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## Large Glass Installation Joins Glass Collection at The Columbus Museum

*Crocodile Tears* by American artist Michael Petry includes 21 large cut glass containers

**Columbus, Ga.** – The Columbus Museum Board of Trustees and staff are pleased to announce the recent acquisition of a large glass installation by Michael Petry, an American artist originally from El Paso who has been based in London (UK) since 1981.

“TCM’s holdings contain a solid core group of studio glass pieces that contextualizes the large Dale Chihuly boat installation in the Legacy Gallery,” stated Jonathan Frederick Walz, Ph.D., the Director of Curatorial Affairs & Curator of American Art at The Columbus Museum. “As *Crocodile Tears* bridges the gap between craft practice and conceptual sculpture, and as the Museum’s overall collection is less strong in installation-based works, we are pleased to be able to share this work with the residents of the Chattahoochee Valley and our many visitors.”

Petry’s work *Crocodile Tears* is from 2007 and is made up of 21 large cut glass containers. There are seven each of red, white, and blue vessels that are placed directly on the floor and look as if whatever contents they may have contained has now evaporated. Numbers are often to be found in Petry’s work and here the number of containers is 21, the legal drinking age in America while the voting age is only 18.

The work was last installed at the Hiram Butler Gallery in Houston, one of the galleries that represent Petry. “We are so happy to be a part of Michael’s and The Columbus Museum’s story,” says gallery director Josh Pazda. “And we are pleased to see it placed in a wonderful long-term public collecting institution.”

**MORE ABOUT *CROCODILE TEARS*:** The work was created for Petry’s 2007 show *America the Beautiful* in New York, which looked at many aspects and notions of patriotism, politics, sexuality, and art history. Similar though much smaller tear catchers have been made throughout the ages and were extremely popular in the Victorian era. Tear catchers or *lachrymatories* were commonly found in the first centuries BCE. Ancient Romans placed them in tombs and it is thought they once contained the tears of mourners for the deceased. Psalms 56:8 reads: *You tell my wanderings, put you my tears into your bottle.* Many a widow, on both sides of the Civil War, kept her tears for her soldier husband. Petry has used a common shape for the small bottles but presents versions that could easily hold a gallon of tears each.

Historically the act of crying for the loss of a loved one was not a private function. The catching of tears was a very public statement about loss, and further, about the ones who cried the tears. Petry suggests that it should come as no surprise that politicians also want to publically show their grief even if they have caused it themselves, or have failed to stop the cause of much public grief. Petry believes that tears are easy, but action is hard.

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**IMAGE INFO:** Michael Petry (with Liam Reeves and Anthony Harris), *Crocodile Tears*, 2007, 21 glass vessels in three colours; installation size variable, each piece approx. 12 in. in length