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Extensive Florida Art Collection Gifted to the University of Florida

The estimated 1,200 works of art from Sam and Robbie Vickers depict state's environment, people and history; includes paintings by Winslow Homer, John Singer Sargent and Thomas Moran

GAINESVILLE, FL, Feb. 3, 2021— A private collection of Florida works of art, some created by the foremost artists of their time, has a new home at the Harn Museum of Art at the University of Florida. The oil paintings, watercolors, drawings and prints—the largest single art collection ever donated to the university—as well as an extensive art library is a gift from native Floridians Sam and Robbie Vickers.



Thomas Moran (American, 1837-1926), *Fort George Island*, 1880, The Florida Art Collection, Gift of Samuel H. and Roberta T. Vickers, Photography by Randy Batista

One of the world's most extensive Florida-themed collections, the estimated 1,200 works of art capture the state's landscape and wildlife, historical moments and people, and diverse scenes of daily life. Among the gifts are works by celebrated artists such as John Singer Sargent, Winslow Homer, Martin Johnson Heade and Thomas Moran. The Jacksonville couple began meticulously and devotedly assembling their collection 40 years ago. Robbie Vickers is an artist who has brought her keen eye to the collection, while Sam Vickers has traveled the country—and in some cases even to Europe—to find art by world-renowned artists who came to Florida and captured its beauty. In the time since they began collecting, they have loaned art from their collection to New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art, the National Gallery in Washington, D.C., and assorted Florida museums.

The Vickers Collection is a transformational donation for the Harn Museum, which celebrated its 30th anniversary in September. The scope and importance of the collection will add considerably to the museum's strategic plan, which includes the construction of a new wing that will include galleries and a print study and conservation center for the display and study of the collection.

“The educational part of it is very important to us,” Robbie Vickers said of the couple's gift to UF. “Even though we know a great deal about the artists and the works of art, students and faculty and scholars can research and find out more. We want [the collection] to go to a place where that's going to happen.”



Samuel H. and Roberta T. Vickers
Photograph by Randy Batista

Added Sam Vickers: “The flagship university of our state is a place where there’s already a wonderful museum, but our things will be able to be studied and enjoyed for decades to come. That will mean a lot to us. We know how great a home the Harn will be.”

The collection’s artists travelled from across the United States and Europe to capture the state’s natural beauty and history. In addition to Sargent, Homer, Heade, and Moran, some of the other renowned American artists include Milton Avery, Ralston Crawford, Louis Comfort Tiffany and Marguerite Zorach. The works date from the early 1800s to mid-1900s.

Florida—the ruggedness and grandeur of its landscapes and the highs and lows of its human history through the centuries,” UF President Kent Fuchs said. “Sam and Robbie have shared a treasure with us, and we are thrilled to have the privilege of sharing their collection in turn with all visitors to the Harn Museum.”

“The Vickers Collection is unique in its power to convey both the exquisite natural beauty and the rich history of people in

This spring, the Harn Museum will display a portion of the collection in its main exhibition hall. The exhibition, *A Florida Legacy: Gift of Samuel H. and Roberta T. Vickers*, will be on view Feb. 26-Aug. 1. It will be organized along six thematic sections that address prominent subjects represented in the Vickers Collection: nature, history, landmarks, diversions, living and impressions.

“We are very thankful to Sam and Robbie Vickers for their generosity,” said Dr. Lee Anne Chesterfield, the Harn Museum of Art’s director. “This is a transformational gift for the Harn and the University of Florida that will increase the museum’s Modern Art Collection by more than double. As an integral part of the University of Florida campus, the Harn Museum of Art will share the Vickers’ gift as an important new resource to strengthen faculty collaboration, support teaching and enhance class tours, and provide research projects for future study.”



Winslow Homer (American, 1836-1910), *Foul Hooked Black Bass* 1904, The Florida Art Collection, Gift of Samuel H. and Roberta T. Vickers, Photography by Randy Batista

The University of Florida, the state’s flagship university, serves more than 56,000 students from throughout the United States and many other countries. It is currently ranked No. 6 on U.S. News and World Report’s annual list of best public universities. The Harn Museum of Art integrates arts and culture into curricula throughout the university’s system of colleges and centers. Its holdings include nearly 13,300 works in five main collecting areas: Asian art, African art, photography, modern art of the Americas and Europe and international contemporary art.