

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****HIGH MUSEUM OF ART TO HOST  
SIXTH ANNUAL COLLECTORS EVENING  
TO HELP GROW PERMANENT COLLECTION**

*New acquisitions to be chosen from six proposed works  
from the High's curatorial departments*

**ATLANTA, Dec. 29, 2015** – The High Museum of Art will host the sixth annual Collectors Evening on Jan. 29, 2016, from 6:30 to 10 p.m. at The St. Regis Atlanta. Six works will be presented for acquisition during the event from the High's curatorial departments. Attendees will cast their ballots, and the High will purchase the works of art with the most votes. Collectors Evening is open to the public, and tickets and additional information may be found at [www.high.org/CollectorsEvening](http://www.high.org/CollectorsEvening).

“By all accounts, Collectors Evening is among the museum's most anticipated events—great energy, great intellect, and most important, great art,” said Rand Suffolk, the High's newly appointed Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr., director. “It offers a wonderful opportunity to directly participate in building our permanent collection while showcasing our curators' knowledge, passion and competitive spirit.”

Collectors Evening was established in 2010 as a means to add works to the High's permanent collection. Following a reception during which attendees enjoy one-on-one conversation with the museum's curators, the evening continues with dinner, presentations by each of the curators and a few rounds of voting.

Since the inception of Collectors Evening, attendees have selected a total of 21 acquisitions for the museum. The four works acquired at the 2015 Collectors Evening were Lyle Ashton Harris' silver foil print “Untitled (Silver Handcuffs)” (2007), Alex Prager's photograph “Simi Valley” (2014), Vilhelm Kyhn's painting “Girl at a Window” (ca. 1870), and a Qur'an (ca. 16th–17th century) from Timbuktu, Mali.

This year's proposed acquisitions are:

**African Art**

“Female Figure from a Karan-wemba (Living Ancestress) Mask” (ca. 1875–1925), a wood-and-iron work by a Mossi artist from the Yatenga region of Burkina Faso, is the proposed acquisition for the African art department. The elegant, cubistically carved female figure originally surmounted a small, oval face mask (now an eroded fragment). The sculpture was created to honor a very elderly woman who was given the rank of “living ancestress,” a conduit for communication between the living and the spirits of her family's ancestors. In the figure, she is portrayed not as elderly but as a youthful woman at the height of her physical beauty. Worn with a fiber costume attached to its rim that covered the dancer's body, the mask was used in the masquerade performed at the funeral of the ancestress and during annual masquerades to

celebrate and commemorate her community's deceased elders. This sculpture is one of a group of at least eight closely related masks attributed to a single workshop that flourished in the Mossi kingdom of Yatenga.

### **American Art**

The proposed acquisition for the American art department is James Henry Daugherty's oil on canvas "Portrait of Industrial Designer, John Vassos" (ca. 1935). Among American modernists, Daugherty was one of the first exponents of abstract color painting, which he often incorporated into his figurative works. Daugherty's vibrant portrait of the prominent industrial designer John Vassos aligns the artist's strengths in pictorial narrative with his modernist commitment to color and abstraction. In the painting, Vassos—an icon of modern design best known for his graphic art and his 1933 design of the now ubiquitous subway turnstile—appears embedded in a space of his own design. Bands of bright, jolting color layer in abstract, pulsating forms around Vassos, who is depicted at ease, leaning back in a traditional wood slat chair—a curious contrast to the deco graphics and hard-edged design most associated with the sitter. This portrait would be the first in the High's collection to feature an industrial designer and offers an excellent example of the important early-20th-century experiments with color theory and abstraction.

### **Decorative Arts and Design**

"Smoke Chair (Thonet Model No. 16, ca. 1865)" (2016) by Dutch designer Maarten Baas is the proposed acquisition for the decorative arts and design department. The High would commission Baas to transform a historic Michael Thonet "Chair Model No. 16" (ca. 1865) by torching the piece of furniture and then sealing it. In his "Smoke" series, which debuted in 2002, Baas manipulates existing works by singeing them with a blowtorch and refinishing the pieces, giving them an entirely new character and individuality. The fragile charcoal surface is preserved with a multi-layered epoxy resin to restore the piece's functionality after it has been scorched. "Chair Model No. 16" is an example of Michael Thonet's early innovations in bentwood furniture. The caning on this example has been damaged, making it an ideal candidate for the proposed transformation. The chair is part of a suite of furnishings by Thonet that includes the High's "Settee Model No. 16," so this commission would set up a powerful pairing, uniting the museum's historic collection with contemporary design in a visible, tangible way. The acquisition would also add depth to the High's holdings of works by Baas, which include "Analog Digital Clock" (2009) and "Sweepers Clock" (2009).

