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The
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Museum
of Art

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art and Detroit Institute of Arts Collaborate with Shared Curatorial Expertise

Nii Quarcoopome of DIA to Assist Nelson-Atkins

San Francisco, CA, Jan 18, 2012 – The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art and Detroit Institute of Arts are pleased to announce a shared relationship of curatorial expertise. Directors from both institutions are part of the Association of Art Museum Directors, which is holding its mid-winter meeting in San Francisco this week. As the result of an innovative collaboration between the two institutions, Nii Quarcoopome (*Nee Kwar-ku-pome*), currently head of the DIA Department of Africa, Oceania & the Indigenous Americas, will devote a quarter of his curatorial work time to the Nelson-Atkins and also will continue in his position at the DIA.

“We are delighted to collaborate with our colleagues at the Detroit Institute of Arts and to share the immense talent of Nii Quarcoopome,” said Julián Zugazagoitia, Director & CEO of the Nelson-Atkins. “He is one of the most respected curators in this field, and we are fortunate to continue our relationship with him.”

Quarcoopome, a native of Ghana, holds a doctorate in art history from the University of California, Los Angeles. He joined the DIA staff in 2002 and was responsible for reinstallation of the museum’s African galleries.

"Nii has been a tremendous asset to the DIA," said Graham W. J. Beal, director of the Detroit Institute of Arts. "His profound understanding of African society and material culture has resulted in an installation of the



DIA's African collection that brings the art alive for many visitors. We are happy to have the opportunity to share Nii's rare talents with a fellow art museum."

Quarcoopome worked with the Nelson-Atkins in 2010 during the exhibition he curated, *Through African Eyes: The European in African Art, 1500–Present*, a groundbreaking examination of how African artists expressed the interactions between African cultures and Europeans and Westerners. The exhibition, which opened first at the Detroit Institute of Arts, gave a wide perspective of the African point of view of Europeans, from first encounters and trade relations, to European settlements and colonization, through the contemporary years of post-independence.

Quarcoopome said he looked forward to working with the African collection at the Nelson-Atkins, which is on permanent view in the Bloch Building.

"I would describe it as superb in many ways," he said. "I am especially pleased to be working with art from the private collection of Donald and Adele Hall, who are so generous in lending pieces to the Nelson-Atkins. That will make my job much easier, because their collection is one of the best in the country."

The Halls are long-time benefactors of the Nelson-Atkins who have collected important works of African art for many years. In 2010, they promised seven extraordinary works from their collection to the Nelson-Atkins in honor of the museum's 75th anniversary.

Quarcoopome holds a doctorate in art history from the University of California, Los Angeles (1993). Following several years of teaching at the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor), Quarcoopome joined the Newark Museum in 2000 as curator of Africa, the Americas and Pacific. At Newark, he was instrumental in winning several important collection development awards, including a National Endowment of the Arts grant for an African Masterworks Project. Since arriving in Detroit in 2002, he has directed the reinstallation of the museum's African galleries.

Quarcoopome has written for numerous publications and received prestigious awards and honors, including a Social Science Research Council Dissertation Fellowship, a Smithsonian Pre-doctoral Fellowship, a J. Paul Getty Postdoctoral Fellowship (1998–99) and J. William Fulbright Lectureship in Ghana (1999–2000), a Detroit City Mayoral Proclamation and a Detroit City Council Resolution for his exhibitions *African Form and Imagery: Detroit Collects* (1995) and *Through African Eyes* (2010), respectively. He has served as consultant for various highly acclaimed permanent gallery installation projects at some of the nation's major cultural institutions, including *African Voices* for the National Museum of Natural History (Washington, D.C.) and *And Still We Rise* for the Charles Wright Museum of African American History (Detroit). He is currently a consultant for the African gallery reinstallation project at the Baltimore Museum of Art.

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

The Nelson-Atkins in Kansas City is recognized nationally and internationally as one of America's finest art museums. The Nelson-Atkins serves the community by providing access and insight into its renowned collection of more than 33,500 art objects and is best known for its Asian art, European and American paintings, photography, modern sculpture, and new American Indian and Egyptian galleries. Housing a major art research library and the Ford Learning Center, the Museum is a key educational resource for the region. The institution-wide transformation of the Nelson-Atkins has included the 165,000-square-foot Bloch Building expansion and renovation of the original 1933 Nelson-Atkins Building.

The Nelson-Atkins is located at 45th and Oak Streets, Kansas City, MO. Hours are Wednesday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.; Thursday/Friday, 10 a.m.–9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Sunday, Noon–5 p.m. Admission to the Museum is free to everyone. For Museum information, phone 816.751.1ART (1278) or visit nelson-atkins.org.

For media interested in receiving further information, please contact:

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