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Michael E. Shapiro Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr. Director

Michael E. Shapiro has been the Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr. Director of the High Museum of Art since March 2000. Since joining the High's leadership team in 1995, Shapiro has overseen the reinstallation of the Museum's permanent collection, developed numerous partnerships with national and international art institutions to bring masterworks to the High, and spearheaded the High's 177,000 square-foot expansion by Renzo Piano that opened in November 2005, creating a "village for the arts" in Midtown Atlanta.

Shapiro began his tenure at the High as director of museum programs and chief curator, followed by deputy director and chief curator. In 1996, Shapiro was the managing curator for the Olympic-related exhibition "Rings: Five Passions in World Art," which led to an ongoing partnership with the Museum of Modern Art, New York (MoMA). Under Shapiro's curatorial leadership, this collaboration brought four outstanding exhibitions to Atlanta: "Matisse: Masterworks from The Museum of Modern Art," 1997; "Picasso: Masterpieces from The Museum of Modern Art," 1998; "Pop Art," 1999; and "Van Gogh's Starry Night: Three Masterpieces from The Museum of Modern Art," 2000. This series of exhibitions spurred the High's membership to unprecedented growth. In 2009, the High and MoMA launched a new phase of their collaboration to bring six exhibitions exclusively to Atlanta through 2013.

Shapiro has brought several ambitious and highly-successful exhibitions from Europe to the High, including "Impressionism: Paintings Collected by European Museums" in 1999, and "Paris in the Age of Impressionism: Masterworks from the Musée d'Orsay" in 2002. Through these two exhibitions, Shapiro began his longstanding relationship with Henri Loyrette, former director of the Musée d'Orsay and current director of the Musée du Louvre. Together, they developed the "Louvre Atlanta" partnership which brought hundreds of works of art from the Louvre's collections to Atlanta from October 2006 through September 2009. The partnership, which included student and staff exchanges, publications and symposia, brought in over 1.3 million visitors. In 2011, in collaboration with the directors at the High Louvre, Crystal Bridges, and the Terra Foundation, Shapiro launched a four-year collaboration devoted to producing programming and annual, focused installations of American and European art. In 2013, the Louvre and the High will collaborate again on "The Louvre and the Tuileries Garden."

In 2001, Shapiro embarked on a new series of exhibitions which focused on a small group of works or a single work of art. These exhibitions included "Michelangelo: Drawings and Other Treasures from the Casa Buonarroti, Florence," 2001; "Verrocchio's David Restored," 2003; and "The Gates of Paradise: Lorenzo Ghiberti's Renaissance Masterpiece," 2007. Exhibitions at the High that have continued to build on Shapiro's partnership and programming foundations include "Van Gogh to Mondrian: Modern Works from the Kröller-Müller Museum" (2004), "The Art of Romare Bearden" (2005), "Andrew Wyeth: Memory & Magic" (2006), "The First Emperor: China's Terracotta Army" (2008), which was the second-highest attended exhibition in the museum's history,

Prior to coming to the High Museum, he held positions as director of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, chief curator at The Saint Louis Art Museum, and as assistant professor in the Department of Art at Duke University, Durham, N.C. He continues to publish exhibition catalogues, books and articles.

Shapiro holds a Ph.D. from Harvard University, a master of arts degree from Williams College and bachelor of arts degree from Hamilton College. He specializes in 19th century and 20th century painting and sculpture. Shapiro has been awarded two of France's top cultural honors, the Officier des Arts et des Lettres (2011) and Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (2005) for his partnership with France in the advancement of the arts. Shapiro is secretary of the board of the Association of Art Museum Directors, and also serves on the board of the Terra Foundation for American Art. He is a member of the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Committee on the Visual Arts for Hamilton College, the External Review Committee for the Smithsonian Institution Art Museums, the Bizot Group and serves on the Visiting Committee for the Harvard University Art Museum.