

Colonial Williamsburg

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation
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Empowering Creativity and Craftsmanship: Announcing “I made this”: Black Artists & Artisans Conference



WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (Aug. 22, 2023) – Registration is open for Colonial Williamsburg’s “[I made this](#)”: Black Artists & Artisans Conference, an exclusive educational event dedicated to celebrating the craftsmanship and creativity of Black artists and artisans. The conference will take place Nov. 10-11 at the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg. Participants have the option of attending in-person or virtually.

The “I made this” conference aims to inspire attendees with a deep appreciation for the artistry, ingenuity, and dedication of Black artists and artisans from the 18th to the 20th centuries whose legacy endures to this day. The title of this conference, as well as the [corresponding exhibition](#) currently on view at the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg, comes from a quote by 19th-century enslaved potter David Drake who inscribed these words on several of his pots despite laws prohibiting literacy for enslaved people at that time.

Key Highlights of the “I made this” Conference:

- **Thought-Provoking Presentations:** The conference will feature keynote lectures by guest speakers including:
 - **Dr. Tiffany Momon**, assistant professor at Sewanee: The University of the South, and founder and co-director of the Black Craftspeople Digital Archive
 - **Dr. Torren Gatson**, assistant professor, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, co-director of the Black Craftspeople Digital Archive
 - **Michael Twitty**, James Beard Award-winning author, historical interpreter and culinary historian
 - **Dr. Bernie Herman**, George B. Tindall distinguished professor of southern studies and folklore at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Additional presentations and performances by Colonial Williamsburg historic interpreters, curators, and tradespeople will explore the historical significance of Black artisans and the contemporary relevance of their craftsmanship.

- **Behind-the-Scenes Tours:** Delve into the rich history of Colonial Williamsburg with exclusive pre-conference, behind-the-scenes tours of exhibitions and historic buildings with curators and collaborators to learn more about the lives of enslaved and free Black tradespeople and domestic workers in 18th-century Williamsburg.
- **Culinary Celebration:** In-person registration includes a historically inspired opening reception and dinner on Friday evening. This collaboration between guest speaker Michael Twitty and Colonial Williamsburg interpretive and hospitality staff will give attendees the opportunity to experience history through food.
- **Optional Partnership Gatherings for in-person attendees:** In collaboration with the [Let Freedom Ring Foundation](#), conference attendees may purchase a ticket to the *Let Freedom Ring Gala* on Saturday, Nov. 11. All in-person attendees are also invited to gather at William & Mary's Hearth: Memorial to the Enslaved on Sunday morning, Nov. 12, in partnership with [The Lemon Project](#).

“Colonial Williamsburg’s “I made this” conference illuminates the numerous, invaluable ways that enslaved and free Black people contributed to the creation of this nation through material culture,” said Ronald L. Hurst, the Foundation’s Carlisle Humelsine chief curator and senior vice president for education and historic resources. “Colonial Williamsburg, where the lives and work of 18th-century Black artists and artisans have been shared for decades, provides the perfect context for this exploration of history and culture.”

Thanks to the generosity of The Americana Foundation, this conference is able to support a low-cost registration fee of \$200 for in-person attendance and \$40 for virtual attendance, as well as scholarship opportunities. Scholarship applications are due by Sept. 15, 2023, and are available for students, museum professionals, educators and more. Applicants of all backgrounds, ages, and professions are encouraged to apply.

Registration for in-person and virtual attendance is open, and spaces are limited. To reserve your spot or find more information about the conference, please visit colonialwilliamsburg.org/imadethis

The “I made this” conference is supported by The Americana Foundation, Let Freedom Ring Foundation, and William & Mary’s The Lemon Project: A Journey of Reconciliation.

For additional information on Foundation offerings, follow Colonial Williamsburg on [Facebook](#) and @colonialwmsburg on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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About The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation preserves, restores and operates Virginia’s 18th-century capital of Williamsburg. Innovative and interactive experiences highlight the relevance of the American Revolution to contemporary life and the importance of an informed, active citizenry. The Colonial Williamsburg experience includes more than 600 restored or reconstructed original buildings, renowned museums of decorative arts and folk art, extensive educational outreach programs for students and teachers and 18th-century inspired culinary options from historic taverns situated along historic Duke of Gloucester Street. Colonial Williamsburg Resorts complement the experience, offering guests five unique hotel properties including the iconic Forbes Travel Guide Five-Star, AAA Five Diamond Williamsburg Inn, newly renovated Williamsburg Lodge-Autograph Collection, Williamsburg Woodlands Hotel and Suites, the Griffin Hotel, and authentic 18th-century Colonial Houses. The resort offers a range of events and amenities including four historic taverns, 15 food and beverage outlets providing exquisite culinary experiences from casual to elegant dining, the Golden Horseshoe Golf Club featuring 36 holes designed by Robert Trent Jones Sr. and his son Rees Jones, a world-class full-service spa and fitness center, pools, meeting and flexible event spaces, and scenic

gardens providing the perfect venue for weddings and special events. Merchants Square, built alongside the Historic Area in 1935 as one of the first planned shopping districts in the United States, features more than 40 specialty boutiques with products ranging from apparel to fine jewelry, art, specialty foods and gifts. Philanthropic support and revenue from admissions, products and hospitality operations sustain Colonial Williamsburg's educational programs and preservation initiatives.

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*Images (left to right): *Big Daddy's House at Hickory Hill*, Bernice Sims, Brewton, Alabama, ca. 1996, acrylic on canvas, Museum Purchase, 2020.100.4; Image of working hands, courtesy of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; *Pieced Housetop Quilt*, Rita Mae Pettway, Gee's Bend, Alabama, ca. 1990, cotton and polyester, Museum Purchase, Dr. and Mrs. T. Marshall Hahn, Jr. Fund, 2008.609.10.