



For immediate release

Aaron Douglas: African American Modernist

**Major retrospective completes national tour in New York City
at Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture**

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PROMOTIONAL IMAGES AVAILABLE

Lawrence, KS— New York's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture will provide the final venue for ***Aaron Douglas: African American Modernist***, a major exhibition celebrating the life, art and legacy of **Aaron Douglas**, an African American artist from Kansas who went on to become the most important visual artist of the Harlem Renaissance. The exhibition, organized by the Spencer Museum of Art at the University of Kansas, is the first-ever national traveling retrospective of Douglas's work, and brings together nearly 100 works from public institutions and private collections across the country.

Opening August 30 and continuing through November 30 at the Schomburg Center, ***Aaron Douglas: African American Modernist*** was previously on view at the Spencer, at Nashville's Frist Center for the Visual Arts, and at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C. For more information, please visit www.aarondouglas.ku.edu. The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, part of The New York Public Library system, is located at 515 Malcolm X Blvd., New York, N.Y. For more information, please visit <http://www.nypl.org/research/sc/sc.html>

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue edited by Susan Earle, the exhibition curator and the Spencer's Curator of European & American Art, with contributions by leading scholars of African American art. Yale University Press co-published the exhibition catalogue with the Spencer. Support for the exhibition and catalogue comes from the Henry Luce Foundation, with additional exhibition support from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

ABOUT AARON DOUGLAS

Born to laborer parents in Topeka, Kansas, Aaron Douglas (1899-1979) overcame many obstacles to pursue his passion for art and ideas. He was one of the first African American artists to portray racial themes within the context of modern art, and his ambitious pursuit of justice through his paintbrush continues to influence artists today. After earning a BFA degree in 1922 from the University of Nebraska and teaching at Lincoln High School in Kansas City, he migrated to New York in 1925 to join in the cultural flourishing that has variously been called the New Negro Renaissance or the Harlem Renaissance. He later taught art at historically black Fisk University in Nashville.

A socially conscious artist, Douglas vividly captured the spirit of his time and established a new black aesthetic and vision. Working from a politicized concept of personal identity, he combined art-deco dynamism with African and African American imagery to produce a new visual vocabulary that evoked not only current realities but also hope for a better future. His work is the most powerful visual legacy of the Harlem Renaissance and has had a lasting impact on the art and cultural heritage of the nation.

Of special interest to the Spencer's exploration of Douglas and the Harlem Renaissance is the Midwestern origin of artists associated with what seems a distinctly urban and East Coast phenomenon. Douglas and his good friend Langston Hughes both spent their childhoods in Kansas, while other important writers such as Claude McKay and Countee Cullen both had Midwestern ties. The exhibition will illuminate not only the Midwestern roots of the "New Negro" outpouring in Harlem, but also how Douglas's influence extended far beyond the Harlem neighborhood and the years most closely associated with the Harlem Renaissance.

Support

Major support for the exhibition and catalogue for *Aaron Douglas: African American Modernist* is provided by The Henry Luce Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. Additional support comes from the Capitol Federal Foundation; the Judith Rothschild Foundation; the Office of the Chancellor of The University of Kansas.

Key Information

Organizer:	Spencer Museum of Art, The University of Kansas, Lawrence
Website:	http://www.aarondouglas.ku.edu
Curator:	Dr. Susan Earle, Curator of European and American Art, Spencer Museum of Art
Coordinator:	Stephanie Knappe, Spencer Museum of Art

Schedule:

Sept. 8–Dec. 2, 2007	Spencer Museum of Art, Lawrence, KS
Jan. 18–April 13, 2008	Frist Center for the Visual Arts, Nashville, TN
May 9–Aug. 3, 2008	Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.
Aug. 30–Nov. 30, 2008	Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York City

Spencer Museum of Art

The University of Kansas

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Also find the Spencer...

- On the Web: www.spencerart.ku.edu
- E-mail: spencerart@ku.edu

Gallery hours

Tues., Wed., Fri., & Saturday 10 AM—5 PM

Thurs. 10 AM—8 PM

Sun. 1—5 PM

Closed Monday

Museum Shop closes 30 minutes before the galleries close.

Also check out our “Walk-ins Welcome Fridays” in the Print Study Room: View works on paper and photographs of your choosing—without appointment. 10 AM—Noon and 1—4 PM.

- Free parking in Lot 91 after 5 PM on weekdays and all day weekends, excepting home football games.
- Parking garage adjacent to Kansas Union is \$1 per hour weekdays, free on Saturdays and Sundays (but unavailable on home football games).