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THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART PRESENTS IMPRESSIONIST PAINTINGS BY THEODORE ROBINSON

Exhibition features a selection of works by Claude Monet

BALTIMORE, MD (September 7, 2004) — Discover how an American Impressionist found inspiration in Monet's Giverny. In *Monet's Light: Theodore Robinson at Giverny*, on view October 17, 2004, through January 9, 2005, features nearly 60 of Theodore Robinson's luminous paintings of the French countryside alongside five stunning masterpieces by his friend and mentor Claude Monet.

"The BMA is thrilled to premier the first major exhibition of Theodore Robinson's work in Giverny, the greatest moment in his career," said BMA Director Doreen Bolger. "Visitors will be entranced by this artist's light-filled canvases."

Beginning in the late 1880s, Theodore Robinson spent extended periods painting in and around Giverny, the French village where Claude Monet had settled in 1883. During that time he developed a close bond with Monet and embraced the color and light of Impressionism. The exhibition features breathtaking views of Giverny in every season and charming portraits of local villagers amongst the picturesque architecture, stone footbridges, and winding farm paths that enchanted the artist.



Theodore Robinson. *By the Brook*, c. 1891. The Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey. Gift of William T. Evans.

This special ticketed exhibition brings together works from the nation's leading museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the Art Institute of Chicago, as well as private collections. An Acoustiguide audio tour will offer a rare look into the friendship between this American artist and Claude Monet, in their own words. A full-color catalogue, available for purchase in The BMA Shop, shows how Robinson's close contact with Monet in Giverny transformed the American artist's work.

In Monet's Light: Theodore Robinson at Giverny is organized by The Baltimore Museum of Art and curated by the leading Robinson scholar Sona Johnston, BMA Senior Curator of Painting & Sculpture. The exhibition will travel to the Phoenix Art Museum in Arizona from February 4, 2005–May 8, 2005, and the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in Hartford, Connecticut, from June 4, 2005–September 4, 2005.

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This exhibition is generously sponsored by The Rouse Company and the Henry Luce Foundation. Additional support is provided by the Charlesmead Foundation and the Terra Foundation for the Arts. The media sponsor is Comcast.

In Monet's Light: Theodore Robinson at Giverny shows how Robinson's close contact with Claude Monet transformed his work. One of the first of his generation to embrace the innovative Impressionist movement, Robinson was much admired by his American contemporaries. Central to his mature artistic style was his close association with Monet, whom he befriended in the course of six extended sojourns in Giverny from the spring of 1887 through the end of 1892. Notations in his personal diary and letters to friends record frequent visits to the French master's home and discussions about artistic matters of mutual interest. Not only did Robinson adopt the fresh brushwork and vibrant palette of the new movement, but, like Monet, he became increasingly attuned to the subtle changes in light and color at different moments through the day and under varying atmospheric conditions.

"During the six-year interval spent in the French countryside working in proximity to his good friend Monet, Theodore Robinson painted his finest works," said exhibition curator Sona Johnston. "Thanks to correspondence between these friends and Robinson's diary entries—presented here for the first time—we are able to consider these lovely works of art as part of an engaging friendship."

The exhibition is divided into several sections that explore Robinson's artistic evolution in Giverny, alongside comparative works by Claude Monet, including views from his signature series of haystacks and the Rouen cathedral.

The Village and its Surroundings

Panoramic views of Giverny from high in the hills rising above the village demonstrate how Robinson's artistic focus gradually evolved from figural images to Impressionistic landscapes. Many of these expansive works include some aspect of the town itself. Archival photographs of the town and Robinson's own photographic studies show the actual appearance of the specific locales he painted, such as the picturesque *French Farmhouse* (c. 1887), *Old Church in Giverny* (1891), and *The Duck Pond* (c. 1891).

Friends and Acquaintances as Models

Robinson's paintings present the villagers outdoors in Giverny, bathed in light and color, as they go about their everyday activities. Examples include women washing clothes along the river in *Gossips* (1891), a young peasant in *Woman Sewing, Giverny* (c. 1891), and *The Wedding March* (1892). In many respects, American Impressionism was less dominated by landscapes than its French counterpart, and Robinson's synthesis of Impressionist and figural representation was an important part of what he brought back to America.

His Favorite Model — Images of Marie

This section includes an array of exquisite representations of Robinson's mysterious favorite model. Though her identity is unknown to history, Marie played a vital role the artist's life and art. She appears in numerous works from 1885 to 1892, such as the *Girl at Piano* (c. 1887), a portrait of her in an elegant Paris salon, and *Val d'Arconville* (c. 1888), a bright landscape featuring her seated on a hillside reading a book. Unlike other figural compositions in which a model's features are rather generalized, Robinson's images of Marie are refined and carefully drawn, giving her a distinctly recognizable persona.

