Albert Murray is a singular voice in American culture, art, and music, and we are pleased that the conference will be held in the state that has exerted such imaginative and critical force on his writings.

The public is invited to attend both the symposium and the lecture, but those interested are asked to register online at http://www.auburn.edu/cah.
We thank our many partners and funders for their support of the Caroline Marshall Draughon Center for the Arts & Humanities. We could not accomplish our work without them.

As many of you know, this summer we celebrated the naming of the Center in honor of former Auburn University first lady Caroline Marshall Draughon. As it ushered in a new era for the Center, that happy day offered us an opportunity to reaffirm its mission to strengthen the bonds between the academic community, the arts, and the general public through quality programs in schools, towns, and communities around the state.

In this newsletter, you’ll find updates on the programs that accomplish our mission, including announcements of new initiatives and features on the people and events that make it all happen.

Among the most exciting new initiatives is the inauguration of a partnership with the University of Alabama Press to publish books that grow out of or contribute to our outreach mission. The Pebble Hill Books imprint series will launch this spring with a community history by Frye Gaillard. Based on a research project funded by the Kettering Foundation, In the Path of the Storms: Bayou La Batre, Coden, and the Alabama Coast will feature photographs by Sheila Hagler and by the students that she and Peggy Denniston have worked with in their award-winning Merging of Cultures project. Other titles are already in the pipeline, and we are enormously excited by the opportunity the series offers to capture the Center’s work and share it more widely than ever.

Other projects that have kept us busy this year include “This Goodly Land: Alabama’s Literary Landscape.” This online map can be found at www.alabamaliterarymap.org. Project manager Midge Coates has worked to create entries on a long (and growing) list of writers and to develop educational materials and exciting add-ons, including a “this day in Alabama literary history” feature and podcasts of authors and scholars.

Oh technology!

This fall, Leah Atkins wrapped up her lecture series on the history of the Alabama Power Company, and “Learning to Talk” has focused on the role of deliberative decision-making in communities. The award-winning Alabama Gets Caught Reading poster series debuted with a second round of noted Alabamians reading their favorite book. Thanks to the Alabama Power Foundation and the Alabama Public Library Service, every school and library in the state received a set of the posters.

Check the website for information on the Draughon Seminars in State and Local History, this year featuring the indefatigable Dr. John Hall as William Bartram. Beginning in January, Alabama Voices and Helping Schools Through the Arts & Humanities will feature several noted artists and writers, including Betsy Hearne and Joy Jones. Partnerships with the University Libraries and the Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art have enabled us to support local programming, including a symposium on Philip Henry Gosse and the “Discover Auburn” lecture series.

We look forward to a great year of partnership and accomplishment. As always, we thank you for your interest in and support of the Center. Hope to see you at a program soon.

Jay Lamar

The newsletter’s calendar notes upcoming lectures and programs. For more information on these and other projects of the Center, be sure to check the website at www.auburn.edu/cah.
The Caroline Marshall Draughon Center for the Arts & Humanities has developed the second in an annual lecture series on Alabama’s visual art. Encouraged by the response to last year’s programs, which sought to open a window on the vista of the state’s rich artistic heritage, “New Perspectives: “Alabama Art in the Open” will step out into the landscape to look at art created for, in, or about the out-of-doors.

“Alabama Art in the Open” will explore artists’ creative reactions to and interactions with their environments, in large and small scale, in public and private spaces, using particular and universal languages. Those interested in history, anthropology, art history, or Native American and African-American studies will find the lectures especially relevant and stimulating.

Georgine Clarke, Alabama State Council on the Arts, will discuss the state’s public art and its creation, placement, and purposes. Photography curator Julian Cox will share research from a forthcoming exhibit and catalogue at the High Museum of Art in “Bearing Witness: Photography and the Civil Rights Movement, 1956-1968.” Judith McWillie, University of Georgia, will explore the intersection of personal and cultural values in African-American yard work. The cultural and architectural legacy of Mobile’s historic ironwork is the topic of architectural historian John S. Sledge. Kelly A. Wacker, University of Montevallo, will examine Wichahpi, a memorial in North Alabama built to honor the artist’s ancestor. She will place this physical manifestation of story and history in the context of contemporary Land Art.

