



# university museums

engagement report 2016-17



UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND





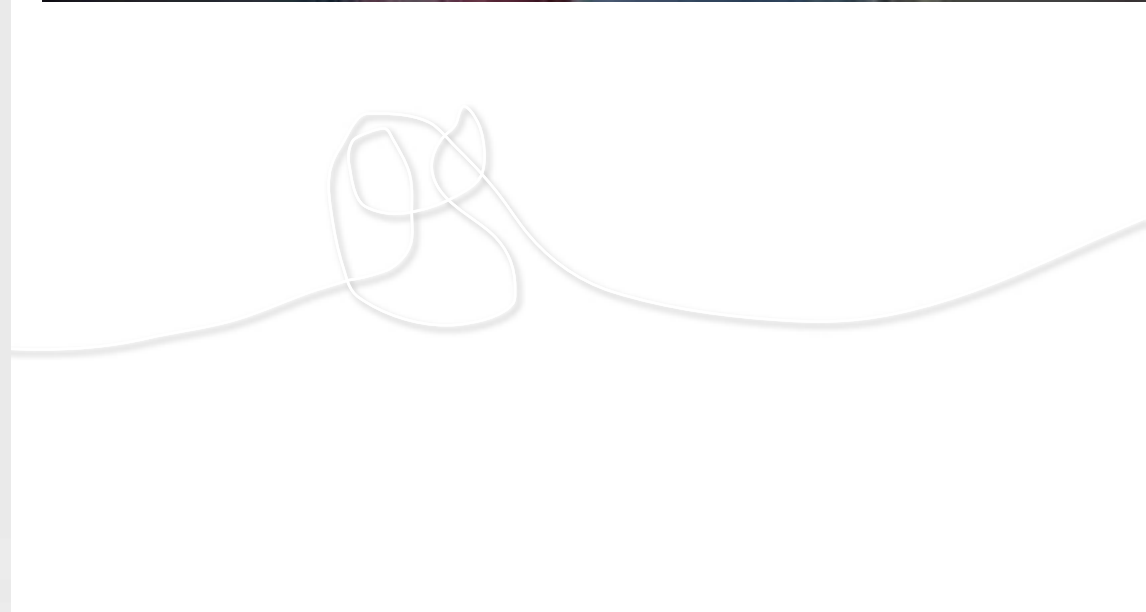
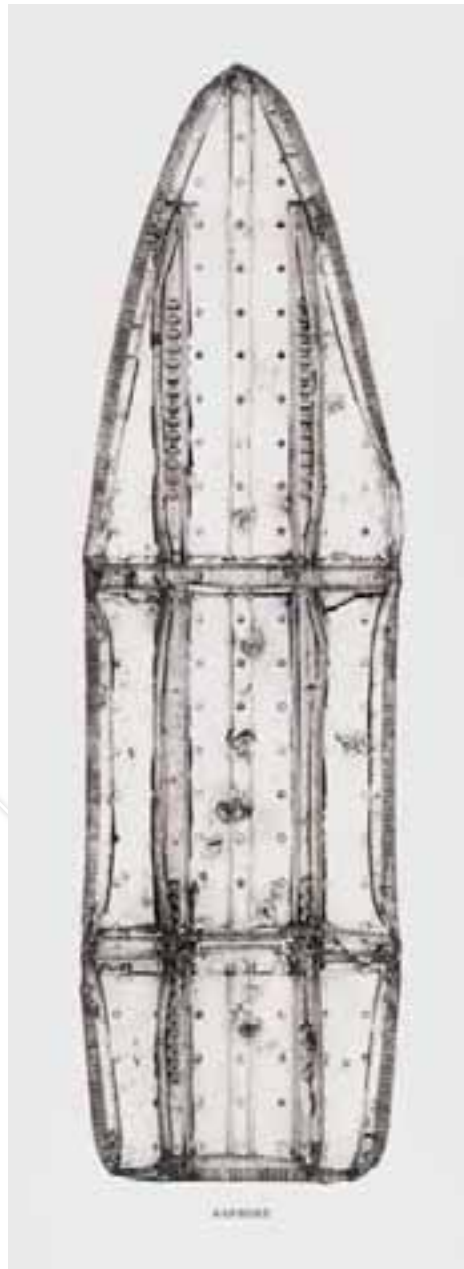
When installing *Rodin, The Human Experience*, University Museums curators Richard Waller and Elizabeth Schlatter would place a sculpture on a pedestal, walk across the room, and look. Then they'd rotate it to the left, stand back, and look again.

