

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****HIGH MUSEUM OF ART CURATOR MICHAEL ROOKS SELECTED AS  
2015 NEXUS AWARD RECIPIENT FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO  
CONTEMPORARY ART**

**ATLANTA, March 27, 2015** – The High Museum of Art is pleased to announce that Wieland Family Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art Michael Rooks has been selected as the recipient of the sixth annual Nexus Award.

Presented by the Atlanta Contemporary Art Center (The Contemporary), the Nexus Award is a public acknowledgment of individuals, groups or organizations that have made significant contributions to the contemporary arts landscape. The award celebrates local leaders who are instrumental in making Atlanta an exceptionally vibrant arts community. Rooks will receive the Nexus Award at a ceremony and reception to be held at The Contemporary on May 19, 2015.

“It is humbling and incredibly meaningful to join the esteemed group of Nexus Award honorees,” said Rooks. “Connecting the High Museum of Art with artists and the people who nurture them in Atlanta has been a priority to me since my first conversation about my position at the High. That responsibility has since become a joy for me personally, an inspiration, and a critically important aspect of what I do.”

“We congratulate Michael on this significant honor, and we are delighted that his steadfast efforts to connect the Museum with Atlanta’s robust artist community are being broadly recognized,” said Michael E. Shapiro, Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr., director of the High.

Rooks joined the High as Wieland Family Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art in January 2010. During his tenure at the High, Rooks has presented exhibitions including “Workshopping: An American Model of Architectural Practice” (U.S. Pavilion at the 12th International Architecture Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia in 2010), “KAWS: DOWN TIME” (2012), and “Picasso to Warhol: Fourteen Modern Masters” (2011-2012) and “Fast Forward: Modern Moments 1913-2013” (2012-2013) as part of the High’s MoMA Series. In conjunction with “Fast Forward,” Rooks commissioned major works by Sarah Sze and Aaron Curry. Current and upcoming exhibitions include “Imagining New Worlds: Wifredo Lam, José Parlá and Fahamu Pecou” (February 2015), “Alex Katz, This Is Now” (June 2015), and “Sprawl: Drawing Outside the Lines” (July 2015), which follows the very popular summer 2013 exhibition “Drawing Inside the Perimeter” that featured the work of more than 30 Atlanta-based artists.

Prior to the High, Rooks served as the Chief Curator and Director of Exhibitions and Artist Relations at Haunch of Venison, a contemporary art gallery in New York. Rooks has also held curator positions at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (MCA), The Contemporary Museum Honolulu, and at the Honolulu Academy of Arts.

He received both a Master of Arts degree in modern art history, theory and criticism (1995) and Bachelor of Fine Arts degree (1988) from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. At MCA,

Rooks organized “Roy Lichtenstein: Interiors,” a posthumous survey focusing on Lichtenstein’s late work; “War: What is it Good For,” the first museum response to the Iraq war; and “H. C. Westermann,” a traveling retrospective of this highly influential but underappreciated artist. He has lectured on postwar and contemporary art at museums and university campuses in the United States, including the University of Chicago’s Smart Museum. In addition, Rooks has conducted public interviews with contemporary artists including Gilbert & George, Yoshitomo Nara, Art Spiegelman, Julie Mehretu and others for audiences in Chicago, Honolulu and Atlanta. Besides authoring and contributing to four monographs on H. C. Westermann, most recently in a catalog published by David Zwirner Gallery, Rooks has written about the work of Roy Lichtenstein and is co-author of the exhibition catalogue “Situation Comedy: Humor in Recent Art,” a group show that Rooks co-curated for Independent Curators International (iCI). Rooks was appointed commissioner and co-curator of the U.S. Pavilion at the 12th International Architecture Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia in 2010 and is a member of ActArt, the President’s committee for contemporary art and social action.

### **High Museum of Art**

The High is the leading art museum in the southeastern United States. 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 United States 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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