

HEMPHILL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, August 11, 2016



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**Elizabeth Catlett & Benny Andrews
September 14 - October 29, 2016**

Washington DC — HEMPHILL is pleased to announce the exhibition, *Elizabeth Catlett & Benny Andrews*, opening on Wednesday, September 14 with a reception from 6-8pm. The exhibition will remain on view through October 29, 2016.

There is no denying the formal achievement of Modern art. Some see a simultaneous loss of effective social commentary as Modernism advanced through the various abstractionists' adventures in painting and sculpture. The works of certain mid 20th Century African American artists, such as Elizabeth Catlett and Benny Andrews, contradict this notion. These artists utilized the formal strength of modernism to advance and articulate their strong socio-political views. Despite their powerful blending of abstract expression and representational content, both artists were ignored or openly discouraged by the art world establishment. Catlett was forced to leave the United States in order to voice her political beliefs and Andrews was discouraged by his dealer from depicting black themes. Without hesitation, these two artists demonstrated a determination and capacity to address the substance of a people. They each asserted the validity of their own lives and the humanity around them, communicating a spiritual dignity that still resonates today. We feel fortunate and proud to have the opportunity to present the paintings of Benny Andrews and the sculpture of Elizabeth Catlett, two modern masters, to our audience.

Elizabeth Catlett & Benny Andrews is timed to celebrate and complement the opening of the National Museum of African American History and Culture. In addition to the works on view by Catlett and Andrews we have gathered other pieces by historically important African American artists, including works by Margaret Burroughs, Herbert Gentry, Sam Gilliam, James Wells, Walter Williams and Alma Thomas. These additional works may be seen upon request.

Elizabeth Catlett (American, 1915-2012) was born in Washington, DC where she lived until she graduated cum laude from Howard University in 1935. Catlett went on to study painting at the University of Iowa and received the first Masters of Fine Arts degree in sculpture in 1940. In 1947 she would begin studying at the Escuela de Pintura y Escultura in Esmeralda, Mexico, and would later teach at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico in Mexico City. Elizabeth Catlett is represented in the collections of the National Museum of Woman in the Arts, The Art Institute of Chicago, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, among numerous other public, private, and university art collections.

Benny Andrews (American, 1930-2006) was born in Plainview, GA and received a scholarship to attend Fort Valley State University from 1948-1950. Andrews would go on to serve in the United States Air Force as a Staff Sergeant until 1953. He later travelled to Chicago, IL in 1954 to study at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Benny Andrews is represented in a number of collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, The Studio Museum in Harlem, The Art Institute of Chicago, The High Museum of Art, The National Museum of African Art among others.

HEMPHILL was founded in Washington DC in 1993. The exhibition schedule features modern & contemporary art in all media by artists ranging from emerging to mid-career to modern masters.

GALLERY HOURS

Tuesday–Saturday, 10:00am–5:00pm, and by appointment.

Image: Elizabeth Catlett, Star Gazer, 1997, black marble, 14 1/2" x 32" x 11", Initialed "EC", Art © Catlett Mora Family Trust/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

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