

THE SHELDON ART GALLERIES

JOSEPHINE BAKER:

APRIL 28 THROUGH AUGUST 26, 2006

IMAGE
& ICON



3648 Washington Blvd. Saint Louis, MO 63108 www.sheldonconcerthall.org 314-533-9900

J. Chassaing courtesy of the Renier Collection, New York

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 21, 2006

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A MAJOR JOSEPHINE BAKER EXHIBIT AND RELATED PROGRAMS OPENS SPRING 2006 AT THE SHELDON ART GALLERIES

The Sheldon Art Galleries announce the organization of a major exhibition, *Josephine Baker: Image and Icon*, opening April 28, 2006 and running through August 26, 2006 in the History of Jazz Gallery, celebrating the life of Josephine Baker to coincide with the centennial of her birth. The exhibition will open to the public with a free reception on Friday, April 28 from 5 to 7 p.m. A special sneak preview of the exhibit will be available to patrons of the 2006 Sheldon Gala, "A Tribute to Josephine Baker" featuring Dee Dee Bridgewater on April 21. Admission to the exhibition is free. Gallery Hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays, Noon - 8 p.m.; Wednesdays and Fridays, Noon - 5 p.m., Saturdays, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. and one hour prior to Sheldon performances and during intermission.

Through vintage photographs, posters, drawings, prints, paintings and ephemera, the exhibition will trace the entertainer's important and innovative contributions to the Jazz Age. Mounted in celebration of the 100th anniversary of Josephine Baker's birth, the exhibition is drawn from a variety of important public and private collections including the National Portrait Gallery in Washington D.C., the J. Paul Getty Museum, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the collection of Mary Strauss, St. Louis and others. The show examines the development of her image, first as the exotic "other" in a Paris infatuated by all things African, then as a glamorous cabaret star who became a vocal force in the civil rights movement. Curator of the exhibition, Sheldon Art Galleries director Olivia Lahs-Gonzales, has been working over two years to bring together these important works of art depicting Josephine Baker. The only exhibition celebrating Josephine Baker in the United States during this, her centennial year, *Josephine Baker: Image and Icon* brings together vibrant works of art and groundbreaking scholarship. "We are pleased to be able to bring together such an important group of speakers and writers for this project," said Lahs-Gonzales, "This event and the concurrent programs both at The Sheldon and at other institutions around the city will pay tribute to this important African-American figure."

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Sheldon Art Galleries/Josephine Baker: Image and Icon
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Born Freda Josephine McDonald in St. Louis, Missouri on June 3, 1906, Josephine ran away at age 13 to join a traveling road show. In 1921, she got her first break as a dancer in a successful run of Noble Sissle and Eubie Blake's *Shuffle Along*, which toured the country in 1922. Choosing to use the last name of her second husband, Willie Baker, Josephine Baker left the United States for Paris in 1925 to perform in a new musical review called *La Revue Nègre*, where she quickly became the star of the show at age 19 and the toast of Paris and Europe. She moved on to star in the *Folies-Bergère*, including a celebrated performance in a banana skirt. From her early days as a chorus girl, Baker developed a talent for comedy but also had a personal sense of high style. She became the inspiration to many of the hottest fashion designers of the time.

The musical and artistic rebellion of the 1920s made Paris a hotbed for the arts, fueling the visual artistic movement that erupted after World War I and embodied modernity and change. Paris embraced African-Americans and the radical new musical language called jazz that was first introduced by the touring Captain James Europe in 1917. Many African-American artists moved to Paris or spent considerable time there rather than endure the racism and segregation in America. Baker was one of these expatriates who adopted France as her home.

The Sheldon Art Galleries exhibition will contain sections on Josephine Baker's early years as a star in Paris in the 1920s and 1930s, her later participation in the French resistance during World War II and her involvement in the civil rights movement in America. Listening and video stations will highlight her music, dance and film contributions. The tandem exhibitions of painting, sculpture, decorative arts, architecture and photography from the 1920s to the 1940s: *Art in the Age of Josephine Baker from St. Louis Collections; An American in Europe: Photographs from the Baroness Jeane von Oppenheim Collection of the Norton Museum of Art, Chez Josephine: the Adolf Loos House and Les Milandes;* and *Regarding Josephine: St. Louis Children's Art Inspired by Josephine Baker*, on view in other gallery spaces of the Sheldon Art Galleries, will provide a visual arts context for the Jazz Age and the remarkable life and career of Josephine Baker.

