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Frédéric Bazille Exhibition Explores Artist's Role in Impressionist Movement at National Gallery of Art, April 9–July 9, 2017

—Only U.S. Venue and Last Tour Stop—

—Includes Major Discoveries Using Scientific Imaging—



Frédéric Bazille
Portraits of the Family, called *The Family Gathering*, summer 1867 - early winter 1868
oil on canvas
152 x 230 cm (59 13/16 x 90 9/16 in.)
Musée d'Orsay, Paris, purchased with the assistance of Marc Bazille, 1905
© Musée d'Orsay, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Patrice Schmidt

Washington, DC—Frédéric Bazille (1841–1870) created paintings inspired by contemporary life that challenged the aesthetic conventions of his day and helped to lay the groundwork of impressionism. In celebration of the 175th anniversary of the artist's birth, **Frédéric Bazille and the Birth of Impressionism** brings together some 75 paintings that examine Bazille as a central figure of impressionism. The National Gallery of Art, which holds the largest group of Bazille's works outside of France, as well as important related impressionist paintings of the 1860s, is the sole American venue for the exhibition. The first major presentation of Bazille's work in America in 25 years, the exhibition is on view in the East Building from April 9 through July 9, 2017.

Bazille was actively engaged with the most significant pictorial issues of his era—the revival of the still-life form, realist landscapes, plein-air figural painting, and the modern nude. Drawing inspiration from the vibrant cultural life of Paris as well as from his native Provence, Bazille painted with a style that was distinctly his own.

"This exhibition shows Bazille's key role in the developments of French painting and provides new insight into this period of impressionism," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art, Washington. "The outstanding partnership between the National Gallery of Art, the Musée Fabre in Montpellier, and the Musée d'Orsay in Paris made it possible to undertake this new study of Bazille's work. We are delighted to reveal brand-new scientific examinations that offer new analyses, identifications, dates, and attributions."

Organization and Support

The exhibition was organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington; the Musée Fabre, Montpellier; and the Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

This exhibition is made possible by leadership support of The Leonard and Elaine Silverstein Family Foundation. Major support is provided through the generosity of the Virginia Cretella Mars Endowment Fund for the International Exchange of Art. Additional funding is provided by The Exhibition Circle of the National Gallery of Art. The exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

Exhibition Highlights

Frédéric Bazille and the Birth of Impressionism is the most comprehensive retrospective of Bazille's career, featuring nearly three-quarters of his artistic output. Organized thematically, this exhibition juxtaposes works by Bazille with important works by the predecessors who inspired him—Théodore Rousseau, Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, and Gustave Courbet—and by contemporaries such as Édouard Manet and Claude Monet with whom he was closely associated.

"Frédéric Bazille is such an extraordinary talent, though he still remains relatively unknown. This exhibition offers a rare opportunity to bring together the majority of the artist's work for the first time in almost 25 years," said Kimberly A. Jones, curator of 19th-century French paintings, National Gallery of Art. "They are remarkable paintings and people are going to be astonished by their quality and their vibrancy. It is such a pleasure to be able to introduce Bazille to a new generation of admirers."

The exhibition begins with his student works, self-portraits, still lifes, small portraits, and luminous landscapes painted in the forest of Fontainebleau and the coast of Normandy. Portraits of fellow artists are juxtaposed with interior scenes of Bazille's studio depicting the dynamic circle of avant-garde artists and writers to which he belonged. The fifth and sixth galleries explore Bazille's plein-air figural paintings, created while he was in Montpellier, and the male and female nude as subjects. The exhibition continues with a gallery dedicated to floral still-life paintings and concludes with a return to outdoors with seascapes painted in the south of France.

In preparation for this exhibition, the National Gallery of Art and the Centre de Recherche et de Restauration des Musées de France, Paris (C2RMF), performed extensive conservation and research on nearly half of the artist's known works. In 11 of those paintings, earlier compositions of fruit, flowers, or figural works were discovered underneath the surface of the visible painting. The conservation efforts revealed *Young Woman at the Piano*—Bazille's first submission to the Salon in 1866 and a work previously believed to have been lost—underneath *Ruth and Boaz* (1870), as well as a study of Renior's 1867 painting *Diana the Huntress* beneath *The Studio on the Rue La Condamine* (1869–1870).

Curators, Catalog, and Related Activities

The exhibition was organized by Kimberly A. Jones, curator of 19th-century French paintings, National Gallery of Art; Michel Hilaire, General Heritage Curator, director of the Musée Fabre, Montpellier; and Paul Perrin, curator of paintings, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

Made possible in part thanks to the support of the American Friends of the Musée d'Orsay, the 300-page, fully illustrated exhibition catalog includes scholarly essays by Jones, Hilaire, and Perrin, a detailed chronology, maps, and a family tree. Published by Flammarion, the hardcover catalog is available in English and French for purchase in the Gallery Shops at shop.nga.gov; (800) 697-9350 or (202) 842-6002 (phone); (202) 789-3047 (fax); or mailorder@nga.gov.

The newly opened East Building Shop at the entrance to the exhibition will feature a selection of scholarly monographs, music CDs, stationery, jewelry, apparel, and accessories related to the artist's work and the impressionist period.

Lecture and Book Signing

An Introduction to the Exhibition—Frédéric Bazille and the Birth of Impressionism

April 9 at 12:00

East Building Auditorium

Kimberly A. Jones, curator of 19th-century French paintings, National Gallery of Art

Concert

Alliage Quintett

April 9 at 3:30

West Building, East Garden Court

Alliage Quintett performs *Dancing Paris*

Press Contact:

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General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets at Constitution Avenue NW, and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. For information call (202) 737-4215 or visit the Gallery's Web site at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt, Twitter at www.twitter.com/ngadc, and Instagram at <http://instagram.com/ngadc>.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag

or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

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Exhibition Press Release

[Exhibition Checklist](#) (PDF 652.5 kb)

[Wall text](#) (PDF 1.5 mb)

CURATOR BIOGRAPHY

Kimberly A. Jones

Curator of Nineteenth-Century French Paintings

AUDIO/VIDEO

[Press Preview: Frédéric Bazille and the Birth of Impressionism](#)

ONLINE RESOURCES

[Frédéric Bazille and the Birth of Impressionism](#)

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