Over and over, they'd repeat this process, changing, studying, trying again.

It was only a few degrees, but every shift showed a new profile, revealed subtle details and beautiful contours, and fostered a new appreciation for the artist's genius.

Curators can spend hours searching for a position that elicits different effects with light, color, and texture. But museums also guide us through stories that draw on our diverse perspectives. A scientist might see Rodin's "Three Faunesses" and think about how metal will flow through a mold to cast a shape. An artist might be drawn to the interplay of muscle and bone while a dancer is moved by Rodin's ability to capture a body in motion.

Museums inspire us to experience art in ways that are uniquely our own, and encourage us to converse with one another and with the beauty that surrounds us.





# complexity

3,112 people attended 160 tours

In *Rodin, The Human Experience: Selections from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Collections*, executive director Richard Waller and deputy director Elizabeth Schlatter wanted to invite visitors to explore the complexity of sculptures from every angle.

"That's the joy of three-dimensional work," Waller says. "It's not one view. You get different views as you walk around."

The exhibition featured 32 bronze sculptures by French artist Auguste Rodin (1840-1917), examining the artist's fascination with the human figure and the body in motion. The artworks were part of the Cantor Foundation collection that, at one time, contained as many as 750 of Rodin's sculptures and pieces of memorabilia.

*Rodin, The Human Experience* was curated by the Cantor Foundation's executive director, Judith Sobol. But Sobol intentionally leaves plenty of room for a hosting museum to install the collection in the way that best fits their galleries and audiences.

"I don't think someone from the outside can do as good a job as someone who knows how the space works," she says. "Often, they surprise me by putting works next to each other that I would never have done — and they have wonderful insights."



11,927 total visits to University Museums

The interplay of stillness and movement was on display when dance professors Alicia Díaz and Matthew Thornton performed a dance inspired by the Rodin exhibition.

Their choreography began with an intense study of the sculptures on view. They explored the close, sometimes intertwining, bodies, and the ways Rodin distorted their shape and logic. Then, Díaz and Thornton started to move. Sometimes they replicated shapes and forms found in specific sculptures. Sometimes they simply tried to capture an essence, a spirit.

"It humanizes the sculptures in some way," Díaz says. "The taking it off the pedestal, the changing of the scale, the constant play with movement."

"The sculptures aren't positioned as if they're sitting and waiting for their image to be recorded. They're in transition, and Rodin just happened to catch that moment. A lot of art elicits that part of the imagination, of what came before and what happens afterward."



"The bronze pour process can be dangerous, but rewarding. Liquid bronze is around 2,000 degrees. The metal is so hot that it will react violently with moisture. When handling material this hot there are a number of points to keep in mind: extreme heat, material reactions, how your body handles the weight and heat, pouring the metal in the right spot, guessing how much metal is left in the crucible, and good team work. Along with the heat comes safety equipment that makes you sweat more, but it's fun. At the end of the pour, everyone involved is generally filthy and exhausted."

—**Nathan Hansen-Hilliard**, studio lab manager, who presented a bronze pour demonstration with Mark Rhodes, associate professor of art, in conjunction with the Rodin exhibition.

# Interpretation

When the students in Brooke Inman's Introduction to Printmaking got their assignment, they weren't quite sure what to make of it. They had to take visitor usage data from the Weinstein Center for Recreation and Wellness — and make a work of art.

