Experience European Masterpieces Of History's Notable Artists

Oct. 22, 2010

MISSOULA –

Montana residents and visitors will have an unprecedented opportunity to view selected works by some of the most notable artists from the late 18th to the early 20th century at an exhibition opening Friday, Nov. 12, at the Montana Museum of Art & Culture at The University of Montana.

The exhibition, “Renoir, Magritte, Gauguin and other Masterpieces from a Private Collection,” is largely centered on portraiture and includes works by Alexander Archipenko, Rosa Bonheur, William Bouguereau, Max Ernst, Paul Gauguin, René Magritte, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, George Romney, Théophile van Rysselberghe and John William Waterhouse.

An opening reception will be held from 4 to 7 p.m. Nov. 12 at MMAC, which is located in UM’s Performing Arts and Radio/Television Center. The exhibition will be on view at the museum through March 12, 2011.

Featured will be three portraits by Renoir: “Portrait de Nini” (1874); “Mademoiselle Grimprel au ruban rouge (Hélène Grimprel)” (1880); and “Portrait de Wilhelm Mühlfeld” (1910). The portraits provide compelling evidence of the evolution of the artist’s approach to his subjects over the course of his life.

Romney’s romantic portrait of Emma Hart, a painting that was listed in a 1787 inventory of the artist’s studio, also will be part of the exhibition. Considered one of the most beguiling beauties of England in the mid-1700s, Hart was renowned for her talent of imitating classical poses drawn from antiquity, such as those found on Greek vases. In this portrait, she appears demurely as “Absence.”

Bonheur, perhaps the most famous woman artist of the 19th century, was a friend to Francisco Goya and known for her depictions of animals. Because the Paris-based Académie de Beaux-Arts did not admit women to their classes, Bonheur, disguised as a man, frequented slaughterhouses, fairs and horse shows for models. The exhibition includes “Monarchs of the Forest,” a double-portrait of Bonheur’s favorite pet stag.

Additional paintings by Gauguin and Van Rysselberghé document the transition away from the Impressionist painting style to what became known as Post Impressionism and Pointillism – both of which are characterized by an expressive use of color and emphasis on emotion instead of shifting natural light.

In conjunction with the exhibition, MMAC Curator of Art Brandon Reintjes will present an Osher Lifelong Learning Institute course titled “Questions of Connoisseurship” at UM. The course will begin Jan. 17. Reintjes also will present a lecture at 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 9, in the Masquer Theatre of the PAR/TV Center.

UM art history Professor Valerie Hedquist will give a lecture in conjunction with the exhibition at 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 10, in the Montana Theatre of the PAR/TV Center.

Concurrent with the masterpiece exhibition will be “Three Centuries of European Prints,” a display of works on paper drawn from the same period. The works are from MMAC’s Permanent Collection and have never before been exhibited. They will be on view in the museum’s Paxson Gallery. The Permanent Collection, which has existed since 1894, contains more than 10,000 artworks.
MMAC will provide expanded hours throughout the course of the exhibitions. Gallery hours will be from noon to 3 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday and from noon to 6 p.m. Thursday and Friday.

Sponsors of the exhibitions in addition to the private collector are Laura Barrett, First Interstate Bank, Suzanne and Bruce Crocker, The Washington Companies, Ben and Shirley Steele, Anne and Jon Bertsche, Cathy Capps and Tom Rickard, the UM President's Office, Bravo Catering and Montana Public Radio.

For more information, visit the MMAC website at http://www.umt.edu/montanamuseum or call 406-243-2019.

###

**NOTE TO MEDIA:** Digital images of select items included in the exhibition are available by calling 406-243-2019.

BR/bd

Local, state

102210muse