

NEWS RELEASE



Montclair Art Museum

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For Immediate Release

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**AFRICAN-AMERICAN READING GROUP, THE BIBLIOPHILES,
TO DISCUSS SEMINAL WORK OF
HARLEM RENAISSANCE WRITER ZORA NEALE HURSTON**

**THE MEETING, AT THE MONTCLAIR ART MUSEUM, WILL CLOSE OUT
MAJOR EXHIBITION**

MONTCLAIR, NJ, June 11, 2010—The Bibliophiles, Inc.—An African-American Reading Group—will hold a book club meeting in a public forum on Sunday, July 25, 2010, at the Montclair Art Museum (MAM). The topic of discussion will be Zora Neale Hurston’s seminal work *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. The event will also include a celebration of the culmination of MAM’s special exhibition *A Force for Change: African American Art and the Julius Rosenwald Fund*, which closes at the end of that day. The general public is invited to join The Bibliophiles for a tour of the exhibition at 2 p.m., followed by the book club discussion at 3 p.m. in the Museum’s Leir Hall. Admission is free, and light refreshments will be served.

The exhibition is the first to explore the artistic legacy of the Julius Rosenwald Fund, one of the largest and most influential single supporters of African American arts

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and letters in the 20th century. It includes more than 60 paintings, sculptures, and works on paper by 22 Rosenwald fellows, as well as an original short documentary film. The artists in the exhibition are among the foremost of their era: Elizabeth Catlett, Aaron Douglas, Jacob Lawrence, Gordon Parks, Rose Piper, Augusta Savage, Charles White, Hale Woodruff, and more.

Between 1928 and 1948, the Rosenwald Fund's Fellowship Program awarded stipends to hundreds of African American artists, writers, and scholars, including Zora Neale Hurston. Ms Hurston is considered one of the pre-eminent writers of 20th century African-American literature. She was closely associated with the Harlem Renaissance and influenced writers of her time and since. *Their Eyes Were Watching God* is often referred to as Hurston's most recognized work. Supposedly written in seven weeks, it was part of the National Endowment for the Arts' The Big Read in 2009.

This year, The Bibliophiles are celebrating "BiblioFavorites"—works they have read before and that the members nominated for rereading. Interestingly, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* was one of those works, and the regularly scheduled meeting coincides with the July date of this partnership with the Montclair Art Museum.

About The Bibliophiles

The Bibliophiles is a group of African-American women dedicated to reading, promoting and preserving the literature of the African Diaspora. It is a book club of 20 women formed in 1988 by Joyce Harley and Shelia Baynes, who were reading Toni Morrison's *Beloved* at the time. To learn more about The Bibliophiles, visit the group's website at www.thebibliophiles.org.

About the Montclair Art Museum

The Montclair Art Museum, a notable, community-based institution with an international reputation, boasts a renowned collection of American and Native American art that uniquely highlights art making in the United States over the last three hundred years. The collection includes more than 12,000 objects: paintings, prints, original works on paper, photographs, and sculpture by American artists from the 18th century to the present, as well as traditional and contemporary Native American art and artifacts representing the cultural developments of peoples from all of the major American Indian regions. MAM's Yard School of Art is the leading regional art school, offering a multitude of comprehensive courses for children, youth, adults, seniors, and professional artists.

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The Montclair Art Museum is located at 3 South Mountain Avenue in Montclair, N.J. Information and directions are available on the Museum website, montclairartmuseum.org, or by calling 973-746-5555. MAM is open Wednesdays through Sundays, Noon – 5 p.m., and closed on Mondays, Tuesdays, and major holidays. Museum admission is \$12 for nonmember adults, \$10 for senior citizens and students with I.D., and free for members and children under 12.

All Museum programs are made possible, in part, by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, and by funds from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Vance Wall Foundation, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, and Museum Members.

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