

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 10, 2012

In January, the Crisp-Ellert Art Museum at Flagler College is pleased to present, *Planning and Painting in Paradise: The Art and Architecture of the Hotel Ponce de Leon*, as a part of a yearlong, multi-faceted program at Flagler College to commemorate the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Hotel. This College-wide celebration will include a series of lectures, special tours and other events to illuminate the architecture and history of the Hotel since it opened in 1888. The museum's exhibition will focus on the contributions of architects John Merven Carrère and Thomas Hastings and builders McDonald and McGuire, and as well as a selection of artists who worked in the Hotel's artist studios during the early years, through historically and culturally significant ephemera and original artworks. The display will be on view from Friday, January 11 through February 22, 2013 and we will host an opening reception on Saturday, January 12 from 10am until 4pm. As a part of the College's "Ideas and Image: Visiting Scholars and Artists" program, we will present a lecture on Artists and Salons in Florida's Gilded Age, by Roberta Favis, Professor of Art History at Stetson University and Curator of the Vera Bluemner Kouba Collection. This talk will take place on Tuesday, February 5 at 7pm in the Flagler Room.

In 2009 Flagler College and the University of Florida embarked on a collaborative project to conserve and digitize a group of over 200 blueprints, diazotypes, and drawings created for the Hotel Ponce de Leon from the 1880s-1920s by the Beaux-Arts architecture firm of John Merven Carrère and Thomas Hastings. This project was supported in part through the National Park Service's "Save America's Treasures" grant. Pairing a selection of blueprint reproductions and original drawings from this collection with early photographs of the Hotel by William Henry Jackson as well as other images culled from various archives, this exhibition will give visitors a rare visual glimpse into the planning and construction of the Hotel and a window into the artistic vision that permeated every detail of its execution.

In addition to commissioning significant artisans and craftsmen to contribute to the interior decoration of the hotel, such as Louis Comfort Tiffany, George W. Maynard and Virgilio Tojetti, Flagler also constructed seven studios that would be occupied by important artists of the day. Artists such as Martin Johnson Heade and George Seavey had been painting in St. Augustine for several years prior to the Hotel's opening, and while not a new idea, artist studios had become an essential component of the tourist industry in the White Mountains of New Hampshire and throughout New England, the Ponce de Leon was the first of such places in Florida. From 1888 until the early 1910's, artists including Frank Shapleigh, Otto Henry Bacher, Marie a'Becket, Felix de Crano, Charlotte Buell Coman, William Staples Drown and Marion Foster played a vital role in the social life of the Hotel and contributed to the cultural development of Saint Augustine. A few of these artists enjoyed success during their lifetime, and while some have secured a place in the annals of art history, many of the lesser-known artists have been rediscovered by contemporary audiences in recent years. The exhibition will include original artworks from both public and private collections, as well as photographs, newspaper clippings, letters and other ephemera that demonstrate how

this small group of people occupied a special place within the life of the Hotel Ponce de Leon. Complementing the efforts of those who had a hand in developing and decorating the Hotel Ponce de Leon, this group of artists embodied the rich cultural atmosphere that Henry Flagler sought to establish with his Hotel in paradise.

This exhibition was made possible by a grant from The Community Foundation in Jacksonville. For further information on the exhibition and related programs, please visit the website at [www.flagler.edu/crispellert](http://www.flagler.edu/crispellert), or contact Julie Dickover at 904-826-8530 or [crispellert@flagler.edu](mailto:crispellert@flagler.edu).

“Ideas and Images: Scholars and Artists in Residence” features an international composition of artists and authors, introducing a fresh and creative component to the greater St. Augustine community. Each event is free and open to the public. Call (904) 819-6282 or visit [www.flagler.edu/our-community](http://www.flagler.edu/our-community) for more information. If you are a person with a disability and need reasonable accommodations, please contact Lynn Francisco at 904-819-6460. Sign Language Interpreters are available upon request with a minimum of three days’ notice.

For a comprehensive schedule of 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events, please visit <http://ponce125.com/>.