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First American Exhibition in 30 Years to Focus on Works by Eugene Boudin, on View March 25 – September 3, 2007

Exhibition Honors the Centenary of National Gallery of Art Benefactor Paul Mellon's Birth



Eugène Boudin (1824 - 1898)

Beach Scene, 1862

oil on wood

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

Washington, DC – The art of French landscape painter Eugène Boudin (1824 – 1898) will get a rare showing in America, when **Eugène Boudin at the National Gallery of Art** goes on view in the National Gallery of Art's East Building, March 25 through September 3, 2007. The exhibition of approximately 40 paintings and works on paper will honor the centenary of the birth of Paul Mellon, the Gallery's founding president and the benefactor largely responsible for its Boudin collection, which is one of the largest

and most distinguished in this country. Proclaimed the "king of the skies" by Camille Corot, Boudin influenced a number of impressionist painters, most notably Claude Monet.

The exhibition is organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington. It will travel to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts as **Eugène Boudin 1824–1898: Works from the Mellon Collections at the National Gallery of Art**, from November 14 through January 27, 2008. It has been more than 30 years since the last monographic American exhibition of Boudin's work was held at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art in 1976.

"The works gathered in this exhibition add up to something timeless in their beauty: the play of light on water and clouds, carefully observed over the course of a lifetime. It is perhaps this very duality, of momentary sensation and timeless beauty, that made Boudin such a natural addition to the collection of Paul Mellon," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "In Mr. Mellon's own words, 'It seems to me that art makes one feel the essence of something, turning the ordinary, everyday object or scene into a universal one.'"

Exhibition Sponsor

The exhibition is made possible by the generous support of Altria Group, Inc.

"For 50 years, the Altria family of companies has supported hundreds of arts organizations that celebrate the vision and voices of established and emerging artists. We believe the arts are an essential part of a vibrant community and are so pleased to sponsor the Eugène Boudin exhibition. Boudin was an innovator who inspired Monet and his impressionist colleagues with his refreshing and illuminating outdoor scenes of coastal France. We hope you too will be inspired by this rare opportunity to view some of Boudin's most glorious paintings, drawings, and watercolors," said Jennifer P. Goodale, vice president of contributions at Altria Group.

The Artist and the Exhibition

Boudin belonged to the generation of realists and naturalists that preceded impressionists. He made his reputation with small-scale paintings of tourists at

fashionable Normandy resorts, and although he received little attention from the general public, his nuanced depictions of light and atmosphere, the freshness of his colors, and the accuracy of his renderings earned the admiration of contemporaries such as Edouard Manet, Gustave Courbet, and Corot. His practice of working outdoors, en *plein air*, was emulated by Monet, who, together with Auguste Renoir and Camille Pissarro, eventually created the style known as impressionism. Boudin was invited by Monet to join the impressionists at their first exhibition in 1874.

The National Gallery's exhibition will feature 22 oil paintings and 20 drawings and watercolors. In the first room, small-scale paintings range from finished exhibition pictures to oil sketches that span the artist's entire career. They include *Jetty and Wharf at Trouville* (1863), a finished exhibition picture; *Concert at the Casino of Deauville*, shown at the Paris Salon in 1865; and *On the Jetty* (1869/1870), a *plein air* oil sketch.

In the second room, watercolor paintings on graphite and drawings will be shown in clusters. Boudin's watercolors, such as *Beach House with Flags at Trouville* (1865) and *A Couple Seated on the Beach with Two Dogs* (unknown date) are the graphic equivalent of his oil paintings, depicting leisurely visitors on the northern coast. One notable Mellon donation is a suite of six graphite drawings from a single sketchbook made by Boudin in 1858 at the beginning of his career, showing agrarian pursuits in the rural Brittany coastal region. Paintings in this section of the exhibition depict the main commercial occupations in Normandy and Brittany—peasant labor and shipping—and include two of the paintings Boudin exhibited during his lifetime at the Paris Salon: his prize-winning 1883 Salon entry *Entrance to the Harbor, Le Havre and Ships and Sailing Boats Leaving Le Havre* (1887), shown at the Salon in 1888.

Exhibition Curator

The exhibition curator is Florence E. Coman, assistant curator of French paintings, National Gallery of Art.

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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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