



**TURNER TO CÉZANNE:
MASTERPIECES FROM THE DAVIES COLLECTION, NATIONAL MUSEUM WALES**

FIVE-VENUE NATIONAL TOUR

Begins March 2009 at the Columbia Museum of Art, South Carolina



J. M.W. Turner, *The Storm*, ca. 1840–45. Oil on canvas, 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 21 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.
National Museum Wales; Miss Margaret S. Davies Bequest, 1963



Paul Cézanne, *The François Zola Dam*, ca. 1877–78. Oil on canvas, 21 $\frac{3}{8}$ x
29 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. National Museum Wales; Miss Gwendoline E. Davies Bequest, 1951

New York, NY (January 5, 2009) — The American Federation for Arts (AFA) is pleased to announce the five-venue North American tour of *Turner to Cézanne: Masterpieces from the Davies Collection, National Museum Wales*, commencing at the Columbia Museum of Art in South Carolina on March 6, 2009. A selection of 47 paintings—many of which have been rarely exhibited outside of Wales—and 11 important works on paper will reveal the cross-currents between artists and movements that propelled 19th-century painting from the romantic naturalism of J.M.W. Turner to the post-impressionism of Paul Cézanne. The works on view are drawn from the collection of Gwendoline and Margaret Davies, Welsh sisters who were among the most important art patrons in Europe at a key moment in the history of painting. The exhibition includes eight works by Turner, five by Jean-François Millet, three each by Camille Corot and Claude Monet, and two each by Cézanne, Edouard Manet, and Pierre-Auguste Renoir. The clear connections among the various works acquired by the Davies sisters, particularly the inclusion of British artists such as Matthew Smith and Richard Bevan, whose work responds to French modernism, suggest an astute and informed understanding of 19th-century painting. AFA Acting Director Pauline Willis remarked: “The exhibition will be a visually stunning survey of the evolution of modern art through key examples of the stylistic innovations that shaped the art of the 19th century.”

***Turner to Cézanne: Masterpieces from the Davies Collection* will follow this schedule:**

Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, South Carolina:	March 6 – June 7, 2009
Oklahoma City Museum of Art, Oklahoma:	June 25 – September 20, 2009
Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York:	October 9, 2009 – January 3, 2010
Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.:	January 30 – April 25, 2010
Albuquerque Museum of Art & History, New Mexico:	May 16 – August 8, 2010

About the Davies Sisters:

Gwendoline (1882–1951) and Margaret (1884–1963) were born in the Welsh village of Llandinam. They were grandchildren of the famed industrialist and philanthropist David Davies and enjoyed a privileged upbringing. After attending private school near London, the sisters traveled extensively throughout Europe and began acquiring art. They quickly established themselves as important patrons and were among the first to purchase works by Corot, Honoré Daumier, and Millet. The Davies's extensive knowledge and financial independence allowed them to spend more than £110,000 (approximately \$12 million today) building their impressive collection by 1913. The sisters ceased collecting at the outbreak of World War I in order to focus on charitable activities, including a volunteer stint with the Red Cross in Troyes, France. In 1920, they purchased a mansion called Gregynog near their childhood home in Wales, which they soon turned into a forum for arts and culture, attracting an international circle of educators, artists, and politicians. Their steadfast belief in advancing the study, practice, and appreciation of art in Wales led them to donate their collection of 260 paintings and works on paper to National Museum Wales. Margaret bequeathed Gregynog to the University of Wales in 1960, shortly before her death.



