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African art museum dc hours

The Smithsonian National Museum of African Art has the largest publicly held collection of contemporary African art in the United States including more than 10,000 objects representing nearly every country in Africa dating from ancient to contemporary times. The collection contains a variety of media and art forms—textiles, photography, sculpture, pottery, paintings, jewelry and video art.Founded in 1964 as a private educational institution, the Museum of African Art initially occupied a town house once owned by Frederick Douglass, a former slave, abolitionist and statesman. In 1979, the Museum of African Art became part of the Smithsonian Institution and in 1981 it was officially renamed the National Museum of African Art. In 1987, the museum was relocated to its current facility on the National Mall. The museum is the only national museum in the United States dedicated to the collection, exhibition, conservation and study of the arts of Africa. The building includes exhibition galleries, public education facilities, an art conservation laboratory, a research library and photographic archives. The museum has nearly 22,000 square feet of exhibition space. The Sylvia H. Williams Gallery, located on sub-level one, displays contemporary art. The Walt Disney-Tishman African Art Collection rotates a selection of the 525 objects from this collection. The remaining galleries offer exhibitions on various subjects. Exhibits include: The Walt Disney-Tishman African Art Collection Highlights—ongoing. African Mosaic: Selections from the Permanent Collection—ongoing. Jim Chuch's Innovations - through July 2018 Wind Sculpture VII-ongoing Healing Arts-ongoing Senses of Time: Video and Film - through January 2018 The Smithsonian National Museum of African Art offers a variety of educational programs, including lectures, public discussions, films, storytelling, musical performances, and workshops. The museum also has programs and activities at Washington, DC area schools and African Embassies. The Warren M. Robbins Library, named for the museum's founder, is a branch of the Smithsonian Institution Libraries system and supports research, exhibitions and public programs of the museum. It is the major resource center in the world for the research and study of the visual arts of Africa, and houses more than 32,000 volumes on African art, history and culture. It is open to scholars and the general public by appointment Monday through Friday. The museum's Conservation Department is dedicated to the long-term preservation of art and other cultural property from the entire continent of Africa and is responsible for the examination, documentation, preventative care, treatment and restoration of these materials. The museum houses a state-of-the-art conservation laboratory and continues to refine conservation procedures unique to the care of African art. Conservation activities are integrated into every aspect of the museum's operation. These activities include documenting the condition of all collection objects, treating objects, assessing the condition and previous restoration of potential acquisitions, maintaining optimal exhibition/storage conditions for preserving artifacts, executing collections-based research, conducting educational tours of the lab and preparing interns for formal conservation training.Address950 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, D.C. The closest Metro Station is the Smithsonian.See a map of the National MallHours: Open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., except Dec. 25.Website: africa.si.edu Thanks for letting us know! The Smithsonian National African Art Museum has a lot in common with the Sackler Gallery. For one, they have entrances in the same area that mirror each other and they both have very small above-ground buildings that open to larger underground galleries. In fact, the African Art Museum and Sackler Gallery are connected by an underground walkway making them excellent touring partners. The African Art Museum showcases art and artifacts from the continent of Africa, specializing in sub-Saharan Africa. It is one of the only museums in the United States that showcases exclusively African contemporary artists. The Collection Almost all of the permanent collection is housed on Sublevel 1, the floor directly below the street level. The first thing you will see will be a familiar story to fans of our Walt Disney World section: The Disney-Tishman African Art Collection. When EPCOT Center was being designed there was a plan to create a World Showcase pavilion for Africa. (For the familiar, it would have been where the African Outpost currently sits.) Unfortunately, the African pavilion never materialized, but the Disney company had purchased a massive collection of art from the Tishman family. Eventually, Disney donated the never-used collection to the Smithsonian. It includes hundreds of artifacts, some of which are still being restored by the museum. As part of the display you will see decorative bowls, pipes, and masks, the craftsmanship of which is fantastic. Moving back across the mezzanine brings you to the African Mosaic galleries. These are pieces from all of Africa across the centuries. Some of these include tapestries, weapons, musical instruments, and