

# **“CELEBRATION AND VISION: THE HEWITT COLLECTION OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN ART” OPENS AT THE BMA**

NOTE: NEW CLOSING DATE — EXHIBITION ENDS AUGUST 8

**BALTIMORE, MD** (May 25, 2004)—The Baltimore Museum of Art presents an exhibition featuring works by the some of the foremost African-American artists of the last century. **Celebration and Vision: The Hewitt Collection of African-American Art**, on display from **May 30 through August 8**, features nearly 60 paintings and works on paper by 20 renowned artists, including Romare Bearden, Jacob Lawrence, and Elizabeth Catlett.

“The BMA is thrilled to be able to present the Hewitt Collection, a veritable ‘who’s who’ of African-American artists,” said BMA Director Doreen Bolger. “Works by many of these American masters can also be found in the BMA’s outstanding collection of African-American art.”

This exhibition of the Hewitt Collection features a wide range of vibrant and poignant artworks, from powerful portraits and drawings to colorful collages and abstract paintings. Harlem street scenes give way to glimpses of Africa, and views of community life run from church services to the neighborhood card game. Additional artists include Charles H. Alston, John T. Biggers, Margaret Burroughs, Ernest Crichlow, James Denmark, Jonathan Green, J. Eugene Grigsby, Earl Hill, Alvin C. Hollingsworth, Ronald Joseph, Hughie Lee-Smith, Virginia Evans Smit, Ann Tanksley, Henry Ossawa Tanner, Ellis Wilson, Frank Wimberley, and Hale Woodruff.



Jonathan Green. *Easter*, 1989.  
The Hewitt Collection

Purchased by Bank of America in 1998 from John and Vivian Hewitt of New York, the Hewitt Collection represents more than 50 years of collecting and is regarded as one of the most important and comprehensive collections of African-American art of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Collecting art by the country’s best African-American artists was the Hewitts’ lifelong passion. As a teacher and a librarian, they did not have an unlimited budget; however, they had an eye for fine art and emerging artists who would grow to national prominence. They made countless trips to studios to meet and mix with their extensive network of friends and artists, and many of these works include personal inscriptions celebrating special occasions in the lives of the collectors. Since 1999, Bank of America has been underwriting a traveling exhibition of these works to museums and cultural centers throughout the United States.

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"Bank of America is committed to improving lives by providing educational opportunities, building inclusive communities, and promoting cultural outreach," said Laura L. Gamble, president, Bank of America Maryland. "The Hewitt Collection showcases the legacy and contributions of the artists to the community and, in particular, how African-American culture and art are a vital part of our society."

This exhibition is organized by Bank of America, N.A., and made possible in Baltimore by Bank of America Maryland.

**Celebration and Vision: The Hewitt Collection of African-American Art** is curated at The Baltimore Museum of Art by Susan Dackerman, Curator of Prints, Drawings & Photographs, with assistance from Heather Egan and Lynette Roth, graduate interns from The Johns Hopkins University's Department of Art History.

**The Baltimore Museum of Art**

Founded in 1914, The Baltimore Museum of Art is Maryland's largest art museum with more than 90,000 objects. The Museum presents a variety of major exhibitions each year, as well as special installations that showcase the Museum's incomparable collection. The BMA's pre-eminent holding of Post-Impressionist and Modern art—The Cone Collection—includes a group of 500 works by Matisse, considered the most comprehensive collection in the world, as well as major examples by Picasso, Cézanne, Gauguin, van Gogh, and Renoir. The BMA's West Wing for Contemporary Art houses 16 galleries featuring works by Andy Warhol, Sol LeWitt, and Grace Hartigan, as well as more contemporary works by Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Glenn Ligon, and Kara Walker.

In 1939, The Baltimore Museum of Art presented one of the first exhibitions of works by African-American artists in the country, the first step in a long and distinguished record of presenting and collecting African-American art. In recent years the BMA has added more than 30 works by both historical and contemporary African-American artists, including Henry Ossawa Tanner, Lorna Simpson, and Kara Walker. Also featured in the collection are examples of painting and sculpture by Romare Bearden, Elizabeth Catlett, and Kerry James Marshall, as well as works on paper by Gordon Parks and Carrie Mae Weems. Among the Baltimore-based artists represented are Linda Day Clark, Tom Miller, and Joyce J. Scott.

The BMA's collection also includes grand European paintings and sculpture from Old Masters through the 19<sup>th</sup> century; an extensive collection of prints, drawings, and photographs from the 15<sup>th</sup> century to the present; notable American decorative arts and Maryland period rooms; and African, Asian, Native American, and Oceanic art. The BMA's sculpture gardens feature 34 works of art on nearly three landscaped acres.

**Visitor Information**

The Baltimore Museum of Art is open Wednesday through Friday, 11 a.m. until 5 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m. until 6 p.m.; and during the first Thursday of every month (except major holidays), 11 a.m. until 8 p.m. The Museum is closed Monday, Tuesday, New Year's Day, July 4, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Admission is \$7 for adults; \$5 for seniors ages 65 and over and college students; and free for children 18 & under. Admission is free on the first Thursday of every month and for related Free First Thursday activities. The BMA is located on Art Museum Drive at North Charles and 31<sup>st</sup> Streets, three miles north of Baltimore's Inner Harbor. For general Museum information, call 410/396-7100 or visit the BMA's web site at [www.artbma.org](http://www.artbma.org).

**MEDIA CONTACT: BMA PUBLIC RELATIONS, 410/396-6310**

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