



HIGH MUSEUM OF ART ATLANTA

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**HIGH MUSEUM OF ART RECEIVES MORE THAN 100 SCULPTURES
BY SELF-TAUGHT ARTISTS FROM COLLECTORS ANNE AND ROBERT LEVINE**

ATLANTA, Dec. 17, 2020 — The High Museum of Art continued to expand its collection in 2020 with a gift of 114 wood-carved sculptures by self-taught artists from Connecticut-based collectors Anne and Robert Levine. The artworks, which date from the 17th to the 20th century, strengthen the Museum’s renowned collection of art by self-taught artists, which is among the most significant in the world, by establishing deeper holdings of historical American folk art.

“The High was the first general interest museum to establish a dedicated department for self-taught art in 1994, and over the last nearly 30 years, we have celebrated and preserved the incredible contributions of artists without formal training from our region and beyond,” said Rand Suffolk, the High’s Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr., director. “We are incredibly grateful to the Levines for recognizing our commitment to self-taught art through this generous gift and for entrusting us with the care of these important objects.”

The artworks reflect the Levines’ passion for American history and politics and include figures of innovators and pathbreakers such as Benjamin Franklin and Martin Luther King Jr., along with memorial plaques related to major war battles, carvings of American generals and depictions of American cultural icons including Amelia Earhart and Elvis Presley.

Reflecting on the beginning and evolution of their collection, the Levines said, “We started our marriage looking for something to collect together, and our love of American history melded with the craft of wood carving. Travelling all over the country, we searched for objects that have an energy and unique vitality.”

Most of the artists who created works in the collection are unidentified, but the Levines amassed numerous works by known artists including Vestor Lowe of Tennessee and Joe Hrovat, whose carvings of Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Lyndon B. Johnson are among more than two dozen representations of U.S. presidents in the gift. Other works, such as Hellor K. Rissanin’s carving of President Dwight D. Eisenhower (ca. 1950) and violin maker Moise Potvin’s meticulously carved diorama of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his historic 1933 cabinet, showcase realism and formal excellence.

Many of the other artworks feature the visual qualities, such as geometricized form and bold color, that first attracted modernist artists, collectors and curators to folk art in the 1920s. These characteristics can be seen in the sleek carving of a cat by Millie “the Chiseler” Miller and

an angular whirligig depicting the turn-of-the-century champion boxer John Sullivan, one of the more than two dozen kinetic sculptures that are part of this gift. Other traditional forms of Americana — sculptures depicting national symbols such as Lady Liberty and the Bald Eagle as well as life-size figures that once served as trade signs — offer points of connection between the High’s American and folk and self-taught art collections.

“I’ve never seen anything quite like the Levines’ collection before, and it really is a perfect fit for the High. It not only adds strength to our holdings of traditional folk art forms, such as whirligigs and trade signs, but also provides interesting points of connection with our historical holdings of American art. More than ever before, we’ll be able to represent a greater range of artistic ingenuity in the United States across the centuries within our collection,” says Katherine Jentleson, Merrie and Dan Boone curator of folk and self-taught art.

In choosing the High for their collection, the Levines were compelled by the strengths of the Museum’s existing collection and the community around it. “On our first visit to the museum, we were immediately struck by the energy and appealing range of art we found there. The crowds were diverse and engaged. After more than 30 years of stewardship we were ready to share our folk art with a broader audience than our home could provide,” they said.

About the High Museum of Art

Located in the heart of Atlanta, 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 prehistory 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.

###

DIGITAL IMAGES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

Media contact:

Marci Tate Davis
High Museum of Art
Manager of Public Relations
404-733-4585
marci.davis@high.org