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Samba Sessão: Afro-Brazilian Art and Film Opens April 7, 2012

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Samba Sessão: Afro-Brazilian Art and Film focuses attention on the visual culture of Brazil, formerly home to the largest concentration of African slaves in the Americas and the longest lasting slave system in the Western Hemisphere. Brazil has a rich artistic tradition that is little known or exhibited in the United States, an oversight that *Samba Sessão* seeks to rectify.

Collected in the late-1990s by John Axelrod and later acquired by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the fifteen paintings and three sculptures that form the core of the exhibition draw on different aspects of modern Afro-Brazilian life and culture. Created at the hands of twentieth-century Brazilian artists, the paintings, sculptures, and videos on display in the exhibition showcase a rich cultural inheritance.

"In the canvases, sculptures and films featured in the gallery, we witness birth, death, love, conflict, belief, and fantasy," says curator Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw, "We see bustling life in the big city and the slower pace of country roads side-by-side with ribald dancing and visionary rituals. The social and cultural landscape of Brazil is brought to life."

Adds curator Tamara J. Walker: "The past - its weight, lessons, as well as its triumphs - is ingrained into the symbols and stories at the heart of the pieces on display, and as such it provides the key to understanding them."

Samba Sessão is the product of a Halpern-Rogath Curatorial Seminar offered by the Department of the History of Art and led by professors Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw and Tamara J. Walker. The exhibition is organized in collaboration with the Arthur Ross Gallery with support from the Friends of the Arthur Ross Gallery. Additional support is provided by the Center for Africana Studies, Latin American and Latino Studies, the History Department, and the Interdisciplinary Arts Grant, Office of the Provost, University of Pennsylvania.

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*The Gallery is located at 220 South 34th Street, Philadelphia, and is free and open to the public. HOURS: Weekdays 10:00am – 5:00pm; Weekends 12:00pm – 5:00pm. Closed Mondays. Visit us on Facebook and Twitter. To reserve a group tour please contact us at arg@pobox.upenn.edu or 215.898.3617. Additional information is available at **ArthurRossGallery.com** or 215.898.2083.*