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**SCHOOL OF THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON, PRESENTS
*LOÏS MAILOU JONES: THE EARLY WORKS: PAINTINGS AND PATTERNS 1927–1937***

Design Work by Pioneering Artist of the Harlem Renaissance

Boston (July 20, 2006) — After her graduation from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (SMFA), in 1927, Loïs Mailou Jones embarked on a successful career as a textile designer before earning international recognition as a celebrated American painter and noted scholar and teacher. *Loïs Mailou Jones: The Early Works: Paintings and Patterns 1927–1937*, which focuses on the textile designs and studies Jones created at the outset of her career, is on view in the SMFA’s Grossman Gallery September 15–October 14, 2006.

A pioneering twentieth century artist, Loïs Mailou Jones worked for more than seven decades in a wide variety of styles, enjoying an extraordinary career that drew inspiration from France, Haiti, and Africa, as well as her native New England. As an African-American woman artist working in a racialized gender-biased society, Jones met great challenges in her lifetime but persevered to exhibit her paintings to the world and earn many national and international honors.

“Loïs Mailou Jones’s invaluable contributions to American art are a testament to her talent and invincible spirit,” says Deborah Dluhy, dean of the School and deputy director, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. “We are so pleased to pay tribute to her great accomplishments by showcasing the design work she created following her graduation from the Museum School.”

Comprised of more than 30 studies and designs and including many pieces on display for the first time, *Loïs Mailou Jones: The Early Works: Paintings and Patterns 1927–1937* offers rare insight into Loïs Mailou Jones’s artistic beginnings and her grounding in the field of design. Jones’s pattern designs and

designs for cretonnes, which show the strong use of color and great interest in other cultures that permeated her versatile and prolific career, were purchased, reproduced, and sold across the country by firms including Schumacher in New York and F. A. Foster in Boston. The design work in the exhibition is generously on loan from the Lois Mailou Jones Pierre-Noël Trust.

“Over a remarkably long career, Lois’ work remained fresh, energetic and compelling,” says Edmund Barry Gaither, executive director and museum director, National Center of Afro-American Artists. “The ideas that are evident in her early designs were built upon and embellished in her later work giving it a structural clarity and colorful richness. Indeed, design remained key to her highly individualized synthesis of French, Haitian, African and American influences, and lent her work a wonderfully modern feeling.”

Lois Mailou Jones was born in Boston in 1905 and began formal art training at the city’s High School of Practical Arts before receiving a scholarship to attend the Museum School, where she majored in design and received both the Susan Minot Lane Award and the Nathaniel Thayer Prize in Design. The work in this exhibition covers the 10-year period after her graduation until Jones’s trip to France in 1937. That first, extended foreign sojourn marked the beginning of Jones’s lifelong embrace of travel and world cultures, which informed both her art and her teaching at Howard University, where she taught painting and design for 47 years (1930–1977). The first African-American female artist to have a retrospective in a major museum (at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in 1973), Jones’s paintings are included in many of the world’s major collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the National Museum of American Art, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Lois Mailou Jones died in 1998 at the age of 92.

Lois Mailou Jones: The Early Works: Paintings and Patterns 1927–1937 will be on view at Grossman Gallery at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 230 The Fenway, September 15–October 14, 2006. Hours are Monday through Saturday, 10 AM to 5 PM, and Thursday, 10 AM to 8 PM. The gallery is closed on Sundays and holidays. Admission is free.

RELATED EVENTS

All events are free and open to the public.

Opening Reception

Thursday, September 14, 5–7 PM

Grossman Gallery

Lecture: Loïs Mailou Jones: Artist and Friend

Monday, September 18, 6 PM

Anderson Auditorium

Edmund Barry Gaither, curator, scholar, and a longtime friend of Loïs Mailou Jones, discusses her work and extraordinary life.

Gallery Talks

Tuesday, September 26, 12:30 PM and Thursday, September 28, 6 PM

Discussions lead by Reese Inman, Tufts University Museum Studies Certificate candidate, and Janet Zipes, Harvard University Master of Liberal Arts candidate, place Loïs Mailou Jones's work in the wider art and historical context.

Video Screening and Discussion: *Loïs Mailou Jones: Fifty Years of Painting*

Wednesday, September 27, 6 PM, Anderson Auditorium

A screening of the 55-minute video directed by Abiyi R. Ford, introduced by Dr. Tritobia Hayes Benjamin, Associate Dean and Director of the Howard University Art Gallery. Dr. Benjamin will also discuss Loïs Mailou Jones's significant contributions to teaching.

Opening Our Doors! 2006

Columbus Day, Monday, October 9

10:30 AM–4 PM

View the exhibition *Loïs Mailou Jones: The Early Works: Paintings and Patterns 1927–1937* and enjoy art-making activities for children in the Grossman Gallery as part of *Opening Our Doors! 2006*, the Fenway Alliance's festival celebrating culture in the Fenway neighborhood. For more information, visit www.fenwayculture.org.

For more information on the exhibition, visit www.smfa.edu.

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Founded in 1876 and accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design, the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (SMFA), is one of the largest and oldest museum schools in the country. A division of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and in partnership with Tufts University, the Museum School offers the Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA), the BFA in Art Education, the Five Year Combined-Degree (BA or BS with BFA), the Master of Arts in Teaching in Art Education, and the Master of Fine Arts. The SMFA also offers an all-studio four-year Diploma, and one-year Fifth Year and Post-Baccalaureate certificates. Through Continuing Education, evening and weekend courses, high school workshops, and art-making programs for teenagers also are available. For more information, visit www.smfa.edu or call 617-267-6100.