

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**ROMARE BEARDEN AND DOX THRASH
EXHIBITIONS CELEBRATE LEGACY OF SOUTHERN-BORN ARTISTS**

Bearden exhibition spotlights major acquisition of artist's only known self-portrait

Thrash works reflect artist's personal journey through America's changing cultural and political landscape

ATLANTA, Dec. 30, 2014 – Southern-born artists Romare Bearden and Dox Thrash are the focus of two new exhibitions on view concurrently at the High Museum of Art. Opening Jan. 10, the exhibitions convey the inspiring stories of two artists who lived and worked during periods of great social change in the 20th century.

Co-founder of Spiral, the Civil Rights era collective of African-American artists, Bearden (1911-1988) infused his work with themes central to the Black experience. The exhibition “A Painter’s Profile: The High Celebrates Romare Bearden” marks the first time the High is exhibiting the recent acquisition “Profile/Part II, The Thirties: Artist with Painting and Model” (1981), the artist’s only known self portrait. “Dox Thrash: An American Journey” features more than 40 works on paper by the Georgia native, whose art offers a visual chronicle of his transition to life in the northern U.S. following the Great Migration.

“We are fortunate to have this rare opportunity to present work by two Southern-born artists who came of age during some of the most tumultuous yet hopeful times in our nation’s history,” said Stephanie Heydt, Margaret and Terry Stent curator of American art. “These exhibitions explore the challenges and achievements of these two extraordinary African American artists, both of whom were inspired to share their experiences growing up in the South and their transitions to new lives in the North as consistent themes in their work.”

“A Painter’s Profile: The High Celebrates Romare Bearden”**Jan. 10 through May 31, 2015**

In this exhibition, the High honors one of the 20th century’s most influential artists and the important recent acquisition of Bearden’s only known self portrait, “Profile/Part II, The Thirties: Artist with Painting and Model” (1981). This late-career collage is a retrospective work in which Bearden brings together important memories and spiritual influences from his youth in the South with broader art historical themes that guided his career for more than four decades. “Artist with Painting and Model” is the culminating work of Bearden’s “Profile” series, a two-part collection of collages based on Bearden’s memories of the 1930s and 40s, and it is Bearden’s only work that directly references his role as an artist.

In the collage, Bearden depicts himself in his studio holding a brush with his arm draped over a painting. This “painting within the painting” is a rendition of “The Visitation” (1941), a tempera on paper that Bearden considered to be among his key works. Elsewhere in the studio are motifs

that allude to his art historical sources and artistic training, contributing to the painting's powerful narrative of personal history that also recognizes the legacy of past and present masters of Western art.

This focus exhibition delves into the layered references of this stunning self portrait – from the Italian Renaissance to Matisse, African Art to the rhythms of jazz, from Bearden's reminiscences of his Southern roots to the powerful expression of his spirituality and experiences as a black man in America. In addition to "Artist with Painting and Model," the exhibition will feature the eight other Bearden works in the High's collection, which showcase the diversity of his practice and include collage, watercolors and various types of prints.

"Dox Thrash: An American Journey"

Jan. 10 through May 10, 2015

In 1911, at the age of 15, Georgia native Dox Thrash (1893-1965) left the South in search of a better life. He first settled in Chicago, where he took night classes at the Art Institute of Chicago and launched his artistic career. Thrash served in combat during World War II and eventually settled in Philadelphia. Accustomed to making ends meet with a number of odd jobs, including a stint in the circus and as a bellboy, janitor, and house painter, Thrash used the rich material of his everyday experiences as inspiration for his art. From visceral images of labor and Depression-era unrest that he created while working for the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s, to hazy recollections of his childhood in the rural South, Thrash's art chronicles, in the period of a few years, a journey that extended a lifetime. His works offer not only one man's observations but also a broad view of the larger cultural and political environment facing African-Americans at the dawn of the Civil Rights Era.

This exhibition will present 43 works on paper by Thrash, including watercolors, relief prints, lithographs, etchings and carborundum mezzotints—created using an innovative etching process Thrash invented. The exhibition will also highlight the High's recent acquisition of a print by Thrash titled "Georgia Cotton Crop" (1944-45).

Exhibition Organization and Support

"A Painter's Profile: The High Celebrates Romare Bearden" is organized by the High Museum of Art. "Dox Thrash: An American Journey" is organized by Georgia College Museum of Art, Milledgeville, and Dolan Maxwell Fine Arts, Philadelphia.

About the High Museum of Art

The High is the leading art museum in the Southeastern U.S. With more than 14,000 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, folk art and African art. The High is also dedicated to supporting and collecting works by Southern artists. For more information about the High, visit high.org.

About The Woodruff Arts Center

The Woodruff Arts Center is one of the largest arts centers in the world, home to the Alliance Theatre, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the High Museum of Art and Arts for Learning. Each year, these arts organizations play host to over 1.2 million patrons at the Woodruff Arts Center's Midtown Atlanta location, one of the only arts centers in the U.S. to host both visual and

performing arts on a single campus. Through its work with educators and schools, the Woodruff Arts Center serves over 300,000 students annually and is the largest arts educator in Georgia.

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