



BERMUDA NATIONAL GALLERY

For immediate release

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Inuit Art, Byllee Lang tribute highlight BNG Winter shows

Hamilton, Bermuda, January 21, 2008 — The Bermuda National Gallery will be making cultural connections from the Arctic to Africa in its Winter Exhibitions 2008, which open to the public on January 28.

The Exhibitions, sponsored by Endurance Specialty Insurance Ltd., include one of the most historically important American collections of Inuit Art; a tribute to the late Byllee Lang, an influential figure in the Island's post-War art scene; and *African Affinities*, which explores the African influence on contemporary art. The exhibitions continue to April 4.

Cultural Reflections is a unique touring exhibition of more than 70 stone sculptures, and prints drawn from the extensive collection of Inuit art at the Dennon Museum Centre at the Northwestern Michigan College (NMC) in Traverse City, Michigan. This exhibit is complemented by *Culture on Cloth*, which features wall hangings from the Judith Varney Burch Collection of Arctic Inuit Art.

As one of the last surviving hunting cultures native to North America, the Inuit are a vigorous, yet sensitive, people who inhabit the Nunavut territory of Arctic Canada. These two important collections offer visitors to the BNG an opportunity to study the remote Inuit culture through its artistic expressions.

The Dennon Museum Centre's collection of more than 1,000 works of art by some 80 Inuit artists is recognised as one of the most historically complete collections of contemporary Inuit art in the US.

The Museum's executive director, Eugene Jenneman, will be present at the official opening of the Winter Exhibitions by the Mayor of Hamilton, the Wor. Sutherland Madeiros, on January 27.

Judith Varney Burch is an internationally recognised expert on Inuit art. She currently curates the Inuit art exhibitions at the Canadian Embassy in Washington, D.C. and in 1999 she gave the address on Inuit art during the Nunavut Celebration Symposium at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington.

Ms. Burch will be visiting Bermuda in February to deliver two lectures on Inuit Art and Culture at the BNG – a Lunchtime Lecture on February 6 and a PartnerRe Art Lecture on February 7. Additional related programming includes a Lunchtime Lecture by local artists and Inuit art collector Jill Amos Raine on January 30 and student workshops on Culture on Cloth on February 9.

Tribute To Byllee Lang: Inspirational Artist and Educator is particularly topical given recent publicity over the threat to the Bermuda Society of Arts gallery space at the City Hall & Arts Centre. The Canadian-born sculptress who lived in Bermuda from 1948 until her death in 1966, was among the early members of the Bermuda Art Association formed in 1947 by Georgine Hill, Sir Stanley Spurling and others, and which evolved into the BSoA.

Lang was instrumental in inspiring emerging Bermudian artists of her day, holding Bermuda's first mixed-race art classes in her studios at a time when the schools were still segregated. She is best remembered for the reredos which she created for the Anglican Cathedral but also created window displays for A.S. Cooper's, prize-winning floats for the Easter Parade, made costumes and designed sets for local theatrical productions. Andrew Trimmingham, her friend and artistic executor, wrote that Lang was "the godmother of every artistic endeavour going".

This exhibition includes examples of her sculpture work, as well as archival photographs of her studio and her art completed in Bermuda and her native Canada as well as a short documentary by local filmmaker Antoine Hunt.

African Affinities compares pieces from the BNG's African Collection and contemporary works from the Permanent Collection to show the influence of African art either directly or by highlight affinities, or parallels, between forms and subjects. The exhibition will feature work by Bermudian artists Will Collieson, Graham Foster, Bill Ming, Lynn Morrell, and Kevin Morris.

Laura Gorham, Director of the BNG, said the Exhibitions will offer visitors a cultural experience on several levels. "The Inuit exhibits offer a fascinating glimpse into the evolution of a dynamic culture still in process. It is only in recent years that the Inuit people have used art to both document their past and provide cultural, spiritual and ethnic self-affirmation that has become fundamental to their continued identity and survival.

“Byllee Lang contributed so much to Bermuda through both her work and her humanity and we believe this long overdue tribute will be well-received by her friends and former students as well as perhaps provide inspiration to a new generation.

“The BNG has always had a close connection to African art and *African Affinities* allows us to examine our African Collection and contemporary art from a new perspective. We believe it will be of particular interest to students studying Black History Month in February

“We are once again extremely grateful for the generous sponsorship of Endurance for our Winter Exhibitions and we greatly appreciate their continued support of the arts in this way.”

The Winter Exhibitions are rounded out by the BNG’s revolving exhibition, *350 years of Art In Bermuda* that traces the development of the fine and decorative arts in Bermuda over the last 350 years. The historical timeline reveals the transitions in Bermuda’s art and the turning points in local culture.

For more information about the Inuit Collection at the Dennis Museum Center, visit:
www.dennismuseum.org/exhibitions/inuit/

For more information about Judith Varney Burch, go to:
www.arcticinuitart.com

For more information about Byllee Lang visit:
www.bermudabiographies.bm/Bios/bio-lang.html

Note to editors

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 or visit www.bng.bm.

About Endurance: [Endurance Specialty Holdings Ltd.](http://www.endurance.com), through its operating subsidiaries, is a global specialty insurance and reinsurance provider with more than 700 employees in Bermuda, the United Kingdom and the United States. *Endurance Specialty Insurance Ltd.*, the company’s Bermuda operating subsidiary, is the firm’s original operating platform and currently writes property catastrophe reinsurance, casualty treaty reinsurance, excess casualty and professional liability insurance as well as other specialty business lines such as aerospace and healthcare. Formed in 2001, Endurance is publicly traded on the NYSE and has grown to approximately \$7 billion in assets and over \$2 billion in shareholders’ equity.

