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**MAJOR TRAVELING EXHIBITION OF CIVIL RIGHTS PHOTOGRAPHS
WILL PREMIERE AT HIGH MUSEUM IN JUNE 2008**

“Road to Freedom: Photographs of the Civil Rights Movement, 1956–1968”
June 7–October 5, 2008

ATLANTA, June 5, 2008 – The most significant art-museum exhibition devoted to photography of the Civil Rights Movement in more than two decades will premiere at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta on June 7, 2008. “Road to Freedom: Photographs of the Civil Rights Movement, 1956–1968” will include unforgettable images that helped change the nation, increasing the momentum of the non-violent movement by dramatically raising awareness of injustice and the struggle for equality. Consisting of approximately 200 photographs—many of which have never been on public display—“Road to Freedom” will be drawn primarily from the High’s permanent collection, which contains one of the most comprehensive holdings of Civil Rights–era photography in the country.

The exhibition will coincide with the fortieth anniversary of the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. On view in Atlanta through October 5, 2008, “Road to Freedom: Photographs of the Civil Rights Movement, 1956–1968,” will be accompanied by a comprehensive catalogue. The exhibition will travel to the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, D.C. from November 8, 2008 through March 9, 2009, and the Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles, from November 16, 2009, through March 1, 2010.

“The photographs featured in ‘Road to Freedom’ have strong connections to Atlanta and the city’s role as the cradle of the Civil Rights Movement,” said Michael E. Shapiro, the High’s Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr. Director. “The High is committed to organizing exhibitions that are relevant to our community and representative of our unique role as the Southeast’s premiere art museum. Thanks to the generosity of several Atlanta benefactors, the High is now home to one of the nation’s most important collections of Civil Rights–era photography, and we’re delighted to share these photographs with the world through this compelling exhibition.”

Covering the twelve-year period between the Rosa Parks case in 1955–1956 and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s assassination in 1968, “Road to Freedom” will follow key events such as the Freedom Rides of 1961, the Birmingham hosings of 1963 and the Selma–Montgomery March of 1965. The exhibition will feature work by nearly fifty photographers, with recognized names such as Bob Adelman, Morton Broffman, Bruce Davidson, Doris Derby, James Karales, Builder Levy, Steve Schapiro, and Ernest Withers. Also included will be the work of press photographers and amateurs who made stirring visual documents of marches, demonstrations and public gatherings out of a conviction for the social changes that the movement represented. Key images will include Bob Adelman’s “Kelly Ingram Park, Birmingham,” 1963; Morton Broffman’s “Dr. King and Coretta Scott King Leading Marchers, Montgomery, Alabama,” 1965; Bill Eppridge’s “Chaney Family as they depart for the Funeral of James Chaney, Philadelphia, Mississippi,” 1964; and Builder Levy’s “I Am a Man/Union Justice Now, Memphis, Tennessee,” 1968.

“In many ways, the history of the Civil Rights Movement cannot be understood without contemplating the photographs that helped shape public opinion,” said Julian Cox, Curator of Photography at the High Museum of Art. “Most Civil Rights photographs were taken by professional photojournalists sympathetic to the cause and by activists motivated to record newsworthy events with an objective and informing eye. Because of the moral energy they radiate, these are among the most important and beautiful photographs of our nation.”

Supplementing the photographs will be archival documents, newspapers, magazines and posters from the period. These complementary materials will demonstrate how, in the hands of community organizers and newspaper and magazine editors, photographs played a pivotal role in shaping public opinion. Documents such as Rosa Parks' fingerprint paperwork and the blueprint of the bus on which she protested will be shown alongside related photographs for the very first time. Many of the photographs and documents in this exhibition will be accompanied by descriptive captions to provide deeper historical context. Also included will be several contemporary portraits, by photographer Eric Etheridge, of the young men and women who challenged segregation as Freedom Riders in 1961 and who are now senior citizens. Installed alongside these works will be a short documentary film, produced by Neal Broffman, that includes interviews with civil rights activists, photographers and reporters.