In conjunction with the exhibition, The Sheldon presents a concert of early jazz and French cabaret by renowned jazz singer Dee Dee Bridgewater in a tribute to Josephine Baker in the adjoining Sheldon Concert Hall on Friday, April 21. The Sheldon also presents an international symposium, several lectures, a family day on her birthday, and, with Reedy Press, published a beautiful catalogue book with images from the exhibit and three essays on her life and legacy. "I am thrilled with the upcoming Josephine Baker celebration," said Paul Reuter, Executive Director of The Sheldon. "The Sheldon Art Galleries and the Sheldon Concert Hall are the perfect venues for the presentation of both the visual arts and the music related to this celebrated international star."

The exhibition, publication and related education and outreach programs for *Josephine Baker: Image and Icon* have been generously underwritten by Mary Strauss. The Sheldon Art Galleries presents *Josephine Baker: Image and Icon* in partnership with generous support from the The Boeing Company; the City of St. Louis; the National Endowment for the Arts; Patrick Davis Partners; Paradowski Creative; the Missouri Humanities Council with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities; Joan and Mitchell Markow; and Eleanor J. Moore. Additional support for the symposium has been provided by the Des Lee Professorship in Art Education at the University of Missouri-St. Louis; the Department of American Studies, Saint Louis University; the Department of Art History and Archaeology, Washington University; and the Center for the Humanities at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

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JOSEPHINE BAKER: IMAGE AND ICON CONCURRENT PROGRAMS:

2006 Sheldon Gala

A Tribute to Josephine Baker featuring Dee Dee Bridgewater
Friday, April 21 at 8:15 p.m., Sheldon Concert Hall

Grammy and Tony Award winning jazz vocalist Dee Dee Bridgewater appears in a special tribute to Josephine Baker. Gala tickets are on sale now through The Sheldon at 314.533.9900. Single tickets go on sale April 1 at 10 a.m. through MetroTix at 314.534.1111 or online at www.sheldonconcerthall.org.

An International Symposium on Josephine Baker

April 28 ~ 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., Sheldon Concert Hall

Tickets in advance: \$45.00 (Includes Box Lunch). Tickets at the door: \$45.00, lunch not included. Students with ID: \$20.00 including lunch. Free for students without lunch included. If lunch is required, tickets must be purchased no later than April 24. Tickets available through MetroTix at 314.534.1111 or online at www.sheldonconcerthall.org.

Symposium Speakers:

9 – 9:45 a.m.: **Tyler Stovall**, Professor, History and Program Chair, France-Berkeley Fund, Institute of European Studies, University of California, Berkley. **Topic:** *Josephine Baker and the World of Black Montmartre*.

10 – 10:45 a.m.: **Terri Francis**, Assistant Professor of Film Studies and African-American Studies, Yale University. **Topic:** *Embodied Fictions, Melancholy Migrations: Josephine Baker's Cinematic Celebrity*.

11 – 11:45 a.m.: **Griselda Pollock**, Professor of Social and Critical Histories of Art in the Department of Fine Art, University of Leeds, England. **Topic:** *Authoring a Self Between Invisibility and Excessive Visibility: Subjectivity, Embodiment and Performance*.

1:15 – 2 p.m.: **Bennetta Jules-Rosette**, Professor of Sociology, University of California at San Diego and Director of the African & African-American Studies Research Project. **Topic:** *Hues of the Rainbow in a Global Village*.

2:15 – 3 p.m.: **Simon Njami**, Paris-based art critic, curator, publisher, scholar, novelist and founding member and Chief Editor of *Revue Noire*. **Topic:** *Two loves: Pioneering the Question of Identity in France*.

3:15 – 4 p.m.: **Speaker's Panel**, moderated by Jonathan Smith, Ph.D., Department of American Studies, St. Louis University.

Josephine Baker Film Series

Webster University Film Series Presents: Josephine Baker: A Centennial Celebration

Saturday, April 29 and Sunday, April 30, 7p.m.

