
Potsdam, September 3, 2020

Impressionism: The Hasso Plattner Collection

On permanent display at the Museum Barberini starting September 5, 2020

Beginning on September 5, 2020, the Museum Barberini in Potsdam will present a permanent display of the extensive collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings from the collection of the museum's founder, Hasso Plattner, including masterpieces by Monet, Renoir, and Signac. With thirty-four paintings by Monet, there is no venue in Europe outside of Paris where visitors can see more works by this painter. The holdings of paintings by Caillebotte, Pissarro, Signac, Sisley, and Vlaminck are also unique in Germany. In addition to its temporary exhibitions, the Museum Barberini now showcases a permanent collection that is unparalleled in Germany. This makes Potsdam one of the most important international centers of Impressionist landscape painting.

Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro, Pierre-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": artists who preferred to work outdoors, capturing fleeting impressions directly on the canvas. Painters such as Berthe Morisot, Paul Cézanne, and Gustave Caillebotte joined this new movement. More than a decade later, artists such as Paul Signac and Henri-Edmond Cross further developed the painting style of these pioneers. Even in their Neo-Impressionist compositions, focus on the landscape remained linked to the liberation of color—an aspect that was reinforced by the high-key compositions of the Fauves such as Maurice de Vlaminck and André Derain. Impressionists, Neo-Impressionists, and Fauves followed the ideal of making nature tangible through color and light.

Impressionism has been the focus of Hasso Plattner's collecting since 2000. As Plattner explains, "The paintings involve us as viewers in a very direct way. We can practically 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." Roughly three years after the Museum Barberini first opened, Plattner is now giving one hundred works from his private collection as well as from the Hasso Plattner Foundation to the museum as a permanent loan. Featuring thirty-four paintings by Claude Monet, no other venue in Europe outside of Paris offers more works by this artist. The holdings of compositions by Caillebotte, Pissarro, Signac, Sisley, and Vlaminck are also unique in Germany. Among the most famous works of the collection are Caillebotte's *The Argenteuil Bridge* and the *Seine* (ca. 1883), Signac's *The Port at Sunset, Opus 236* (Saint-Tropez) (1892), and Monet's *Grainstacks* (1890), *The Palazzo Contarini* (1908) and *Water Lilies* (1914–17).

The presentation of the collection at the Museum Barberini spans the period from the 1860s to the early twentieth century and brings together works by three generations of artists who often worked together, traveled to the same places to work, and mutually inspired each other. Consisting of eight central chapters, the show enables visitors to trace the development of French landscape painting through the styles of Impressionism, Neo-Impressionism, and Fauvism. Ortrud Westheider, the director of the Museum Barberini, stresses the significance of the new permanent exhibition: “No other collection can present Impressionist landscape painting as comprehensively and coherently in terms of its development and iconography. Through our works, visitors can learn about the fascinating history of the Impressionist movement as well as the further development of landscape through the Neo-Impressionists and Fauves.”

In the 2017 inaugural exhibition of the Museum Barberini, *Impressionism: The Art of Landscape*, Westheider had already countered the preconception that Impressionism is a spontaneous art of atmosphere. “These paintings invite a thorough examination. Now that Hasso Plattner has entrusted this treasure to the Museum Barberini as a permanent loan, we can offer new impulses to research on Impressionism and create an international network through our exhibitions, conferences, and lectures. These are paintings that have companion pieces in such high-profile collections as the Musée d’Orsay in Paris, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the National Gallery of Art in Washington—institutions with which the Museum Barberini will be able to connect more closely in the future. In addition to museums rich in tradition such as the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum in Cologne, the Neue Pinakothek in Munich, the Alte Nationalgalerie in Berlin, and the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, which later this fall will be opening the exhibition *With All the Senses* that is devoted to French Impressionism, the museum landscape of Germany has gained another venue that has an excellent collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist works—thanks to the generous permanent loans of our patron.”

In conjunction with the opening of the collection presentation, Prestel will publish the catalog *Impressionism: The Hasso Plattner Collection* by Ortrud Westheider. The museum’s website will present the collection with texts by Daniel Zamani, Curator at the Museum Barberini, and the results of the provenance research carried out by Research Associate Linda Hacka.

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