

From: Columbia Museum of Art
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PRESS RELEASE

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The Columbia Museum of Art and Friends of African American Art and Culture

Present Lecture on African-American Artist Robert S. Duncanson

Highlights New Painting Given in Honor of Executive Director's Ten Years at the Museum

Talk and Unveiling on Tuesday, November 18, 2014

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Robert S. Duncanson (American, 1821-1872), *Landscape with Fantastic Architecture*, n.d. oil on canvas, 9 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 14 $\frac{1}{16}$ in.

Columbia, S.C. - The Columbia Museum of Art and Friends of African American Art and Culture (FAAAC) present a special lecture, "Robert S. Duncanson: 19th-Century African-American Master," by CMA Chief Curator Will South in the Museum's Lorick Auditorium on Tuesday, November 18, 2014, at 6:00 p.m. The lecture, sponsored by the CMA membership affiliate FAAAC, is presented in celebration of the Museum's recent gift of Duncanson's oil painting, *Landscape with Fantastic Architecture*. After the lecture, attendees will be the first to view the painting on display.

The CMA has a long-standing commitment to collecting and exhibiting African-American art, and this beautiful addition to the collection enhances the CMA's opportunity to present and interpret the history of art in America.

"Duncanson was described during his life as the 'greatest landscape painter in the West,'" says South. "In recent decades, he has been rediscovered as an artist of exceptional talent who painted some of the most important murals in America prior to the Civil War, but faded into obscurity after his death.

Landscape with Fantastic Architecture is a small, but jewel-like, example of the artist's skill and vision. In it, he creates a visually pristine and ideal world, a view typical of the Hudson River School."

Duncanson was an artist who worked to excel as a painter, a career normally not available to African-Americans in the 19th century. Despite formidable challenges, he made himself into an artist and forged a place in history as one of the finest painters of the period.

The painting is given in honor of Karen Brosius in recognition of her first decade as director of the Columbia Museum of Art by Kay and John Bachmann, Melissa and Joe Blanchard, Susan and Darnall Boyd, Suzan D. Boyd and M. Edward

Sellers, Susie B. and C. Carroll Heyward, Hannah and Ron Rogers, Kit and Joel Smith, Susan Thorpe and John Baynes, and Joann and Claude Walker.

"I love being at the CMA," says Brosius. "The past ten years have been a tremendous experience to see the Museum grow in such a positive direction. This is truly a great honor, and I am deeply grateful to the generous donors that made this gift possible and to all the museum members and supporters who make the CMA such an important institution."

"The donors felt that a painting by Robert Scott Duncanson was a special way not only to celebrate Karen's decade as our director," says Kay Bachmann, CMA board of trustees member and gift donor, "but also to memorialize Karen's and CMA's commitment to including important African-American artists in our collection. We are delighted that it will be first introduced into the collection at a special event for the FAAAC."

Lecture at 6:00 p.m. followed by light refreshments in the lobby. Free.

Duncanson biography

Robert Scott Duncanson was born circa 1821 in New York's Finger Lakes region in Fayette, New York, into a family of free African-Americans. His early artistic training is unknown, but by the early 1840s he was exhibiting his work in the Cincinnati, Ohio area. In 1853, he traveled to Glasgow, Scotland, with the help of the Freedman's Aid Society of Ohio, to study painting and began painting portraits of prominent white abolitionists from Detroit and Cincinnati upon his return a year later. Duncanson gained international recognition for his landscape paintings, which were influenced by the painters of the Hudson River School. He traveled extensively depicting numerous landscape scenes throughout North Carolina, Pennsylvania, England, Canada, and Scotland. In 1863, he again left for Europe to escape the turmoil of the Civil War. Four years later, he returned, continuing his work in landscapes with much success. He died in 1872.

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