

## THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART RECEIVES \$5 MILLION GIFT TO ESTABLISH CENTER DEDICATED TO THE STUDY OF FRENCH MASTER HENRI MATISSE

*The Ruth R. Marder Center for Matisse Studies Honors Longtime BMA Supporter and Creates Important New Resource Using the Museum's Extensive Holdings*

**BALTIMORE, MD (July 25, 2019)**—The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) today announced that it has received a gift of \$5 million from the Ruth Carol Fund to support the creation of a center within the museum dedicated to the study of French artist Henri Matisse, drawing on the museum's incomparable collection of more than 1,200 works by the artist. In recognition of this generous gift and in tribute to the Ruth Carol Fund's founder, a longtime BMA supporter, the center will be called The Ruth R. Marder Center for Matisse Studies. The Marder Center will serve as a major resource for scholars, providing new opportunities for research and symposia, for the presentation of exhibitions that contribute to both academic and public understanding of the French master's practice, and for the digitization and publication of portions of the collection, making it accessible to audiences around the world. The gift from the Ruth Carol Fund provides essential support toward the design and construction of the space and also establishes an endowment for the Marder Center's ongoing operations. The Ruth R. Marder Center for Matisse Studies is slated to open in 2021, with a focused presentation drawn from the BMA's vast Matisse collection.

"With the opening of The Ruth R. Marder Center for Matisse Studies, we are creating new opportunities to engage our audiences with our collection and to spark new interests and conversations on Matisse's influence on modern and contemporary art practice," said Christopher Bedford, BMA Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director. "This opening also allows us to honor the legacies of several incredible women, who through their commitment helped shape the BMA into an institution dedicated equally to scholarship and civic engagement. This includes Claribel and Etta Cone as well as Ruth R. Marder, whose lifelong dedication to the BMA proved invaluable to the enhancement of our collections and programmatic capabilities. We are grateful to the Ruth Carol Fund for continuing Ruth's generosity and engagement with the museum."

The Matisse collection at the BMA was first established in the early 20th century through the vision and philanthropy of sisters Claribel and Etta Cone, whose internationally renowned collection was bequeathed to the museum in 1949 and is the centerpiece of the BMA's expansive holdings. Among the highlights of the Cone Collection are 500 works by Matisse—considered one of the greatest artists of the 20th century—including paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints, and illustrated books. To this incredible group of objects, the BMA has added more than 700 works by the artist, amassing the world's largest and most comprehensive collection of Matisse works in a public museum. This includes gifts from members of the Matisse family, such as a selection of works from the collection of the artist's daughter Marguerite Duthuit and a major donation of prints by The Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation in New York. The creation of The Ruth R. Marder Center for Matisse Studies fulfills a long-term strategic goal for the BMA to present the breadth and depth of its Matisse holdings, while also supporting the development of new scholarly publications that advance ongoing discussions on the trajectory of modern art and Matisse's importance therein.

Ruth R. Marder was a Baltimore-based philanthropist whose charitable giving encompassed the arts, education, and medical research and improvements. Over the course of several decades, Marder formed a deep and longstanding relationship with the BMA, serving on the BMA Council and the former Women's Council, and providing leadership for the development of museum's Textile Fund, the Cone Gala in 2001, and the 90th Anniversary Gala in 2004. Her

vision, advocacy, and commitment to the BMA were essential to the growth of the museum's collections and curatorial program. In addition to her work with the BMA, Marder supported a wide range of organizations, including the Greater Baltimore Medical Center Foundation, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Maryland Public Television, and Towson University—which in 2002 named its studio theater at its Center for the Arts in her honor—among many others. In 2004, she established the Ruth Carol Fund, a private foundation that continues to support the causes important to Marder.

