
Potsdam, February 5, 2019

Announcement *Monet: Places*

February 22 to June 1, 2020

From February 22 to June 1, 2020, the Museum Barberini in Potsdam will host a large-scale retrospective on French Impressionist artist Claude Monet (1840–1926). Assembling around 110 paintings from all phases of his long career, the exhibition *Monet: Places* explores his approach towards the depiction of sites and topographies that influenced his stylistic development, including Paris and London, the Seine villages of Argenteuil, Vétheuil and Giverny, the coasts of Normandy and Brittany as well as Southern travel destinations such as Bordighera, Venice and Antibes. Amongst the show's many highlights are numerous depictions of Monet's garden and pond in Giverny, including several variations of his world-famous waterlilies.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the rise of Impressionism dramatically changed the evolution of European landscape painting. One of the movement's most influential practitioners was Claude Monet, whose exceptionally prolific career spanned more than six decades. Although he was a highly versatile artist, Monet's key interest lay on depictions of the natural world, characterized by a relentlessly experimental exploration of color, movement, and light. Inspired by the artistic exchange with his colleagues Eugène Boudin and Johan Barthold Jongkind, Monet's early Impressionist compositions radicalized the practice of plein-air painting, as he largely rejected the studio in favor of working in open nature and directly in front of the motif.

More than any of his fellow Impressionists, he was deeply attracted to exploring the character of specific sites and locations in situ, from the sundrenched Riviera or the wind-swept, rugged coastline of the Belle-Île in Brittany to the picturesque banks of the river Seine. At the very heart of Monet's artistic practice lay a keen interest in capturing the impression of a fleeting moment, as he tried to translate the most evanescent effects of the atmosphere into the material structure of paint. "For me, a landscape does not exist in its own right, since its appearance changes at every moment", Monet explained in 1891. "But its surroundings bring it to life—the air and light, which vary continually (...). For me, it is only the surrounding atmosphere which gives objects their real value."

The Museum Barberini is currently organizing a large-scale Monet retrospective in collaboration with the Denver Art Museum, exploring the role of the places that inspired him as well as his approach to rendering their specific topography, atmosphere, and light. From his very first documented composition through to the late depictions of his farmhouse and water-garden in Giverny, the show *Monet: Places* offers a rich overview of his entire career, demonstrating his unique place within the French avantgarde of his time. The show engages with some of the major questions that were already touched upon by

the museum's opening exhibition *Impressionism: The Art of Landscape*, which attracted over 320,000 visitors in its three-month run in 2017.

Daniel Zamani, curator at the Museum Barberini, explains: "Monet's career has been the subject of intense scholarly scrutiny, but our focus on the places that inspired him offers new insights into his artistic interests and methods. Our aim is to demonstrate just how significant specific topographies were at key junctures in Monet's career and to look more deeply into how and why these places influenced his development as a painter." To this, the Barberini's director Ortrud Westheider, adds: "Monet was not just an incredibly gifted landscape painter, but one of the most radical and progressive artists of his generation. Compositions such as his iconic depictions of the waterlilies and pond at Giverny are powerful gestures towards abstraction whose visual force and expressive qualities continue to baffle and amaze."

In Potsdam, the wide-ranging exhibition brings together around 110 Monet paintings, including key loans from internationally important collections such as the Musée d'Orsay and the Musée Marmottan Monet in Paris, the National Gallery in London, the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam and the National Gallery of Art in Washington. These works will be shown alongside numerous masterpieces from international private collections which are not usually accessible to the public, including a significant amount of loans from the US-based German entrepreneur Hasso Plattner, the Museum Barberini's founder and benefactor. "As a collector, Impressionist landscapes are Hasso Plattner's great passion", Ortrud Westheider points out. "I am therefore absolutely thrilled that he has made this exhibition possible with such a generous amount of loans. In light of his close personal links to the US and the country's great tradition of public patronage, it is particularly fitting that we can realize this show as a collaboration with our esteemed colleagues at the Denver Art Museum."

Catalog:

The exhibition will be accompanied by a lavishly illustrated 280-page catalog, including contributions by some of the leading scholars on Impressionist painting, amongst them Marianne Mathieu, James Rubin, George T. M. Shackelford, Richard Thomson, and Paul Tucker. All of the catalog essays have been prepared through an international Monet conference that took place at the Museum Barberini in January 2019.

Press Images:

www.museum-barberini.com/en/press

Interviews with the Monet conference participants Christoph Heinrich, Marianne Mathieu, James Rubin, George T. M. Shackelford, Richard Thomson, Paul Tucker, Ortrud Westheider, and Daniel Zamani: We are pleased to make these interviews in HD quality available to you free of charge for your current editorial reporting.

www.museum-barberini.com/en/monet

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