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The
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Museum
of Art

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***The Big Picture* Opens April 28 at Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art**

Exhibition Celebrates \$10 Million Hall Family Foundation Gift

Kansas City, MO. March 20, 2018—*The Big Picture: A Transformative Gift from the Hall Family Foundation* opens April 28 at The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City. The exhibition coincides with the 75th anniversary of the Hall Family Foundation and features nearly 100 newly acquired photographs purchased with a special \$10 million grant given to the Nelson-Atkins by the Foundation. More than 800 photographs were purchased with the gift from 2015-2017.

“This exhibition is the first opportunity for our visitors to discover the great works we acquired over the past three years, thanks to the incredible gift from the Hall Family Foundation,” said Julián Zugazagoitia, Menefee D. and Mary Louise Blackwell CEO & Director of the Nelson-



Atkins. “With this gift, the Nelson-Atkins has significantly enhanced its

stature as one of the greatest repositories of the history of photography. Scholars will be able to study the depth of our collection, and art lovers will enjoy this collection for many years to come.”

The acquisition process and the selection of works in *The Big Picture* were a collaborative effort by the photography department’s Keith F. Davis, senior curator; April M. Watson, curator; and Jane L.



Aspinwall, associate curator. Davis has overseen the Hallmark Photographic Collection for nearly 40 years. He arrived in Kansas City after interning at the George Eastman House in 1979 to begin a six-month stint as cataloguer of the collection; he never left.

“This gift has allowed us to take a nationally-renowned collection and bring it up a full notch,” said Davis. “We built up our holding of 19th and 20th century American and European work, and made major strides with international contemporary pieces. We were really able to acquire great things across the board.”

The Hall Family Foundation has supported a great variety of programs and initiatives that effect positive change in the greater Kansas City community. The Foundation’s president, William A. Hall, said, “The Foundation began

in 1943, and has made significant contributions to the Kansas City area for 75 years. Donald J. Hall has been consistent in his support of excellence over the years, and the photography collection at the Nelson-Atkins is excellent.”

The special \$10 million gift allowed the curators to build on the collection’s existing strengths—primarily its broad holding of American daguerreotypes and paper photographs—and to enhance its representation of 19th- and 20th-century European and contemporary international works. These new acquisitions span the entire history of the medium, from an 1826 print by Joseph Nicéphore Niépce, the inventor of photography, to a 2016 work by legendary musician and artist Patti Smith. Many of history’s most famous names are represented, including Nadar, Gustave Le Gray, Edward Steichen, Jaromir Funke, Claude Cahun, Alfred Eisenstadt, Dorothea Lange, W. Eugene Smith, Robert Frank, and Diane Arbus. Also represented are leading contemporary artists such as Cindy Sherman, Paul Graham, Ellsworth Kelly, Carrie Mae Weems, Dayanita Singh, Ilit Azoulay, Thomas Struth, Candida Hofer, and Thomas Demand. This three-year initiative has resulted in the addition of more than 800 objects, made over a span of 190 years, by artists from more than a dozen countries.

In December 2005, Hallmark transferred its entire photographic collection of 6,500 works to the Nelson-Atkins. The museum’s photographic holdings immediately expanded from 1,000 to 7,500 works and now numbers about 15,000. Since 2006, the Hall Family Foundation has provided vital support for this department.

The Big Picture, April 28–Oct. 7, 2018, highlights about 100 of the most significant of these acquisitions and will be presented in all 3,000 sq. ft. of the museum’s dedicated photography galleries. The exhibition will be accompanied by a small publication authored by Davis on the history of photography at the museum, at Hallmark, and in the Kansas City community.

Image captions: Southworth and Hawes, American: Albert Sands Southworth (1811–1894), Josiah Johnson Hawes (1808–1901). Portrait of a young girl, ca. 1850. Daguerreotype, 8 1/2 × 6 1/2 inches. Gift of the Hall Family Foundation, 56.2017.2.

Robert Frank, American (b. 1924). Hoboken (Parade), 1955. Gelatin silver print (printed later), 14 1/2 × 22 inches. Gift of the Hall Family Foundation, 2016.25.3.

Exhibition credit line: This exhibition is supported by the Hall Family Foundation in honor of Keith F. Davis. Additional support provided by the Campbell-Calvin Fund.

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

The Nelson-Atkins in Kansas City is recognized nationally and internationally as one of America’s finest art museums. The museum, which strives to be the place *where the power of art engages the spirit of community*, opens its doors free of charge to people of all backgrounds. The museum is an institution that both challenges and comforts, that both inspires and soothes, and it is a destination for inspiration, reflection and connecting with others.

The Nelson-Atkins serves the community by providing access to its renowned collection of nearly 40,000 art objects and is best known for its Asian art, European and American paintings, photography, modern sculpture, and new American Indian and Egyptian galleries. Housing a major art research library and the Ford Learning Center, the Museum is a key educational resource for the region. In 2017, the Nelson-Atkins celebrates the 10-year anniversary of the Bloch Building, a critically acclaimed addition to the original 1933 Nelson-Atkins Building.

The Nelson-Atkins is located at 45th and Oak Streets, Kansas City, MO. Hours are Wednesday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Thursday/Friday, 10 a.m.–9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Admission to the museum is free to everyone. For museum information, phone 816.751.1ART (1278) or visit nelson-atkins.org.

For media interested in receiving further information, please contact:

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