



Royal Academy of Arts
**Painting the
Modern Garden**
Monet to Matisse

Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse
30 January – 20 April 2016

Main Galleries

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In January 2016, the Royal Academy of Arts will present *Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse*, a major exhibition examining the role of gardens in the paintings of Claude Monet and his contemporaries. With Monet as the starting point, the exhibition will span the early 1860s to the 1920s, a period of tremendous social change and innovation in the arts, and will include Impressionist, Post-Impressionist and Avant-Garde artists of the early twentieth century. It will bring together over 120 works, from public institutions and private collections across Europe and the USA, including 35 paintings by Monet alongside rarely seen masterpieces by Paul Klee, Emil Nolde, Gustav Klimt and Wassily Kandinsky.

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 activities as a horticulturist and his paintings of gardens, a relationship that can be traced from his early years in Sainte-Adresse to his final months at Giverny. *'I perhaps owe it to flowers'*, he wrote, *'that I became a painter'*. A rich selection of documentary materials including horticultural books and journals, as well as receipts for purchases of plants and excerpts from letters, will be included in the exhibition.

Highlights of the exhibition will include a magnificent selection of Monet's water lily paintings including the great *Agapanthus Triptych* of 1916 - 1919, (The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City; The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland; Saint Louis Art Museum, St Louis) works that are closely related to the great panorama that he donated to the French State in 1922 and that are now permanently housed in the Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris. It will be the first time this monumental triptych has been seen in the UK. This exhibition will be among the first to consider Monet's *Grandes Décorations* as a response to the traumatic events of World War I, and the first to juxtapose the large *Water Lilies* with garden paintings by other artists reacting to this period of suffering and loss.

Other highlights will include Monet's *Lady in the Garden*, 1867 (The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg); Auguste Renoir's *Monet Painting in His Garden at Argenteuil*, 1873 (Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford); Monet's *Le bassin aux nymphéas, harmonie verte*, 1899 (Musée d'Orsay, Paris); Monet's *Le jardin de l'artiste à Giverny*, 1900 (Musée d'Orsay, Paris); Monet's *Water*

Lilies, 1904 (Musée Malraux, Le Havre); Wassily Kandinsky's *Murnau The Garden II*, 1910 (Merzbacher Kunststiftung) and Pierre Bonnard's *Resting in the Garden*, 1914 (The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo). Works by artists such as Edouard Manet, Mary Cassatt, Berthe Morisot, Camille Pissarro, Paul Cézanne, James-Jacques Tissot, John Singer Sargent, Joaquín Sorolla, Max Liebermann, Santiago Rusiñol, Henri Matisse, Paul Klee, Vincent van Gogh, Gustav Klimt, Emil Nolde and Edouard Vuillard will also feature.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, Symbolists, Fauves, and German Expressionists embraced more subjective approaches by imagining gardens as visionary utopias; many turned to painting gardens to explore abstract colour theory and decorative design. In the early twentieth century, Monet emerges as a vanguard artist. The monumental canvases of his garden at Giverny anticipate major artistic movements that were to come such as American Abstract Expressionism.

The exhibition will be arranged thematically, leading visitors through the evolution of the garden theme, 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 the 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.

ORGANISATION

Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse has been co-organised by the Royal Academy of Arts and the Cleveland Museum of Art. The exhibition is curated by Ann Dumas, Curator, Royal Academy of Arts and Dr. William H. Robinson, Curator of Modern European Art at the Cleveland Museum of Art.

EXHIBITION TOUR

The Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio	11 October 2015 – 5 January 2016
Royal Academy of Arts, London	30 January – 20 April 2016

CATALOGUE

Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue. Authors include Monty Don, horticulturalist and presenter; James Priest, Head Gardener at Monet's garden at Giverny; William H. Robinson, Curator of Modern European Art at the Cleveland Museum of Art; Ann Dumas, Curator at the Royal Academy of Arts; Heather Lemonedes, Curator of Drawings at the Cleveland Museum of Art and Clare P Willsdon, Senior Lecturer in the History of Art at the University of Glasgow.

SPONSOR'S STATEMENT

Michael Cole-Fontayn, Chairman of Europe, Middle East and Africa, BNY Mellon said "Supporting the arts is deeply stitched into the fabric of BNY Mellon's heritage. We firmly believe cultural places and events contribute to making our communities vibrant, welcoming and more positive places to live and work. In today's fast-paced society, art also offers us moments of stillness and reflection. We have enjoyed a very special partnership with the Royal Academy since 2007 and we are thrilled to be involved in bringing this exciting new exhibition, *Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse*, to London in the New Year."

ABOUT BNY MELLON

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DATES AND OPENING HOURS

Open to public: Saturday 30 January – Wednesday 20 April 2016
10am – 6pm daily (last admission 5.30pm)
Late night opening: Fridays until 10pm (last admission 9.30pm)

ADMISSION

£17.60 full price (£16 without Gift Aid donation); concessions available; children under 16 and Friends of the RA go free.

TICKETS

Tickets for *Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse* are available daily at the RA or online at www.royalacademy.org.uk. Group bookings: Groups of 10+ are asked to book in advance. Telephone 020 7300 8027 or email adultgroups@royalacademy.org.uk.

IMAGES

Publicity images for *Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse* can be obtained from Picselect, the Press Association's image service for press use. Please register at www.picselect.com and once registered go to the Royal Academy folder in the Arts section of Picselect.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Join the discussion about the exhibition online at:
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ABOUT THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS

The Royal Academy of Arts was founded by King George III in 1768. It has a unique position in being an independent, privately funded institution led by eminent artists and architects whose purpose is to be a clear, strong voice for art and artists. Its public programme promotes the creation, enjoyment and appreciation of the visual arts through exhibitions, education and debate.

For public information, please print 020 7300 8000 or www.royalacademy.org.uk
Royal Academy of Arts, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1J 0BD

For further press information, please contact Johanna Bennett on 020 7300 5615 or
press.office@royalacademy.org.uk

06.07.15