

PRESS RELEASE

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The Cleveland Museum of Art presents: *Painting the Modern Garden:*

Monet to Matisse

See It in Cleveland, the Only U.S. Venue

Exhibition Features More Than 100 Paintings by Modern Masters

Cleveland (September 30, 2015) *Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse* looks broadly and deeply at the garden theme in modern art through paintings by Claude Monet and fellow Impressionists, Post-Impressionists and avant-garde artists of the twentieth century. A centerpiece of the exhibition is the reuniting of Monet's great *Water Lilies (Agapanthus)* triptych depicting the artist's water garden at Giverny. A new contextual understanding of the importance of gardening and gardens in the development of modern art is provided by a sweeping survey of more than 100 paintings by masters such as Édouard Manet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Paul Cézanne, John Singer Sargent, Joaquín Sorolla, Vincent van Gogh, Edvard Munch, Wassily Kandinsky, Emil Nolde, Pierre Bonnard and Henri Matisse.

Arguably the most important painter of gardens in the history of art, Monet was also an avid horticulturist who cultivated gardens wherever he lived. As early as the 1860s a symbiotic relationship developed between his twin passions for gardening and painting, a relationship that can be traced from his early days at Sainte-Adresse to his final years at Giverny. "Gardening was something I learned in my youth when I was unhappy," he remarked. "I perhaps owe it to flowers that I became a painter."

The exhibition offers new insights into the subject through a large display of paintings and documentary materials borrowed from 19 private collections and 44 museums, foundations and cultural institutions, including the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, the National Gallery in London, the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff, the Lenbachhaus in Munich, the Nolde Stiftung in Seebüll, the Museo Nacional Reina Sofía and the Museo Sorolla in Madrid, the Beyeler Foundation in Basel, the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, the Museet Munch in Oslo, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, the Art Institute of Chicago and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, among others. Organized by the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Royal Academy of Arts in London, *Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse* will be on view at the Cleveland Museum of Art, the only U.S. venue, from October 11, 2015, through January 5, 2016.

About *Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse*

Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse is organized in six sections that lead visitors through the evolution of the garden theme over a span of nearly seven decades, from Impressionist visions of light and atmosphere to retreats for reverie and dreams, sites for bold experimentation, sanctuaries of refuge and healing and, ultimately, signifiers of a world restored to order—a paradise regained. Framing these paintings in the context of broad artistic movements, as well as social and political events, will offer unprecedented paths for understanding the garden as a multifaceted, universal theme in modern art.

“Many of Monet’s colleagues shared his passion for gardening and were inspired to paint gardens as emblematic of the pursuit of modern, middle-class leisure,” said William H. Robinson, co-curator of the exhibition, and curator of modern European art at the Cleveland Museum of Art. “They were among the first artists to portray gardens observed directly from life, disconnected from historical, religious or literary themes. As the century drew to a close, Post-Impressionists and Symbolists embraced more subjective approaches by imagining gardens as visionary utopias; many turned to painting gardens to explore abstract color theory and decorative design.”

The works have been carefully selected to reveal surprising connections and unexpected, poignant meanings even in familiar paintings. Considering these paintings in the context of what artists wrote about them in their diaries and letters offers revealing insights into the importance and meaning of their garden paintings. Renoir painted roses to improve his rendering of flesh tones. Van Gogh studied flowers to better understand color theory, and painted imaginary gardens filled with symbolic allusions. Emil Nolde and Paul Klee painted gardens, both real and imaginary, as part of their search for an authentic spirituality. *Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse* will offer new insights into the theme's significance and broad appeal to artists during a period of tremendous social change and innovation in the arts.

Tickets for *Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse* are \$18 for adults; seniors and college students \$16; children ages 6–17 \$9; children 5 and under are free. Museum members free; member guests \$9.

The exhibition is accompanied by a 304-page, fully illustrated, scholarly catalogue produced by Royal Academy Publications. It includes 250 illustrations, and essays by William H. Robinson, Ann Dumas, curator at the Royal Academy of Arts, Clare A. P. Willsdon of Glasgow University, a noted historian of nineteenth-century garden paintings, Heather Lemonedes, curator of drawings at the Cleveland Museum of Art, and an interview by Monty Don with James Priest, currently the head gardener at Giverny.

Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse has been co-organized by the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Royal Academy of Arts in London. The Cleveland venue of the exhibition is generously supported by Baker Hostetler, the Michelle and Richard Jeschelnic Exhibitions & Special Projects Fund, Cuyahoga Arts and Culture, the Ohio Arts Council and the Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities. The exhibition at the Royal Academy, on view January 30 through April 20, 2016, is supported by BNY Mellon.

