

# NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

**NEWS RELEASE**

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

FOR RELEASE APRIL 14**\*\* PRESS PREVIEW: Mon., April 28  
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**PAINTINGS FROM THE SOVIET UNION ON EXHIBITION AT NATIONAL GALLERY

Title: Impressionist to Early Modern Paintings from the U.S.S.R.: Works from the Hermitage Museum, Leningrad and the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

WASHINGTON -- As the first major art exchange to result from the cultural agreement signed by the United States and U.S.S.R. at the Geneva summit, an exhibition of 41 impressionist, post-impressionist and early modern paintings from the Soviet Union's Hermitage and Pushkin museums will be presented at the National Gallery of Art. The exhibition will open May 1 and continue through June 15 on the Concourse level of the East Building of the Gallery.

J. Carter Brown, director of the National Gallery of Art said: "We are delighted to have these paintings coming to the National Gallery. In terms of critical importance they have to be considered some of the finest examples of impressionist to early modern painting anywhere. We are particularly grateful to Dr. Armand Hammer for his pivotal role in bringing this event about and for providing funding for this exhibition as well as for the overall exchange. It is our hope that exchanges of art between the United States and Soviet Union will continue and broaden in the years to come."

The exhibition is based on a selection lent to Baron Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza for exhibition at Lugano in 1983. Immediately after the United States and Soviet Union renewed cultural ties at the Geneva summit in November 1985, the National Gallery resumed talks with the Soviets, and with the assistance of Dr. Armand Hammer, an exchange of paintings was arranged.

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Soviet Paintings . . . add one

The National Gallery has sent 40 of its own impressionist and post-impressionist paintings to the Soviet Union which were on view at the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad from Feb. 3 through March 9. The exhibition opened March 21 at the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow, where it will be on view through April 30. This is the first collection of paintings from the National Gallery ever shown in the Soviet Union. Also part of the exchange is the exhibition of the Armand Hammer Collection in Leningrad, Moscow and other Soviet cities between March and December 1986.

The Soviet paintings include works by Pablo Picasso, Vincent van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, Henri Matisse, Paul Cézanne, Claude Monet and Pierre-Auguste Renoir. Charles Stuckey, curator of modern painting at the National Gallery, commented: "I saw most of the paintings for the first time last December and can say with certainty that what awaits us is a treat of the highest order. Matisse's Conversation, by itself, would justify our excitement, or Monet's murals for Montgeron. And it would be difficult to imagine a more impressive group of early works by Picasso. Taken as a whole, this brilliant sample of one area of the Soviet state collections will show how deeply the new cultural agreement can touch all of our lives."

After leaving the National Gallery of Art, the paintings will go on view at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, June 26 - Aug. 12, and at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, Aug. 23 - Oct. 5.

This exhibition is made possible through the cooperation of The Ministry of Culture of the U.S.S.R.; The Hermitage Museum, Leningrad; The Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow; the National Gallery of Art, Washington; and The Armand Hammer Foundation, Los Angeles. Major funding is provided by the Occidental Petroleum Corporation, Los Angeles. The exchange is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION or photographs contact Neill Heath or Randall Kremer, Information Office, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 20565 (202) 842-6353.

Soviet Paintings . . . add two

HOW TO SEE IMPRESSIONIST TO EARLY MODERN PAINTINGS FROM THE U.S.S.R.

Scheduled to open May 1, 1986, the exhibition may be seen on the Concourse level of the East Building located at 4th Street and Constitution Ave., N.W. It will remain on view through Sunday, June 15, 1986. Gallery hours are 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday - Saturday; and Sunday, noon to 9:00 p.m.

Passes will be available in the East Building for same day use on a first-come, first-served basis. Due to the anticipated popularity of this exhibition, however, the Gallery advises making advance reservations for this exhibition. Beginning April 21, 1986, advance reservations will be available at a special Ticketron Pass Desk in the East Building of the National Gallery. There will be no service charge for passes acquired in person at the National Gallery. Passes may also be obtained at all Ticketron outlets nationwide, or ordered by calling Teletron at 1-800-233-4050. New York and New Jersey residents please call one of the following: 212-947-5850 or 201-343-4200. There will be a Ticketron service charge for passes ordered through outlets (\$1.25) or by telephone (\$1.75, credit card only). Reservations will be restricted to six passes per person.

Recorded tours may be rented for \$3.00 when you enter the exhibition or reserved in advance through Ticketron. There will be no public tours through the exhibition or special arrangements for groups.

