For Immediate Release
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**Building on the Legacy: African American Art from the
Permanent Collection of the Muscarelle Museum of Art**

Williamsburg, Va. (August 30, 2017) – More than thirty paintings, drawings, works on paper and sculptures by some of this country's most renowned artists will be featured in *Building on the Legacy: African American Art from the Permanent Collection,* opening to the public at the Muscarelle Museum of Art on Saturday, September 2, 2017.  The selection will embrace a panoply of approaches, ranging from the 19th century realism of Henry Ossawa Tanner to the contemporary conceptualism of Martin Puryear.  The subjects include portraiture by realist and folk artists, black-and-white abstractions and colorful landscapes, all drawn from the Muscarelle Museum of Art's young but flourishing holdings of this material.  Comprised of a variety of media, styles and time periods, this exhibition exemplifies the plurality of vision among these accomplished artists.

The exhibition offers a rare opportunity to see many of the Museum's African American works on paper, which – due to their fragile nature and sensitivity to light – are displayed only periodically.  Notable in this category is a bold abstract collage by Sam Gilliam, probably the greatest living black artist.  Of local interest are several portraits and figure studies drawn by A.B. Jackson, who lived and taught for decades in nearby Norfolk, Va.

A number of the works in *Building on the Legacy*  have not previously been exhibited, as they have only recently entered the Muscarelle collection.  Significant acquisitions since 2010 include earlier important black artists like Augusta Savage and Margaret Burroughs as well as such notable young talents as Kara Walker, Fred Wilson and Steve Prince.  In 2015, the Muscarelle was able to acquire the two powerful portraits that are the "symbols" of this show: John Wilson's etching of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., 2002, and a rare photograph of the poet Maya Angelou, 1993, by Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe.  The portrait of Maya Angelou was purchased from her estate soon after her death in 2014.  "We are so fortunate to have acquired this image of Maya Angelou and to honor her in doing so for our alma mater of the nation," Muscarelle Director Aaron De Groft said. "Angelou transcends time and place as both a poet of our nation and in her tireless work for decades on behalf of civil rights."

*Building on the Legacy: African American Art from the Permanent Collection*  is a special exhibition organized as part of this year's commemoration by the College of William & Mary of the fiftieth anniversary of the first African American students in residence.  The fiftieth anniversary of the first African American students in residence — Lynn Briley, Janet Brown and Karen Ely (class of 1971) — will be observed at the College with a year-long series of special events, guest speakers and performances, beginning with Convocation weekend in August 2017, and continuing through Commencement in May 2018.  To commemorate this milestone, the Muscarelle Museum of Art is pleased to present a selection of African American art from the permanent collection on view through January 14, 2018.

For further information about the *Building on the Legacy* commemoration at the College of William & Mary, please visit:  https://events.wm.edu/calendar/upcoming/50thanniversary  Follow on Facebook (@50yrCommemoration) and on social media #wm50Legacy.


**About the Muscarelle Museum of Art**
The Muscarelle Museum of Art is located on the campus of William & Mary at 603 Jamestown Rd in Williamsburg, Va. For more information, call 757-221-2700 or visit muscarelle.org. Follow on Twitter (@Muscarelle), Instagram (@muscarellemuseum) or on Facebook (Muscarelle Museum of Art) and on social media #WMArts.

Tickets during this exhibition are $10 per person at the museum on the day of your visit.

Admission is free to Museum members, William & Mary students, faculty and staff, as well as children under twelve.

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