

**FROM THE GROUNDS UP: THOMAS JEFFERSON'S ARCHITECTURE AND
DESIGN EXAMINES FOUNDING FATHER'S IMPACT
ON YOUNG NATION'S VISUAL IDENTITY**

*Exhibition on view exclusively at University of Virginia's Fralin Museum of Art
Jan. 26-Apr. 29, 2018*

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) occupies a central position in American history as the author of the Declaration of Independence and the third President of the United States. One of his most important legacies was his role as a designer and advocate for the creation of an iconic architectural identity for our fledgling country that still endures today. Jefferson's architectural vision for the United States will be explored in a special exhibition early next year. *From the Grounds Up: Thomas Jefferson's Architecture & Design* at the Fralin Museum of Art at the University of Virginia will investigate and illuminate Jefferson's many architectural accomplishments as well as the classical tradition to which his architecture was aligned. The exhibition will consist of drawings, prints, paintings, photographs and building and construction artifacts, among other archival materials.

Curated by Richard Guy Wilson, Ph.D., Commonwealth Professor of Architectural History at the University of Virginia, *From the Grounds Up* will be on view exclusively at the Fralin Museum of Art from Jan. 26 through Apr. 29, 2018.

“The bicentennial of the University of Virginia provides an ideal opportunity to reassess Thomas Jefferson's achievements as an architect and designer,” said Matthew McLendon, director and chief curator of the Fralin Museum of Art. “As an art museum sited on one of the premier public campuses in this country, the Fralin is dedicated to serving as an engaged social space for cultural conversations and our broader shared experiences.”

As a designer, Jefferson is primarily known for his home, Monticello, and the University of Virginia, established by Jefferson 200 years ago – both UNESCO world heritage sites – but his architectural career encompasses much more. He designed other houses and major public buildings that helped define American architecture, including

extensive city plans for Washington, D.C. and the U.S. Capitol. Jefferson traveled extensively throughout Europe during his tenure as American minister to the French court. As a result, European architecture and garden design deeply informed his design ethos, and can be seen in several of his iconic buildings. Jefferson understood that as the U.S. grew, its built environment would need to be designed and that quality architecture would be of primary importance to the future of the country.

From the Grounds Up: Thomas Jefferson's Architecture & Design will focus on a number of key aspects of Jefferson's career as an architect. His early influences and interests, including American landscapes he admired and architecture he encountered abroad that enlarged his view of design will be discussed. Construction techniques and the tools employed in the construction of his iconic buildings will be highlighted while also addressing some of the issues surrounding the construction by both free and enslaved men. The exhibition will move on to sections devoted to his design of private homes and public buildings. Of particular note will be an examination of Jefferson's establishment and design of the University of Virginia.

The exhibition represents a key component of the University of Virginia's multi-year bicentennial celebrations in 2017-19. Among his many accomplishments, Jefferson considered the creation of UVA as one of his most enduring and significant contributions. The university grew from Jefferson's deeply held beliefs that education of the people is one of government's most important responsibilities, and that education is central to freedom. Jefferson designed the university, wrote its initial curriculum, chose the books for the library and served as the first rector. The result was an educational and architectural masterpiece that survives today as a testament to Jefferson's far-reaching philosophy and vision.

Jefferson wrote to a friend shortly before his death on July 4, 1826, "I am closing the last scenes of life by fashioning and fostering an establishment for the instruction of those who are to come after us. I hope its influence on their virtue, freedom, fame and happiness, will be salutary and permanent."

Complementing the exhibition will be a suite of public programs, including a two-day symposium to be held at UVA in March 2018.

Admission to the Fralin Museum of Art and the exhibition is free.

The Fralin Museum of Art's programming is generously supported by The Joseph and Robert Cornell Memorial Foundation. This exhibition is supported by the University of Virginia Bicentennial, with funding provided by the Alumni Board of Trustees.

About The Fralin Museum of Art at the University of Virginia

Established in 1935, the University of Virginia Art Museum became the Fralin Museum of Art in 2012 in honor of a bequest of American art and service to the university by Cynthia and W. Heywood Fralin. The Museum maintains a collection of nearly 14,000 works of art, including American and European painting, works on paper, and sculpture from the 15th through the 20th centuries; art from the ancient Mediterranean; Asian art; and Native American art. Housed in the historic Bayly Building near the Rotunda on the landmark UVA campus, the Fralin is dedicated to serving the widest possible audiences and engaging comprehensive visual education to enhance its visitors' understanding of world cultures. Throughout the year the Museum presents a diverse selection of exhibitions, programs, research and events that bring the university and broader community together.

For more information, visit <http://uvafralinartmuseum.virginia.edu>.

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