



ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART BOOK CLUB OFFERS ONLINE MEETING

Virtual Book Club Meeting Is Set for Tuesday, April 7 at 6 pm

**[For Release April 1, 2020 – Albany, GA]**— The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to an end even small gatherings, but members of the *AMA Art Lovers Book Club* have a new way to get together—a virtual club meeting.

A live online club meeting has been scheduled for **6 pm on Tuesday, April 7**. The club will discuss the novel *I, Juan de Pareja* by Elizabeth Borton de Treviño.

“Depending on interest, we’ll have two sessions available,” Albany Museum of Art Director of Education and Public Programming Director Annie Vanoteghem said. “We want to keep each of the virtual meetings to six or seven participants so everyone can have the chance to share their thoughts on this fascinating story.”

In keeping with local shelter-in-place directives, the AMA has been closed to the public since March 18 and has postponed or cancelled events at the museum.

“We are delighted to offer this alternative book club gathering as we acknowledge the need for creative human contact in this unusual period of social distancing,” AMA Executive Director Andrew James Wulf, Ph.D., said. “Whether it be the discussion of a fascinating piece of art-infused literature or partaking in our online family activities, the AMA continues to care for all of our Albany neighbors and our friends further afield. Let us be that break you take each day to feed your soul with the arts.”

To sign up for the book club meeting, email Vanoteghem at [annie.vanoteghem@albanymuseum.com](mailto:annie.vanoteghem@albanymuseum.com). She will send you an invitation to a Google Hangouts meeting for the book club. Vanoteghem and Wulf each will facilitate one of the meetings.

“It’s easy. All you have to do is click on the link when it’s time for the club meeting to start,” Vanoteghem said. “You can join using your laptop, desk computer, tablet or cellphone.”

The dynamics will be different from a physical meeting, she noted. "Several of our club members have already read the novel and were looking forward to this meeting," Vanoteghem said. "Under the circumstances, this is the best way we can get together and talk about something we all enjoy—a great book."

Treviño won a Newberry Award for *I, Juan de Pareja*, which is inspired by a real portrait that Diego Velázquez, an important painter of the Spanish Golden Age and lead painter for King Phillip IV's court, painted of his slave Juan de Pareja.

Written in Pareja's voice, the novel tells the story of the man born into slavery in Seville, Spain, in the 1600s. He becomes a valued part of the Velázquez household, helping the artist in his studio. Forbidden by law to engage in the art, Pareja paints secretly, but later becomes a notable painter in his own right.

Vanoteghem said the club, which concludes its first series with the April 7 meeting, will return to its schedule of meeting every other month beginning in May. She said the meetings will be in person or online, depending on the situation.

"We are excited that the first season of art lovers book club was such a hit," she said. "We really appreciate our regular crowd for showing up with so much to share. Some friendships have been made among the group, and we are hoping it will continue to grow next season! Season two will start in May!"

Information on the club can be found on the AMA's website at [albanymuseum.com/ama-art-lovers-book-club.html](http://albanymuseum.com/ama-art-lovers-book-club.html) and on the AMA's Facebook page, [AlbanyMuseumOfArt](https://www.facebook.com/AlbanyMuseumOfArt).

### **CURRENT AMA EXHIBITIONS**

- *Cut & Paste: Works of Paper*, works by 11 Georgia artists, is in the Haley Gallery.
- *Looking at America and Painting How I Want, What I Want and How I See It*, works by Dean Mitchell, is in the East Gallery.
- *Do Not Hand Me Over to the Impure Whiteness of Noon: A Hemings Elegy*, works by Yanique Norman, is in the West Gallery.

### **ABOUT THE ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART**

The Albany Museum of Art is located at 311 Meadowlark Drive in Albany, Georgia, adjacent to Albany State University West Campus just off Gillionville Road. The museum is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The Albany Museum of Art is currently closed to the public in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For more information about the AMA please visit our website, [www.albanymuseum.com](http://www.albanymuseum.com) or call 229.439.8400. Be sure to follow the @AlbanyArtMuseum on Twitter, AlbanyMuseum on Instagram and AlbanyMuseumOfArt on Facebook.

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