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*Tibetan Monks return to Telfair Museum of Art
to create mandala sand painting*

Series of related educational programs and events free to the public

[Savannah, Georgia] — The Telfair Museum of Art announced today that the Tibetan Monks of Drepung Loseling Monastery will return to the Jepson Center for the Arts this summer for one of Savannah's most anticipated events. During a weeklong residency from June 1-7, 2009, the monks will create an intricate and spiritually-significant sand painting called a Sita Tara Mandala in the Eckburg Atrium.

Harry DeLorme, the Telfair's senior curator of education, says of the monks' visit, "This is one of our most requested programs and we are pleased to partner with the city to make this unique cultural opportunity available to Savannah residents and visitors."

The monks' residency will coincide with the 2009 Savannah Asian Festival, ensuring a week filled with exciting cultural and artistic events for families and visitors of all ages. On Monday, June 1, the residency begins with an opening ceremony of Tibetan music, chants, and traditional dance, after which the monks will begin the early formation and drawing of the Sita Tara Mandala. Honoring the female Buddha of health and longevity, this type of mandala has never before been created in Savannah.

Throughout the week, the monks will work on the mandala during the museum's normal business hours and on Thursday, June 4, will give a public lecture on the mandala's meaning and significance in Tibetan culture and spirituality. The monks' visit comes to a close on Sunday, June 7, with a final ceremony including music and chants before the mandala is destroyed. The monks will then proceed to the Savannah River to scatter its remnants into the water.

Complementing the monks' residency will be a series of related programs and educational events including afternoon sand painting workshops for children and teens on June 3 and 4, and a *High Creativity* photography workshop for high school students on June 6. From June 3-29, the Telfair will present the exhibition *Savannah Mandala*, highlighting the work of six photographers who have documented the monks during previous visits to Savannah.

Viewing of the monks during their residency at the Jepson Center and all related programs are free of charge. Please visit our website at www.telfair.org for complete program details or to register for the student workshops.

Project funding has been provided by the City of Savannah. The Telfair's Teen Advisory Committee is a co-sponsor of the *High Creativity* workshops.

Images available upon request.

About the Telfair

Located in the heart of Savannah's historic district, the Telfair Museum of Art is the oldest public art museum in the South. It is comprised of two National Historic Landmark Buildings—the Telfair Academy and the Owens-Thomas House—and the contemporary Jepson Center for the Arts. With three unique buildings housing three distinct collections, the Telfair bridges three centuries of art and architecture.

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The Telfair Museum of Art is supported by its members, with partial support of the annual operating fund provided by the City of Savannah and by the Georgia Council for the Arts through the appropriations of the Georgia General Assembly.

The Telfair Academy is located on Telfair Square at 121 Barnard Street, Savannah, GA. The Jepson Center is also located on Telfair Square, just steps from the Academy building, at 207 W. York Street. The Telfair's Owens-Thomas House is located at 124 Abercorn Street on Oglethorpe Square. General admission (which includes a one-time visit to each of the Telfair's three sites) is \$15 for adults; \$12 for seniors, military personnel, and AAA members; \$5 for K-12 students; children under 5 are free. Members are always admitted free.

The Telfair's Jepson Center for the Arts and Telfair Academy are open Sunday 12-5 pm, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday 10 am-5 pm, Tuesday-Closed, and Thursday 10 am-8 pm. Call 912.790.8880 for Owens-Thomas House hours or visit www.telfair.org. Museum sites are closed some holidays.

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