



Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts News Release

Contact: Cynthia Milledge, Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts Public Relations and Marketing Director: 334.240.4369; cmilledge@mmfa.org

For Immediate Release

The MMFA Brings Rare Masterpieces from Shakespeare, Boydell, Callot, Uribe, Spangler, and more to Montgomery this fall

Montgomery, AL, September 30, 2016— The Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts invites visitors to take a journey through our galleries and get an in-depth look at extraordinary and captivating creations of artists that demonstrate how art has evolved from the 17th to the 21st century.

Join us Thursday, October 6, for a special unveiling of the much-anticipated exhibitions: *First Folio! The Book that Gave Us Shakespeare*, *Hamlet at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival*, *Boydell Shakespeare Gallery Engravings*, *Callot's Commedia dell'Arte Characters and 17th-Century Scenes*, *Federico Uribe: Transformart*, and *The Political Persuader: Cartoons by Frank M. Spangler, Sr.*

The evening will begin with a free reception from 5:30 to 7 P.M. At 6 P.M., enjoy a reading of Hamlet's soliloquy, "To Be or Not to Be..." from Act 3, Scene 1 by the Alabama Shakespeare Festival's Producing Artistic Director, Geoffrey Sherman. We will end the evening with a lecture by Colombian-born, Miami-based artist Federico Uribe at 7 P.M.

The MMFA is honored to be one of 52 sites across the United States chosen to host the national traveling exhibition, *First Folio! The Book that Gave Us Shakespeare*, on tour from the Folger Shakespeare Library. The 1623 First Folio of Shakespeare is the earliest folio edition of plays ever published. The publication of the First Folio in 1623 was a significant event, both for the preservation of Shakespeare's works and in the history of English printing. Prior to the First Folio, only half of Shakespeare's plays had ever appeared in print.

First Folio! The Book that Gave Us Shakespeare has been made possible in part by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities: Exploring the human endeavor; and by the support of Google.org; The Lord Browne of Madingley; Vinton and Sigrid Cerf; the British Council; Stuart and Mimi Rose; Albert and Shirley Small; and other generous donors. MMFA exhibition sponsors include Winifred and Charles Stakely; William Thames, Sr.; Dr. Laurie Jean Weil and Dr. Tommy Wool; and co-sponsor River Bank and Trust.

In conjunction with *First Folio!*, the Museum is presenting *Hamlet at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival*, an exhibition of costumes, props, and designs from a recent Alabama Shakespeare Festival performance. The First Folio on view at the Museum will be displayed with the page turned to Hamlet's soliloquy, "To Be or Not to Be..." one of the most famous passages in the history of literature. The objects on view are provided by ASF from their collection and reflect the outstanding talents of their designers and craftspeople.

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The *Boydell Shakespeare Gallery Engravings* exhibition features illustrations from an 1804 volume of Shakespeare's plays, depicting some of the best-known scenes in the history of the theater. London Alderman John Boydell conceived of a gallery of paintings inspired by Shakespeare's plays commissioned from contemporary artists. Over a period of almost two decades, he gathered works by some of the best-known painters of the day. The gallery opened in London in 1789 with 34 paintings, and by 1802 it had grown to 167. However, the Shakespeare Gallery was an elaborate and costly proposition for its time, and plagued by financial difficulties, it closed in 1805.

When Shakespeare's First Folio was published in 1623, Jacques Callot (French, 1592-1635) had just published a series of tiny etchings depicting characters from the Italian *Commedia dell'Arte*, the first modern professional theatrical performers. *Callot's Commedia dell'Arte Characters and 17th-Century Scenes* will provide artistic context for the brief exhibition of a rare original First Folio.

First Folio! The Book that Gave Us Shakespeare, Hamlet at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Boydell Shakespeare Gallery Engravings, and Callot's Commedia dell'Arte Characters and 17th-Century Scenes all open for viewing this Saturday, October 1, at 10 A.M.

Federico Uribe: Transformart is comprised of magical creatures and playful installations created from everyday objects. Finding beauty in simple materials such as books, colored pencils, wood fragments, and shoes, and adapting them into animals and natural environments, artist Federico Uribe creates an immersive and whimsical landscape. On October 8, Uribe will debut a new, site-specific, sculptural tree made from clothing in the MMFA's galleries, alongside inventive animals and a fantastical landscape that celebrates life.

Federico Uribe: Transformart is sponsored by Hyundai Motor Manufacturing and co-sponsors Harmon Dennis Bradshaw, Inc.; Joan Loeb; Dr. Marla Wolhman and John Crews; USAmeriBank, and Warren Averett.

Also on view now is *The Political Persuader: Cartoons by Frank M. Spangler, Sr.* Former *Montgomery Advertiser* editorial cartoonist Frank M. Spangler, Sr. (known by his byline "Spang"), explored the day's issues with humor, insight, and significant artistry. Spang's witty cartoons of contested and controversial politics, in particular, the presidential election of 1928 and Alabama's state election in 1930, alongside his skewering of U.S. Senator Thomas J. "Cotton Tom" Heflin, strongly resonate with today's charged political climate and the presidential election.

Hamlet at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Boydell Shakespeare Gallery Engravings, Callot's Commedia dell'Arte Characters and 17th-Century Scenes, and Federico Uribe: Transformart are organized by the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts. For more information about the shows and related programs visit our website at www.mmfa.org.

The Museum, located at One Museum Drive, is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M.; Thursday from 10 A.M. to 9 P.M.; and Sunday 12 noon to 5 P.M. The Museum Store is open Tuesday through Saturday, 11 A.M. to 4 P.M., and Sunday, 12 noon to 4 P.M. Admission is free and donations are welcome. For more information, call the MMFA at 334.240.4333.

The MMFA, a department of the City of Montgomery, is supported by funds from the City of Montgomery and the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts Association. Programs are made possible, in part, by grants from the Alabama State Council on the Arts. Exhibition programs are supported by the Poarch Band of Creek Indians.

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