

1280 PEACHTREE STREET, N.E. • ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30309

Press Office

TEL 404-733-4437

FAX 404-733-4529

prinfo@woodruffcenter.org

For Immediate Release

**MOST COMPREHENSIVE EXHIBITION OF WORK BY ATLANTA
ARTIST RADCLIFFE BAILEY TO PREMIERE AT THE HIGH**

Exhibition Will Include New and Never Before Seen Works

*“Radcliffe Bailey: Memory as Medicine”
June 26–September 11, 2011*

ATLANTA, June 8, 2011 – The High Museum of Art will organize and premiere the most comprehensive presentation of works by Atlanta-based artist Radcliffe Bailey to date. Opening June 26, 2011, “Radcliffe Bailey: Memory as Medicine” will highlight the artist’s experimentation with diverse media, showcasing sculptures, paintings, installations, works-on-paper, glass works and modified found objects. Comprising 37 works, “Memory as Medicine” will include new art created for the exhibition as well as works never before seen on public display. The exhibition will also juxtapose Bailey’s work with classic African sculptures from the High’s permanent collection and selected loans to show the influence of African aesthetic practices on the artist’s work.



“Windward Coast” (detail), 2009, Jack Shainman Gallery. Photo by K. Tauches, courtesy of Solomon Projects. Atlanta.

“Radcliffe Bailey: Memory as Medicine” is organized by the High Museum of Art and will be on view in Atlanta from June 26 through September 11, 2011. The exhibition is scheduled to travel to the McNay Art Museum, San Antonio (June 6–September 2, 2012), and the Davis Museum and Cultural Center at Wellesley College (February 15–May 6, 2012).

“In this exhibition, visitors will discover Radcliffe’s ability to combine sculpture and painting, two- and three-dimensional forms and grand and intimate scales, creating works of art that are rich in texture, detail, color and, most importantly, meaning,” stated Michael E. Shapiro, the High’s Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr. Director. “The High is pleased to debut this exhibition in Atlanta, underscoring the Museum’s continued commitment to celebrating the nationally recognized talents and legacies of our hometown artists.”

The exhibition will present Bailey’s work in three thematic sections: “Water,” “Blues” and “Blood.” Works included in the “Water” group will feature the artist’s references to the Middle Passage as a site of historical trauma as well as an artistic and spiritual journey. “Blues” will present works that illustrate music as a transcendent art form. “Blood” will feature works focusing on the ideas of ancestry, race, memory, struggle and sacrifice. This section will further explore the artist’s engagement with African sculptures in tandem with his investigation of his own family’s DNA.

In 2006 Bailey traced his maternal ancestry to the Mende people of Sierra Leone. This inspired him to create his most intimate work to date—a miniature drawing of a Mende mask done in ink and coffee on a piece of sheet music framed within a tiny red-velvet-lined, 19th-century tintype case, evoking an heirloom family portrait. This piece will be on view in the exhibition alongside more recent works, including a new sculpture indebted to the materiality and smooth, curvilinear forms of Mende masks, but not their functionality. Repeatedly rubbed with finishing wax in a daily studio ritual, Bailey created a Brancusi-esque objet d’art—an inscrutable prop for a contemporary, Neo-Dada-style art world performance.

Other works explore issues of scale. A number of pieces will highlight the artist’s penchant to animate his work with large-scale photographic reproductions of black-and-white prints given to him by his grandmother as well as historical photos he collects, in order to place African Americans at the center of both American and world history. Another new work, “Cleanup II,” is a painted wooden sculpture in the form of an eight-foot-high baseball bat. Bailey comments, “The reason why I made the bat so big was to beat down all the things that I confront. Baseball being one of my first passions, before art, the bat was like my paintbrush. In baseball, the fourth batter that comes up is the cleanup hitter.”

The exhibition will also feature seven sets of “medicine cabinet” sculptures, whose contents include a broad range of culturally charged objects, imagery and raw materials, from indigo powder to tobacco leaves to Georgia red clay. The contents of the cabinets are displayed in deeply recessed shelves protected under reflective, tinted glass, a nod to Kongo *minkisi* sculptures from central Africa, which contain healing and protective medicine within mirrored packets. These sculptures link the too often disconnected histories of peoples of Africa and the African Diaspora and emphasize collective experiences.

“Radcliffe Bailey’s art is consistently informed by a strong social and historical consciousness, and solidly grounded in family and community. The exhibition combines a rich narrative content with a high-level of abstraction and poetic resonance to explore questions of history and memory,” said Carol Thompson, the High’s Fred and Rita Richman Curator of African Art and curator of the exhibition. “Bailey’s art traces the complex network of his ‘aesthetic DNA’ to create an antidote to cultural and historical amnesia.”

Radcliffe Bailey

Radcliffe Bailey was born in 1968, in Bridgeton, New Jersey. He grew up in Atlanta, earning a bachelor’s degree in fine art from the Atlanta College of Art in 1991. From 2001 to 2006 Bailey taught at the Lamar Dodd School of Art at the University of Georgia. He received a Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant (2004) and was a visiting faculty member at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (2006). In 2008 he created large-scale glass works as a participant in the Toledo Museum of Art’s Guest Artist Pavilion Project (GAPP). His work is represented in leading museum collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Smithsonian Museum of American Art and the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; San Francisco Museum of Art; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City; the Art Institute of Chicago; and the High Museum of Art, Atlanta. In 1994 Bailey’s work was included in “The Hale Woodruff Memorial Exhibition” at The Studio Museum of Harlem. In 1996 Bailey gained acclaim for his large-scale mural “Saints,” a commission for Atlanta’s Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport for the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta. “Saints” remains on view, welcoming travelers entering the airport at International Terminal E.

Exhibition Organization and Support

“Radcliffe Bailey: Memory as Medicine” will be on view at the High Museum of Art from June 26 to September 11, 2011, and is curated by Carol Thompson, the High’s Fred and Rita Richman Curator of African Art, in consultation with managing curator Michael Rooks, the High’s Wieland Family Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art. “Radcliffe Bailey: Memory as Medicine” is organized by the High Museum of Art, Atlanta. The exhibition has been made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts as part of American Masterpieces: Three Centuries of Artistic Genius. Additional support has been provided by the Ed Bradley Family Foundation, the Lubo Fund, Jack Shainman Gallery, Vicki and John

Palmer, Marjorie and Steve Harvey, Mrs. Gary W. Rollins, and members of the Radcliffe Bailey Guild, co-chaired by Vicki and John Palmer, Jay and Arthur Richardson, and Honorary Chair, Honorable Kasim Reed, Mayor of the City of Atlanta.

Catalogue

A full-color, 160-page book will accompany “Memory as Medicine,” and features essays by Carol Thompson, Michael Rooks, René Paul Barilleaux, Manthia Diawara and Ed Spriggs.

High Museum of Art

The High Museum of Art, founded in 1905 as the Atlanta Art Association, is the leading art museum in the southeastern United States. 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, please 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. Opening 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:

Cassandra Streich Senior Manager of Communications
Tel: 404-733-4436 | E-mail: cassandra.streich@woodruffcenter.org

Nicole J. Taylor Assistant Manager of Public Relations
Tel: 404-733-4585 | E-mail: nicole.taylor@woodruffcenter.org

Media outside the southeastern United States please contact:

Alison Buchbinder Resnicow Schroeder Associates
Tel: 212-671-5165 | E-mail: abuchbinder@resnicowschroeder.com

Aga Sablinska Resnicow Schroeder Associates
Tel: 212-671-5177 | E-mail: asablinska@resnicowschroeder.com