



HIGH MUSEUM OF ART ATLANTA

1280 PEACHTREE STREET, N.E. • ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30309

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**HIGH MUSEUM OF ART TO PRESENT FIRST MUSEUM SURVEY FOR  
EXPERIMENTAL DUTCH DESIGNER JORIS LAARMAN**

***Spring 2018 exhibition will feature groundbreaking designs from the High's collection, which represents the second largest public repository of Laarman's work in the world***

**ATLANTA, Sept. 6, 2017** – From furniture generated by algorithms to a “living” lampshade made of genetically modified cells, the work of pioneering Dutch designer Joris Laarman (born 1979) redefines the boundaries between art, science and technology. The High Museum of Art will offer an in-depth look at his innovative oeuvre as the exclusive Southeast venue for “Joris Laarman Lab: Design in the Digital Age.” The exhibition, on view Feb. 17 through May 13, 2018, will feature numerous designs from the High’s collection, which boasts the largest public holdings of the Dutch artist’s work outside of his home country.

Organized by the Groninger Museum, the Netherlands, “Joris Laarman Lab” is the first museum survey to comprehensively explore Laarman’s creative prowess and curiosity through a range of works dating from 2004 to the present that blend emerging technologies with skilled craftsmanship. Furniture designs, applied projects and experiments from every phase of his career are presented alongside related videos, sketches and renderings that illustrate the Joris Laarman Lab’s creative and production processes. Founded in 2004, the Lab is a multidisciplinary hub of scientists, engineers, programmers and craftspeople who explore the possibilities of design through research, experimentation and groundbreaking technology.

“Laarman and his Lab are design pioneers and idea detonators. Laarman’s intellectual, thoughtful and collaborative approach to design propels him to explore new means and methods for creating, resulting in a remarkably innovative and beautiful body of work,” said Sarah Schleuning, High Museum of Art curator of decorative arts and design. “We have been supporting Laarman’s work for nearly a decade through major acquisitions and commissions, such as the ‘Digital Matter’ voxel tables he created for our 2011 exhibition ‘Modern by Design.’ It is an honor to further the High’s dedication to his practice by presenting an expansive view of Laarman’s landmark contributions to contemporary design.”

“On the heels of our piazza installation series and such exhibitions as ‘Making Africa,’ ‘Sneaker Culture’ and ‘Iris van Herpen: Transforming Fashion,’ which the High co-organized with the Groninger, ‘Joris Laarman Lab’ builds on the Museum’s commitment to showcasing design in all

forms and to championing the visionaries who conceive the world we experience,” said Rand Suffolk, Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr., director of the High Museum of Art.

Arranged into sections focused on the designer’s major bodies of work, the exhibition includes groundbreaking projects Laarman created as a student in the early 2000s and continues through his most recent 3-D printing innovations.

Featured works include:

- **“Heatwave” radiator and “Ivy” climbing wall (2004)** from Laarman’s groundbreaking thesis project **“Reinventing Functionality”**: “Heatwave” incorporates Baroque curves and aesthetics in a functional and beautiful wall radiator; the lavish curves provide greater surface area to radiate heat more efficiently. The High will present both the original prototype (2003) in its collection and the 2004 Jaga production model. The “Ivy” climbing wall is simultaneously an elegant architectural element and a means of exercise or transportation. Its curvilinear forms transform sterile white walls into a playful, interactive environment.
- **“Bone Chair” (2006)**: Although the organic form of Laarman’s “Bone Chair” may be reminiscent of Art Nouveau furniture designs from the early 1900s, it is firmly rooted in the technology of the 21st century. Laarman created the design using computer software developed for the European automotive industry. Based on scientific research into the structural growth patterns of bones and trees, the software mimics their capacity to add, remove and redistribute matter in response to external stimuli. The chair, which is part of the High’s collection, joins six other works from Laarman’s “Bone Furniture” series in the exhibition.
- **“Digital Matter” (2011)**: Commissioned by the High in 2011 for its “Modern by Design” exhibition, this series features tables constructed by a mounted robotic arm programmed to build relatively high-definition, digitally ornamented side tables in three different resolutions using thousands of building blocks called voxels (the three-dimensional version of a pixel). The tables’ designs reference the Rococo period; however, the ornaments (little flowers and clouds) come from the world of the famous video game character Super Mario.
- **“Makerchairs” (2014)**: Laarman explores the intersections of design, DIY and digital technology with this series, which includes 12 chairs assembled like 3-D puzzles from modular elements produced using relatively small and affordable machines. Laarman experimented with different patterns for the chairs’ pieces, such as stripes, diamonds and diagonals. Some versions of the “Makerchair” are available for download as open-source design.
- **“Dragon Bench” (2014)**: Laarman developed his own 3D-printing robot, the MX3D, to make this impressive bench, now in the High’s collection. The robot’s specially adapted arm draws molten metal lines in the air to create a form regardless of orientation and without the need for support structures. The “Dragon Bench” represents Laarman’s ongoing explorations in fabrication through 3-D printing innovation. Accompanying the bench will be dramatic renderings of Laarman’s current project using the revolutionary

