

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**VMFA’s Foundation Receives Major Funding to
Increase Public Access to More Than 7,600 Works on Paper**
NEH grant award of nearly \$350,000 will underwrite support staff for the
Raysor Collection initiative at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts



La Pompe Notre-Dame from the series *Eaux-fortes sur Paris*, 1852, Charles Meryon (French, 1821–1868), etching printed in black ink on green laid paper. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Frank Raysor.

Richmond, VA — The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) announced today that its Foundation received a *Humanities Collections and Reference Resources* grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The award of nearly \$350,000 will underwrite support staff for VMFA’s three-year implementation project to catalog, photograph, house and increase public access to a recent gift of more than 7,600 works on paper given by Frank Raysor.

This year, VMFA’s Foundation was one of 33 recipients of *Humanities Collections and Reference Resources* grants, awarded to help preserve and expand public access to important historical records and humanities collections at archives, libraries and museums across the country.

“This significant grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities comes at a time of increased interest in and commitment to stewarding and providing public access to the extensive works on paper collections at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts — and in advance of the 2028 completion of the museum’s transformative expansion and renovation project,” said the museum’s Director and CEO Alex Nyerges.

As part of the expansion, VMFA will construct a 12,500-square-foot facility for the stewardship of the museum’s

ever-expanding collection of more than 29,400 works on paper and photographs. This future facility, the Raysor Center for Works on Paper, will house a publicly accessible study and display room, reflective of the museum's broader strategic commitment to accessibility, scholarship and the preservation of its collections.

Frank Raysor bequeathed his remarkable collection of prints — which spans the history of printmaking from the 15th century to present day — to VMFA. The donated works, along with a selection of drawings and rare books, are by myriad recognized and lesser-known European and American artists including Félix Bracquemond, Mary Cassatt, Albrecht Dürer, Théodore Géricault, Wenceslaus Hollar, Winslow Homer, Henri Matisse, Charles Meryon and Rembrandt van Rijn, among others.

“NEH support for the Raysor Collection project will ensure the care and accessibility of this important body of artwork for generations to come,” said Dr. Sarah Kennel, the Aaron Siskind Curator of Photography and Director of the Raysor Center at VMFA. “With the support of this grant, the Raysor Collection will transform the museum's ability to explore and present a rich variety of cultural, artistic and material histories of more than six centuries of Western printmaking through expanded opportunities for research, exhibitions, digital projects, public engagement and programming and collaborations with schools and universities.”

For more information about the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, visit www.VMFA.museum.

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National Endowment for the Humanities

Created in 1965 as an independent federal agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) supports research and learning in history, literature, philosophy, and other areas of the humanities by funding selected, peer-reviewed proposals from around the nation. Additional information about the National Endowment for the Humanities and its grant programs is available at www.NEH.gov.

Frank Raysor

Frank Raysor (1943–2022) grew up in Richmond, Virginia, and was an executive at Seagram's in New York City for many years before retiring and returning to the state. Fascinated with the processes of printmaking, he amassed his astounding collection of nearly 10,000 prints — which includes works by Félix Bracquemond, Mary Cassatt, Albrecht Dürer, Winslow Homer, Édouard Manet, Henri Matisse, Charles Meryon, Rembrandt van Rijn and James McNeill Whistler — and his impressive print reference library during his time in New York. Raysor's body of prints by Wenceslaus Hollar, now in VMFA's holdings, is the fifth largest collection of the artist's works in the world and the largest such collection in the United States. The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts has offered several exhibitions that feature works from Raysor's collection, including *A Celebration of Print: 500 Years of Graphic Art from the Frank Raysor Collection*; *Remnants and Revivals: Architectural Etchings by Charles Meryon and John Taylor Arms*; *Nightfall: Prints of the Dark Hours*; *Steinlen: Cats*; and *Hollar's Encyclopedic Eye*. Prints from the Raysor Collection have also been displayed in exhibitions at the Albuquerque Museum, the Yale Center for British Art and the J. Paul Getty Museum.

About the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, Virginia, is one of the largest comprehensive art museums in the United States. VMFA, which opened in 1936, is a state agency and privately endowed educational institution. Its purpose is to collect, preserve, exhibit and interpret art, and to encourage the study of the arts. Through the Office of Statewide Partnerships program, the museum offers curated exhibitions, arts-related audiovisual programs, symposia, lectures, conferences, and workshops by visual and performing artists. In addition to presenting a wide array of special exhibitions, the museum provides visitors with the opportunity to experience a global collection of art that spans more than 6,000 years. VMFA's permanent holdings encompass nearly 50,000 artworks, including the largest public collection of Fabergé outside of Russia, the finest collection of Art Nouveau outside of Paris and one of the nation's finest collections of American art. VMFA is also home to important collections of Chinese art, English silver, and French Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, British sporting and modern and contemporary art, as well as renowned South Asian, Himalayan and African art. In May 2010, VMFA opened the James W. and Frances G. McGlothlin Wing

I after a transformative expansion, previously the largest in its history. A new expansion, the McGlothlin Wing II, is planned to open in 2028. Comprising more than 170,000 square feet, it will be the largest expansion in the museum's history and will make VMFA the fifth largest art museum in the United States.

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is the only art museum in the United States open 365 days a year with free general admission. For additional information, telephone (804) 340-1400 or visit www.VMFA.museum.

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