“Alabama Art in the Open” lectures will be held as a series in Auburn and individually in Eufaula, Fayette, Jasper, Montgomery, and Sylacauga. Major funding for the series comes from the Alabama Humanities Foundation, state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Co-sponsors for the Auburn lectures are the Jule Collins Smith Museum, AU Art Department, and Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. State partners include the Eufaula Heritage Association, Fayette Art Museum, Bevill State Community College, Rosa Parks Museum, and B. B. Comer Memorial Library.

*photo credit for top center: Morton Broffman, "Dr Martin Luther King, Jr., Leading Marchers, Montgomery, Alabama, 1965,” gelatin silver print, 13.8 x 19.9 cm, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, © Morton Broffman

*photo credit for top center: Morton Broffman, "Dr Martin Luther King, Jr., Leading Marchers, Montgomery, Alabama, 1965,” gelatin silver print, 13.8 x 19.9 cm, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, © Morton Broffman
[JANUARY]
1/14  3 p.m. “‘Oh My God . . . I Wish He Was There Now’: Lyndon Johnson and Civil Rights,” Martin Luther King Jr. Week lecture by David Carter, Ralph Brown Draughon Library


1/23  9 a.m.-9 p.m. “Albert Murray and the Aesthetic Imagination of a Nation: A Symposium,” with 7 p.m. keynote address by John Callahan, Dixon Conference Center, Auburn University

1/26  10 a.m – 5 p.m. “Cultural Crossroads Symposium,” Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts

1/28  noon “William Bartram,” lecture by John C. Hall, Ozark-Dale County Public Library, Draughon Seminars

1/28  7 p.m. “William Bartram,” lecture by John C. Hall, Just Folk Coffeehouse and Community Arts Center, Elba, Draughon Seminars

1/29  6:30 p.m. “William Bartram,” lecture by John C. Hall, Eufaula Carnegie Library, Draughon Seminars

1/29  1 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. “Youth: The Real Future of the South,” community forum, Collinsville Public Library

[FEBRUARY]


2/12  3 p.m. “Inventing the Cotton Gin: Alabama Perspectives,” lecture by Angela Lakwete, Ralph Brown Draughon Library, Discover Auburn Lecture Series

2/17  2 p.m. “William Bartram,” lecture by John C. Hall, Albert L. Scott Library, Alabaster, Draughon Seminars

2/19  4 p.m. “‘Doing Things Right’: Traditional Signs in African American Cemeteries, Homes, and Churches,” lecture by Judith McWillie, Jule Collins Smith Museum, New Perspectives Lecture Series


2/20  4 p.m. “‘Doing Things Right’: Traditional Signs in African American Cemeteries, Homes and Churches,” lecture by Judith McWillie, Fayette Art Museum, New Perspectives Lecture Series

2/26  noon “Alabama’s 1901 Constitution,” lecture by Clif Perry, CLA Speakers’ Bureau, Dothan

*William Bartram portrait: Independence National Historical Park

check www.auburn.edu/cah for more info

2/26 4 p.m. “Road Trip: Touring Public Art of Alabama,” lecture by Georgine Clarke, Jule Collins Smith Museum, New Perspectives Lecture Series

2/26 6 p.m. “Celebrating Mobile’s Past in Word and Image,” lecture by John S. Sledge, Eufaula Heritage Association, New Perspectives Lecture Series

2/26 Storytelling Performance/Workshop with Charles Ghigna, Cottondale Elementary School

2/26 “Youth: The Real Future of the South,” community forums, Elmore and Staton correctional facilities

2/27 noon “Road Trip: Touring Public Art of Alabama,” lecture by Georgine Clarke, B. B. Comer Memorial Library, Sylacauga, New Perspectives Lecture Series

2/27 noon “William Bartram,” lecture by John C. Hall, Bay Minette Public Library, Draughon Seminars

[MARCH]

3/4 4 p.m. “Celebrating Mobile’s Past in Word and Image,” lecture by John S. Sledge, Jule Collins Smith Museum, New Perspectives Lecture Series


3/6 6:30 p.m. “William Bartram,” lecture by John C. Hall, Decatur Public Library, Draughon Seminars


[APRIL]


4/17 2 p.m. “William Bartram,” lecture by John C. Hall, Florence-Lauderdale Public Library, Draughon Seminars

4/18 8 a.m. “Changing Landscape of Public History,” lecture by Bob Beatty, The Shoals

4/18 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Alabama Book Festival Workshop for Creative Writing Teachers, Troy University Montgomery

4/19 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. 2008 Alabama Book Festival, Old Alabama Town, Montgomery

check www.auburn.edu/cah for more info
Save the date! The third annual Alabama Book Festival will take place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, April 19, 2008. The site will be the grounds of Old Alabama Town in the historic district of Montgomery (www.oldalabamatown.com).

