

For immediate release
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Ackland Receives Extraordinary Gift



CHAPEL HILL, NC – Museums rely on the generosity of donors and the Tyche Foundation gift represents one of the most significant contributions in the history of the Ackland Art Museum. This collection of fifty-one works of art will be unveiled in its entirety in the special exhibition *Fortune Smiles: The Tyche Foundation Gift* (May 23 – August 29, 2010). These works of art add new depth to the Ackland Collection. Accompanying the exhibition is an illustrated catalogue featuring art historical commentary on each piece, as well as nine original works of fiction by acclaimed author Allan Gurganus written in response to selected pieces.



"The collection of the Ackland Art Museum has been decisively, permanently, enriched and strengthened by this unprecedented act of generosity," said Ackland Chief Curator Peter Nisbet.



Named for the Greek goddess of fortune, the Tyche Foundation was founded by former Ackland director Charles Millard after a serendipitous and dramatic encounter with a mysterious work of art. For years, Millard kept a small sculpture that he had purchased at auction on a coffee table in his home. He knew little about the object's history or creator. By happenstance, an article about the sale of a similar piece piqued his curiosity, and, to his surprise, his own sculpture was soon identified as a valuable and highly sought after work of art.

Instead of simply gifting this one piece to the Ackland, Millard opted to sell it and take the proceeds to establish a foundation with the explicit goal of acquiring multiple works. After a career that included positions at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, in addition to directing the Ackland, Millard is a celebrated connoisseur and patron whose acuity and generosity has benefited cultural institutions across the country. The works of art included in the Tyche Foundation gift are tailored to fit the Ackland Collection specifically – enhancing areas, adding luster to others – guided by the unique institutional knowledge and celebrated eye of Millard.

"Charlie knows this collection intimately—our strengths and our gaps—but he also has his own very particular tastes and interests," said Ackland Director Emily Kass. "Because of this rare combination, each of the works included in this amazing gift enriches and adds an important aspect to the permanent collection and reflects the singular vision of this donor."

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Ackland Art Museum | The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Distinguished by its impressive diversity, the Tyche Foundation gift includes drawings, paintings, prints, sculpture, calligraphy, and photographs. When viewed as a whole, the collection encompasses a wide stylistic range. Among the pieces included are a sensuous Greek head dating from 500 BCE (above, top), an exquisite and minutely-detailed Indian watercolor from the seventeenth century (above, middle), and Édouard Manet's first published etching (*The Gypsies*, 1862 – above, bottom). Including nine examples of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century photography, twelve pieces of Asian art, and nine works by “old masters,” the Tyche Foundation gift is an astonishing collection of works marked by an uncompromising aesthetic quality.

Published in conjunction with the exhibition, the catalogue includes fifty-two full color images, foreword by Ackland Director Emily Kass, introduction and art historical commentaries by Ackland Chief Curator Peter Nisbet, and a special section of fictional narrative responses by Allan Gurganus, acclaimed author of *Oldest Living Confederate Widow Tells All*, *White People*, *Plays Well With Others*, and *The Practical Heart*.

Related Events

The Art of Collecting and Telling Tales:
Conversation and Reading with Charles Millard and Allan Gurganus
Sunday, May 23 | 1:00 PM
Hyde Hall
Followed by catalogue signing and light reception
Seating is Limited
This program made possible by Shirley Drechsel and Wayne Vaughn

This exhibition and related programs are made possible by the generosity of Shirley Drechsel and Wayne Vaughn, friends of the Tyche Foundation, and the William Hayes Ackland Trust.
Exhibition catalogue made possible by the Carl and Lily Pforzheimer Foundation, friends of the Tyche Foundation, Allan Gurganus, and the William Hayes Ackland Trust.

Images:

Unidentified artist, Greece (perhaps Rhodes): *Head of a Goddess*, c. 500 BCE. terra cotta. 21.6 x 17.3 x 13.2 cm. Gift of the Tyche Foundation

Jalal Quli, Indian, Mughal, active 1630 – 1660: *Prince Dara-Shikoh and Mullah Shah, Accompanied by Five Retainers, in Kashmir*, c. 1640-50; opaque watercolor and gold on paper mounted on an 18th century album page with nasta'liq calligraphy on the verso. 27.3 x 17.3 cm (image). Gift of the Tyche Foundation

Édouard Manet, French, 1832 – 1883: *The Gypsies (Les gitanos)*, 1862; etching on chine colle. 31.5 x 23.8 cm (plate). Gift of the Tyche Foundation

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The Ackland Art Museum

The Ackland Art Museum is an academic unit of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and serves broad local, state, and national constituencies. The Ackland Collection consists of more than 15,500 works of art, featuring significant collections of European masterworks, twentieth-century and contemporary art, North Carolina's premier collections of Asian art and works of art on paper (drawings, prints, and photographs), as well as African art and North Carolina pottery and folk art.

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Location and Hours

The Ackland Art Museum is located at 101 South Columbia Street in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, near the corner of South Columbia and East Franklin Streets. Admission is always free, with donations accepted. Hours are 10AM – 5PM on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday; 10AM – 8PM Thursday; 1PM – 5PM Sunday; and 10 – 9PM on the second Friday of every month. More information available at 919.966.5736 or www.ackland.org.

For further information, please contact:

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