



THE DAYTON ART INSTITUTE

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOLK ART FEATURED IN DAYTON ART INSTITUTE EXHIBITION

Collection from local law firm on view January 21 – March 27 in the Lower Level Galleries

(DAYTON, OHIO) – January 18, 2011 – Folk Art will be the subject of the next exhibition in The Dayton Art Institute’s Lower Level Galleries. *Folk Art from the Collection of Porter Wright Morris & Arthur LLP* will be on view January 21 – March 27.

Folk Art from the Collection of Porter Wright Morris & Arthur LLP includes 23 paintings and drawings by men and women from many different walks of life, though all shared a passion for making images about the world as they experienced it. The subjects can be extremely complex, such as an overall view of Noah’s Ark; warm and charming, like a black cat in front of a white-trimmed doorway; or dreamy, like a multi-colored flute player against a psychedelic background.

“Folk Art” is a difficult term. Many use it to mean “unschooled,” but this designation seems somehow unkind and misleading, as formal education and artistic inclination are not always linked. “Folk art” also has been used as a synonym for “primitive,” “naïve,” and – confusingly – for the term “outsider art” (which more strictly refers to art made outside of “normal” cultural bounds). “Folk art” most often refers to art that expresses common social values by individuals who, in fact, aspired to be thought of as artists.

With all of the above terms, the broad idea is that these artists have lived, learned and worked without the benefit of official art training or support from galleries and museums. The things they make do not show the tell-tale signs of the so-called professional artist: for example, technical proficiency in realism or the participation in a major art movement (Pop Art, Abstract Expressionism, etc.). Instead, things made by the “folk artist” appear spontaneous and free from rules, with imaginative subjects and bright, bold color.

The origins of this particular collection go back several decades in Dayton. The law firm of Estabrook, Finn & McKee, organized in 1920, was, in the early 1980s, the oldest firm in Dayton operating under its original name. In 1983, the firm merged with Porter, Wright, Morris & Arthur, a large firm based in Columbus, and the Dayton office has carried the latter name ever since.

In December 1973, when Estabrook, Finn & McKee moved from the Hulman Building to much larger offices in the First National Bank Building, the firm became interested in collecting.

To call the items previously hanging on the walls in the Hulman Building eclectic art is giving it a compliment it did not deserve. It ranged from reproductions of the Magna Carta through framed quotations of Abraham Lincoln to watercolors painted by grateful clients.

The firm made the decision it wanted a homogeneous collection of interesting, attractive and colorful works of art in the new offices. It sought the advice of Carl Solway, the noted Cincinnati art dealer. It was Solway who showed members of the firm examples of folk art, and they, in the words of R. Bruce Synder (the partner in charge of the collection), “became very excited.” Over the next several years, the firm collected until it had enough for the halls and other public areas of the new offices.

Today, the collection hangs in the firm’s offices located at One South Main Street in Dayton. While the firm no longer actively collects, the art still entertains and enlightens visitors at their offices and is made available to the community through special exhibitions such as this one at The Dayton Art Institute.

Folk Art from the Collection of Porter Wright Morris & Arthur LLP will be on view in the Lower Level Galleries at The Dayton Art Institute from January 21 – March 27.

Beginning February 1, the suggested admission to The Dayton Art Institute will be \$8 for adults, and \$5 for seniors and students. Museum members and children (12 and under) receive free admission to the museum’s permanent collection and most special exhibitions.

For more information about this exhibition and other programs at The Dayton Art Institute, please visit www.daytonartinstitute.org or call the museum at 937-223-5277. Be sure to also visit The Dayton Art Institute on Facebook (facebook.com/daytonartinstitute) and Twitter (twitter.com/daytonart) for additional information and exclusive offers.

ABOUT THE DAYTON ART INSTITUTE

As one of the Miami Valley’s premier fine art museums, The Dayton Art Institute offers a full range of programming in addition to exhibiting its collection. The galleries and Museum Store are open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m., with extended hours on Thursday until 8 p.m. General admission to the museum’s permanent collection is free, courtesy of Chase. Free parking is available at the museum and the facility is fully accessible to physically challenged visitors. CAFÉ MONET by Elegant Fare serves lunch Tuesday through Saturday, 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and Sunday, noon – 2:30 p.m. For more information, please call 937-223-4278 or visit www.daytonartinstitute.org.

The Ohio Arts Council helped fund this organization with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. The DAI also receives support from the Montgomery County Arts and Cultural District.

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