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NEWS RELEASE

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The Muscarelle Museum of Art at William & Mary and the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation announce “Muscarelle on the Move” to temporary gallery space in Merchants Square

Museum is closed and will move in preparation for The Martha Wren Briggs Center for the Visual Arts and the New Muscarelle Museum of Art

Williamsburg, Va. (August 2, 2018) –The Muscarelle Museum of Art at William & Mary will move temporarily into the what was previously the Williamsburg Art Gallery in Merchants Square, Muscarelle and Colonial Williamsburg Foundation officials announced today.

The interim space will be known as “Muscarelle on the Move” and will be open as the museum prepares to expand significantly as part of The Martha Wren Briggs Center for the Visual Arts and new Muscarelle Museum of Art, a multimillion-dollar, state-of-the-art facility. The Briggs Center and Muscarelle are expected to open in 2021.

Over the past year and a half, the university announced gifts to develop and expand the Muscarelle to host its world-class exhibitions and to continue its mission of experiential learning as a laboratory for W&M students, faculty and staff. It also announced the selection of the internationally-renowned architectural firm Pelli Clarke Pelli to design the expanded facility.

That facility along with construction of a music building and renovations at Phi Beta Kappa Memorial Hall will form the William & Mary Arts Quarter.

“We are very proud to be able to bring the Muscarelle to Merchants Square,” said Jeff Duncan, vice president of real estate at Colonial Williamsburg. “Their presence adds to a decades-long tradition of our support of the arts in Merchants Square, including Art on the Square each spring and the upcoming An Occasion for the Arts each fall.”

The temporary space for the Muscarelle will be located across North Boundary Street from William & Mary’s Historic Campus in Merchants Square and above Williams Sonoma. The permanent collection of art of the museum will be housed in various locations, including Colonial Williamsburg and, through a partnership with the

Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, which administers/operates Jamestown Settlement and the American Revolution Museum at Yorktown.

“This interim location in Merchants Square will allow us to continue to have a distinctive place in the community and the university and to continue new types of engaging programs and social events as we shape the future of our new facility over the next couple of years,” said Aaron H. De Groft '88, director of the Muscarelle.

“With attendance of just over 10,000 people per year 10 years ago, our numbers peaked with the Botticelli exhibition last year, when we hosted over 110,000 visitors to that show alone,” he said. “All of these accomplishments are on the same footprint of the museum as it was built over 30 years ago, and our growth cannot be sustained in that space. We hope to be set up and ready in Merchants Square in early September.”

“The Muscarelle Museum of Art Foundation is raising all the money privately for the new facility, and it prides itself on the solid partnership it has with the College and the College of William & Mary Foundation,” said Robert S. Roberson, M.B.A. '73, chair of the MMAF Board.

William & Mary has a long history of promoting the arts. At the behest of alumnus Thomas Jefferson (class of 1762), William & Mary was the first university in the United States to include the fine arts in its curriculum and to begin collecting art in the 1700s. In 1779, Reverend Robert Andrews (ca. 1747-1804) was appointed to the professorship to instruct in “Sculpture, Painting, Gardening, Music, Architecture, Poetry, Oratory and Criticism.” Much later, in 1938, William & Mary and Wheaton College in Massachusetts held national architectural competitions for fine arts buildings on their campuses.

“It is more than poetic that in 1938 the greatest architects in the world vied in competition for an inspired arts facility on the campus of our historic and prestigious university, and that it is only today that that dream is becoming a reality,” said De Groft “It is so befitting, then and now for William & Mary, that a distinctive ‘Public Ivy’ will again have one of the greatest living architects to design our new The Martha Wren Briggs Center for the Visual Arts. Eero Saarinen, founder of the architecture firm where Cesar Pelli began his career, was among those who placed first in that 1938 competition.”

The Muscarelle Museum was established with the mission of advancing art and artists, building a dynamic and vibrant community, promoting thought-provoking dialogue and encouraging diverse and creative thinking. The Martha Wren Briggs Center for the Visual Arts was named in honor of one of the museum’s greatest benefactors, Martha Wren Briggs '55. The Briggs Center and its expansive space will house world-class exhibitions featuring interactive technologies and a Teaching Center and a Research Center for research and engaged learning, including the study of tangible works of art. It

will have a modern auditorium and gathering spaces and will be home to the Muscarelle Museum of Art and the W&M Global Film Festival and the film and media studies program.

About the Muscarelle Museum of Art

Opened in 1983, the Muscarelle Museum of Art increasingly attracts national and international recognition for its balanced menu of important and noteworthy international exhibitions and meaningful, experimental and scholarly shows of diverse media from various historical time periods, as well as a commitment to modern and cutting-edge contemporary art, Asian art, Native American art and photography.

Recently such exhibitions include loans from the Medici Collections, landscape paintings from the Uffizi, Golden Age Dutch landscapes from Dulwich Picture Gallery, Michelangelo drawings from the Casa Buonarroti and Caravaggio paintings from Italian collections. In 2015 the Muscarelle organized the major exhibition “Leonardo: The Idea of Beauty.” In 2017, the Muscarelle hosted the largest and most important international loan exhibition of Botticelli’s works in this country, “Botticelli and the Search for the Divine: Florentine Painting from the Medici to the Bonfires of the Vanities.” For more information, visit www.muscarelle.org.