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About the High Museum of Art

The High Museum of Art, founded in 1905 as the Atlanta Art Association, is the leading art museum in the Southeastern United States. Located in Atlanta's Midtown arts and business district, the High has over 12,000 works of art in its permanent collection. The Museum has an extensive anthology of 19th- and 20th-century American art; significant holdings of European paintings and decorative art; a growing collection of African American art; and burgeoning collections of modern and contemporary art, photography and African art. The leading museum in the Southeastern United States, the High is dedicated to supporting and collecting works by Southern artists and is distinguished as the only major general museum in North America to have a curatorial department specifically devoted to the field of folk and self-taught art. The High's Media Arts department produces acclaimed annual film series and festivals of foreign, independent and classic cinema.

Established in 1905 as the Atlanta Art Association, the Museum's first permanent home came in 1926, with the donation by Mrs. Joseph M. High of her family's residence on Peachtree Street. In 1955, the Museum moved to a new brick structure adjacent to the old High house. After 122 Georgia art patrons died in a plane crash on a Museum-sponsored European tour in 1962, the Atlanta Arts Alliance was founded in their memory, and the Atlanta Memorial Arts Center opened in 1968—constructed around the existing Museum. In 1979, Coca-Cola magnate Robert W. Woodruff offered a \$7.5 million challenge grant to build a new facility; Museum officials matched and exceeded the grant, generating a total of \$20 million. Atlanta's children broke ground for the new facility in 1981, and the building opened two years later.

The Museum's building, designed by noted architect Richard Meier, opened to worldwide acclaim in 1983, and has received many design awards, including a 1991 citation from the American Institute of Architects as one of the "ten best works of American architecture of the 1980s." Meier's 135,000-square-foot facility tripled the Museum's space, enabling the institution to mount more comprehensive displays of its collections. In 2003, to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Richard Meier-designed building, the High unveiled enhancements to its galleries and interior, and a new chronological installation of its permanent collection.

Due to the unprecedented growth the High has experienced during the past decade in exhibitions, community programming and collection building, the Museum initiated a building expansion program. The High Museum of Art opened its expanded facilities to the public in November 2005, creating a vibrant "village for the arts" at the Woodruff Arts Center in Midtown Atlanta. Three new buildings, designed by Italian architect Renzo Piano, more than double the Museum's size to 312,000 square feet, allowing the High to display more of its growing collection, increase educational and exhibition programs, and offer new visitor amenities to address the needs of larger and more diverse audiences. The expansion strengthened the High's role as the premier art museum in the Southeast and allows the Museum to better serve its growing audiences in Atlanta and from around the world.