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CHEEKWOOD TO FEATURE ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT COLLECTIONS OF WILLIAM EDMONDSON'S WORK IN THE WORLD IN A NEW EXHIBITION OPENING AUGUST 12

In Partnership with Fisk University, the Exhibition Will Present New Scholarship on the Artist and Will Make Cheekwood's Collections Available Online

(Nashville, TN) Cheekwood Estate & Gardens is proud to present *The Sculpture of William Edmondson: Tombstones, Garden Ornaments and Stonework*, the first large-scale museum exhibition of the artist's career in over twenty years. Organized by Dr. Marin R. Sullivan, Cheekwood's Curator-at-Large, the project will reexamine and recontextualize the life and work of William Edmondson (1874-1951). The first Black artist to receive a solo exhibition at New York's Museum of Modern Art, Edmondson is the most significant sculptor to emerge from Nashville during the 1930s and 40s and remains one of the leading folk, or self-taught, American artists of the first half of the twentieth century. Cheekwood's collections contain a large body of Edmondson's work as well as archival materials and related works by sculptor Puryear Mims and the noted photographer Louise Dahl-Wolfe. Many of these works will be featured in the exhibition alongside significant loans from other public and private collections in order to contextualize the breadth of Edmondson's practice. The exhibition runs concurrently at both Cheekwood and the Fisk University Galleries from August 12 – October 31.

In conjunction with the exhibition, Cheekwood will produce a comprehensive, richly illustrated catalogue that will be published by Vanderbilt University Press and include new scholarship on Edmondson written by a diverse group of contributing authors. Also published for the first time will be an essay and appendix related to Edmondson's tombstones still *in situ* across Nashville cemeteries. Additionally, Cheekwood and Vanderbilt University will host a two-day scholarly symposium, *William Edmondson in Context*, on September 24 and 25, which will bring together numerous scholars from across the country. The exhibition also serves as the impetus for an online collection access initiative – fully digitizing all works by or related to Edmondson in Cheekwood's collections and providing access to these works through a new collections' portal on Cheekwood's website. This will mark the first time Cheekwood has made its collections available online.

The Sculpture of William Edmondson and its accompanying catalogue are generously supported by grants from the Henry Luce Foundation, the Terra Foundation for American Art, and the Wyeth Foundation for American Art. Additional support is provided by AllianceBernstein.

About Cheekwood

Cheekwood is considered one of the finest American Country Place Era estates in the nation. Formerly the family home of Mabel and Leslie Cheek, the extraordinary 1930s estate, with its 30,000 square foot Mansion and 55 acres of cultivated gardens and expansive vistas, today serves the public as a botanical garden, arboretum, and museum with period rooms and galleries, showcasing works from its permanent collection as well as traveling exhibitions. The property includes 12 distinct gardens and a 1.5-mile woodland trail featuring modern and contemporary outdoor sculpture. Cheekwood is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, and is a *USA Today* Top 10 Botanical Garden. In 2020, the grounds were awarded a Level II National Arboretum Accreditation by The ArbNet Arboretum Accreditation Program and The Morton Arboretum. Cheekwood is located just 8 miles southwest of downtown Nashville at 1200 Forrest Park Drive. Daily hours of operation: Tuesday through Sunday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Admission to Cheekwood must be purchased in advance online. For tickets and more information, call 615-356-8000 or visit cheekwood.org.

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