

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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

UPDATED RELEASE
February 3, 1993

WORLD TOUR OF GREAT FRENCH PAINTINGS

FROM THE BARNES FOUNDATION

TO PREMIERE AT NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, MAY 2, 1993

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- For the first time, eighty of the finest French impressionist, post-impressionist, and early modern paintings from the extraordinary collection assembled by Dr. Albert C. Barnes (1872-1951) will be exhibited in an international tour, beginning at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, May 2 - August 15, 1993. The exhibition will also travel to the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, September 6, 1993 - January 2, 1994; the National Museum of Western Art in Tokyo, January 21 - April 3, 1994; and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, dates to be determined.

Great French Paintings from The Barnes Foundation at the National Gallery of Art is supported by a grant from GTE Corporation. The National Gallery of Art and The Barnes Foundation are exhibition co-organizers.

"We are extremely grateful to The Barnes Foundation for making this remarkable exhibition possible," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art.

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"These masterpieces of modern French painting form a vast and exhilarating visual banquet, and reveal Dr. Barnes as a bold and original collector of modern art."

The exhibition includes highlights from The Barnes Foundation's strong holdings of Cézanne, Matisse, and Renoir, as well as paintings by Manet, Monet, van Gogh, Gauguin, Rousseau, Seurat, Toulouse-Lautrec, Chaim Soutine, Roger de la Fresnaye, Braque, and Picasso. Elizabeth P. Streicher, associate research curator in the department of modern painting, National Gallery of Art, is coordinating curator of the exhibition.

According to Richard H. Glanton, president of The Barnes Foundation, "This exhibition was undertaken by the Board of Trustees to secure the funds required to preserve Dr. Barnes' magnificent collection for future generations. The tour also advances Dr. Barnes' lifelong commitment to education and the appreciation of fine arts."

"GTE is honored to join the National Gallery in presenting this unprecedented exhibition of Dr. Barnes' magnificent collection. We are delighted that GTE could be a part of this landmark undertaking, which underscores our longstanding commitment to helping improve our society by supporting the arts and education. We at GTE look forward with great anticipation to the opening of this spectacular show next May," said Charles R. Lee, chairman and chief executive officer of GTE Corporation. This is the eighth exhibition to be sponsored by GTE at the National Gallery of Art.

The exhibition and its tour will take place during the period when the

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Foundation is scheduled to upgrade the environmental and security systems, which are essential to the preservation of some 2,500 works of art. The historic building that houses the collection was designed by the noted architect Paul Cret and opened in 1925.

The ruling of Judge Louis Stefan of the Orphans' Court of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, handed down on July 22, 1992, gives permission to The Barnes Foundation to stage an international exhibition that will help achieve its founder's vision to promote "the advancement of education and the appreciation of the fine arts" and pay for critically needed improvements at the sixty-seven-year-old gallery housing the Barnes collection.

Among the paintings to be included in the exhibition are Renoir's life-size depiction of fashionable young Parisians, Leaving the Conservatoire (1877); the largest and most complex version of Cézanne's Cardplayers (1890-1892); Seurat's pointillist masterpiece Models (Poseuses) (1886-1888); Acrobat and Young Harlequin (1905), a touching evocation of circus performers from Picasso's Rose Period; and Matisse's landmark fauve painting, Bonheur de vivre (The Joy of Life) (1905-1906), an exuberant and sensual depiction of an earthly paradise.

Another important feature of the exhibition is Matisse's tripartite mural The Dance (1932-1933). Measuring 407 1/4 inches in width and 198 1/8 inches in height, the painting was commissioned by Dr. Barnes specifically to fit into the lunettes above the French windows in the main hall of The Barnes Foundation. While in the United

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States to serve on the jury of the Carnegie International Exhibition in 1930, Matisse visited the gallery of the Foundation, which held the world's largest collection of his paintings. Matisse was surprised by Dr. Barnes, who personally greeted him at the door and later made the request for the mural.

