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COLLECTORS EVENING 2017 SECURES THREE NEW ACQUISITIONS FOR THE HIGH MUSEUM OF ART


“Collectors Evening was filled with excitement and high energy as our guests eagerly engaged in building the High’s collection,“ said Rand Suffolk, the High’s Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr., director. “We are grateful to the attendees for their support of these amazing works and for helping us give them a new home at the High.”

“I look forward to seeing these works represented within our future gallery installations,” noted Kevin W. Tucker, the High’s chief curator. “They reflect not only important growth for these holdings but our strategic efforts to draw upon the legacy of artists both within the region and well beyond to continue to shape a collection of international significance.”

Collectors Evening, established in 2010 to build the Museum’s collection, invites guests to take an active role in choosing the next works of art to join the collection. During the evening, each of the High’s curators presents artworks as potential new acquisitions. Guests then cast their votes, and the High purchases the artworks that receive the most votes.

More information about this year’s acquisitions is below:

Modern and Contemporary Art
“Conspiracy of Icons #1” (1991), by Donald Locke (Guyanese, 1930–2010), joins the modern and contemporary art collection. Locke belonged to a generation that grappled with the legacy of colonization and the dawn of independence in the Caribbean. He enrolled in Guyana’s free Working People’s Art Class at age 18 and received scholarships to study at the Bath Academy of Art in England and the Edinburgh College of Art. He studied painting, pottery and sculpture, all practices that remained important throughout his artistic development. The recipient of a
prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship, Locke moved to the United States in 1979, and in 1990 he relocated from Arizona to Atlanta, where he maintained a studio practice while teaching at Georgia State University. This painting was the central work in the High’s recent Locke exhibition, and it includes a variety of found objects, such as original and historical photographs that relate the artist’s experience of British colonialism to the history of the American South. His dynamic brushwork refers to the development of the postwar avant-garde — particularly action painting, such as the work of Franz Kline — and the rise of such Neo-Dada artists as Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns, who dominated the art world in the decades following World War II. The painting is an important addition the High’s growing collection of contemporary work examining history, post-colonialism and the African Diaspora. An important sculpture by Locke, “Plantation Series: Blairmont” (1972–1974), will enter the High’s collection as a gift from the artist’s estate along with the purchased painting.

**African Art**

“Minotaurus” (2015), an 8-foot-tall cast bronze sculpture by South African artist Nandipha Mntambo (born 1982), was acquired for the African art department. Mntambo often explores the interrelationships between things typically demarcated as categorical opposites, such as humans and animals or men and women. She used her own body to cast in bronze this larger-than-life self-portrait disguised as a minotaur. Unlike standard representations of the Greek mythological creature, this sculpture projects a tender, gentle quality. Raised high on a sandstone base, the figure has a tranquil expression that contradicts the aggressive and domineering character typically attributed to this creature. This acquisition is the first monumental bronze to enter the High’s African art collection and reflects the Museum’s continuing exploration of contemporary African art.

**Folk and Self-Taught Art**

The folk and self-taught art department acquired a group of 24 quilts that represent the aesthetic legacy of early 20th-century African American quilters in the South. The variety of materials used in these works, from cotton flour sacks to bright corduroy clothes, exemplifies the unidentified quilt makers’ resourcefulness and improvisational techniques. The textiles include key examples of iconic quilt styles such as the Log Cabin variation, a pattern of concentric squares that represents an aerial perspective of a humble country dwelling. These objects document lives that are often underrepresented in museum collections and evidence how abstract visual languages developed outside of the mainstream art world. Many of the quilts are nearly 100 years old, but they remain in exceptional condition thanks to the care of Corrine Riley, a textile artist and conservator who began building a leading collection of African American quilts in the 1970s. This acquisition bridges aspects of the High’s existing textile collections, linking to Nigerian and Ghanaian textiles as well as historical American works and Gee’s Bend quilts. In addition, this acquisition builds on existing holdings to reinforce quilting traditions as a distinguishing collection strength for the Museum.

**Collectors Evening Support**

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About the High Museum of Art
The High is the leading art museum in the southeastern United States, housed within facilities designed by Pritzker Prize–winning architects Richard Meier and Renzo Piano. With more than 16,000 works of art, the High has 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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