Among the works included in "Road to Freedom" are examples from two significant groups of photographs that have recently been acquired by the High. A portfolio of twenty-eight photographs by Danny Lyon, a leading photographer of the Civil Rights Movement, was given to the High Museum by Turner Broadcasting System, Inc., in 2006. Turner acquired them directly from Lyon in the 1990s, when he was hired as a photographer on the TNT movie "Freedom Song" about the 1960s campaign for voting rights in Mississippi. The portfolio includes photographs of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Representative John Lewis, Ralph Abernathy and other movement leaders.

The second is a group of thirty-three vintage photographs by Washington, D.C.-based freelance photographer Morton Broffman. In addition to working for several major publications, Broffman was the photographer for "The Cathedral Age," the magazine of the Washington National Cathedral, for more than twenty-five years until his death in 1992. He was a campaign photographer for Senator Eugene McCarthy, who ran for president in 1968, and took numerous photographs of the Civil Rights gatherings in Washington, D.C. and in Selma and Montgomery, Alabama. His collection includes images of marchers and movement leaders, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Coretta Scott King, Representative John Lewis, Ralph Abernathy, Joan Baez and James Baldwin. The photographs were given to the High by the Broffman family in 2006 in honor of the artist.

Organization and Support

"Road to Freedom: Photographs of the Civil Rights Movement, 1956–1968" is organized by Julian Cox, Curator of Photography at the High Museum of Art. This exhibition is supported by Sandra Anderson Baccus, The Atlanta Foundation, The Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, Toyota, American Express, Turner Broadcasting and an award from the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes that a great nation deserves great art.

The High worked in partnership with the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture—Director Lonnie G. Bunch III, Deputy Director Kinshasha Holman Conwill, and Chief Curator Jacquelyn Serwer—for intellectual and logistical support during the planning and publication stages of "Road to Freedom."

"After 1968: Contemporary Artists and the Civil Rights Legacy"

The events and actions of 1968 ignited progressive social change and helped to initiate political policies that radically reshaped American culture. "After 1968" is an exhibition of contemporary art organized by the High Museum to accompany "Road to Freedom" and will include recent and newly-commissioned works of art by a group of young, influential emerging artists and collectives. These artists will be challenged to process the visual and historical data of 1968 and produce projects in all media that honor the legacy of the Civil Rights Movement while exploring the continuing relevance of progressive social change that it encapsulates.

The artists who will participate in "After 1968," such as Hank Willis Thomas, approach issues of racial identity, commodity culture, American violence and political agency with a fresh point of view. These artists, born after 1968, have inherited a legacy that uniquely shapes their distinct worldview. Some of the work included in "After 1968" will be acquired by the High Museum of Art for its collection. The exhibition is curated by Jeffrey Grove, the Museum's Wieland Family Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, and is made possible by the generous support of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, American Express and Turner Broadcasting. "After 1968" will travel to the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, D.C. from November 8, 2008 through March 9, 2009, and to the California African American Museum, Los Angeles, from November 19, 2009 through March 7, 2010.

Photography at the High

“Road to Freedom: Photographs of the Civil Rights Movement, 1956–1968” showcases the High’s important and rapidly expanding photography collection, which includes the nation’s most comprehensive holding of Civil Rights–era photographs, encompassing more than 200 works, many of which have direct ties to Atlanta and the southeastern United States.

The High’s photography collection includes more than 3,900 prints, with notable examples of every photographic genre and process as well as many of the acknowledged masters in the field, including Julia Margaret Cameron, Carleton Watkins, George N. Barnard, Harry Callahan, Walker Evans and Richard Misrach. American photographs made between 1945 and 1980 are a particular strength of the collection. Additionally, large-scale prints by leading contemporary artists such as Sally Mann, Thomas Struth, Taryn Simon and Jeff Wall also feature prominently in the collection.

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 of Art 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 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 the largest arts center in the Southeast as well as one of the four largest in the nation. The Woodruff is unique in that it combines five 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, Young Audiences and the 14th Street Playhouse.

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