

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**HIGH MUSEUM OF ART CELEBRATES FIRST THOMAS WILMER DEWING PAINTING TO ENTER ITS AMERICAN ART COLLECTION**

Free Nov. 6 seminar will offer exclusive access to the recent acquisition, made possible by a generous gift from The Sara Giles Moore Foundation

ATLANTA, Aug. 31, 2017 – The High Museum of Art will celebrate the recent acquisition of “A Reading” (ca. 1909), the first work by American Gilded Age artist Thomas Wilmer Dewing (1851–1938) to enter its collection, with an intimate free seminar on Nov. 6, 2017, from 9 a.m. to noon.

The “Painters, Patrons and Architects: Thomas Wilmer Dewing and the Gilded Age” seminar will feature behind-the-scenes gallery access and an in-depth examination of the painting led by Stephanie Mayer Heydt, the High’s Margaret and Terry Stent curator of American art; Linda Merrill, senior lecturer of art history at Emory University; and frame historians Tracy Gill and Simeon Lagodich. Tickets are free, but reservations are required. Space is limited, so early registration is encouraged. Lunch will be provided. Register online at www.high.org.

The oil-on-linen painting is an elegant example of Dewing’s signature style. A beautiful woman poses alone in a room. Through the model’s position—relaxed in a chair, lost in thought, an open book before her—Dewing gestures toward the absorptive sensation reading can inspire. The Colonial-era Windsor chair hints at the artist’s fascination with simple, harmonious forms.

Dewing’s classic, ethereal style was well suited to the cosmopolitan tastes of many turn-of-the-century collectors. Top among them was the successful industrialist Charles Lang Freer, who would later establish the Smithsonian Institution’s Freer Collection. Dewing also collaborated with some of the era’s most notable tastemakers, including the architect Stanford White, who designed exquisite frames for his friend’s paintings, including “A Reading.” White drew from historical patterns in classical Renaissance architecture to design frames that complemented



Thomas Wilmer Dewing (American, 1851–1938), “A Reading,” ca. 1909, oil on linen. High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from The Sara Giles Moore Foundation in memory of Sara Giles Moore, 2017.27.

the delicate, subtle surfaces of Dewing's paintings. His frame for "A Reading," with its low profile and textured detail, draws the eye to the painting and minimizes the amount of shadow cast upon it.

The Nov. 6 seminar will feature talks by each presenter, followed by conversations in the galleries to offer a rich perspective on the trends and styles of America's Gilded Age. After Heydt's presentation on the recent acquisition, Merrill will discuss the cultural impact of Freer, the American collector who championed Dewing and his artistic circle in the United States. Frame historian Gill will present on the artistic relationship between Dewing and White, whose frames have become almost as sought after as the paintings themselves, and frame historian Lagodich will guide attendees through a behind-the-scenes tour of American Gilded Age frames in the High's collection. A luncheon will follow.

The acquisition and seminar are made possible through a generous gift from Atlanta's The Sara Giles Moore Foundation in honor of its namesake, who was a long-time supporter of the High. Moore dedicated herself to strengthening Atlanta's cultural institutions. She gave generously to the High and served on its Board of Directors; The Foundation's gift marks her important legacy. "A Reading" currently hangs in the gallery named in honor of Moore and her husband, O. Ray Moore, located on the third level of the High's Stent Family Wing.

"We are grateful to The Sara Giles Moore Foundation for their generous support of this acquisition, which is an important addition to our strong holdings of early 20th-century American painting," said Rand Suffolk, the High's Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr., director.

"This painting is the first significant figurative work from the Tonalist movement to enter the collection, and it boasts an original Stanford White frame—an object of aesthetic and historical value in its own right," said Heydt. "Without the support of The Sara Giles Moore Foundation, it would not have been possible for us to acquire, conserve and celebrate this exquisite work."

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 historical 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. Through its education department, the High offers programs and experiences that engage visitors with the world of art, the lives of artists and the creative process. For more information about the High, visit high.org.

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