

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**HIGH MUSEUM OF ART TO PRESENT FIRST MUSEUM EXHIBITION
IN THE US EXPLORING THE EMERGENCE OF SNEAKER CULTURE**

ATLANTA, June 4, 2015 – In summer 2016, the High Museum of Art will present “The Rise of Sneaker Culture,” the first museum exhibition in the United States to examine the complex and fascinating social history and design evolution of the sneaker, from its origins in the mid-19th century to its role in the present day as a symbol of urban culture and marker of masculine identity.

“The Rise of Sneaker Culture” features more than 150 sneakers, including iconic and incredibly rare shoes from the 1830s to today, some of which have never been publicly exhibited. The touring exhibition is organized by the American Federation of Arts (AFA) in collaboration with the Bata Shoe Museum, Toronto (BSM), and will be on view at the High from June 11 through Aug. 14, 2016.

“What we choose to wear and the impact of those choices are powerful components of design,” said Sarah Schleuning, curator of decorative arts and design at the High. “‘The Rise of Sneaker Culture’ is an in-depth exploration of the creativity and diversity of design within the singular typology of sneakers as well as the social significance of their evolution. The sneaker is a ubiquitous object that through this exhibition can be experienced and appreciated in a new way.”

The featured sneakers are drawn from the archives of manufacturers such as Adidas, Converse, Nike, Puma and Reebok; the collections of the Bata Shoe Museum, Kosow Sneaker Museum and Northampton Museums and Art Gallery; and private collectors such as hip-hop legend Darryl “DMC” McDaniels, sneaker guru Bobbito García, and Dee Wells of Obsessive Sneaker Disorder. Highlights include an 1860s spiked running shoe, an original 1917 Converse All Star/Non Skid, a 1936 track shoe, an original Nike Air Force 1 and early Adidas Superstars. Also featured are sneakers by Prada and other major fashion design houses as well as contemporary sneaker collaborations with prominent figures such as Damien Hirst, Jeff Staple and Kanye West. Significant works from the archives of Nike include sneakers spanning the career of design legend Tinker Hatfield and a complete presentation of Air Jordans I–XX3, which highlights the role this coveted series of shoes has played in the rise of contemporary sneaker culture.

The shoe selections are richly contextualized with film footage, interactive media, photographs and design drawings, creating a narrative of the social history, technical innovation, fashion trends and marketing campaigns that have shaped the sneaker over the past two centuries.

“The Rise of Sneaker Culture” is organized into six major sections. The first section features a selection of shoes highlighting the past and future of sneaker design, including the Nike Air

Trainer 1, the Reebok Pump prototype, and the GE x Android Homme “The Missions” Moon Boot. The second section examines how technological advances, such as the development of vulcanized rubber, and cultural shifts during the Industrial Revolution led to the establishment of the sneaker as footwear for the elite leisure class. In its third section, spanning the 1920s to the early 1970s, the exhibition explores the design innovations of specialized athletic shoes and the commercialization of the sneaker as a symbol of the nationalistic pursuit of physical perfection.

The fitness craze of the 1970s and ’80s elevated the sneaker to a symbol of social status and a signifier of conspicuous consumption. The fourth section of the exhibition traces the creativity and inventiveness that shifted the sneaker from the gym to the street, where high-end designs became fashion-forward dress. The fifth and sixth sections focus on how sneakers became vanguards of today’s urban culture, transforming into treasured personal possessions and collector’s items through links to fashion design, music and professional sports.

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue published by the AFA in partnership with the Bata Shoe Museum and Rizzoli. The catalogue features an in-depth look at the history of sneaker culture by exhibition curator Elizabeth Semmelhack as well as interviews, personal stories and insights from 24 influential contributors, including former Jordan Brand Footwear Design Director D’Wayne Edwards, NBA champion Walt “Clyde” Frazier, Beastie Boys member Adam “Ad-Rock” Horovitz, U.S. Open tennis champion Stan Smith, creative designer Sophia Chang, fashion designer Jeremy Scott, Details magazine Style Director Eugene Tong, footwear designer Christian Louboutin, founding creative director of Def Jam Records Cey Adams and contemporary artist Tom Sachs.

Exhibition Organization and Support

“The Rise of Sneaker Culture” is organized by the American Federation of Arts and the Bata Shoe Museum. The exhibition is curated by Elizabeth Semmelhack, senior curator of the Bata Shoe Museum.

Generous support for the national tour of the exhibition is provided by Macy’s.

Support for the High Museum of Art’s presentation of the exhibition is generously provided by Delta Air Lines, wish Foundation and The Shops Buckhead Atlanta.

About the High Museum of Art Decorative Arts and Design Department

The High’s decorative arts and design collection is the most comprehensive survey of American decorative arts in the southeastern United States, with more than 2,300 objects dating from 1640 to the present. Strengths of the collection include works of 20th- and 21st-century design that explore the intersections between art and design, handcraft and technology, and innovation and making. Highlights include the Virginia Carroll Crawford Collection of American decorative art, with important works by Alexander Roux, Herter Brothers, Tiffany & Co. and Frank Lloyd Wright. Other notable gifts include the Frances and Emory Cocke Collection of English Ceramics from 1640 to 1840. Recent acquisitions focusing on design from the 20th and 21st centuries include key additions of Gerrit Rietveld’s “Red/Blue Chair” (1918), Ron Arad’s “Blo-Void 1” chair (2006) and Joris Laarman’s “MX3D (Dragon Bench) (Prototype)” (2014).

About the 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 Museum of Art has an extensive anthology of 19th- and 20th-century American art; a significant 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.

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

About the American Federation of Arts

The American Federation of Arts is the leader in traveling exhibitions internationally. A nonprofit institution founded in 1909, the AFA is dedicated to enriching the public’s experience and understanding of the visual arts through organizing and touring art exhibitions for presentation in museums around the world, publishing exhibition catalogues featuring important scholarly research, and developing educational programs. For more information, visit www.afaweb.org.

About the Bata Shoe Museum

The Bata Shoe Museum in Toronto, Canada, is an internationally acclaimed museum that boasts a collection of more than 13,000 artifacts spanning 4,500 years of history and actively supports a mandate to collect, research, exhibit and publish on the cultural, historical, and sociological value of footwear. For more information, visit www.batashoemuseum.com.

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Media contacts:

Marci Tate
Manager of Public Relations
marci.tate@woodruffcenter.org
404-733-4585

Anne Randolph Powell

Public Relations Specialist
annerandolph.powell@woodruffcenter.org
404-733-4423