

PRESS RELEASE

Escher Exhibition on View, Intrigues with Surreal Appeal

By: Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum on March 2nd, 2017

WAUSAU, WISCONSIN: An exhibition from Athens, Greece, featuring iconic works by Dutch artist M.C. Escher (1898-1972), *M.C. Escher: Reality and Illusion*, opened Saturday, March 4, at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum and is one of the most comprehensive Escher retrospectives offered in the United States. During an opening-day gallery talk, Wisconsin artist Robin Lauersdorf, long inspired by Escher's work, will present "Illustrating Illusion à la Escher," on Saturday, March 4, 1-2 pm.

M.C. Escher: Reality and Illusion, drawn from a large private collection from the Herakleidon Museum, Athens, Greece, and on view at the Woodson Art Museum March 4 through May 28, includes his most iconic works – a pair of hands drawing themselves, fish morphing into birds, and his signature architectural fantasies, endless stairways, and tessellations.

Escher's mind-bending artwork, familiar from college dorm rooms to museums worldwide and pervasive throughout pop culture since the 1960s, continues to mesmerize and prompt inquiry as it bridges the worlds of art, math, science, engineering, and architecture.

In Escher's realistic, yet logic-defying world, water runs uphill, stairways appear upside-down, and objects are repeated with mathematical precision. The exhibition of 120 woodcuts, lithographs, mezzotints, and drawings also includes early figure drawings, lesser-known book illustrations, and detailed Italian landscapes.

The expansive 1939 woodcut "Metamorphosis II" combines tessellations with metamorphosis. Using an oriental scroll format more than thirteen feet in length, Escher created this magnificent, multi-colored work employing twenty woodblocks printed on joined rice paper.

Escher's dichotomy-filled images – amusing and serious, realistic yet visually challenging, accessible but elusive – fascinate visitors of all ages. Using his imagination and skills as a graphic artist, Escher invented visual constructions that challenged conventional perceptions of impossible spaces and perspectives. In addition to meticulously detailed depictions that required finely honed observational skills, Escher often constructed sculptures and figures from varied materials to work out perspectives and mathematical problems encountered in his two-dimensional work.

By the 1905s, Escher had inspired a cadre of mathematicians and scientists intrigued by his tessellations and depictions of architecture. Forty years after his death, Escher's artwork continues to bridge the realms of science and art.

Concurrent with *M.C. Escher: Reality and Illusion*, is an exhibition featuring the Escher-inspired artwork of Wisconsin artist Robin Lauersdorf. In his whimsical yet meticulous drawings, Lauersdorf playfully juxtaposes reality and imagination and manipulates perspective. In an artwork of a fly fisherman, for example, goldfish crackers seem to jump from a bowl into a stream. Sixteen detailed drawings that Lauersdorf created throughout nineteen years – often spending months on a single one – were selected to illuminate Escher's influence for *Illustrating Illusions: Drawings by Robin Lauersdorf*, on view March 4 through May 28.

On opening day, Lauersdorf presents a gallery talk, "Illustrating Illusion à la Escher," on Saturday, March 4, 1-2 pm, when he discusses how Escher's work continues prompting artists to enchant the eye and exercise the mind through their work. He also will lead a two-day drawing workshop for teens and adults on Saturday and Sunday, March 25 and 26; for details, check the events calendar and call the Museum to register.

Hands-on Programs for all Ages Make Escher Connections

Woodson Art Museum programs engage and educate visitors of all ages throughout the year, and during

the exhibition this spring those Museum programs incorporate themes making myriad connections – like Escher’s work – to art, math, science, engineering, and architecture.

This month’s highlights, in addition to Lauersdorf’s programs, include “Impossible Figures & Visual Spatial Talent,” led by a University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire psychology professor, on Saturday, March 18, 1-2 p.m., when Catya von Karolyi discusses the importance of nurturing visual spatial abilities in the classroom and with children at home. Recognizing impossible figures, like those found in Escher’s artwork, has been associated with artistic talent and also with dyslexia; von Karolyi will present research about these relationships.

On Thursday, March 23, a gallery walk – offered twice, at Noon-1 p.m. or 5:30 p.m. – will be led by Nicholas T. Kondoprias, a partner at PAN Art Connections, Inc., which organized *M.C. Escher: Reality and Illusion*.

To learn more about guest presenters’ upcoming programs, check out the Museum’s online events calendar and the visiting artist webpage.

During Art Park Open Studio on the first Saturday of each month, 1-3 p.m., all ages drop in for hands-on art making inspired by artwork on view in the galleries.

SPARK! programs for individuals with memory loss and an accompanying friend or family member on March 9, April 13, and May 11, 10:30 a.m.- Noon, offer social interaction in the galleries amid Escher artwork, followed a hands-on art activity; call the Museum to register.

During Art 101 on Wednesday, March 15, 12:15-1 p.m., explore Escher’s puzzling patterns and impossible spaces during a gallery walk with Museum educator Catie Anderson. Art 101 programs on Thursday, April 6, 5:30-6:30 p.m. and Wednesday, April 19, 12:15-1 p.m., focus on Escher’s printmaking processes via presentations by curator Jane Weinke. Art 101 programs on Thursday, May 4, 5:30-6:30 p.m. and Wednesday, May 17, 12:15-1 p.m., highlight Escher’s influence on art and culture via presentations by museum educator Catie Anderson.

