Berkshire Museum Press Release
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Images available upon request

At the Berkshire Museum

Leonardo da Vinci: Machines in Motion opens Saturday,
January 26, 2019

Visitors explore 40 full-size working models of Leonardo’s inventions

[PITTSFIELD, MA] – Experience 40 full-size working models of Leonardo da Vinci’s innovative designs, from flying machines to an early robot, when Leonardo da Vinci: Machines in Motion opens at the Berkshire Museum on Saturday, January 26, and remains on view through Sunday, May 5, 2019. The exhibition is a Feigenbaum Innovative Experience, generously sponsored by the Feigenbaum Foundation.

Leonardo da Vinci is celebrated as the father of invention, innovation, and creativity. His ideas have inspired generations of engineers, architects, artists, and others in pursuit of excellence in design. Today, his legacy of creative thought is still studied in the drawings and diagrams he left to be decoded, constructed, and set in motion. In Leonardo da Vinci: Machines in Motion, Museum visitors experience his innovations first-hand, exploring the 40 full-size, true-to-design working models of his inventions. Each mechanism is accompanied by Leonardo’s drawings and a descriptive narrative to tell his amazing story.

“Leonardo da Vinci’s life and work exemplified the interconnection of art and science, which makes this exhibition ideal for the Berkshire Museum,” says Craig Langlois, Berkshire Museum’s Chief Experience Officer. “We will be offering a series of gallery programs that will focus on this powerful and important connection. Leonardo’s designs
are amazing and translate into extraordinary machines. We are thrilled to share this work with our community."

About Leonardo da Vinci
Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) was born in Vinci, Tuscany, in Italy, and spent much of his creative life between Milan, Florence, and Rome. He represents the archetype of the Renaissance man: he was a painter, sculptor, musician, architect, engineer, and anatomist. The works of art he is most identified with are the Mona Lisa, The Last Supper, and Vitruvian Man. His thousands of manuscripts, collectively named the Codices, contain designs that are the precursors of many modern machines and devices.

About the exhibition
The 40 machines that comprise the exhibition were meticulously built by a group of scientists and skilled artisans in collaboration with the Leonardo da Vinci Museum in Florence, Italy. The exhibition includes several life-sized and large-scale mechanisms. Visitors may touch and set into motion many of the models. The materials used in the construction of these machines were available in Leonardo’s era and are the ones he described in his manuscripts. The mechanisms were crafted by hand using wood, rope, and glue, faithfully adhering to Leonardo’s instructions and utilizing the tools of his time. Graphic displays and videos explain the life and legacy of Leonardo, and provide context for his inventiveness and his designs. The History Channel video, Da Vinci & The Code He Lived By, will be playing in one of the galleries.

The machines in the exhibition are grouped into four sections, based upon their relevance to the four elements — fire, water, earth, and air — which held a strong fascination for Leonardo da Vinci.

Under “Fire,” we find machines for military use, such as the cannon and machine gun. Highlights include an armored vehicle, a moving wooden battle tank large enough for visitors to step inside. The “Water” section features machines that use water pressure to relay energy as well as equipment intended to enable a man to walk on water and a large webbed glove, similar to a flipper, meant to accelerate swimming. Under “Earth,”
we find inventions like the crane, the printing press, the oil press, theatrical machines, and even a robot. Leonardo was famously fascinated by flight, and in the “Air” category visitors will discover several models of flying machines, from the ornithopter (a device with mechanical wings), to an early type of hang glider, a parachute, and a flying bicycle.

**About the Berkshire Museum**

Located in downtown Pittsfield, Massachusetts, at 39 South St., the Berkshire Museum is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is $13 adult, $6 child; Museum members and children age 3 and under enjoy free admission. For more information, visit www.berkshiremuseum.org or call 413.443.7171.

Established by Zenas Crane in 1903, Berkshire Museum integrates art, history, and natural science in a wide range of programs and exhibitions that inspire educational connections between the disciplines. **Festival of Trees 2018: Often Heard** is on view through January 6, 2019. **National Geographic Rarely Seen: Photographs of the Extraordinary** is on view through January 6, 2019. **Josh Simpson: Galactic Landscapes** is on view through January 6, 2019. Little Cinema is open year-round. Curiosity Incubator, Lab 102, Feigenbaum Hall of Innovation, Animals of the World in Miniature, Aquarium, and other exhibits are ongoing.

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