Born in 1872 and raised in Philadelphia, Dr. Barnes financed his tuition for medical school by playing semi-professional baseball and boxing. He received an M.D. at the age of 21 and a few years later entered the pharmaceutical business. Financial success enabled him to amass one of the world's greatest private art collections. At first he focused his efforts on European and American impressionist, and later on post-impressionist and early modern works. He also collected African tribal sculpture, Greek and Egyptian antiquities, metalwork, Native American art, and watercolors and drawings, personally creating 92 wall ensembles, which are still intact today and will remain in place after the renovation.

In 1922, Dr. Barnes established the Foundation, which was chartered as an educational institution. He also oversaw the building of a house for the Foundation and for his vast collection of more than 2,500 works of art in Merion Station, a Philadelphia suburb. In 1950 he amended the bylaws to designate that the board of trustees of Lincoln University, a local, historically black college, would nominate four of the five trustees of The Barnes Foundation. Dr. Barnes died in an auto accident in 1951.

In addition to co-organizing the exhibition, the National Gallery has also advised

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The Barnes Foundation on arrangements for the world tour and on an exhibition-related book to be published by Alfred A. Knopf Incorporated. The 338-page book will include 323 illustrations including 135 in full color, as well as essays and entries by twelve eminent American and French art historians and curators. The hardcover book will be available at the National Gallery of Art bookstore and at bookstores throughout the nation at \$65.00. The softcover version will be available only through the National Gallery of Art bookstore at \$25.00.

Other exhibitions sponsored by GTE at the National Gallery were: Post-Impressionism: Cross-Currents in European and American Painting, 1880-1906 (1980); Mauritshuis: Dutch Painting of the Golden Age from the Royal Picture Gallery, The Hague (1982); Art of Aztec Mexico: Treasures of Tenochtitlan (1983-1984); Henri Matisse: The Early Years in Nice 1916-1930 (1986-1987); Paintings by Fitz Hugh Lane (1988); Masterpieces of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism: The Annenberg Collection (1980); Art for the Nation: Gifts in Honor of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art (1991).

The National Gallery, located at Fourth Street and Constitution Avenue, N.W., is open Monday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Sunday, 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The hours for the Gallery's East Building will be extended until 7:00 p.m. on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings for the entire run of the exhibition, May 2 through August 15, 1993.

Passes will be required for admission to the exhibition. Advance passes will be

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available free of charge beginning April 4 in the East Building of the National Gallery. Same day passes will be available beginning May 2. Beginning April 4, passes can also be obtained at all Ticketmaster locations and Hecht Co. stores for a service charge of \$2.00 per pass, and through Ticketmaster PhoneCharge for a \$3.00 service fee per pass and a \$1.00 handling fee per order by calling one of the following numbers:

Washington, DC (202) 432-SEAT

Baltimore, MD (410) 481-SEAT

Nationwide toll-free (800) 551-SEAT

For more information about passes or the exhibition, call (202) 842-6713.

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National Gallery of Art

Washington, D.C.

SPECIAL EXHIBITION LECTURE SERIES: Albert C. Barnes and Modern French Painting

An eight-part series by the staff of the Education Division focusing on the collections of Albert C. Barnes. The initial lecture considers Dr. Barnes as a collector and the reception of modern art in Philadelphia. It is followed by talks on individual masters represented in The Barnes Foundation. Lectures are presented Fridays at 5:00 and repeated on Sundays at 4:00, in the East Building Large Auditorium. Reservations are not required, but seating is limited and on a first-come first-served basis.

June 25 and 27

Dr. Albert C. Barnes and Modern Art in Philadelphia

Wilford W. Scott, lecturer

July 2 and 4

Cézanne: Figure Paintings

J. Russell Sale, lecturer

July 9 and 11

Cubism

Robin Thorne Ptacek, lecturer

July 16 and 18

Renoir

Philip L. Leonard, lecturer

July 23 and 25

Cézanne: Landscape and Still-Life Paintings

Robert Haywood, guest lecturer

July 30 and August 1

Manet, Monet, Van Gogh, Gauguin, and Toulouse-Lautrec

Eric Denker, lecturer

August 6 and 8

Matisse

Frances Feldman, lecturer

August 13 and 15

Seurat

Kimberly Jones, guest lecturer