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The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens Presents
The Walter O. Evans Collection of African American Art

Jacksonville, Fla. - The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens presents *The Walter O. Evans Collection of African American Art* on February 1. The exhibition, on view through April 17, 2007, features 80 original works drawn from more than 500 collected by Dr. Walter Evans over the past 40 years. The collection chronicles the achievements of African-American artists working from the mid-19th century to the present.

“The Cummer is delighted to have the opportunity to present *The Walter O. Evans Collection of African American Art*,” said Museum Director Maarten van de Guchte. “The collection is one of the best private collections celebrated for its quality, variety, breadth and depth. This exhibition has provided a platform for The Cummer to develop some innovative programs for all ages as well as innovative partnerships. Those programs and partnerships will bring the creativity and inspiration manifest in this collection and collector beyond the walls of The Cummer deep into our community.”

The paintings, sculptures and works that are on view in this exhibition convey the contributions of African-American artists to the tapestry of American art and culture as well as their development of uniquely African-American perspectives and aesthetics. The collection also represents an important corrective to the prior lack of representation of African-American artists in museums, private collections and the commercial art world.

Landscape and still life paintings and drawings show how the artists were initially conformed to the conventions of the 19th century. Particular strengths of the Evans Collection include significant works by artists who worked or studied art during the Harlem Renaissance. Aaron Douglas’ *The Negro Speaks of Rivers (for Langston Hughes)* celebrates Hughes’ first poem and alludes to both the heritage of African-Americans and their migrations in America. As Evans has become close friends with numerous artists, he

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has commissioned many iconic works by Jacob Lawrence and Richard Hunt. Also included are works by Edward Bannister, Romare Bearden, Elizabeth Catlett, Robert Duncanson, and Charles White among others.

Evans made his first major acquisition in the late 1970s, with the purchase of Jacob Lawrence's *The Legend of John Brown*, a portfolio of 22 silkscreen prints. Soon after, Evans met Romare Bearden and obtained a trio of works, which eventually led to what is now widely recognized as *The Walter O. Evans Collection of African American Art*.

Evans was featured in *Art & Antiques* in March 1991, 1992 and 1993 as one of "America's Top 100 Collectors." He serves as the President of the Jacob and Gwendolyn Lawrence Foundation, and as an officer and board member of the Margaret Walker Alexander Research Center, Savannah College of Art & Design, and Telfair Museum of Art.

Members' Opening Celebration is scheduled for Monday, February 5, 6 to 8 p.m. Members are free and non-member guests are \$15. Special programs and events for visitors throughout the show include exhibition tours, Family Day, the Art of Collage, a collage workshop, Especially For Seniors Talks and Tea and a Celebration of Harlem Renaissance (see attached program and event schedule).

A media tour is scheduled for Monday, February 5 at 11 a.m. with special guests Dr. and Mrs. Walter O. Evans. For more information or to RSVP, please contact Amy Chamberlin at 899-6034.

The exhibition is sponsored by Fidelity National Financial, Wachovia, Barbara and Rev. Carlton Jones and the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville. The exhibition was organized by The Walter O. Evans Foundation for Art and Literature. For more information about Dr. Evans and his collections, visit The Walter O. Evans Foundation at www.walteroevansfoundation.org.

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