In view of the overwhelming number of telephone calls and letters the Gallery received relating to previous special exhibitions, the public is asked not to call or write the National Gallery for passes. Ticketron will handle all pass reservations by telephone or in person at any Ticketron outlet nationwide or at the special pass desk at the National Gallery. For a recorded message please call 202-842-3472.

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IMPRESSIONIST TO EARLY MODERN PAINTINGS FROM THE U.S.S.R.: Works from the Hermitage Museum, Leningrad and the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow  
May 1 - June 15, 1986 (East Building)

## BACKGROUND

Virtually all of the impressionist, post-impressionist and early modern paintings in the Hermitage and Pushkin museums were acquired in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by two Russian collectors, Ivan Morosov and Sergei Shchukin. As prosperous businessmen with a passion for the most progressive art of their day, they pursued their acquisitions in fierce but friendly competition, ultimately leaving a rich artistic legacy to the Soviet people.

Sergei Ivanovich Shchukin (1854-1936) began his remarkable collection by concentrating on the impressionists, acquiring his first Monet in 1897. His collection developed in rapid, historical progression from the impressionists to the post-impressionist masters -- Cézanne, van Gogh and in particular, Gauguin. In 1904, Shchukin purchased his first Matisse (two years before Gertrude and Leo Stein "discovered" the artist), and by 1908 he was Matisse's most important patron, eventually collecting 37 works by the artist. Shchukin also collected 50 major canvases by Picasso, the most avant-garde artist of the time.

Coming from a family of collectors, and himself a serious student of art history, Ivan Abramovich Morosov (1871-1921) emerged as the more conservative of the two collectors. Morosov's discriminating nature once led him to keep a blank space on his wall until he found the exact Cezanne that suited him. Nevertheless, he amassed a personal collection of more

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Soviet Background...add one

than 130 paintings, including important works by Monet, Renoir, van Gogh and Matisse. Morozov's collection is further distinguished by remarkable Gauguins and by the inclusion of works by Russian artists such as Chagall.

In this exhibition, the impressionists are represented by six important canvases by Claude Monet and Pierre-Auguste Renoir. Monet's shimmering Woman in a Garden(1866) and Renoir's softly-modeled Lady in Black(1876) both reflect the impressionists' artistic quest to capture ephemeral visual experiences. Monet's stunning Corner of the Garden at Montgeron(1876) and Pond at Montgeron(1876) are two from a series of four privately-commissioned decorative panels for a chateau in Montgeron.

The work of Paul Cézanne, the recognized forerunner of 20th-century painting, will be seen in eight exceptional examples, among them the early landscape The Property of "Les Mathurins" in the Hermitage Quarter of Pontoise(1875-77). In Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves (1904-1906), one in an extensive series of canvases featuring views of a mountain in southern France, the artist created a strongly two-dimensional pictorial structure through the relationships of sequences of colored planes. Cézanne's Still Life with Milk Can, Carafe, and Coffee Bowl (1879-1880) demonstrates the artist's genius at infusing his still-lives with the characteristic "constructive brushstroke" and warm colors.

Characterized by a love for the exotic, Paul Gauguin's work is represented in the exhibition by an early self-portrait(1888?), and eight lush Tahitian scenes, including Are You Jealous?(Aha oe feii)(1892), which depicts two Tahitian female nudes lying sensually on a diagonal plane of pink sand.

Vincent van Gogh's heavily outlined and boldly colored painting A View of the Arena in Arles(1888) dates from the brief, but intense mentor/student relationship between Gauguin and van Gogh. The exhibition

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Soviet Background...add two

will also include van Gogh's penetrating character study Portrait of Doctor Felix Rey(1889).

Twentieth century art was revolutionized by two masters, Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse, whose rendering of space and use of bold decorative color were based partly on the trends established by the post-impressionists. Goldfish(1911), one of 6 major works by Matisse in the exhibition, unites the animation of subject matter, color and space with an articulate perception of still-life. In The Red Room(1908), Matisse has created a monumental canvas in intense red, presenting remarkable spatial relationships without the use of perspective. Also included is Nasturtiums with "La Danse"(1912), a work depicting the artist's own studio with a vase of flowers juxtaposed against the large decorative painting La Danse commissioned by Shchukin.

Eight paintings by Picasso will also be exhibited, including the blue period Portrait of the Tailor Jose Maria Soler(1903). The cubist masterpiece Portrait of Ambroise Vollard(1909-1910) depicts the famous art dealer concealed within a complex network of facets executed in a subdued palette of earth tones. Picasso's Still Life with Skull(1907) combines uncharacteristic bright colors, possibly influenced by the Fauves, with a striking depiction of a skull as the focus of the painting.

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