FAU Presents Exhibition on Landscape Artists
A.E. Backus and Florida’s Highwaymen

BOCA RATON, Fla. (July 5, 2016) – Florida Atlantic University’s University Galleries presents the exhibition, “A.E. Backus and Florida’s Highwaymen: History, Commerce and Art.” The exhibition will be on display from Friday, Sept. 16 through Saturday, Nov. 19 in the Ritter Art Gallery, 777 Glades Road, Boca Raton campus. An opening reception will take place on Thursday, Sept. 15 at 6:30 p.m. and will feature live music and hors d’oeuvres, and a presentation by one of the participating humanities scholars. The opening and reception are free and open to the public.

The exhibition brings to the public new scholarly insights into the work of A.E. “Bean” Backus, Florida’s preeminent landscape painter, and the Highwaymen, a group of 26 African-American artists influenced to varying degrees by Backus. The exhibition consists of a selection of original Backus works owned by FAU and a number of Highwaymen paintings borrowed from regional collectors. Didactic wall texts, accompanied by historical photographs and artifacts, will provide viewers with the contexts for comparing the styles and themes of the paintings and for understanding how the Highwaymen emerged and commercially produced their unprecedented works of art. Specifically, the exhibition will address Backus’ relation to these young artists during Jim Crow Florida in the 50s and 60s; Backus’ own place in the history of Florida landscape painting; commerce and art; illusions and perceptions of the Florida landscape; and the contribution of these landscape paintings to the Florida Dream.

A series of public programs will take place while the exhibition is on display. Lectures by Florida-based humanities scholars will analyze the social, historical and political milieu of these artists. Also, a panel of several contemporary African-American visual artists will critically examine and offer fresh perspectives on the content, stylistic renderings and aesthetics of these paintings.

The University Galleries’ Ritter Art Gallery at FAU is open Tuesday through Friday from 1 to 4 p.m., and Saturday from 1 to 5 p.m. Visitors must obtain a $2 parking pass or use the limited metered parking before visiting the gallery. More extensive parking directions are available online at www.fau.edu/galleries. The University Galleries operate an active Museum Education Program that is approved as a Field Experience Provider by the School District of
Palm Beach County. Class and other group tours can be arranged during and outside of open hours by appointment. For more information, visit www.fau.edu/galleries or call 561-297-2661.

Funding for this program was provided through a grant from the Florida Humanities Council with funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this exhibition do not necessarily represent those of the Florida Humanities Council or the National Endowment for the Humanities. This project was also funded, in part, by Florida Atlantic University’s Departments of Visual Arts and Art History, Anthropology, and History, the Dean of Students, the Student Affairs Diversity Fund, as well as private donors.

-FAU-

About Florida Atlantic University:
Florida Atlantic University, established in 1961, officially opened its doors in 1964 as the fifth public university in Florida. Today, the University, with an annual economic impact of $6.3 billion, serves more than 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students at sites throughout its six-county service region in southeast Florida. FAU’s world-class teaching and research faculty serves students through 10 colleges: the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters, the College of Business, the College for Design and Social Inquiry, the College of Education, the College of Engineering and Computer Science, the Graduate College, the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College, the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine, the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing and the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science. FAU is ranked as a High Research Activity institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The University is placing special focus on the rapid development of three signature themes – marine and coastal issues, biotechnology and contemporary societal challenges – which provide opportunities for faculty and students to build upon FAU’s existing strengths in research and scholarship. For more information, visit www.fau.edu.