

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**RESTORED TALLADEGA COLLEGE MURALS TO BEGIN
MULTI-CITY NATIONAL TOUR AT HIGH MUSEUM OF ART JUNE 9**

***“Rising Up: Hale Woodruff’s Murals at Talladega College” Provides Fresh Look at Murals
Depicting Key Moments in African American History; First Ever Tour for Murals from Talladega, Ala.***

ATLANTA, May 2, 2012 – With 12 months of conservation work now complete, the historic Talladega Murals will be presented to a national audience for the first time in a new exhibition – [“Rising Up: Hale Woodruff’s Murals at Talladega College”](#) – on view at the High Museum of Art June 9 to Sept. 2, 2012.

The Museum and College announced dates and locations for several U.S. museums set to share the murals with audiences through 2015.

Following the High exhibition, the murals will travel to the African American Museum in Dallas Oct. 6 to Feb. 28, 2013. Other venues to host the murals include:

- The 80WSE Gallery at New York University’s Steinhardt School of Culture July 20 to Oct. 13, 2013
- The Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History & Culture Nov. 22, 2013 to March 2, 2014, (on view at the National Museum of American History)
- The New Orleans Museum of Art June 13 to Sept. 14, 2014
- The Amistad Center for Art & Culture, Inc. at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art and Connecticut’s Old State House, Hartford, Conn., Oct. 4, 2014 to March 1, 2015
- Detroit’s Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History March 14 to May 24, 2015
- Alabama’s Birmingham Museum of Art June 14 to Sept. 6, 2015.

Conservation Partnership

In March 2011, the High Museum of Art and Talladega College in Alabama began a five-year collaborative project to restore, research and exhibit Hale Aspacio Woodruff’s renowned Talladega murals.

Commissioned in 1938 to commemorate the 1867 founding of Talladega College and celebrate its success as one of the nation’s first all-black colleges, the murals have been continuously viewed on campus since their installation in the lobby of Savery Library.

Considered among Woodruff’s greatest achievements, the Talladega murals underwent conservation at the Atlanta Art Conservation Center under the auspices of the High Museum of Art. With conservation work now complete, the murals will be presented to a national audience for the first time. The process addressed the effects of aging on the works and unveiled some surprising discoveries about Woodruff’s creative process.

The Murals

Comprising six monumental canvases arranged in two cycles of three, the vibrant murals portray heroic efforts to resist slavery as well as moments in the history of the college, which opened in 1867 to serve the educational needs of a new population of freed slaves.

The first cycle includes *The Mutiny On The Amistad*, which depicts the uprising on the slave ship La Amistad; *The Trial of the Amistad Captives*, depicting the court proceedings that followed the mutiny; and *The Repatriation of the Freed Captives*, portraying the subsequent freedom and return to Africa of the Amistad captives.

The companion murals *The Underground Railroad*, *The Building of Savery Library* and *Opening Day at Talladega College* show themes of the Underground Railroad, the construction of Savery Library at Talladega College, and the early days of the college campus, for which the murals were commissioned, respectively.

The Exhibition

The exhibition at the High Museum of Art will include works that span a good part of Woodruff's early career with a particular focus on his important work as a muralist. In addition to the Talladega murals and studies, this exhibition will feature examples of Woodruff's other mural commissions, as well as smaller-scale paintings he made while in Mexico, where he went in 1936 to study mural painting with Diego Rivera.

The project also explores Woodruff's impact on the arts and the opportunities he provided for artists of color in his role as the first chair of the newly established art department of Atlanta University (now Clark Atlanta University) from 1931 to 1946. The exhibition project will be accompanied by a catalogue that includes essays on the artist, the murals, Talladega College, and American mural painting in the decades surrounding the Talladega project. A descriptive photo essay on the findings of the conservation work will also be featured. After the murals are restored and exhibited nationally, they will return to Talladega College in 2015.

"Preserving and exhibiting these murals holds a particular relevance for the people of Atlanta," said Michael E. Shapiro, the High's Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr. Director. "Hale Woodruff was of central importance to the burgeoning art scene here in the '30s and '40s and an integral figure in the history of public art in the Southeast. Seeing Woodruff's newly restored Talladega murals in the context of his other works will be a significant experience for both local and national audiences."