But pie charts and bar graphs evolved into screen printed sketches of pizza slices and sneakers and heads of broccoli, and signified different hours during the day as well as reasons why people might hit the gym. Saturation of color conveyed peak visitation days.

*Crooked Data: (Mis)Information in Contemporary Art* featured art from 21 artists and studios who work with data in nontraditional ways. Some might use data as an aesthetic device divorced from its originally function. Others gather data that might normally be considered not worthy of collecting.

"We see data everywhere — graphs in the news about voting statistics, interactive maps on our phones, animated weather radars and charts, and standardized testing scores," says Elizabeth Schlatter, exhibition curator and deputy director of University Museums. "The artists in this exhibition creatively question our assumptions about how we decide what information is important."



Some students choose a major. Lindsay Hamm, '17, created hers. It's art conservation: a blend of chemistry, studio art, art history, and calculus — and a dash of curatorial assistance with University Museums.

Hamm was tasked with developing the online catalog for *Crooked Data*. She designed [crookeddata.com](http://crookeddata.com) and drafted Q&As after interviewing participating artists.

"I did a lot of research on R. Luke DuBois and got to know his body of work really well," she says. "He's a coder and so he's able to create these works through coding. We're definitely seeing the art world shift into technology and the artist not using studio materials anymore. He's taking it in a really different direction than anything I've seen before."



4,381 people attended 75 programs



"The idea behind 'TMT. 170209' (left) was to raise awareness about the complex ecology of plastic toy reclamation. As an artist and mother, I hoped to inspire other parents to work with their children to recycle broken or unwanted plastic toys into a large-scale installation work that alluded to issues of consumption and sustainability."

—Tiffany Holmes, whose installation, "TMT. 170209," was created for Crooked Data and was based on species data gathered with assistance from UR students working with professors in the departments of biology, and geography for the environment.





801 people attended 7 exhibition openings

In professor Jeremy Drummond's Independent Film and Video: Curatorial Practice and Presentation course, students curated a video festival culled from titles by national and international artists, as well as their own work. This year's festival was connected to *Crooked Data*, with students exploring the depth and diversity of contemporary works that employ data as a framework.



"There's an initial explosion of George's immediate followers, then a bit of a lull, and then a whole new set of George's followers pile on, and those then shoot out in their own directions with their own specific profiles. It's like watching the Internet breathe."

—Eric Rodenbeck of Stamen Design, which created *Facebook Flowers*, a series of three videos correlating to the viral activity following Facebook posts by *Star Trek* actor George Takei



In a two-part workshop series, organized by Partners in the Arts, local K-12 teachers explored data collection, mapping, and printmaking as creative teaching practices. In the first session, taught by social sciences librarian Samantha Guss, participants examined databases and tools available in the University's Boatwright Memorial Library. In the second session, led by art instructor and *Crooked Data* artist Brooke Inman, the teachers used gathered data and screen printing to create an original artwork.

# adaptation

Just inside the Lora Robins Gallery of Design from Nature, two red-eared slider turtles are swimming in a tank. Approach and they'll dart to the surface, waiting for a nibble of food.

Tomato and Basil were caught along the shore of Westhampton Lake when they were hatchlings. They're an invasive species and can't be returned to the wild. Eventually, they'll find a home in the University's biology department. But for now they reside in the museum, surrounded by the fossils of their ancestors.

*Turtles in Time: From Fossils to the Present* tells the 200-million-year-old story of turtle evolution. As visitors wander, taking in the 150-million-year-old *Glytrops* from the Jurassic era or a shell and egg clutch from South Dakota, they might begin to understand how this shy species endured and adapted, yet in many ways remains the same.



1,072 times objects from permanent collection were used in tours

"Turtles are such a distinct group of vertebrates and are instantly recognizable because of their unusual body plan. They are also survivors. Their basic architecture has been unchanged for millions of years."