### **Folk and Self-Taught Art**

The proposed acquisition for the folk and self-taught art department is "The Dirty Spoon Cafe" (2002), a large-scale, hand-tooled leather work by Georgia-born artist Winfred Rembert (b. 1945). Rembert's intricately detailed and vibrantly colored leather paintings document the joy and suffering of his personal odyssey through the Jim Crow South, from the good times he celebrated at all-black establishments like the Dirty Spoon Cafe to the forced labor he endured as a prisoner in a chain gang. This lively nightlife scene is a stunning example of Rembert's facility with leather, which he dyes, paints, tools and varnishes. The rhythmic, interlocking figures in the work recall the dynamic scenes of African American life by great artists like Archibald Motley, Romare Bearden and Jacob Lawrence. The piece would also complement many works in the High's folk and self-taught art collection, from the brightly painted wood relief carvings by Elijah Pierce and Herbert Singleton to Jessie Telfair's "Freedom Quilt."

## **Modern and Contemporary Art**

“Indian Country” (2015) by New York–based artist Stanley Whitney is the proposed acquisition from the department of modern and contemporary art. The 6-foot-square painting is composed as an irregular, multi-colored grid. The adjacent squares produce a vibration of optical color and generate a rhythm across the surface of the canvas—vertically, horizontally and diagonally.

Whitney has said that color is the subject of his work and that each color has its own autonomy while corresponding to its neighbor. Whitney’s grid paintings of recent years are variations on a theme that evokes Ornette Coleman’s jazz improvisations and painter Morgan Russell’s “synchronies” of the early 20th century. As in the work of the Synchronists, color in Whitney’s paintings suggests the synesthetic blending of the senses—“hearing” color, “seeing” sound. His work is also resonant with the abstract painting of his fellow Yale University alumni Peter Halley and Chris Martin. “Indian Country” complements important works in the museum’s collection by Martin and Halley as well as paintings by Katherine Bernhardt, Sam Gilliam, Mary Heilmann, Ellsworth Kelly, Sean Scully and Joan Snyder.

## **Photography**

“Vik, 2 Years Old” (2014) by Brazilian-born photographer Vik Muniz is the proposed work for the High’s photography collection. Muniz is distinguished as one of the most innovative and creative artists of the 21st century. Renowned for creating what he calls “photographic delusions,” Muniz works with a dizzying array of unconventional materials to painstakingly design narrative subjects before recording them with his camera. This large-scale photograph (approximately 8 by 6 feet) is from the artist’s “Album” series, in which he draws inspiration from specific typologies found in family photo albums of the early 20th century. Muniz fastidiously builds replicas of those generic and familiar moments by collecting thousands of discarded vernacular snapshots at flea markets, cutting them up into small pieces and pasting them together as a collage to form a scene. This photograph is a re-creation of a snapshot of the artist himself when he was 2 years old. “Vik, 2 Years Old” would be the fourth work by Muniz to enter the museum’s collection and is a perfect complement to the High’s self-portrait of Muniz as a mature artist, “Khyber Pass, Self-Portrait as an Oriental, after Rembrandt,” from the “Pictures of Junk” series (2005).

## **Collectors Evening Support**

Presenting Sponsor Delta Air Lines is the official airline of Collectors Evening 2016. Additional support is provided by Avyve, BNY Mellon, The St. Regis Atlanta, the Tavistock Group and Private Wealth Group of Arnall Golden Gregory.

## **About the High Museum of Art**

The High is the leading art museum in the southeastern United States. With more than 15,000 works of art in its permanent collection, the High Museum of Art has an extensive anthology of 19th- and 20th-century American art; a substantial collection of historic and contemporary decorative arts and design; significant holdings of European paintings; a growing collection of African American art; and burgeoning collections of modern and contemporary art, photography, folk and self-taught 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](http://high.org).

## **About The Woodruff Arts Center**

The Woodruff Arts Center is one of the largest arts centers in the world, home to the Tony

Award-winning Alliance Theatre, the Grammy Award-winning Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and the High Museum of Art, the leading art museum in the Southeast. Each year, these centers of artistic excellence play host to more than 1.2 million patrons at The Woodruff Arts Center's midtown Atlanta location, one of the only arts centers in the United States to host both visual and performing arts on a single campus. The Woodruff Arts Center also offers remarkable educational programming through each of its arts partners. Through the combined efforts of its arts partners, The Woodruff Arts Center serves more than 300,000 students annually and is the largest arts educator in Georgia. [www.woodruffcenter.org](http://www.woodruffcenter.org)

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