



Greenville County **Museum of Art**

420 College Street Greenville, SC 29601

864.271.7570

gcma.org

News Release

CONTACT: Paula Angermeier 864.271.7570, ext.1028 pangermeier@gcma.org

Greenville, SC—Recent Acquisitions Funded by Sale of Alma Thomas Painting

On October 21, 2020, the governing body of the Greenville County Museum of Art, the Greenville County Museum Commission, unanimously approved the deaccession of the museum's Alma Thomas painting *Flower Garden*. The deaccession and subsequent sale were in keeping with the museum's, the American Alliance of Museums', and the American Association of Museum Director's longtime policy of using funds from deaccessioned works only to support additional art purchases and were not related to the temporary AAMD guidelines. In this case, part of the funds realized from the sale of *Flower Garden* were used to purchase a later work by Thomas, untitled (*Composition in Rainbow Colors*), 1977. This new acquisition was painted by Thomas in the last full year of her life, and it distills the major coloristic themes pursued by the 86-year-old artist throughout her career of abstract experimentation.

Flower Garden sold to an undisclosed buyer for \$2. 8 million, surpassing Thomas's auction record by almost \$200,000. A condition of the sale was confidentiality, and the identity of the buyer is not known to the GCMA.

Flower Garden was purchased by the Greenville County Museum Commission in 2008 for \$135,000. The credit line "In Memory of Betsy Dew Ashley" was transferred to the painting to remember a former staff member who died in a car accident in 1978. The new Thomas painting will also carry this memorial.

Some of the recent acquisitions whose purchases are supported with proceeds from the sale (in addition to the previously mentioned Alma Thomas painting, untitled [*Composition in Rainbow Colors*]) include:

Mary Cassatt

Clarissa Turned left, with Her Hand to Her Ear, c 1893

pastel on paper

-more-

Beauford Delaney
untitled abstraction, c. 1959
oil on canvas

David Drake
poem jar, 1840
alkaline glazed stoneware

Hughie Lee-Smith
Counterpoise II, 1989
oil on canvas

John Wilson
Maquette of Martin Luther King, Jr., 1982
bronze

Hale Woodruff
untitled, c 1950
oil on canvas

Jamie Wyeth
Catching Pollen, 2012
enamel and oil on canvas

In 1984, the GCMA collection was valued at \$1.3 million and today, with around 5000 works of art, it is valued at more than \$100 million, the result of consistent fund-raising efforts, the generosity of our community, and conscientious collection management, including strategic deaccessioning.

The Greenville County Museum of Art is temporarily closed for construction. Construction and maintenance address these major areas: replacing the main public elevator; replacing heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems; securing building integrity; and upgrading electrical and lighting systems. These critical improvements will both ensure the protection of our community's valuable art collection and enhance our visitor experience.

Museum staff continue to work both off- and on-site, developing educational programs and publications and planning future exhibitions and events.

A re-opening date is expected to be announced later this summer.

-end-