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The Wharton Esherick Museum
P.O. Box 595
Paoli, PA 19301

Media contact: Katie Wynne
katie@whartonesherickmuseum.org
610-644-5822

***Fairhope Days* Exhibition at Wharton Esherick Museum Highlights Early 20th-Century Progressive Alabama Community**

Malvern, PA – The Wharton Esherick Museum’s new exhibit *Fairhope Days* is on display from June 3 through September 2, 2018. From lifelong friendships to explorations in the studio, this exhibit takes a focused look at the Esherick family’s time spent in the utopian community of Fairhope, Alabama, and brings some of Esherick’s early work into the spotlight.

Founded in 1895 on the principles of economist Henry George as a “single-tax” community, Fairhope was a hotbed of progressive ideas, attracting artists, educators, political reformers, and writers. The Esherick’s first visited in 1919, drawn to Marietta Johnson’s Organic School of Progressive Education. On display are personal items of the Esherick family and Fairhope memorabilia rarely on display for public viewing as well as key artworks from Esherick’s career as he made his first carving marks in woodcut prints and frames.

Wharton Esherick Museum Curator & Program Director, Laura Heemer is excited to highlight Fairhope’s fascinating history and the role it played in shaping Wharton Esherick’s artistic career. “We always mention Fairhope on our guided tours of Wharton’s Studio, but many of our visitors have never heard of this utopian community far away in Alabama,” Ms. Heemer reflected, “This exhibit allows us to bring Fairhope to the Museum where we can dive deeper into this pivotal experience in Esherick’s career.”

“Fairhope was a game changer for Esherick – it was there that the painter, struggling to find his voice in the art world was given a set of carving tools that would change the trajectory of his career. It’s entirely possible that we wouldn’t have the Esherick legacy we have today if he’d never made that trip south,” Heemer elaborated.

Fairhope Days is on display from June 3 through September 2, 2018 in the Museum’s Visitor Center and is free to the public. This does not include entry into the Museum - for which admission and advance reservations are required. An opening reception for *Fairhope Days* will be held on Sunday, June 3 from 1-4pm.

About the Wharton Esherick Museum:

The Wharton Esherick Museum, located just outside of Valley Forge Park in Malvern, PA is the handcrafted home and studio of Wharton Esherick (1887-1970) and exhibits over 300 of the artist’s work including sculpture, sculptural furniture, woodcut prints and paintings. Wharton

Esherick was a leading American sculptor and artist of the early 20th century. Working primarily in wood, he is considered to be among the most influential furniture designers of the 21st century. The Museum is open for tours Tuesday – Friday (for groups of 5 or more) from 10 am to 4 pm, Saturdays from 10 am – 4 pm and Sundays from 1 pm - 4 pm (no minimum requirement on weekends). Advanced tickets are required, and can be purchased at www.whartonesherickmuseum.org. For more information call 610-644-5822 or email info@whartonesherickmuseum.org.