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Art Gallery 21 in Wilton Manors Presents

“The Quilts of Gee’s Bend: The Fabric of Their Lives” February 3 - March 10, 2018

Wilton Manors, Florida (January 11, 2018) - In honor of Black History Month, [Art Gallery 21](#) and the [City of Wilton Manors](#) are proud to present “The Quilts of Gee’s Bend: The Fabric of Their Lives” from Saturday, February 3 through Saturday, March 10, 2018. The exhibit will feature seven original quilts from the collection of Janet Dolland, advocate of the celebrated Gee’s Bend Quilter’s Collective.

Formed in the isolated African American hamlet of Gee’s Bend, Alabama, in the early 20th century, this group of women creates quilts that symbolize the individuality of the quilters’ multigenerational approach to African American art and culture. The quilters, who range in age from 19 to 90, have been recognized by such organizations as the National Museum in Washington, D.C., and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, N.Y., and they have even been honored by the U.S. Postal Service with a set of stamps depicting their quilts.

“The Gee’s Bend Quilter’s Collective maintains a quilting style that has been passed down through six generations of African American quilters from rural Alabama,” said Constance Ruppender, gallery manager at Art Gallery 21. “Our goal is to deliver a distinct African American cultural exhibit to Broward County for Black History Month, and we are honored to be able to bring this marvelous collection to South Florida.”

In addition to the exhibit, Dolland will be giving two free lectures on the Gee’s Bend style of quilting Saturday, February 3 at Art Gallery 21 (600 NE 21st Court, Wilton Manors, FL 33305) and Thursday, February 8 at Old Dillard High School (1001 NW 4th Street, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33311) from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. Dolland is a quilters’ advocate who has lectured on this subject throughout Michigan and in southern Alabama. She befriended the Quilter’s Collective in Gee’s Bend after traveling to the area out of curiosity. She has sent them or taken more than a ton of fabric since 2003.

“This exhibit truly transforms a common household item into fine art,” said Ruppender. “These quilts are considered to be some of the most important African American cultural and visual contributions of art within the U.S., and we



encourage people to come out to Art Gallery 21 for this once-in-a-lifetime display.”

Funding for this project is provided in part by the Broward County Board of County Commissioners, as recommended by the Broward Cultural Division; by the Wilton Manors Community Affairs Advisory Board and by private donations.

“The Quilts of Gee’s Bend: The Fabric of Their Lives” will be available for viewing Thursdays through Saturdays from noon - 8 p.m., and admission is free. To learn more about the exhibit, visit <http://bit.ly/QuiltsOfGeesBend> or contact Constance Ruppender at (954) 661-4740 or artgallery21wccwm@gmail.com.

About the City of Wilton Manors

Wilton Manors was laid out in 1925 by Edward John “Ned” Willingham, a land developer from Georgia, as an **upscale residential community**. It was recognized as a Village in 1947 and incorporated as a City in 1953. Today, the City of Wilton Manors offers all the benefits of a big city from shopping, to hip restaurants and bars, a burgeoning arts community and tons of community events, yet still maintains a cozy, community-feeling offering miles of natural waterways perfect for kayaking, paddle boarding and other outdoor activities. Recently named the “Second Gayest City” in the United States, the City of Wilton Manors celebrates a **diverse population of approximately 12,000 residents**. To learn more about the live, work and play opportunities in Wilton Manors, call (954) 390-2100 or visit www.wiltonmanors.com.

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