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## MAJOR COLLECTION OF 19TH-CENTURY AMERICAN ART OPENS May 9, 2004, AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART



Martin Johnson Heade  
*Sunlight and Shadow: The Newbury Marshes, c. 1871-1875*  
oil on canvas, 30.5 x 67.3 cm (12 x 26 1/2)  
John Wilmerding Collection

Washington, DC-- **American Masters from Bingham to Eakins: The John Wilmerding Collection** will showcase one of the most important private collections of 19th-century American art. The exhibition of 51 paintings by 26 American artists will be on view at the National Gallery of Art's East Building, May 9, 2004 through February 6, 2005. Works by such masters as George Caleb Bingham, Frederic Edwin Church, Thomas Eakins, William Stanley Haseltine, Martin Johnson Heade, Fitz Hugh Lane, John Marin, John F. Peto, and William Trost Richards represent four decades of collecting in an area of particular scholarly interest to Wilmerding.

"Over the course of his career John Wilmerding has become one of the most respected and widely known authorities on American art. His many books and articles have helped define the scholarly nature of the field as a whole and have also documented the works of key figures. John has organized many exhibitions on American art and through

his teaching and lectures he has introduced literally thousands to the wonders and complexities of our national art," said Earl A. Powell III, director of the National Gallery of Art. "Our warmest thanks go to John for lending his extraordinary collection."

The exhibition was organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington.

## **THE EXHIBITION**

The works in the exhibition reveal a variety of American art such as landscapes, marine painting, portraits, genre scenes, still lifes, and figure paintings, including a group of drawings and watercolors of the scenery of Mount Desert Island, Maine, by artists--among them Haseltine, Lane, Marin, and Richards--who worked there from the 1840s until the early 20th century.

Highlights from the collection include Fitz Hugh Lane's *Western Shore of Gloucester, Outer Harbor* (c. 1857), a radiant view of sailing vessels on calm water that is particularly notable for its superb state of preservation. Another notable work is one of George Caleb Bingham's rare genre pictures, *Mississippi Boatman* (1850), which depicts a rugged-looking man guarding cargo on the riverside.

In addition to the paintings by Lane and Bingham, there are superb examples by Martin Johnson Heade, Frederic Edwin Church, John F. Peto, and Thomas Eakins, such as Heade's *Sunlight and Shadow: The Newbury Marshes* (c. 1871-1875) and *Still Life with Roses, Lilies, and Forget-Me-Nots in a Glass Vase* (1869), Church's *Newport Mountain, Mount Desert* (1851), Peto's *Take Your Choice*, (1885), and Eakins' *Portrait of Dr. William Thomson* (c. 1907) and watercolor *Drifting* (1875).

## **JOHN WILMERDING**

In his more than 40 years as a scholar and teacher of American art, John Wilmerding has also been a collector. He comes from a family with a rich history of collecting art. Wilmerding's great-grandparents, Henry Osborne Havemeyer and his second wife, Louisine Waldron Havemeyer, amassed an extraordinary group of European and Oriental works of art that was eventually bequeathed to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

One of the Havemeyers' daughters, Electra Havemeyer Webb (Wilmerding's grandmother), was an eclectic acquirer of American fine and folk paintings and sculptures, decorative arts, quilts, tools, vernacular objects, toys, buildings, and transportation vehicles. Her remarkable and vast collection was the genesis of the Shelburne Museum in Vermont.

Wilmerding acquired his first work of art, American marine painter Fitz Hugh Lane's *Western Shore of Gloucester, Outer Harbor* (c. 1857), in 1960. At the time Wilmerding was writing his senior honors thesis on the artist at Harvard University, having become interested in Lane's work from his own avid love of sailing. The painting by Lane remained the only painting owned until 1965, when he acquired Bingham's *Mississippi Boatman*. Following completion of his doctorate in art history, Wilmerding began teaching at Dartmouth College and started to collect more seriously. Wilmerding went on to work at the National Gallery of Art, first as curator of American art and senior curator, and then as deputy director. He returned to full-time teaching in 1988. Currently he is the Christopher Binyon Sarofim Professor of American Art at Princeton University. While at the National Gallery of Art, Wilmerding organized the 1980 landmark exhibition, **American Light: The Luminist Movement**, which included artists such as Church, Sanford Gifford, Heade, John F. Kensett, and Lane.

## **EXHIBITION CURATOR, CATALOGUE, AND PROGRAMS**

The exhibition curator is Franklin Kelly, senior curator of American and British paintings, National Gallery of Art. Kelly was the curator of **Frederic Edwin Church** in 1989 and, **Twentieth-Century American Art: The Ebsworth Collection** in 2000. Kelly is the curator of the current traveling exhibition **Hudson River School Visions: The Landscapes of Sanford R. Gifford**, on view at the National Gallery of Art, June 27 through September 26, 2004.

Published by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, in association with Lund Humphries, and available in April 2004, the exhibition catalogue *American Masters from Bingham to Eakins: The John Wilmerding Collection* includes an essay based on an interview between Kelly and Wilmerding, as well as entries by Nancy K. Anderson, Charles M. Brock, Deborah Chotner, and Abbie N. Sprague. The catalogue

will be available from the National Gallery of Art Web site at [www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov) (<http://www.nga.gov/home.htm>) or by phone at (202) 842-6002 or (800) 697-9350 (\$60.00 hardcover, \$35.00 softcover, 168 pages, 63 color and 66 black-and-white illustrations).

Noted American art experts William H. Gerdtz, Jules David Prown, and Theodore E. Stebbins, Jr. will join Wilmerding and Kelly in a discussion about the development of American art scholarship and collections on the closing date of the exhibition, October 10, at 2:00 p.m. in the East Building auditorium. The scholars will sign catalogues following the program. This event is free of charge; seating is available on a first-come, first-seated basis.

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## General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets along Constitution Avenue NW and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. With the exception of the atrium and library, the galleries in the East Building will be closing gradually beginning in July 2013 and will remain closed for approximately three years for Master Facilities Plan and renovations. For specific updates on gallery closings, visit [www.nga.gov/renovation](http://www.nga.gov/renovation) (<http://www.nga.gov/renovation>) .

For information call (202) 737-4215 or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (202) 842-6176, or visit the Gallery's website at [www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov). Follow the Gallery on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt](http://www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt) and on Twitter at [twitter.com/ngadc](http://twitter.com/ngadc).

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

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