



BERMUDA NATIONAL GALLERY

For immediate release

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**Kaufmann retrospective, Hair in African Art headline BNG's  
Summer Exhibitions 2007**

***Hamilton, Bermuda, May 02, 2007*** — John Kaufmann, generally regarded as the doyen of Bermuda impressionist landscape painters, will be honoured by the Bermuda National Gallery with a major retrospective of his work to mark his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The exhibition, ***Essential Elements 1947-2007***, is one of two major new shows that are part of the BNG's Summer Exhibitions 2007, opening on May 10. Also on display will be ***Hair In African Art***, which explores the attitudes toward hair, its symbolism and how it is represented in African Art. The Summer Exhibitions 2007 are sponsored by Butterfield Bank in association with the Argus Group, Robin Judah, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Steinhoff and Special Friends of the BNG.

The Kaufmann retrospective, curated by Charles Zuill, includes 30 works and represents 60 years of painting Bermuda, ranging from *John Smith's Bay* (1947), painted when he was just 10, to the epic sweep of *Church Bay, Evening* (2007). While many of the works were painted in Bermuda at his studio at his home, *Tranquillity*, in Somerset, the exhibition includes others created at his farm in Colebrook, New Hampshire.

Fellow Bermudian artist Georgine Hill has called Kaufmann "the ultimate painter" and has said of his work: "Through his landscapes he captures the true spirit and character of "old" Bermuda. He interprets the natural beauty of Bermuda that allows us to appreciate our environment even more. Each painting is like a little piece of the island, making you not only want to be there, but making you feel as if you are there for the moment."

Curator Charles Zuill said: "When the history of Bermudian art is written, John Kaufmann's art will be seen as an important step in the maturation of local painting. His work is a more abstract rendering of the Bermuda landscape. Indeed, John Kaufmann sees his paintings as expressions of infinity."

John Hollis Kaufmann was born in Montreal, Quebec, Canada in 1937, the son of the late Canadian surgeon Dr. Mark Kaufmann and his Bermudian wife Jeannette Helena Roberts. He began visiting Bermuda regularly from about 1946 and the family eventually moved to the Island in 1949.

After attending Whitney Institute and Saltus Grammar School, Kaufmann studied art and design at McGill University in Montreal with John Lyman, a student at the Royal College of Art and the Academie Julian,

Paris, where he studied with Matisse, and was also a pupil of Arthur Lismer, one of the hugely influential Canadian Group of Seven landscape painters of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. After Montreal, Kaufmann continued his art studies at Bard College, New York with Louis Shanker, who was known not only for abstract paintings, but also for woodcuts.

BNG Director Laura Gorham said: “An important part of our mission at the Bermuda National Gallery has always been to “bring Bermuda’s art to the world”. Hand in hand with that aim goes a commitment to recognising Bermuda’s most important artists and ensuring that successive generations are aware and appreciative of their legacy.

“It is with this in mind that we are delighted to be able to stage this retrospective of John Kaufmann’ work. John Kaufmann’s name is invariably invoked in discussions about Bermuda’s art history and modern artists in particular. He is justifiably acknowledged as one of Bermuda’s few true masters and certainly one of its greatest living artists.”

*Hair In African Art* is based on a successful exhibition at the Museum For African Art in New York in 2000 called *Hair In African Art And Culture*. While hairstyles in the West are mainly used to make a fashion statement, in Africa, hair has a far greater significance, often indicating power, authority, social standing or religious affiliation and this importance has long been reflected in the continent’s art

This exhibition combines existing pieces from the BNG’s African Collection with works loaned from private collections as well as contemporary work by African artists. The exhibition flows from tradition-based African objects, where the hairstyle is a significant feature of the work, and headrests that protect the coiffeur, to contemporary commercial signage for hairdressers from Ghana, and two stone sculptures by leading Shona fine artist Peter Chikumbirike of Zimbabwe that are crowned by hairstyles from an earlier time.

The exhibition is complemented by photographs of the Himba women of Namibia and the Masai of Tanzania by Bermudian photographer Scott Stallard as well as photographs of contemporary creative hairstyles contributed by local residents in The Education Centre.

Laura Gorham said: “The exhibition is diverse and varied as African culture itself. It shows not only how hairstyles can express individual creativity or membership of ethnic, social or religious groups but also how they draw on fashion and cultural influences from all over the globe. This exhibition adds a dynamic new perspective to our African Collection that we hope will appeal to a wide cross-section of the community

Hair in art will also be the subject of the 5<sup>th</sup> in the series of **PartnerRe Art Lecture Series** at the BNG on June 7 (5.30 p.m.). Ori Z. Soltes, Goldman Professorial Lecturer in Fine Arts and Theology at Georgetown University and guest curator for *Inside & Out: House & Home* at BNG in 2003, will deliver a lecture entitled **Hair in Art Through the Ages: Symbols, Significances, Transformation & Continuity**. Tickets are \$20 (\$10 for BNG Members) and available from the BNG box office of [www.boxoffice.bm](http://www.boxoffice.bm).

The Summer Exhibitions continue to September 7. Admission to the BNG is free.

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***About the Bermuda National Gallery:*** Opened in 1992 and located in the City Hall & Arts Centre in Hamilton, the Bermuda National Gallery is both the home of Bermuda’s national art collection and the centre of the Island’s thriving arts scene. It is the Island’s leading art museum with a richly diverse exhibition programme of past and present works by local and international artists that reflects Bermuda’s varied artistic heritage and multicultural community. The Bermuda National Gallery is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. from Monday to Saturday. Admission free. **For more details contact Director Laura Gorham on 441-295-9428, [director@bng.bm](mailto:director@bng.bm) or visit [www.bng.bm](http://www.bng.bm).**