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NEW #: 443-573-1870

INFLUENCE OF HENRY OSSAWA TANNER ON AMERICA EXPLORED IN NEW EXHIBITION

Features works by African-American artists from the BMA's collection

BALTIMORE (June 5, 2006)—One of the first African-American artists to achieve international acclaim, Henry Ossawa Tanner (1859-1937) welcomed a younger generation of artists into his studio to give them advice and encourage their careers. **Henry Ossawa Tanner and His Influence in America**, on view at The Baltimore Museum of Art **June 7–November 26, 2006**, explores how Tanner's art and example inspired the succeeding generation of African-American artists in their search for racial and artistic identity in 20th-century America.

The exhibition features six paintings by Tanner along with approximately 40 paintings, prints, drawings, and photographs from the BMA's collection by some of the foremost African-American artists of the 20th century, including Hale Woodruff, Jacob Lawrence, James Van Der Zee, and Romare Bearden.



Aaron Douglas. *Study for Aspects of Negro Life: From Slavery through Reconstruction*. 1934. The Baltimore Museum of Art

Tanner, who spent most of his adult life working in Paris and the French countryside, became a hopeful symbol to many artists who were to contribute to the Harlem Renaissance. His artistic success and his international acclaim were an inspiration to this next generation whose art and lives were impacted by racism, modernism, and the call by African-American intellectual voices to simultaneously embrace their African heritage and Eurocentric modern art

The majority of the works in the exhibition are drawn from the BMA's distinguished collection of African-African art. The Museum began exhibiting and collecting African-American art more than 60 years ago when the Museum presented one of the first exhibitions of works by African-American artists in the country. In recent years the BMA has added more than 50 works by both historical and contemporary artists, from important examples by the early 19th-century portraitist Joshua Johnson to contemporary works by David Hammons, Kara Walker, and Lorna Simpson.

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This is the second in a series of exhibitions that highlight the art, life, and influences of Henry Ossawa Tanner. **Henry Ossawa Tanner and the Lure of Paris**, which was on view December 7, 2005–May 28, 2006, explored the influence of 19th-century French art on Tanner's work.

This exhibition is guest curated by Dr. James Smalls, Associate Professor of Art History and Theory at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. He teaches art and visual culture of the 19th and 20th centuries in Europe and America and has written extensively on modern and contemporary black visual culture.

This exhibition is generously sponsored by the Museum Loan Network and M&T Bank.

Additional support is provided by the Henry Luce Foundation.

PROGRAMS

ARTFUL CONVERSATION

The Inspired Life and Art of Henry Ossawa Tanner

Saturday, June 10, 10:30 a.m.-noon

\$15 (free for BMA Members)

Discover the inspired life and art of one of the most important and celebrated African-American artists of the 20th century with Rae Alexander-Minter, grand niece of artist Henry Ossawa Tanner, and exhibition curator James Smalls, Associate Professor of Art History and Theory at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Coffee and pastries and a tour of *Henry Ossawa Tanner and His Influence in America* included. Call 443-573-1832 for reservations.

FREE FIRST THURSDAY

Henry Ossawa Tanner and His Influence in America

Thursday, July 6, 11 a.m.–8 p.m.

Enjoy free admission all day and family-friendly activities during extended evening hours (5–8 p.m.).

Don't miss a jazz performance by Tamm E. Hunt and a one-man show based on the life of artist Henry Ossawa Tanner.

FAMILY ART WORKSHOP

Henry Osawwa Tanner and His Influence in America

Sunday, June 11, 2–4 p.m.

Sunday, July 23, 2–4 p.m.

Free with Museum admission; kids ages 18 & under always admitted free!

GALLERY TOURS

With a Museum Docent. Free with Museum admission

Henry Ossawa Tanner and His Influence in America

Thursday, June 22, 2 p.m.

Thursday, July 6, 2 p.m.

Wednesday, July 26, 2 p.m.

