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The Legacy of Paul Mellon at the National Gallery of Art to be Celebrated During the Centennial of His Birth



Paul Mellon enjoying Edgar Degas' *Little Dancer, Aged Fourteen* (1879-1881) in the National Gallery of Art Sculpture Gallery, West Building. Courtesy of the National Gallery of Art, Washington. ©Dennis Brack/Black Star.

Washington, DC—The centenary of the birth of Paul Mellon (1907–1999) will be celebrated throughout 2007 by the National Gallery of Art with exhibitions, special installations, a new Gallery documentary, concerts, gallery talks, lectures, and a Web site feature. Mellon's visionary leadership of the National Gallery spanned some six decades, starting in 1938, when he was first elected to the Board of Trustees, a year after his father and Gallery founder Andrew W. Mellon died.

Exhibitions and Installations

The Gallery's celebration begins with the opening of the exhibition **Eugène Boudin at the National Gallery of Art**, which will be on view in the East Building from March 25 through August 5, 2007. The exhibition includes 41 paintings and works on paper by

French Impressionist Boudin (1824–1898). They are drawn from the Gallery's extensive collection of works by the artist, one of the largest and most distinguished in this country, acquired primarily through gifts from Paul Mellon and his wife Bunny. The exhibition is made possible by the generous support of Altria Group, Inc.

Paul Mellon's British heritage (his mother, Nora McMullen, was British) and his great interest in British art will be remembered when **J.M.W. Turner** goes on view from October 1, 2007 through January 6, 2008, in the West Building. It will be the largest and most comprehensive retrospective of Turner's work ever presented in the United States. The exhibition in Washington is made possible in part through the generous support of Access Industries.

Paul Mellon and the National Gallery of Art, a display of rarely seen documents, photographs, memorabilia, and publications that illuminate Paul Mellon's life and art collecting, his leadership and ideas, and his generosity, will be on view in the West Building Founder's Room from May 19 through September 10, 2007.

New Documentary

Paul Mellon: In His Own Words, produced by the National Gallery of Art, will celebrate the spirit and philosophy of Paul Mellon. The one-hour biographical film draws on rarely seen archival footage of the Mellon family, as well as interviews, speeches, and a variety of writings in which Mellon describes his passions, pursuits, and such interests as family, art, collecting, horses, and racing. The film premieres on June 9 at 1:00 p.m. at the National Gallery of Art and will be shown during the summer on PBS-TV stations throughout the nation. It will also be available for free download on iTunes beginning June 11, 2007.

Special Programs

Gallery Talks: Beginning in May and June Gallery lecturers will offer stimulating discussions in the galleries focusing on gifts made by Paul Mellon, including Winslow Homer's *Dad's Coming*, Gustave Courbet's *Calm Sea*, Paul Gauguin's *Breton Girls Dancing*, *Pont-Aven*, Paul Cézanne's *The Artist's Father*, *Reading L'Événement*, Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot's *Young Girl Reading*, and Edouard Manet's *Plum*

Brandy, in addition to talks on the art of George Bellows and the Gallery's ongoing installation of Small French Paintings.

Concerts: A special series of Wednesday afternoon piano concerts, underwritten by the Billy Rose Foundation, will take place in the East Building Auditorium in May and June. Leading pianists will perform works by composers as diverse as J. S. Bach, Chopin, and Villa-Lobos on the newly refurbished Steinway piano given by Paul Mellon's sister, Ailsa Mellon Bruce. A special Benny Goodman-style jazz concert by Eddie Daniels and Ensemble will be presented at 3:00 pm in the East Building atrium on June 10. It will help visitors recall how Mellon was surprised on his 80th birthday by his wife Bunny at one of the first dinners in the East Building when Benny Goodman suddenly appeared and performed some of Mellon's favorite tunes.

Lectures: A series of eight Sunday illustrated presentations by Gallery staff will focus on Paul Mellon and other great and lesser-known collectors and art donors of the National Gallery of Art, including among others Chester Dale, John Hay Whitney, Peter A.B. Widener, and Robert and Jane Meyerhoff.

Other Programs: A Gallery Web site feature and additional programs will be announced at a later date.

Paul Mellon and the National Gallery of Art

When National Gallery of Art founder Andrew Mellon died in 1937, only months after the Gallery had been approved by Congress, his 30-year-old son Paul saw the museum to completion. In 1941, Paul Mellon presented the building and his father's collection of art to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who accepted it on behalf of the American people.

Paul Mellon watched over and nurtured the museum's growth from a single grand building to a mature institution with two monumental structures, a sculpture garden, and a world-class collection. He generously contributed funds for acquisitions, education, archives, and the Gallery's Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts. The East Building was constructed entirely with funds provided by Paul Mellon, his beloved sister Ailsa Mellon Bruce, and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which Paul Mellon founded.

Some 1,027 works of art given by Paul Mellon and his wife Bunny form an extraordinary legacy. They include many great paintings, sculptures, and works on paper by such major artists as George Stubbs, J.M.W. Turner, Camille Pissarro, Edouard Manet, Edgar Degas, Winslow Homer, Paul Cézanne, Claude Monet, Auguste Renoir, Berthe Morisot, Mary Cassatt, Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh, George Seurat, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Henri Matisse, George Bellows, and Alexander Calder.

Mellon's gift of 49 waxes, ten bronzes, and two plasters by Degas helped to make the Gallery the home of the largest group of original Degas sculptures anywhere in the world. Mellon also gave the Gallery some 350 paintings of American Indians by George Catlin.

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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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