

# National Gallery of Art

## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BREADTH AND MASTERY OF WINSLOW HOMER'S ART ON EXHIBITION

AT NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, OCTOBER 15, 1995 - JANUARY 28, 1996;

PASSES REQUIRED ON WEEKENDS AND HOLIDAYS

WASHINGTON, D.C., August 25, 1995 -- The towering artistic achievements of Winslow Homer (1836-1910), one of America's greatest painters, will be presented in the first comprehensive exhibition of his work in more than twenty years. Organized by the National Gallery of Art, Winslow Homer will be on view in the Gallery's East Building from October 15, 1995 through January 28, 1996, before traveling to Boston and New York.

The exhibition is made possible by GTE Corporation.

More than 225 works in the show, including 86 oil paintings, 99 watercolors, 31 drawings, and six prints, as well as technical materials, will illustrate Homer's superb breadth, mastery, keen observation of life, and sensitivity to political issues in nineteenth-century America.

"It is fitting that the premiere venue for this exhibition will be the capital of the nation whose life and finest values are so enduringly expressed in Homer's art," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "We are deeply grateful

-more-

homer . . . page 2

to GTE for making this possible."

"GTE is honored to join the National Gallery of Art for the ninth time in presenting a major exhibition. By supporting Winslow Homer, GTE affirms its belief in art as a powerful means of communication. We have a longstanding commitment to enhancing the quality of life in our society by supporting the arts and education," said Charles R. Lee, chairman and chief executive officer, GTE Corporation.

The exhibition was organized by Nicolai Cikovsky Jr., curator of American and British paintings and deputy senior curator of paintings, and Franklin Kelly, curator of American and British paintings, both at the National Gallery of Art.

Homer's life and career have undergone extensive analysis since the last comprehensive exhibition of his work in 1973 at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Cikovsky and Kelly have gathered a large body of Homer's art to present a broader vision of his career. Three galleries at the end of the exhibition contain 72 works of art and technical materials. These include paintboxes and brushes used by the artist and watercolor manuals from his day, which reveal the artist's techniques, working methods, and creative process.

The exhibition begins with Homer's first oils, including Sharpshooter (1863) and Prisoners from the Front (1866), which depict Civil War subjects. Among the works of the late 1860s and 1870s, in which Homer addressed key aspects of national life, are

homer . . . page 3

Croquet Scene (1866, oil); Snap the Whip (1872, oil); Breezing Up (A Fair Wind) (1876, oil), which was recently restored; Cotton Pickers (1876, oil); and Blackboard (1877, watercolor).

The heroic, classically formed paintings of the 1880s include The Fog Warning (1885, oil), The Life Line (1884, oil), and Eight Bells (1886, oil). Vivid nature scenes in the Adirondacks are presented in such works as Huntsman and Dogs (1891, oil) and Leaping Trout (1889, watercolor). Colorful watercolors of the Tropics include A Garden in Nassau (1885) and Key West, Hauling Anchor (1903). The exhibition concludes with the monumental Prout's Neck seascapes, such as West Point, Prout's Neck (1900, oil), and the tragic, almost visionary paintings of Homer's final years, such as Right and Left (1909, oil).

A fully illustrated, 420-page catalogue, written by Cikovsky and Kelly, with contributions by Charles Brock, exhibitions assistant, and Judith Walsh, senior paper conservator, National Gallery of Art, will be published by the National Gallery and distributed by Yale University Press. In addition to eight essays analyzing the developments of Homer's career, it includes entries on all of the objects in the show, a chronology of his life, an exhibition history, and a select bibliography. The definitive catalogue and a complimentary brochure are supported by a grant from the Henry Luce Foundation.

Winslow Homer was born in Boston in 1836. At the age of

homer . . . page 4

eighteen he began an apprenticeship in a lithography shop, where he also designed sheet-music covers and did similar commercial work. This led to his free-lance career as an illustrator, chiefly for Harper's Weekly, for which he covered President Lincoln's inauguration and the Civil War. He also studied at the National Academy of Design in New York, where he became a full academician in 1866. Later that year he traveled to Paris, where he spent a year before returning to New York in late 1867.

During the summer of 1873 at Gloucester, Massachusetts, Homer began working seriously in watercolor. In 1883, after nearly two years in Cullercoats, England, he settled in Prout's Neck, Maine. For the rest of his life Homer would spend most of each year in Maine working in oils, with excursions to the Adirondacks and Tropics reserved primarily for his work in watercolor.

Throughout the 1890s and last decade of his life Homer was represented in major exhibitions and received numerous awards.

Right and Left (1909), an oil painting of two Golden-eye ducks shot in mid-air, was completed a year and nine months before Homer's death. Imbued with symbolism and topical references, it was, according to Cikovsky, "not his last painting, but, made when his artistic powers were still fully intact, his last great one."

An audio tour of the exhibition, narrated by Cikovsky with an introduction by Powell, will be available to visitors for a small rental fee.

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homer . . . page 5

Passes are required for admission to the exhibition on weekends and holidays (Saturdays and Sundays, as well as November 24 and December 26 through 31). Advance passes may be obtained free of charge beginning October 1 in the East Building at 4th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW. Same-day passes will also be available beginning October 15 in the East Building. Advance passes can also be obtained as of October 1 at all TicketMaster locations, including Hecht's stores, for a service charge of \$2.00 per pass, and through TicketMaster PhoneCharge for a \$2.75 service fee per pass and a \$1.25 handling fee per order by calling one of the following numbers:

Washington, DC	(202) 432-SEAT
Baltimore, MD	(410) 481-SEAT
Northern Virginia	(703) 573-SEAT
Nationwide toll-free	(800) 551-SEAT (outside the areas listed above)

For more information about passes or the exhibition call (202) 842-6713 or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (202) 842-6176.

The National Gallery is open Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. It is closed on Christmas Day and New Year's Day (December 25 and January 1).

GTE Corporation has sponsored eight other exhibitions at the National Gallery: Post-Impressionism: Cross-Currents in European and American Painting, 1880-1906 (1980), Mauritshuis: Dutch

homer . . . page 6

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 (1990), Art for the Nation: Gifts in Honor of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art (1991), and Great French Paintings from the Barnes Foundation (1993).

With slight variations, Winslow Homer will travel to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, February 21 through May 26, 1996, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, June 20 through September 22, 1996.

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