MISSISSIPPI MUSEUM of ART
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Mississippi Museum of Art Hosts Two Marie Hull Exhibitions in Fall 2015

Exhibitions and book commemorate life and work of prodigious Southern artist

(Bright Fields, The Mastery of Marie Hull) The Mississippi Museum of Art (the Museum) is excited to announce a major celebration - consisting of two remarkable exhibitions - of the work of Mississippi artist Marie Hull. Emily Marie Atkinson Hull (1890 to 1980) remains one of Mississippi’s most significant artists and teachers, beloved by generations of collectors and students, including renowned artists such as the late Andrew Bucci. A 2015 joint resolution passed by the Mississippi House of Representatives named September 28, 2015 Marie Hull Day – a day also which also marks the 125 anniversary of her birth – in recognition of her contributions to the artistic history of the state. The two exhibitions at the Museum amass and present more than 150 works by Hull, the most ever assembled. Both are on view September 26, 2015 through January 10, 2016.

“Marie Hull is a giant in the annals of Mississippi art history,” said Betsy Bradley Director of the Mississippi Museum of Art. “As a Southern woman in the early twentieth century, she was a determined and dedicated student at the nation’s finest art academy
and fearless in her wide travels to experience landscapes and influences beyond her local reach. She devoured current information on artistic movements and contemporary influences, continually evolving her style until the end of her immensely productive life.”

**Bright Fields: The Mastery of Marie Hull** is the larger of the two exhibitions; it has been curated by acclaimed concert pianist and Mississippi native, Bruce Levingston, who is a life-long admirer and collector of Hull’s work. With approximately 75 oil paintings and 35 works on paper in various media (drawings, watercolors, gouaches), the retrospective exhibition contains selected masterpieces from the collections of other institutions such as the Wright Art Gallery at Delta State University, the Ogden Museum of Southern Art, the University of Mississippi Museum, the Johnson Collection in Spartanburg, South Carolina, and from many private collections both within and beyond the state of Mississippi. The exhibition will unfold chronologically but also thematically, with sections devoted to Mrs. Hull’s famous still lifes, for example, and to the remarkably serene, abstract landscapes she produced between about 1965 and 1975—the last major flourish of her artistry. Bright Fields is generously sponsored by BancorpSouth and Visit Mississippi.

A forthcoming book by the same title – conceived, developed, and authored by Bruce Levingston – is to be published by University Press of Mississippi in conjunction with the exhibition. The book, a complement to the exhibition, is the first thorough examination of Marie Hull’s work since the publication of *The Art of Marie Hull* in 1975. His book will examine over 200 of Hull’s most important paintings and watercolors and will include state-of-the-art, high-resolution images of these works made especially for this project.

“The art of Marie Hull, from her earliest impressionist paintings, to her remarkable, moving series of Sharecropper and African-American portraits, to her later daring, expressionistic landscapes and abstracts, remains one of the most important bodies of work ever created by a Mississippi artist,” said Bruce Levingston. “Then, as now, her paintings challenge the eye, mind and soul to see, think and feel in unique and open ways. Nearly 125 years after her birth, she remains one of the most influential, powerful voices Mississippi has ever produced. Writing this book and curating this
exhibition about Marie Hull’s life and work has been a privilege. It has made me not only a better artist, but a better human being.”

A Closer Look Gallery and a Family Corner found within the exhibition itself will explore relevant themes including landscape, portraiture, still life, and genre scenes. These educational spaces will offer students and visitors an opportunity to learn about and engage with aspects of Hull’s work through hands-on activities.

On the Road with Marie Hull, the second of the two celebratory exhibitions, was conceived and curated by Dr. Roger Ward, the Museum’s Deputy Director and Chief Curator. Its subject is Marie Hull’s amazing vitality which found expression through her constant travel—in an age when travel was generally less easy than it is today. From Jackson to Philadelphia and New York, from Tampa to San Diego, from Vancouver to Kennebunkport, and constantly back and forth to Chicago on the “City of New Orleans” locomotive, America as seen from the window of a car, bus, or train was the fuel for Hull’s creativity. An indefatigable draftsman, she left an extraordinarily rich record of her experience in her sketchbooks of all shapes and sizes. No less so is this the case for her extended sojourn in France, Spain, and Morocco during the course of 1929 when she made nearly 600 drawings and watercolors of the picturesque hilltop towns of Brittany and the Auvergne, of La Mancha and Andalusia, and of the dazzling kasbahs and minarets of Casablanca, Fes, and Marrakech. The exhibition has been carefully selected from the mostly unseen resources of the Museum itself – dozens of unpublished sketchbooks – and from the collections of two private owners. On the Road with Marie Hull is sponsored by Dea Dea and Dolph Baker.

“It is a great honor to be the organizing venue of these long-anticipated shows,” said Roger Ward, Deputy Director and Chief Curator of the Museum. “Ms. Hull obviously had a profound impact on the visual arts in Mississippi and far beyond. The Museum was the recipient of the largest single share of her artistic legacy, nearly a hundred works, including a treasure trove of sketchbooks which document her long and disciplined career. The Museum’s own holdings were the source of a non-traveling exhibition back in 2000, but this is a much grander enterprise which, along with the monographic publication, will highlight Marie Hull’s prominence in the lively dialogue about Southern painters of the twentieth century.”
Following its presentation at the Museum in Jackson, the exhibition will travel to the Ogden Museum of Southern Art in New Orleans, Louisiana. A full schedule of programming and events will accompany the exhibition.

“Perhaps as important as her artistic production is the influence she had on the hundreds of pupils with whom she generously shared her time, encouragement, and support as a teacher, mentor, and advocate,” added Betsy Bradley. “Her role in shaping the collection of this institution and the lives of Mississippi artists cannot be overestimated. This comprehensive look at her impressive career is a fitting tribute to Ms. Hull on the 125th anniversary of her birth. The Museum is grateful to Bruce Levingston and to The University Press of Mississippi for their collaboration on this project.”

About Bruce Levingston

Bruce Levingston has appeared at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center as well as in concert as a soloist and chamber musician in many international music festivals. His numerous recordings have received notable critical acclaim. Levingston was recently named the Chancellor’s Honors College Artist-in-Residence at The University of Mississippi. A native of Cleveland, Mississippi, he divides his time between New York City and Oxford.

About Marie Hull

Emily Marie Atkinson Hull (Marie Hull) was born on September 28, 1890, in Summit, Mississippi. In 1909 she graduated with a degree in music from Belhaven College in Jackson, Mississippi, and began taking art lessons from Aileen Phillips. She promptly focused her energy on her true talent of painting. She went on to study with renowned masters at the Pennsylvania Academy of Art in Philadelphia and the Art Students League in New York. She was awarded her first gold medal from the Mississippi Art Association in 1920, and in 1926 received her first prize at the Southern States Art League. In 1929 she went on an extended study tour of Europe and in 1931 her work
was chosen for the prestigious Spring Salon in Paris. As her style evolved over the years, she began to work in a freer more abstract style and continued to garner many prizes and awards. Her work may be seen in the permanent collections of museums throughout the country.

The Mississippi Museum of Art’s mission is to “engage Mississippians in the visual arts.” The Museum is located at 380 South Lamar Street in Jackson. Museum hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10 AM to 5 PM and Sunday, noon to 5 PM. The Museum is closed Monday. For more information about the Mississippi Museum of Art's exhibitions, programs, and special events, please call 601-960-1515 or 1-866-VIEW ART (843-9278), or visit www.msmuseumart.org.

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