personal adornments, our favorite being massively oversized brass anklets whose discs must have resulted in sever unintentional bruising. The final room of the permanent collection is the Sylvia H. Williams gallery which contains contemporary African art. One that caught our eye was a 6 foot tall recreation of a Nokia cell phone which turned out to be a coffin designed by a Ghanaian fantasy coffin maker (not making this up). Apparently someone really liked their early 90s mobile phone. Special Exhibitions The African Art Museum is currently turning their largest gallery on Sublevel 2 into Special Exhibition space. Expected to be completed in 2017, the museum is looking to have many rotating exhibitions, but hasn't actually announced any yet. Current Exhibitions Wind Sculpture VII - Ongoing Commissioned from internationally renowned artist Yinka Shonibare MBE, the installation is found at the entrance to the museum. The ship-sail shapes of Shonibare's Wind Sculpture series evokes cross-continental connections—in history, in trade, in politics, in ideas, and in contemporary art. Healing Arts - Ongoing Featuring artworks from the museum's permanent collection, this exhibition proves that water is one of most potent forces on earth. Its currents flow through myths, metaphors, and rituals. Diverse and wide-ranging in material, time period, style, and intended use, the objects in this exhibition span the continent of Africa to explore the importance of water for both practical and artistic purposes. Senses of Time: Video and Film-based Works of Africa - May 18, 2016 through March 26, 2017 Six internationally recognized African artists examine how time is experienced—and produced—by the body. Bodies stand, climb, dance, and dissolve in seven works of video and film art. These time-based works by Sammy Baloji, Theo Eshetu, Mostaz Naser, Berni Searle, Yinka Shonibare MBE, and Sue Williamson repeat, resist, and reverse the expectation that time must move relentlessly forward. Attraction Photos Ten former staff and board members of the world's largest museum complex have urged executives to address an alleged long-standing "culture of racism" at its museum of African art. A group of former staff members at the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art (NMAAIA) in Washington, D.C., have accused their leadership of turning a blind eye to concerns of bigotry in a two-page letter seen by HuffPost. The letter's signatories are calling for the resignation of the NMAAIA's deputy director and chief curator Christine Mullen Kreamer to "enable real, systemic changes in the museum's practices and policy implementation." The letter was addressed to Smithsonian secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III, who last year became the first Black person to serve as the institution's head and now oversees 19 Smithsonian museums. The letter alleges that more than 10 former or current Black employees have "reported or experienced incidents of racial bias, hostile verbal attacks, retaliation, terminations, microaggressions and degrading comments," all of which have been ignored by management when raised formally. On several occasions, managers at the museum have attempted to promote white employees into vacant roles while disregarding the institutional policy requiring a competitive application process, former staffers said. "Persistent racial disparities at NMAAIA are apparent in the application of institutional policies," the letter reads. "Recent events have brought deeper attention to systemic racism within museums across our country. In this spirit, we write to you to express our outrage about the current state of the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art. Our goal is to collectively express our concerns and to engage in building an equitable and inclusive museum for our community." One former staffer claims just five full-time Black employees worked at the museum at the time they left — out of more than 40 staff members — which is solely dedicated to the arts and culture of Africa. They also say there were no Black curators at the museum and, for more than 10 years, its entire curatorial team had been exclusively white despite what the letter's authors describe as a "demonstrated interest among Black arts professionals and scholars in joining the institution." The Smithsonian Institution did not comment on claims about the diversity of the museum's staff. Kreamer, deputy director and chief curator at NMAAIA, has allegedly had "multiple complaints" filed against her by employees concerning racism, aggression and mismanagement, according to the former staff members. These complaints include alleged abuse of her hiring and promotion authority in favor of white employees and "consistent bullying and hostility" directed toward Black colleagues who raised concerns about her behavior, the letter claims. Kreamer, who joined the curatorial staff at the National Museum of African Art in 2000 before being promoted to her current role in 2009, did not respond to HuffPost's request for comment. The letter's signatories are calling for a replacement to be selected from a diverse pool of candidates — and the position of deputy director and chief curator "to be separated to ensure effective management of the museum." From 2019 to 2020, two senior Black employees in