

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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PAINTINGS FROM SMITH COLLEGE MUSEUM EXHIBITED AT NATIONAL GALLERY

WASHINGTON, D.C. May 8, 1970. A selection of fifty-eight nineteenth and twentieth century French and American paintings from the Smith College Museum of Art will go on exhibition Saturday, May 16, at the National Gallery of Art.

This is the first time a collegiate collection has been shown at the National Gallery. Commenting on this occasion, J. Carter Brown, Director of the Gallery, said, "The growth of university art museums is one of the most significant trends in the current art scene. The National Gallery is pleased to be able to pay tribute to this movement in exhibiting selections from one of the oldest and finest college museums in the country."

The exhibition is made possible at this time by the temporary lack of exhibition space during the construction of a new art complex to show the entire collection at the college in Northampton, Massachusetts.

Although the holdings of the Museum range from the 5th century B.C. to the present, the selection for this exhibition is limited to nineteenth and twentieth century paintings in order to show key pictures marking the development of the collection, as well as some of the finest examples in the collection.

The college began collecting in 1879. Its first acquisition, In Grandmother's Time, 1876, by Thomas Eakins (1844-1916), sums up the early years when only works by American artists, most of them prominent living artists of the day, were acquired. This painting is among those selected for the current exhibition.

Boon Companions, a charming genre piece of children by James Wells Champney (1843-1903), is included as a tribute to the first artist to help with the conception of the collection. November Evening, a landscape by Dwight Tryon (1849-1925), is a work by the artist most responsible for laying the foundation of the collection.

A small portrait, Woman in Black, by William Merritt Chase (1849-1916) and a New York City scene, Union Square in Spring, by Childe Hassam (1859-1935) also illustrate those years when the acquisition program was entirely American and contemporary.

An unfinished work by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867), the first of two replicas of a painting commissioned by the Comte de Blacas, French Ambassador in Rome, represents a brief but important period when the college sought uncompleted works by great artists in order to demonstrate to students the creative process that a finished work usually obscures.

Other French paintings, largely acquired by the college in the first two decades of the twentieth century, are by Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (1796-1875), Gustave Courbet (1819-1877), Claude Monet (1840-1926), and Edgar Degas (1834-1917).

By 1920, the collecting policy of the college focused on the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Some of the outstanding acquisitions of this time are Courbet's La Toilette de la mariée,

from the artist's series based on events of contemporary life but depicted in the large-scale tradition reserved for mythological and historical subjects; Corot's landscape entitled Jumièges, one of three examples by this artist in the exhibition; and an unfinished landscape by Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), La Route tournante à La Roche-Guyon.

A fully-illustrated catalogue is available. After leaving the National Gallery, the exhibition will be circulated by the American Federation of Arts.

The director of the Smith College Museum, Charles Chetham, will give a lecture on the collection in the National Gallery Auditorium on Sunday, May 17, at 4 p.m.

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For photographs, catalogues, and further information contact Katherine Warwick, Assistant to the Director, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 20565. Area Code 202, 737-4215, ext. 224.