

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Sketching Gallery Invites Visitors to Create Floral Still Life Drawings

VMFA has a rich tradition of supporting flower-inspired programs

In a creative twist, the exhibition *Van Gogh, Manet, and Matisse: The Art of the Flower*, on view through June 21, 2015, includes an opportunity for visitors to create their own art by sketching a beautiful floral arrangement.

Within the exhibition, visitors encounter the interactive sketching gallery, where they are encouraged to draw a bouquet of flowers. “This is the first time we’ve promoted audience participation within an exhibition,” Director Alex Nyerges said. “Our hope is visitors will gain a different level of understanding of the art by looking at flowers the way the artists did.”

For *The Art of the Flower*, members of The Council of VMFA are designing a large floral arrangement in the Sketching Gallery. The flowers, donated by Strange’s Florists, will change regularly. Equipped with benches, chairs, clipboards and colored pencils for visitors, the Sketching Gallery is a creative space that encourages visitors to reflect on and reinvent the art of the flower. VMFA is providing all materials, and visitors may display their work in the gallery.



VMFA has a rich history of welcoming and interpreting art through flowers. In 1985 the Hirshler Flower Fund was established, which provides a dazzling floral arrangement at the museum’s entrance to welcome visitors. The Hirschler Flower committee includes 35 volunteers who provide a fresh floral design in the museum’s Atrium 52 weeks of the year.

Also, since 1987 the VMFA Council has regularly coordinated *Fine Arts & Flowers*, a museum-wide exhibition of floral interpretations of works in the museum’s permanent collections. Floral designers from all over Virginia are nominated by their garden clubs to participate in this event, which also includes lectures and many other programs. As visitors look at the art and at the complementary floral design, they gain a greater appreciation for both the art and the sensitive work of the floral designer.

#### About the exhibition

- TITLE: *Van Gogh, Manet, and Matisse: The Art of the Flower*
- DATES: March 21 –June 21, 2015
- ORGANIZERS: The exhibition is co-organized by VMFA and Dallas Museum of Art
- CURATOR: Co-curated by Dr. Mitchell Merling, Paul Mellon Curator and Head of European Art, VMFA, and Dr. Heather MacDonald, Program Officer, Getty Foundation, and former Lillian and James H. Clark Associate Curator of European Art, Dallas Museum of Art.

- ITINERARY: The Dallas Museum of Art, *Bouquets: French Still-Life Painting From Chardin to Matisse* (October 26, 2014 – February 8, 2015) and the Denver Art Museum, *In Bloom: Painting Flowers in the Age of Impressionism* (July 19 – October 11, 2015.)
- NUMBER OF WORKS: 64
- TICKETS: \$15 for adults, \$12 for seniors and groups
- PROMOTIONAL PARTNER: April 18-25, 2015, the Garden Club of Virginia will offer tours of over 250 private homes and gardens throughout Virginia, and is a partner with *Van Gogh, Manet, and Matisse: The Art of the Flower*.
- CATALOGUE: A fully illustrated catalogue, *Working Among Flowers: Floral Still-Life Painting in Nineteenth-Century France*, is distributed by Yale University Press with contributions by the exhibition's curators and other invited scholars, including Audrey Gay-Mazuel, Curator, Department of the Nineteenth Century at the Musée des Arts décoratifs, Paris; Olivier Meslay, Associate Director of Curatorial Affairs and Barbara Thomas Lemmon Curator of European Art at the Dallas Museum of Art; and Sylvie Patry, Chief Curator of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist Paintings at the Musée d'Orsay, Paris. \$45.
- SPONSORS: The exhibition is presented at VMFA by Altria Group with additional support from The Francena T. Harrison Foundation Trust, Mrs. Frances Massey Dulaney, The Julia and Tunnicliff Fox Charitable Trust, Virginia H. Spratley Charitable Fund II, Mr. and Mrs. Fred T. Tattersall, Lilli and William Beyer, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph T. Knox, The Robert Lehman Foundation, McGue Millhiser Family Trust, Norfolk Southern Corporation, Toni A. Ritzenberg, Mary and Don Shockey, Mr. and Mrs. Read Branch, Jr., Capital One Bank, The Jeanann Gray Dunlap Foundation. The Banner Exhibition Program at VMFA is supported by the Julia Louise Reynolds Fund. This exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

### **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, a certified Virginia Green attraction, is open 365 days a year and general admission is always free. For additional information, telephone 804-340-1400 or visit [www.vmfa.museum](http://www.vmfa.museum).

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