Gwendoline Davies
(1882–1951). Photo Van
Dyck, London, 1937



Margaret Davies
(1884–1963). Photo, ca. 1900

Exhibition Details:

I. J.M.W. Turner and the Seeds of Modern Painting

Turner to Cézanne begins with late works by the British master J.M.W. Turner (1775–1851), including *Morning after the Wreck* (ca. 1840) and *The Storm* (ca. 1840–45). Turner's oils and watercolors presage modern painting with their emphasis on loose, painterly brushwork, first-hand observation, and atmospheric effects. His revolutionary break with the mandates of mimesis, or exact copying of nature, would later have a tremendous impact on the Impressionists, particularly Claude Monet (1840–1926). Turner's influence is readily apparent in *Charing Cross Bridge* (1902), one of the three canvases by Monet in the exhibition. Monet's own brushstroke became increasingly fractured and his palette more tonal as he studied Turner's oeuvre during sojourns to London.

II. Corot, Millet, and the Barbizon School



Jean-François Millet, *The Gust of Wind*, 1871–73. Oil on canvas.
35 x 46 1/8 in. National Museum Wales; Miss Margaret S. Davies
Bequest, 1963

In France, the work of the Barbizon school paralleled Turner's Romantic naturalism. Breaking from the traditions of classical landscape painting and biblical subject matter, artists such as Camille Corot (1796–1875) and Jean-François Millet (1814–1875) left their studios to paint en plein air, or outdoors. The three paintings on view by Corot include *Distant View of Corbeil* (ca. 1870), which depicts an idyllic landscape with a harmonized palette and feathery brushstrokes. Millet's unfinished *Winter: The Faggot Gatherers* (1868–75), a haunting image of peasants from Normandy, underscores the many radical changes—including a new appreciation of the creative act itself and an elevation of scenes of modern life from secondary to primary importance—that propelled French art toward impressionism and post-impressionism. Although misunderstood in its own day and sometimes perceived as conservative in ours, the Barbizon school was integral to the rise of modern art and opened the door to artists of many genres seeking to explore a new realism in France.

III. Toward Impressionism

Following the precursors of Turner and the Barbizon school, the exhibition presents an important early work by Edouard Manet (1832–1883): *Effect of Snow at Petit-Montrouge* (1870). Often described as Manet's first impressionist work, the painting conveys the unflinching scene of destruction in the suburbs of Paris during the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71). Applying broad, fluid strokes of gray, brown, and white directly onto the canvas, the artist perfectly captures the unique half-light of a dreary winter's day, an effort that foreshadows his interest in *effets de neige*, or snow effects. Following Corot's precedent by working on the spot and *sur le motif*, or from the subject (there is no discernible under-drawing in the work), *Effect of Snow at Petit-Montrouge* is a first instance of the spontaneity and direct observation that would characterize impressionism.

In addition to the strikingly modern work by Manet and Monet, including the latter's renowned *Waterlilies* (1906), the exhibition features Pierre-Auguste Renoir's masterpiece *La Parisienne* (1874), which demonstrates impressionism's commitment to depicting modern life. The painting depicts the beautiful young actress Henriette Henriot directly confronting the viewer with a coquettish gaze. Rather than naming his sitter, Renoir presents her as a social type—the beguiling ingénue seen at the theater or in the shops and cafés of Paris. This follows the proclamation of 19th-century poet Charles Baudelaire, who called for contemporary artists to engage with modern life.



Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *La Parisienne*, 1874. Oil on canvas. 64 3/8 x 42 5/8 in. National Museum Wales; Miss Gwendoline E. Davies Bequest, 1951

IV. Cézanne, van Gogh, and Post-Impressionism

The exhibition culminates with several post-impressionist works, including paintings by Cézanne and Vincent van Gogh. In 1918, Gwendoline Davies bought Cézanne's *Provençal Landscape* (ca. 1877) and *The François Zola Dam* (ca. 1877–78), one of Cézanne's most admired paintings. A few years later, she acquired van Gogh's magnificent *Rain—Auvers* (1890). This evocative image, which dates to the last week of the artist's life, conveys a sense of solitude through its open, panoramic composition.



