

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 1, 2013

Groundbreaking Virginia Collections to be Displayed in Permanent Galleries

New early 20th-century European art galleries open in May

VMFA opens its permanent early 20th-century European art galleries on May 4, showcasing French and German art from the first half of the 20th century. The galleries, also known as the Deane & Goodwin Galleries, are located on the Atrium level of the museum.

“It’s noteworthy that the galleries will house the collections of two visionary Virginia collections, Ludwig and Rosy Fischer and T. Catesby Jones,” Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Director Alex Nyerges said. “Both collections represent internationally significant artists and open important dialogues with the Sydney and Frances Lewis Family collection of mid to late 20th-century art as well as the Lewis Art Nouveau and Art Deco Decorative Arts collection.”

The Ludwig and Rosy Fischer Collection, which came to VMFA as a gift-purchase in 2009, was assembled by the couple in Frankfurt, Germany, between 1905 and 1925. In its time, it was widely known as one of the most significant collections in Europe of new German art. Brought to the United States in 1934, it became the last refugee collections of German Expressionism to enter a U.S. museum when it was acquired by a combination purchase-gift in 2009. It includes the work of Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Emil Nolde, Max Pechstein, Conrad Felixmuller, Wassily Kandinsky, and Paul Klee, among others.

T. Catesby Jones, a native Virginian who pursued a law career in New York, gave his French Modernism collection to VMFA as a bequest in 1947. He purchased works between 1924 and 1939 from prominent artists of the era – Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, André Masson, Jacques Lipchitz, and others – as well as works by such artists as André Lhote and Jean Lurçat, who are less widely known today. For a time, his gift placed VMFA in the vanguard of U.S. museums collecting modern European art. New acquisitions, including the 1912 sculpture *Maggy* by French artist Raymond Duchamp-Villon, also will be on display.



Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (German, 1880-1938) *Six Dancers* (Sechs Tänzerinnen), 1911. Oil on canvas. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. The Ludwig and Rosy Fischer Collection, Bequest of Anne R. Fischer. Photo: Katherine Wetzel © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts



Henri Matisse (French, 1869-1954) *Lorette*, 1917. Oil on panel. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. T. Catesby Jones Collection. Photo: Katherine Wetzel © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

Altria Group is the presenting sponsor of this installation.



About German Modernism

The new galleries will feature German Expressionist art from just before World War I through the 1920s,

more

with an emphasis on Die Brücke (“the Bridge”), a movement in which artists opposed the dominant style of Impressionism and its focus on color and light. Die Brücke artists responded to the changing world of the early 20th century and employed a style defined by vivid palettes, strong lines, and distorted forms. These characteristics symbolize the German Expressionism movement as a whole. The artists witnessed industrialization and either celebrated it by depicting aspects of the bustling, modern city, or opposed it by fleeing the city and painting rural landscapes in response to the pressures of modern life.

Ludwig and Rosy Fischer, who embraced the changing art of their time, purchased the majority of German works in the new early 20th-century European art galleries. From 1905 to 1925, they acquired paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints and illustrated books, and the collection was passed to their two sons, Max and Ernst upon their deaths. In 1934, Ernst left Germany with his family and his half of the collection and accepted a position at the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond. Max’s half of the collection stayed in Germany, which was then confiscated and destroyed by the Nazis. In 2009, the Ludwig and Rosy Fischer Collection of German Expressionist Art, approximately 200 works, became part of VMFA’s permanent collection through a gift-purchase agreement with Ernst’s widow, Anne Fischer.

About French Modernism

During the first half of the 20th century, European artists viewed Paris as a cultural capital where a spirit of experimentation and innovation produced a succession of artistic movements including Fauvism, Cubism and Surrealism. While many of the artists represented in the European Modernism gallery were French, some were émigrés from other European countries: Pablo Picasso, Juan Gris and Salvador Dalí were from Spain; Jacques Lipchitz was from Lithuania; and Alexander Archipenko came from the Ukraine. There were connections between artists working in Paris and German Expressionists, and the dialogues between different nationalities emphasized the web of cultural influences that shaped the way artists in Paris understood the modern world.

Many of these works came to VMFA’s collection from T. Catesby Jones (1880-1946). Descended from a Virginia family, Jones spent his childhood in Petersburg, Va., and attended Hampden-Sydney College, Princeton University and the University of Virginia School of Law. In 1911, he moved to New York City and when the modern art boom occurred in the city during the 1920s, he became a dedicated collector of 20th-century art. After two decades, he amassed almost 300 works including paintings, drawings, prints, sculptures, textiles and illustrated books. He often traveled to Paris and formed friendships with artists such as Jacques Lipchitz, Jean Lurçat, and André Masson. Jones was a VMFA trustee and he donated works during his lifetime and left his paintings, sculptures and drawings as a bequest to the museum in 1947.

About the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

VMFA’s permanent collection encompasses more than 33,000 works of art spanning 5,000 years of world history. Its collections of Art Nouveau and Art Deco, English silver, Fabergé, and the art of South Asia are among the finest in the nation. With acclaimed holdings in American, British Sporting, Impressionist and Post-Impressionist, and Modern and Contemporary art – and additional strengths in African, Ancient, East Asian, and European – VMFA ranks as one of the top comprehensive art museums in the United States. Programs include educational activities and studio classes for all ages, plus lively after-hours events. VMFA’s Statewide Partnership program includes traveling exhibitions, artist and teacher workshops, and lectures across the Commonwealth. VMFA is open 365 days a year and general admission is always free. For additional information, telephone 804-340-1400 or visit www.vmfa.museum.

#

Press Contact:

Suzanne Hall, suzanne.hall@vmfa.museum, 804.204.2704

Pryor Green, pryor.green@vmfa.museum, 804.204.2701

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, 200 N. Boulevard, Richmond VA 23220-4007