



RIVERSIDE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

June 4, 2008

Contact:

Danielle L. Leland, Associate Curator of Education
Riverside Metropolitan Museum
Phone: 951.826.5124
Email: dleland@riversideca.gov

Charlie Brown, Snoopy, and the *Peanuts* Gang Come to Town in New Exhibition — *Peanuts at Bat: The Life and Art of Charles M. Schulz*

**Learn about Charles Schulz's life and how he created
the world's most popular comic strip**

RIVERSIDE, CA —Charles Monroe Schulz brightened the world for 50 years with his *Peanuts* comic strip. With Charlie Brown, Snoopy, and the rest of the lovable *Peanuts* Gang, Schulz explored the emotional territory of friendship, disappointment, faith, and tolerance. He was an artist and a storyteller who transformed images of everyday life into art that captured the humor, vulnerability, and dignity of the human spirit. Through *Peanuts*, Schulz connected the world with his drawings and stories. *Peanuts at Bat: The Life and Art of Charles M. Schulz* explores Schulz's personal history and his role as the sole inspiration and artistic talent behind *Peanuts* and its unique cast of characters. Schulz once proclaimed, "It seems beyond the comprehension of people that someone can be born to draw comic strips, but I think I was." The show will open at Riverside Metropolitan Museum (3580 Mission Inn Ave., Riverside, 92501) and runs from July 19 – September 14, 2008. For more information: (951) 826-5124 or www.riversideca.gov/museum.

Related Events

July 19, 11:00 – 4:00 pm, Opening Family Day featuring Beagles and Buddies Pet Adoption Agency, kite-making, caricatures, comic drawing, Solar S'mores, make a birdhouse, and a Root Beer and Pizza Party. The first 100 visitors will receive a free *Peanuts* gift.

The exhibition follows Schulz from his Minnesota roots to his life in California and tracks the development of the characters that make up the unique world of *Peanuts*. Examples of *Peanuts* comic strips, Schulz quotes and photographs, and selected *Peanuts* collectibles will illuminate the story behind the creation of this most popular and influential cartoon strip. The exhibit will also showcase some of Schulz's most memorable baseball-themed comic strips, including vintage *Peanuts* baseball memorabilia and ephemera: bobble head dolls, banners, and a board game. Also on display are a Louisville Slugger Joe Shlabotnik bat (Shlabotnik is Charlie Brown's favorite—underperforming—player, who's never actually seen in the strip) and an over-sized Snoopy doll decked out in his favorite team uniform.

“Comic strips are an art form: a means of expressing an idea of a great truth in an abbreviated space,” Schulz noted in 1985. He was “master of the slight incident” and broke new ground for newspaper cartoons by using innovations such as Lucy’s psychiatric booth, Linus’ security blanket (a term Schulz coined), Snoopy’s dog house, and Schroeder’s music. He profoundly influenced several generations of cartoonists with his spare graphic style and subtle sense of humor. “With intelligence, honesty, and wonderfully expressive artwork, Charles Schulz gave the comics a unique world of humor, fantasy, warmth, and pain that completely reconfigured the comic strip landscape,” wrote Bill Watterson, creator of *Calvin and Hobbes*, in 1989.

Schulz revolutionized the art of the comic strip through his single-handed dedication to the art, wit, and wisdom of *Peanuts*. For 50 years he researched, wrote, designed, and drew each *Peanuts* strip that appeared in daily and Sunday newspapers, producing nearly 18,000 strips. From the comic strip’s humble beginnings in 1950, appearing in only seven newspapers, *Peanuts*’ popularity and influence grew rapidly. By 2000 it was the most successful comic strip in newspaper history, appearing in over 40 languages, in 75 countries, in more than 2,600 newspapers, with over 355 million readers. The strip and its characters were also the inspiration for nearly 50 television specials, two plays, four movies, a symphonic concerto, many books, and thousands of licensed products. *Peanuts* products became a billion dollar worldwide industry, and Schulz became the highest paid, most widely read cartoonist in history.

Schulz officially retired in December 1999 and always intended that the strip would retire with him. On February 12, 2000, at age 77, just hours before the final *Peanuts* strip appeared in Sunday newspapers, Charles Schulz died at his home in Santa Rosa, California. The next morning, tributes ran in newspapers around the world, including one from then-U.S. President Bill Clinton in *USA Today*: “The hopeful and hapless Charlie Brown, the joyful Snoopy, the soulful Linus, even the crabby Lucy, give voice, day after day, to what makes us human.”

Inside Peanuts: The Life and Art of Charles M. Schulz was organized by the Charles M. Schulz Museum and Research Center in Santa Rosa, California. This exhibition is currently on an international tour around the world.

##