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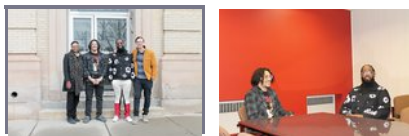
# The Black Library signs lease



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**From left, Ellyane Hutchinson, Douglas Shindler, Michael Davis, and Tal Beery pose in front of the Historic Key Bank Building new home to the Black Library.**

NIC BIRGLER | DEMOCRAT



Posted Tuesday, March 21, 2023 6:10 am

### By Nic Birgler

MONTICELLO - Hurleyville Performing Arts Centre (HPAC) and The Black Library co-founders Douglas Shindler and Michael Davis, have signed a lease last Friday, March 17, for the historic Key Bank Building on Broadway in Monticello.

The Monticello Land Bank Board approved a short-term lease with Shindler and Davis this past January.

“We’d like to extend our thanks to the Sullivan County Land Bank and visionaries on the Sullivan County Land Bank Board. We think this project will be immensely valuable to the people of Sullivan County and we cannot wait to get started,” stated

Tal Beery Interim Co-Executive Director of Administration and Strategy for HPAC.

This historic building will be the official home of the Black Library. As previously reported by the **Democrat**, the two Monticello-based artist started the Black Library as a program to benefit local artists and promote diversity in literature and art.

## **Instilling Pride in their Community**

Funded by the Artist Employment Program (AEP) from Creatives Build New York, The Black Library will carry a diverse collection of books by Black authors, exhibit visual art by Black artists, offer educational workshops for children and adults, and host talks and community discussions.

Welcoming residents and visitors of all backgrounds, the project will promote greater understanding of Black history and culture, advocate for racial justice in Sullivan County and beyond, and act as an incubator for the next generation of local artists.

The library's mission is to create a community hub for people to read literature and knowledge promoting community pride and creating a repeating positive cycle.

## **The Artists**

Douglas Shindler is a local painter and photographer whose work address's themes of violence, street-life, sport, and community. His work spotlights the underrepresented and overlooked, and takes influence form hip-hop lyrics and writings from Black culture.

Michael Davis is a Guyanese-American artist whose work captures moments of aggression, honesty, vulnerability, and strength. Davis strives to capture energetic and immortal imagery that will preserve his culture and community for futures generations to experience.

Both Schindler and Davis are alumni of SUNY Sullivan, where their partnership began in their art classes. When Shindler acquired an art studio he began collecting black literature, sparking the conversation with Davis about a potential book club. The idea grew from there and the duo official started their program on July 1, 2022.

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