



American Federation of Arts

For Immediate Release

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**AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ARTS ANNOUNCES NATIONAL TOUR OF AN EXHIBITION
OF SOME OF THE FINEST IMPRESSIONIST ART**

***AN IMPRESSIONIST EYE: PAINTING AND SCULPTURE
FROM THE PHILIP AND JANICE LEVIN FOUNDATION***

**TO OPEN AT BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM OF ART
FEBRUARY 1–APRIL 11, 2004 FOLLOWED BY SEVEN ADDITIONAL VENUES**

New York, NY, December 5, 2003— *An Impressionist Eye: Painting and Sculpture from the Philip and Janice Levin Foundation* will begin its national tour, organized by the American Federation of Arts, at the Birmingham Museum of Art, February 1–April 11, 2004. This remarkable collection, formed by Philip and Janice Levin, includes work by many of the most well known and beloved artists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including Edgar Degas, Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro, Pierre Bonnard, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and Edouard Vuillard. The press preview for the exhibit will be held at the Birmingham Museum of Art on Friday, January 30, 2004.

The exhibition will also travel to the Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, NV, April 23–July 18, 2004; Grand Rapids Art Museum, MI, November 5, 2004–January 30, 2005; The Taft Museum of Art, Cincinnati, OH, June 10–August 28, 2005; Faulconer Gallery, Grinnell College, IA, September 30–December 11, 2005; and three additional venues. Levin—a major philanthropist who generously supported the visual and performing arts in New York and Washington, D.C.—was particularly drawn to figurative art in the late-nineteenth-century French tradition. The works selected by the AFA will include three groups of canvases—images of women, interiors and still lifes, and leisure and country scenes—and a group of sculptures. The earliest work in the exhibition will be Camille Corot's *Girl with a Large Hat*, the first of a group of paintings of female figures that includes a dancer by Degas, a bather by Renoir, and Vuillard's *Woman with a Hat*, a portrait of Lucie Hessel, wife of the Belgian painting dealer Jos Hessel.

Among the most beautiful of the intimate interior scenes in the collection are three Vuillard paintings. These will form the core of the group of interior pictures that also include works by Bonnard and Berthe Morisot. Complementing the interiors are several still lifes, including Monet's *Chrysanthemums* and André Derain's *Plate of Peaches*.

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, many French artists began painting in the countryside outside of the ever-growing metropolitan center of Paris. Levin was particularly drawn to these, especially to paintings of the Normandy landscape. The exhibition will include two characteristic works by Eugène Boudin showing the bourgeoisie enjoying the pleasures of the coast; Renoir's portrait of the Pourville home of one of his most devoted patrons; and paintings by Pissarro examining country women absorbed in work. Pissarro's *Peasant Woman Digging* captures the everyday intimacy of peasant life in a manner that is poetic rather than sentimental.

The final component of the exhibition will be four bronze sculptures—two dancers by Degas, *Head of a Jester* by Pablo Picasso, and *Bust of Diego* by Alberto Giacometti. Degas's dancers were completed relatively late in his career and are more freely modeled than his earlier sculptures. The Picasso and Giacometti, as well as Amedeo Modigliani's painting *Head of a Woman*, exemplify Levin's secondary interest in collecting outside the area of French Impressionism.

Published by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the catalogue *The Janice H. Levin Collection of French Art* will accompany the AFA exhibition. The catalogue includes an essay and entries on each work by Richard Shone, curator of the exhibition *The Art of Bloomsbury: Roger Fry, Vanessa Bell, and Duncan Grant* (1999) and author of books on Manet and the post-impressionists.

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