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**ALEX KATZ, IRIS VAN HERPEN, VIK MUNIZ, AND
ELIJAH PIERCE WORKS AMONG
2015–16 HIGH MUSEUM OF ART ACQUISITIONS**

530 works acquired across all curatorial departments

*Significant gift of 47 artworks from collector Gordon W. Bailey enhances holdings by
contemporary Southern self-taught artists*

ATLANTA, July 21, 2016 – The High Museum of Art continued to expand its collection in 2015–16 with the addition of 530 works of art in all seven of the Museum’s curatorial departments.

Acquisition highlights include an important gift of 47 paintings, sculptures and works on paper from collector Gordon W. Bailey. The gift strengthens the High’s identity as one of the world’s most significant public repositories of work by American self-taught artists and adds particular strength to the Museum’s holdings of American contemporary art and works created by African American and Southern artists. Bailey’s gift features such renowned artists as Leroy Almon, Burlon Craig, Roy Ferdinand, Howard Finster, Bessie Harvey, Lonnie Holley, Ronald Lockett, Elijah Pierce, Herbert Singleton, Purvis Young and Thornton Dial, Jr.

In addition to such highlights as a tempera on paper by American artist Dorothy Dehner, other key works to enter the collection follow major exhibitions that originated at the High, including a monumental painting by renowned contemporary artist Alex Katz, whose retrospective “This is Now” went on view in June 2015; a recent work by Brazilian-American photographer Vik Muniz, currently part of a major survey of Muniz’s work; and the High’s first fashion acquisition—a 3-D-printed dress by cutting-edge Dutch designer Iris van Herpen, which made its debut at the High last fall in “Iris van Herpen: Transforming Fashion.”

Fifty-nine works by Atlanta-based artists, including Lucinda Bunnan, Lonnie Holley and Sheila Pree Bright, were added to the collection over the past year.

“We significantly strengthened our holdings across all collecting areas this year, demonstrating a sustained commitment to a diverse collection representative of a wide range of artistic media and periods, with particular emphasis on work by Southern artists,” said Rand Suffolk, Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr., director of the High Museum of Art.

Below is a summary of acquisition highlights across each of the Museum’s curatorial departments.

African Art – 38 acquisitions, including:

- **19th-century wood stool by a Bamileke artist** from Bafut, Cameroon – The Museum of Modern Art featured this stool, likely used as a repository for healing substances, in its seminal 1935 exhibition of African Art. Two female figures form the base, which supports a male and female figure on a circular seat. The work adds to the High's holdings that demonstrate the diversity of artistic production in the Grasslands region of Cameroon.
- **“Interior Architectural Screen (Insika),” an early-20th-century screen made of woven plant fibers by a Tutsi artist** from Rwanda or Burundi – The work's zigzag design echoes the patterns repeated in a calabash milk pot and two miniature beaded baskets by highly skilled Tutsi artists, also recently acquired by the High. This screen was created to encircle milk pots ceremonially placed upon a round platform in a domestic interior.

American Art – five acquisitions, including:

- **“Untitled (Still Life with Hands, St. Johns),”** a 1932 tempera on paper by **Dorothy Dehner** – This is the first work by Dehner to enter the High's collection. The combination landscape and still life adds to the High's holdings of works by women artists, joined by her modernist peers including Georgia O'Keeffe, Rebecca James, Lee Krasner, and Dehner's instructor, Jan Matulka.
- **“Portrait of Industrial Designer, John Vassos,”** a ca. 1935 oil on canvas by **James Daugherty** – The High acquired this work through the 2016 Collectors Evening event, at which attendees voted to secure objects for the collection. This portrait is the first in the High's collection to feature an industrial designer and offers an excellent example of the important early-20th-century experiments with color theory and abstraction.
- **“Munich Landscape,”** an oil on paper laid down on canvas by **Joseph Frank Currier** – Though little-known today, in his lifetime J. Frank Currier was widely considered the most daring of the late 19th-century “Munich Men,” a group of American artists who studied at the Munich Royal Academy. This landscape features his hallmark style and is the first Currier work to enter the High's collection, adding to the Museum's holdings in the circle of Munich artists such as John Henry Twachtman and Robert Blum.

Decorative Arts and Design – 10 acquisitions, including:

- **“Magnetic Motion,”** a 2014 3-D-printed dress by Dutch fashion designer **Iris van Herpen** – For this delicate, transparent “ice” dress, van Herpen challenged 3D Systems to fabricate the dynamic and groundbreaking design, which is the High's first fashion acquisition.
- **A ca. 1795–1810 mahogany card table by an unknown Baltimore-area maker** – This richly grained Hepplewhite card table is part of a group of Neoclassical furniture made in Baltimore between the American Revolution and the War of 1812. Of that group of works, this card table is the rarest form, with its elegant serpentine front and delicately tapered legs, complemented by extensive satinwood inlays. The work is a fitting addition to the High's renowned collection of American furniture from the era.

