RANDOM SKETCHES FROM HERE AND THERE: GOUACHE DRAWINGS BY GUSTAVE BAUMANN
ON VIEW APRIL 28 – JULY 29, 2007

(WORCESTER, Mass., March 27, 2007) – The Worcester Art Museum is pleased to announce the upcoming spring exhibition, Random Sketches from Here and There: Gouache Drawings by Gustave Baumann, on view April 28—July 29, 2007. In 2006, WAM received a major gift of prints and drawings from the Baumann Estate, which makes the Museum one of the two chief repositories of the artist’s work. To honor this significant gift, David Acton, Curator of Prints, Drawings and Photographs, has selected about fifty original gouache* sketches, which will be on view in the PDP Gallery. Many of these gouaches were used in the production of prints, and most have never been exhibited before.

The most popular and influential American color woodcut artist of the twentieth century, Gustave Baumann devised a style and technique all his own. Born in Germany, the artist grew up in Chicago, where he was an apprentice in a print shop, then a design studio, while attending art classes at night. In 1904-5, he spent a year studying in Munich at the Royal School of Arts and Crafts. There, Baumann learned the techniques of color relief printmaking, which he later used for advertising and illustration. After returning to Chicago, he worked for some years as a commercial artist before deciding to commit himself to fine printmaking, at that time a very unusual career choice. In 1910-17, Baumann worked in the remote country town of Nashville, Indiana. In 1918, the artist settled in Santa Fe, New Mexico. His color woodcut views of the American Midwest and Southwest remained perennial winners at print exhibitions throughout the world, and are coveted by collectors.

Baumann worked out his own distinctive method. He traveled the countryside, making plein-air sketches in gouache, the size and exact colors of his anticipated prints. Back in the studio, he would mechanically transfer these designs to his blocks. Then he mixed oil-based inks to match his gouache colors, and produced his prints from a set of five or six matching blocks that he carved and printed himself.

*gouache (pr. gwahsh) - A heavy, opaque watercolor paint, sometimes called body color, producing a less wet-appearing and more strongly colored picture than ordinary watercolor. In addition, any painting produced with gouache.
About the Worcester Art Museum

The Worcester Art Museum, which opened to the public in 1898, is world-renowned for its 35,000-piece collection of paintings, sculpture, decorative arts, photography, prints, drawings and new media. The works span 5,000 years of art and culture. View paintings by Cassatt, Gauguin, Goya, Monet, Sargent and Whistler; admire floor mosaics from the ancient city of Antioch; see cutting-edge contemporary art; and discover the Museum’s many other treasures. Special exhibitions showcase the masterworks, seldom-seen gems, and important works on loan. Enjoy a delectable lunch in the Museum Café, and browse the Shop for unique gifts and mementos.

Dedicated to the promotion of art and art education, the Museum offers a year-round studio art and art appreciation program that enrolls over 7,000 adult and youth students each year. Public tours are offered Saturdays at 11 a.m. and Sundays at 1 p.m., September through May. Audio tours are also available in English and Spanish.

Museum hours are Wednesday through Sunday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Third Thursdays of every month, 11 a.m.-8 p.m., and Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Admission is $10 for adults, $8 for seniors and full-time college students with current ID, and FREE for Members and all youth 17 and under. Admission is also FREE for everyone on Saturday mornings, 10 a.m.-noon (sponsored by The TJX Companies, Inc. and National Grid).

The Museum is located at 55 Salisbury St., Worcester, Mass., easily accessible from the Massachusetts Turnpike (I-90), Route 290 and Route 9. Free parking is available near entrances on Salisbury, Lancaster and Tuckerman streets. For more information, call (508) 799-4406 or visit the Museum web site at www.worcesterart.org.

Electronic images available.

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Random sketches from here and there

GOUACHE DRAWINGS BY GUSTAVE BAUMANN

Gustave Baumann, Sante Fe Spring, about 1925, gouache over graphite on brown wove paper, Gift of Ann Baumann, 2006.238

Gustave Baumann, Grand Canyon, 1927, gouache over graphite on brown wove paper, Gift of Ann Baumann, 2006.276

Gustave Baumann, Mending the Seine, 1917, gouache and watercolor over graphite on cream wove paper, Gift of Ann Baumann, 2006.231

Gustave Baumann, Country Bridge, Brown County, Indiana, 1915, gouache over graphite on brown wove paper, Gift of Ann Baumann, 2006.236

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