

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****FIFTH ANNUAL COLLECTORS EVENING SECURES FOUR  
NEW ACQUISITIONS FOR THE HIGH MUSEUM OF ART**

**ATLANTA, Feb. 12, 2015**—More than three hundred guests voted to secure four new acquisitions of works of art for the High Museum of Art at the fifth annual Collectors Evening on Jan. 31, 2015, at The St. Regis Atlanta. The selected pieces are 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.

"Collectors Evening is a rare occasion when the High's curators go head-to-head to secure votes for their works of art. The competition this year was spirited and creative, and attendees were treated to some lively curatorial performances," said David Brenneman, the High's director of collections and exhibitions and Frances B. Bunzl Family curator of European art. "It was great fun and serious work at the same time."

One of the selected works, Prager's large photograph "Simi Valley," will be featured in the High's upcoming exhibition ["The Coca-Cola Bottle: An American Icon at 100."](#) The other works will go on view in the Museum's permanent collection galleries by April 2015.

Following the selection of the first three works, a fourth acquisition was made possible by the proceeds from the evening's live auction, which featured four lots for bidding. Lots included Louisiana P. Bendolph's etching "Doorway to a Dream" (2013); Matthew Pillsbury's 2014 photograph "Vermeer's The Art of Painting—Vienna Kunstristorisches Museum"; a chef's table dinner at the new Atlas Buckhead restaurant at The St. Regis Atlanta and a tour of a private art collection; and two tickets to the 2016 Elton John Aids Foundation Oscars viewing party plus behind-the-scenes tours of the Getty Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA).

Collectors Evening, established in 2010 to build and improve the Museum's permanent collection, invites guests to take an active role in choosing the next works of art to join the permanent collection. During the evening, each of the High's curators presents a work of art as a potential new acquisition for their collection. Guests then cast their votes, and the High purchases the works of art that receive the most votes.

More information about this year's chosen works are below:

**Modern and Contemporary Art**

"Untitled (Silver Handcuffs)," (2007) by Lyle Ashton Harris was acquired for the department of modern and contemporary art. The image was originally created for a special issue of The New York Times focusing on the status of American people and produced as a pigmented inkjet print.

“Untitled (Silver Handcuffs)” is a special edition of the image printed on silver foil. Harris’ diverse artistic practice includes photographic media, collage, installation and performance, and his work explores intersections between the personal and the political, examining the impact of ethnicity, gender and desire on the contemporary social and cultural dynamic. Harris particularly concerns himself with how gender and race are constructed and perceived through the representation of the black male body in the public sphere. Harris is the 2014 recipient of the High’s David C. Driskell Prize, an award recognizing a scholar or artist whose work makes an original and important contribution to the field of African American art or art history. “Untitled (Silver Handcuffs)” is the only edition in a public collection.

### **Photography**

The work acquired for the High’s photography collection is “Simi Valley” (2014) by American photographer Alex Prager. Prager has garnered international acclaim for her work in recent years, and she is known for staging scenes with the use of Hollywood sets and actors. The resulting images hover ambiguously between appearing documentary and fictional. There are often subtle references to images from the history of art within her photographs, as in this work, which draws compositional inspiration from a famous image by Robert Frank of a New Orleans train station. This print is the second by Prager to enter the High’s collection, and its size (more than eight feet wide) and cinematic quality complement the High’s existing holdings of work by Jeff Wall and Thomas Struth.

### **European Art**

Danish Romantic painter Vilhelm Kyhn’s “Girl at a Window” (ca. 1870) was acquired for the European art department. The oil-on-canvas work is a “picture within a picture” featuring a young woman observing the snow-laden winter landscape from a large window. The theme of the woman or girl in a domestic interior at or near a window can be traced back to the 17th century and to the works of certain Dutch artists like Johannes Vermeer. During the Romantic Period in the early 19th century, this theme became central to the work of Northern European artists, especially those working in Germany and Denmark. This quietly poetic painting by Kyhn captures the spirit of Danish Golden Age painting and is the first painting by a Scandinavian artist to enter the High’s collection.

### **African Art**

A Qur’an (ca. 16th-17th century) and a collection of beads from Timbuktu, Mali, were acquired for the African art department. The book is a rare example of a sub-Saharan African Qur’an with fine, hand-written Arabic script on Venetian paper in a hand-tooled casing of goat hide. Like the earliest Qur’ans, this example is unbound, and its small scale suggests that it was carried in a pocket as a personal amulet. Also part of this acquisition is a dazzling collection of nearly 800 beads including ancient stone beads, fossil beads in the form of sand dollars, African and European-manufactured glass trade beads from Venice and Czechoslovakia, and beads of semi-precious stones such as agate, carnelian, quartz and amazonite. Together, the Qur’an and beads represent a timeline of cross-cultural interactions between Timbuktu and other regions on the continent, with Europe, and beyond, throughout the ages.

### **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 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, visit [high.org](http://high.org).

### **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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**DIGITAL IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**

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