Vincent van Gogh, *Rain—Auvers*, 1890. Oil on canvas, 19 3/4 x 39 1/2 in. National Museum Wales; Miss Gwendoline E. Davies Bequest, 1951

Exhibition Credit Line: The exhibition is organized by the American Federation of Arts and National Museum Wales. This exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

Guest Curator: Oliver Fairclough is Keeper of Art at National Museum Wales. Fairclough has researched and documented art collections and patronage throughout Wales and has developed his findings into a number of successful exhibitions. He is the co-author of *A Companion Guide to the National Art Gallery* (1997) and *Art in Exile: Wales, Flanders and the First World War* (2002).

Publication: The exhibition catalogue is published in soft cover (\$39) and hardcover (\$60) editions by the AFA in association with Hudson Hills Press and will be available in March 2009, in conjunction with the exhibition's opening. In addition to entries on each work by Bryony Dawkes and Bethany McIntyre of National Museum Wales, the catalogue includes an essay on the Davies sisters and the evolution of their collection by Guest Curator Oliver Fairclough; an essay on collecting French art in Britain during the 19th and early 20th centuries by Paul Greenhalgh, Director of the Corcoran Gallery of Art; and an essay on Renoir's impressionist masterpiece *La Parisienne* by Colin B. Bailey, Associate Director and Peter Jay Sharp Chief Curator, The Frick Collection.

American Federation of Arts: Celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2009, the AFA is a nonprofit institution that organizes art exhibitions for presentation in museums around the world, publishes exhibition catalogues, and develops educational materials and programs for children and adults. The AFA's mission is to enrich the public's experience of art and understanding of culture by organizing and touring a diverse offering of exhibitions embracing all aspects of art history. Over the years, millions of visitors in more than 100 museums around the world have experienced more than 1,000 AFA exhibitions. For more information about its exhibitions, publications, artist talks (ArtTalks), membership, cultural travel program (ArtScapes), and online resources, including family guides and podcasts, see www.afaweb.org

National Museum Wales: National Museum Wales was established by Royal Charter in 1907. Today, the organization runs seven national museums in Wales and is now known as Amgueddfa Cymru–National Museum Wales. The core objective of Amgueddfa Cymru is the “advancement of the education of the public.” This involves developing, caring for, studying, and sustaining access to Wales's national collections ranging from art, archaeology, industry, and social history, through to the natural sciences. As well as its seven museums and a network of partner venues, the Rhagor Web site (www.museumwales.ac.uk) was launched in 2007. Rhagor allows much more of the national collections to be enjoyed online. This brand new virtual museum reveals, for the first time, many previously unseen treasures from the collections housed at Wales's seven national museums.

Amgueddfa Cymru's art collections, held at National Museum Cardiff, encompass both the fine and applied arts, from antiquity to the present. The museum has old master paintings of exceptional quality, a rich collection of British art, outstanding ceramics and silver, and a print room collection with more than 32,000 works on paper. Highlights include extensive landscape and portraiture collections, as well as comprehensive works by Welsh artists from Richard Wilson to Gwen John. It also has a unique collection of the Regency porcelains made at Swansea and Nantgarw. The museum is renowned, however, for its internationally acclaimed Impressionist collections, which were bequeathed to the museum in the mid-20th century by the remarkable Davies sisters.

The year 2007 marked the centenary year of National Museum Wales during which exciting new plans were unveiled to refurbish the historic galleries and expand into new galleries for the modern and contemporary collections to form a new National Museum of Art. This will present opportunities to highlight the production of art in Wales while providing, for the first time, a sense of its relationship to the wider history of European art.

National Museum Wales operates seven museums across Wales. They are National Museum Cardiff; St. Fagans, National History Museum; National Slate Museum, Llanberis; National Wool Museum, Dre-fach Felindre; National Roman Legion Museum, Caerleon; Big Pit, National Coal Museum, Blaenafon; National Waterfront Museum, Swansea; and the Collections Centre in Nantgarw. Entry to all sites is free thanks to the support of the Welsh Assembly Government.

For more information please visit www.museumwales.ac.uk

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