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The Peale Center announces \$50,000 Fundraising Campaign

to help make the oldest museum building in the U.S. safe and accessible for all.

BALTIMORE (September 26, 2018) – Today, the Peale Center for Baltimore History and Architecture announced the launch of its Fall 2018 Campaign in support of making the historic museum building safer and more accessible for all.

Based in the oldest museum building in the U.S., the Peale has become one of the most unusual and inspiring sites in Baltimore for contemporary art, performance, and new ways of engaging with the history and architecture of the city. From cultural storytelling to immersive theater, the Peale welcomes diverse voices and audiences to its galleries and garden through unique offerings and partnerships with Baltimore’s creators and culture keepers.

The historic building currently lacks an elevator and requires upgrades to key facilities to meet modern standards and be truly accessible for all. These essential improvements are the theme and focus for the Peale’s Fall 2018 Campaign. With the goal of raising \$50,000 by November 20th (this year’s “Giving Tuesday”), the Peale invites supporters to help ensure that this National Historic Landmark will remain a vibrant and open platform for Baltimore’s cultural scene for generations to come.

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“The Peale has been lucky for more than two centuries, escaping the 1904 Great Fire of Baltimore and even emerging unscathed from Rembrandt Peale’s gas light demonstrations and the gas production facilities he housed in the backyard of his museum!” remarked Nancy Proctor, Executive Director of the Peale. “With upgrades to the building’s fire prevention and safety facilities and the addition of an elevator, we can ensure that this National Historic Landmark will be safe and accessible to today’s and future communities as well.”

The Fall 2018 Campaign is part of a larger effort to raise \$5.5 million to renovate the historic Peale Museum building by 2020. Over \$2.5 million has been contributed so far to the Peale’s capital campaign from public funds, private foundations, and individuals. The project is a partnership between the Peale Center for Baltimore History and Architecture, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, and the City of Baltimore, the owners of the historic Peale Museum building. SM+P Architects have designed the Peale’s renovation plans.

Upcoming programs in support of the Fall 2018 Campaign include (more events will be announced in October):

- **Wednesday Sept 26, 6-8pm** Reception for **Architecture/Baltimore** Exhibition and talk by Steve Ziger at the Peale; all donations benefit the Peale.
- **Wednesday, October 3, by invitation: 70th Birthday Celebrations of Hertzbach & Company P.A.**, including a silent auction to benefit the Peale
- **Sun Oct 7, 12-1pm:** Artists’ Talk at **Architecture/Baltimore** Exhibition.
- **Sunday, October 7, 2-4pm:** **Book launch: From Blackface to Black Twitter**

Supporters can follow these links to make a tax-deductible contribution to the campaign today:

<https://www.thepealecenter.org/donations/>

<https://www.paypal.me/thepeale>

<https://www.gofundme.com/peale2018>

The Peale Center for Baltimore History and Architecture is based in the first purpose-built museum in the United States, designed by architect Robert Cary Long Sr. and opened by artist Rembrandt Peale in 1814. Also a new technology entrepreneur, Peale founded a gas company, now BGE, at his museum and introduced gas light to Baltimore in 1816, making “Light City” the first in the U.S. to be lit by gas street lights. The building went on to become Baltimore’s first City Hall in 1830, and then, during Reconstruction, its first public high school for African Americans. Today the Peale is an innovative new center for authentic stories of Baltimore’s people and places, and a platform for creating a more inclusive cultural record of the City. While under renovation, the Peale offers a diverse array of immersive and participatory experiences that bring Baltimore’s history and architecture to life in new and unexpected ways.

SM+P Architects have now completed the renovation of the Peale’s exterior. After 20 years of standing vacant, the historic Peale Museum building now has a new roof, restored exterior masonry, and a reopened front porch, thanks to support from the City of Baltimore’s Department of General Services. Masonry and 19th century gas lights, including a period fire alarm pole, were restored this summer by students from Morgan State University’s School of Architecture participating in the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Hands On Preservation Experience (HOPE) program, and by engineers from BGE and Baltimore Foundry Works. Thanks to a Green Grant from BGE and support from private individuals, the garden was replanted as a Pollinator Garden, and is now open for free to the public during the Peale’s normal opening hours.

To ensure the safety of the building and its visitors, Phase III of the building’s renovations include installing the Peale’s fire protection systems, an elevator, and accessible restrooms. These systems, including automatic fire suppression sprinklers and fire alarm detection and notification devices, will bring the building’s life-safety systems into compliance with current building codes and ensure that everyone can enjoy the entire building and participate in the Peale’s programs and events while respecting the historic building’s design.

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