Charleston Gaillard Center Announces Fall for Democracy

Performances explore themes of American identity, power, and freedom; community outreach includes opportunities to engage with art as well as voter registration.

Participants include acclaimed musician Rhiannon Giddens and Silkroad Ensemble, vocalist and educator Martha Redbone, international theater companies Stan's Cafe and Ontroerend Goed, and more.

Charleston, SC – March 18, 2024 – The Charleston Gaillard Center today announced Fall for Democracy, a program of performances, panels, and community-focused events exploring the foundational core values defining America. Taking place September 12.
through November 19 in the lead up to and following the 2024 Presidential Election, this program aims to highlight the original aspirations of democracy and the defining principles of our nation. Featuring a diverse array of voices, Fall for Democracy provides a platform for individuals to express their beliefs and amplify underrepresented stories through an artistic lens. Additionally, the Gaillard will host voter registration and engagement opportunities throughout the run of the events to encourage participation in our democracy.

Beginning with the promise of inclusivity and representation, Fall for Democracy focuses on voices from three often underrepresented groups: Indigenous, LGBTQIA+, and immigrant communities—specifically African, Irish, Chinese, and Japanese. The cross section of artists and artistic thinkers—including MacArthur fellow and Pulitzer Prize winner Rhiannon Giddens with Silkroad Ensemble; vocalist, songwriter, and educator Martha Redbone and American Patchwork Quartet; international theater companies Ontroerend Goed and Stan’s Cafe; actor Alan Cumming; and journalist Ari Shapiro – share a deep engagement with the ideals of democracy and identity, and through art and dialogue will help acknowledge and explore the past, present, and creation of a better future. The program also invites international organizations to interrogate American democracy from abroad.

In addition to performances and panels, the Gaillard will welcome the League of Women Voters—a nonpartisan advocacy organization—from August through November. Members of the League will be available at each performance to help audience members register to vote and learn about the election process, promoting voter engagement ahead of Election Day.

“Through Fall for Democracy, the Gaillard both honors and examines democracy as not merely a system of governance, but as a promise of representation and inclusivity. As the nation grapples with evolving political dynamics, the enduring legacy of the South, coupled with our community’s ongoing efforts to confront historical narratives, underscores the distinctive responsibility the Lowcountry has in continuing to uphold the principles of democracy,” said Gaillard Center CEO Lissa Frenkel. “Through these events, we forefront themes of American identity and uplift those who have historically been discounted in the formation of America and its culture. Additionally, the program includes international artists, offering a unique opportunity to confront American politics through a foreign perspective and encouraging another layer of dialogue about our systems of power and the collective pursuit of shaping a more promising future.”

Since its establishment in 1663, through its tumultuous history to today, South Carolina has been at the forefront of discussions regarding access to voting and representation. One of
13 original colonies, it has participated in every presidential election except during the Civil War in 1864. South Carolina was among several states in the south to impose discriminatory processes following the establishment of the 15th Amendment, including poll taxes and literacy tests, until the Voting Rights Act of 1965. In February 2024, South Carolina continued its significant role in American political history by hosting the first-in-the-south primaries for the 2024 United States Presidential Election.

The Gaillard Center’s mission acknowledges America’s difficult history of racism and injustice—especially prevalent in Charleston as a city that first saw nearly half of the enslaved people brought to this country—and through its programs advocates for the use of the arts to bridge divides, build dialogues, and support healing.

More about the Gaillard Center’s Fall for Democracy program follows below and at gaillardcenter.org.

**PROGRAMS**

**Ontroerend Goed’s Fight Night**
September 12 & 13, 2024

More than a decade after its premiere, this critically acclaimed theatrical exploration of democracy is being remade to reflect a changed world. *Fight Night*, from Belgian theater and performance group Ontroerend Goed, invites audiences to participate in a series of live votes, dwindling five contenders down to one winner. Without any mention of American politics, this impartial examination of democratic principles highlights the sweeping distrust of a previously unimpeachable system of power.

On September 12, the Gaillard Center will host a pre-show panel discussion featuring a diverse cross section of speakers examining the role the arts and artists play within the framework of democracy. (More details to be announced.)

**Alan Cumming and Ari Shapiro: Och & Oy! A Considered Cabaret**
September 14, 2024

Alan Cumming (*Cabaret, The Good Wife*) and Ari Shapiro (NPR’s *All Things Considered*, Pink Martini) combine their on-stage chemistry, theatrical prowess, and captivating storytelling styles for an unforgettable cabaret experience. From humorous to heartfelt, *Och & Oy!*
reflects on the world through the lens of two extraordinary LGBTQ+ performers, and offers an opportunity for audiences to better understand the shared experiences that connect us all.

