

**Media Contact:**

Chrissy Noh, Marketing Manager  
(413) 658-1105 / chrissy@picturebookart.org

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**“BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL, UH-HUH!”**

**Ashley Bryan Exhibition Honors a Masterful Interpreter of African Folklore  
and of the African-American Experience**

Amherst, Mass. (July 23, 2005) – The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art has announced the opening of the exhibition **Painter and Poet: The Wonderful World of Ashley Bryan**. On view at the Museum through November 6, 2005, this career retrospective includes works inspired by West African oral storytelling traditions, jazz music, and poetry, and exemplifying Bryan’s life-long devotion to creating art that honors and promotes appreciation for a broad range of artistic expression from the African diaspora.

“Ashley Bryan is an American treasure,” says Museum Director, Nick Clark, “as he has done so much through his art and life to promote a greater understanding and appreciation for the African American experience and to celebrate its great cultural traditions. We hope that this exhibition captures his generous spirit and tremendous range of artistic talents, from painting and drawing to puppet-making and collage.”

Born to Antiguan parents in 1923 and raised in an integrated and economically disadvantaged neighborhood of the Bronx during the Depression, Bryan grew up listening to the lively music and colorful stories of his parents’ circle of friends, and reading as many books as he could. He went on to pursue a career in art and art education, ultimately becoming a professor and then Chair of the Art Department at Dartmouth College.

Interested in retelling and illustrating African folktales since his art school days, Bryan has created over 30 books for children and is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Coretta Scott King Award for *Beautiful Blackbird* (2004). His work has been at the forefront of culturally conscious children’s literature, and his illustrations and books were among the first by African American creators to be mass produced and introduced to mainstream audiences.

(over)

Events planned in conjunction with the exhibition include a lecture with the artist- October 1, African storytelling with Onawumi Jean Moss- October 22, Ashley Bryan-inspired art activities in the Museum's Art Studio, *Poetry, Music, and Pictures*- July 12 - August 14 and *Puppets and Performance*- August 16 - September 11 in the and other exhibition-related classes and workshops.

The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art is a museum dedicated to exploring the role of visual art in children's literature from around the world. Founded in part by Eric Carle, the renowned author and illustrator of more than 70 books printed in 30 languages, including the 1969 classic *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, the Museum offers exhibitions and programming that encourage inquiry, foster an appreciation for the visual arts, and engage, delight, and inspire children and families.

The Museum—which houses three galleries dedicated to rotating exhibitions of picture book art, a hands-on Art Studio, a Reading Library, an Auditorium, and a popular Café and Museum Shop—is located at 125 West Bay Road, Amherst, MA. Museum hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday 12 noon to 4 p.m. Admission is \$7 for adults, \$5 for children under 18, and \$20 for a family of four. For further information and directions, call 413-658-1100 or visit the Museum's website at [www.picturebookart.org](http://www.picturebookart.org).

# # #

For additional press information and/or images,  
please contact Chrissy Noh, Marketing Manager  
(413) 658-1105 [chrissy@picturebookart.org](mailto:chrissy@picturebookart.org)

