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#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

# HIGH RECEIVES GIFT OF 90 19<sup>th</sup>-CENTURY AMERICAN PAINTINGS AND SCULPTURES FROM WEST FOUNDATION

Includes Important Works by Frederic Edwin Church, Jasper Cropsey, Rembrandt Peale,
Hiram Powers, and Chauncey Bradley Ives;
Establishes High as Major Resource for 19<sup>th</sup>-Century American Art

On View in Permanent Collection Galleries Beginning October 29

ATLANTA, October XX, 2010 – The High Museum of Art today announced that it has received a major gift of 90 paintings and sculptures from the Atlanta-based West Foundation's nineteenth-century American collection. The donated works include 49 paintings and 41 sculptures, establishing the High as a major resource for nineteenth-century American art. The gift enriches the High's collection of American Art with important works including landscapes by Frederic Edwin Church and Jasper Cropsey, portraits by Rembrandt Peale and William Sydney Mount, and sculptures by Hiram Powers and Chauncey Bradley Ives. Beginning October 29, the newly-acquired paintings and sculptures will be on view within the permanent collection galleries on the second and third floors of the Stent Family Wing.

"Building a strong collection of American art has been an institutional priority for the High, and this recent gift has significantly diversified and enhanced our collection," said Michael E. Shapiro, the High's Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr. Director. "As one of the most significant gifts to the department of American Art in the museum's history, this collection distinguishes the High as a major center of neoclassical sculpture and nineteenth-century American Paintings."

The West Foundation's gift of neo-classical sculpture consists of 41 marble, plaster and bronze works, and was given in honor Gudmund Vigtel, Director Emeritus, and Michael E. Shapiro, the Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr. Director of the High Museum. The majority of the works are large-scale, neo-classical marbles executed between 1838 and 1887, including major works by William Wetmore Story, Hiram Powers, Edmonia Lewis, Harriet Hosmer, Thomas Ball, Randolph Rogers, and Thomas Crawford. The gift includes iconic objects that represent the *chef d'oeuvre* of an artist's production, such as Hiram Powers' "Proserpine," Randolph Rogers' "Nydia the Blind Flower Girl of Pompeii," and Harriet Hosmer's "The Sleeping Faun." Other highlights include:

- Nine marbles by Chauncey Bradley Ives, the largest single museum holdings of his sculpture
- A plaster bust by one of America's first artist-sculptors, William Rush, circa 1813
- An 1894 casting of Frederick William MacMonnies' bronze "Bacchante and Infant Faun"
- The 1878 version of "Cleopatra" by William Wetmore Story, of which an earlier version provided inspiration for author Nathaniel Hawthorne's 1860 novel "The Marble Faun"
- Edmonia Lewis' "Columbus," a rare carving depicting an explorer and a young Native American woman

Four Hudson River School paintings were given in honor of High Museum of Art Director Emeritus Gudmund Vigtel. These works by Frederic Edwin Church ("Twilight in the Catskills," 1849), Sanford

Robinson Gifford ("Mount Washington from the Saco River," 1858), Louis Remy Mignot ("Sunset Winter," 1862), and Thomas Worthington Whittredge ("Beach and Rocks," ca. 1870-80) show a range of response to the American landscape, both cultivated and wild. Vigtel, director of the High from 1963 to 1991, was instrumental in establishing the museum's American collection and served as an advisor for the West Foundation Collection. Shapiro, whose scholarly work has included subjects on American bronze sculpture, has been an active advocate for the growth of the Museum's sculpture collection.

In addition to the four Hudson River School Paintings, 45 other paintings were also given in honor of Vigtel. This collection features twenty-four landscapes, nine genre paintings, eight figure and portrait paintings, and four still life paintings. All but three were executed before 1900, with the strongest concentration of works painted before 1880. Highlights include:

- Two portraits by William Sydney Mount of Laetres and Laura Colton Chapman dated 1833
- One portrait by Rembrandt Peale of General Erastus Root, a major-general for the NY State militia, NY State senator and later a US Congressman, dated 1823
- An Italian landscape by Jasper Cropsey, titled "Ruins at Narni, Italy," from 1875
- Charles Courtney Curran's painting "Breakfast for Three"

"This gift of 19<sup>th</sup> Century American sculpture and paintings is a one of the most significant in the history of the High Museum," said Gudmund Vigtel. "This adds immeasurably to the Museum's collections which already include outstanding examples of American decorative arts and paintings of this period. I was involved in the selection of the works of art and remember keenly the collector's excitement as new pieces added to the importance of this collection, ranking it among the finest in the South."

### **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 12,000 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 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. Opening 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 <a href="https://www.woodruffcenter.org">www.woodruffcenter.org</a>.

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