

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**HIGH TO HOST LANDMARK EXHIBITION OF WORKS BY AMERICAN MODERNIST JOHN MARIN**

Marin Most Celebrated Artist of Mid-20th Century U.S.; Exhibition Features Rare Watercolors from the Collection of Alfred Stieglitz Given to the Art Institute of Chicago; High is Only Traveling Venue for the Exhibition

**John Marin's Watercolors: A Medium for Modernism
June 26–September 11, 2011**

ATLANTA, March 7, 2011 – The High Museum of Art will host “John Marin’s Watercolors: A Medium for Modernism,” the first major comprehensive exhibition addressing John Marin’s (1870–1953) modernist achievements in the watercolor medium. Comprising more than 100 works, the exhibition includes a group of 40 watercolors from the collection of Alfred Stieglitz donated to the Art Institute of Chicago in 1949 and 1956 by his wife Georgia O’Keeffe, many of which have rarely or never before been on public display. Additional selections of oil paintings, drawings and etchings will showcase Marin’s experimentation throughout his career. Organized by and debuting at the Art Institute of Chicago, “John Marin’s Watercolors: A Medium for Modernism” will be on view at the High from June 26 to September 11, 2011.



“In 1948, a nationwide survey published in *Look* magazine celebrated John Marin as America’s number-one artist. This is a testament to Marin’s exuberant and improvisational paintings, and how they are recognized today as critical to the evolution of American modernism even through to today,” says Stephanie Heydt, the High’s Terry and Margaret Stent Curator of American Art. “Less well known, though, is the extent to which Marin pushed the limits of the watercolor medium, establishing for a new generation of artists its inherent suitability to avant-garde expression.”

The exhibition reveals Marin’s working method as it developed through etching and into watercolor as well as his development of the natural properties of the medium to craft a new avant-garde approach. The exhibition showcases important intersections between media, artistic character and the politics of modern art, shedding new light on the question of why watercolor became such an important instrument for avant-garde artistic practice in the hands of Marin and other American artists of the Stieglitz circle, including Charles Demuth, Arthur Dove, Georgia O’Keeffe and Marsden Hartley.

A notable aspect of the exhibition is the particular attention paid to the frames that Marin made for his watercolors. He felt strongly about the mode of presentation for the works, and his choices of frames and mounts departed radically from the ornate European styles favored in the late 19th century. The Art Institute collection—including the 40 works from Alfred Stieglitz’s personal collection via Georgia O’Keeffe—contains the largest surviving museum holdings of Marin’s original mounts and frames, thus providing essential information about the presentation and promotion of modern watercolor during the first

half of the 20th century. The original frames and mounts have been researched and preserved, and replica frames based on these models have been built for the works without original frames, making the Art Institute's presentation of these works as close to Marin's intent as possible and showing, for the first time, how Marin's innovation and originality extended beyond his painted compositions.

Alfred Stieglitz and His Circle: American Moderns from Atlanta Collections

In conjunction with "John Marin's Watercolors," the High will also host "Alfred Stieglitz and His Circle: American Moderns from Atlanta Collections" from June 18 through September 25, 2011. The exhibition will consist of more than 40 works both borrowed from major private collections in Atlanta and drawn from the High's permanent collection. "Alfred Stieglitz and his Circle" will feature the watercolors, prints, paintings and photographs of both Stieglitz and the artists who engaged with him over his fifty-year career, from the early experimental works of Max Weber to the mature expressions of Marin and Hartley and the progressive photographic compositions of Paul Strand, Edward Steichen and Stieglitz himself. The works in this exhibition will emphasize the dynamic exchange of media that inspired Stieglitz and his circle.

John Marin

Born in 1870, John Marin was raised in New Jersey. He attended the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia and the Art Students League in New York. He traveled extensively in Europe, where he initially began developing his watercolor technique. Marin turned to watercolor around the time he met and began exhibiting with Alfred Stieglitz in his famous Gallery 291 in 1909, showing regularly at Stieglitz's galleries and nurturing a relationship that would last until Stieglitz's death in 1946. Like Winslow Homer, Marin also worked extensively in Maine. The watercolors in this exhibition span Marin's deep interest in urban architecture and the energy of modern New York, and explore his passionate relationship to the rough and dramatic Maine coastline. Marin enjoyed great success and visibility during his lifetime, both at home and in Europe, where his watercolors frequently represented the country's avant-garde in international exhibitions.

In 1936, Marin became the first American artist to be honored with a retrospective in all media at The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Many of Marin's contemporaries often felt compelled to focus on the artist's powerful deployment of his tools and materials when they spoke or wrote of his art. Working continuously in watercolor—and at various times in oils—he had a very personal way of manipulating the means at his disposal: he improvised, harnessing kinetic energy and transforming it into boldly colored marks. His brush was the conduit through which his joy in the visual world traveled from his person to the flat surface of his paper. Exploring the tension between representation and abstraction, Marin conjured in line and color his visceral reactions to his favorite subjects. By the time of death at the age of 83, Marin had ascended to the top ranks of American modernism, his canvases, watercolors and handmade frames continually pushing the field of expression to new limits.

Exhibition Organization and Support

"John Marin's Watercolors: A Medium for Modernism" is organized by the Art Institute of Chicago. It is curated by Martha Tedeschi, curator of prints and drawings at the Art Institute. Major support for this exhibition is generously provided in part by the Terra Foundation for American Art and the Henry Luce Foundation. Additional support is provided by Edward McCormick Blair and Catherine Hamilton. The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue. Published by the Art Institute in association with Yale University Press, the 192-page volume features essays written by exhibition curator Martha Tedeschi and Art Institute paper conservator Kristi Dahm. The catalogue also includes major contributions by Marin scholar Ruth E. Fine, curator for special projects in modern art at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.; Charles Pietraszewski, frame conservation technician; and Christine Conniff O'Shea, assistant conservator for mounting and framing, both at the Art Institute of Chicago. Underwriting for the catalogue has been generously provided by The Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation.

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 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 designed 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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John Marin (American, 1870–1953), "The Red Sun-Brooklyn Bridge," 1922. Alfred Stieglitz Collection.