

NORTH CAROLINA

Museum of Art

NEWS RELEASE

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North Carolina Museum of Art Receives Alison Saar Sculpture

Gift is first acquisition by Friends of African and African American Art

RALEIGH, N.C.—The North Carolina Museum of Art received a sculpture by contemporary artist Alison Saar from the Friends of African and African American Art (FAAAA), an affiliate group of the Museum. *Tippy Toes*, which goes on view in the Contemporary Gallery Tuesday, October 14, marks the group's first purchase for the Museum.

"This gift enables us to expand the collection's global orientation and showcase artists from diverse backgrounds," said Director Dr. Lawrence Wheeler. "We are grateful for the FAAAA group's generous work on behalf of the Museum."

Tippy Toes, first exhibited in New York last December, is a five-foot tall bronze sculpture with a petite figure suspended by a seemingly delicate, ladderlike crinoline. The delicacy belies the strength of the bronze from which it is cast and the thorns that suggest a difficult climb.

Saar's work is inspired by African American culture, history, and narratives, and she relies heavily on the past to tell her own story as an African American woman. The themes of women, female sexuality, nature, racism, and domesticity reoccur throughout the body of Saar's work. *Tippy Toes* particularly speaks to the fragility of natural and social environments, and to the strength and femininity of women.

On Saturday, October 25, at 7 p.m. FAAAA will host a reception and fundraiser to celebrate the acquisition of *Tippy Toes*. The evening will feature a lecture by artist Alison Saar, as well as a performance by jazz vocalist Lois Deloatch. Tickets are \$60 and available by calling (919) 664-6808.

About Alison Saar

Raised in a suburb of Los Angeles, Saar received a BA from Scripps College and an MFA from the Otis Art Institute. Her works are in the collections of many major museums, including the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian, Metropolitan Museum of Art, High Museum of Art, and Virginia Museum of Art. Saar frequently exhibits with her mother, Betye, and sister, Lezley, both well-known artists. Their work was featured in the special exhibition *Family Legacies: The Art of Betye, Lezley, and Alison Saar* at the Ackland Art Museum of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is the recipient of many awards including the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, Joan Mitchell Foundation, National Endowment from the Arts, and Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston.

(more)

About the Friends of African and African American Art

A special interest membership group of the Museum, FAAAA is a diverse group of art lovers, who have a strong interest in both historical and contemporary African and African American art. The group is dedicated to enhancing the Museum's collection of African Art and African American Art and related educational programming.

For more information on FAAAA, call (919) 664-6808. For more information on the Museum, visit www.ncartmuseum.org or call (919) 839-NCMA (6262).

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Note to the Editor: A publicity image of *Tippy Toes* is attached for media use only. Please note: image may not be altered and complete caption pasted below must accompany image.

Alison Saar, *Tippy Toes*, 2007, wood and cast bronze, H. 59 x W. 23 X D. 23 in., Gift of the Friends of African and African American Art, © 2007 Alison Saar

The North Carolina Museum of Art's permanent collection spans more than 5,000 years, from ancient Egypt to the present, making it one of the premier visual arts museums in the Southeast. The Museum uses its collection to provide educational, aesthetic, intellectual and cultural experiences for the citizens of North Carolina and beyond. The Museum offers a series of changing national touring exhibitions, classes, lectures, family activities, films and concerts.

The North Carolina Museum of Art, Lawrence J. Wheeler, director, is located at 2110 Blue Ridge Road in Raleigh. It is the Art Museum of the State of North Carolina, Michael F. Easley, governor, and an agency of the Department of Cultural Resources, Lisbeth C. Evans, secretary. Museum hours are Tuesday–Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. In addition, the Museum is open until 9 p.m. every Friday. Closed Monday. Admission is free.

Visit the NCMA's Web site at www.ncartmuseum.org.