

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**HIGH MUSEUM OF ART ANNOUNCES RECENT ACQUISITIONS**

*More than 300 Works Added to the Permanent Collection;
Important Gifts to Modern/Contemporary and American Art Departments*

ATLANTA, October 22, 2009 – The High Museum of Art has recently acquired more than 300 works of art for its African, American, decorative arts and design, European, folk, photography and modern and contemporary collections. Highlights include significant gifts to the modern and contemporary, American, and European art departments. The High also purchased 53 works by Peter Sekaer for its photography department, creating the nation’s most comprehensive holding of works by this artist in a visual arts institution.

“The heart of any museum is its permanent collection,” said David Brenneman, the High’s Director of Collections and Exhibitions. “We are thankful for the continued support and funding for new acquisitions, allowing the Museum to build significant holdings of great art across all departments. We look forward to introducing our public to these new works soon.”

African Art

The highlight of the High’s acquisitions in African art is a late-19th-century staff finial made by an artist from the Akan region of the Ivory Coast. This finial, once topping a staff used to commemorate ancestors, depicts a bearded figure seated on the shoulders of a standing male figure. The staff may have functioned as a portable ancestral shrine, used by a trance diviner to maintain communication with ancestral spirits. The High purchased the work from the estate of Chaim Gross thanks to funding from Fred and Rita Richman. The High also received a gift of 16 Paleolithic and Neolithic stone sculptures from the southern edge of the Sahara Desert, and a gift of a butterfly mask made by Yacouba Bondé of Burkina Faso (currently on view). Begun in 1953, the High’s growing African art collection encompasses approximately 700 works of art, including more than 400 from the collection of Fred and Rita Richman.

American Art

The High received a major gift of 15 paintings and works on paper by various American artists from the estate of Barney “Bim” Franklin. The collection includes works by such artists as John Ferren, Ilya Bolotowsky and George L. K. Morris. More recently, the High purchased Edward Bannister’s “Apple Tree in a Meadow” (ca. 1890) from the Cafritz Collection. The High’s American art collection includes more than 900 works, with notable pieces from the J. J. Haverty Collection.

Decorative Arts and Design

In spring 2009 the High acquired an important “American Bottle Case” (ca. 1800–1830) attributed to North Carolina cabinetmaker Joseph Freeman. This uniquely Southern furniture type will join 34 pieces of pre-1900 Southern furniture in the High’s collection. Also entering the collection is “Insect Icon Tapestry” (2005–2006), a hand-woven tapestry made of metallic and silk thread on a field of freshwater pearls by Atlanta-based textile artist Jon Eric Riis (currently on view). The addition of Dutch designer Joris Laarman’s prototype “Bone Armchair” (2008) to our contemporary design collection anticipates the

High's presentation of the exhibition "European Design Since 1985" in summer 2010. With more than 2,200 objects, the decorative arts collection is the most comprehensive survey of American decorative arts in the Southeast, including major works from The Virginia Carroll Crawford Collection.

Folk Art

New York gallery owners Frank Maresca and Roger Ricco made the High a partial gift of "All About Eve" (ca. 1989). This important late assemblage/painting by William Hawkins will enhance the High's already significant holdings of Hawkins's work. From the descendants of Saleta Henry Stansell, the High received a whitework coverlet spun, woven, and embroidered by Stansell from local cotton in Newton County, Georgia (ca. 1815), featuring the the popular Tree of Life motif. The North Carolina artist William Fields donated "Lapis Philosporum" (ca. 2003), a pastel and prisma-color drawing from his "Illuminations" series. With 769 objects, the folk art department contains one of the nation's foremost collections of contemporary self-taught and folk art.

European Art

Long-time Atlanta residents and High Museum patrons Michelene and Bob Gerson donated two paintings by Pierre Auguste Renoir, "Woman Arranging Her Hat" (ca. 1890) and "Still-Life with Apples" (ca. 1890). These paintings are the first by Renoir to enter the High's collection, where they join Impressionist paintings by Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro and Frederic Bazille. More recently, the Cantor Foundation gave the Museum a bronze sculpture by Rodin. In addition, the High purchased a terracotta portrait of the French painter Jacques-Louis David by François Rude, a rare complete portfolio of etchings by Eugène Delacroix and prints by Honoré Daumier and Pierre Bonnard. Also among the more than 700 objects in the European art collection are Italian works from the 14th through the 18th centuries, donated by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation.

Modern and Contemporary Art

As part of a program called "50 Works for 50 States," the New York collectors and donors Herbert and Dorothy Vogel gave the High an important group of modern and contemporary works by such artists as Richard Tuttle, William Anastasi and Stephen Antonakos. The artist Chuck Close presented the Museum with the gift of a color woodcut titled "Self Portrait" (2007). In addition, the High purchased several prints by Martin Puryear and David Driskell. With the opening of the Museum's expansion in 2005, the High has consistently focused on contemporary acquisitions, with the full modern and contemporary collection now totaling more than 2,300 works.

Photography

At the end of 2008, the High received an extraordinary gift of more than 100 works by photographer Eugène Atget (French, 1857–1927) from anonymous collectors through Peter MacGill of Pace/MacGill Gallery in New York. Additionally, the High purchased 53 works by Peter Sekaer (American, born Denmark, 1901–1950), making the High's holding of works by this artist the nation's most comprehensive collection in a visual arts institution. The photography collection contains more than 4,300 prints, with notable examples of every photographic genre and process as well as the nation's most comprehensive holding of civil rights-era photographs.

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. With more than 11,000 works of art in its permanent collection, the High Museum has an extensive anthology of 19th- and 20th-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 Museum of Art is also dedicated to supporting and collecting works by Southern artists and is distinguished as the only major 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. 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, please visit www.High.org.*

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, please visit www.woodruffcenter.org.*

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