—Matthew Houle, curator of museum collections



1,575 students, teachers, and parents attended 49 K-12 tours

**T**urtles in Time shows the evolution of the species, but the exhibition evolved from a long-time relationship with a local fossil collector. Dave Hutchison is a member of the Richmond Gem and Mineral Society, which frequently visits University Museums. Hutchison helped identify fossil specimens in the museum's collection. While talking to Matthew Houle one day, Hutchison mentioned his own collection.

"I didn't realize how extensive it was until I went out to visit his property," Houle says. "We got the idea of doing a general fossil tour, highlighting some of the interesting ecosystems along the way."

Hutchison began collecting the fossils in the late-1960s when he took an earth history course at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Today, his collection ranges from fossil mammals and reptiles from the Oligocene Epoch, to extensive plants, and early Cretaceous fossil fish, insects, and turtles from Brazil. The exhibition showcases about 40 percent of his collection.

"I think that fossils are works of natural art," Hutchison says. "Turtles can be appreciated in this light more so than other animals in that they radically changed their structure very early, over 200 million years ago, and are going strong today."



*Student Attendants, Ritwika Bose ('19) and Rennie Harrison ('18) lead tours of Turtles in Time to local public school students brought to UR by the Blue Sky Fund.*



**O**n another side of the Lora Robins Gallery, hundreds of fifth graders from eight local elementary schools gather for the chance to look at — and even touch — rocks, minerals, and fossils. They've been learning about the differences between rocks and minerals, the kinds of rocks found in Virginia, and how the surface of the earth is constantly changing.

They're in the museum thanks to a partnership with Blue Sky Fund, a nonprofit organization that provides outdoor adventure programming and environmental science education for urban youth.

"For the majority of our students, the only rocks they have seen have been gravel and maybe the rocks along the James River," says David Kunnen, executive director of Blue Sky Fund. "At the Lora Robins Gallery, they get to touch and really observe the rocks and minerals they are learning about. It helps them understand that rocks are made of minerals when they can take the minerals and hold them next to a rock."

# transformation

1,383 University of Richmond students attended 99 class tours.



Putting a fresh take on a 40-year-old museum — that's what the museums studies seminar was tasked with when curating the anniversary exhibition of the Lora Robins Gallery.

They combed through about 100,000 rocks, shells, fossils, and decorative artifacts, searching for a common thread. Eventually, they landed on the transformation of natural materials into decorative and functional objects.

"In the collection, we do have a lot of natural science specimens," says executive director Richard Waller, who taught the course. "[The students asked], 'What can be made of them? How can they be transformed?' It's a very interesting way to look at the collection."

With so many possible objects in the collection, finding a cohesive selection proved challenging. Mitchell Merling, Paul Mellon Curator and head of the Department of European Art at the Virginia Museum for Fine Arts, offered guidance. He spoke to students about crafting a narrative — in this case, exploring the cultural, religious, and scientific contexts of natural materials.

Take jade, for example. Labels explained the stone's significance in Chinese culture, while samples of the raw material showed what might be harvested in different areas of the world. Sculptures offered a chance to explore cultural symbols, like the Chinese jade deer that represents immortality and longevity.

"The students knew why they were interested in particular materials, and what becomes of the materials in the process of being transformed," Waller says. "That helped the students decide which objects would help visitors see these changes, too."





"Wood is one of the most diverse materials, with an extensive history. People have been using wood for millennia for fuel, tools, construction, art and paper. The interaction between humans and trees and woods vary over time. Different cultures ascribe different values and meanings to trees and wood. Deforestation can indicate industrial triumph over the disordered wild, or it can spell disaster for future generations."

– Rebecca Tribble, '17, on an exhibition label



*"Visions from the Other Side: Works by Nicholas Roerich," organized by the University Museums, was curated by Joe Troncale, Associate Professor of Literature and Visual Studies, Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures. The exhibition was one of the largest public displays of Roerich's work from the Nicholas Roerich Museum, New York.*

# collections + exhibitions

Whether visitors come to see a sculpture or print, a fossil or piece of carved jade, our permanent collections and special exhibitions continue to inspire conversation.

