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Gustave Caillebotte Painting Donated by Scharffenberger Family of California to National Gallery of Art, Washington
-French Impressionist Masterpiece Now on View-



Gustave Caillebotte, French, 1848 – 1894, *Dahlias, Garden at Petit Gennevilliers*, 1893, Oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of the Scharffenberger Family

Washington, DC—The National Gallery of Art announced today that a major work by French impressionist Gustave Caillebotte—*Dahlias, Garden at Petit Gennevilliers* (1893)—has been donated by the Scharffenberger family of California. On view in the 2015–2016 international traveling exhibition **Gustave Caillebotte: The Painter's Eye**, *Dahlias, Garden at Petit Gennevilliers* depicts the artist's beloved garden, which he designed on his country estate on the banks of the Seine River. The painting is now on view in the West Building, gallery M-85, alongside Claude Monet's *Artist's Garden at Vétheuil* (1880), a similarly sized work also inspired by a love of flowers and sunshine.

"We are moved by the generosity of the Scharffenberger family, parting with a masterpiece by Gustave Caillebotte that they have lived with in their home for the last 50 years," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art, Washington. "The Gallery's collection was formed through generous donations from private citizens and has continued to grow to the present day thanks to contributions by numerous collectors and patrons. The Scharffenberger family's gift to the nation enables millions of visitors a year to see this exquisite impressionist painting."

***Dahlias, Garden at Petit Gennevilliers* (1893)**

A leader in the impressionist movement—a central exhibitor and an organizing force for several of the movement's exhibitions between 1876 and 1882—Gustave Caillebotte was also an avid gardener. Like his close friend Claude Monet, with whom he shared gardening expertise and exchanged tips, he created lush, vibrantly colored landscapes and translated them into paint on canvas. *Dahlias, Garden at Petit Gennevilliers* celebrates his prized dahlias blossoming in the foreground in front of his greenhouse and home. A figure in a long, loose skirt and sun hat, likely the woman with whom Caillebotte lived, carefully inspects something in her hands as her small dog stares at the painter. Afternoon shadows dapple the composition and wispy clouds mollify the light blue sky. The painter used perspectival recession to structure his composition and dramatize the space, an effect employed brilliantly in his Parisian scenes of the late 1870s, such as *Paris Street, Rainy Day* and *The Pont de l'Europe*.

Caillebotte designed this garden on his property in Petit Gennevilliers across the Seine River from Argenteuil, both suburbs of Paris. He and his brother Martial bought the land in 1881 after both of their parents had died, leaving them a fortune. Over the next decade, Caillebotte expanded the estate, bought his brother out, and largely gave up his Parisian life for gardening, painting, and sailing. A champion sailor, he was president of the Paris Sailing Club, and an acclaimed boat designer. He continued to paint scenes of his garden and of the river until his premature death in 1894, one year after he completed this painting.

History of the Gallery's French Impressionist and Post-Impressionist Collection

The Gallery's French impressionist and post-impressionist holdings, comprising nearly 400 paintings, are among the most prized in the collection.

The impressionist and post-impressionist collection began with the 1942 Widener bequest, and reached a high point with an extraordinary gift from Chester Dale in 1962, which tripled the size of the Gallery's modern French paintings. These works include major masterpieces, such as Paul Cézanne's *Peppermint Bottle* (1893/1895), Paul Gauguin's *Self-Portrait* (1889), Vincent van Gogh's *La Mousmé* (1888), Edgar Degas's *Four Dancers* (c. 1899), and two of Monet's celebrated views of Rouen Cathedral (1894). The Dales—Chester and his wife Maud—acquired, within a nine-month period, two spectacular pictures: Edouard Manet's early masterpiece *The Old Musician* (1862) and Pablo Picasso's early masterpiece *Family of Saltimbanques* (1905). In particular, the Dales gravitated toward figural works, accruing examples by many of the modern masters of portraiture as well as marvelous female nudes, such as Auguste Renoir's *Bather Arranging Her Hair* (1893) and *Odalisque* (1870) and Amedeo Modigliani's *Nude on a Blue Cushion* (1917). In accordance with the deed of gift, these great works may never be loaned.

Other highlights of the collection include *The Black Rocks at Trouville* (1865/1866) by Gustave Courbet and 13 recently restored works, including Renoir's sparkling Parisian view of the Pont Neuf (1872), his ever-popular *Girl with a Watering Can* (1876), Monet's classic *Bridge at Argenteuil* (1874), and an 1867 portrait of Monet's newborn son Jean in his cradle.

Paul Mellon—son of the Gallery's founding benefactor Andrew W. Mellon—also avidly collected 19th-century French paintings, influenced by his second wife, Rachel "Bunny" Mellon. Inspired by Dale's example, Mellon expanded upon the foundation of French modernism that Dale had built for the Gallery. While the Dale collection includes Monet's later landscapes, Mellon collected Monet in all genres and across his career, as well as works by important impressionist painters the Dales did not collect, such as Frédéric Bazille and Caillebotte. Mellon was a great admirer of Cézanne and gave the Gallery seven paintings spanning the artist's career, including in 1991 *Boy in a Red Waistcoat* (1888–1890), one of the Gallery's great masterpieces. Mellon was also a devotee of Degas, and his gift of major paintings and sculptures by that master makes the Gallery's Degas collection one of the best in the world.

Paul Mellon's sister Ailsa Mellon Bruce augmented the Mellon family's dedication to the Gallery through her extensive 1969 bequest of great old master and impressionist paintings, by Renoir in particular. Other important donors to this part of the Gallery's collection include the Havemeyer family, W. Averell Harriman, his second wife Marie Norton Whitney Harriman and his third wife Pamela Digby Churchill Hayward Harriman, John Hay and Betsey Cushing Roosevelt Whitney, and Eugene and Agnes Ernst Meyer.

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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 at 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. For information call (202) 737-4215 or visit the Gallery's Web site at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt, Twitter at www.twitter.com/ngadc, and Instagram at <http://instagram.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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