

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**HIGH MUSEUM OF ART ACQUIRES MONUMENTAL WORK
BY KARA WALKER**

ATLANTA, June 26, 2017 – The High Museum of Art in Atlanta today announced that it has acquired “The Jubilant Martyrs of Obsolescence and Ruin” (2015), a massive cut-paper work by contemporary artist Kara Walker (American, born 1969). This acquisition marks the first major work by Walker to enter the Museum’s collection.

A former Georgia resident who studied at the Atlanta College of Art, Walker is renowned for her cut-paper silhouette installations that explore themes of race, gender, sexuality and violence. “The Jubilant Martyrs of Obsolescence and Ruin,” which is nearly 60 feet wide, is based on the Confederate Memorial Carving on the face of Georgia’s Stone Mountain. In the work, Walker uses caustic, satirical imagery to reconcile the history of oppression and injustice experienced by African-Americans in the South with the persistence of racial and gender stereotypes and ongoing efforts to advance equality in America.



Kara Walker (American, born 1969), “The Jubilant Martyrs of Obsolescence and Ruin,” 2015, cut paper on wall, 165 3/8 x 698 13/16 inches.

This important acquisition continues the High’s commitment to collecting artwork that explores the history of the American South and examines intersections of race, identity, human rights and social justice. It joins two print portfolios by Walker already in the Museum’s collection.

“We are honored to acquire this major work by one of today’s most significant and influential artists,” said Rand Suffolk, the High’s Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr., director. “Like all of Walker’s work, this piece profoundly questions the resonance of our collective past while challenging us to consider what exactly will determine a shared future. These questions remain

greatly important. The High is proud to play a role in encouraging dialogue around this work and the compelling perspectives it brings to light.”

“We are grateful to Kara Walker and to Victoria Miro Gallery for making this epic work available to the High and for the tremendous outpouring of support from the community to make this acquisition possible,” said Michael Rooks, the High’s Wieland Family curator of modern and contemporary art.

In addition to those of the three Confederate Civil War leaders portrayed in the Stone Mountain carving, Walker incorporated Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s likeness into “The Jubilant Martyrs.” The exquisite lines of her hand-cut paper silhouettes speak to centuries of vernacular art tradition in the United States and Europe. An artist would render a person’s silhouette by cutting black paper to make a keepsake profile portrait. Walker’s images evoke the nostalgic reverie of such traditional silhouettes and use devices including humor and caricature to provoke reflection on notions of race and identity in America.

According to Walker, “The thing that has fueled my work since I started is this misremembered history, or a kind of flawed refashioning of history spelled out along deeply personal terms.”

“The Jubilant Martyrs of Obsolescence and Ruin” will go on view as part of a permanent collection reinstallation planned for 2018.

About Kara Walker

Born in Stockton, Calif., in 1969, Kara Walker moved to Atlanta at the age of 13. She studied at the Atlanta College of Art and received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 1991. She earned a Master of Fine Arts degree from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1994. Recent major solo exhibitions include presentations at The Cleveland Museum of Art (2016) Camden Arts Centre, London (2013); Art Institute of Chicago (2013); Center for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw (2011); Fondazione Merz, Turin (2011); Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga (2008); and Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle (2008). Her work is in the collections of major museums including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Tate, London; Museo Nazionale delle Arti del XXI Secolo, Rome; and Mudam, Luxembourg. Walker received a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship in 1997, the Deutsche Bank Prize in 2000, and the United States Artists Eileen Harris Norton Fellowship in 2008. She currently lives and works in New York.

About the High Museum of Art

The High is the leading art museum in the southeastern United States. 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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