

**WHAT:** Exhibition

***What a Family! Photographs, Prints and Drawings from the Collection***

**WHERE:** UVA Art Museum, Graphics Gallery

**WHEN:** November 3- December 23, 2007

**ALSO:** Gallery Talk by Exhibition Curator Stephen Margulies  
Sunday, November 4, 2pm, in the Museum

In tandem with the theme of this year's Virginia Film Festival (November 1-4)—*Kinflicks* -- the University of Virginia Art Museum presents a display of art inspired by what is the most important and most ambiguous aspect of human life: the family. What Sigmund Freud called "the family romance" has been the source of both tragedy and comedy in art and literature. The family is the microcosm of all the strife and delight in our existence. There have been so many recent changes in social structures that the very definition of what constitutes a family is continually under consideration, sometimes painful and sometimes liberating. Even if we rebel against the "constraints" of our genetic or immediate cultural heritage, can we be free of family without, paradoxically, losing our individual identity? Can we ever really leave our household?

*What a Family!* Explores some of the mind-boggling variety of relationships that may be interpreted as family—married couples, siblings, extended family—but also suggests the power, for good or bad, embodied in the family. A family may be grotesque or elegant, ridiculous or sublime, oppressive or joyous, hilarious or miserable, or simply mysterious. Visually speaking, the family gives the artist an opportunity to combine a sense of overall and complex design with tremendous and subtle psychological import.

In *What a Family!* we see Picasso's gracefully poignant tragicomic evocations of professional street acrobats performed as families. We see Kathë Kollwitz's heartbreaking depiction of a mother and child, as well as happier depictions of parents and children by Gertrude Kasëbier, Clarence White, Eugene Smith, and Hendrick Goltzius. Somewhat more ambiguous or mysterious families may be seen in the work of Giovanni Tiepolo, Goya, Shelby Lee Adams and others. Philippe Halsman, one of *Life* magazine's most striking photographers, depicts actress and singer Ethel Merman as a pleasingly ordinary mother. Visually, psychologically and perhaps even politically, *What a Family!* hints at why this theme has such resonance.

Exhibition curator Stephen Margulies will present a Gallery Talk on the exhibition on Sunday, November 4, at 2pm, in the Museum. The talk is free and open to the public.