Admission

The Reginald F. Lewis Museum is Baltimore's premier facility highlighting the history and accomplishments of African Americans with a special focus on Maryland's African American community. A Smithsonian affiliate, the museum is the East Coast's largest African American museum occupying an 82,000 square-foot facility with ample permanent and special exhibition space, interactive learning environments, auditorium, resource center, oral history recording studio, museum shop, café, classrooms, meeting rooms, outside terrace and reception areas. The museum is located near Baltimore's Inner Harbor at the corner of Pratt and President Streets. For more information, please call 443-263-1800 or visit the museum's website at www.AfricanAmericanCulture.org

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