During Toddler Tuesdays on the third Tuesday of each month, 10:30 a.m.-Noon, little ones, 18 months-4 years, and accompanying adults drop in to sample art making and interactive play in Art Park.

Check the events calendar and call to register for Art Time for Tots, Art Babies, and Art 4 You programs offered during the last week of each month this spring.

During Art Kids programs this spring, children, 5-12 years, will view Escher’s tessellations and design and create one-of-a-kind stamps to explore symmetry and also build dimensional, geometric sculptures. Call the Museum to register for Thursday-afternoon programs, 4:30-6 p.m. on March 23, April 27, and May 25.

Call to register for a woodblock printing workshop for teens and adults, on Saturday, April 8, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., and Sunday, April 9, 10 a.m.-Noon. Inspired by M.C. Escher’s early woodblock prints, participants will design, carve, and print an original small edition of prints with guidance from printmaker and paper artist Shannon Pueschner and Museum educator Catie Anderson. Fee: \$65, Museum members; \$85, non-members; Saturday lunch and materials provided.

For details about upcoming programs, check the events calendar. To learn more, visit www.lywam.org, e-mail the Museum at museum@lywam.org, call 715-845-7010, and follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

State Tourism Grant Extends Escher Promotion

Expanded promotion of “*M.C. Escher: Reality and Illusion*” is possible thanks to a \$20,000 [Wisconsin Department of Tourism](#) Joint Effort Marketing grant. Encouraging families and adults to connect math and science concepts with art during spring break trips and long weekend getaways, the grant enables marketing throughout Wisconsin, Chicago, and the Twin Cities via targeted online and social media advertising.

“We are excited to once again support the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in its efforts to attract art enthusiasts and others to the Wausau area,” said Tourism Secretary Stephanie Klett. “Exhibitions with worldwide appeal like *M.C. Escher: Reality and Illusion* not only create a positive economic impact in the local community; they further establish Wisconsin as a growing arts destination in the Midwest.”

“This project clearly demonstrates that funding tourism marketing initiatives produces a sound return on investment for the local economy,” Governor Scott Walker said. “Tourism is part of Wisconsin’s economic foundation and its continued growth is a priority for my administration because of the nearly 191,000 jobs it supports, the tax revenues it generates and the positive image it projects for the State.”

Building on the themes of Escher’s work, the exhibition bridges the worlds of art, math, science and engineering through engaging programming for visitors of all ages.

“With the universal appeal of M.C. Escher’s iconic images, it’s significant to be able to spread information about the exhibition to an even greater number of potential visitors thanks to the JEM Grant,” said Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum director Kathy Kelsey Foley. “The Museum is grateful to the Wisconsin Department of Tourism for its generous and enthusiastic support.”

March 4 – May 28, 2017

M.C. Escher: Reality and Illusion

The most iconic works by Dutch artist M.C. Escher (1898-1972), including a pair of hands drawing themselves and fish morphing into birds, are familiar to many. This exhibition of 120 woodcuts, lithographs, mezzotints, and drawings opens Saturday, March 4, at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum and remains on view through Sunday, May 28. M.C. Escher: Reality and Illusion, delves deeper into both the literal and impossible worlds Escher created over a career spanning five decades. Drawn from a large private collection of M.C. Escher’s work, Reality and Illusion includes early figure drawings, lesser-known book illustrations, detailed Italian landscapes, the tessellations for which he became famous, and examples of his signature architectural fantasies in which stairways seem to go both up and down. M.C. Escher: Reality and Illusion is from the collection of Herakleidon Museum, Athens, Greece, www.herakleidon-art.gr and remains on view through May 28.

Click on this link to the exhibition webpage image gallery [M.C. Escher: Reality and Illusion](#) to see low-resolution versions of artwork images.

March 4 – May 28, 2017

Illustrating Illusions: Drawings by Robin Lauersdorf

Whimsical, yet meticulous, graphite pencil drawings by Wisconsin artist Robin Lauersdorf, long interested in Escher’s work, are featured in an exhibition organized by Woodson Art Museum curator of exhibitions, Andy McGivern. Lauersdorf playfully juxtaposes reality and imagination and manipulates perspective. In an artwork of a fly fisherman, for example, goldfish crackers seem to jump from a bowl into a stream. Sixteen detailed drawings that Lauersdorf created throughout nineteen years – often spending months on a single one – were selected to illuminate Escher’s influence for this exhibition that coincides with M.C. Escher: Reality and Illusion, on view March 4 through May 28, 2017.

Click on this link to the exhibition webpage image gallery [Illustrating Illusions: Drawings by Robin Lauersdorf](#) to see low-resolution versions of artwork images.

Black & White: Andrea Rich – on view February 25 through July 30, 2017

A selection of Birds in Art Master Artist Andrea Rich’s woodcuts – printed only with black ink and utilizing only one woodblock – complements M.C. Escher’s black-and-white artworks in M.C. Escher: Reality and Illusion, on view March 4 through May 28, 2017.

Click on this link to the exhibition webpage image gallery [Black & White: Andrea Rich](#) to see low-resolution versions of images of artwork.