



HIGH MUSEUM OF ART ATLANTA

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

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**HIGH MUSEUM OF ART AWARDED
BANK OF AMERICA ART CONSERVATION PROJECT GRANT
FOR THORNTON DIAL WORKS**

ATLANTA, Oct. 17, 2019 – The High Museum of Art has been selected as a 2019 Bank of America Art Conservation Project grant recipient for a project to conserve artwork by renowned contemporary artist Thornton Dial (American, 1928–2016). The High holds the largest public collection of Dial’s work, including paintings and assemblages spanning his entire 30-year career, which represents a cornerstone of the Museum’s unparalleled folk and self-taught art department.

Dial used a wide range of media, including metals, wood, textiles and plastics. Due to the interactions between these materials, as well as the fact that most are repurposed from previous use, his works require analysis and treatment to improve their condition. In addition, as a master of complexly layered surfaces, Dial created works that are always in danger of loose parts.

With the grant funds, the Museum will conduct a full assessment of these works using analytical and imaging techniques to capture each work’s intricacy and create a baseline understanding of Dial’s fabrication practices and how his materials have deteriorated over time. The groundbreaking conservation project, under the direction of Katherine Jentleson, the High’s Merrie and Dan Boone curator of folk and self-taught art, will focus on treating the Museum’s 10 most complex Dial works, which span nearly two decades. Assessment will begin in November 2019, and conservation will be completed by November 2020.

The High Museum of Art was one of the first museums to acquire Dial’s art, beginning in the 1990s with mixed-media works, including “Struggling Tiger Know His Way Out” (1991), which is the earliest work being treated as part of this project. In 2017, the High received a stunning group of Dial’s assemblage paintings as part of a major gift/purchase from the Souls Grown Deep Foundation, including “Birmingham News” (1997) and “Looking Out the Windows” (2002), which will also undergo examination and treatment.

“We believe that Dial is one of the seminal and most defining artists of the 20th century, and it is essential that we preserve his artworks for future generations,” said Rand Suffolk, Nancy and

Holcombe T. Greene, Jr., director of the High. “We are incredibly grateful to Bank of America for selecting our conservation project for this grant, which will allow us to give these works their due attention and care.”

“We believe in the power of the arts to help economies thrive, and we are proud to expand our partnership with the High Museum of Art,” said Wendy Stewart, Atlanta market president, Bank of America.

In addition to preserving Dial’s assemblages, the conservation project will also provide the basis for important scholarship on his materials and methods and will establish protocols for the conservation of his work, and for that of the entire spectrum of self-taught artists working in non-traditional mixed media.

“Like many contemporary artists, Dial did not limit himself to traditional materials,” said Jentleson. “I am thrilled that, through Bank of America’s generosity, we will be able to serve Dial’s tremendous legacy but also make discoveries that will inform treatments of complex works by a varied array of artists, both self-taught and trained.”

The Art Conservation Project is a key element of Bank of America’s program of arts support worldwide and part of the company’s environmental, social and governance program. For more information, please visit the [Art Conservation Project website](#).

About the High’s Folk and Self-Taught Art Department

The High is dedicated to supporting and collecting works by Southern artists and is distinguished as the first general art museum in North America to have a full-time curator devoted to folk and self-taught art. The nucleus of the folk and self-taught art collection is the T. Marshall Hahn Collection, donated in 1996, and Judith Alexander’s gift of 130 works by Atlanta artist Nellie Mae Rowe. The High’s folk and self-taught art department features works by such renowned artists as Dial, Bill Traylor, Ulysses Davis, Sam Doyle, William Hawkins, Mattie Lou O’Kelley and Louis Monza as well as the largest collection of works by Georgia’s Howard Finster outside of Paradise Garden in Summerville, Georgia. The collection of more than 1,000 objects also boasts superb examples by celebrated artists from beyond the South, including Henry Darger, Martín Ramírez and Joseph Yoakum.

About the High Museum of Art

Located in the heart of Atlanta, Georgia, 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 17,000 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.

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