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**DELAWARE ART MUSEUM WELCOMES NEW ACQUISITION BY AARON DOUGLAS
IN CELEBRATION OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

Wilmington, DE (January 29, 2009)—The Delaware Art Museum is proud to unveil an exquisite and unique work of art by the famed African American artist Aaron Douglas (1899-1979) in celebration of Black History Month with a public welcome ceremony on Friday, February 6, beginning at 6:00 p.m.

Aaron Douglas, who was the only visual artist at the heart of the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, had a strong connection to Wilmington through his close friends Dr. Walter and Grace Price Goens. The artist's wife, Alta, was a cousin of Dr. Goens, and the foursome traveled to Paris together. The painting acquired by the Museum is an oil study from c. 1963 for a mural commissioned by the Goenses for their house in Hockessin.

“This oil study is a great addition to the Delaware Art Museum,” says Wilmington Mayor James M. Baker. “Not only is this striking painting the work of an immensely talented and historically significant artist, but its provenance is directly linked to the Wilmington area. This acquisition helps preserve a small but important part of Delaware's history, while at the same time enabling visitors to appreciate first-hand the work of one of this nation's foremost African American artists.”

Danielle Rice, Executive Director of the Delaware Art Museum, waxes enthusiastic: “I am so excited by this beautiful new addition to the Museum's collection. It is a remarkable and compelling painting and typical of Douglas's work, with its rhythmic, abstract shapes and African motifs.”

The Delaware Art Museum was fortunate to benefit from many supporters who contributed to the acquisition of this painting. The work is a partial gift of Alberta Price Fitzgerald and Wilson, Deborah, and Lauren Copeland in honor of Walter and Grace Price Goens. Additional support came from the City of Wilmington, The Judith Rothschild Foundation, and from generous individuals: Donald J. Puglisi;

Rodman Ward, Jr.; Peggy H. Woolard; H. F. and Marguerite Lenfest; Paula J. Malone; Lynn Herrick Sharp; Robert and Mike Abel; P. Coleman Townsend; Danielle Rice and Jeffrey Berger; Carol Burger; and Elaine Carter. The Museum extends its sincere thanks to all of those who made this acquisition possible.

Welcome Celebration: Friday, February 6 | 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. | Free

The Delaware Art Museum is welcoming the new Aaron Douglas work with a celebration on Friday, February 6. As part of Wilmington's Art on the Town program, the Museum is open late this evening, and admission is free from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Mayor James M. Baker, Tina Betz (Director of the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs), and Danielle Rice (Executive Director of the Delaware Art Museum) will open the celebration with remarks in the DuPont Auditorium. Associate Curator Heather Campbell Coyle will discuss the art of Aaron Douglas and Douglas' connection to Wilmington. Festivities include poetry and song.

About Aaron Douglas

Aaron Douglas was the only visual artist at the heart of the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. His circle in New York included Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, and Duke Ellington. He quickly became a successful illustrator, producing covers for magazines and illustrating important books by James Weldon Johnson and Alain Locke. In the late 1920s, Douglas began to paint murals, and these are among his best known works. In 1940, the painter became an art instructor at Fisk University in Nashville.

When Walter and Grace Goens asked Aaron Douglas to paint a mural in their new home, he presented them with paintings of two different designs. The study acquired by the Delaware Art Museum is for the design chosen by the Goens. Douglas painted the mural on the wall surrounding the fireplace in the center of their Hockessin home.

In paintings, illustrations, and murals like the one in Hockessin, Aaron Douglas fused African motifs and modern artistic styles. Like many artists of his time, his style built on artistic movements including Cubism and Precisionism, as well as Art Deco design and African art. The mural study reflects the artist's signature style of broad, flat figures in silhouette, with little or no sense of perspective, and concentric rings of subtle color.

About the Museum

The Delaware Art Museum, located at 2301 Kentmere Parkway, Wilmington, DE 19806, is open Wednesday through Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. and Sunday noon – 4:00 p.m. Admission fees are charged as follows: Adults (19 – 59) \$12, Seniors (60+) \$10, Students (with valid ID) \$6, Youth (7 – 18) \$6, and Children (6 and under) free. Admission fees are waived every Sunday thanks to support from

AstraZeneca. For more information, call 302-571-9590 or 866-232-3714 (toll free), or visit the website at www.delart.org.

Founded in 1912, the Delaware Art Museum is best known for its large collection of British Pre-Raphaelite art, works by Wilmington-native Howard Pyle and fellow American illustrators, and urban landscapes by John Sloan and his circle. Visitors can also enjoy the outdoor Copeland Sculpture Garden and a number of major traveling exhibitions throughout the year.

IMAGE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

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