

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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SMALL FRENCH PAINTINGS IN BRUCE BEQUEST
TO BE SHOWN IN EAST BUILDING JUNE 1

WASHINGTON, D. C. March 17, 1978. A selection of French impressionist and post impressionist paintings bequeathed to the National Gallery of Art by the late Ailsa Mellon Bruce, daughter of the Gallery's founder Andrew W. Mellon, will go on view at the opening of the new East Building on June 1.

Entitled Small French Paintings from the Bequest of Ailsa Mellon Bruce, the fifty-nine works which will form this exhibition have been selected from Mrs. Bruce's 1970 bequest of more than 100 French paintings on the basis of their small and intimate scale. They include eighteen examples by Auguste Renoir; ten by Édouard Vuillard; six by Eugène Boudin; four by Pierre Bonnard; three by Edgar Degas; two works each by Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, Édouard Manet, Claude Monet, Berthe Morisot, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and Maurice Utrillo; and single examples by Henri Matisse, Camille Pissarro, Odilon Redon, Georges Rouault, Georges Seurat, and Vincent van Gogh.

"Thus this little exhibition is designed to accomplish several things at once. It should, first of all, provide a source of visual delight by putting on view material that the Gallery has been heretofore unable to

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exhibit. In addition, for the opening of the East Building, which itself must be considered one of the opening exhibits, it illustrates the range of capability that the architecture provides. And finally, this selection can serve to represent Mrs. Bruce, and her deep feeling for art, at a moment which she unfortunately was not able to experience first-hand," J. Carter Brown, Director of the National Gallery, writes in the preface to the exhibition's catalogue.

The fully illustrated catalogue was written by David E. Rust, the Gallery's Curator of French Painting, and also includes an introduction by John Rewald, renowned scholar of this period.

The exhibition will be installed on the East Building's ground floor in a sequence of intimate spaces designed by the Gallery's staff especially for this installation.

The major part of Mrs. Bruce's collection is composed of the Edward Molyneux Collection, which Mrs. Bruce bought in 1955; she then continued to add significantly to her holdings with individual purchases until her death in 1969.

Concentrating on works of both a small scale and of exceptional quality, the exhibition includes a tiny Manet still life Flowers in a Crystal Vase, as well as A King Charles Spaniel; a powerful and colorful early fauve Matisse Still Life; two sensitive and charming canvases by Morisot, The Artist's Sister at a Window and The Harbor at Lorient; Renoir's Madame Monet and Her Son, painted in their garden at Argenteuil; and van Gogh's sun-drenched landscape Farmhouse in Provence, Arles.

Additional canvases include several important paintings by Pissarro,

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including Orchard in Bloom, Louveciennes (which, along with Morisot's The Harbor at Lorient, was shown in the very first group exhibition of the impressionists in a Parisian photographer's studio in 1874); and two important small oils by Monet Argenteuil and Ships Riding on the Seine at Rouen. Also on view is a strong representation of early canvases by Bonnard and Vuillard.

Other unusually fine works on view include Boudin's On the Jetty and Yacht Basin at Trouville-Deauville; Seurat's Study for "La Grande Jatte"; and Degas' Dancers at the Old Opera House, Ballet Dancers and Dancers Backstage.

Among other exhibitions at the opening of the East Building will be:

The Splendor of Dresden: Five Centuries of Art Collecting,
an exhibition from the German Democratic Republic

American Art at Mid-Century: The Subjects of the Artist

Piranesi: The Early Architectural Fantasies

Aspects of Twentieth-Century Art: I. Picasso and Cubism;
II. European Painting and Sculpture; III. Matisse--
Cutouts and "Jazz"

Master Drawings and Watercolors from the National Gallery
Collection and Promised Gifts

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION or photographs contact Katherine Warwick, Assistant to the Director, or Pamela Jenkinson, Information Office, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C. 20565, area code 202, 737-4215, ext. 224.