



HIGH MUSEUM OF ART ATLANTA

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## HIGH MUSEUM OF ART APPOINTS BRETT ABBOTT AS NEW CURATOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

**ATLANTA, December 2, 2010** – Michael E. Shapiro, Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr. Director of the High Museum of Art, today announced the appointment of Brett Abbott as the Museum’s new curator of photography. Abbott currently serves as associate curator in the department of photographs at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, and will join the High on April 1, 2011. As curator of photography Abbott will be responsible for the High’s growing collection of more than 4,000 prints, with notable examples of every photographic genre and process as well as many of the masters in the field, including George N. Barnard, Julia Margaret Cameron, Walker Evans, Richard Misrach, Emmet Gowin and Sally Mann.

“In addition to his extensive knowledge of the history of photography and exciting repertoire of recent scholarship, Brett brings a fresh and energetic perspective to our curatorial team,” said David Brenneman, the High’s Director of Collections and Exhibitions. “We look forward to welcoming him to the High and his stewardship of the museum’s robust photography collection, as well as introducing him to Atlanta’s thriving photography community.”

A member of the curatorial staff at the J. Paul Getty Museum since 2002, Abbott has been integral in managing the museum’s important collection of photographs, including mounting exhibitions, researching and publishing the collection and building the holdings through acquisitions and gifts. He recently received the 2010 Lucie Award for Curator/Exhibition of the Year for his organization of the exhibition and its related publication “Engaged Observers: Documentary Photography since the Sixties,” the Getty’s highest-attended photography exhibition to date. Abbott also received the 2007 Lucie Award for Curator/Exhibition of the Year for “Edward Weston: Enduring Vision” and edited its companion publication, “Edward Weston’s Book of Nudes.”

The High began collecting photography in 1974 and has recently amassed the nation’s most comprehensive collection of civil rights-era photography with works by Ernest C. Withers, Danny Lyon, Bruce Davidson, Bob Adelman and others. The collection also includes large-scale prints by prominent contemporary artists such as Thomas Struth, Taryn Simon, Vik Muniz and Jeff Wall.

“It is a wonderful honor to be joining the High’s talented and innovative team and to be welcomed into Atlanta’s thriving arts community,” said Abbott. “The High has made significant contributions to the study of photography. I’m excited to be charged with building the collection in ways that will further distinguish it on the national level, while harnessing its resources for local arts education and outreach. To that end, I’m eager to begin working with the Museum’s supporters toward developing a vibrant roster of acquisitions and exhibitions that contributes to the field and inspires the community.”

Abbott received his Master of Arts in art history from Williams College in 2002 and his Bachelor of Arts in the same field from Stanford University in 2000. Prior to his current position, Abbott served as a curatorial intern in the department of photographs at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (2001), where he conducted research for the bibliography and introductory essay of Sarah Greenough’s “Alfred Stieglitz: The Key Set: The Alfred Stieglitz Collection of Photographs.” Abbott has also held roles at the Williams College Museum of Art (2000–2001) and the Santa Barbara Museum of Art (1999).

**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 art, significant holdings of European paintings and decorative art, 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](http://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 and Young Audiences.

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