



HIGH MUSEUM OF ART ATLANTA

1280 PEACHTREE STREET, N.E. • ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30309

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**HIGH MUSEUM OF ART TO CELEBRATE MAIRA KALMAN'S
CHILDREN'S BOOK ART WITH SUMMER RETROSPECTIVE**

Exhibition is fourth in a series organized in collaboration with The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art and presented in conjunction with a world premiere play based on the artist's work by the Alliance Theatre

ATLANTA, Feb. 12, 2019 – This summer, the High Museum of Art will premiere “The Pursuit of Everything: Maira Kalman’s Books for Children,” a colorful exhibition exploring the extensive catalog of Kalman’s imaginative stories and illustrations, which have delighted readers of all ages for more than 30 years.

Perhaps best known for her quirky New Yorker magazine covers and brilliant pictorial essays, Kalman (American, born 1949) has published more than a dozen books for adults and 18 acclaimed children’s books, beginning with the game-changing picture book “Stay Up Late” (1985), which gave visual form to the famous Talking Heads song from the album “Little Creatures.” Since then her works have followed the comic adventures of beloved characters, including a poet dog named Max Stravinsky and Pete the dog, and have addressed important historical people and events with books including “Looking at Lincoln” (2012) and the 9/11-inspired “Fireboat: The Heroic Adventures of the John J. Harvey” (2002).

Debuting at the High on June 22 and running through Sept. 15, 2019, “The Pursuit of Everything” will provide an immersive panorama of Kalman’s picture-book career spanning three decades. The more than 100 works on view will include original drawings and paintings from award-winning books including “Smartyants” (2003), about gluttonous canine Pete’s classroom antics, and “Next Stop Grand Central” (2001) as well as newer publications, among them “Bold & Brave: Ten Heroes Who Won Women the Right to Vote” (2018), authored by U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, and the illustrated cookbook “Cake” (2018), written in collaboration with the food writer Barbara Scott-Goodman.

Kalman’s stories weave a curious web of familiarity and imagination with illustrations that celebrate the visual splendor of everyday subjects through a lens that is all her own. Her books ignite curiosity and invite young readers to engage deeply with the world around them. Known for her surreal imagery, Kalman expertly combines sophisticated and hilarious text with beautifully rendered pictures, readily acknowledging the interplay between her writing and painting practice. Her stories have deeply personal roots featuring characters, settings and story lines drawn from the artist’s life and whimsical imagination. Kalman’s images reveal a

profound curiosity about shared history and the human experience through themes of adventure, exploration, friendship, dreams and the search for meaning.

Kalman paints with gouache on paper, favoring flat, highly saturated planes of color and an idiosyncratic use of space that imbue her works with surprises that will delight and excite the young and the young at heart. The exhibition will offer the opportunity for a different and satisfyingly intimate experience of Kalman's art.

Kalman says of her wide-ranging work, "The best children's books are as appealing to adults as they are to children. There have to be different levels of humor, different levels of reference, which allow a dialogue between adults and children. If you live with children, the kinds of conversations you have during the day range from the surreal to the mundane to the insane to the pedantic. And that language can be duplicated in writing because the world is all of those things."

"The Pursuit of Everything" marks the High's fourth collaboration with The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, which organized the show and will present it in Amherst, Mass., from October 13, 2019, through January 19, 2020.

"We are thrilled to partner again with the High to bring children's picture book art to Atlanta," said Ellen Keiter, chief curator at The Carle. "Kalman is an astute chronicler of our time as well as someone who makes history accessible. Museum visitors will revel in her lively imagery and witty observations, which vacillate between the comic and the profound."

"Both captivating and moving, Kalman's work challenges all of us to rediscover the childlike curiosity that lives deep down inside," said Virginia Shearer, the High's Eleanor McDonald Storza director of education. "We are delighted to welcome families back to the High for another exhibition that highlights the work of an acclaimed author and illustrator, and we're honored to continue our multiyear collaboration with our colleagues at The Eric Carle Museum, who are such wonderful partners."