Sunday, August 13, 2 p.m.

African-American Artists Across the Collection

Wednesday, August 16, 2 p.m.

Sunday, August 20, 2 p.m.

HENRY OSSAWA TANNER

Henry Ossawa Tanner (1859-1937) was the country's most celebrated African-American artist at the turn of the 20th century. He was born in Pittsburgh to Sarah Tanner, a former slave who had escaped on the Underground Railroad, and Reverend Benjamin Tucker Tanner, one of the most renowned intellectual figures in the African-American community in the 19th century. The family had important ties to Maryland where Bishop Tanner was principal of the A.M.E. Conference School for Freedman in Frederick and pastor of the Bethel A.M.E. Church in Baltimore. The family later moved to Philadelphia, where Tanner enrolled in the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and became the pupil of American artist Thomas Eakins.

Tanner traveled to Paris in 1892 and studied under the French academic painters Jean-Joseph Benjamin Constant and Jean-Paul Laurens. He exhibited at the annual Salons and won prizes and recognition for his work. Tanner traveled extensively in Egypt, Palestine, and Italy in 1896 and soon began producing the religious genre and Orientalist subjects for which he is best known. In the last two decades of his life, he achieved international recognition and the admiration of his peers. He achieved one of his greatest distinctions in 1923 when the French government named him chevalier of the Legion of Honor. He died in Paris in 1937.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN ART AT THE BMA

The BMA has a long and distinguished record of collecting African-American art that began in 1939 when the Museum presented one of the first exhibitions of works by African-American artists in the country. In recent years the BMA has added more than 50 works by both historical and contemporary artists. The collection includes contemporary works by David Hammons, Kerry James Marshall, Martin Puryear, Allison Saar, Lorna Simpson, Kara Walker, Carrie Mae Weems, and Fred Wilson; important examples of painting and sculpture by Romare Bearden, Elizabeth Catlett, Beauford Delaney, Sam Gilliam, Joshua Johnson, Jacob Lawrence, Horace Pippin, Alma Thomas, and Hale Woodruff; and works on paper by John Thomas Biggers, Gordon Parks, and James Van Der Zee. Among the Baltimore-based artists represented are Carl Clark, Linda Day Clark, Cary Beth Cryor, Robert Houston, Tom Miller, Kenneth Royster, and Joyce J. Scott. Many of these works can be seen on display in the West Wing for Contemporary Art.

THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART

The Baltimore Museum of Art is home to an internationally renowned collection of 19th-century, modern, and contemporary art. Founded in 1914, the BMA's outstanding collection encompasses 90,000 works of art, including the largest and most significant holding of works by Henri Matisse in the world, as well as masterpieces by Picasso, Cézanne, and van Gogh. An expanding collection of contemporary art features iconic post-1960 works by Andy Warhol and Sol LeWitt, as well as exciting acquisitions by artists such as Kara Walker and Olafur Eliasson. The BMA is also recognized for an internationally acclaimed collection of prints, drawings, and photographs from the 15th century to the present; grand European painting and sculpture from Old Masters to the 19th century; distinguished American painting, sculpture, and decorative arts and Maryland period rooms; one of the most important African collections in the country, and notable examples of Asian, ancient American, and Oceanic art. The BMA's sculpture gardens feature a 100-year survey of modern sculpture on nearly three landscaped acres.

VISITOR INFORMATION

The Baltimore Museum of Art is open Wednesday through Friday, 11 a.m.–5 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m.–6 p.m.; and during the first Thursday of every month (except major holidays), 11 a.m.–8 p.m. The Museum is closed Monday, Tuesday, New Year's Day, July 4, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Admission is \$10 for adults; \$8 for seniors ages 65 & over; \$6 for college students (full time with ID); and free for ages 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 31st Streets, three miles north of Baltimore's Inner Harbor. For general Museum information, call **(NEW #) 443-573-1700** or visit www.artbma.org.

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