



MEDIA CONTACT INFORMATION:

Treshea N. Wade
Manager, Marketing & Communications
August Wilson Center for African American Culture
Office 412.338.8734
Cell 412.716.8961
TWade@AugustWilsonCenter.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**August Wilson Center Celebrates Romare Bearden Centennial
with World-Class Traveling Exhibition
*From Process to Print: Graphic Works by Romare Bearden***

*Celebration includes several activities; companion exhibit,
Romare Bearden: The Last Years, Photography by Frank Stewart*

PITTSBURGH, PA—June 13, 2011—The August Wilson Center for African American Culture will host the exhibition *From Process to Print: Graphic Works by Romare Bearden* from Friday, July 15 to September 12, 2011 in The Center's Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation Changing Exhibit Gallery. Opening night is also the date of Downtown Pittsburgh's Gallery Crawl in the Cultural District.

The Romare Bearden Foundation, a New York based, public foundation dedicated to the legacy of preeminent American artist, Romare Bearden (1911-1988) has organized the exhibition *From Process to Print: Graphic Works by Romare Bearden* for a three-year national tour. The exhibition presents a selected body of prints that examines the ways that Bearden experimented, innovated and collaborated on his journey toward mastery of the print medium. It includes over seventy-five lithographs, etchings, collagraphs, collagraph plates, screen prints, drypoints, monoprints and engravings, all created over a span of 30 years. They demonstrate, in part, how Bearden extended his artistic imagination beyond the collages and photomontages that inspired many of the works. The exhibit was curated by Pamela Ford, The Foundation's former program director, and designed by Bally Exhibit, Pittsburgh, PA.

Cecile Shellman, Artistic Director, Visual Arts & Exhibitions at the August Wilson Center, said it is an honor to present Bearden's multiple original graphic prints, especially given his connection to Pittsburgh.

"The richness of pattern and color, the strength of theme and the importance of mark and myth are evident in this body of work. Bearden's formative years in Pittsburgh—as a boy in East Liberty living with his maternal grandmother—influenced his work throughout his entire career," Ms. Shellman said.

"A graduate of Pittsburgh Public Schools, Romare Bearden is an example of the promise Pittsburgh holds for youth who dare to dream, are nurtured in their desires, and persevere against the odds," she added.

The national museum tour, organized by Landau Traveling Exhibitions, Los Angeles, CA, will travel to museums throughout the country through 2013.

/next

August Wilson Center Hosts National Romare Bearden Exhibit /Page 2

From Process to Print

The exhibition follows several major shows of Bearden's work, including the groundbreaking retrospective *The Art of Romare Bearden*, organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. *From Process to Print* is important for examining in depth the significance of prints in Bearden's oeuvre, for offering new perspectives from contemporary scholars and artists/practitioners, for bringing the research up to date and in many instances, correcting the past record on titles, attributions and techniques.

As Grace C. Stanislaus, the President of the Foundation noted, "For Bearden, the process of making art was as important as the product that resulted. While this is especially true of his collages, for which he is an acknowledged master, it is equally true about his graphic works."

The exhibition offers a unique opportunity to examine Bearden's print making process as he worked and re-worked a particular image, theme or technique, to consider how his thinking and approaches were shaped through collaborations with master printmakers and to understand how key themes and motifs like trains, family life, rituals, urban scenes, jazz and mythology extended his artistic imagination from collage into other media.

The works in the exhibition show Bearden's extraordinary facility for weaving into every art form a rich tapestry of literary, biblical, mythological, popular culture and western and non-western themes that were informed by his African American cultural experiences. Included are prints based on collages like the *Odysseus Series* and *Piano Lesson* that he reworked in several media through changes in technique, scale and color and through the use of photographic processes. Also included are two important photoengraving series, *The Train* and *The Family* and the extraordinary limited edition *12 Trains*. John Loring writing in *Arts Magazine* in 1973 proclaimed *The Train* "one of the 10 most important prints of our time."

A full-color 140-page catalogue published and distributed by Pomegranate accompanies the exhibition and includes: a foreword by Grace C. Stanislaus; a seminal essay by Mary Lee Corlett, Research Associate, Special Projects in Modern Art at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC and interviews with master printmakers and Bearden collaborators, Kathy Caraccio and Mohammed Khalil. This catalogue will be available for purchase in The Center's gift shop.

***Romare Bearden: The Last Years, Photography by Frank Stewart* | COMPANION EXHIBIT**

Also being unveiled on July 15 is a companion exhibition, ***Romare Bearden: The Last Years*** featuring the work of Frank Stewart, an award-winning, New York-based photographer whose work has been included in solo and group exhibitions at venues such as the Studio Museum in Harlem, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, International Center of Photography and the Museum of Contemporary Art.

Stewart met Bearden in 1975 while filming the documentary "Two Centuries of Black American Art." Over the next 13 years, Stewart spent thousands of hours with the artist capturing him socializing at exhibits, working in his studio and relaxing. Approximately 46 of Stewart's photographs will be on exhibit at The Center.

Ms. Shellman said the paired exhibitions are particularly significant because this is the first time these works have been shown concurrently.

"Frank Stewart's familial closeness to Bearden made him, the young artist, an observer and mentee of the older, wiser, established luminary whom he befriended and documented in this tender series of photographs spanning a 13-year period," she said. "We see Bearden at rest, Bearden at play, Bearden in the company of other noted artists and critics."

