

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

SIXTH STREET AT CONSTITUTION AVENUE NW WASHINGTON DC 20565 • 737-4215 extension 224

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** PRESS PREVIEW
Thursday, May 22, 1980
10 A.M. - 1 P.M. All press
and media
1 - 3 P.M. Additional time
for filming and photography

MAJOR POST-IMPRESSIONISM EXHIBITION

OPENS AT NATIONAL GALLERY MAY 25

WASHINGTON, D. C. April 23, 1980. As no other exhibition has attempted to do before, Post-Impressionism: Cross-Currents in European and American Painting, 1880-1906, a major international loan exhibition opening in the National Gallery of Art's East Building May 25, places the four towering French post-impressionists in the context of their contemporaries, not only in France, but in eight other countries of Europe and the United States. The four principals are Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh and Georges Seurat.

More than 170 public and private lenders are contributing works to the exhibition. Included are examples from major collections in the United States, Canada, Mexico, France, England, Scotland, Ireland, Belgium, Norway, The Netherlands, the Federal Republic of Germany, Portugal, Italy, Greece and Switzerland. The exhibition has been made possible by a generous grant from General Telephone & Electronics Corporation.

The National Gallery's exhibition was developed from an exhibition mounted by the Royal Academy of Arts in London last fall. When the long-planned Hermitage

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exhibition was unexpectedly cancelled, Gallery director J. Carter Brown began discussions with Alan Bowness, director of the Tate Gallery and chairman of the team of scholars for the Royal Academy's show, and Norman Rosenthal, the Academy's exhibitions secretary, about the possibility of holding a Post-Impressionism show in Washington. John House and MaryAnne Stevens, co-directors of the Academy's exhibition, together with the rest of the original English team of scholars and the addition of two American curators, were enlisted in the task of revising the London show, while the Gallery carried out negotiations for loans of approximately 300 works of art. The result is a new exhibition for the Gallery, with a strictly focused time-span and a new section of American paintings added to the core of the London exhibition and supplemented further by many European examples not previously included.

The exhibition is presented in sections devoted to (1) impressionism in the 1880's; (2) aspects of salon painting in the 1880's; (3) great masters of post-impressionism; (4) Brittany, tradition and innovation; (5) Great Britain and Ireland; (6) the United States; (7) the Low Countries; (8) aspects of salon painting in the 1890's; (9) young independents and the nabis; (10) the neo-impressionists (pointillists); (11) divisionism in Italy; (12) Germany, Norway and Switzerland; and (13) the heritage of post-impressionism. It is installed in the special exhibitions area on the Concourse level of the Gallery's new East Building, divided into galleries laid out expressly for the thirteen sections of the exhibition. The installation has been designed by Gaillard F. Ravenel and Mark Leithauser of the Gallery's installation and design department.

Among the nine Cézanne paintings on view are The Bibémus Quarry (1898-1900) lent for the Washington show by Sam Spiegel of New York, Still Life with Pots and Fruit (1890/1894) from a private collection, Mont Sainte-Victoire (1902-1906), a new inclusion lent by Walter H. Annenberg, and The White Sugar Bowl (1890-1894), a new loan from Henry P. McIlhenny of Philadelphia.

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Sixteen key works by Gauguin include Contes barbares (1902) from the Folkwang Museum, Essen, Federal Republic of Germany, The Yellow Christ (1889), a new loan from the Albright-Knox Museum, Buffalo, New York, The Man with the Axe (1891) lent by Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Lewyt of New York, and Annah the Javanese (1893/4) from a private collection.

Fourteen examples by van Gogh include Self Portrait with Bandaged Ear (1889) newly lent from a private collection, The Tarascon Coaches (1888) lent by the Henry and Rose Pearlman Foundation, Still Life, Roses (1890) from the W. Averell Harriman Collection, and Still Life, Apples (1887) from the Rijksmuseum Vincent Van Gogh, Amsterdam.

Lighthouse at Honfleur (1886) lent to the Gallery from the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon is among eleven Seurats on view, as are Young Woman Powdering Herself (1888-1890) from the Courtauld Institute Galleries, London, Grande Jatte (1884) newly lent from the collection of Mr. and Mrs. John Hay Whitney, and Le Crotoy, Looking Downstream (1889) from the Detroit Institute of Arts.

