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MAJOR MISSISSIPPI EXHIBITION A MUST SEE

Jackson, Mississippi (January 12, 2009) – The Mississippi Museum of Art is further defining its role as both a conceptual arts venue and a key contributor to Mississippi’s economic development efforts with an astonishing exhibition of the varied and remarkable accomplishments of French master Raoul Dufy.

Visitors to Raoul Dufy: A Celebration of Beauty now through July 5, 2009, will see the extraordinary influence of the creative spirit as approachable, accessible, and inspiring.

“The Mississippi Museum of Art’s upcoming presentation is a rich exploration and experience of works by French artist Raoul Dufy, from dramatic French fashion designs to colorful painted works,” stated Mississippi Development Authority Tourism Director D. Craig Ray. “Mississippians and guests to our state should not miss this exhibition.”

Much like the museum’s grand opening and inaugural exhibition last year of *Between God and Man: Angels in Italian Art*, the Dufy exhibition will appeal to the broader public and be esteemed within the art community. Approximately 65,000 visitors annually tour the museum’s highly contemporary facility in downtown Jackson.

“This show is bright, colorful, and employs a multitude of different mediums in its expression,” Bradley said. “Gaining an understanding and appreciation for Raoul Dufy will be a delightful experience for all.”

Mississippians and other visitors to Raoul Dufy: A Celebration of Beauty will be swept up in the artist’s profound and brilliant appreciation of the infinite richness of daily life. More than 100 paintings, watercolors, and drawings from European private collections communicate Dufy’s *joie de vivre*, also shared through his wealth of Art Deco textile designs. More than 100 original fabric projects from the archives of leading French silk manufacturer Bianchini-Ferrier will be displayed.

Rendered by Dufy, these imaginative fabric designs were used by the leading dress designer of the day, Paul Poiret, to create dramatic capes, coats and dresses that galvanized the French fashion world of the early 20th century. Original gowns using Dufy fabrics and designed by French couturiers such as Mongi Guibane and Christian LaCroix will be featured and include garments inspired by some of Poiret’s creations.

The Mississippi Welcome Centers located throughout the state are distributing information about the art exhibit. While the Welcome Center located on Interstate 20 overlooking the Mississippi River in Vicksburg is featuring a special teaser exhibit. The Vicksburg Center is 45 miles west of Jackson and a main entrance to the Capital City.

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“The Mississippi Museum of Art is pleased to be partnering with the Department of Tourism to promote this amazing exhibition to the millions of visitors who stop through Mississippi’s Welcome Centers each year,” said Betsy Bradley, director of the Mississippi Museum of Art. “By making visitors aware of the high quality of cultural offerings available in Mississippi, we are giving them more and more reasons to come back again and again.”

Organized by the Humanities Exchange in Montreal, Canada, and presented by the Mississippi Museum of Art as part of The Annie Laurie Swaim Hearin Memorial Exhibition Series, Raoul Dufy: A Celebration of Beauty accurately reflects how Dufy’s imagination, fantasy and mental energy could not be contained by paint and canvas.

His life’s work included remarkable achievements in both fine and applied art. During the years from roughly 1900 to his death in 1953, he created several thousand paintings, wood engravings, lithographs, etchings, watercolors and drawings, and illustrated some 50 literary works. He rendered more than 200 ceramic pieces, almost 50 tapestries and about 5000 fabric designs. His stage sets, murals and monumental decorations are still lauded among the most important of his time.

That his work continues to appeal to contemporary audiences is evidenced by the exhibition’s recent tour in Japan. There, Dufy was showcased in five museums with an average attendance of more than a thousand visitors a day.

Special events and activities with a French accent will enhance visitors’ Dufy experience. Teacher training and school partnerships will offer educational opportunities statewide.

“We look forward to welcoming all Mississippians and visitors from around the world as we stage this significant attraction,” said Bradley. “Raoul Dufy: A Celebration of Beauty gives us an opportunity to enjoy the full capabilities of the new Mississippi Museum of Art, share our state’s famous Southern hospitality, and applaud one of modern history’s most accomplished and enjoyable artists.”

The Mississippi Museum of Art and its programs are sponsored in part by the city of Jackson and the Jackson Convention & Visitors Bureau. Support is also provided in part by funding from the Mississippi Arts Commission, a state agency, and in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

For ticket prices and exhibition hours, call the Mississippi Museum of Art at 601-960-1515 or toll free at 1-866-VIEW ART or visit the web site www.msmuseumart.org. To schedule a group tour for adults or students, contact the Museum at 601-960-1515 or toll free at 1-866-VIEW ART. Acoustiguide™ audio tours are included with admission. For Mississippi visitor information phone 1-866-SEE MISS or check the website www.visitmississippi.org.

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