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Gari Melchers Press Release

Bellarmino Museum of Art

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New Exhibition

“Gari Melchers: An American Impressionist At Home and Abroad”

March 5 – May 22, 2015

Bellarmino Museum of Art

Fairfield University, Fairfield, Connecticut

FAIRFIELD, Conn. (January 15, 2015) – Fairfield University’s Bellarmino Museum of Art presents its newest exhibition, “Gari Melchers: An American Impressionist At Home and Abroad,” on view from Thursday, March 5, 2015, through Friday, May 22, 2015. An opening reception, free and open to the public, will take place at the Bellarmino Museum of Art from 6 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, March 5.

Hugely successful during his own lifetime, the Detroit-born artist Julius Garibaldi ("Gari") Melchers left behind an artistic legacy that is as varied as it is compelling. From engaging peasant scenes inspired by his years at Egmond aan Zee, Holland (where he shared a studio with the great American painter George Hitchcock in the late 19th century) to intimate portraits of mothers and their children, Melchers' *oeuvre* is inflected with a dynamic range of influences, including the Barbizon School, Impressionism and Symbolism. From this broad range of sources, Melchers created a style that was uniquely his own; remarkable for its insistent structural rigor and careful draughtsmanship (absorbed through his years at Dusseldorf's Royal Academy of Art) as well as a lyrical palette and keen observance of humanity.

This exhibition, the first of its kind in the Northeast in decades, surveys more than a half-century of Melchers' career with key examples of the genres he favored, including landscape, genre scenes and portraiture, lent by Gari Melchers Home and Studio. The exhibition will include 23 works in oil, pastel, watercolor, gouache and charcoal.

Exhibition programming includes a free public lecture, “Gari Melchers in Context,” by Joanna D. Catron, Ph.D., at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, March 5, in the Diffley Board Room, Bellarmino Hall, immediately preceding the opening reception. Dr. Catron is the curator of Belmont, Gari Melchers’ 18th-century home and studio located in Fredericksburg, Virginia. In 1942, Melchers’ wife, Corinne, gave the estate to the Commonwealth of Virginia to serve as a Gari Melchers’ memorial and arts center. Today, Belmont is registered as both a National and Virginia Historic landmark.

On Saturday, March 14, “Family Day: Exploring Impressionism,” sponsored by Morris Media, takes place at Fairfield University’s Bellarmino Museum of Art from 1 to 4 p.m. Arts and crafts,

story time and a gallery talk designed for children ages 4-12 will complement Gari Melchers artworks. The Bellarmine Museum will be open to the public from 12 noon to 5 p.m. that day.

On March 18, from 5 to 7 p.m., the Museum, will host “Draw On! The Cast Party,” a free event that allows participants the opportunity to draw the human figure from plaster casts of important Greek and Roman sculpture. Attendees will also be free to draw inspiration from the works by Gari Melchers on view in the Meditz Gallery. No experience is necessary, all ages are welcome and all materials will be supplied. Light refreshments will be served.

Admission to the Bellarmine Museum of Art is always free. Hours are Monday-Friday: 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (open select Saturdays, see website calendar for details). The Bellarmine Museum of Art is located in Bellarmine Hall on the campus of Fairfield University, 1073 North Benson Road, in Fairfield, Conn.

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