

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CURRIER
MUSEUM
of ART

**Shakespeare's First Folio at the Currier Museum of Art in April 2016
Exclusive New Hampshire and Boston Area Exhibition Venue**

Manchester, NH – Imagine a world without the immortal words “To be, or not to be” or “Beware the Ides of March.” The book that saved many of William Shakespeare’s greatest plays from being forever lost will be on view at the Currier Museum of Art, April 9, 2016 to May 1, 2016. *First Folio! The Book that Gave Us Shakespeare* will bring one of the remaining copies of this important historic publication to the Currier as its exclusive New Hampshire and Boston-area venue.

“After nearly 400 years the First Folio is still revealing its secrets to us, and this is a rare opportunity to see it first-hand,” said Meghan Petersen, Currier librarian and archivist. “Shakespeare is a household name, but how the First Folio came to be is less well known. In the age of the e-book, I think it is a particularly interesting time to explore the concept of the printed book as an artifact.”

The Currier is proud to have worked with our academic partners, Saint Anselm College, University of Massachusetts Lowell; University of New Hampshire, Durham and University of New Hampshire, Manchester. A higher education committee, chaired by Douglas Lanier, professor of English and director of the University of New Hampshire London Program provided invaluable leadership and support in our effort to secure this treasure for our regional audience.

Many of Shakespeare's plays were written to be performed and were not published during his lifetime. The First Folio came out in 1623, seven years after Shakespeare’s death and represents the first collected edition of Shakespeare’s plays. Two of Shakespeare’s fellow actors compiled 36 of his plays, hoping to preserve them for future generations. Eighteen of these plays would have been lost if not for the First Folio, including *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Tempest*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *The Comedy of Errors* and *As You Like It*.

“Shakespeare tells the human story like no one else,” said Michael Witmore, director of the Folger Shakespeare Library. “He connects us to each other, to our history, and to themes and ideas that touch us every day.”

About the Exhibition

When the First Folio arrives in Manchester, its pages will be opened to one of the most quoted lines in the world, “To be or not to be,” from *Hamlet*. Accompanying the rare book will be a multi-panel exhibition exploring Shakespeare’s significance, then and now, with interactive programs. The Currier and its partner institutions are planning numerous programs for the public and families in connection with the First Folio

exhibition. These will be announced at a later date at <http://www.currier.org/shakespeare>.

The exhibition is coordinated by the Folger Shakespeare Library in partnership with the Cincinnati Museum Center and the American Library Association. During 2016, a copy of Shakespeare's First Folio will be on view in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico for one month in each location.

The Folger Shakespeare Library holds 82 copies of the First Folio, by far the largest collection in the world, representing more than one-third of the 233 known copies in the world today. It is believed that 750 copies were originally printed.

One of the most valuable printed books in the world; a First Folio sold for \$6.2 million in 2001 at Christie's and another one for \$5.2 million in 2006 in London. It originally sold for one British pound—about \$200 today.

Exhibition Support

First Folio! The Book that Gave Us Shakespeare has been made possible in part by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities: Exploring the human endeavor, and by the generous support of Vinton and Sigrid Cerf and the Google Inc. Charitable Giving Fund of Tides Foundation. Sponsorship opportunities of this major exhibition and the Folger's other Wonder of Will programs commemorating the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death are available; learn more at www.folger.edu.

General Information

About Currier Museum of Art

The Currier Museum of Art, located at 150 Ash Street, Manchester, N.H., is open every day except Tuesday. It is home to an internationally respected collection of European and American paintings, decorative arts, photographs and sculpture, including works by Picasso, Matisse, Monet and O'Keeffe. Visitors of all ages will enjoy the engaging exhibitions, the dynamic programs ranging from art-making and lectures to music, a Museum Shop, and an airy, light-filled café. Free Wi-Fi is available throughout the Museum. The Currier welcomes visitors with disabilities and special needs. We are wheelchair accessible and offer FM headsets for sound amplification at many public programs. For more information, visit www.currier.org or call 603.669.6144, x108.

The Currier Art Center offers studio classes, art camps, Master classes and intensive workshops for all ages. The Museum also owns the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Zimmerman House, complete with the original furnishings and the owners' fine art collection.

About Folger Shakespeare Library

Folger Shakespeare Library is a world-renowned center for scholarship, learning, culture, and the arts. It is home to the world's largest Shakespeare collection and a primary repository for rare materials from the early modern period (1500-1750). The Folger is an internationally recognized research library offering advanced scholarly

programs in the humanities; an innovator in the preservation of rare materials; a national leader in how Shakespeare is taught in grades K–12; and an award-winning producer of cultural and arts programs—theatre, music, poetry, exhibits, lectures and family programs. Learn more at www.folger.edu

About Cincinnati Museum Center

Cincinnati Museum Center (CMC) at Union Terminal is a nationally recognized institution and national historic landmark. Dedicated to sparking community dialogue, insight and inspiration, CMC was awarded the 2009 National Medal for Museum and Library Service from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and received accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums in 2012. CMC is one of only 16 museums in the nation with both of these honors, making it a unique asset and a vital community resource. Union Terminal has been voted the nation's 45th most important building by the American Institute of Architects. Organizations within CMC include the Cincinnati History Museum, Duke Energy Children's Museum, Museum of Natural History & Science, Robert D. Lindner Family OMNIMAX® Theater and Cincinnati History Library & Archives. Recognized by Forbes Traveler Magazine as the 17th most visited museum in the country, CMC welcomes more than one million visitors annually. For more information, visit www.cincymuseum.org

About the American Library Association

The American Library Association is the oldest and largest library association in the world, with approximately 58,000 members in academic, public, school, government and special libraries. The mission of the American Library Association is to provide leadership for the development, promotion and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all.

ALA's Public Programs Office provides leadership, resources, training and networking opportunities that help thousands of librarians nationwide develop and host cultural programs for adult, young adult and family audiences. The mission of the ALA Public Programs Office is to promote cultural programming as an essential part of library service in all types of libraries. Projects include book and film discussion series, literary and cultural programs featuring authors and artists, professional development opportunities and traveling exhibitions. School, public, academic and special libraries nationwide benefit from the office's programming initiatives. Additional information can be found at www.ala.org/programming

About the National Endowment for the Humanities

Created in 1965 as an independent federal agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities supports research and learning in history, literature, philosophy, and other areas of the humanities by funding selected, peer-reviewed proposals from around the nation. Additional information about the National Endowment for the Humanities and its grant programs is available at www.neh.gov

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