BMA PRESENTS SPECTACULAR VIEWS OF LONDON BY MONET AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

The whole Thames was gold. I went to work with a frenzy following the sun and its shimmers on the water.”
—Claude Monet

BALTIMORE, MD (August 22, 2005) — Monet’s London: Artists’ Reflections on the Thames, 1859-1914 is the first exhibition in the U.S. to showcase a selection of Monet’s London masterpieces alongside works by contemporaries James McNeill Whistler, Camille Pissarro, and others inspired by the city’s misty atmosphere and grand architecture. On view at The Baltimore Museum of Art from October 2 through December 31, 2005, the exhibition features more than 125 paintings, watercolors, prints, and photographs by European and American artists fascinated by London at the dawn of the 20th century.

“The BMA is delighted to host the final stop on the national tour of this magnificent exhibition,” said BMA Director Doreen Bolger. “This is an extraordinary look at London’s transformation into a modern city seen through the eyes of some of the greatest artists of the period.”

The highlight of the exhibition is 12 of Monet’s paintings of London’s bridges and the Houses of Parliament, including the BMA’s two Monet masterpieces, Charing Cross Bridge and Waterloo Bridge. Attracted to London because of the striking effects created by the fog, smoke, and rain, Monet painted nearly 100 views along the river between 1899 and 1901. These works established Monet as a 20th-century master whose influence was strongly felt by a rising generation of modernists.

Monet’s London brings together works from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the National Gallery in London, and many other national and international collections, both public and private. From exuberant Fauvist paintings to evocative etchings and moody photographs, works by great artists such as Camille Pissarro, Childe Hassam, Andre Dérain, and photographer Alvin Langdon Coburn take visitors on a journey along the Thames River through a range of styles and perspectives. Documentary photography and vintage stereographs offer a historical view of the city that attracted artists from around the world.

This exhibition is generously supported by The Richard C. von Hess Foundation. The media sponsor is Comcast.

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LONDON, MONET, AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

Between 1859 and 1914, London was the largest city in the world and the center of the British Empire. Increasing industrialization and urban development dramatically altered the banks along the Thames and the overall environment. These changes attracted people from around the world, including a number of important artists. Among the first was American expatriate artist James McNeill Whistler, who left Paris for London in 1859 and created the *Thames Set*, an influential group of etchings that inspired both painters and printmakers. His work encouraged other leading artists to cross the English Channel and Atlantic Ocean.

Known for painting sites at different times of the day and under varying environmental conditions, French Impressionist Claude Monet began a series of views along the Thames in the autumn of 1899. He made two more trips in 1900 and 1901, eventually creating nearly 100 paintings of the British capital. The views were painted mainly from the Savoy Hotel, where he was staying, and from St. Thomas’ Hospital, which was on the opposite bank of the river from Parliament. Thirty-seven of his Thames views were included in an exhibition at the Galerie Durand-Ruel Gallery in Paris in 1904, which became one of Monet’s most successful gallery shows. Four of the paintings from the Durand-Ruel show will be on view in this exhibition.

Monet’s contemporaries responded, often very differently, to the Thames and its setting. James Tissot places people and boats in a more central position in his painting *The Thames* (c. 1876). André Derain’s *London Bridge* (1906) uses bolder colors, while his *View of the Thames* (1906) has a freer, more modernist approach. Joseph Pennell captured a variety of weather effects and times of day in his atmospheric prints, such as *The Shower, London* (1909). Alvin Langdon Coburn created moody, impressionistic photographs that render the city with shadows and light, as in *The Bridge—London (Waterloo Bridge)* (1909).

ORGANIZER AND TOUR

The exhibition is organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, Florida, and curated by Chief Curator Jennifer Hardin. It travels to Baltimore after presentations at the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg (January 16–April 25, 2005) and the Brooklyn Museum (May 27–September 4, 2005).

SPONSOR

This exhibition is supported with a generous gift from The Richard C. von Hess Foundation. The media sponsor is Comcast.

The exhibition is organized and circulated by The Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, Florida, and has received indemnification from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

British Airways is the official airline of the exhibition.
CATALOGUE
A fully illustrated, 216-page exhibition catalogue explores Claude Monet’s London paintings, works by his contemporaries, the artistic exchange between London and Paris, and the art market of the day. It includes essays by John House, one of the world’s foremost authorities on Monet and Impressionism; Petra ten-Doesschate Chu, Professor of Art History at Seton Hall University; and exhibition curator Jennifer Hardin. The catalogue, co-published by the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, Florida, and Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon in Ghent, Belgium, is available for purchase in The BMA Shop for $35.

THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART
The Baltimore Museum of Art is home to an internationally renowned collection of 19th-century, modern, and contemporary art. Founded in 1914, the BMA’s outstanding collection encompasses 90,000 works of art, including the largest and most significant holding of works by Henri Matisse in the world, as well as masterpieces by Pablo Picasso, Paul Cézanne, and Vincent van Gogh. An expanding collection of contemporary art features iconic post-1960 works by Andy Warhol and Sol LeWitt, as well as exciting acquisitions by artists such as Kara Walker and Olafur Eliasson. The BMA is also recognized for an internationally acclaimed collection of prints, drawings, and photographs from the 15th century to the present; grand European painting and sculpture from Old Masters to the 19th century; distinguished American painting, sculpture, and decorative arts and Maryland period rooms; one of the most important African collections in the country, and notable examples of Asian, ancient American, and Oceanic art. The BMA’s sculpture gardens feature a 100-year survey of modern sculpture on nearly three landscaped acres.

VISITOR INFORMATION
The Baltimore Museum of Art is open Wednesday through Friday, 11 a.m. until 5 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m. until 6 p.m.; and during the first Thursday of every month (except major holidays), 11 a.m. until 8 p.m. The Museum is closed Monday, Tuesday, New Year’s Day, July 4, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. The BMA will close at 4 p.m. on Saturday, December 24.

NEW ADMISSION PRICES: Effective Wednesday, September 14, 2005

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<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Seniors (age 65 &amp; over)</td>
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<td>College Students (full time with ID)</td>
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<td>Ages 18 &amp; under</td>
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Free museum admission to all on Free First Thursday

No special ticketing required for Monet’s London: Artists’ Reflections on the Thames, 1859–1914

The BMA is located on Art Museum Drive at North Charles and 31st Streets, three miles north of Baltimore’s Inner Harbor. For general Museum information, call 410-396-7100 or visit the BMA’s web site at www.artbma.org.

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