



HIGH MUSEUM OF ART ATLANTA

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

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## **TWO NEW WORKS ACQUIRED FOR HIGH MUSEUM OF ART AT 2019 COLLECTORS EVENING**

**ATLANTA, Oct. 10, 2019** – The High Museum of Art welcomed 200 guests for Collectors Evening on Oct. 3, 2019, to support the acquisition of two new works for the Museum’s collection. The acquired objects are Shirin Neshat’s film “Possessed” (2001) and “Barbershop Stand and Shelf” (ca. 1940–1950), a handmade work by an unidentified self-taught artist.

“Collectors Evening was another great success for our curatorial departments and a wonderful event dedicated to encouraging involvement from our patrons,” said Rand Suffolk, Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr., director of the High. “The attendees voted to add some truly remarkable works to our collection, and we were thrilled to see their engagement, excitement and commitment to building the collection.”

Collectors Evening, established in 2010 to help the Museum acquire artworks, invites guests to take an active role in choosing the next works to join the collection. At the event, guests enjoyed a seated dinner, curatorial presentations for the proposed works and voting for their favorite choices. Since the inception of Collectors Evening, attendees have supported the acquisition of 30 artworks for the Museum’s collection.

“We look forward to these exceptional new acquisitions joining future installations in the High’s collection galleries,” said Kevin W. Tucker, the High’s chief curator. “Additionally, these two works encapsulate our commitment to acquiring a diverse range of art representing a variety of artists, media and locales.”

More information about this year’s acquisitions is below:

### **Modern and Contemporary Art/Photography**

“Possessed” (2001), a film by Shirin Neshat, was acquired through a collaboration between the modern and contemporary art and photography departments. Haunting and mesmerizing, Neshat’s work interrogates the complexities of gender, politics and public space in the Middle East. Neshat (born 1957), a renowned Iranian-born artist living in New York, shot the work in Morocco using 16 and 35mm black-and-white film. The film shows a distraught woman as she roams the streets of a walled city without a chador, the traditional Islamic veil. Her increasingly aberrant behavior is initially ignored until she mounts a platform. Soon, a crowd gathers and

begins to argue, some condemning her madness while others defend her. As she quietly slips away, she leaves in her wake chaos and dissent. The conclusion is provocative and ambiguous: does she symbolize the radical force of a woman who refuses to remain silent or the repressive violence of a patriarchal society? Neshat's technical mastery heightens the film's dramatic impact. She interweaves closeups referencing silent movies with long tracking shots and cuts edited in sync with the gripping soundtrack. Poetic and troubling, the film exemplifies what Neshat has characterized as the drive "to make sense out of shambles, to distill essence out of chaos."

A key work by an internationally renowned artist, this acquisition was the last available in an edition of six and will greatly strengthen the Museum's growing collection of time-based media. The work will anchor the next rotation on the Skyway Level of the Anne Cox Chambers Wing featuring works exclusively by women, in celebration of the centennial of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which granted women the right to vote.

### **Decorative Arts and Design/Folk and Self-Taught Art**

"Barbershop Stand and Shelf" (ca. 1940–1950), created by an unidentified artist, was acquired through a collaboration between the decorative arts and design and folk and self--taught art departments. The brightly colored, handmade stand is a rare example of Southern vernacular furniture from the mid-20th century. The work consists of a chest of idiosyncratically assembled drawers along with a freestanding shelf, which were used to hold haircutting and shaving implements in a West Virginia barbershop. The stand and shelf are constructed from reused pieces of old furniture, including chair rods and drawers from other chests. The artist added many bands of notched wood and finished the whole with rich shades of red, light blue, mustard yellow and black paint, giving it an otherworldly, sculptural appearance.

In the High's collection, there are several examples of work by African-American self-taught artists, including Elijah Pierce and Ulysses Davis, who used their barbershops as places not only for hairstyling and wood sculpting but also as centers of Christian ministry. In addition to this point of kinship with the work of Davis and Pierce, the altarlike barbershop stand serves as a companion to examples of decorative arts masterpieces in the collection that similarly incorporate found and assembled constructive elements.

### **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](http://www.high.org).

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