WASHINGTON—This summer, The Phillips Collection presents a major international exhibition on American artist William Merritt Chase (1849–1916). A renowned figure in the international art circles of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Chase was a brilliant observer of contemporary life, an innovative painter, and an influential teacher. Marking the centennial of his death, this retrospective—the first in more than three decades—explores the interrelationships in Chase’s work across subject and media. *William Merritt Chase: A Modern Master* is on view at the Phillips beginning June 4, 2016.

Co-organized by The Phillips Collection, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Fondazione Musei Civici Venezia, and the Terra Foundation for American Art, *William Merritt Chase* brings together more than 75 of the artist’s best works from all phases of his four-decade-long career, from portraits and figurative paintings, to urban park scenes, domestic interiors, still lifes, and landscapes. The exhibition also includes several fine examples of Chase’s pastels to highlight the integral role the medium played within his oeuvre. A co-founder of the progressive Society of American Painters in Pastel, Chase was a leader in the late 19th-century revival of pastel painting and one of its most innovative practitioners. Throughout his career, Chase experimented with pastel alongside his work in oil, translating the painterly qualities of wet color to the velvety effects of dry pigment.

*William Merritt Chase* sheds new light on the artist’s aesthetic philosophy, artistic practice, and working methods, while positioning his work within the vibrant international cultural climate at the turn of the 20th century. Drawing on significant new scholarship in the field since the last Chase retrospective in
1983, this exhibition provides a fresh appraisal of the artist and his important contribution to the history of American art. The exhibition also focuses attention on Chase’s role as a highly influential and devoted teacher, who trained and inspired the next generation of American artists, including Marsden Hartley, Edward Hopper, Georgia O’Keeffe, and Joseph Stella, who feature prominently in the Phillips’s permanent collection.

“Today, as the history of American art is being rewritten through 21st-century eyes, long overlooked but revolutionary figures like Chase deserve renewed attention,” explains Curator Elsa Smithgall. “While the artist’s so-called ‘eclecticism’ has made it a challenge for scholars to fit him into a particular art movement, this exhibition firmly redresses that position by asserting that Chase’s stylistic experimentation is one of his strongest virtues. The Phillips has celebrated American art and artists since it opened to the public in 1921, and this in-depth presentation of Chase enriches our understanding of his vital place within the history of American art and his lasting legacy in the art of our time.”

This exhibition will be the first Chase retrospective to be exhibited abroad, traveling to the International Gallery of Modern Art, Venice, Italy, in February 2017 after appearing at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, October 2016–January 2017.

“William Merritt Chase once said, ‘Art has become international… the best of art today belongs to all countries combined and localization has been entirely done away with,’ and this curatorial team’s rigorous intellectual study is aptly driven by an international approach,” says Director Dorothy Kosinski. “A growing interest in transnational approaches to historical American art makes it a timely moment for a major Chase exhibition and an unprecedented opportunity to introduce international audiences to a preeminent American artist who is largely unknown outside the United States.”


IMAGE GALLERY
High-resolution press images are available by request or by accessing the museum’s online Dropbox: https://goo.gl/KyuWyN
CATALOGUE

Essays by Elsa Smithgall, Erica E. Hirshler, Katherine M. Bourguignon, Giovanna Ginex, and John Davis. Foreword by D. Frederick Baker.

*Available this spring for $60 in the museum shop and online:* [www.shop.phillipscollection.org](http://www.shop.phillipscollection.org)

SPONSORS
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![Terra Foundation for American Art](image)

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ABOUT THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION
The Phillips Collection, America’s first museum of Modern art, is one of the world’s most distinguished collections of Impressionist and Modern American and European art. Stressing the continuity between art of the past and present, it offers a strikingly original and experimental approach to Modern art by combining works of different nationalities and periods in displays that change frequently. The setting is similarly unconventional, featuring small rooms, a domestic scale, and a personal atmosphere. Artists represented in the collection include Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Vincent van Gogh, Edgar Degas, Henri Matisse, Pierre Bonnard, Paul Cézanne, Pablo Picasso, Paul Klee, Claude Monet, Honoré Daumier, Georgia O'Keeffe, Arthur Dove, Mark Rothko, Milton Avery, Jacob Lawrence, and Richard Diebenkorn, among others. The permanent collection has grown to include more than 1,000 photographs, many by American photographers Berenice Abbott, Esther Bubley, and Bruce Davidson, and works by contemporary artists such as Anselm Kiefer, Wolfgang Laib, Whitfield Lovell, and Leo Villareal. The Phillips Collection regularly organizes acclaimed special exhibitions, many of which travel internationally. The Intersections series features projects by contemporary artists responding to art and spaces in the museum. The Phillips also produces award-winning education programs for K–12 teachers and students, as well as for adults. The University of Maryland Center for Art and Knowledge at The Phillips Collection is the museum’s nexus for academic work, scholarly exchange, and interdisciplinary collaborations. Since 1941, the museum has hosted Sunday Concerts in its wood-paneled Music Room. The Phillips Collection is a private, non-government museum, supported primarily by donations.

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