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The Practice of Democracy: A View from Connecticut Exhibition at The Housatonic Museum of Art Wins 2024 AASLH Award of Excellence

BRIDGEPORT, CT —July 8, 2024—The American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) proudly announces the Housatonic Museum of Art as an Award of Excellence recipient for *The Practice of Democracy: A View from Connecticut*. The AASLH Leadership in History Awards, now in its 79th year, is the most prestigious recognition for achievement in the preservation and interpretation of state and local history.

From January 17 to February 24, 2023, the Housatonic Museum of Art in Bridgeport, Connecticut, featured *The Practice of Democracy: A View from Connecticut*, a locally customized version of the interactive exhibition created and curated by April De Simone, Founder and Managing Principal of The Practice of Democracy. Visitors were invited to explore everyday experiences through the interconnected layers of culture, environment, economy, politics, and society. Examining how these layers influence our buildings, streets, and open spaces — whether they support or hinder a collective pursuit of democracy. Organized as a past-to-present journey, the immersive exhibition illuminates a collection of local stories and traces the policies, practices, and investments, often muted or left out of history books, that shape how democracy is defined and experienced in our neighborhoods and cities. The exhibition asks how you can become a “doer” of democracy. Through these stories and other tools, the exhibition encourages visitors to see themselves as agents of change in shaping healing, equity, and justice through the design and stewardship of our city’s spaces and systems. The exhibition was produced in collaboration with Ms. De Simone, the Regional Plan Association, Connecticut State Community College, and the Housing Collective, a Connecticut-based organization committed to providing resources to address the state’s housing crisis.

“We’re incredibly honored to be receiving the AASLH Leadership in History Award for a project that is so important to understanding the Bridgeport community,” said **Jennifer Reynolds-Kaye, Director of the Housatonic Museum of Art**. “This exhibit allowed us to create a space of learning and reflection on the



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active process of democracy, encouraging community conversations around housing, creating a sense of belonging for many in our community, and how housing continues to be an essential part of our everyday lives.”

This year, AASLH confers 47 national awards honoring people, projects, exhibits, and publications. The winners represent the best in the field and provide leadership for the future of state and local history.

The AASLH awards program was initiated in 1945 to establish and encourage standards of excellence in the collection, preservation, and interpretation of state and local history throughout the United States. The AASLH Leadership in History Awards not only honor significant achievement in the field of state and local history, but also bring public recognition of the opportunities for small and large organizations, institutions, and programs to make contributions in this arena. For more information about the Leadership in History Awards, contact AASLH at 615-320-3203 or go to www.aaslh.org.

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About the Housatonic Museum of Art

The Housatonic Museum of Art is located on the Connecticut State Community College Housatonic campus, located at 900 Lafayette Blvd. in Bridgeport. It is home to one of the premier college art collections in the country, spanning the history of art from the ancient to the contemporary, and is on continuous display throughout the 300,000 square foot facility. The museum also hosts changing exhibitions in the Burt Chernow Galleries, and engaging lectures, workshops, films, special events and programs throughout the year, both in-person and online. Visit www.HousatonicMuseum.org to learn more.

About the Housing Collective

[The Housing Collective](#) works to address the housing crisis by convening communities, resources and stakeholders around collaborative regional responses in Connecticut. The Housing Collective partners with 400 organizations in Connecticut and beyond to prevent homelessness and address housing



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affordability through its three initiatives: Opening Doors, the Center for Housing Opportunity and the Housing Innovation Lab.

About the Practice of Democracy

Practice of Democracy is a public benefit corporation, intersecting research and design with the advancement of democratic values. PoD activates opportunities for new pedagogical and methodological approaches to interrogate and deconstruct existing paradigms while simultaneously advancing democratic spatial practice through the emergence of projects centered on more equitable, humane, and just stewardship of the built environment.

About the Regional Plan Association

RPA is an independent non-profit civic organization that develops and promotes ideas to improve the economic health, environmental resiliency, and quality of life of the New York metropolitan area. RPA conducts research on the environment, land use, and good governance, and advises cities, communities, and public agencies.

About the American Association for State and Local History

The American Association for State and Local History is a not-for-profit professional organization of individuals and institutions working to preserve and promote history. From its headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee, AASLH provides leadership, service, and support for its members who preserve and interpret state and local history in order to make the past more meaningful to all people. AASLH publishes books, technical publications, a quarterly magazine, and maintains numerous affinity communities and committees serving a broad range of constituents across the historical community. The association also sponsors an annual meeting, regional and national training in-person workshops, and online training.

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