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**Forbearance by John Himmelfarb:
 A Promised Gift to the IU Art Museum**



John Himmelfarb
 American, born 1946
Forbearance, 2009
 Acrylic on canvas
 54 x 76 in.
 Promised gift of
 Stephen Mueller in
 memory of his parents,
 Karl and Tanny Mueller

Painted in January 2009 by Chicago-based painter, sculptor, and printmaker John Himmelfarb, *Forbearance* is the latest addition to the artist's Truck series. Since 2003 Himmelfarb has created a body of work—paintings, sculptures, prints, and drawings—focused on the image of the truck. Explaining his fascination with trucks, Himmelfarb has said, "There's just something about them that's so easy to anthropomorphize.... They've got a personality, a soul."

Both of Himmelfarb's parents were artists, and they introduced him at a young age to postwar European painting. The spontaneity and directness in the work of the postwar painters—including Art Brut pioneer Jean Dubuffet and CoBra members Pierre Alechinsky and Karel Appel—made a strong impression on Himmelfarb. The tension between representation and abstraction in their work, as well as their gestural spontaneity, finds echoes in much of Himmelfarb's oeuvre. His work, too, is characterized by its balance of painterliness and draftsmanship. *Forbearance's* impastoed surface and vigorous brushwork are tempered by its calligraphic, linear patterning. Subtle touches of red, green, and blue soften the boldly black and white composition.

A promised gift to the IU Art Museum from Chicago collector and artist Stephen Mueller in memory of his parents, Karl and Tanny Mueller, the painting is expected to be formally accessioned into

the museum's permanent collection by the end of the year. Stephen Mueller has said of *Forbearance*: "I first saw it... on a visit to John's studio. It was a stunning first encounter and I continue to be surprised with every viewing." *Forbearance* is a splendid addition to the museum's collection of contemporary art, and the first painting by Himmelfarb to enter our collection. As an art museum in the Midwest, we are pleased to acquire a work by an artist who, despite having attained national prominence, has chosen to live and work in this region. *Forbearance* is on view in our first-floor Gallery of the Art of the Western World, and we express our gratitude to Stephen Mueller for this important gift.

Jenny McComas
 Class of 1958 Curator of Western Art after 1800

experience
 art from all angles