



# News Release

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**EXHIBITION:** *Masters of Illusion: 150 Years of Trompe l'Oeil in America*

**DATES:** January 10 – March 20, 2005

**OPENING:** Sunday, January 16, 2-5 p.m.

**LOCATION:** Kresge Art Museum, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Mich.

## What You See Is Not Always What You Get- Masters of Illusion at Kresge Art Museum

Great tricksters from America's past and present converge in the exhibition *Masters of Illusion: 150 Years of Trompe l'Oeil in America* presenting works that will leave viewers wondering if what they see is real. This exhibition includes 19<sup>th</sup> century paintings in the traditional *trompe l'oeil* (pronounced tromp loy) style while also featuring contemporary variations in sculpture and video. *Masters of Illusion* will be on view at Kresge Art Museum January 10 through March 20, 2005. Support for the exhibition comes from the Michigan State University Federal Credit Union and the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs.

When translated from French, *trompe l'oeil* literally means "to fool-the-eye." Over 45 works of art will be on display and include paintings by the famous 19<sup>th</sup> century American artists William Michael Harnett and John Frederick Peto. Some of the contemporary artists include Tom Friedman, Sylvia Mangold, Robert Gober, Vernon Fisher, Alan Magee, Sam Taylor-Wood, and Federico Castelluccio (known for his role as Furio Giunta on HBO's *The Sopranos*). Paintings are on loan from the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Manoogian Collection, Detroit Institute of Arts, Flint Institute of Arts, various New York City galleries, and private collections.

The *trompe l'oeil* style has existed for centuries, but in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century American painters became its foremost practitioners. These painters try to make the images on the canvas seem three-dimensional and to extend into the viewer's space. They use depth and receding and jutting planes to achieve the illusion. "For some painters, the illusion lies in the details. In Vernon Fisher's case, it is a small sculpted fly resting on a large abstract canvas," says April Kingsley, curator of the exhibition.

"Some contemporary *trompe l'oeil* artists continue to work in the traditional formats popular in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, but others are extending it into sculpture and other art forms," says Kingsley. *Trompe l'oeil* sculptures are often presented as one thing, but created out of something entirely different, such as marble "toilet paper," ceramic "leather goods," and wooden "flowers," adds Kingsley.

A preview of the exhibition and a listing of related public programs is available online at [www.artmuseum.msu.edu](http://www.artmuseum.msu.edu).

Admission is free to Kresge Art Museum and many of its public programs. The museum is open Monday – Friday 10 a.m. – 5p.m., Thursday until 8 p.m., Saturday and Sunday noon – 5 p.m. Kresge Art Museum is located on the campus of Michigan State University, in East Lansing, Mich. For additional information please call 517/355-7631 or visit [www.artmuseum.msu.edu](http://www.artmuseum.msu.edu)

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