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## **BIG PICTURE: A NEW VIEW OF PAINTING IN CHICAGO**

Chicago's artistic personality is on view in a fresh, provocative way

CHICAGO (September 10, 2007) – The Chicago History Museum's newest exhibition *Big Picture: A New View of Painting in Chicago*, opening October 20 running through August 3, 2008, presents an overview of the city's painting history by showcasing works from the late 19th-century realist, satirical, and folk traditions to mid 20th-century expressionism and abstraction. The paintings on view include 49 pieces from the Museum's own collection, and approximately 30 pieces on loan from private collectors.

The exhibition is part of American Art American City, a city-wide American art initiative sponsored by the Terra Foundation for American Art, and draws from the Museum's rarely displayed collection of historical paintings exploring several styles and subjects. The exhibition explores the relationship between Chicago's landscape and its artists; Chicago artists' contributions to American abstraction; and the city's enduring interest in the figure. Additional works look at Chicago's depictions of social spaces, including a group of large murals formerly gracing the walls of some of the city's historically significant bars and restaurants. Visitors will have the rare opportunity to view selected pieces that are displayed to reveal their backs, or verso. The intimate view of a two-sided watercolor, for instance, allows guests to examine work's seldom-seen artists' notes and sketches.

"This is the first time that a history museum has put a collection of paintings, spanning more than a century, in a historical perspective like this," said Gary Johnson, museum president. "This exhibition really highlights our collection as one of the most significant, yet relatively unrecognized collections of American art in Chicago." The paintings in the exhibition explore different mediums including watercolor, gouache, mixed media, and oil on canvas, as seen in several of the pieces including William Herman Schmedtgen's *Caricature of George Ade and Orson Collins Wells* from 1912, and the more recent piece, *Leopold and Loeb* by Ed Paschke in 2004. The exhibition highlights works by lesser-known but skilled artists such as James Needham, and famous Chicagoans including Leon Golub and Phil Hanson.

# ChicagoHistoryMuseum

The Guild of the Chicago Historical Society will be hosting a preview party for the exhibition on Friday, October 19 starting at 6:30 p.m. with cocktails, hors d' oeuvres, and gallery previews. The night continues with remarks from the curators and a buffet dinner. Tickets start at \$225 and can be obtained by calling 312.799.2116. Other programming includes a documentary film, *In the Realms of the Unreal*, as part of the Museum's new Project Sunday series, on Sunday, November 11 at 1:30 p.m. The Museum will also present *Subliminal Strings*, the premier concert for New York-based artist and musician, Paul D. Miller, aka DJ Spooky on Saturday, November 17. A crawl through Chicago's art galleries will occur on Thursday, January 17, 2008 as an introduction to Chicago's gallery world. More information on special events and programs surrounding this exhibition can be found at [www.chicagohistory.org](http://www.chicagohistory.org).

This exhibition could not have been possible without the generous support from The Guild of the Chicago Historical Society in honor of Miss Racine Tucker, the Terra Foundation for American Art, and Robert and Joan Clifford.

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The Chicago History Museum, a major museum and research center for Chicago and American history, is located at 1601 N. Clark Street. The Museum can be reached by CTA buses 11, 22, 36, 72, 151, and 156. Parking is conveniently located one block north of the Museum at Clark and LaSalle Streets (enter on Stockton Drive). Admission to the Museum is \$14 adults with audio tour, \$12 seniors/students with audio tour, free for children 12 years and younger. General Admission is free on Mondays. Please call 312.642.4600 or visit us at [www.chicagohistory.org](http://www.chicagohistory.org).