

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**MASONIC TEMPLE PRESENTS OPEN ART
COMPETITION/EXHIBITION ON VIEW STARTING OCT. 11**

(Philadelphia, PA) -- When the Masonic Temple's open art competition/exhibition is unveiled to the public on Oct. 11, visitors will discover 43 artist's visual interpretations of some aspect of Freemasonry in Pennsylvania, whether it be philosophical, historical, scientific, social, fraternal, charitable or architectural.

Three of the artists will display embroidery work from their time in Santé Johnson's hand embroidery class, which started over the summer at the Masonic Temple. Johnson was looking to utilize her embroidery skills in a community-based setting, and the Masonic Temple was the perfect fit.

"My main goal was to have a space for people to find value within the Masonic embroidery collection, while learning and bringing ideas from the past into the present and future," Johnson said. "It has been really great to see the inspiration."

The art exhibition will be on view to the public **Oct. 11 through Nov. 11** at One North Broad Street, Philadelphia. Participants must request to view the exhibition, which is not part of the standard guided tour, and will be located on the lower level of the building.

Johnson worked with Mike McKee, Masonic Library and Museum executive director, to offer free, weekly embroidery sessions to the Masonic community. Johnson has since opened the sessions to the general public. Students learn about the Masonic embroidery collection, stitching basics and how to complete a sample piece.

The public embroidery sessions are held the second Saturday of every month, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2 to 5 p.m., and are limited to eight students at a \$20 recommended donation. Interested participants can sign up by contacting

Johnson at sante8@gmail.com. A full exhibition of student work will be on view at the Masonic Temple on Saturday, Dec. 16, from 2 – 6 p.m.

“Embroidery connects us to the past, builds community and strengthens relationships,” Johnson said. “Hand embroidery takes dedication, skill and a love for something. You can tell the Masonic collection is dedicated to the past, and many stories have passed through these doors.”

Beyond teaching, Johnson is part of a 13-person federal team that is exclusively responsible for embroidering both the presidential and vice-presidential flags. She has studied art and embroidery in various cities across the globe, including in Philadelphia.

Johnson is thrilled that her students will exhibit their work in the Masonic art contest/exhibition next month. Artists submitted work in several categories, including oil, three-dimensional, drawing and printmaking, water-based medium and digital imagery.

A private Grand Exhibition Gala will be held at the Masonic **Temple on Friday, Oct. 6**, with an announcement of the winners and a silent auction of selected artwork. There is a \$200 prize per category winner, a \$500 Grand Master’s Prize and a \$1,000 Best in Show Prize. Most of the artwork will be available to the public for purchase after the gala on the Temple website (pamasonictemple.org).

Prior to the exhibition opening, the Masonic Temple is offering **free tours on Sunday, Oct. 8**, with no registration required. A guided tour will start every 20 minutes, from 9:30 a.m. to 10:50 a.m., then from 1 p.m. to 3:20 p.m., with no tours offered after 3:20 p.m.

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A National Historic Landmark in the heart of Philadelphia, the Masonic Temple was constructed in 1873. It is the headquarters for the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania (Masonic fraternity) and the Masonic Library and Museum of Pennsylvania. Special events are hosted within the building through the branded events department known as ONE North Broad.