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**\*Images Available Upon Request**

## Cincinnati Art Museum Acquires Work by Renowned Ceramicist Roberto Lugo

**CINCINNATI — July 12, 2023** — The Cincinnati Art Museum has expanded its renowned decorative arts collection with the acquisition of *Annie Ruth and Robert O’Neal Teapot* and *Bootsy Collins and Kathryn Gardette Teapot*, two works created by artist, educator and poet Roberto Lugo.

Lugo created the teapots leading up to the museum’s *Roberto Lugo: Hi-Def Archives* exhibition, which opened March 17, 2023, and runs through September 24. They join another work by Lugo in CAM’s collection, *Rookwood in Hi-Def*, a four-foot ceramic vase that portrays Cincinnati-born hip-hop artist Hi-Tek on one side and a depiction of Downtown Cincinnati on the other. The teapots and vase feature prominently in the exhibition.

Lugo (Puerto Rican-American, b. 1981) was raised in the Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia, a dynamic community but with few opportunities to achieve economic mobility or access to artistic outlets. At the age of 25, Lugo enrolled in his first pottery class and found his life’s calling.

Lugo draws from his lived experience and deep knowledge of ceramic history to create works that elevate the people and cultural movements that have been overlooked or misrepresented in the historical record of ceramics. His multicultural mashups often combine classic forms and patterns with elements of hip-hop. Throughout history, motivations for portraying Black Americans, Indigenous Americans and other marginalized people varied. White artists often painted portraits of their BIPOC subjects as “exotic others,” perpetuating the racist stereotypes that developed alongside the growth and sustainment of imperial and colonial systems.

Roberto Lugo responds to this history with the *Annie Ruth and Robert O’Neal Teapot* and *Bootsy Collins and Kathryn Gardette Teapot* featuring four Black and Brown Cincinnati leaders who have dedicated their lives to connecting art and communities to promote dialogue, build relationships and create equity. Artist, author and educator Annie Ruth (b. 1963) works tirelessly to empower people—particularly women and girls. Robert O’Neal (1940-2018) founded Cincinnati’s Arts Consortium, a hub that nurtured cultural identity, supported Black artists, and provided arts education to inner-city youth. Bootsy Collins (b. 1951) has made invaluable contributions to American Funk music and mentored young musicians. Community advocate Kathryn Gardette (b. 1961) is the Walnut Hills Area Council president and a long-time member of Drums for Peace, a wide-ranging program that utilizes performance and media arts as tools for experiential learning. These are just a few of the featured leaders’ many accomplishments and endeavors.

# cincinnati art museum

“I was very honored to see my father, Robert O’Neal, on the teapot created by Roberto Lugo,” shared Toilynn O’Neal Turner, founding director of the Robert O’Neal Multicultural Arts Center (ROMAC). “My father stood for others. As I preserve his legacy through the ROMAC and how I impact the community, it is exciting to know he will be in the CAM collections.”

*Roberto Lugo: Hi-Def Archives* is in the Sara M. and Michelle Vance Waddell Gallery and the Manuel and Rhoda Mayerson Gallery (Galleries 124 and 125) located across from the Terrace Café. No tickets are required for this exhibition. General admission to the museum is also free.

## **About the Cincinnati Art Museum**

The Cincinnati Art Museum is supported by the generosity of individuals and businesses that give annually to ArtsWave. The Ohio Arts Council helps fund the Cincinnati Art Museum with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence, and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. The Cincinnati Art Museum gratefully acknowledges operating support from the City of Cincinnati, as well as our members.

Free general admission to the Cincinnati Art Museum is made possible by a gift from the Rosenthal Family Foundation. Exhibition pricing may vary. Parking is free.

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