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Press Contacts:
Garland Scott, 202.675.0342 / gscott@folger.edu
Peter Eramo, Jr., 202.675.0344 / peramo@folger.edu

FOLGER LAUNCHES NEW VISUAL IDENTITY

Washington, DC – In honor of the Folger's 90th anniversary and Shakespeare's birthday month of April, the **Folger Shakespeare Library** is launching a new visual identity. Created by acclaimed designer **J. Abbott Miller** of **Pentagram**, the Folger's fresh new look includes three typefaces, one of them custom-designed; a palette of black, gray, cream, white, and Folger red; and a bold logo—a distinctively shaped capital letter F with a deep Folger connection.

Together, these elements offer the Folger a new visual identity—a rich system that can adapt to and expand across the full range of the Folger's forms of expression, from performances and programs to publications and resources to its place as a DC destination. The new visual identity is one of many projects the Folger is undertaking as it prepares for the reopening of its historic landmark building in 2023, following a multi-year renovation to expand public spaces.

"Not only does this logo express the heart and soul of our own history," says **Folger Director Michael Witmore**, "it also expresses an attitude, and an opportunity, to fill in the spaces in a new way."

An important goal for the identity project was to speak to the "modernity of Shakespeare," says Miller, which drew him toward the modern, rather than the classical, elements of the Folger's building. "A lot of our thinking was about how to keep the identity feeling vibrant and modern and for everyone," he says. "We wanted the Folger to look like it was aware of its past, but operating very much in the present."

In his work, Miller explored the extensive exterior and interior inscriptions and lettering throughout the building, which include many different styles of lettering developed by architect Paul Cret and his studio. By far the most modern is one that is used with a beloved statue of Puck produced for the Folger by Brenda Putnam in 1932. Putnam's statue of Puck is distinctively Art Deco, and so is the engraved lettering associated with it, which spells out a playful quote from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: "Lord, what fooles these mortals be!" ("Fooles" reflects how the text appears in the 1623 First Folio.)

As Miller began to focus on the Puck lettering, he found that it was unexpectedly similar to Mallory, a typeface by typographer Tobias Frere-Jones. Miller asked Frere-Jones if he could 'Puck-ify' Mallory, and Frere-Jones created a new Puck typeface based on Mallory. The visual identity's three typefaces include Puck, which is employed for special, powerful uses, Mallory, also by Frere-Jones, and Practice, a typeface by designer François Rappo, from the Swiss type foundry Optimo.

In addition to providing display text, the Puck typeface has done much more. It's supplied the star of the visual identity: the new logo. From the beginning, Miller aimed for a unifying logo, something that would be easily recognized even at a small scale, but distinctive and bold, too. The design process ultimately led to the letter F from the Puck typeface. The F has a shape that is inspired by the lettering near Putnam's statue, but is not identical to it.

The design team has crafted many specific ways to combine the logo and the "Folger Shakespeare Library" signature, with the signature to the right or the left, at different scales, inside or outside the F, and so on. In each case, says Miller, "our strategy was staging it so that the F is the hero of the visual identity and the "Folger Shakespeare Library" is the caption to that hero."

As for selecting the F from the Puck typeface as the Folger's new logo, Miller says, "The fact that this was rooted in the Puck statue, and connected so well with the building, made it really delightful."

"What's distinctive about the Folger," says Witmore, "is that we really are spanning the old and the new. I see that in terms of our ability to perform and reinterpret the plays, the forms, the music in a complementary, but also bold way. Abbott chose the F as a kind of touchstone for the entire institution. It speaks volumes about who we are."

About the Folger Shakespeare Library

Folger Shakespeare Library is the world's largest Shakespeare collection, the ultimate resource for exploring Shakespeare and his world. The Folger welcomes millions of visitors online and in person. We provide unparalleled access to a huge array of resources, from original sources to modern interpretations. With the Folger, you can experience the power of performance, the wonder of exhibitions, and the excitement of path breaking research. We offer the opportunity to see and even work with early modern sources, driving discovery and transforming education for students of all ages.

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