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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**A Grand Vision: Violet Oakley and the American Renaissance**

**September 30, 2017 – January 21, 2018**

Woodmere Art Museum presents **A Grand Vision: Violet Oakley and the American Renaissance** from September 30, 2017 to January 21, 2018.

The most ambitious exhibition of the work of Violet Oakley (1874–1961) to date, this retrospective highlights Oakley’s spirit of civic humanism and her prolific accomplishments as a painter, muralist, portraitist, stained-glass designer, and illustrator. At a time before women had the right to vote, she achieved international fame for her prestigious government commissions for the Pennsylvania State Capitol. The exhibition will also explore Oakley’s evolving vision of the interplay between Quaker principles, civic engagement, and world peace through the international cooperation of nations and diverse peoples.

This exhibition follows Oakley’s career through the 20th century, documenting her extensive contributions to Philadelphia institutions and to the American Renaissance revival. She fashioned herself to be an artist-diplomat, promoting world peace as she created portraits of the delegates to the League of Nations and to the United Nations. The exhibition will also highlight the artists, architects, designers, and patrons with whom Oakley collaborated, with particular attention to her work with Edith Emerson, her life partner and Woodmere’s director from the early 1940s through 1978.

Guest curator Dr. Patricia Likos Ricci is an art historian and director of the Fine Arts Division at Elizabethtown College. In the late 1970s, she worked with Emerson, who had founded the Violet Oakley Memorial Foundation at Cogslea to organize the artist’s remaining works and reconstruct the trajectory of her career. Dr. Ricci worked with curators Anne D’Harnoncourt and Anne Percy in 1979, writing the essay and participating in the organization of the first major exhibition of Oakley’s work at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1979.

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**About Woodmere Art Museum**

Housed in a 19th-century stone mansion on six acres in the Chestnut Hill neighborhood of Philadelphia, Woodmere offers a unique museum experience that centers on the art and artists of Philadelphia. The Museum first opened its doors to the public in 1910. The building, grounds, and core of the permanent collection are the gifts of Charles Knox Smith (1845 – 1916). A passionate collector of contemporary art in his day, Smith was a civic leader of wealth and stature, serving on Philadelphia’s Common Council (the precursor to today’s City Council). Born of modest means, Smith’s first job was that of “grocer’s boy,” but he eventually built a successful mining company that was active in Mexico. He lived in urban Philadelphia most of his life and purchased the Woodmere estate in 1898 with the grand ambition of creating a spiritual experience through encounters with great works of art in the context of the green beauty of the Wissahickon and Chestnut Hill. Woodmere continues to honor and interpret Smith’s vision of bringing art and nature together, and in recent years has acquired important examples of outdoor sculpture. Woodmere’s collection consists of more than 6,000 works of art with strengths in Hudson River painting, the circle of Violet Oakley, Pennsylvania Impressionism, the circle of Arthur B. Carles, and Philadelphia’s unique brand of modernism and contemporary art. The collection can be viewed online, and Woodmere encourages artists and their friends and families to share information about works in the collection through the museum’s website. Studio classes, family activities, tours, lectures, music and film programs, and other special events are scheduled throughout the year.

The Museum is open to the public Tuesday – Thursday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., Friday 10 a.m. – 8:45 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., and Sunday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Admission is $10; FREE on Sunday. For more information: [woodmereartmuseum.org](http://woodmereartmuseum.org/).