- **A ca. 1830–1860 pie safe by an unknown Tennessee maker**, crafted of walnut, tulip poplar, tin and paint – Until refrigeration and ice boxes made them obsolete in the 20th century, pie safes were a staple of the American household. This is a premier example of the form and an important acquisition for the High’s Southern vernacular design collection.
- **“Arch Table (SQN5-T Stainless Steel),”** a 2013 stainless steel architectural table by Chinese designer **Zhang Zhoujie** – To make this table, Zhang used a digitized fabrication system to laser cut segments of stainless steel that he then welded and meticulously finished by hand. The High’s first contemporary Chinese design acquisition, this artwork strengthens the Museum’s impressive contemporary international design collection.

European Art – 19 acquisitions:

- **A gift of 19 drawings and watercolors by 19th-century French and British artists, including George Cattermole, Nicolas-Toussaint Charlet, Jean-Louis Forain and Armand Point** – Strengthening the High’s significant holdings of 19th-century European works on paper, these artworks are an addition to the High’s Clyde and Hildegard Ryals collection, which was established in 2004. Most of the artists represented are new to the High’s collection.

Folk and Self-Taught Art – 78 acquisitions, including:

- **A gift of 47 paintings, sculptures and works on paper from collector, scholar and advocate Gordon W. Bailey, featuring such renowned 20th-century artists as Leroy Almon, Burlon Craig, Roy Ferdinand, Howard Finster, Bessie Harvey, Lonnie Holley, Ronald Lockett, Elijah Pierce, Herbert Singleton, Purvis Young and Thornton Dial, Jr.** – This is Bailey’s third substantial gift to the High since 2010 and further underscores his commitment to helping build the Museum’s collection, which is recognized as one of the world’s most significant public repositories of work by American self-taught artists. All 25 of the artists represented in the gift are Southern and self-taught, including 18 African American and two Native American artists, and many of the recently acquired works are currently on view in the High’s exhibition [“A Cut Above: Wood Sculpture from the Gordon W. Bailey Collection”](#) (through Oct. 30, 2016). Included in the gift are important relief carvings by Georgia artist Leroy Almon and Elijah Pierce’s reverent tribute to Henry “Hank” Aaron and his wife, Billye. Pierce created the carved wood portrait in 1974 to honor Aaron on the occasion of his historic 715th home run, which eclipsed Babe Ruth’s longstanding record.

Modern and Contemporary Art – 73 acquisitions, including:

- **“Meadow,”** a 1997 oil painting by **Alex Katz** – This monumental painting complements the High’s first major Katz acquisition, “Winter Landscape 2” (2007). The subject is a field of wild flowers on Katz’s Maine property, enlarged exponentially and cropped to exclude the horizon and other spatial points of reference. The result is a work that oscillates between abstraction and observation. The High is now one of the largest

repositories of Katz's work in the world, with a total of 34 paintings, drawings and prints acquired through purchase and the generosity of the Alex Katz Foundation.

- "Indian Country," a 2015 oil on canvas by **Stanley Whitney** – Whitney's abstract painting is a variation on the theme of the grid in his work of the past several decades. His use of flat planes of color arranged in rows that relate to one another horizontally, vertically and diagonally suggests the synesthetic blending of the senses—"hearing" color, "seeing" sound—and evokes the painterly experiments of the synchromists from a century ago. The High acquired "Indian Country," the first work by Whitney to enter the Museum's collection, in conjunction with the 2016 Collectors Evening.
- "Untitled" (2015) by **Borna Sammak** – This sculptural installation incorporating digital video animation and consumer-grade hardware features a hypnotic loop of ballistic cartoon images, which are fragmented and collaged together. The result is a tapestry of explosions and rocket trails whose implied violence is belied by familiar AV equipment shown with its commercial packaging intact. The High is the first museum to acquire Sammak's work, purchased with the Museum's Future Fund, which introduces "post-internet" practice into the collection.

Photography – 307 acquisitions, including:

- "Vik, 2 Years Old," a 2014 photograph by Brazilian-American photographer **Vik Muniz** – This large-scale photograph (approximately 8 by 6 feet), which entered the collection through the High's 2016 Collectors Evening, is from the artist's "Album" series, for which Muniz builds replicas of familiar moments with small pieces of discarded vernacular snapshots pasted together to form scenes. A re-creation of a snapshot of the artist himself when he was 2 years old, the photograph is the fourth work by Muniz to enter the Museum's collection and is a perfect complement to the High's self-portrait of Muniz as a mature artist, "Khyber Pass, Self-Portrait as an Oriental, after Rembrandt," from the "Pictures of Junk" series (2005).
- "Navigation without Numbers," a 1957 photograph by **Wynn Bullock** – This poetic and enigmatic photograph is among Bullock's key works, and the exceedingly rare print is the last print of this image from the artist's estate. The High maintains a leading collection of Bullock's work.
- A gift of seven photographs by **Clarence John Laughlin** – These prints cover a cross-section of Laughlin's oeuvre and add strength to the High's holdings of work by Southern photographers. Along with leading collections of work by the artist's friends and colleagues Wynn Bullock and Harry Callahan, the acquisition makes the High an important center for studying mid-century American modernist photography.

About the High Museum of Art

With more than 15,000 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.

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