Works new to the exhibition by other European artists include Edvard Munch's The Dance of Life (1899-1900), The Artist's Sister (1892) and Moonlight (1895) from the Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo, Walter Richard Sickert's Little Dot Hetherington at the Old Bedford Music Hall (1888-1889) from a private collection and The Old Bedford: Cupid in the Gallery (1890) from the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, and Henri Matisse's Young Sailor II (1906) from Mr. and Mrs. Jacques Gelman, Mexico City, which will join Young Sailor I (1906) from a private collection, for what is believed to be the first time these two master works have ever been exhibited together.

In addition to new examples by the major American expatriates Mary Cassatt (1844-1926), James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903) and John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), who were represented in the French and British sections of the London exhibition,

the Gallery's new American section offers paintings by thirteen other Americans. Among the works on view are William Merritt Chase's The Blue Kimono (c.1898) from The Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, New York, Childe Hassam's The Room of Flowers (1894) lent from the collection of Arthur G. Altschul of New York, Winslow Homer's Sleigh Ride (c.1893?) from the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts, and Thomas Eakins' Miss Van Buren (c.1891) lent by The Phillips Collection.

A fully illustrated catalogue published by the Gallery, with 24 color plates, will accompany the exhibition. Prepared by John House, co-editor of the Royal Academy's catalogue, in conjunction with the other London organizers and the American curators, the Gallery's catalogue includes summary essays on the principal national schools and shorter comments devoted to the individual artists represented. These texts focus on pertinent biographical information and the significance of the respective figures in the larger context of the exhibition's primary themes.

In addition to Alan Bowness, who served as chairman, the team of organizers for the London exhibition were responsible for the following in the Gallery's show: Sandra Berresford, Italian section; Anna Gruetzner, British section; John House, French section; Norman Rosenthal and Gillian Perry, German, Norwegian and Swiss section; MaryAnne Stevens, French, Belgian and Dutch sections.

The new American section has been selected by the Gallery's curator of American art and senior curator John Wilmerding, with the assistance of Professor Wanda Corn, presently a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. The exhibition coordinator for the Gallery is Lyndel King.

The Gallery is open seven days a week, and every evening. Summer hours are: 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday, Sunday 12 noon to 9 p.m.

In conjunction with the exhibition, the following lectures by British members

of the exhibition team will be offered by the Gallery at 4 p.m. in the East Building auditorium:

Sunday, May 25, Alan Bowness, director of the Tate Gallery, London, "Post-Impressionism: Cross-Currents in European Painting"

Sunday, July 6, MaryAnne Stevens, lecturer in the history of art at the University of Kent, Canterbury, England, "The Idea and the Ideal in French Painting from 1880-1906"

Sunday, July 13, John House, lecturer in the history of art at the Courtauld Institute of Art, London, "Visions of Nature in French Post-Impressionist Paintings"

Sunday, July 20, Sandra Berresford, art historian, Florence, Italy, "Divisionism and Italian Post-Impressionist Painting"

Sunday, July 27, Anna Gruetzner, lecturer in the history of art at Reading University, Reading, England, "British Post-Impressionist Paintings"

Sunday, August 3, Gillian Perry, lecturer in the history of art at the Open University of Great Britain, "German Post-Impressionism"

A recorded tour of the exhibition, approximately 45 minutes in length, will be available for a nominal fee.

"We are proud to be associated with the National Gallery of Art in supporting the Post-Impressionism exhibition," said Theodore Brophy, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the General Telephone & Electronics Corporation.

"This exhibition brings to America some of the finest European works of art and combines them with North American paintings in what should be a landmark art event in this country."

The exhibition will remain on view through September 1.

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** Film crews and photographers should contact the Information Office (737-4215, ext. 511) in advance.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION or photographs contact Katherine Warwick, Assistant to the Director (Information Officer) or Mary Dyer, Information Office, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C. 20565, area code 202, 737-4215, ext. 511.