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GREAT AMERICAN ARTIST WINSLOW HOMER IS SURVEYED IN EXHIBITION OF 50 WORKS; OPENING JULY 3, 2005 AT NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART



Winslow Homer

Breezing Up (A Fair Wind), 1873-1876

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Art, Washington

Gift of the W. L. and May T. Mellon Foundation

Washington, DC –Exceptional oil paintings, watercolors, drawings, and prints from the Gallery's extensive holdings by distinguished American artist Winslow Homer (1836-1910) will be on view in the National Gallery of Art's East Building, July 3, 2005–February 26, 2006. **Winslow Homer in the National Gallery of Art** spans the artist's entire career from his early oils, such as the Civil War scene *Home, Sweet Home* (c.1863) to late masterful watercolors including *Key West*, *Hauling Anchor* (1903).

Approximately 50 works from the Gallery's collection are included in this special survey exhibition.

"Winslow Homer, one of America's most outstanding artists, is also one of our most well-known and well-loved artists. Therefore, it is appropriate that the Gallery's Homer collection is one of the country's most significant, representing the full scope of his production, and enabling us to present this great American summer exhibition in time for the Fourth of July," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art.

EXHIBITION SUPPORT

Winslow Homer in the National Gallery of Art is sponsored by Siemens.

"Siemens is proud to sponsor this important exhibition at one of America's premier art institutions," said George Nolen, Siemens Corporation president and CEO. "Siemens focuses its worldwide community outreach efforts on education, and supporting the arts is a compelling way to make history accessible to many people. Winslow Homer's powerful artwork depicting the 'real' side of American history will enlighten visitors about significant American events and inspire them with the unique perspective of this talented artist."

THE EXHIBITION

The exhibition will begin with Homer's insightful portrayal of the Civil War with the oil *Home, Sweet Home* (1863) and the wood engraving *The Army of the Potomac—A Sharp-Shooter on Picket Duty* (published c. 1862). At the start of the Civil War in 1861, Homer was already working as an illustrator for Harper's Weekly and after visiting the front, became an artist-correspondent for the publication. Instead of combat scenes, Homer depicted the lives of ordinary soldiers between battles.

After the war, Homer returned to coastal and rural scenes of peacetime America, as seen in the oil *Breezing Up (A Fair Wind)* (1873-1876) and the watercolor *The Sick Chicken* (1874). He also explored the various occupations of women in the watercolors *Blackboard* (1877) and *The Milk Maid* (1878), and scenes of childhood in the wood engraving *Snap-the-Whip* (published 1873) and the watercolor *Four Boys on a Beach*

(c. 1873).

In 1880 Homer left the United States for England, where he lived in the small fishing village of Cullercoats, on the North Sea, for two years. While there he documented the difficult lives of the men and women whose livelihoods depended on the sea. Moving away from the more celebratory mood found in his images of American life in the 1870s, Homer now began creating works with a greater sense of gravity and seriousness. Of particular interest to him were the activities of the women who remained onshore while the men went out to fish, and the exhibition includes works such as *Mending the Nets* (1882) and *Sparrow Hall* (c. 1881-1882) that movingly chronicle the seemingly difficult unending labors of their lives.

Upon Homer's return to the U.S., he settled permanently in Prout's Neck, Maine. Over the next several years, his work was filled with themes based on man's life and death struggle with the sea. In 1884, Homer began traveling to warmer, more tropical places such as the Bahamas, Cuba, Florida, and Bermuda. His dazzling watercolors of these places with their spontaneous, informal compositions and vibrant colors are unprecedented in his career. In *Salt Kettle, Bermuda* (1899) and *Key West, Hauling Anchor* (1903), Homer portrays island scenery as well as the day-to-day activities of its inhabitants.

In the last decade of his life Homer painted less frequently; however, the works from this period include some of the most ambitious and complex pictures of his career. Completed about a year and a half before Homer died, his last great painting *Right and Left* (1909) is both a sporting picture and a reflection on life and death. Two ducks are represented at the moment when a hunter in a boat has fired at them. The painting summarizes the creative complexity of Homer's late style with its unconventional point of view and diverse sources of inspiration, from the Japanese print to popular hunting imagery.

CURATOR AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

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.

A special family workshop will be held July 22 and 23 and August 12 and 13 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the East Building, where children ages five and up will be able to explore nature in paintings and watercolors by American artist Winslow Homer and create a colorful work of art with oil pastels. *WinslowHomer: The Nature of the Artist* (National Gallery of Art, 30 mins.) will be shown at 10:30 a.m., 12:00 p.m., and 1:30 p.m. and *WinslowHomer: An American Original* (Devine Entertainment, 50 mins.) will be shown at 11:00 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. The films are recommended for children ages 7 and up; seating is on a first-come, first-served basis. Family Workshops are made possible by the generous support of ChoicePoint Government Services.

A Gallery Talk, "Winslow Homer in the National Gallery of Art" (50 minutes), will be given by Dianne Stephens in the East Building on July 7, 13, 21, 27, and August 1, 4, 10, at 2:00 p.m.

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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>).

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. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt and on Twitter at 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.

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

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