



ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART PERMANENT COLLECTION HAS RETURNED HOME

AMA Thanks High Museum of Art for Its Generous Support Following 2017 Storm

[For Release Oct 6, 2020 – Albany, GA] — It was fitting that the painting titled *Dangerous Shore* was the first piece of the Albany Museum of Art permanent collection to re-enter the museum late Monday afternoon.

The painting by American artist James Hamilton depicting the power of nature at a seashore was one of the thousands of art objects that were rescued after horrific hurricane-force winds and rain breached the roof of the Albany Museum of Art the night of Monday, Jan 2, 2020. That powerful storm caused widespread destruction in Albany and Southwest Georgia, toppling trees, destroying homes and businesses, and leaving thousands without power.

As soon as museum officials and volunteers were able to get to the AMA, the work began to secure and protect the AMA's permanent collection and the artwork that was on exhibition in the museum at the time. Artworks that needed conservation were transported to Chicago's Conservation Center after a team of conservators flew to Albany that day after the storm. Artworks, including *Dangerous Shores*, that were undamaged were taken to the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, where they have safely resided for three years and nine months.

In a testament to the dedication of AMA staff, Board of Trustee members, volunteers, local officials and the conservators who worked tirelessly to rescue the artworks, none was destroyed by the storm.

"These collections form the heart of the AMA and are symbolic of the universal human creative impulse," AMA Executive Director Andrew J. Wulf, Ph.D., said. "They are in one sense the treasures we safeguard for the enjoyment by thousands of visitors through the decades of the life of this marvelous institution. Yet they also serve as a sometimes gentle, sometimes dramatic, catalyst for how this museum in particular serves its community: as a location of civil discourse, understanding and inclusion. These artworks remind us of how individuals envision their world and how we interact with one another. Art at its core serves up answers to the tough stuff of life."

"We are all so very thankful to the wonderful staff at the High Museum of Art and the Chicago Conservation Center for literally helping us weather through the storm," Albany Museum of Art Board of Trustees President Alfreda Sheppard said. "While our gratefulness is without measure, there truly is no place like home. The return of the permanent collection to Albany has been a long time coming, and we look forward to reintroducing the collection to our patrons, supporters, and friends of the AMA very soon."

The more than 1,350 artworks in the AMA collection that had been cared for at the High arrived in Albany after 4:30 pm on Monday, Oct 5. By 6 pm, all of the artworks were stored in the AMA facilities, which have been repaired and upgraded to ensure the safety of the museum's treasured collection.

Wulf helped with the unloading. Earlier Monday, he was at the High in Atlanta as High Senior Registrar Frances R. Francis supervised the loading of the artworks into a truck for shipment to Albany.

"I'm just beyond delighted to be able to see the collection firsthand finally," Wulf said. "It really is a stunning array of treasures.

"It's most meaningful that we get to bring it back home. It's the return of the heart and heartbeat of the museum. It will help us fulfill our mission of making our collections accessible to all in Albany and Southwest Georgia."

Wulf, who has been executive director of the AMA for just over one year, said approximately half of the AMA's collection was at the High. "This was the part of the collection that did not need conservation treatment," he said. "By special arrangement, our expert colleagues at the High graciously stewarded our collection these last three years."

The Jan 2, 2017 storm was one of two major disasters that struck Albany and Southwest Georgia that year. With a series of tornadoes following a similar path through Albany and Southwest Georgia three weeks later on Jan 22. Both were declared disasters by the state and federal governments, and resulted in weeks without power for many residents in the region and months of cleanup and restorations of homes and businesses. Tarps on roofs were common sights for months, bright blue reminders of the savage storms.

The AMA was closed for nearly nine months in 2017 as repairs to the building were made. Museum staff worked in the Willson Auditorium, which escaped major damage, and partnered with local organizations including Thronateeska Heritage Center and Flint RiverQuarium to keep children's programs such as summer art camps operating.

The museum reopened to the public in late August 2017, with the three downstairs galleries and the auditorium operational and offices moved downstairs. The AMA has maintained a full schedule of visiting exhibitions and both children and adult programming since the reopening. The only exceptions were a period in October 2018 when Hurricane Michael caused a power outage that forced the AMA to close for a week, and the three-month COVID-19 closure this year that resulted in AMA programs transitioning to online events.

Utilizing grants, the AMA was able to repair and upgrade its art storage facilities to allow for the return of the permanent collection. Upstairs offices have been renovated and opened. During the COVID-19 shutdown earlier this year, the children's activity space at the AMA was renovated. The upstairs McCormack Gallery will reopen later this month.

The Albany Museum of Art also is inviting the community to join in its **#FallinLoveWithArt** campaign by becoming a member of the AMA over the final three months of 2020. Details may be found at www.albanymuseum.com/join.

CURRENT AMA EXHIBITIONS

- *JUAN LOGAN: creating & collecting* is in the Haley Gallery July 9-Oct 24, 2020.
- *Works by Brian Willmont* is in the East Gallery July 9-Oct 24, 2020.
- *Viberations from Pasaquan* is in the West Gallery July 9-Oct 24, 2020.

ABOUT THE ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART

The Albany Museum of Art is located at 311 Meadowlark Drive in Albany, Ga., adjacent to Albany State University West Campus just off Gillionville Road. The museum is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The Albany Museum of Art is open to the public 10 am-5 pm Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and 9 am-7 pm Thursdays. Admission is free.

For more information about the AMA please visit our website, www.albanymuseum.com or call 229.439.8400. Be sure to follow the @AlbanyArtMuseum on Twitter, AlbanyMuseum on Instagram and AlbanyMuseumOfArt on Facebook.

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