MX3D technology: a fully functional footbridge that will cross one of the oldest canals in central Amsterdam.

The exhibition was previously on view at the Groninger Museum and the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum in New York. Following its presentation at the High, the exhibition will travel to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (June 17 through Sept. 9, 2018).

“Joris Laarman Lab” is curated by Mark Wilson and Sue-an van der Zijpp, Groninger Museum, and managed at the High by Schleuning. An updated catalogue featuring essays by Schleuning, Cindi Strauss (Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, curator of modern and contemporary decorative arts and design) and Andrea Lipps (Cooper Hewitt assistant curator of contemporary design) will be published to accompany the North American tour.

### **About Joris Laarman**

Born in Borculo, the Netherlands, Laarman graduated cum laude from the Design Academy in Eindhoven, the Netherlands, in 2003 with his thesis project “Reinventing Functionality,” which featured the lauded “Heatwave” radiator, now in the High’s collection. In 2004, Laarman and his partner Anita Star founded Joris Laarman Lab. Laarman’s work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions at distinguished institutions worldwide and is found in the prestigious collections of The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Art Institute of Chicago; the Denver Art Museum; the Centre Pompidou, Paris; and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Laarman lives and works in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

### **Exhibition Catalogue**

The exhibition is accompanied by a 302-page comprehensive monograph featuring a photographic overview of each of Laarman’s collections. The book features essays by Schleuning, Strauss and Lipps, which are complemented by detailed descriptions and interviews.

### **Exhibition Organization and Support**

“Joris Laarman Lab: Design in the Digital Age” is organized by the Groninger Museum, the Netherlands. Support for this exhibition is provided by Creative Industries Fund NL. This exhibition is made possible by Premier Exhibition Series Partner Bank of America; Exhibition Series Sponsors Delta Air Lines, Inc., and Turner; Premier Exhibition Series Supporters Anne Cox Chambers Foundation, the Antinori Foundation, Ann and Tom Cousins, Sarah and Jim Kennedy, Jane and Hicks Lanier, Louise Sams and Jerome Grilhot, and wish foundation; and Contributing Exhibition Series Supporters Barbara and Ron Balser, Corporate Environments, Peggy Foreman, James F. Kelly Charitable Trust, The Lubo Fund, Margot and Danny McCaul, and Joyce and Henry Schwob. Generous support is also provided by the Alfred and Adele Davis Exhibition Endowment Fund, Anne Cox Chambers Exhibition Fund, Barbara Stewart Exhibition Fund, Dorothy Smith Hopkins Exhibition Endowment Fund, Eleanor McDonald Storza Exhibition Endowment Fund, Forward Arts Foundation Exhibition Endowment Fund, Helen S. Lanier Endowment Fund, Howell Exhibition Fund, and John H. and Wilhelmina D. Harland Exhibition Endowment Fund.

**About the High Museum of Art**

The High is the leading art museum in the southeastern United States. With more than 16,000 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](http://high.org).

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Marci Tate Davis  
Manager of Public Relations  
404-733-4585  
[marci.davis@high.org](mailto:marci.davis@high.org)