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N.C. Museum of Art Presents Impressive Collection of Still-Life Masterpieces

Exhibition features works by Renoir, Cézanne, Matisse, O’Keeffe, and more from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Raleigh, N.C. — This fall the North Carolina Museum of Art presents a stunning 400-year survey of more than 70 still-life paintings and decorative arts in *Still-Life Masterpieces: A Visual Feast from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*. The only U.S. venue for the exhibition, the NCMA will showcase memorable works by European and American masters like Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Paul Cézanne, Henri Matisse, and Georgia O’Keeffe, together with fanciful decorative arts that draw inspiration from the natural world.

Still-life painting as an art form developed in late 16th-century Europe. Artists dispensed with the need to tell stories in order to concentrate on closely observed compositions of everyday objects such as bowls of fruit, vases of flowers, or a shelf of bottles. Some painted expressively, each stroke of paint boldly evident, while others employed *trompe l’oeil* (“trick of the eye”), an uncanny, almost photographic illusionism.

“What all still-life painters have in common is the need to pay close, personal attention to the stuff of this world,” says John W. Coffey, deputy director for art and curator of American and modern art at the NCMA. “What’s painted is less important than how it is painted. These artists are primarily concerned with achieving a harmony of shape, color, and overall design.”

Placing particular emphasis on the visitor perspective, *Still-Life Masterpieces* is arranged conversationally rather than chronologically, encouraging dialogues between works of different periods and styles. A traditional painting of an elegant arrangement of fruit, porcelain, and glass goblet from the Dutch Golden Age contrasts with the fractured planes and perspectives of a cubist table composition. Lush impressionist images of flowers and fruits invite comparison to later still lifes, such as American John Peto’s homespun depiction of a student’s desk or British artist Sam Taylor-Wood’s poignant video of a slowly decaying plate of fruit.

Throughout the exhibition, cases display an eclectic assortment of decorative arts serving as counterpoint to the pictures. Sèvres porcelain wares, painted with floral sprays, pair with contemporaneous English porcelains in the shapes of fruits and vegetables. A flower-bedecked silver pitcher by Tiffany is matched with other American silver decorated with motifs from nature.

Exhibiting joyful porcelain vegetables and painted “tablescapes,” some galleries also feature the somber opulence of 17th-century *vanitas* paintings, which often juxtapose everyday objects with symbols of mortality, such as a skull or burnt candle, intending to remind viewers of the transience of life and beauty.

“We are thrilled to bring to North Carolina an exhibition with works by some of the greatest artists of all time—Manet, Courbet, Braque, and more,” says Director Lawrence J. Wheeler. “The works showcase an array of mediums, color palettes, themes, and techniques as diverse as the artists who created them.”
Still-Life Masterpieces: A Visual Feast from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Location
East Building: Meymandi Exhibition Gallery

Hours
Tuesday–Thursday 10 am–5 pm
Friday 10 am–9 pm
Saturday–Sunday 10 am–5 pm

Tickets
$15 Adults
$12 Seniors, Military, Students 13+, groups of 10 or more
$7.50 Children 7–12
Free for children 6 and under
Free for college students with current ID, Fridays 5–9 pm

Tickets may be purchased beginning Thursday, September 20, at www.ncartmuseum.org, (919) 715-5923, or at the Museum Box Office in East Building. The NCMA member presale begins Friday, August 31.

NEW! Combined Tickets
For Still-Life Masterpieces and Edvard Munch
$18 Adults
$15 Seniors, military, students 13+, groups of 10 or more
$10.50 Children 7–12

Media Resources
Online Newsroom: www.ncartmuseum.org/still-lifenewsroom
Exhibition Overview: www.ncartmuseum.org/still-life
Facebook: www.facebook.com/ncartmuseum
Twitter: www.twitter.com/ncartmuseum

In the Galleries: College-Juried Exhibition
A Life, Still features student work juried by college students through collaboration between NCMA educators and East Carolina University. College students from across the country are invited to submit original still-life art and video compositions through the blog at www.alifestill.tumblr.com.

Exhibition-Related Tours
Docent-led and self-guided group tours of Still-Life Masterpieces: A Visual Feast from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston will be available during the exhibition. Student opportunities, including limited post-tour studio programs for K–12 groups, will also be available.

Still Life Comes to Life, a series of free, docent-led tours, will be offered on Friday nights in October and November in the Museum's West Building. Each week the series will feature a different gallery tour exploring the still-life genre in the Museum’s permanent collection.

Still-Life Masterpieces tour packages with dining and shopping components will be available for groups of 16 or more. Reservations must be made at least four weeks in advance through the Museum concierge at (919) 664-6785.
Tour Schedule
North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, N.C.
B & M Theocharakis Foundation for the Fine Arts, Athens, Greece
Early 2013

Exhibition Credit Line
Organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. In Raleigh the presenting sponsor is Quintiles, the media sponsor is WTVD-11/ABC-11, and the participating sponsors are UNC Health Care/Rex Healthcare and American Airlines. The exhibition is also made possible, in part, by the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources; the North Carolina Museum of Art Foundation, Inc.; and the William R. Kenan Jr. Endowment for Educational Exhibitions.

Image Captions, from top

Paul Cézanne, Fruit and Jug on a Table, circa 1890–94, oil on canvas, 12 3/4 x 16 in., Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Bequest of John T. Spaulding, Photograph © 2012 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston


About the North Carolina Museum of Art
The North Carolina Museum of Art’s permanent collection spans more than 5,000 years, from ancient Egypt to the present, making the institution one of the premier art museums in the South. The Museum’s collection provides educational, aesthetic, intellectual, and cultural experiences for the citizens of North Carolina and beyond. The 164-acre Museum Park showcases the connection between art and nature through site-specific works of environmental art. The Museum offers changing national touring exhibitions, classes, lectures, family activities, films, and concerts.

The Museum opened West Building in 2010, home to the permanent collection. The North Carolina Museum of Art, Lawrence J. Wheeler, director, is located at 2110 Blue Ridge Road in Raleigh. It is the art museum of the State of North Carolina, Beverly Eaves Perdue, governor, and an agency of the Department of Cultural Resources, Linda A. Carlisle, secretary.

Hours and Admission
Admission to the Museum’s permanent collection and Museum Park is free. Museum hours are Tuesday–Thursday and Saturday–Sunday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Friday, 10 a.m.–9 p.m.; Closed Monday. For more information, visit www.ncartmuseum.org.