Admission is \$6 for the general public, \$5 for seniors, students from other schools and Webster alumni, and \$4 for Webster University staff and faculty unless otherwise noted. All films screened in Moore Auditorium on the campus of Webster University, 470 E. Lockwood, Webster Groves, Missouri, unless noted. Contact: James Harrison, 314.968.7487. For more information go to: www.webster.edu/filmseries.html.

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In honor of the 100th birthday of the St Louis born "Parisian Sensation" the Webster University Film Series is pleased to present a weekend of Ms. Baker's finest films. The weekend program is as follows:

April 29 at 7 p.m.

Zou Zou (Zouzou), Marc Allégret, 1934, France, 92 min

Conceived as a vehicle for Josephine Baker, then among Europe's most popular entertainers, the film was her debut talking film and a huge success in France upon its release. In the tradition of "backstage musicals" of the period, *Zou Zou* concerns a star who walks out on her producer for true love. A talented Cinderella (Baker) who takes her place, saves the show and is hailed as a new sensation on opening night. The film places Baker in several lavish production numbers in which she is sumptuously dressed and supported by a large chorus, but it is the poignant rendition of "Haiti" that remains indelible.

Screens with:

Siren of the Tropics (La Sirène des tropiques), Henri Etievant & Mario Nalpas, 1927, France, 86 min.

Baker's feature film debut, *Sirène* establishes the rags-to-riches, fairy tale template from which her subsequent films would be cut. Papitou (Baker), a free-spirited, animal-loving native girl falls in love with André, a sophisticated young man who has been sent to the Parisian Antilles as a prospector. Papitou finds herself pursuing André back to Paris, where she lands a job as a music hall performer. Though silent, the film abounds with musical energy, aided in no small part by Josephine Baker's innate screen magnetism. The film contains perhaps her greatest dance work on celluloid, the frenetic "Charleston." Among the crew was a very young Luis Buñuel!

April 30 at 7 p.m.

Princess Tam Tam, Edmond T. Gréville, 1935, France, 77 min.

Tam Tam is a Pygmalion-like comedy in which a mischievous shepherd girl Alwina (Baker) rises through society to become a pretend princess and the toast of Paris nightlife. In a thinly-veiled parallel to Baker's own experience, Alwina becomes an exotic celebrity, a favorite subject for the city's great artists and a guest at the most important social events. Her rise to notoriety climaxes in a posh nightclub, where she is coaxed into drinking too much by her mentor's jealous wife and falls prey to the compelling tom-tom beat of the club orchestra, whereupon she leaps to the stage, strips off her shimmering evening gown and dances as only La Baker could. In French with English subtitles.

The Webster University Film Series receives funding from the Regional Arts Commission; the Arts and Education Council of Greater St. Louis; and the Missouri Arts Council, a state agency.

Sheldon Art Galleries - Tuesday Evening Gallery Talks:

6 - 7 p.m., in the History of Jazz Galleries, admission free.

Tuesday, May 16, 6 p.m. Olivia Lahs-Gonzales, Director of the Sheldon Art Galleries and Curator of the exhibition *Josephine Baker: Image and Icon*. Topic: *Josephine Baker: Modern Woman*.

Tuesday, June 6, 6 p.m. Alicja Sowinska, Doctoral Student, St. Louis University, Department of American Studies. Topic: *The Dialectic of the Banana Skirt*.

Tuesday, July 11, 6 p.m. Kimberly M. Curtis, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of American Studies, Saint Louis University. Topic: *Josephine Baker's Participation in the Civil Rights Movement in St. Louis, Missouri, 1951-1952*.

Sheldon Art Galleries - Saturday Gallery Talk:

Saturday, July 29, 11 a.m. Harper Barnes, writer. Topic: *East St. Louis Race Riot of 1917*.

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La Revue Josephine A Tribute to the Grand Fashion of a St. Louis Icon

Friday, June 2, 2006, Sheldon Ballroom, 6:30 and 9 p.m.