Named the top literary event for 2007’s Year of Alabama Arts www.alabama.travel/ and supported by more than 20 sponsors and partners—including the Alabama State Council on the Arts, the Alabama Public Library Service, the Montgomery Advertiser, the Children’s Literacy Guild of Alabama, and Ellis-Harper Advertising—the festival is a signature event for the state and for those who love books and reading. Last year, more than 2000 people attended the festival.

This year’s festival will showcase more than 50 authors, storytellers, publishers, illustrators, and performers. Among the authors already confirmed are fiction writers Ace Atkins and Joshilyn Jackson, syndicated columnist Rheta Grimsley Johnson, acclaimed children’s writer Deborah Wiles, historian Stephen Berry, and Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and nonfiction writer Rick Bragg.

The festival will feature a dedicated children’s area and offer special programs for young adult readers and writers. Exhibitors and vendors will include antique book appraisers, libraries, and reading promotion partners, among many others.

A teacher workshop will take place on the Friday before the festival, and plans are underway for a general writing workshop that will be open to anyone interested. More information about these special offerings will be announced in the spring.

In the meantime, for a general overview of the festival and information about volunteer opportunities, vendors, and confirmed authors go to www.alabamabookcenter.org and click on Alabama Book Festival. Check back often to keep abreast of additions to the program.
Barb Bondy is an assistant professor in the Art Department at Auburn University. She is a teaching artist with the Alabama Prison Arts + Education Project. The following essay is a condensed version of a paper she presented at the 2007 Outreach Scholarship Conference: Access through Engagement, October 7-9, in Madison, Wisconsin. Also on her panel were Dr. Kim King-Jupiter of the Office of Outreach at Auburn University and Kyes Stevens with APAEP.

The Alabama Prison Arts + Education Project has significantly informed my teaching and research scholarship through critical reflection and discoveries that have emerged from concurrently teaching drawing in Alabama prisons and foundations level art majors at Auburn University.

I direct my teaching practices toward developing drawing classes and projects with objectives that align creative growth with the realities of prison life and the needs of art students whose goals are to emerge as visual communicators and cultural workers.

Currently I teach drawing at Staton Correctional Facility, a medium security men’s prison, and Drawing 2 at Auburn. I facilitate collaborative projects either by assigning the same topic to each group of students or by having both groups of students work on the same drawing until it is completed; in this case, I transport the drawings back and forth to each respective location until the artwork is completed. These collaborative efforts enable the two groups to engage in dialogue through art. A bridge is formed whereby the groups are learning from each other by observing different viewpoints on assigned topics and drawing technique; students’ perspectives are broadening as they see the viewpoint of others through drawing. For example, in a drawing project based on the concept of Time, the drawings revealed how life’s experiences frame one’s view of time.

The bridge between the two groups of students is beneficial on many levels; it has increased student motivation and provides an opportunity for students to get a response to their work from others. Through discussion and written comments by students I have observed growth in deep reflection as well as empathy and tolerance for others. Throughout the semester, while project objectives aim to address such skills as problem solving, ideation, critical thinking, and working collaboratively, they also focus on developing drawing abilities and observation skills.

I guide students toward becoming creative individuals who understand and believe that their voice is important.

In the prison arts and academic arts classrooms I guide students toward becoming creative individuals who understand and believe that their voice is important. My goal is to show students how to be creative based upon what they have or don’t have, how to create something from nothing, and how to regard anything as potential material for creativity and inspiration.

Early in the semester, I play for students recorded sounds, noises, and unique instrumental music. While the students listen they translate what they hear into visual, graphic marks. My aim is to demonstrate for students that noise, music, even silence, present a possibility for creative inspiration and drawing potential. Students learn that if one is listening and observing as a creative individual, subject matter is omnipresent and easily accessible despite one’s environmental circumstances.

The impact and measure of success is revealed in the transitions I see in students over the course of the classes as confidence in drawing and personal expression grow steadily and drawing skills improve.

Emancipation of the human spirit is the goal of a prison arts program. It is my belief and intention to fulfill this goal as one who teaches students who live in a confined space under social and living conditions that are the antithesis of the ideal conditions for fostering a creative spirit.