

**Upcoming Exhibition at Bowdoin College Museum of Art Explores Maine  
As an Essential Site of Inspiration for Artists Across Two Centuries**

**Developed on the Occasion of Maine's Bicentennial,  
*At First Light* Features Approximately 100 Works by Artists David Driskell, Lois Dodd,  
Marsden Hartley, Winslow Homer, Alex Katz, Molly Neptune Parker, William Wegman,  
and N.C. and Andrew Wyeth, Among Many Others**

**On View June 27 - November 15, 2020**

**Brunswick, Maine, March 12, 2020**—Maine has long captivated artists and inspired the creation of iconic works of American art, driven by its rugged mountain and sweeping coastal vistas, its traditions and histories, and the character of the people who make it home. Artists, in turn, have shaped how we understand, and quite literally see, Maine's landscape and its people. On June 27, the Bowdoin College Museum of Art (BCMA) will open *At First Light: Two Centuries of Artists in Maine*, an exhibition that explores Maine as a place that has nurtured artistic production over the course of two centuries. The exhibition will include approximately 100 works, including those by acclaimed artists such as Marsden Hartley, Winslow Homer, and Andrew Wyeth as well as living masters Lois Dodd, David Driskell, Molly Neptune Parker, and William Wegman, among numerous others. Together the featured works, which range widely in media, style, and approach, will offer a vivid portrait of Maine and its relationship to wider artistic developments in American art. The exhibition, which is curated by co-directors Anne Collins Goodyear and Frank H. Goodyear III, will be on view through November 15, 2020.

Organized in recognition of Maine's 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary, *At First Light* will explore the extraordinary breadth of art created in and inspired by Maine through masterpieces from the BCMA collection as well as important loans from other institutions, including the Addison Gallery of American Art, the Farnsworth Art Museum, the Harvard Art Museum, the Rhode Island School of Design Museum, and the Toledo Museum of Art, among others. Through this exceptional range of works, the exhibition will pose important questions about the state's history and its diverse population as well as foster dialogues on the artistic traditions that have flourished in Maine for two centuries. In particular, the exhibition will highlight the ways in which Maine's natural landscape, local communities, and creative practice are inextricably linked, creating an environment ripe for artistic experimentation and innovation.

Additionally, in anticipation of the exhibition and the state's bicentennial, the BCMA, in partnership with Rizzoli Electa, commissioned celebrated architectural photographer Walter Smalling to create a new photographic record of the homes, studios, and favored locations of 26 artists who lived and worked in Maine, from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present, including Dodd, Hartley, Homer, Robert Indiana, Alex Katz, Rockwell Kent, John Marin, Fairfield Porter, the Wyeths, and Marguerite and William Zorach. These photographs appear in *At First Light: Two Centuries of Maine Artists, Their Homes, and Studios*, the publication that accompanies the exhibition. The book includes Smalling's photographs together with

images of notable works by each of the featured artists, as well as texts by the BCMA's co-directors and Michael Komanecky, Chief Curator at the Farnsworth Art Museum. Stuart Kestenbaum, the poet laureate of Maine, has contributed a forward. A dedicated installation of Smalling's photographs will also be on view at the BCMA, as a companion exhibition to *At First Light*.

Works in *At First Light* will be installed chronologically, allowing audiences to experience how ideas were communicated through evolving artistic styles and approaches. Among the underlying themes is Maine's dramatic landscapes, which will be examined through works such as Thomas Cole's *House, Mount Desert, Maine* (1844-45, Harvard Art Museum), Winslow Homer's *Sunlight on the Coast* (1890, Toledo Museum of Art), George Bellows's *Green Breaker* (1913, BCMA), Marsden Hartley's *After the Storm, Vinalhaven* (1938-39, BCMA), and Lois Dodd's *Long Cove Quarry* (1993, BCMA). Other works will evoke the professional occupations that have come to characterize Maine and drive its economy, from tourism, as experienced in Wegman's playful works, to the traditional industries of logging, as depicted by George Hawley Hall and Berenice Abbott, and lobstering, as seen through the work of Olive Pierce and Andrew Wyeth. Artists have also captured and expressed the character and diversity of Mainers themselves. This can be seen in Gilbert Stuart's portrait of the abolitionist Phebe Lord Upham (ca. 1823, BCMA) and in Jeremiah Pearson's depiction of the African American barber Abraham Hanson (ca. 1828, Addison Gallery of American Art).

The presence and impact of growing communities of ambitious artists over the course of two centuries are also examined throughout the exhibition. Marguerite Zorach's *The Family Evening* (ca. 1924, BCMA) testifies to the formation of communities of artists in the region, which began to proliferate in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, as areas such as Ogunquit, Georgetown, Monhegan, Skowhegan, Mt. Desert Island, Vinalhaven, and the Rangely Lakes became more accessible to creative practitioners eager to escape urban settings. The exhibition will also explore the work of native artists, including members of the Wabanaki Confederacy through the work of Barry Dana, Neptune Parker, and the Ambrose St. Aubin Family. Addressing the formation of artistic communities across the state, the exhibition will also draw connections between artists and their creative motivations, offering a range of artistic voices including those that are well known and others that have yet to be fully explored.

"*At First Light* offers an exciting platform to experience Maine through the eyes of a spectrum of artists from across history and into the present day, and to examine the particular sensibilities of this region that have so influenced artists and that artists in turn have shaped. To look at Maine's artistic history is also to explore the trajectory of American art more broadly. Through the one hundred works featured in this exhibition, we are able to capture the developments and evolutions within creative practice and across communities," said Anne and Frank Goodyear, BCMA's co-directors and the exhibition curators. "We are very much looking forward to engaging our audiences with the broad range of artwork featured in the show, and to celebrating Maine's bicentennial with a vibrant exploration of its artistic traditions and its present-day creative spirit."

### **Bowdoin College Museum of Art**

The Bowdoin College Museum of Art is the cornerstone of the arts and culture at Bowdoin. One of the earliest collegiate art collections in the nation, it came into being through the 1811 bequest of James Bowdoin III of 79 European paintings and a portfolio of 140 master drawings. The collection has been expanded through the generosity of the Bowdoin family, alumni and friends, and now numbers more than

20,000 objects, including paintings, sculpture, works on paper, decorative arts and artifacts from prehistory to the present from civilizations around the world. [www.bowdoin.edu](http://www.bowdoin.edu)

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