



ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART PERMANENT COLLECTION RETURNS HOME**

Part of the AMA's Collection Had Been in Chicago Since the 2017 Storms

**[For Release April 8, 2022 – Albany, GA]** – Thursday was a special homecoming for the Albany Museum of Art.

For the first time since hurricane-force winds breached the roof of the Albany Museum of Art on Jan 2, 2017, the museum's collection of art objects is home.

Three truckloads of artworks arrived Thursday afternoon at the Albany Museum of Art, where they were taken to museum vaults, which were renovated in 2020, and to storage areas that were prepared earlier this year. Immediately after the storm five years ago, the objects were taken to the Conservation Center in Chicago, where they were conserved, inventoried, and stored while the AMA repaired and prepared its facilities for their return.

The art objects that did not require conservation measures were taken to the High Museum in Atlanta, where they were stored until they returned to the AMA in October 2020.

"The permanent collection of a museum is, in so many ways, the heart of the institution," Executive Director Andrew J. Wulf, Ph.D., said. "We at the AMA are profoundly appreciative of the swift action and careful dedication of all those who rescued these important works at the time of the storms in 2017. And, we are indebted to our friends at the Conservation Center in Chicago who shepherded these pieces over these last five years. Today marks a milestone in the history of the Albany Museum of Art. We are whole again, and we are grateful."

Many of the more than 2,100 art objects in the AMA permanent collection will soon be in full view. The museum is celebrating the collection's return in May by devoting all of the galleries to a special exhibition of these artworks.

Since December, Director of Curatorial Affairs Katie Dillard has been slowly reintroducing a few pieces at a time. A small number of abstract paintings can be found on display in the AMA lobby, and several

masquerade masks from Sub-Saharan African nations are on display in the Hodges Gallery, giving visitors a bite-size sample of what is held in the full scope of the museum's collection.

"This summer, the AMA will proudly present many of its treasures, some that have been away from home for years, in a complete museum takeover," Dillard said. "Our permanent collection will occupy as many square feet as possible within our four rotating galleries for the summer season, giving museum visitors a chance to explore the wide variety of artworks this institution has collected over the years, going back as far as 1967 when the Albany Museum of Art was known as the Southwest Georgia Art Association."

None of the artworks in the AMA's permanent collection or the borrowed artworks that were on exhibition at the museum was destroyed in the 2017 storms that forced the museum to close for almost nine months. AMA staffers, Board of Trustee members, and volunteers worked tirelessly in the critical days immediately after the storm to stabilize the art objects and get them moved to safe locations or sent to professionals for conservation. All of the objects were in safe locations when the second wave of devastating storms, which included tornadoes, struck Albany and the region in late January 2017.

When the AMA reopened in August 2017, it initially operated three downstairs galleries, where it has hosted a series of temporary exhibitions. The auditorium, classroom, and the AMAzing Space family area, all located downstairs, resumed operations, and administrative offices were relocated to spaces downstairs as well. At that time, museum officials and trustees began exploring the idea of moving the AMA to a new home in downtown Albany. That became possible in June 2019 when the Robert N. Brooks Sr. family donated the former Belk department store property at 128 and 146 W. Broad Ave. To the Albany Museum of Art. The move downtown is a major part of the new five-year strategic plan the AMA's Board of Trustees adopted in 2021.

While work continues in preparation for a move downtown, AMA officials also saw an opportunity to improve the current museum building when the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic forced the museum to temporarily close in March 2020. Many of the AMA's programs were reimaged as virtual experiences, and the three-month closure gave museum officials time to renovate and reopen the upstairs McCormack Gallery, redesign and refresh the downstairs AMAzing Space, replace and upgrade the upstairs vault, and finish out upstairs offices for staff.

"The AMA is a museum that is answerable to our Albany community and to visitors from further afield," Wulf said. "As we prepare to make our move downtown, we continue our creative journey to become that place where all people feel they belong. We shall not shy nor tire from reaching that goal."

## AMA EXHIBITIONS

- *The Way of Life, Works by Ray Pierotti* is in the Haley Gallery Jan 20 -April 23, 2022.
- *Prismatic, Works by Melissa Huang* is in the East Gallery Jan 20 -April 23, 2022.
- *Ordo naturalis, Works by Eric Mack* is in the McCormack Gallery Jan 20 -April 23, 2022.
- *African Artifacts of Spirituality and Identity* is in the Hodges Gallery Jan 20 -April 23, 2022.
- *Escape Plan*, installation by Elinor Saragoussi, is in the West Gallery.

## 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 through Saturdays. Admission is free.

For more information about the AMA please visit our website, [www.albanymuseum.com](http://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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