

PRESS RELEASE

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**Williams College Museum of Art Presents
an exhibition of the artwork of
Rhoda Holmes Nicholls**

June 10–September 10, 2006

Williamstown, MA—The Williams College Museum of Art (WCMA) proudly presents the first in depth exhibition for Rhoda Holmes Nicholls (1854-1930), who was well known at the turn of the century for the charm and delicacy of her paintings and watercolors. This exhibition will feature approximately 25 of Nicholls's works, including still lifes, landscapes from the New England countryside, and seascapes; about half of the works in the show are watercolors. **Rhoda Holmes Nicholls** will be on view at WCMA from June 10 through September 10, 2006. A gallery talk on the artist's life and work will be given Tuesday, August 1 at 2 pm by exhibition curator, Kathryn Price.

Originally from England, Nicholls led a colorful life, traveling to South Africa, Rome, Venice, and the Dolomites. She eventually settled in the United States where she painted and taught in towns along the East Coast. She served as a role model for many young women of the time, both in her successes and failures. Nicholls made headlines with her divorce from fellow painter Burr Nicholls after her painting was accepted to the Paris Salon and his was not; newspapers widely warned women about the dangers of success and its potential influence on marital and domestic bliss. However, this did not deter the ambitious Rhoda Holmes Nicholls. A

celebrated painter and teacher, she served as co-editor of the turn-of-the-century journal *Palette and Bench*, was awarded medals at such prestigious exhibitions as the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 and the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo of 1901, and taught watercolor classes at William Merritt Chase's Shinnecock School on Long Island, as well as at the Art Students League in New York.

Nicholls is represented in such museums as the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the High Museum of Art, Atlanta. Nevertheless, her place in history has been largely obscured by the passing of years. WCMA has long been committed to the study of women artists, such as Kara Walker, Carrie Mae Weems, Kiki Smith, and Mary Cassatt, who add or have added to the canon of art history. The exhibition **Rhoda Holmes Nicholls** hopes to refocus the public's attention on this influential and groundbreaking female artist, further enlightening the study of American art.

The works in this exhibition are drawn from the collection of Walter and Berta Burr of Hoosick, New York. A catalogue will accompany the exhibition.

The Williams College Museum of Art is open Tuesday through Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m. Admission is free and the museum is wheelchair accessible. Contact: Suzanne Augugliaro, Director of Public Relations and External Affairs, 413.597.3178; WCMA@williams.edu; www.wcma.org.