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Potsdam, June 18, 2020

***Impressionism: The Hasso Plattner Collection***

From September 7, 2020 at the Museum Barberini

Beginning on September 7, 2020, the Museum Barberini in Potsdam will present a permanent display of the extensive collection of Impressionist paintings of the museum's founder, Hasso Plattner, including masterpieces by Monet, Renoir, and Signac. With thirty-four paintings by Claude Monet, there is no venue in Europe outside of Paris where visitors can see more works by this painter. This makes Potsdam one of the most important international centers of Impressionist landscape painting. The Museum Barberini now showcases a collection that is unique in Germany in addition to its temporary exhibitions mounted in cooperation with museums all over the world.

Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro, Auguste Renoir, and Alfred Sisley formed a group in the 1860s and revolutionized art with light-infused landscapes that were liberated from the traditional subject matter of the era. In 1874 they became known as the "Impressionists," who preferred to paint outdoors and captured fleeting impressions directly on the canvas. Artists such as Berthe Morisot, Paul Cézanne, and Gustave Caillebotte joined this new movement. More than a decade later, colleagues such as Paul Signac and Henri-Edmond Cross further developed the painting style of these pioneers, and even Pablo Picasso was inspired by the Impressionist style in 1901, the first year he spent in Paris.

With its focus on the fleeting moment, this movement has lost none of its original charm. The Impressionists wanted to paint everything in a fresh way. Their gift of observation resulted in realistic images of surprising abstraction. Guided by changing effects of light and atmosphere, they created timelessly beautiful landscapes whose pioneering spirit and energy continue to delight us to this very day.

Hasso Plattner chose to concentrate on this style and explains his passion in the following terms: "The paintings involve us as viewers in a very direct way. We feel the wind on our skin and the temperature of the water when we look at Monet's sailboats on the Seine. No other art can do that. The Impressionists are geniuses of communication." Plattner is now lending more than 100 works from his private collection as well as from the Hasso Plattner Foundation to the Museum Barberini. Amongst the most famous paintings in this body of works are Caillebotte's *Bridge at Argenteuil* (1893), Monet's *Grainstacks* (1891), Signac's *The Port at Sunset* (1892), as well as Monet's *Palazzo Contarini* (1908) and *Water-Lilies* (1914–17).

With the Museum Barberini and his collection, one of Plattner's aims is to remind us of the contested history of Impressionism in Germany. To this day, the paintings of this movement are underrepresented in German museums: "Due to national resentments, French Impressionism was only rarely collected during the imperial era in Germany. I would

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like my collection in the Museum Barberini—particularly due to its location in eastern Germany—to be a place of French-German friendship, of cultural openness, and of international exchange.”

The collection enables visitors to visualize the history of French Impressionism. Ortrud Westheider, the Director of the Museum Barberini, underlines the importance of the new permanent display: “No other collection can present Impressionist landscape painting as comprehensively and coherently in terms of its development and iconography. Our works make the history of this fascinating art movement tangible.” In *Impressionism: The Art of Landscape*, the opening exhibition of the Museum Barberini in 2017, Westheider already confronted the preconception that Impressionism is merely a spontaneous and atmospheric art form. According to Westheider, this art deserves to be examined in a more profound way: “The fact that Hasso Plattner has now entrusted the Museum Barberini with this treasure as a permanent loan enables us to give new impulses to scholarship on Impressionism with our exhibitions, conferences, and lectures, and also to further enhance our international networks.”

The catalog *Impressionism: The Hasso Plattner Collection* by Ortrud Westheider will be published by Prestel in conjunction with the opening of the permanent display. On the museum's website, the collection will be presented with texts by Daniel Zamani, Curator at the Museum Barberini, and results of provenance research conducted by Linda Hacka, Research Assistant at the Museum Barberini.

Until July 19, the Museum Barberini will be showing the exhibition *Monet: Places*, the largest retrospectives ever devoted to the artist by a German museum, as well as the presentation of *Jasper Johns: The 100 Monotypes*. Thanks to the extraordinary support of all lenders, the museum was not only able to extend *Monet: Places* until July 19, but to also postpone the exhibition *Rembrandt's Orient*, a cooperation with the Kunstmuseum Basel, to spring 2021. On view from March 13 to June 27, 2021, the show features more than 100 works of art, exploring how Rembrandt and his Dutch colleagues responded to the influence of Far Eastern cultures.

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