

April 24, 2018

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SAMA ANNOUNCES GRAND OPENING FOR BEDFORD MUSEUM; COMMUNITY DAY PLANNED FOR MAY 5

Bedford – Last May, the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art hosted a press conference at the Anderson House to announce its intention to open a fifth museum site in Bedford. This May, SAMA is opening the doors of the Anderson House to the public for the grand opening of the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Bedford.

The festivities kick off with a preview reception from 5 to 7 p.m. on Thursday, May 3. Be among the very first to visit the new museum, remark on the incredible restoration work, and enjoy the several galleries and exhibitions. Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres will be served. Tickets are \$50 per person. For more information, call SAMA-Loretto at (814) 472-3920.

On Saturday, May 5, the Museum opens to the public with a Community Day celebration. Open free of charge from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Community Day features live music throughout the day, creativity stations featuring some of the Museum's teaching artists, and an art detective scavenger hunt for children. SAMA's Bedford Ambassadors will be on-hand to greet visitors and assist with art projects. The Museum's new web-based audio tours of its featured exhibitions also will debut to the public at Community Day.

Inside the Museum, guests will find eight galleries displaying several different exhibitions. Another highlight is the Nicole Renae Clark Creativity Studio. The room features crafts and activity space for children and will be utilized for art camps and other children-themed events.

"SAMA is excited to become part of the fabric of the Bedford community," said Jim Cayce, the Museum's Board of Trustees President. "Speaking for the Board of Trustees, I want to thank all of those who have worked so hard to make SAMA's new museum in the Anderson House a reality."

The hard work began in November, when Clark Contractors, Inc. of Bedford began the five-month-long project to transform the Anderson House into a fine arts museum. "The first unique challenge was to level the floors and stabilize the structure, which had sagged six-to-eight inches in some spots over the past 200 years," said Clifton Clark, President and Owner of Clark Contractors.

“Another challenge was preserving all of the building’s existing architectural elements, such as the trim and doors, while pulling the building apart and putting it back again. Restoring some of the blacksmith hardware on the doors also was unique and difficult. Luckily, our job foreman had just rebuilt his own 200-year-old home. That experience helped.”

While the Anderson House has maintained its original charm and historic elements, Clark said the renovations have infused it with a new energy. “Looking at the building now, it seems as if life has been put back into the structure,” he said. “When I first heard SAMA was coming to the Anderson House I thought, ‘Wow, a first-class museum of art coming to Bedford. What a great asset this will be to help draw more tourism and enrich Bedford’s art scene.’”

Now that the interior work has finished, all that remains are some finishing touches on the building’s exterior, including a fresh paint job and the installation of lighting, said SAMA-Bedford Site Coordinator Debbie Grazier. “The excitement continues to build at the Anderson House,” she said. “Interior renovations and appointments have been completed and the walls await the hanging of the first exhibitions. Once the sun comes out and temperatures rise above 60 degrees, the exterior facelift will begin.”

Inside the Museum, guests will find eight galleries offering a variety of exhibitions. In the first floor Titelman Galleries will be *A Museum Collects: Highlights from the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art*. Emphasizing nationally known artists, this exhibition will introduce the Bedford community to SAMA’s most remarkable holdings. Iconic American masters such as Mary Cassatt and John Singer Sargent will be on view alongside contemporary leaders like Romare Bearden and Andy Warhol.

Also on the first floor, the Anderson Legacy Gallery will house *Old Master Prints and Drawings from The Catherine and David O’Neill Collection*. Among the Museum’s newest distinctive holdings, the Collection features an outstanding group of works on paper by European Old Master artists such as Leonard Beck, Albrecht Durer and Rembrandt van Rijn.

On the second floor, guests can enjoy internationally acclaimed photographer Donald M. Robinson’s work in the Donald Robinson Gallery. The Gallery’s debut exhibition, *Seasons of Western Pennsylvania*, offers a selection of Robinson’s Pennsylvania subjects as they appear in spring, summer, fall and winter. The Ashe Gallery will display regional art from the SAMA permanent collection, while the Regional Artists Galleries will host an invitational exhibition featuring local artists. Also on view throughout the stairwell will be a selection of prints by Leonard Baskin.

The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Bedford is located in the Anderson House at 137 E. Pitt St. Beginning Sunday, May 6, the Museum will begin its regular hours of 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily and 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Fridays. The Museum will be closed Tuesdays. Admission is \$10 per person, with free admission for ages 21 and under or 65 and older. The Museum will offer free admission to residents of Bedford Township on the first and third Wednesdays of every month. For more information, please contact the Museum at bedford@sama-art.org or visit www.sama-art.org.