key roles were suddenly dismissed without any evidence of underperformance or unethical behavior, former employees have said. By contrast, the letter claims, white colleagues who exhibited "sub-par performance" were offered special counseling, expanded job responsibilities or redeployment to new positions. Black staffers claimed NMAAIA managers created obstacles to their ability to do their jobs, but gave white employees chances to develop such as speaking engagements and conference work, the letter says. The former employees claim the "toxic" culture of racism at NMAAIA did not improve under former director Gus Casely-Hayford's tenure between 2018 and his departure in 2020. "This situation became particularly distressing under Gus Casely-Hayford, resulting in negative impacts on Black staff, as well as NMAAIA's reputation within the broader community," they wrote about the Black British curator in the letter. Casely-Hayford did not respond to a request for comment. One letter signatory, who asked not to be named, told HuffPost: "Unfortunately these incidents and concerns about systemic racism only grew during Gus' tenure. He did nothing to address them. [...] It's so important that there's self examination within the Black community and there's a discussion about internal racism." The letter's signatories say the police killing of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement that followed have presented the opportunity to raise their concerns with fresh optimism about being heard. "I think about George Floyd's life and this would not be happening right now if it wasn't for what happened," one told HuffPost. "Six months ago, if we had tried to speak out in this way, talking to journalists or galvanizing in this way, I think there would be a reluctance to address this issue, and it's even harder to do this when there's a Black person in leadership." Another signatory, who also didn't want to be named for fear of repercussions, echoed these sentiments. "It is a pivotal moment for people of color to be able to speak their truth and, where people of color have had bias affect them, be able to talk about it with the mindset that there is a platform now that supports the ability to do that," the signatory said. "The Black Lives Matter movement focuses specifically on police brutality and the vulnerability of people of color — but if you look at many different industries, organizations are now self-reflecting and, at the same time, people of color are looking at this as a time to speak up," they said. It is not the first time a letter has been sent to the Smithsonian outlining these concerns, according to the former employees. In early 2020, nine members of the NMAAIA's 13-person advisory board wrote of their concerns about the treatment of Black staff members following the dismissal of a Black employee on the museum's senior leadership team by Casely-Hayford. The worker had just one week left of her one-year probationary period, and there were no grounded complaints about her performance or behavior, it is alleged. Casely-Hayford, a successful Black man who was in a powerful position at the Smithsonian, stands accused of not doing enough to help Black people subjected to racism within an organization that champions Black art. "As a person of color in a titular position, I think there's a responsibility to make sure that diversity and inclusion — particularly inclusion — are at the front and center of the organization," the first signatory said. "It's not just about hiring people of color to make up the numbers. It's about making sure there is fair and equitable opportunity in that particular organization for people to be seen, heard and able to progress." They added: "There's often a tendency to open the door for yourself and do well in your career — but the mark of your legacy is that you open the door behind you and bring more people forward." Seven recommendations for improvements have been suggested to the Smithsonian's leadership in the letter, including a pay equity plan for Black employees; a review of all firings, alleged racially driven incidents and complaints during the past five years; and a public commitment from the museum to improve representation and career advancement of Black employees. UPDATE: July 15 — Following the publication of this article, a Smithsonian spokesperson sent the following statement to HuffPost on Tuesday. At the National Museum of African Art, we are committed to increasing diversity across the museum and all disciplines; equally essential, we are cognizant of the need to recruit, employ and empower more curators and artists that represent diverse fields and backgrounds. While our collections and exhibits represent a rich diversity of thought, artists and scholarship, we recognize that we must continue to increase diversity within the museum, and drive inclusive behavior among all Smithsonian staff. As a federal entity, we have established policies and processes in place to review employee complaints, and other human resources matters. Museum supervisors receive training and must abide by government wide federal regulations. At the Smithsonian, not only do we adhere to these rules — fairness and equity are core to our culture, mission and who we are as a leader in the museum field.

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