In addition to original works from her books, also on view will be Kalman's illustrated correspondence with her two-year-old granddaughter Olive, fascinating personal notebooks, a colossal reproduction from New York's Grand Central Terminal, manuscripts, dummy books and other ephemera, including Kalman's collection of crazy-named candy bars arranged as haikus. The galleries will also feature sketches and images of Kalman's pictorial essays and covers for *The New Yorker*.

To bring the audience closer to her artistic process, Kalman repainted the opening scene from her Mikado-themed book "Sayonara, Mrs. Kackleman" (1989) expressly for the exhibition, and she will also create an installation of photographs and objects that inspire her, similar to the one in her studio.

"It is such a wonderful thing to meet a gifted illustrator or a talented writer, and Maira happens to be both," said Jane Bayard Curley, the exhibition curator. "She is just like her work: funny, smart, and an undisputed champion for the universal appeal of the picture book. Her highly

personal and somewhat eccentric worldview appeals to anyone who wants to be verbally and visually amused and challenged.”

Key works featured in the exhibition will include:

- Four hilariously surreal paintings from Kalman’s first picture book, “Stay Up Late,” a collaboration with David Byrne pairing Kalman’s paintings with the lyrics to the popular Talking Heads song
- An early self-portrait of the artist at age 7 sitting in a tree in Henry Hudson Park, from “Chicken Soup, Boots”
- A series of lovingly rendered portraits illustrating the adventures of Kalman’s beloved dog Pete
- Preliminary sketches and finished paintings from Kalman’s popular book series featuring her alter ego, Max the poet dog
- Delicate yet powerfully moving portraits of Sojourner Truth and Inez Milholland from “Bold & Brave: Ten Heroes Who Won Women the Right to Vote,” Kalman’s recent collaboration with U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand.

In conjunction with the exhibition, the [Alliance Theatre](#) at The Woodruff Arts Center, of which the High is also an arts partner, will present the world premiere play “Max Makes a Million,” from June 20 to July 21, 2019. Poetry, dance, jazz, visual art and dreams coalesce in this theatrical adaptation combining Kalman’s most notable books, adapted and directed by Liz Diamond.

This collaboration is the fourth in a series presented by the High and the Alliance Theatre in partnership with The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art. The Kalman project follows the successful exhibition and theatre productions based on the work of children’s book authors and artists Ashley Bryan (2017), Eric Carle (2016) and Mo Willems (2015). The presentations are made possible through a grant to The Woodruff Arts Center from the Lettie Pate Evans Foundation to expand programming and increase access for family audiences.

“The Pursuit of Everything” will be presented on the lobby and second levels of the High’s Anne Cox Chambers Wing.

About Maira Kalman

Born in 1949 in Tel Aviv, Israel, Kalman moved to Riverdale in New York’s Bronx borough with her family at age four. Now a Manhattan resident, Kalman has written and illustrated 18 children’s books, including “Ooh-la-la (Max in Love),” “What Pete Ate,” “Fireboat: The Heroic Adventures of the John J. Harvey,” “13 Words” (a collaboration with Lemony Snicket), “Why We Broke Up” (with Daniel Handler), “Looking at Lincoln” and “Thomas Jefferson: Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Everything.”

She is a frequent contributor to The New Yorker magazine and is well known for her collaboration with Rick Meyerowitz on its “New Yorkistan” cover in 2001. Additional projects include illustrating Strunk and White’s classic “The Elements of Style.” Kalman also created two

monthly online columns for The New York Times. The first, “The Principles of Uncertainty” (2006–07), was a narrative journal of her life. The second, “And the Pursuit of Happiness” (2009), was a yearlong exploration of American history and democracy. Both columns are now collected in book form, published by the Penguin Press.

