

Press view: Thursday 17 July, 11:30-13:00h



For further information and images
please contact the National Galleries
of Scotland's press office on:

0131 624 6247
6325/6332/6314

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Pictured:
Frank W Benson (1862-1951)
Eleanor, 1901
Oil on canvas
Museum of Art, Rhode Island
School of Design

AMERICAN IMPRESSIONISM: A NEW VISION

19 July 2014 – 19 October 2014
Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (Modern Two)
73 Belford Road, Edinburgh EH4 3DS
Admission £8 / £6 | 0131 624 6200
#AmerImp

A major international exhibition which explores the impact of French Impressionism on American artists in the late nineteenth century will be one of the highlights of the National Galleries of Scotland's summer exhibition programme. *American Impressionism: A New Vision* will bring together nearly 80 paintings by some of America's most celebrated artists, such as James McNeill Whistler, John Singer Sargent and Mary Cassatt. It will also feature the work of a number of significant artists who are probably better known to American

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audiences – among them Theodore Robinson, Childe Hassam, William Merritt Chase, Edmund Tarbell and John Twachtman. Paintings by the major French artists Claude Monet, Berthe Morisot, and Edgar Degas will demonstrate how closely the Impressionists worked with their American colleagues.

The exhibition will reflect the impact of Impressionism on both Americans working abroad in the period from 1880 to 1890, and those working at home in the following decade. It will begin with iconic paintings by Cassatt and Sargent, who cultivated friendships with French Impressionists – in particular Monet and Degas - and participated in the development and promotion of this revolutionary new way of painting.

More than any other American artist working in France Mary Cassatt (1844-1926) helped to shape Impressionism. Through her friendships with French artists Edgar Degas and Berthe Morisot she participated in four Impressionist exhibitions between 1879 and 1886. Two of her finest works, *Children on the Beach* (1884) and *Young Girl at a Window* (c.1884), appeared in the eighth and final Impressionist exhibition in Paris in 1886 and are included in the Edinburgh show.

John Singer Sargent (1856-1925) was one of several young artists from North America who worked at Giverny in Normandy in the late nineteenth century. He developed a close friendship with Monet and visited him at his house in Giverny on several occasions; he immortalised their shared work sessions in his 1885 painting *Claude Monet Painting by the Edge of a Wood*. The work shows the French artist at work on a canvas that has been identified as *Meadow with Haystacks near Giverny*, one of the earliest works in his famous series of haystacks paintings.

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Other artists assimilated Impressionism in a more gradual way: Theodore Robinson (1852-1896) experimented with the changing effects of light while working outdoors alongside Monet at Giverny, as seen in the luminous painting *Blossoms at Giverny* (1891). Frederick Childe Hassam (1859-1935) incorporated impressionist colours and subjects into his more traditional 'Salon-style' pictures, using bright colours to capture the effect of a bright sunny day in *Grand Prix Day (le jour du grand prix)*, c.1888.

In America, artists turned to Impressionism slightly later. Between 1890 and 1900 painters such as Hassam, Chase, Tarbell and Twachtman adapted Impressionism by responding to the new subject matter, compositions and colours of the movement in scenes depicting their native country and creating a new vision for an American audience. Their subjects included New York parks, East Coast beaches, New England villages and, of course, the image of the American woman. Prismatic colour, broken brushwork and purple shadows became prevalent at exhibitions in New York, Philadelphia and Boston in the early 1890s. Chase, for instance, created a series of bright, urban park scenes as well as bright, outdoor pictures of women and children at leisure during summers on the coast of Long Island in the 1890s. The exhibition will include four of his paintings of East Coast scenes at Shinnecock from the 1890s.

Michael Clarke, director of the Scottish National Gallery, commented: "We know that Americans became great collectors of Impressionism, now we can see how American artists responded to Monet and his fellow Impressionists. This should be an eye-opener for European audiences and we are delighted to be hosting its only UK showing."

This major international exhibition has been organized by the musée des impressionnismes Giverny and the Terra Foundation for American Art with the collaboration of the National Galleries of

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Scotland and the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, with the generous support of the Terra Foundation for American Art. For its only UK showing, it will be on display at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (Modern Two).

The exhibition is accompanied by a lavishly illustrated catalogue *American Impressionism: A New Vision, 1880-1900*, published on the occasion of the exhibition. The catalogue reproduces more than 80 paintings by significant American artists (160 pages, 120 colour illustrations, price £20.00).

American Impressionism is part of the Edinburgh Art Festival.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

Impressionism originated in France in the second half of the nineteenth century, where Claude Monet (1840-1926), Edgar Degas (1834-1917) and other Paris-based artists produced works focusing on landscapes and scenes of everyday life. They worked outdoors, rather than painting from sketches and in a studio, and in contrast to the academic emphasis on careful draughtsmanship, used visible, broken brushwork to illustrate the changing light and colours of outdoor scenes. Impressionists came to prominence in the late nineteenth century thanks to their independent group exhibitions, which were held at intervals from 1874 and 1886. The name of the movement stems from a work by Monet, entitled *Impression, Sunrise*, which featured in the first exhibition.

Three venues in Europe:

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musée des impressionnismes Giverny: *L'Impressionisme et les Américains* (28 March – 29 June 2014)

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art: *American Impressionism: A New Vision* (19 July – 19 October 2014)

Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza: *Impressionismo Americano* (4 November 2014 – 1 February 2015)

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