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Hale Woodruff - Torso

Black Zeitgeist: Atlanta, the Visual Arts, and the National Black Arts Festival exhibition opens at Hammonds House Museum on July 18

Atlanta, GA --- Two of Fulton County's premier legacy organizations, Hammonds House Museum and the National Black Arts Festival, partner to present **Black Zeitgeist: Atlanta, the Visual Arts, and the National Black Arts Festival**. The exhibition reflects a confluence of visionary leadership, artistic excellence, and institutional power: the bold cultural agenda of Mayor Maynard Jackson, the strategic foresight of Fulton County Commission Chairman Michael Lomax, the founding of NBAF, and the influence of the Black Arts Movement and the Atlanta University Annuals. These efforts were amplified by the support of African American owned businesses like Atlanta Life Insurance Company, the advocacy of cultural leaders such as Jenelsie Walden Holloway, Alice Lovelace, and Dr. Richard A. Long, and the collecting vision of pioneers like Paul R. Jones. Together, they helped shape a dynamic arts ecosystem powered by the creativity and determination of Black artists and communities.

This exhibition will be on view from July 18 through December 14, 2025. There is an opening night reception on Friday, July 18 from 6:30-8:30 pm with the first opportunity to see the artwork. To RSVP, click [HERE](#).

Black Zeitgeist: Atlanta, the Visual Arts, and the National Black Arts Festival presents the works of Romare Bearden, Elizabeth Catlett, Henry Ossawa Tanner, Hale Woodruff, Norman Lewis, Louis Delsarte, Samella Lewis, Kevin Cole, Lynn Marshall Linnemeier, Faith Ringgold, Charles White, Mildred Thomas, Kojo Griffin, Wadsworth Jarrell, and many others. The exhibition demonstrates how Hammonds House Museum expands the reach of NBAF through its visual arts programming, and features pieces from both institutions' permanent collections.

Dr. Richard A. Long (1927–2013) was a renowned scholar of language and the arts and for nearly fifty years he was a central figure in Atlanta's art communities. As a professor, raconteur, author, and collector, he shared his deep knowledge of African Diaspora expression through lectures, literature, tours, and informal gatherings at his home. While serving as the Atticus Haygood Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies at Emory University, he directed over thirty dissertations, and often hosted graduate seminars in his living room, beginning each semester with a tour of his personal art collection. He was also the founder of the Center for African and African American Studies at Atlanta University and a guiding force behind the National Black Arts Festival.

Dr. Long's influence extended beyond academia. He hosted luminaries such as Romare Bearden, James Baldwin, and Maya Angelou, as well as supporting local and regional artists. His legacy endures in the generations of artists, scholars, and communities he inspired, making him a pivotal figure in Atlanta's Black Zeitgeist and the ongoing celebration of Black creativity and intellect.

Statement by Co-Curators Dr Amalia Amaki and Anne Collins Smith.

Since the 1980's the convergence of grassroots activism, institutional leadership, visionary collectors, and artist-scholars in Atlanta has not only elevated Black visual arts locally but also set a national standard for celebrating and sustaining Black artistic excellence.

Artists and scholar activists played a pivotal role in shaping this cultural renaissance. Influential figures such as Amiri Baraka, Sonia Sanchez, Maya Angelou, Faith Ringgold, and Betye Saar used their creative and scholarly work to address pressing issues of race, identity, and social justice, inspiring generations to use art as a form of activism and empowerment. Their efforts, alongside Atlanta-based visionaries, established the city as a center for Black artistic innovation and intellectual discourse, fostering an environment where creative expression and activism were inseparable. The legacy of their activism is reflected in the ongoing programming and outreach of institutions like the National Black Arts Festival, which continues to focus on artistic expression, cultural preservation, education and community engagement.

A Personal Testimony from Co-Curator Anne Collins Smith.

I took Ms. Holloway's "Afro-American Art" course at Spelman in 1993. Though she had retired in 1991, she returned to teach our class, opening up a world of knowledge that propelled my career. Our textbook was her own compendium of key readings in African American history and culture, including George S. Schuyler and Langston Hughes's debate in "Negro Art Hokum" and "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," excerpts from Samella Lewis's "African American Art and Artists," Alain Locke's "A Note on African Art," Amiri Baraka's "Black Nationalism vs. Pimp Art," and other foundational texts.

After graduate school, I served as the Andrew W. Mellon Curatorial Fellow at the Davis Museum at Wellesley College. When a position at the Spelman College Museum became available, I was hired as Curator of Collections.

There are countless testimonies about the profound impact Jenelsie Walden Holloway had on other students lives and careers. **Black Zeitgeist: Atlanta, the Visual Arts, and the National Black Arts Festival** is dedicated to her enduring legacy in shaping the African American cultural community.

Statement by Halima Taha, Hammonds House Museum Artistic Chair

It is with great pleasure that Hammonds House Museum welcomes the brilliant scholarship and curatorial expertise of Dr. Amalia Amaki and Anne Collins Smith as guest curators for **Black Zeitgeist: Atlanta, the Visual Arts, and the National Black Arts Festival**.

Through the artwork featured in this exhibition we celebrate the intellectual diversity, creative innovation, and enduring legacy of Atlanta's visual artists and cultural visionaries. We are proud to honor the fertile ground cultivated by Atlanta's premiere Black institutions for art and their remarkable collections. From the pioneering efforts of Atlanta Life Insurance Company to the historic exhibitions and permanent collection at Clark Atlanta University Art Galleries, and the ongoing impact of the Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, these institutions have been foundational. They have nurtured generations of artists, scholars, and audiences, ensuring that Atlanta remains a vibrant center for Black art and culture.

Hammonds House Museum is a 501(c)3 arts organization whose mission is to celebrate and share the cultural diversity and important legacy of artists of African descent. The former residence of the late Dr. Otis Thrash Hammonds, a prominent Atlanta physician and passionate arts patron, the museum is in a beautiful Victorian home at 503 Peebles Street SW, Atlanta, GA 30310. Hammonds House Museum's 2025 exhibitions are supported by a series of workshops, public programs and civic engagement activities which serve as opportunities for the community to have a deeper experience with the artworks. For information about upcoming events, to join the mailing list, become a member, or plan your visit, go to the website: hammondshouse.org.

Hammonds House Museum is generously supported by Fulton County Board of Commissioners through the Fulton County Department of Arts and Culture, City of Atlanta Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs, National Performance Network, The Estate of Dr. Doris Derby, National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, as well as donors and members.

National Black Arts Festival is a 501(c)3 arts and culture organization with a mission to expose, educate, and engage audiences through the presentation and support of the art and artists of African descent. Based in Atlanta, GA, NBAF is recognized as the oldest multidisciplinary arts organization in the United States focused exclusively on the art and artists of African descent. In 2008, the United States Congress recognized NBAF for its importance to the "cultural fabric of greater Atlanta and all of America. Through its annual public programs, world-class performances, commissioned works, arts education and public programs, NBAF offers audiences experiences that are extraordinary, enriching and transformative.

MEDIA: For images, here's our Dropbox <http://bit.ly/HammondsHouseMuseum>. To request press passes, set up interviews, or for more information, contact Karen Hatchett at Hatchett PR, karen@hatchettpr.com.