About the Curators

William H. Robinson is curator of modern European art at the Cleveland Museum of Art and head of the Department of European and American Painting and Sculpture. He received his doctorate in art history from Case Western Reserve University and a certificate in Spanish language studies from the University of Barcelona. Currently he is adjunct professor of art history at Case Western Reserve University. A prolific author of scholarly books and articles, he has written extensively about nineteenth- and twentieth-century art in Europe and America, covering a broad range of subjects, including the art of Pablo Picasso, Vincent van Gogh, Diego Rivera, Charles Burchfield, modernist culture in America, French Impressionism, replication theory and modernist movements in Spain. Robinson has organized over 30 exhibitions, most notably *Van Gogh Repetitions*; *Picasso and the Mysteries of Life: La Vie*; and *Barcelona & Modernity: Picasso, Gaudí, Miró, Dalí* (The Cleveland Museum of Art/The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York). His articles have appeared in *Modern Art Criticism*, *American Art Review*, *New Art Examiner*, *Apollo*, *Inland Architecture*, *Sculpture Magazine* and *International Foundation for Art Research Journal*.

Ann Dumas is a curator at the Royal Academy of Arts in London, and a specialist in late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century French art, about which she has published extensively. She received an MA in French literature from London University before continuing postgraduate studies in art history at the Courtauld Institute of Art. She was a Hilla von Rebay Fellow at the Guggenheim Museum, New York, and, for a number of years, an associate curator at the Brooklyn Museum. Dumas has curated numerous exhibitions, among them *The Private Collection of Edgar Degas* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), *Cézanne to Picasso: Ambroise Vollard, Patron of the Avant-Garde* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York/Art Institute of Chicago/Musée d'Orsay, Paris), *Inspiring Impressionism: The Impressionists and the Art of the Past* (High Museum, Atlanta/Denver Art Museum/Seattle Art Museum), *Matisse: The Fabric of Dreams—His Art and His Textiles* (Royal Academy of Arts, London/The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), *Edgar Degas: The Last Landscapes* (Columbus Museum of Art), *From Russia: French and Russian Master Paintings 1870–1925 from Moscow and St. Petersburg* (Royal Academy of Arts, London) and *The Real Van Gogh: The Artist and His Letters* (Royal Academy of Arts, London).

Programming Highlights

Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse is accompanied by a robust schedule of related programming. For more information and updates, please refer to www.clevelandart.org.

Lectures and Talks

Easels in Eden: Monet's Gardening and Painting at Giverny

Sunday, October 11, 2:00 p.m.

Dr. Eric T. Haskell, professor of French and humanities director of the Clark Humanities Museum at Scripps College, focuses on the relationship between Claude Monet's gardening practices and painting techniques as used in the creation of over 500 canvases at Giverny from the 1890s until his death in 1926. Central to his concern is an examination of how Monet moved beyond representation to abstraction and thus prefigured the modern aesthetic in the most subtle terms. Presented in conjunction with the opening day of *Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse*, on view October 11, 2015, to January 5, 2016, at the Cleveland Museum of Art. Free; registration recommended.

This is the 2015 James H. Dempsey Jr. Guest Lecture, presented by Squire Patton Boggs (US) LLP.

The Edible Garden: Pissarro's Gardens in Eragny

Friday, November 20, 7:00 p.m.

In 1883 Camille Pissarro and Claude Monet moved to farmhouses in the Norman villages of Eragny and Giverny. Both artists lived in these houses—initially rented and eventually purchased (Pissarro's with a loan from Monet!)—until their respective deaths in 1903 and 1926. Monet's world-famous house and garden in Giverny, now owned by the Institut de France, is inundated with French and foreign visitors. By contrast, Pissarro's house and garden in Eragny is privately owned, all but unmarked, and visited by no one. Yet both places were completely transformed by the artists to become the principal motifs for their late landscapes. Richard Brettell, chair of art and aesthetic studies at the University of Texas at Dallas, discusses the two gardens, the two sets of paintings of them, and the visual ideologies of these two Impressionist friends.

Free; registration recommended.

Sponsored in part by the Painting and Drawing Society

Cleveland Connections

In celebration of *Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse* and *Imagining the Garden*, enjoy insights into local gardens, gardeners and more right here in Cleveland.

The Journey Continues Tuesday, November 3, 2:00 p.m., Recital Hall

Joining 31 other gardens representing the many facets of the Cleveland community, the African American Cultural Garden in Rockefeller Park broke ground for its first phase of construction in May 2015. Join architect W. Daniel Bickerstaff II of Ubiquitous Design as he shares insights into his design for the garden and the progress made toward its completion. Free; no registration required.

Inspiration from French Painters of Gardens Tuesday, November 10, 2:00 p.m., Exhibition

Learn to relate elements of landscape and garden design, as seen in paintings by French artists, to your own gardens. Garden designer Bobbie Schwartz of Bobbie's Green Thumb focuses on the use of color, form, texture, balance, and line and on maintenance requirements. She also discusses her visits to several gardens in France and her experiences as owner of a French-inspired house and landscape. Exhibition ticket and advance registration required; space is limited.

GardenWalk Cleveland: Making Cleveland Beautiful One Garden at a Time

Tuesday, November 17, 2:00 p.m., Recital Hall

GardenWalk Cleveland is a free, self-guided tour of gardens, urban farms, vineyards, orchards and more in the city's neighborhoods. Join Jan Kious, the tour's co-founder and coordinator, as she shares pictures and stories from some of the best gardens featured in GardenWalk Cleveland over the past five years, including interviews with the gardeners. Free; no registration required.

