

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, ST. PETERSBURG RETURNS POPULAR WORKS TO LENDER'S ESTATE

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St. Petersburg, Fla.—Works that have been on loan to the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg since 1976 will return to the generous anonymous lenders. The transfer of these primarily nineteenth-century French paintings will probably occur in early March, in advance of a spring auction at Christie's in New York.

“We want to emphasize that the Museum of Fine Arts is not deaccessioning or selling these works,” said Kristen A. Shepherd, the MFA's Executive Director. “They have been placed in our trust and care. We are deeply grateful to the family for allowing us to share these stunning works with our visitors for over four decades. They have greatly enriched the cultural life of the community and have attracted visitors from around the globe.”

The paintings currently on view include:

Claude Monet's *Road to the Village of Vétheuil, Snow* (1879) and *Springtime in Giverny, Afternoon* (1885).

Paul Cézanne's *Orchard, Côte Saint-Denis, at Pontoise (The Côte des Boeufs, Pontoise)*, 1877.

Paul Gauguin's *Goose Girl, Brittany* (1888).

Pierre-Auguste Renoir's *Woman Reading* (1891).

Honoré Daumier's *The Connoisseur of Prints* (about 1885).

Additional works were safeguarded in storage and will also be returned to the family: James McNeill Whistler's *The Yellow Room* (about 1885), a lithograph by Renoir, a drawing by Edgar Degas, a watercolor by Raoul Dufy, and an antique French mahogany armoire.

The MFA's choice painting by Monet, *Houses of Parliament, Effect of Fog* (1904), is part of the permanent collection and remains on view, along with other nineteenth-century French masterworks by Eugène Louis Boudin, Camille Corot, Johan Barthold Jongkind, and Berthe Morisot, including one of her rare sculptures.

The *Houses of Parliament* is one of Monet's celebrated works from his “Views of the Thames” series and was featured in one of his most successful shows at the Durand-Ruel Gallery in Paris in 1904. It inspired the MFA's major 40th anniversary exhibition in 2005, *Monet's London: Artists' Reflections on the Thames, 1859-1914*, which received international acclaim and traveled to the Brooklyn Museum and the Baltimore Museum of Art.

The compelling *Portrait of Paul Gauguin* (1900) by his friend Georges-Daniel de Monfreid was not part of the extended loan, is included in the MFA's collection, and is on display.

The MFA's encyclopedic collection of more than 20,000 works is one of the largest and most distinguished in the Southeast. The Museum has periodically accepted works on extended loan to more fully reveal the history of art and culture.

"We are, of course, sad to see these works leave the community," Ms. Shepherd said. "But temporary exhibitions and loans are a normal, dynamic part of the life of a museum. They complement our outstanding permanent collection and allow us to introduce the public to works from other public and private holdings. Once again, we extend our appreciation to the lenders of these French masterpieces and encourage you to see them before they leave."

ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

The MFA at 255 Beach Drive N.E. has a world-class collection, with works by Monet, Morisot, Rodin, O'Keeffe, Willem de Kooning, and many other great artists. Also displayed are ancient Greek and Roman, Egyptian, Asian, African, pre-Columbian, and Native American art. Selections from the photography collection, one of the most significant in the Southeast, are now on view in a gallery dedicated to the medium. **Kristen A. Shepherd** is the new Executive Director.

Hours are 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, until 8 p.m. on Thursday, and noon-5 p.m. Sunday. **Admission is only \$5 after 5 p.m. on Thursday.** Regular admission is \$17 for adults, \$15 for those 65 and older, and \$10 for students seven and older, including college students with current I.D. Children under seven and Museum members are admitted free. Groups of 10 or more adults pay only \$12 per person and children \$4 each with prior reservations. The MFA Café is open from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday. For more information, please call 727.896.2667 or visit mfastpete.org.