“Ruth’s family’s long history of philanthropy, including to The Baltimore Museum of Art, instilled in her a deep commitment to civic duty. The Ruth Carol Fund is proud to continue her work, and to support an institution that she long cared for and saw as an important facet of the cultural fabric of Baltimore,” said Donald R. Mering, President. “We are also delighted that the museum has chosen to honor Ruth by naming the center after her, highlighting her leadership and bringing it forward to the community and a new generation of patrons.”

The Ruth R. Marder Center for Matisse Studies will be located on the first floor of the museum and led by Jay McKean Fisher, who will serve as its director. Fisher has worked at the BMA for 44 years—most recently as Chief Curator and Senior Curator of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs. Fisher has a deep knowledge of the BMA’s Matisse collection. In 2007, he co-organized *Matisse: Painter as Sculptor*, an exhibition that traveled to Dallas and San Francisco; and in 2009, he organized *Matisse as Printmaker*—a shared project between the American Federation of Art and the Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation. Fisher will work with experts in the field, at the BMA and also outside the institution, to develop a robust roster of exhibitions and programs. The Marder Center will also host conferences and lectures focused on Matisse and his enduring legacy, and be open to scholars who wish to research the collection of works and archival materials. Through the Marder Center, the BMA will continue to collect works by the artist, providing further opportunities for exhibition, program, and publication development.

The establishment of the Marder Center builds on a long history of important presentations done by the museum on the artist’s work, including *Matisse/Diebenkorn* (2016), a major exhibition on the influence of Matisse on American artist Richard Diebenkorn. In spring 2021, the BMA will explore the close partnership between Matisse and Etta Cone, who were introduced in 1906 and formed a friendship that lasted more than 40 years. The exhibition will explore both works that Cone purchased early in their relationship, and also those that Matisse later created with the Cone Collection in mind. This exhibition will be curated by Katy Rothkopf, BMA Senior Curator of European Painting and Sculpture and Leslie Cozzi, BMA Associate Curator of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs.

### **THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART**

Founded in 1914, The Baltimore Museum of Art is a major cultural destination recognized for engaging diverse audiences through dynamic exhibitions and innovative educational and community outreach programs. The BMA’s internationally renowned collection of 95,000 objects encompasses more than 1,200 works by Henri Matisse anchored by the famed Cone Collection of modern art, as well as one of the nation’s finest holdings of prints, drawings, and photographs. The galleries showcase an exceptional collection of art from Africa; important works by established and emerging contemporary artists; outstanding European and American paintings, sculpture, and decorative arts; significant artworks from China; ancient Antioch mosaics; and exquisite textiles from around the world. The 210,000- square-foot museum is also distinguished by a grand historic building designed in the 1920s by renowned American architect John Russell Pope and two beautifully landscaped gardens featuring an array of 20th-century sculpture. The BMA is located in Charles Village, three miles north of the Inner Harbor, and is adjacent to the main campus of Johns Hopkins University. General admission to the BMA is free so that everyone can enjoy the power of art.

**VISITOR INFORMATION**

General admission to the BMA is free. Special exhibitions may be ticketed. The BMA is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. The museum is closed Monday, Tuesday, New Year’s Day, July 4, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. The BMA is located at 10 Art Museum Drive, three miles north of Baltimore’s Inner Harbor. For general museum information, call 443-573-1700 or visit [artbma.org](http://artbma.org).

Connect with us: #ARTBMA • [Stories](#) • [Facebook](#) • [Twitter](#) • [Instagram](#) • [YouTube](#)

###

**For media in Baltimore:**

Anne Mannix Brown / Sarah Pedroni  
The Baltimore Museum of Art  
443-573-1870  
[abrown@artbma.org](mailto:abrown@artbma.org) / [spedroni@artbma.org](mailto:spedroni@artbma.org)

**For media outside of Baltimore:**

Sascha Freudenheim/Alina Sumajin  
PAVE Communications & Consulting  
917-544-6057 / 646-369-2050  
[sascha@paveconsult.com](mailto:sascha@paveconsult.com) / [alina@paveconsult.com](mailto:alina@paveconsult.com)