## Recent acquisitions

In 2016–17, the Harnett Print Study Center acquired 177 new works, artists include:

- Frank Badur
- Isabel Bishop
- Matthew Carter
- Honoré Daumier
- Francisco de Goya
- Christine Hiebert
- Clare Leighton
- William Neave Parker
- Bernard Perlin
- Sara Sosnowy
- Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen
- Do Ho Suh
- Joyce Tenneson
- Johann Friedrich Volkart

In the Lora Robins Gallery, new acquisitions include:

- Tea kettle (tetsubin), Japan, late 19<sup>th</sup>, early 20<sup>th</sup> century, cast iron kettle with bronze lid
- Jar (Shigaraki Tsubo), Japan, circa 19<sup>th</sup> century, stoneware with ash glaze
- Hagi Thin-foot Tea Bowl, Japan, circa 18<sup>th</sup> century, stoneware with glaze
- Five works of Inuit sculpture

## 2016–17 Exhibitions

- *Annual Student Exhibition*
- *Sonata: Print Series by Nam June Paik*
- *Night and Day the River Flows: Waterscapes from the Harnett Print Study Center Collection*
- *Rodin, the Human Experience: Selections from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Collections*
- *The Beauties: Print Series by Willie Cole*
- *19<sup>th</sup>-Century American Jugs: Relief-Molded Pitchers from the Collection*
- *Unseen Pompeii: The Photographs of William Wylie*
- *Shanghai Passages “Longtang” Photographs by Gong Jianhua*
- *Crooked Data: (Mis)Information in Contemporary Art*
- *HPSC@15: A Celebration of the Joel and Lila Harnett Print Study Center*
- *Visions from the Other Side: Works by Nicholas Roerich*
- *Massive Rocks & Minerals: Selections from the Collection*
- *Lora Robins Gallery, the First 40 Years: From Found to Finished, Museum Studies Seminar Exhibition*
- *Turtles in Time: From Fossils to the Present*

## Image credits

**Cover page:** University of Richmond student Lindsey Hamm, '17, standing in front of installation *TMT. 170209* by artist Tiffany Holmes (American, born 1968), 2017, reclaimed plastic toys, Courtesy of the artist. From the exhibition *Crooked Data: (Mis)Information in Contemporary Art*

**Page 2:** Museum patrons visiting the exhibition *Rodin, The Human Experience: Selections from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Collections*

**Page 3:** (from left to right) Hans Arp (German, born France, 1886-1966), *Constellation*, 1951, lithograph on paper, 20 x 14 ¼ inches, Joel and Lila Harnett Print Study Center, University of Richmond Museums, Gift from the Richmond Public Library Board of Trustees, by transfer, H2008.01.079 © Estate of Hans Arp. From the exhibition *Night and Day the River Flows: Waterscapes from the Harnett Print Study Center Collection*

Willie Cole (American, born 1955), *Saphire* from the series *The Beauties*, 2012, intaglio with relief printing on rives BFK paper, sheet 63 ½ x 22 ½ inches, Joel and Lila Harnett Print Study Center, University of Richmond Museums, Museum purchase with funds from the Louis S. Booth Arts Fund, H2016.05.03 © Willie Cole, photograph by Taylor Dabney

Students in a University of Richmond Roman Art class identifying ancient coins in the collection of the Lora Robins Gallery.

**Page 4:** Museum patrons visiting the exhibition *Rodin, The Human Experience: Selections from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Collections*

**Page 5:** (from left to right) University of Richmond dance professors Matthew Thornton and Alicia Díaz perform their Rodin inspired dance duet for the Family Arts Day Celebration in the exhibition *Rodin, The Human Experience: Selections from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Collections*

Bronze Pour Demonstration presented by Nathan Hansen-Hilliard, Studio Lab Manager, Mark Rhodes, Associate Professor of Art, and Sayaka Suzuki, Adjunct Professor of Art, University of Richmond