Starring the red carpet creations of Allen B. Schwartz and A.B.S. Musical prelude featuring Cheryl Howard as Miss Josephine Baker. Josephine Cocktails & Hors d'oeuvres, cash bar available. Fashion Show directed by Jerry Talamantes & Produced by Mary Strauss. Business "ooh-la-la" attire. Tickets are \$125 Patron (includes preferred seating, special gift from Tiffany & Co.) / \$75 VIP Seating (includes special gift from Dillard's) / \$50 General Admission. Call MetroTix at 314.534.1111 or visit www.sheldonconcerthall.org.

Josephine Baker Birthday Party

Saturday, June 3, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., Sheldon Art Galleries, admission free.

Bring the family and come celebrate Josephine Baker's 100th birthday with music, face painting, storytelling, art projects and birthday cake at the Sheldon Art Galleries!

Josephine Baker: Image and Icon Catalogue

A 116-page hard-bound catalogue with essays by Bennetta Jules-Rosette, Tyler Stovall and Olivia Lahs-Gonzales, co-published by the Sheldon Art Galleries and Reedy Press, St. Louis accompanies the exhibition. Catalogue price \$35.00.

Downloadable Education Packet for Teachers

An education packet with information on Josephine Baker's life and accomplishments along with class projects and lesson plans developed to Missouri's Show Me education standards will be available on The Sheldon's website in preparation for the exhibition. Download packet at www.sheldonconcerthall.org/baker.asp.

Bring your group to the exhibit

Guided tours for groups of 10 or more people may be scheduled by calling the Sheldon Art Galleries at 314.533.9900 ext. 31. Bring your group or organization to see the exhibition *Josephine Baker: Image and Icon* between April 28 and August 26, 2006 and combine your group visit with a reception, meeting or dinner in one of our two Ballrooms or the Kemper Atrium adjacent to the Galleries. A special discounted rate will be made available for group rentals during the run of the exhibition. French cuisine lunches, buffets and dinners in one of The Sheldon's two Ballrooms may be scheduled by calling the Director of Events at 314.533.9900 ext. 11.

ADDITIONAL EXHIBITIONS AT THE SHELDON ART GALLERIES ACCOMPANYING *JOSEPHINE BAKER: IMAGE AND ICON*:

Bellwether Gallery of St. Louis Artists

Art in the Age of Josephine Baker from St. Louis Collections

April 29 - September 2, 2006

Setting the scene for the exhibition *Josephine Baker: Image and Icon* in the adjoining History of Jazz Gallery, the additional galleries of the Sheldon Art Galleries will feature related exhibits focusing on the art and culture of the 1920s - 1940s. In the Bellwether Gallery of St. Louis Artists, Art Deco and other works of art from important St. Louis collections will be on view. Paintings, prints, photographs, fashion, jewelry and decorative arts and design objects will tell the story of the dynamic period of the 1920s to the 1940s, when Josephine Baker became a phenomenon in Europe. The exhibition is organized by the Sheldon Art Galleries.

The exhibition is made possible by Peggy Symes.

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Gallery of Photography

**An American in Europe: Modernist Photographs from the Baroness Jeane von Oppenheim
Collection of the Norton Museum of Art
April 29 - August 19, 2006**

Drawn from the Baroness Jeane von Oppenheim Collection of Photography at the Norton Museum of Art in Palm Beach, Florida, the exhibition features over 35 photographs from the 1920s and '30s by renowned European photographers Lucia Moholy, Albert Renger-Patzsch, Aleksandr Rodchenko, Florence Henri, Lotte Jacobi and others. The exhibition presents a look at the "New Vision" in photography, ushered in after World War I. The New Vision was characterized by a strong drive towards renewal and experimentation. Selected to complement the exhibition *Josephine Baker: Image and Icon*, this group of important photographs will help the visitor gain insight into the cultural context of the Josephine Baker phenomenon.

Bernoudy Gallery of Architecture

**Chez Josephine: the Adolf Loos House and Les Milandes
April 29 - August 19, 2006**

Josephine Baker had a special relationship with architecture throughout her life. In 1928, the important modern architect Adolf Loos created plans for a fantastic residence for Baker. The three-story house, clad in dramatic stripes of black and white marble, featured a café and at its center, an indoor swimming pool with windows for underwater viewing. Loos saw in Baker a chance to express his view of her modernity through the language of architecture, but unfortunately, the home was never built. In this exhibition visitors are able to see plans for the house Loos designed, along with the ambitious plans that Baker put together for her home, *Les Milandes*, where she lived from 1940 to 1969. *Les Milandes* was the headquarters for Baker's dream of racial brotherhood and harmony. The home Baker created for her 12 adopted children, "The Rainbow Tribe," who were all of differing races would serve as a base to start her utopian "model community." The exhibition is organized by the Sheldon Art Galleries.

