



**H I G H**

HIGH MUSEUM OF ART ATLANTA

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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**HIGH MUSEUM OF ART RELEASES “KAWS: DOWN TIME” EXHIBITION  
CATALOGUE**

**ATLANTA, March 15, 2013** –The High Museum of Art is pleased to announce the release of the exhibition catalogue “KAWS: DOWNTIME.” The catalogue is a counterpart to the High Museum of Art’s 2012 KAWS exhibition of the same title, which was curated by Michael Rooks, the Museum’s Wieland Family Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art.

KAWS (American, born 1974) is best known as an internationally admired graphic artist and creator of special-edition toys and other objects. For more than a decade KAWS has also produced paintings, drawings and sculptures, employing a cast of characters that has emerged in recent work through a strategy of appropriation and abstraction.

Combining both “high” and “low” cultural sources, KAWS’s works are influenced by such artists as Roy Lichtenstein, Keith Haring and Jeff Koons. As in the exhibition’s titular painting, these sources are often camouflaged by layers of imagery that become detached from their own specific points of reference in the resulting chaos of form and color.

In his catalogue essay Michael Rooks writes, “KAWS bridges the divide between the common, everyday and the privileged world that art represents, implicitly questioning systems of morality that prescribe cultural values and codes of conduct akin to the social critique imbedded in American pop art of the 1960s.”

“KAWS: DOWNTIME” is the first monographic exhibition catalogue dedicated solely to paintings, drawings and sculptures by KAWS while also revisiting in full the artist’s early interventional collaborations with fashion photographer David Sims (featuring model Kate Moss and musician Iggy Pop, among others). The 112-page book, illustrated with more than 125 images, was designed by New York-based Li, Inc. and includes rarely seen preparatory drawings used by KAWS in the planning of each painting in the exhibition.

The catalogue also includes a foreword by Michael E. Shapiro, Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr., Director of the High Museum of Art, and an essay by Michael Rooks as well as a checklist of the exhibition and KAWS’s complete exhibition history.

“KAWS: DOWNTIME”

Edited by Michael Rooks and Seth Zucker

Texts by Michael Rooks and Michael E. Shapiro

Designed by Li, Inc.

Hardcover with Italian cloth binding and nine-color tip-in; 112 pages, illustrated throughout

Printed in Italy on Swedish and Italian paper stocks

Four-color offset printing with additional spot color

84 matte-coated pages with 28 uncoated bible-paper pages

Size: 8½ x 11½ inches

Published by the High Museum of Art

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## **KAWS**

KAWS emerged as a street artist in the early 1990s, painting the pseudonym KAWS on walls and billboards in and around his hometown of Jersey City, and in New York City. By the mid-1990s he began modifying advertisements in bus shelters and on phone booths with paintings of his emblematic skull-and-crossbones motif. He continued to develop this image over the next few years, conducting guerilla interventions on advertisements in bus shelters and phone booths not only in New York City, but also in Paris, London, Berlin and Tokyo. This work led to direct collaborations with the commercial photographers and designers who produced the original ads, and it has been featured in numerous publications. It was most recently exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, as part of the groundbreaking exhibition “Art in the Streets.” KAWS studied at The School of Visual Arts in New York City and currently lives in Brooklyn. His work has been exhibited internationally in Japan, France, Spain and the Netherlands. KAWS is represented by Honor Fraser Gallery, Los Angeles, and Galerie Perrotin, Paris, Hong Kong, and New York.

## **Organization and Support**

“KAWS: DOWNTIME” was organized by the High Museum of Art, Atlanta, with generous support from Wish, and was curated by Michael Rooks, the High’s Wieland Family Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art. The exhibition was on view from Feb. 18 through May 20, 2012.

## **High Museum of Art**

Founded in 1905 as the Atlanta Art Association, the High is the leading art museum in the southeastern United States. With more than 13,000 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 first 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 Nov. 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, visit [high.org](http://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 visit [www.woodruffcenter.org](http://www.woodruffcenter.org).

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