August Wilson Center Hosts National Romare Bearden Exhibit /Page 3

ROMARE BEARDEN

Romare Bearden (1911-1988), an American artist of African American heritage, was honored during his lifetime and posthumously with numerous prestigious awards, publications and exhibitions. Along with representation in important public and private collections, he was awarded the National Medal of Arts and honored with a groundbreaking retrospective exhibition at the National Gallery of Art. A master collagist, Bearden is celebrated today as a preeminent, highly prolific artist of exceptional and multifaceted talents and interests. He was a jazz aficionado, an author of scholarly books, a song writer/lyricist as well an arts activist and an engaged humanist. Bearden incorporated into his artwork a rich montage of influences from American, African, Asian and European art and culture and took inspiration from memories and experiences of the rural South, the urban North and the Caribbean.

RELATED CULTIVATION PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Celebrate Bearden

July 15 | 5:30 to 9 pm
Free and open to the public

Listen to the jazz that influenced an American arts legacy while people of all ages are invited to celebrate the life and works of international artist, Romare Bearden. Be inspired to make your own arts masterpiece during the **Create Your Own Bearden** collage-making workshop or **Bring Your Own Bearden**-inspired artwork to be displayed during the one-day community exhibition. Contact cultivation@AugustWilsonCenter.org for more information or to Bring Your Own Bearden on July 15.

Film & Discussion: *Bearden Plays Bearden*

August 4 | 5:30 to 7 pm
Free and open to the public

Join us for a screening of the 1981 film by Billie Allen and Nelson E. Breen, *Bearden Plays Bearden*. This 60-minute documentary feature includes conversations with Romare Bearden and observations of the artist by his friends and colleagues. A painter, collagist and muralist whose influence reverberates still, Romare Bearden is widely recognized as one of the most important African American artists of the 20th century.

Romare Bearden Centennial Celebration

September 2 | 2 to 8 pm
Free and open to the public

On the 100th anniversary of Romare Bearden's birth, celebrate the artist's life, art and legacy at the August Wilson Center. Attend a Bearden lecture by **Dr. Mary Schmidt Campbell**, vice chairman of President Obama's Committee on the Arts and Humanities and dean of the Tisch School of the Arts, New York University. Also, renowned photographer **Frank Stewart** discusses his work on view at The Center—poignant images of Romare Bearden from 1975-1987—in an engaging gallery talk. The theme of the presentation is ***Romare Bearden: His Life and Influences***. Guided tours. Light refreshments.

Bearden Print Workshop

September 3 | 12 to 2 pm
Free and open to the public

In celebration of Romare Bearden's 100th birthday, the August Wilson Center and The Andy Warhol Museum partner to host this celebratory workshop. Participants experience the art of printmaking and collage while learning about the history and inspirations of an arts legend. This workshop will feature The Center's current exhibition, *From Process to Print: Graphic Works by Romare Bearden*, and is appropriate for children, families and adults of all ages.

August Wilson Center Hosts National Romare Bearden Exhibit /Page 4

ADMISSION FEES, DATES AND GALLERY HOURS

From Process to Print will be on exhibit at The Center from July 15 to September 12, 2011. *Romare Bearden: The Last Years*, also opens on July 15, but will be on exhibit until October 31, 2011. Entering The Center is free, but there are admission fees for the special exhibitions on the second floor: Adults - \$8, Seniors (62 and over) and Students with valid ID - \$4 and Children - \$3. Members free.

The Center's gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 11 am to 6 pm. For details, the public can call 412.258.2700, or visit AugustWilsonCenter.org.

Group visits of 12 or more are eligible for a group visit discount with advance reservations. K-12 teachers should make reservations for a school group tour by contacting our Cultivation Department at cultivation@AugustWilsonCenter.org or 412.338.8730.

MEDIA: Please contact Treshea N. Wade, manager of marketing and communications, at 412.338.8734 or twade@AugustWilsonCenter.org for any image or interview requests.

The August Wilson Center extends grateful appreciation to the following contributors of major support: Allegheny Regional Asset District, The Buhl Foundation and Henry C. Frick Education Fund, The Heinz Endowments, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, Richard King Mellon Foundation, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, National Endowment for the Arts and The Pittsburgh Foundation.

###

ABOUT AUGUST WILSON CENTER FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE

Named for Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning playwright and Hill District native August Wilson, the August Wilson Center for African American Culture engages regional and national audiences in its mission of preserving, presenting, interpreting, celebrating and shaping the art, culture and history of African Americans in Western Pennsylvania and people of African descent throughout the world.

Located in Downtown Pittsburgh's Cultural District, the multidisciplinary August Wilson Center is reflective of all aspects of African American culture. The Center's striking, two-story, green building houses a 486-seat theater for performances in all disciplines, exhibition galleries, multipurpose spaces for community programs and events and a gift shop. The Center is among a select few African American cultural institutions presenting visual and performing arts, the humanities and educational programs in a state-of-the-art venue.

More information is available on The Center's website at AugustWilsonCenter.org and by calling 412.258.2700.

ABOUT ROMARE BEARDEN FOUNDATION

The Romare Bearden Foundation, a New York based nonprofit organization, preserves, perpetuates and make publicly accessible Romare Bearden's rich artistic and intellectual legacy through its programs. Beyond the material legacy, which includes Bearden's art, archives and literary works, the Foundation has built its programmatic mission on his legacy of nurturing and supporting the creative and intellectual potential of artists, children and scholars. Established in 1990, two years after Bearden's death, the Foundation is one of the oldest organizations of its kind established by an African American visual artist. The Foundation supports the creative and educational development of young people and of talented and aspiring artists and scholars through its national arts education program geared to educators and students in grades K-12, scholarships for young and economically disadvantaged visual art students and support for practicing artists by way of work and professional development opportunities. In general, the Foundation supports scholarship on Bearden through its exhibition, publication and its national symposium programs that aim to broaden national and international exposure to and increase awareness about his extraordinary art, life and legacy and his significant contributions to American and world art.

More information is available on the Foundation's website at beardenfoundation.org.