AT&T Gallery of Children's Art

**Regarding Josephine: St. Louis Children's Art Inspired by Josephine Baker
April 29 - September 9, 2006**

This exhibition presents a selection of drawings, collages, bead dolls and photographs created by St. Louis-area young people in several workshops on Josephine Baker sponsored by the Sheldon Art Galleries. Workshop participants were shown a presentation of photographs of Josephine Baker and read the story *Ragtime Tumpy* by Alan Schroeder. Workshop leaders were the local artists Adelia Parker Castro and Edna Patterson-Petty. The exhibition is organized by the Sheldon Art Galleries.

The exhibition is made possible by the Elissa and Paul Cahn Foundation.

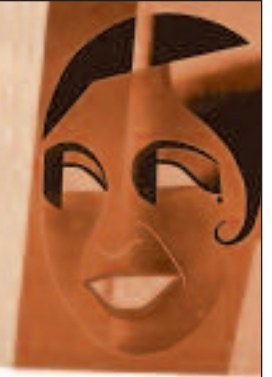
The not-for-profit Sheldon Art Galleries exhibit works by local, national, and international artists in all media. Over 6,000 square feet of the gallery's spaces on the 2nd floor are permanently devoted to rotating exhibits of photography, architecture, jazz art and history, and children's art. A sculpture garden, seen from both the atrium lobby and the connecting glass bridge, features periodic rotations and installations, and the Kranzberg Gallery on the lower level features art of all media. The Sheldon actively supports the work of St. Louis artists in all mediums, and features a dedicated gallery with museum-quality exhibits by St. Louis artists, past and present.

Financial Assistance for this project has been provided by the Missouri Arts Council, a state agency. Support is provided by the Regional Arts Commission, and the Arts and Education Council.

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J. Chassling courtesy of the Remert Collection, New York

Josephine Baker Timeline

June 3, 1906	Josephine Baker born in St. Louis
1919	Works at the Chauffer's Club in St. Louis
1920	Joins the Dixie Steppers vaudeville group, leaves St. Louis
1921	Marries Billy Baker in Philadelphia
1922	Begins work in the traveling version of Shuffle Along in New Haven, Connecticut
1924	Part in Chocolate Dandies in New York
1925	Returns to St. Louis in Chocolate Dandies Leaves on the Berengaria with the new troupe La Revue Nègre
October 2, 1925	Opening Night of La Revue Nègre, Théâtre des Champs Elysées
1926-27	Stars in La Folie du Jour at the Folies Bergère, first wears Banana Skirt Meets Giuseppe "Pepito" Abatino, who becomes her manager and companion
1927	Publishes her first autobiography, Les Memoires de Josephine Baker
1927	Makes film Sirène de Tropiques
1931	Co-authors Mon Sang dans tes veines with Pepito Abatino
1934	Makes the film Zou Zou
1935	Stars in La Créole Makes the film Princesse Tam Tam Leaves for New York and the Ziegfield Follies Visits her family in St. Louis
1940-45	Works for the French Resistance, performs for troops
1945	Makes the film The French Way (released with English subtitles in 1952)
October 8, 1946	Receives the French Medal of Resistance for her wartime work
1951	Performs in Havana, Cuba and returns to the United States, insists upon integrated audiences in the United States Controversy erupts over the "Stork Club Incident"
February 3, 1952	Performs at the Kiel Auditorium in St. Louis
1953	Brings first of twelve adopted children, Akio and Janot, both from Japan
1957	First eight of twelve children are legally adopted in Sarlat, France
August 18, 1961	Receives the medal of the Legion d'Honneur, the highest honor that France can bestow
1963, August	Takes part on the March on Washington
1968	Josephine Baker loses Les Milandes
April 8, 1975	Josephine stars at the Bobino Theatre in Paris.
April 12, 1975	Josephine Baker dies in Paris after a show and much acclaim at the Bobino Theatre