Pairs, Sequences, and Series

From panoramic landscapes of the Seine River valley to closer views of the rooftops of Giverny in various seasons, Robinson was influenced by Monet to paint multiple canvases recording similar views under varying atmospheric conditions. Among the many transient moments in nature Robinson captured with finely tuned color harmonies and descriptive brushwork are three paintings of the Seine Valley and two views of the setting sun against a haystack in *Afternoon Shadows* (1891).

THEODORE ROBINSON IN THE CONE COLLECTION

The art of Theodore Robinson holds a special place in the history of The Baltimore Museum of Art. In 1898, Etta Cone was given \$300 to buy artwork for her parent's house and acquired five of Robinson's paintings from the artist's estate sale in New York. These works formed the nucleus of the renowned Cone Collection—and became the first Impressionist paintings to be seen in Baltimore. The Cone Collection, which was bequeathed to the BMA in 1950, grew to encompass 3,000 objects, including a group of 500 works by Matisse, considered the most comprehensive collection in the world, as well as major examples by Picasso, Cézanne, Gauguin, van Gogh, and Renoir.

EXHIBITION CURATOR SONA JOHNSTON

BMA Senior Curator of Painting & Sculpture Sona Johnston has studied Robinson's career for more than 30 years. She organized a monographic exhibition on the artist at the BMA in 1973, the first such undertaking devoted to his art in a quarter of a century. In *Monet's Light: Theodore Robinson at Giverny*—the first exhibition to focus on Robinson's years in Giverny—is the culmination of a lifetime studying the artist. Johnston is also compiling a catalogue raisonné of Robinson's production and is working on an annotated transcription of his personal diaries, which are rich in details that illuminate his friendship with Monet and the advent of Impressionism in the United States.

CATALOGUE

The exhibition is accompanied by a 224-page full-color catalogue that shows how Robinson's close contact with Monet transformed his work. The catalogue features commentary on Robinson's Giverny works, as well as an examination of Monet's output during this same period, drawing on excerpts from his diary and correspondence between the two artists, published here for the first time. Co-published by The Baltimore Museum of Art and Philip Wilson Publishers Ltd., the catalogue is available for purchase at The BMA Shop for \$30 paperback; \$45 hardcover.

The catalogue is written by Sona Johnston, Senior Curator of Painting & Sculpture at The Baltimore Museum of Art and the leading scholar on Theodore Robinson, and includes an essay on Claude Monet by Paul Hayes Tucker, one of the world's foremost authorities on Monet and Impressionism.

TICKETING

All tickets to the exhibition include general Museum admission and a complimentary Acoustiguide audio tour. Tickets are \$12 for adults; \$10 for seniors, college students, and groups of 12 or more; \$6 for ages 6-18; and free for children under 6. Admission to the exhibition is by timed ticket on weekends, when advance reservations are strongly encouraged.

Tickets will be available through Ticketmaster by phone, online, and at Ticketmaster outlets beginning September 15. A service charge of \$2.75 per ticket, plus \$2.00 per order handling fee applies to all Ticketmaster phone and online orders. Tickets can be purchased in person at the BMA Box Office with no service charge. BMA Members will receive complimentary tickets based on Membership level.

Ticketmaster

Baltimore: 410/547-SEAT (410/547-7328)

D.C.: 202/397-SEAT (202/397-7328)

Virginia: 703/573-SEAT (703/573-7328)

All other areas: 1-800-551-SEAT (1-800-551-7328)

Online: www.ticketmaster.com

THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART

Founded in 1914, The Baltimore Museum of Art is Maryland's largest art museum with more than 90,000 objects. The Museum presents a variety of major exhibitions each year, as well as special installations that showcase the Museum's outstanding collection. The BMA's pre-eminent holding of Post-Impressionist and Modern art—The Cone Collection—includes a group of 500 works by Matisse, considered the most comprehensive collection in the world, as well as major examples by Picasso, Cézanne, Gauguin, van Gogh, and Renoir.

Highlights from the BMA's collection include world-renowned works of modern and contemporary art; grand European paintings and sculpture from Old Masters through the 19th century; an extensive collection of prints, drawings, and photographs from the 15th century to the present; notable American paintings, sculpture, and decorative arts and Maryland period rooms; and African, Asian, Native American, and Oceanic art. The BMA's sculpture gardens feature 34 works of art on nearly three landscaped acres in the heart of the city.

VISITOR INFORMATION

The Baltimore Museum of Art is open Wednesday through Friday, 11 a.m. until 5 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m. until 6 p.m.; and during the first Thursday of every month (except major holidays), 11 a.m. until 8 p.m. The Museum is closed Monday, Tuesday, New Year's Day, July 4, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Admission is \$7 for adults; \$5 for seniors ages 65 and over and college students; and free for children 18 ages and under. Admission is free on the first Thursday of every month and for related Free First Thursday activities. The BMA is located on Art Museum Drive at North Charles and 31st Streets, three miles north of Baltimore's Inner Harbor. For general Museum information, call 410/396-7100 or visit the BMA's web site at www.artbma.org.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT BMA PUBLIC RELATIONS AT 443-573-1870

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