



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Release No: 15077

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South Carolina State Museum Presents: *Requiem for Mother Emanuel*

New exhibit showcases batik paintings by SC artist Dr. Leo Twiggs created in aftermath of Charleston Shooting

COLUMBIA, S.C. – The State Museum is proud to present, *Requiem for Mother Emanuel* opening, Saturday, Jan. 27. This visually moving and thought provoking exhibition, produced by South Carolina artist Dr. Leo Twiggs, is a series of nine paintings created in the aftermath of the violent shooting at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston in June 2015. *Requiem for Mother Emanuel* is a powerful culmination of Twiggs' life's work, and will be accompanied by a number of programs presented by the State Museum.

Twiggs began work on these pieces soon after the shooting. Painting provided a vehicle for the artist to process this awful event and search for meaning, as he continued working into 2016. The final series reveals his reflections on, not only the shooting, but also the aftermath including the responses of the family members, the church and fellow citizens.

"My paintings are testimonies to the nine who were slain. But I also record another moment: our state's greatest moment; a response that moved us from tragedy to redemption," says Twiggs. "For one shining moment, we looked at each other not as different races, but as human beings."

In the days and weeks after the tragedy, Charleston's Mother Emanuel received an outpouring of support, as visitors from around the world came to express their condolences and left handmade prayer quilts, letters, flowers and countless other items in front of the church. In conjunction with the exhibition of Twiggs's work, the State Museum will exhibit some of these items from the church. *Requiem for Mother Emanuel* is also accompanied by a seven minute video, by Sailwind Pictures featuring Dr. Twiggs, and is an exploration of the context and inspiration for his work.

"*Requiem for Mother Emanuel* is an incredibly moving exhibition; reflective and ultimately inspiring, which is amazing considering it's a response to something so horrific," says Lori Kornegay, State Museum curator of art. "It represents a seminal moment in Dr. Twiggs's long and distinguished artistic career, as if he had been preparing for this difficult task his whole life. The depth and complexity of the work is profound and gives voice to our collective grief and aspirations, both as South Carolinians and brothers and sisters in this world."

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Symbols and signifiers of the South's complicated racial history have been reflected in Twiggs's work throughout his sixty-year career. Works of art can offer moments of transcendence and with the exhibition *Requiem for Mother Emanuel*, Twiggs provides such a moment. To help facilitate and explore guest's reaction to the exhibit, the State Museum will offer *Circles of Dialogue*. These facilitator-led discussion groups will be held throughout the run of the show on selected Tuesday nights.

Circles of Dialogue

Tuesdays, Feb. 20; March 20; April 17

Discussion groups will be offered Tuesday evenings from 6:30 until 8 p.m. throughout the run of the exhibition. Guests are invited to join a facilitator-led discussion group to explore their reactions to *Requiem for Mother Emanuel*. Any guest who purchases a museum general admission ticket can return and participate in one of the discussions listed above or they can arrive early on that Tuesday to view the exhibit and later join the discussion. Each Circle of Dialogue will be facilitated by Dr. Deborah J. Walker, who has worked as a multicultural and organizational development consultant for over 25 years. See our website for details on signing up to participate.

Art Day: Honoring the work of Dr. Leo Twiggs

Saturday, March 10

The State Museum will host a day of programs from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. Art Day will serve as an opportunity to recognize Twiggs for his many contributions to the arts community in South Carolina, where he has been an influential leader for decades. The day's activities will include a gallery talk by Twiggs, music performances by Mother Emanuel AME choir and Indigo Soul, South Carolina artists working throughout the museum, behind-the-scenes tours, hands-on family activities and more.

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About the South Carolina State Museum: *As the state's largest and most comprehensive museum, the South Carolina State Museum, offers a unique, entertaining and educational experience to visitors throughout its 225,000 square foot facility located in the heart of downtown Columbia's Congaree Vista. The State Museum is housed in one of its largest artifacts, an 1894 former textile mill listed on the National Registrar of Historic Places. In addition to beautiful meeting spaces throughout the facility, guests can explore outer space in one of the largest planetariums in the Southeast, watch an interactive 4D movie and look through a vintage telescope in a one-of-a-kind observatory. These exciting opportunities are all in addition to the four floors of South Carolina art, cultural history, natural history and science/technology. Visit scmuseum.org to learn more.*

About Dr. Leo Twiggs: *Dr. Twiggs was born in St. Stephen, South Carolina. He received his B.A. Summa Cum Laude from Claflin University, later studied at the Art Institute of Chicago and received his M.A. from New York University where he studied with Hale Woodruff, the acclaimed African-American painter and muralist. He received his doctorate in Art Education from the University of Georgia. As Professor of Art at South Carolina State University, he developed the Art Department and I.P. Stanback Museum. Twiggs was named Professor Emeritus in 2000. Twiggs has had over 70 one-man shows and his work has received international recognition, with exhibits at the Studio Museum and the American Crafts Museum in New York and in U. S. Embassies in Rome, Dakar and Togoland, among others. His work has been widely published in art textbooks and featured in several television documentaries. Twiggs has served on*

numerous boards throughout the state including the South Carolina State Museum Commission, the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts & Humanities, and the South Carolina Arts Commission. He was the first artist to receive the Elizabeth O'Neill Verner Award for outstanding contributions to the arts in South Carolina in 1980 and in 2017 he received a second Elizabeth O'Neill Verner Award for lifetime achievement in the arts. In May of 2017 Twiggs received the state's highest civilian honor, the Order of the Palmetto.