



Canton Museum of Art

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## • News Release •

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

January 4, 2012

### **Important Acquisitions to Canton Museum Permanent Collection**

Four important works on paper were recently added to the Permanent Collection of the Canton Museum of Art – a collection of more than 1,600 works. These latest additions are currently on display in the lobby of the Museum.

*William Sommer, U.S. Mail (diptych), 1938, watercolor on paper, 35 7/8" x 20 7/8", purchased in memory of John Hemming Fry, 2011.18*

American Modernist painter, William Sommer (1867-1949), was a leader of The Cleveland School – a group of Cleveland-based artists active through the 1940's. Sommer was unemployed and near destitute, until his situation improved in the mid 1930's with commissions from the Works Progress Administration. Sommer began using his modernist style to depict the simple country life he enjoyed in Brandywine, Ohio; a rural community midway between Cleveland and Akron. *U.S. Mail* is a large composition combining transparent and opaque watercolor techniques -- a masterpiece of the medium, also demonstrating Sommer's skill at adapting the aesthetic of WPA mural painting to the watercolor medium.

*Lowell Tolstedt, Blue Table with Plate of Cherries, 2011, colored pencil on paper, 29" x 39", purchased in memory of Edward A. and Rosa J. Langenbach, 2011.20*

What Lowell Tolstedt achieves with colored pencil defies belief. Tolstedt (1939- ), a retired Columbus College of Art & Design professor, is known for his exquisite photo-realistic drawings of everyday objects. Given the association of realistic still life with old masters of the 17<sup>th</sup> or even mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, the very characteristics that make a work of art realistic in style and still life in genre are often the same characteristics that keep a work entrenched in tradition. But Tolstedt's work is thoroughly modern – with the simple subject of placing fruit on a plate, he generates a playful tension with his realistic exploration of shape and texture.

*Jim Dine – Untitled (Hearts), 1976, watercolor, 16" x 20", purchased in memory of the Luntz family, 2011.17*

American Pop Artist, Jim Dine, grew up in Cincinnati, attended Ohio University then moved to New York in 1959. Dine's roots as a painter lie in Abstract Expressionism, reflected in his brushy and gestural finish. Working with Robert Rauschenberg, Claes Oldenburg and Roy Lichtenstein, Dine's work moved from Abstract Expressionist towards Pop Art. In this genre he is an American icon and a great addition to the collection of the Canton Museum of Art.

*Hughie Lee-Smith – Industrial Scene, 1953, watercolor, 15 ½” x 22 ¼”, purchased in memory of Austin Lynch and Mary K. Lynch*

Hughie Lee-Smith is one of the most highly acclaimed African American artists to have begun his career in Cleveland. He painted the crumbling inner cities of Detroit and Cleveland. Lee-Smith struggled against the tide of Abstract Expressionism while adhering to his distinctive style, hauntingly enigmatic and sometimes described as Romantic Realism.

It has been an on-going goal of Museum staff and the Museum Board of Trustees to build and diversify the Permanent Collection, which has a dual focus of works on paper and contemporary ceramics. Scott Trenton, Trustee in charge of Collections Management, was instrumental in securing these newest works, which he summarizes as follows:

“Each of these acquisitions is a coup for the CMA. The *U.S. Mail* diptych is a very important piece and easily in the top tier of William Sommer’s body of work. . The Hugh Lee Smith is a rare find and a significant boost to our growing collection by African American artists. The stunningly realistic Tolstedt is among his largest works. We are also fortunate to have found such a marvelous piece by Jim Dine, who is a major name in mid-century modern art.”

Current exhibits at the Canton Museum of Art, through March 4:

*Focus: Fiber 2011*

*Evocations: the Art of Martin Bertman*

*A Moment in Time, Ted Lawson*

*Body Language, selections from the Permanent Collection*

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The Canton Museum of Art is located at 1001 Market Avenue North in the Cultural Center for the Arts, Canton, Ohio 44702. [www.cantonart.org](http://www.cantonart.org) Phone: 330-453-7666.

Admission is \$6/adult, \$4/senior and student, children 12 and under are free and Canton Museum of Art members are free.

Museum Hours:

Monday – closed

Tuesday, Wednesday – 10 am – 8 pm

Thursday - Friday – 10 am – 5 pm

Saturday – 10 am – 3 pm

Sunday – 1 pm to 5 pm

The Ohio Arts Council helps fund the Canton Museum of Art with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans.