"This is a very historic event for Talladega College, not only getting the murals restored, but to share them on tour throughout the country during the next three years," stated Dr. Billy C. Hawkins, President of Talladega College. "The tour will give the institution great exposure and help in our fundraising and recruiting efforts."

Hale Aspacio Woodruff

Hale Aspacio Woodruff (1900–1980) was born in Cairo, Ill. He studied art at both the John Herron Art Institute in Indianapolis and the Fogg Museum of Harvard University. Woodruff contributed to the development of African American art, not only as an artist, but also as a distinguished arts educator.

Woodruff's first mural project was in collaboration with Wilmer Jennings in 1934. The four-panel mural, titled *The Negro in Modern American Life: Agriculture and Rural Life; Literature, Music, and Art*, was part of a public works project and a teaching project that involved both Woodruff's students and a local junior high school. In 1935, Woodruff worked on Works Progress Administration (WPA) murals for the Atlanta School of Social Work.

Between 1931 and 1946, Woodruff served as the first chair of the newly established art department of Atlanta University. During the summer of 1936, he studied mural painting in Mexico under the mentorship of Diego Rivera. In 1946, he became a teacher at New York University, where he taught art for more than 20 years until his retirement in 1968. During the mid-1960s Woodruff and fellow artist Romare Bearden were instrumental in starting the Spiral Group, a collaboration of African American artists working in New York. The Studio Museum in Harlem presented a retrospective of his work titled "Hale Woodruff: 50 Years of His Art" in 1979. The exhibition *Hale Woodruff, Nancy Elizabeth Prophet, and the Academy* was at the Atlanta-based Spelman College Museum of Fine Art in 2007.

Exhibition Organization and Support

"Rising Up: Hale Woodruff's Murals at Talladega College" is organized by the High Museum of Art in collaboration with Talladega College, Talladega, Ala. This exhibition is made possible by generous support from American Express, Georgia-Pacific, the Henry Luce Foundation, the Terra Foundation for American Art, and the Friends of Hale Woodruff. The conservation of the murals is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts and Mr. and Mrs. Jesse C. Crawford.

High Museum of Art

Founded in 1905 as the Atlanta Art Association, the High Museum of Art is the leading art museum in the southeastern U.S. With more than 12,000 works of art in its permanent collection, the High Museum of Art has an extensive anthology of 19th and 20th century American and decorative art; significant holdings of European paintings;

a growing collection of African American art; and burgeoning collections of modern and contemporary art, photography and African art. The High is also dedicated to supporting and collecting works by Southern artists and is distinguished as the only major museum in North America to have a curatorial department specifically devoted to the field of folk and self-taught art. The High's media arts department produces acclaimed annual film series and festivals of foreign, independent and classic cinema. In November 2005, the High opened three new buildings by architect Renzo Piano that more than doubled the Museum's size, creating a vibrant "village for the arts" at the Woodruff Arts Center in midtown Atlanta. *For more information about the High visit www.High.org.*

The Woodruff Arts Center

The Woodruff Arts Center is ranked among the top four arts centers in the nation. The Woodruff is unique in that it combines four visual and performing arts divisions on one campus as one not-for-profit organization. Opened in 1968, the Woodruff Arts Center is home to the Alliance Theatre, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the High Museum of Art and Young Audiences. *To learn more about the Woodruff Arts Center, please visit www.woodruffcenter.org.*

#

Media contacts:

Nicholas Wolaver

Public Relations Consultant

Tel: 404-733-4585 | E-mail: nick.wolaver@woodruffcenter.org

Media outside the Southeastern United States please contact:

Ilana Simon

Resnicow Schroeder Associates

Tel: 720-746-9552 | E-mail: isimon@resnicowschroeder.com

Aga Sablinska

Resnicow Schroeder Associates

Tel: 212-671-5177 | E-mail: asablinska@resnicowschroeder.com