



HIGH MUSEUM OF ART ATLANTA

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

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## **HIGH MUSEUM OF ART ANNOUNCES REDESIGN AND EXPANSION OF INTERACTIVE FAMILY GALLERY**

***Greene Family Learning Gallery to double in size and feature new environments  
that combine cutting-edge technology with hands-on elements***

***Gallery to close May 20 and reopen in October 2018 on 50th anniversary of  
the High's first dedicated family space***

**ATLANTA, April 23, 2018** – In October 1968, the High Museum of Art in Atlanta introduced its first dedicated space for families to learn, play and explore. Since then, the Museum's family spaces have taken on many forms and incited the curiosity of millions of young visitors. To mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its commitment to family spaces, the High will double the footprint and complete a renovation and redesign of its Greene Family Learning Gallery, with new interactive environments, in collaboration with [Roto design firm](#). The Greene Family Learning Gallery will close for renovation on May 20, and the new spaces will debut in October 2018, to coincide with a major reinstallation of the Museum's collection galleries.

"The High has made a strong commitment to serving as a primary visual arts destination for Atlanta families for 50 years," said Rand Suffolk, Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr., director of the High. "We are honored to reaffirm our support of childhood learning by introducing new galleries that will engage, delight and inspire young people for many years to come."

"The High strives to be an essential place in the community where families can connect through informal learning, intergenerational communication and play," said Virginia Shearer, the High's Eleanor McDonald Storza director of education. "This redesign, which is informed by years of research and observation and spearheaded by the Museum's incredible education staff, will better meet the evolving needs of our family visitors and enrich learning opportunities with meaningful engagement with art."

The Greene Family Learning Gallery, located adjacent to the Robinson Atrium on the first floor of the High's Stent Family Wing, has maintained its fundamental format since opening as part of the Museum's transformative expansion in 2005. The Gallery's current 2,000-square-foot space features various discovery areas inspired by some of the most popular artworks in the

Museum's collection. It will expand to include a 2,000-square-foot area (previously occupied by administrative offices) across the hallway from its current location, bringing the total square footage to over 4,000.

The High's Education department worked with Roto, a leading interdisciplinary design firm, to plan the Gallery's two distinct spaces based on a set of goals that are informed by years of visitor observation, community expert input and research, including a four-year study on family spaces funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). These goals include:

- Offering a space for families to make memories while fostering stronger connections between caregivers and children
- Empowering children and their caregivers to explore the Museum and more confidently engage with its collection
- Inspiring wonder and encouraging children to be curious about the art they encounter every day
- Celebrating creativity, imagination, empathy and play, and helping families develop these skills through one-of-a-kind interactive experiences found only at the High.

Each space will be a welcoming, safe and fun environment that is child-centered and child-directed with age-appropriate activities for children from infants through age 8. The open-ended, intuitive, multisensory elements combine cutting-edge technology with hands-on activities in an inclusive, creative space.

"Our team at Roto couldn't be more pleased to have been selected by the High Museum to help reimagine and expand the Greene Family Learning Gallery for a whole new generation of Atlanta families," said Mike Denison, a Principal and Design Director at Roto. "Inspired by both the museum's stunning architecture and its outstanding collection, Roto set out to design a pair of sophisticated and engaging spaces filled with surprise, wonder and opportunities for children and their caregivers to explore art and their own creativity together."

The current Greene Family Learning Gallery space will become **CREATE**, a bright and open studio devoted to developing young visitors' art-making abilities and encouraging the creative process. The newly created space across the hall, **EXPERIENCE**, will be a deeply immersive gallery that enables visitors to explore what art means, how it feels and where it can take us. Both spaces will include a quiet space with activities designed for reflection as well as an area specifically for infants and toddlers.

### **History of the High's Family Spaces**

The High's first family space, "Color/Light/Color," was established in 1968 for the opening of the Woodruff Arts Center's Memorial Arts Building. Other innovative family spaces followed, including "Sensation," which explored the five senses through arts, science and technology (1983–1988), and "Spectacles" (1988–1993), for which the High commissioned nationally recognized artists to create interactive installations that addressed different facets of the arts. The High opened the Greene Family Learning Gallery as part of its transformative expansion in 2005, and it has maintained its fundamental format until this redesign.

### **Arriving at the New Greene Family Learning Gallery**

The High's Education team conducted extensive research to inform the designs for the new Greene Family Learning Gallery.

In 2011, the Museum embarked on a [four-year research study with the Frist Center for the Visual Arts and the Speed Art Museum](#) on how families learn in art museum family spaces, which was funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). This body of research elicited two essential findings: “creative play” is one of the keys to the success of an interactive space, and families highly value these types of spaces for the opportunity to create shared memories.

In 2016, the Museum created Art Lab, a dynamic space in the lobby of its Anne Cox Chambers, Wing to test activities and concepts for the new family gallery and to learn from visitors about what they like to experience in such a setting. The findings of the Art Lab study supported the IMLS study and provided specific insights into the types of experiences that strongly resonate with the High's visitors, including how they interact with technology.

Over the past year, the High convened experts from around Atlanta who work in different areas of education, from early learning and design thinking to accessibility and serving audiences with disabilities, to brainstorm for the new Gallery.

“Our panel of community advisors—from institutions including Georgia State University, Georgia Institute of Technology, North American Reggio Emilia Alliance, Atlanta Public Schools, Metro Regional Educational Service Agency, Atlanta Creatives Project and studio'farrell—has been invaluable,” said Julia Forbes, the High's Shannon Landing Amos head of museum interpretation. “Their input throughout the project, from concept to design and prototyping, has made this project stronger and supported our team of educators in creating a space that we hope will be a national model.”

### **About the High Museum of Art**

Located in the heart of Atlanta, Ga., the High Museum of Art connects with audiences from across the Southeast and around the world through its distinguished collection, dynamic schedule of special exhibitions, and engaging community-focused programs. Housed within facilities designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architects Richard Meier and Renzo Piano, the High features a collection of more than 16,000 works of art, including an extensive anthology of 19th- and 20th-century American fine and decorative arts; major holdings of photography and folk and self-taught work, especially that of artists from the American South; burgeoning collections of modern and contemporary art, including paintings, sculpture, new media and design; a growing collection of African art, with work dating from pre-history through the present; and significant holdings of European paintings and works on paper. The High is dedicated to reflecting the diversity of its communities and offering a variety of exhibitions and educational programs that engage visitors with the world of art, the lives of artists and the creative process. For more information about the High, visit [www.high.org](http://www.high.org).

**About Roto**

Roto originated inside the exhibit department at the renowned Columbus, Ohio, science museum COSI, where the company's eventual founders completed two large projects in the 1990s. Roto's extraordinary growth over the subsequent years is a testament to its visitor-centered values and high standards of quality, honed by years of operational experience. Unique in the industry, Roto today is both an A-list design firm and a compelling design-build resource for family-oriented museums worldwide.

The firm's design studio furnishes innovative and award-winning solutions for leading-edge exhibits and program spaces, as well as architectural interiors and environments. To better integrate design with execution for maximum effectiveness and reliability of highly interactive projects, Roto operates a 40,000-square-foot prototyping, technical engineering and fabrication shop, and it is the only commercial firm operating a year-round visitor and school group evaluation program in-house.

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**DIGITAL IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**

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