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SURVEY OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICAN ART FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION

Washington, D.C., February 15, 1989 -- Sixty-three paintings by nineteenth-century American artists from the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Richard A. Manoogian will begin an exhibition tour opening at the National Gallery of Art on June 4, 1989. This will be the first public exhibition from the collection. Organized by the National Gallery of Art and the Detroit Institute of Arts, American Paintings from the Manoogian Collection will feature works from every major school and tradition in American nineteenth-century painting. The exhibition is made possible by United Technologies Corporation.

The nineteenth-century paintings in the Manoogian collection represent an impressive range of American art including Hudson River landscapes, trompe l'oeil still lifes, genre scenes, impressionist landscapes, and figure paintings. The Manoogian collection is equally notable for its concentration of key masterpieces and less well-known works.

"We are indebted to the Manoogians for many acts of support for the National Gallery, most notably the long-term loan of the American masterpiece by George Caleb Bingham, The Jolly Flatboatmen," said gallery director J. Carter Brown. "This touring show of superb nineteenth-century American art again demonstrates the generosity of the family."

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Landscapes in the exhibition include paintings by Thomas Cole, Frederic Edwin Church, John Frederick Kensett, Asher B. Durand, and Thomas Moran. Jasper Francis Cropsey's The Backwoods of America (1858), which depicts a hearty pioneer family at a frontier settlement, is an image symbolic of the indomitable American spirit. The latest of four works by Thomas Moran in the show, A Miracle of Nature (1913), reflects the artist's fascination with the Grand Canyon, a subject that captured the imagination of many American artists of the era. Whalers Trapped in Arctic Ice (c. 1870-1880) by William Bradford and Albert Bierstadt's The Shore of the Turquoise Sea (1878) are other examples of masterly paintings that demonstrate the nineteenth-century's expansive interest in the range and contrasts of the earth's geography.

Nature studies are epitomized by the polished and pristine Gems of Brazil series (1863-1864) by Martin Johnson Heade. These sixteen paintings of hummingbirds and flowers, arranged in groups of four, were virtually unknown until they were discovered in a private collection in 1981. Among the still lifes are works by Raphaelle Peale, William Harnett and John Frederick Peto. Portraiture includes major works by Thomas Eakins, John Singer Sargent, and Mary Cassatt. Theodore Robinson's World's Columbian Exposition (1894), an accomplished architectural composition, includes a wealth of fine detail.

"The Manoogian collection is unusually rewarding, not only because of the high quality of the nineteenth-century American art it contains, but also because this collection represents the very personal choices of an American industrialist who also happens to be an art connoisseur of the first rank," said Robert F. Daniell, chairman and chief executive officer, United Technologies Corporation.

American Paintings from the Manoogian Collection will be on view at the National Gallery through September 4, 1989. The show will travel to the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, September 25 through November 26, 1989, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, December 18, 1989 through February 25, 1990, and the Detroit Institute of Arts, March 19 through May 20, 1990. The exhibition has been coordinated at the National Gallery by Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr. The catalogue, fully illustrated in color, is edited by Cikovsky with Nancy Rivard Shaw, curator of American art at the Detroit Institute of Arts, and Franklin Kelly, curator of collections at the Corcoran Museum of Art in Washington and former curator in the department of American art at the National Gallery, and will be published by the National Gallery. Cikovsky, Shaw, and Kelly are among the more than twenty scholars of American art who contributed to the volume.

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