

## HESSE FLATOW

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# Prospect Park to debut 'Ancestral Whispers' art installation, honoring Africans enslaved by the Lefferts family

By [Aaron Ginsburg](#) May 20, 2024

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*In the Face of History, Freedom Cape, 2020 c. Adama Delphine Fawundu*

The inaugural work of the Lefferts Historic House museum's first artist-in-residence debuts in Prospect Park next month. Artist [Adama Delphine Fawundu](#)'s "[Ancestral Whispers](#)" is a site-specific installation honoring the heroism of the individuals enslaved by the Lefferts family from the farmhouse's construction in 1783 to the abolition of slavery in New York in 1827. Inspired by research conducted by the Prospect Park Alliance, Fawundu

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created 25 fabric banners to be displayed on the museum's Flatbush Avenue facade. The installation will be on view starting June 9.



*Lefferts Artist in Resident Adama Delphine Fawundu c. Obed Obwoye*

The inspiration for "Ancestral Whispers" comes from recent research conducted by the Prospect Park Alliance's [Reimagine Lefferts Initiative](#), which launched last year to "reenvision" the mission of the Lefferts Historic House museum to focus on exploring the lives of the Lenapehoking and Africans enslaved by the Lefferts family.

The Alliance has identified 25 people who were enslaved at the house. Fawundu's installation will include 25 textile pieces, each paying homage to the 25 individuals, installed across the facade of the historic house.

"When the Alliance reached out it was so special because we were both on a specific trajectory. My whole existence is based in this neighborhood. The smell of the grass when it rains in the park means so much to me...I have such a history here. It felt very much like a 360-degree event to connect with the Reimagine team here in Prospect Park," Fawundu said.

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The opening event [on June 9](#) will feature a spiritual sonic offering by Fawundu and her son, musician Che Buford. Inspired by the idea that memory resides in the wind, this performance invites viewers to witness, imagine, and feel Indigenous and African ancestral stories that have shaped Brooklyn's history.

During the event, Fawundu's 2020 work, "In the Face of History Freedom Cape," filmed throughout Prospect Park and in the Lefferts Historic House, will be displayed alongside a selection of prints inside the house. Fawundu will also host gallery talks to share insights into her creative process and discuss the concepts and imagery present in her work.

"Prospect Park Alliance welcomes the entire community to join us for the debut of our first Artist in Residence and the second season of our ReImagine Lefferts initiative, which has shifted our interpretation to tell these stories of resistance and resilience," Morgan Monaco, president of the Prospect Park Alliance, said.

"It is my hope that visitors will see a version of themselves represented in this museum and feel seen, honored and welcome. The season is an especially significant one as we share 'Ancestral Whispers' with our community, which celebrates the heroism of Africans enslaved by the Lefferts family, and leverages the power of art to heal deep-seated wounds from our nation's past."

Register for the opening event [here](#).