

AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MUSEUM OF SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY

New Exhibit Explores History of South Carolina's Coiled Baskets



Rosalie Coaxum, *Large open wave basket*, 2007, Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina, sweetgrass, palmetto, pine needles, 6 ¾ x 11 ¾ x 11 ¾ inches; courtesy the artist. Photo: E.G. Schempf.

The African American Heritage Museum of Southern NJ will present a new exhibit that traces the history and evolution of the ancient art of coiled basketry in Africa and America. *Grass Roots: African Origins of an American Art* will open on Saturday, November 12th at the Martin Luther King Center in Newtonville with a reception from 2- 5:00 P.M. A variety of items including baskets, basket-making tools and historic rice cultivation artifacts will be displayed at the Museum until the exhibit closes on January 7, 2012.

The exhibit, featuring baskets from the low country of South Carolina and Georgia as well as from diverse regions of Africa, traces the story of coiled basketry from the domestication of rice in Africa, through the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the Carolina rice plantation to the present day.

Grass Roots highlights the remarkable beauty of coiled basketry and shows the humble market basket as a work of art, object of use and container of memory. This survey of these beautifully crafted coiled baskets is instructive about the creativity and artistry characteristic of Africans in America from the 17th century to the present.

The exhibition has been made possible by NEH on the Road, a special initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities. *Grass Roots: African Origins of an American Art* was organized by the Museum for African Art in New York City in collaboration with the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture in Charleston, SC. It was co-curated by Chief Curator Enid Schildkrout, Museum for African Art, and Curator and Historian Dale Rosengarten, College of Charleston. The exhibition is toured by Mid-America Arts Alliance through NEH on the Road. NEH on the Road offers eight different exhibitions for small to mid-sized communities across the country. Mid-America Arts Alliance was founded in 1972 and is the oldest regional nonprofit arts organization in the U.S. For more information, visit <http://www.nehontheroad.org>



Grass Roots: African Origins of an American Art
Reception: Nov. 12th from 2:00-5:00 PM
Martin Luther King Center in Newtonville

Lavinia Nelson with her basket making supplies, 2006, Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina, color photograph, 10 5/8 x 20 inches; courtesy Brian Crockett

Museum Hours: Tuesday - Friday 10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. Saturdays by appointment

AAHMSNJ | Martin Luther King Center | 661 Jackson Road | Newtonville