Master Gardeners in Cleveland Tuesday, November 24, 2:00 p.m., Recital Hall

The Ohio State University Master Gardener Volunteers of Cuyahoga County is a highly trained group that provides the public with unbiased, research-based horticulture information, and works in a number of settings ranging from farmers' markets, after-school programs and community gardens. Jacqueline Kowalski, extension educator at Ohio State University, will give you an overview of the history of the program, the training involved and the opportunities available for Master Gardener volunteers. Free; no registration required.

Seeds: Life Encapsulated December 1, 2:00 p.m., Recital Hall

Marilyn McHugh and Chris Kennedy, co-founders of the Cleveland Seed Bank, discuss the history and importance of seed saving. Explore the beauty of seeds, discover how form drives their function, and learn practical information about how to start saving seeds in your own garden. Free; no registration required.

Flower Fantasies December 8, 2:00 p.m., Exhibition

Have you ever wanted to grow or just learn more about the flowers depicted in famous Impressionist paintings? Join Cynthia Druckenbrod, vice president of horticulture at Cleveland Botanical Garden, for an in-depth look at many of the lovely blossoms in *Painting the Modern Garden* and discover which ones will flourish in your backyard oasis. Exhibition ticket and advance registration required; space is limited.

Garden Fantasies Tuesday, December 22, 2:00 p.m., Prints and Drawings Galleries

Discover depictions of gardens from all over the world in the exhibition *Imagining the Garden*, and learn how you might create the look of these historic and imaginary gardens in your own garden with Cynthia Druckenbrod, vice president of horticulture at the Cleveland Botanical Garden. Meet at the atrium information desk. Free; no registration required.

Special Events:

MIX: Bloom

Friday, November 6, 5:00–9:00 p.m.

Explore the special exhibition [Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse](#) and see gorgeous floral designs inspired by works in the collection, on view exclusively during MIX. Exhibition free with purchase of MIX: Bloom ticket.

Films

Five film classics about gardens and gardening complement our *Painting the Modern Garden* exhibition. Each film \$10; CMA members, seniors 65 & over, students \$8; no passes or vouchers.

The Secret Garden

Saturday, December 26, 1:30 p.m.

Directed by Fred M. Wilcox. With Margaret O'Brien, Herbert Marshall, and Dean Stockwell. A young British orphan girl living in her uncle's dreary, decaying Victorian mansion discovers a walled-off garden on the estate's neglected grounds. From the novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett. (USA, 1949, b&w/color, 35mm, 92 min.)

Greenfingers

Sunday, December 27, 1:30 p.m.

Directed by Joel Hershman. With Clive Owen and Helen Mirren. In this crowd-pleasing comedy, a hardened prisoner and his fellow inmates find their lives transformed by gardening. (UK/USA, 2000, color, 35mm, 91 min.)

The Draughtsman's Contract

Tuesday, December 29, 1:30 p.m.

Directed by Peter Greenaway. With Anthony Higgins and Janet Suzman. A young artist in late 17th-century England is contracted to make 12 drawings of a large country estate but soon uncovers a nefarious conspiracy there. Music by Michael Nyman. (UK, 1982, color, 35mm, 108 min.)

A Man Named Pearl

Wednesday, December 30, 1:30 p.m.

Directed by Scott Galloway and Brent Pierson. This inspiring documentary focuses on Pearl Fryar, an elderly African American man and self-taught topiary gardener whose enchanting, three-acre yard has put Bishopville, SC, on the map. (USA, 2006, color, Blu-ray, 78 min.)

The Secret Garden

Thursday, December 31, 1:30 p.m.

Directed by Agnieszka Holland. With Maggie Smith and John Lynch. Two spoiled, demanding children living in a gloomy British mansion find that their lives improve after they discover and tend to a garden hidden away on the vast property. (USA, 1993, color, 35mm, 101 min.)

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About the Cleveland Museum of Art

The Cleveland Museum of Art is renowned for the quality and breadth of its collection, which includes almost 45,000 objects and spans 6,000 years of achievement in the arts. The museum is a significant international forum for exhibitions, scholarship, performing arts and art education and recently completed an ambitious, multiphase renovation and expansion project across its campus. One of the top comprehensive art museums in the nation and free of charge to all, the Cleveland Museum of Art is located in the dynamic University Circle neighborhood.

The Cleveland Museum of Art is supported by a broad range of individuals, foundations and businesses in Cleveland and Northeast Ohio. The museum is generously funded by Cuyahoga County residents through Cuyahoga Arts and Culture. Additional support comes from the Ohio Arts Council, which helps fund the museum with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. In 2014, the museum was awarded a top four-star rating by Charity Navigator, the nation's most-utilized independent evaluator of charities and nonprofits. For more information about the museum, its holdings, programs and events, call 888-CMA-0033 or visit www.ClevelandArt.org.