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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

# FOURTH ANNUAL COLLECTORS EVENING SECURES FOUR NEW ACQUISITIONS FOR THE HIGH MUSEUM OF ART

ATLANTA, Jan. 24, 2013 – Guests voted to secure four new acquisitions for the High Museum of Art at its fourth annual Collectors Evening on Jan. 11, 2013. The selected pieces are Sebastião Salgado's photograph titled "Church Gate Station, Western Railroad Line, Bombay, India" (1995, printed 2012); an African mask by a Pende artist (ca. 1875-1925); George Henry Yewell's "Self Defense" (1854); and Edmé-Alexis-Alfred Dehodencq's "Self-Portrait" (ca. 1870). These works will be on view at the Museum by April 2013.

The fourth acquisition was made possible by the proceeds from the evening's live auction, which featured 11 lots for bidding. Lots included four worldwide business-class tickets from Delta Air Lines and pieces of artwork on which guests could bid for their own collections. Those pieces included oil paintings, works on paper, drawings, photographs, jewelry and furniture.

Collectors Evening, established in 2010 to build and improve the Museum's permanent collection, invites guests to take an active role in choosing the next work of art to join the permanent collection. During the evening, each of the High's curators presents a work of art as a potential new acquisition for their collection. Guests then cast their votes, and the High purchases the works of art that receive the most votes.

More information about this year's chosen works are below:

## **Photography**

"Church Gate Station, Western Railroad Line, Bombay, India" (1995, printed 2012) by Sebastião Salgado was acquired for the High's photography collection. Salgado is among the most recognized documentary photographers of the 20th century, celebrated for his epic and compassionate depictions of the developing world, manual labor and populations in distress. "Church Gate Station" depicts a train depot in Mumbai, India. Commuters whirl around two docked locomotives in the jam-packed station, which itself is only one portal to a city of mesmerizing proportions. The picture points to the simultaneously exhilarating and frightening rate of growth in developing-world cities, a phenomenon that presents dramatic benefits and challenges for the future of humanity. The image was a seminal influence on the train scenes in Danny Boyle's Academy Award—winning film "Slumdog Millionaire."

#### **African Art**

The work acquired for the African art collection is a wooden mask by a Pende artist of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (ca. 1875-1925). The extreme distortion of the face on this mask resembles that of one of the women depicted in Picasso's famous 1907 painting "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon." Within Pende communities, masks with distorted faces represent individuals who have fallen into a fire, leaving their faces permanently disfigured. The masks promote compassion toward individuals who have suffered such calamities. This striking mask will join other important Pende works of art in the High's collection, including a magnificent

feather mask currently on view, a Pende cup currently on view, two face masks and a ceremonial axe.

#### **American Art**

George Henry Yewell's oil on canvas "Self Defense" (1854) is set on the streets of 1850s New York and depicts a boy preparing a snowball in response to one that landed just inches away from him. Yet this vignette is not merely one of child's play. A painter of genre scenes often embedded with wry commentary, George Henry Yewell includes a series of broadsides plastered to the building walls, which advertise the various mass entertainments that in Yewell's day had generated scandal, moral protest or even political debate. In many ways, "Self Defense" serves as a timeless American allegory, promoting the quick wit and strength of character required to steel oneself against various temptations.

#### **European Art**

French artist Edmé-Alexis-Alfred Dehodencq's "Self-Portrait" (ca. 1870) was acquired by the European art department. This oil-on-canvas work is a penetrating self-depiction that brings to mind several of Rembrandt's mature self-portraits in the attire of the sitter, his pose and the picture's overall seriousness and monumentality. Signed and dedicated to Dehodencq's friend and fellow Orientalist painter Eugène Fromentin (1820–1876), the work was probably given as a gift in thanks for Fromentin's recommendation that Dehodencq, along with seven other artists, including Gustave Courbet, receive the prestigious Légion d'honneur in 1870. This painting will complement one of the High's most important European paintings, Eugène Fromentin's "Arabs on the Way to the Pastures of Tell."

## **About the High Museum of Art**

Founded in 1905 as the Atlanta Art Association, the High Museum of Art is the leading art museum in the southeastern United States. With more than 13,000 works of art in its permanent collection, the High Museum of Art has an extensive anthology of 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century American and decorative art; significant holdings of European paintings; a growing collection of African American art; and burgeoning collections of modern and contemporary art, photography and African art. The High is also dedicated to supporting and collecting works by Southern artists and is distinguished as the first major museum in North America to have a curatorial department specifically devoted to the field of folk and self-taught art. In November 2005, the High opened three new buildings by architect Renzo Piano that more than doubled the Museum's size, creating a vibrant "village for the arts" at the Woodruff Arts Center in midtown Atlanta. For more information about the High, visit www.High.org.

## **About The Woodruff Arts Center**

The Woodruff Arts Center is ranked among the top four arts centers in the nation. The Woodruff is unique in that it combines four visual and performing arts divisions on one campus as one not-for-profit organization. Opened in 1968, the Woodruff Arts Center is home to the Alliance Theatre, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the High Museum of Art and Young Audiences. To learn more about the Woodruff Arts Center visit <a href="https://www.woodruffcenter.org">www.woodruffcenter.org</a>.

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