



**Media Contact:**

Brian Flowers  
(314) 243-1571  
brian.flowers@worldchesshof.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**World Chess Hall of Fame Exhibit  
Examines the Mind-Bending and Mathematical Works of M.C. Escher**

SAINT LOUIS (April 26, 2019) – A new art exhibition featuring the works of world-renowned graphic artist Maurits Cornelis Escher, *M.C. Escher: Infinite Variations*, will open at the World Chess Hall of Fame (WCHOF) on May 2, 2019, and will be on display through September 22, 2019.

The 100+ piece exhibit showcases Escher's extreme variety of groundbreaking techniques and subjects. The new exhibit will display works from throughout his career—starting with his early Italian landscape sketches, self-portraits and book illustrations to his most iconic images of impossible spaces, tessellations, infinity and his metamorphosis series. The extensive Escher collection will occupy 3000 square feet at the WCHOF, while an extension of the show will also be on display at the Saint Louis University Museum of Art (SLUMA).

“As the lender of these M.C. Escher masterpieces, it gives me great joy to see them on display in Saint Louis for the first time ever,” said Paul Firos, founder of the Herakleidon Museum and Pan Art Connections, Inc. “I have long loved M.C. Escher for his attention to detail and mathematical principles. The parallels between his work and the intricacies of chess are striking and unique. I look forward to sharing these Escher treasures at the World Chess Hall of Fame and the Saint Louis University Museum of Art, and I hope guests are as fascinated as I am by the depth and beauty of the Escher experience.”

Of the noted Escher works on display at the WCHOF, *Metamorphosis II*—made using 20 woodblocks printed meticulously on joined sheets of rice paper to create a composition almost 13 feet long—provides a striking parallel to the beauty of chess. Inspired by the stream of consciousness manner in which the mind fits together unrelated subjects, the patterns, shapes, creatures and cubes of the piece eventually morph into a chessboard.

Another Escher masterpiece is *Snakes*, created using the woodcut technique, a favorite of Escher throughout his career. Crafted with the intention of taking the viewer to the limit of the infinite, Escher notably made no attempt to depict the smallest circles visible to the naked eye, feeling the suggestion of a decrease in size was sufficient to create the illusion. This meticulously-designed artwork was his last creation prior to his death in 1972.

“The beauty and intricacies of M.C. Escher's works have influenced artists and art-lovers for decades,” said WCHOF Chief Curator Shannon Bailey. “It is an honor for the World Chess Hall of Fame and Saint Louis University Museum of Art to bring these works to the heart of America for display in Saint Louis for the very first time. It is our hope that guests to this exhibition get lost in the endless spaces brought to life by a chess enthusiast who is one of the world's most prolific artists.”

The general public is invited to attend the free exhibition opening reception at the WCHOF on May 2, 2019, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., to view the Escher works for the first time. Please RSVP at <https://worldchesshof.org/>. Media interviews with Paul Firos, lender of the Escher works, or Shannon Bailey, chief curator of the WCHOF, can be coordinated by contacting Brian Flowers at [brian.flowers@worldchesshof.org](mailto:brian.flowers@worldchesshof.org) or (314) 243-1571.

###

### **About the World Chess Hall of Fame**

The World Chess Hall of Fame (WCHOF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization committed to building awareness of the cultural and artistic significance of chess. It opened on September 9, 2011, in the Central West End after moving from previous locations in New York; Washington, D.C.; and Florida. The WCHOF is located at 4652 Maryland Avenue, housed in an historic 15,900 square-foot residence-turned-business, featuring World Chess Hall of Fame inductees, United States Chess Hall of Fame inductees selected by the U.S. Chess Trust, displays of artifacts from the permanent collection and exhibitions highlighting the great players, historic games and rich cultural history of chess. The WCHOF partners with the Saint Louis Chess Club to provide innovative programming and outreach to local, national and international audiences. Visit <https://worldchesshof.org/> for more information.

### **About M.C. Escher**

Maurits Cornelis Escher was born June 17, 1898, in Leeuwarden in the northern Netherlands. He spent much of his time drawing and his artistic talent was recognized by an art teacher who taught him printmaking. He later studied at the School of Architecture and Decorative Arts in Haarlem, where he chose to pursue graphic arts. After graduating, Escher traveled throughout Europe, gathering inspiration for his artwork. This planted the seed of what would become his lifelong fascination with repeated patterns that would fill a plane.

Escher is most renowned for his work after 1937 when he walked through what he called “the open door of mathematics,” led by his wonder and his many meticulous observations. Among the most famous of Escher’s works of this period were his “regular divisions of the plane,” tessellations filling two-dimensional places. The geometric tiling of the Moorish Alhambra Palace in Granada, Spain, which he had seen during his travels, helped inspire this new phase of his career. He began creating his own interlocking patterns but added figural elements to them, noting that this allowed the introduction of narratives to these works.

Throughout his career, Escher experimented with woodcuts, wood engravings, lithographs, and mezzotints. In the 1950s and 60s, his prints began to gain popularity in Europe and the United States. Escher spent the last 32 years of his life in Holland, completing his final print, the woodcut *Snakes*, three years before his death at the age of 73 in 1972.

### **About the Herakleidon Museum**

The Herakleidon Museum, founded by Paul and Anna-Belinda Firos and based in Athens, Greece, has been bringing art, education and culture to the general public since 2004. Since its inception, the museum has evolved into an interactive center for popularized science, with a permanent interactive exhibition that provides children and adults exposure to science, art, and mathematics through creative play with judiciously chosen and designed interactive exhibits. Visit [www.herakleidon-art.gr/en-us/](http://www.herakleidon-art.gr/en-us/) for more information.

### **About Pan Art Connections, Inc.**

Pan Art Connections, Inc. was formed by museum professionals faced with the day-to-day business challenge of operating a museum efficiently. Pan Art offers ready-to-exhibit, high profile, single-source collections from which museums can select to exhibit in their own venue. Pan Art’s worldwide network enhances the existing connections museum managers are accustomed to and opens new possibilities for continued expansion. Visit <https://pan-art-connections.com/> for more information.

### **About the Saint Louis University Museum of Art**

Established in 2002, the Saint Louis University Museum of Art (SLUMA) exhibits and collects works by modern masters, as well as displaying an extensive collection of Jesuit artworks and artifacts. The museum’s permanent collection includes artists such as Chuck Close, Robert Motherwell, Jasper Johns, Kiki Smith, Robert Rauschenberg, Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein, and continues to grow. Housed in a stunning Beaux Arts style building that dates from the turn of the 20th century, the museum offers a range of works on four floors. Visit <https://www.slu.edu/sluma/> for more information.