Since 2003, Kalman has had eight exhibitions at the Julie Saul Gallery in New York City, which represents her work. In 2010, The Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, organized a retrospective of Kalman’s work titled “Maira Kalman: Various Illuminations (of a Crazy World),” which traveled to the Contemporary Jewish Museum (San Francisco), the Skirball Cultural Center (Los Angeles) and the Jewish Museum in New York. Her work has appeared in books published by The Museum of Modern Art and the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, in connection with 2014 exhibition “Maira Kalman: My Favorite Things.” Her longstanding contributions to literature, art and design lent her the opportunity to serve as a resident at the American Academy in Rome and to present two renowned TED talks in 2007 and 2014. With her son Alex, Kalman co-curated the exhibition “Sara Berman’s Closet,” which debuted at The Metropolitan Museum of Art and is now traveling to other museums.

Exhibition Organization and Support

“The Pursuit of Everything: Maira Kalman’s Books for Children” is organized by The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, Amherst, Massachusetts. Support for the High Museum’s presentation is provided by the Lettie Pate Evans Foundation. This exhibition is made possible by Exhibition Series Sponsors Delta Air Lines, Inc., and Turner; Premier Exhibition Series Supporters the Antinori Foundation, Sarah and Jim Kennedy, and Louise Sams and Jerome Grillhot; Benefactor Exhibition Series Supporter Anne Cox Chambers Foundation; Ambassador Exhibition Series Supporters Tom and Susan Wardell and Rod Westmoreland; and Contributing Exhibition Series Supporters the Ron and Lisa Brill Family Charitable Trust, Lucinda W. Bunnell, Corporate Environments, Marcia and John Donnell, W. Daniel Ebersole and Sarah Eby-Ebersole, Peggy Foreman, Robin and Hilton Howell, Mr. and Mrs. Baxter Jones, and Margot and Danny McCaul. Additional support is provided by 2018 Grandparents Circle of Support members Spring and Tom Asher, Anne Cox Chambers, Ann and Tom Cousins, Sandra and John Glover, Shearon and Taylor Glover, Sarah and Jim Kennedy, and Jane and Hicks Lanier and by Lavona Currie, Nena Griffith, Ellen and Tom Harbin, and Margaretta Taylor. Generous support is also provided by the Alfred and Adele Davis Exhibition Endowment Fund, Anne Cox Chambers Exhibition Fund, Barbara Stewart Exhibition Fund, Marjorie and Carter Crittenden, Dorothy Smith Hopkins Exhibition Endowment Fund, Eleanor McDonald Storza Exhibition Endowment Fund, The Fay and Barrett Howell Exhibition Fund, Forward Arts Foundation Exhibition Endowment Fund, Helen S. Lanier Endowment Fund, Isobel Anne Fraser–Nancy Fraser Parker Exhibition Endowment Fund, John H. and Wilhelmina D. Harland Exhibition Endowment Fund, Katherine Murphy Riley Special Exhibition Endowment Fund, Margaretta Taylor Exhibition Fund, RJR Nabisco Exhibition Endowment Fund, and Dr. Diane L. Wisebram.

About the High Museum of Art

Located in the heart of Atlanta, Georgia, the High Museum of Art connects with audiences from across the Southeast and around the world through its distinguished collection, dynamic

schedule of special exhibitions and engaging community-focused programs. Housed within facilities designed by Pritzker Prize–winning architects Richard Meier and Renzo Piano, the High features a collection of more than 17,000 works of art, including an extensive anthology of 19th- and 20th-century American fine and decorative arts; major holdings of photography and folk and self-taught work, especially that of artists from the American South; burgeoning collections of modern and contemporary art, including paintings, sculpture, new media and design; a growing collection of African art, with work dating from pre-history through the present; and significant holdings of European paintings and works on paper. The High is dedicated to reflecting the diversity of its communities and offering a variety of exhibitions and educational programs that engage visitors with the world of art, the lives of artists and the creative process. For more information about the High, visit www.high.org.

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