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## Bob Bullock Museum opens exhibits for Juneteenth



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While discussions about race have recently dominated discourse both nationally and on campus, the 150th anniversary of Juneteenth — a holiday marking the announcement of emancipation of slaves in Texas — slipped quietly by in comparison on June 19. The holiday found special recognition at the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum, however, which opened two new exhibits in its honor.

The two exhibits, "And Still We Rise: Race, Culture and Visual Conversations" and "Reflections: African American Life from the Myrna Colley-Lee Collection," showcase African-American history and identity and will be accessible to the public throughout the summer for the general price of admission.

"We felt that having the exhibits during the summer of the 150th anniversary of Juneteenth would draw more interest and show everybody that this is not just African-American history — it's American history," said Margaret Koch, deputy director and director of exhibits at the Bob Bullock Museum.

"And Still We Rise" is a collection of 69 quilts that tells the story of African-American history, from the arrival of the first Africans to the Jamestown colony on a slave boat in 1619 to the shooting of Trayvon Martin in 2013. This exhibit will last until Aug. 30.

"Reflections" focuses on African-American identity rather than history. It explores diversity and celebrates African-American artists through a variety of mediums, such as oil paint, photography and collages. This exhibit will close Aug. 23.

Gov. Greg Abbott recognized the installation of the two exhibits with a letter sent to the museum to be read at a party for members on June 19. In the letter, Abbott highlighted the struggles and achievements of African-Americans.

"Today, we can all rejoice that freedom is now the birthright of all Americans," Abbott wrote. "The Lone Star State joins with you in celebrating your heritage, remembering the somber legacy of slavery and taking pride in a people that has overcome great obstacles."

Koch said the museum wanted exhibitions that would lend themselves to its family programs in July, when the museum will have a presentation on story quiltmaking and other interactive activities for children. Koch said the museum also wanted the art pieces to have connections to Texas.

"It had to tie in with our overall mission to tell the story of Texas and Texans," Koch said.

As the state where the Juneteenth proclamation took place and the state that first recognized Juneteenth as a holiday in 1980, Texas has several unique connections to the holiday.

According to Koch, although the Bullock Museum has had exhibits that touch on African-American history, this is the first time the museum has provided a comprehensive look at African-American heritage for visitors.

Dawn Kennedy, a Pleasant Hill Elementary School librarian and quilting hobbyist, went to visit the exhibits and said seeing such a large collection of African-American art at one time was especially impactful.

“When I look at everything all together like this, I feel shame,” Kennedy said. “We oppressed so many people, and people have died. We have an ugly history, and we still haven’t made it right.”