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BEATRIX POTTER EXHIBITION COMING TO THE HIGH MUSEUM OF ART THIS FALL

Featuring drawings, watercolors and more exploring the author’s extraordinary life and beloved children’s book characters, including Peter Rabbit™

Exhibition is seventh in a series presented in conjunction with a musical by the Alliance Theatre

“Beatrix Potter: Drawn to Nature”
Oct. 13, 2023-Jan. 7, 2024

ATLANTA, Oct. 13, 2023 — This fall, the High Museum of Art will present “Beatrix Potter: Drawn to Nature” (Oct. 13, 2023-Jan. 7, 2024), a playful, interactive exhibition that invites visitors of all ages to rediscover one of the most renowned authors of children’s fiction in the 20th century, exploring the places and animals that inspired Potter’s beloved stories including
“The Tale of Peter Rabbit™,” “The Tale of Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle” and “The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin.” Through more than 125 personal objects — including sketches, watercolors, rarely seen letters, coded diaries, commercial merchandise, paintings and experimental books — the exhibition will also examine Potter’s life as a strong-minded and imaginative businessperson, natural scientist, farmer and preservationist, a legacy that extends to the present. The exhibition, which is organized by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, is the latest in the High’s popular series celebrating children’s book art and authors.

“The High is committed to serving family audiences and connecting them to the power of children’s book art, which can inspire creativity, engender empathy and teach important life lessons,” said Rand Suffolk, the High’s Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr., director. “We are delighted to share the wonderful illustrations and stories from Potter’s famous tales with our youngest visitors and explore the author’s life story, which was marked by a love of learning and dedication to preserving nature for future generations.”

Born in London, Helen Beatrix Potter (1866-1943) was passionate about animals and the natural world from an early age, and this sparked her career as a world-famous author and illustrator, published by Frederick Warne & Co. since 1902, with her stories remaining in print ever since. Her interest in nature also influenced all other aspects of her life, leading her to significant achievements in both art and science. “Drawn to Nature” connects key elements of her creative practice, from building characters and observing nature to telling stories and conserving the environment.

“Beatrix Potter’s singularly creative life offers insights for all ages. This exhibition, part of the High’s longstanding dedication to families and intergenerational learning, is designed to welcome everyone to ask what it means to see with imagination and care for our world, together,” said Andrew Westover, exhibition curator and the High’s Eleanor McDonald Storza director of education.

The first section of the exhibition will focus on how Potter developed the beloved characters that inspired her most famous stories, including “The Tale of Peter Rabbit,” “The Tale of Benjamin Bunny” and “The Tale of Jemima Puddle Duck,” among others. She modeled her characters on animals familiar to her, and her stories were informed by her careful observations of nature. These galleries will include many of her initial character sketches and show how she paired human and animal characteristics and added context through clothing and backgrounds to build richly imagined worlds. The second section explores Potter’s scientific observations and will feature a cabinet of curiosities displaying collected objects alongside her realistic nature drawings of animals, insects and fungi created throughout her youth.

“Drawn to Nature” will also explore Potter’s extraordinary abilities as a storyteller, illustrator and entrepreneur. From her mid-20s, Potter translated her close observation of animals and nature into intricate pictorial storytelling. Her pets stirred her imagination, and she described and illustrated their antics in letters to children. She also sold holiday cards featuring her
drawings and designs. These letters and illustrations became the basis for her stories, and in 1902, she signed a publishing deal. The third section of the exhibition features numerous sketches and finished artworks from her books, including “The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin” and “The Tale of Benjamin Bunny,” as well as examples of her illustrated letters, which showcase her skills as an artist and writer. This section will also include a dedicated reading space, a comfortable area to sit and enjoy Potter’s beloved children’s books.

In the exhibition’s final section, watercolors, personal items and drawings underscore Potter’s love for England’s Lake District and her work to conserve its landscape and local farming culture. Following her permanent move there, which inspired many of her children’s books, she recognized how much locals and visitors alike treasured the region. When she saw modern development threatening what made it unique, she used her privilege and position to help protect the area. She built up flocks of Herdwick sheep, which were in danger of dying out, and ensured the landscape would be protected forever by England’s National Trust. On her death in 1943, she left the charity thousands of acres of her own land and 14 working farms.

“Above and beyond the delight that Potter’s book characters and illustrations bring to our lives, her creativity as a businessperson, scientist and preservationist can inspire all audiences,” said Westover. “It’s a privilege to share her stories and invite everyone to rediscover a beloved author and her enduring legacy.”

In conjunction with the exhibition, the Alliance Theatre at The Woodruff Arts Center, of which the High is also an arts partner, will present “Into the Burrow: A Peter Rabbit™ Tale” (Oct. 14-Dec. 23, 2023), a delightful musical adventure written by Mark Valdez and inspired by Potter’s stories. The musical is presented by special arrangement with Penguin Ventures, on behalf of Frederick Warne & Co Ltd.

The exhibition and musical are made possible through a grant to The Woodruff Arts Center from the Lettie Pate Evans Foundation to expand programming and increase access for family audiences. The Lettie Pate Evans Foundation is an independent private foundation that invests primarily in education, arts and culture and is part of the family of foundations that also includes the Robert W. Woodruff Foundation.

“Beatrix Potter: Drawn to Nature” will be presented on the Second Level of the High’s Anne Cox Chambers Wing.

**Related Programs**

**The Life behind the Rabbit: Beatrix Potter**
Saturday, November 4
High Museum of Art
2 to 3 p.m.
Members: Free; Not-Yet-Members: $15
Registration required
While Beatrix Potter is best known for the characters she illustrated and the books she wrote, she was also a gardener, entrepreneur, scientist, farmer and preservationist. Her many legacies continue to inspire people today. Join Potter enthusiast Betsy Bray and Andrew Westover, Eleanor McDonald Storza Director of Education, as they delve into the High’s exhibition “Beatrix Potter: Drawn to Nature.”

**High Tea**
Sunday, December 3
High Museum of Art
2 to 3 p.m.
Members: $75; Not-Yet-Members: $90
Registration required

Learn about Beatrix Potter and the tradition of Victorian tea while enjoying delicious gourmet sandwiches, freshly baked pastries and a variety of teas by just add honey. Come dressed in your finest tea party attire for this family-friendly event and hear about Potter’s famous characters and fascinating life from Andrew Westover, Eleanor McDonald Storza Director of Education and curator of “Beatrix Potter: Drawn to Nature.”

**Exhibition Organization and Support**

**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 19,000 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.

About Peter Rabbit™ and Beatrix Potter
“The Tale of Peter Rabbit” is one of the world’s best-loved children’s books and was created by author and illustrator Beatrix Potter in 1902. The story has never been out of print since it was first published by Frederick Warne & Co. (today an imprint of Penguin Random House) and has sold in excess of 46 million copies worldwide. Today over 2 million of her “little books” are sold globally every year, whilst Peter Rabbit has appeared on books and merchandise in more than 110 countries throughout the world.

Penguin Random House Children’s is committed to growing and protecting The Peter Rabbit™ brand. The World of Beatrix Potter™, one of the world’s largest literature-based licensing programmes, is managed in-house by Penguin Ventures.

www.peterrabbit.com

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