



NATIONAL SPORTING LIBRARY & MUSEUM

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**The National Sporting Library & Museum opens traveling exhibition -
The French Horse from Géricault to Picasso: Works from the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
On view May 6 – July 31**

MIDDLEBURG, Virginia – *The French Horse from Géricault to Picasso: Works from the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts* opens at the National Sporting Library & Museum (NSLM) on May 6, 2016. The exhibition, which was organized by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) from its collections including the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, includes more than 40 paintings, sculptures, and works on paper by artists as varied as Pablo Picasso, Antoine-Louis Barye, Edgar Degas, and Théodore Géricault, and represents every major movement in French art from Romanticism to Fauvism. “Omnipresent in 19th-century France, the horse was portrayed in every manner and style by all types of artists,” note exhibition organizers from the VMFA.

Included among the works traveling to Middleburg are Pablo Picasso’s *Jester on Horseback*, a 1905 large oil on composition board from the artist’s French-influenced Rose Period (for which NSLM will be the only venue); two paintings by Alfred de Dreux; two sculptures and three pencil studies by Edgar Degas; Raoul Dufy’s vibrant watercolor on paper, *Champ de Courses a Deauville*, ca. 1937; and two significant bronzes by *les animaliers* Isidore-Jules Bonheur and Pierre-Jules Mêne. “The equine-themed exhibition featuring several horse-racing subjects holds strong appeal for NSLM members and area visitors,” says Claudia Pfeiffer, NSLM’s George L. Ohrstrom, Jr. Curator of Art. “We are excited to be a venue for the exhibition and to showcase such a distinctive collection of works.”

The NSLM gained access to the exhibit through the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Statewide Partnership Program. VMFA developed the program to support its mission as a state-supported, privately endowed educational institution created for the benefit of the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Its purpose is to collect, preserve, exhibit, and interpret art, to encourage the study of the arts, and thus to enrich the lives of all.

The Statewide Program provides transit and insurance of *The French Horse from Géricault to Picasso* exhibition, considerably reducing the cost for partner organizations. Thanks to the support of the VMFA, the NSLM is able to make admission to the Museum FREE of charge for the duration of the 12-week exhibition. The NSLM will be the second of three venues to present the traveling exhibition - the University of Richmond being the first and University of Mary Washington, the third.

The French Horse from Géricault to Picasso: Works from the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is the result of a course team-taught by Dr. Mitchell Merling, Paul Mellon Curator and Head of the European Art Department at VMFA; Jeffrey Allison, Paul Mellon Educator and Manager of VMFA Statewide Programs and Exhibitions; and Richard Waller, Executive Director, University of Richmond Museums; with course assistant Kristie Couser, Curatorial Assistant for the Mellon Collection, VMFA.

The NSLM will celebrate the opening of the exhibition with two separate events:

- A reception and lecture on Friday, May 6 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at which time Dr. Mitchell Merling will give a presentation entitled “British and French Horses: A Conversation in Art.” This event is free to NSLM members and \$10 for non-members.
- A coffee reception on Saturday, May 7 at 10:00 a.m. followed by a gallery talk given by Dr. Mitchell Merling on the subject of “Working with the French Horse.” This event is free to NSLM members and \$5 for non-members.

The National Sporting Library & Museum (NSLM) is located in Middleburg, Virginia, the heart of beautiful hunt country. Founded in 1954, the renowned research Library and art Museum highlight the rich heritage and tradition of country pursuits. Angling, horsemanship, shooting, steeplechasing, foxhunting, flat racing, polo, coaching, and wildlife are among the subjects one can explore in the organization’s general stacks, rare book holdings, archives, and art collection. The NSLM offers a wide variety of educational programs, exhibitions, and family activities throughout the year, and is open to researchers and the general public. The NSLM is a 501c3 non-profit organization. While there is no admission fee to the Library, the Museum charges \$10 for adults, \$8 for youths (age 13-18), and \$8 for seniors. NSLM members and children age 12 and under are free. Library & Museum hours are Wednesday-Sunday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

[Credit lines must appear with images]:

Images:



Hilaire Germain Edgar Degas (French, 1834–1917)

Thoroughbred Horse Walking, cast 1919-21

bronze, 5³/₈ x 4¹/₈ x 8³/₈ inches

Marks: base, *Degas*; founders mark in rectangle *CIRE / PERDUE / A A HÉBRARD*; 66 / E; on bottom, two labels, A6255 and 83; on bottom, written in black, A6255

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

Photo: Katherine Wetzel © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

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Hilaire Germain Edgar Degas (French, 1834–1917)

Jockey Facing Left, ca. 1870–80

blue pastel on laid paper

12¹/₂ x 9¹/₂ inches

Lower left, Degas studio stamp, *Degas*

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

Photo: Troy Wilkinson © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

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Eugène Delacroix (French, 1798–1863)

Cheval vetu pour la promenade, 1832

Watercolor on paper

4 $\frac{5}{8}$ "H x 7 $\frac{3}{16}$ "W

11.75 cm x 18.26 cm

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

Photo: Troy Wilkinson © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

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Alfred De Dreux (French, 1810–1860)

A Trumpeter of the Life Guards, ca. 1851

oil on canvas

36 x 28 inches

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

Photo: Travis Fullerton © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

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Carle (Antoine Charles Horace) Vernet (French, 1758–1836)

Mameluke on Horseback, with Bow and Arrow, ca. 1800

watercolor on wove paper

12 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 15 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

Photo: David Stover © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

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