**Page 6:** Brooke Inman, Adjunct Professor, Department of Art and Art History, University of Richmond, and students enrolled in Introduction to Printmaking installing their screen-printed mural titled *Participation Spectrum* for the exhibition *Crooked Data: (Mis)Information in Contemporary Art*

**Page 7:** Tiffany Holmes (American, born 1968) *TMT. 170209*, 2017, reclaimed plastic toys, dimensions variable, Courtesy of the artist © Tiffany Holmes. Featured in the exhibition *Crooked Data: (Mis)Information in Contemporary Art*

**Page 8:** (from left to right) Chad Hagen (American, born 1970), *Nonsensical Infographics series*, 2009, inkjet print on paper, 8 x 8 inches, Courtesy of the artist © Chad Hagen. Featured in the exhibition *Crooked Data: (Mis)Information in Contemporary Art*



Casey Reas (American, born 1972) *KTTV*, 2015, custom software (color, sound), digital video, computer, screen, Courtesy bitforms gallery, New York © Casey Reas. Featured in the exhibition *Crooked Data: (Mis)Information in Contemporary Art*

K-12 teachers participating in one of the workshops coordinated by Partners in Arts in conjunction with the exhibition *Crooked Data: (Mis)Information in Contemporary Art*

**Page 9:** (clockwise from left to right) Stamen Design, *Facebook Flowers*, 2012, data visualization, Courtesy of Stamen Design © Stamen Design. Featured in the exhibition *Crooked Data: (Mis)Information in Contemporary Art*

K-12 teachers participating in one of the workshops coordinated by Partners in Arts in conjunction with the exhibition *Crooked Data: (Mis)Information in Contemporary Art*

Brooke Inman (American, born 1983), *Neighborhood Cat Watch*, 2016-2017, photographs, drawings, and notes, Courtesy of the artist. Featured in the exhibition *Crooked Data: (Mis)Information in Contemporary Art*

**Page 10:** *Hamadachelys escuilliei*, Upper Cretaceous, 95 Ma (approximately 95 million years ago), Kem-Kem beds, Ifezouane Formation, Drâa-Tafilalet region, Morocco, 3 ½ x 9 x 13 ½ inches, Courtesy of the David and Jean Hutchison Collection © University Museums, photograph by Taylor Dabney

**Page 11:** (top to bottom) Student attendants, Ritwika Bose, '19, and Rennie Harrison, '18, lead tours of the exhibition *Turtles in Time: From Fossils to the Present* to local public school students participating in the Blue Sky Fund program

*Smithsonite*, Kelly Mine, Socorro County, New Mexico, United States, 3 ¾ x 11 ¼ x 9 inches, 21 pounds, Lora Robins Gallery of Design from Nature, University of Richmond Museums, Museum purchase, R1977.01.1469 © University Museums, photograph by Taylor Dabney

**Page 12:** *Incense Burner*, circa 1975, carved jade, 43 ½ x 16 ½ x 8 ½ inches, Lora Robins Gallery of Design from Nature, University of Richmond Museums, Museum purchase, R1994.01.01 © University Museums, photograph by Taylor Dabney

**Page 13:** (from left to right) Richard Waller, Executive Director, University Museums, stands in the exhibition *Lora Robins Gallery, The First Forty Years: From Found to Finished, Museum Studies Seminar Exhibition*

Nicholas Roerich (Russian, 1874-1947), *Sophia-The Wisdom of the Almighty*, 1932, tempera on canvas, 45 ½ x 63 ¾ inches, Collection of the Nicholas Roerich Museum, New York © Estate of Nicholas Roerich, photograph courtesy of the Nicholas Roerich Museum

**Back Cover:** Student Ambassador Roshan Sen, '18, reads a book in the exhibition *Rodin, The Human Experience: Selections from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Collections* during the Family Arts Day Celebration

# University of Richmond Museums

Joel and Lila Harnett Museum of Art

Joel and Lila Harnett Print Study Center

Lora Robins Gallery of Design from Nature

## University of Richmond Museums

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