**Stan’s Cafe’s Of All The People In All The World**
The American Democracy Edition
October 23 – 27, 2024

UK-based theater collective Stan’s Cafe brings their internationally renowned art installation, *Of All The People In All The World*, to the Gaillard Center with one week of free and open-to-the-public showings. Centered on a concept in which individual grains of rice represent individual people, seemingly abstract statistics will come to startling and powerful life in the Gaillard’s main lobbies. Over a period of seven days, a team of performers carefully weigh out quantities of rice to represent a host of human statistics, all while interacting with and taking suggestions from visitors. Alongside statistics on a diverse range of topics from around the country and the world, this edition will acknowledge the upcoming election season by creating representations of the voting population and of the history of government in the US.

**This Land Is Our Land featuring Martha Redbone Roots Project and American Patchwork Quartet**
October 23, 2024

Vocalist Martha Redbone, celebrated for her distinctive blend of folk, blues, and gospel, is joined by American Patchwork Quartet—comprised of vocalist Falu Shah, guitarist and vocalist Clay Ross, drummer Clarence Penn, and bassist Moto Fukushima—for *This Land is Our Land*, an evening of musical storytelling that celebrates the rich cultural tapestry of America. Redbone’s appearance marks the first time an Indigenous artist has performed on the Gaillard Center stage, further underscoring the group’s dedication to issues of social justice, connecting cultures, and celebrating the human spirit.

On October 24, Lowcountry students will attend an educational performance of *This Land is Our Land*. While at the Gaillard Center, students will also have the opportunity to experience Stan’s Cafe’s *Of All The People In All The World*. 
American Railroad: Silkroad Ensemble with Rhiannon Giddens
November 19, 2024

Under the leadership of Artistic Director Rhiannon Giddens, Silkroad is a Grammy Award-winning ensemble and social-impact organization that champions equity and justice through the arts. Their latest project, American Railroad, focuses on the African American, Chinese, Japanese, Irish, and other immigrant laborers who were pivotal in building the US Transcontinental Railroad, and the Indigenous communities who were displaced by it. This work seeks to correct traditional historical narratives by celebrating the contributions of these groups to America’s cultural development. Through blended musical traditions and original compositions, American Railroad—led by Pulitzer Prize-winning Giddens—offers a fresh perspective on American identity.

During a panel discussion on November 19, speakers—including representatives from the Silkroad Ensemble—will examine the profound influence of immigrant voices on America’s cultural landscape. (More details to be announced.)

VOTER REGISTRATION

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League envisions a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge, and the confidence to participate. With a presence at the Charleston Gaillard Center from August through November 2024, the League endeavors to engage the Charleston community and encourage participation in this important election year. The League of Women Voters is nonpartisan and never supports or opposes candidates for office or political parties.

TICKETS

Tickets for Fall for Democracy programming will become available to the public on Friday, March 22, at 11:00AM EST at gaillardcenter.org. Gaillard Center Members receive presale access! To learn more about our Membership program, please contact our Advancement Office at info@gaillardfoundation.org or (843) 718-1578.

The Gaillard is committed to creating inclusionary and equitable opportunities for all audiences. The Gaillard provides opportunities that enhance access to the arts locally and
across the state of South Carolina, amplify a variety of artistic voices that reflect the city's vibrant diversity, and create an environment where everyone feels valued and welcome.

SPONSORSHIP & INDIVIDUAL UNDERWRITING

Fall for Democracy is made possible thanks to generous support from the Wayne and Alicia Gregory Family Foundation.

Contact our Advancement team at info@gaillarfoundation.org or (843) 718-1578 to learn how to support this program and programs like this at the Gaillard Center.

ABOUT THE CHARLESTON GAILLARD CENTER

A leader in the performing arts in the Southeast, the Charleston Gaillard Center commissions, supports, and presents ambitious, multidisciplinary cultural programming and provides access to the best local, national, and global artists and companies on its stage. Deeply rooted in the community, the Gaillard Center is committed to elevating local and regional voices and partnering with Charleston institutions to reflect the city's diversity, both on stage and off. Through programming on its public campus and extensive arts education initiatives, the Gaillard Center serves as a platform to participate in community building and essential dialogue.

The Gaillard Center is located in the heart of an inspiration corridor of cultural institutions on the Charleston peninsula, across the street from Mother Emanuel AME Church and half a mile from the International African American Museum (IAAM). Established as a nonprofit in 2015, its campus includes the 1,818-seat Martha and John M. Rivers Performance Hall, a 16,000 square-foot Exhibition Hall, and an adjacent park space that was recently activated for artistic presentations. Find more information and upcoming programming at gaillardcenter.org.

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