News Release

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*** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

Friends of Kresge Art Museum Present New Acquisition in honor of museum’s 50th anniversary

EAST LANSING, MI — Aaron Harry Gorson’s painting, *Bridge across a River*, was unveiled Sunday, February 1, 2009, at Kresge Art Museum during the Gallery Talk by Museum Director Susan J. Bandes. The Friends of Kresge Art Museum purchased and presented the piece in honor of the museum’s 50th anniversary.

A classically trained painter, Gorson lived in Pittsburgh from 1903 until 1921, during which time the painting was made. He became known for his moody, tonal depictions of steel mills and the rivers of Pittsburgh. In *Bridge Across a River*, the scene unfolds in layers; the railroad tracks, line of receding telephone poles, river, bridge and distant steel mill. They are enveloped in the grey, damp misty winter light. As a gritty, industrial image this painting provides a narrative about typical Midwest cities in the first half of the 20th century.

“We were looking for a Midwest regional image from the 1910-1920’s, industrial, with a sense of place,” said Susan Bandes. The theme of the painting is relevant to the current decline of the manufacturing base in the northern United States, and April Kingsley, museum curator, noted the irony. “As an industrial scene, everything in the painting is working away, the train, the boat, and the mill yet all of that is dying now. Young people don’t think about factories anymore. It used to be exciting to tour them; it was part of our education growing up. Now it’s nostalgic, but it wasn’t when Gorson was painting”. Another Pittsburgh scene by Gorson was included in the Kresge’s *Artists of the Great Lakes* special exhibition in the fall.

*Bridge*, and other images from the museum’s American collection, will be used in *Picturing America*, a partnership of the Kresge Art Museum, the Michigan Humanities Council, and the National Endowment for the Humanities that bring images of some of American Art’s great masterpieces into schools and libraries to provide a deeper appreciation of American history and culture.

*Bridge across a River* will be on view through March 15, 2009 as part of the current exhibition *The Kresge Art Museum Collection: Celebrating the 50th*. Sponsors are the MSU Federal Credit Union and the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs.

Kresge Art Museum is located in East Lansing, MI, on the campus of Michigan State University, first floor of the Kresge Art Center at the intersection of Physics and Auditorium Roads between the Alumni Chapel and the MSU Auditorium. Museum hours are Monday through Friday, 10 to 5 p.m., Thursday until 8 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. The museum will be open Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and Presidents’ Day. For additional information, call (517) 355-7631 or visit [www.artmuseum.msu.edu](http://www.artmuseum.msu.edu).

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Caption/Credit for attached image: Aaron Harry Gorson (American, 1872-1933), *Bridge across a River*, Ca. 1903-21, Oil on board, 10 x 14 inches, Kresge Art Museum, Michigan State University, MSU purchase, funded by the Friends of Kresge Art Museum, 2008.29

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