



## **Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts News Release**

Contact: Cynthia Milledge: 334.240.4369; [cmilledge@mmfa.org](mailto:cmilledge@mmfa.org)

### **For Immediate Release**

#### **Museum Acquires Painting by American Regionalist Painter Thomas Hart Benton**

**Montgomery, AL, Monday, August 31, 2015** -The Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts is proud to announce the acquisition of a painting by the American Regionalist painter Thomas Hart Benton (1889–1975). The work, *Ozark Autumn*, 1949, is painted in oil and tempera on wood panel, and depicts a corn-harvesting scene. It was purchased for the Museum’s collection using funds from the Ida Belle Young Art Acquisition Fund. The Museum’s Board of Trustees created the fund in 2007 using a bequest from Ida Belle Young designated for the purchase of traditional American art for the Museum’s permanent collection.

Benton is recognized as one of the major artists of the mid-twentieth century, and his work is represented in museums throughout the United States. He began his career at the turn of the twentieth century with study in Paris and New York, and gained a reputation as a painter of the American scene and architectural murals in the 1930s. He eventually resettled in his native Missouri and is best known for his subjects that depict American experiences of the past and his own times. “My American image is made up of what I have come across, of what was ‘there’ in the time of my experience—no more, no less,” he once wrote.

Museum Director Mark Johnson noted that this is a particularly important addition to the Museum’s collection. “We have an outstanding survey of American paintings in the Blount Collection. Using funds bequeathed by Ida Belle Young has enabled us to expand our representation of the accomplishments of American artists across an even broader spectrum. Acquiring the work of Thomas Hart Benton provides a critical context for the work of Southern regional artists such as Kelly Fitzpatrick and his students. It will enable our educators to teach the relationship between the Regionalists on the national scene as they relate to our artists in the River Region of Alabama.”

The work will be unveiled for the Museum’s board of trustees, city and county officials, and other supporters on Monday evening, August 31, at 5:30 p.m. It will subsequently be on view with other works from the Museum’s permanent collection beginning on September 1 at 10:00 a.m.

The MMFA, a department of the City of Montgomery, is supported by funds from the City of Montgomery and the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts Association. Programs are made possible, in part, by grants from the Alabama State Council on the Arts. Exhibition programs are supported by The Poarch Band of Creek Indians.