



NEWS RELEASE

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**SAN DIEGO MUSEUM OF ART PRESENTS
TWO MAJOR NON-WESTERN ART EXHIBITIONS**

Oceanic Art: A Celebration of Form
31 January 2009 – 3 January 2010

Black Womanhood: Icons, Images, and Ideologies of the African Body
31 January - 26 April 2009

SAN DIEGO—This winter, the San Diego Museum of Art is proud to present two major exhibitions that highlight artistic masterpieces from Africa and Oceania. Organized by SDMA *Oceanic Art: A Celebration of Form*—on view from 31 January 2009 to 3 January 2010—presents nearly 100 works of art from the South Pacific Islands, a geographical region broadly defined by scholars as Oceania. Simultaneously, *Black Womanhood: Icons, Images, and Ideologies of the African Body*, organized by the Hood Museum of Art, will be on view at SDMA from 31 January to 26 April 2009. *Black Womanhood* is the first major exhibition to explore the direct relationship between historic and contemporary representations of the black female body as they have been expressed in both traditional African and modern Western art.

“Establishing a more vivid and encyclopedic representation of the global artistic practice has been a goal of recent work at the museum,” said Derrick R. Cartwright, executive director. “I expect our

visitors to be captivated by both of these exhibitions which bring new scholarly perspectives and stunning objects to SDMA.”

Oceanic Art: A Celebration of Form

Curated by George Ellis, director emeritus of the Honolulu Academy of Arts, *Oceanic Art: A Celebration of Form* features 97 three-dimensional works, primarily from Melanesia and Polynesia, but the exhibition also includes objects from Micronesia and Taiwan. Works on view come from three major California collections: the renowned personal collections of Valerie Franklin and Edward and Mina Smith Collection, as well as the extensive holdings of the Sana Art Foundation. The exhibition includes a variety of three-dimensional objects, including sculptures, traditional adornments, weapons, and objects used in everyday life. Many of these are encoded with cultural and social meanings, some of which still function within certain Oceanic cultures today. The exhibition will display the works in groups that not only allude to their original daily uses but also provide for rich cross-examination of the variety of contexts in which these objects functioned.

Oceanic Art highlights an exceptional gathering of diverse works, including a rare life-size sculpture from Nuku‘oro in the Caroline Islands (Micronesia), the only such figure in a private collection. Elaborate hand-carved sculptures, exquisite architectural elements, and several striking figures from New Ireland, Admiralty or Manus Islands, and a rare Easter Island (Rapa Nui) carved figures will also be on view.

The exhibition is accompanied by an illustrated, 128-page scholarly catalogue written by George Ellis and published by the San Diego Museum of Art. The essay contains a current perspective on

Pacific cultures, their diversity and struggles within a colonial context, and a fresh view of these traditional and contemporary arts.

This exhibition was organized by the San Diego Museum of Art, and is generously supported by Tanya and Charles Brandes, Joan and Fredrick Nicholas and the Ray and Wyn Ritchie Evans Foundation.

Additional funding is provided by G.S. Levine Insurance Services, Inc., the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture, the County of San Diego Community Enhancement Program, and members of the San Diego Museum of Art.

Black Womanhood: Icons, Images, and Ideologies of the African Body

Through the display of more than one hundred sculptures, prints, postcards, photographs, paintings, textiles, and video installations by artists from Africa, Europe, America, and the Caribbean, *Black Womanhood* provides an in-depth look at how images of the black female body have been created and used differently in Africa and the West. The exhibition explores themes such as ideals of beauty, fertility and sexuality, maternity and motherhood, and women's identities and social roles. It presents three separate but intersecting sections and reveals three different perspectives—the traditional African, Western colonial, and contemporary global—that have contributed to current ideas about black womanhood.

By contrasting historic representations of the African female body with contemporary representations of black womanhood, the exhibition peels back the layers of social, cultural, and political realities that have influenced the creation of stereotypes about black women. *Black Womanhood* promotes and encourages a deeper understanding of the various ways in which ideas about and responses to the black female body have been shaped as much by past histories as by contemporary experiences.

Black Womanhood features works by contemporary African and African-descended artists,

and new works by emerging South African artists Zanele Muholi, Senzeni Marasela, and Nandipha Mntambo, which will be exhibited for the first time on the West coast. Also featured will be a new sculpture created especially for this exhibition by the African-American artist Joyce Scott.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a 370-page illustrated catalogue published by the Hood Museum of Art in association with the University of Washington Press. The exhibition and its accompanying catalogue make a valuable contribution to ongoing discussions of race, gender, and sexuality, promoting a deeper understanding of past and present readings of black womanhood, both in Africa and the West.

Black Womanhood: Images, Icons, and Ideologies of the African Body was organized by the Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, and is generously funded by a grant from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Art.

The local presentation of this exhibition is made possible by the generous support of the SANA Art Foundation, Valerie Franklin, G.S. Levine Insurance Services, Inc., and SDMA's African Arts Council and the Legler Benbough Foundation. Additional funding provided by the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture, the County of San Diego Community Enhancement Program, and members of the San Diego Museum of Art.

Museum Information:

San Diego Museum of Art
1450 El Prado, Balboa Park
San Diego, CA 92101

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Group Sales: (619) 696-1915
Web site: www.sdmart.org

Hours: Tuesday–Sunday: 10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.; *Effective January 1, 2009* Tuesday – Saturday: 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. and Sunday: 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Admission Prices: Adult \$10; Senior (65+) and Military with ID \$8; Student \$7; Youth (6–17) \$4. Children 5 and under are free. (Specially priced tickets may be required for certain exhibitions. Please contact the Museum for more information.)

The San Diego Museum of Art provides a rich and diverse cultural experience for more than 400,000 annual visitors. Located in the heart of beautiful Balboa Park, the Museum's nationally renowned collections include Spanish and Italian old masters, South Asian paintings, and 19th- and 20th-century American paintings and sculptures. In addition, the Museum regularly features major exhibitions of art from around the world, as well as an extensive year-round schedule of supporting cultural and educational programs for children and adults, as well as a research library, and an art school with classes for all levels and audiences. At SDMA exhibition text is always in English and Spanish.

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