

# NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

FOURTH STREET AT CONSTITUTION AVENUE NW WASHINGTON DC 20565 • 737-4215/842-6353

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART ANNOUNCES  
THE NEW PAINTING: IMPRESSIONISM 1874-1886  
TO PREMIERE JANUARY 1986 IN WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON, D. C. May 20, 1985. At a live video press conference transmitted between Washington, D. C. and San Francisco, J. Carter Brown, Director of the National Gallery of Art, announced today that an extraordinary exhibition of 135 French impressionist paintings will go on view in Washington from January 17 through April 6, 1986. The exhibition is made possible by AT&T.

The New Painting: Impressionism 1874-1886 will be held at the Gallery in honor of the preeminent collectors of French impressionist art, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, and will inaugurate the new suite of daylit galleries that will have just been completed adjacent to the French rooms in the Gallery's West Building.

This exhibition consists of a selection of the very works that the artists chose to bring together before the public and the critics more than a century ago. In effect, The New Painting creates a synthesis of the eight group shows. This exhibition will afford for the first time an opportunity to study together in their chronological and historical context a small group of gifted artists who fought against prevailing tastes and revolutionized the art of painting. Their new vision was the beginning of the modern movement.

From the AT&T Building in San Francisco, Ian McKibbin White, Director of The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, announced that after the Washington showing the exhibition will be seen at The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco from April 19 through July 6, 1986.

Joining Mr. Brown in the Gallery's East Building for this announcement were His Excellency Emmanuel de Margerie, Ambassador of France; Charles Marshall, Executive

(MORE)

Vice President, AT&T, and Charles Moffett, curator-in-charge of European Paintings at The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, who has organized the exhibition.

At the teleconference Mr. Marshall said, "We at AT&T are proud to join The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and the National Gallery of Art in making The New Painting: Impressionism possible. It is a special privilege to be associated with an exhibition, selected by so distinguished a specialist as Charles Moffett, which will mark the opening of the new nineteenth century galleries at the National Gallery."

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, Mayor of San Francisco, and Milton J. Morris, Regional Vice President, AT&T joined Mr. White in San Francisco.

The exhibition will include paintings by such key artists as Caillebotte, Cassatt, Cézanne, Degas, Gauguin, Monet, Morisot, Pissarro, Redon, Renoir, Seurat and Sisley as well as outstanding examples by such lesser known impressionists as Bracquemond, Cals, Desboutin, de Nitis and Zandomeneghi.

Between 1874 and 1886, these artists, who sometimes referred to themselves as Impressionists, organized eight group shows in Paris. The influence of these shows has long been assumed to be of extraordinary importance, but the precise nature of their impact has never been analyzed. On the occasion of the one-hundredth anniversary of the last of the impressionist exhibitions, Charles Moffett has selected a representative cross section of the works in the original eight shows.

Reviews published at the time of the group shows, scholarly articles, correspondence, witness accounts and other significant and critical documentation dealing with the then avant-garde paintings have been used to identify many of the paintings chosen. The exhibition catalogue will include much of this material, all of the paintings illustrated in color, and essays by such leading authorities as Paul Tucker, Hollis Clayson, Richard Brettell, Ronald Pickvance, Charles Moffett, Charles Stuckey, Joel Isaacson, Martha Ward and Richard Shiff. In addition, the catalogue will include reprints of Stéphane Mallarmé's essay "The Impressionists and Edouard Manet," and Edmund Duranty's "La Nouvelle Peinture" (The New Painting), 1876.

(MORE)

The catalogue also considers the evolution of the movement as a whole, and the artists' individual development as observed by their selection of works to be exhibited while they were attempting to establish themselves as a viable force in French painting.

The group which originally called itself "Société anonyme des artistes, peintures, sculpteurs, et graveurs..." presented its exhibitions in reaction to the hostile climate in Salon officialdom toward innovation and change. While a Salon de Refusés was established in 1863 and again organized in 1873, the impressionists found that solution to be less than satisfactory. They rejected the negative stigma of refusal and rejection; from 1873 many of the group abstained from sending any of their work to the Salons. In 1874 the idea of an independent group exhibition, a plan that had been conceived in the late 1860s by Monet and Bazille, was revived and their first exhibition opened to the public on April 15, 1874.

Among the museums which have agreed to loan works of art for the exhibition are the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, the National Gallery of London, The Art Institute of Chicago, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

END

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION or photographs contact Katherine Warwick, Assistant to the Director (Information Officer), or Carolyn Amiot, Information Office, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 20565 (202) 842-6353.