



Old Masters, Impressionists & Moderns

FRENCH MASTERWORKS FROM THE STATE PUSHKIN MUSEUM, MOSCOW

FOREWORD

EVER SINCE the time of Czar Peter I (the Great) (r. 1682–1725), Russia has had a love affair with French art. Peter the Great and his successors filled their palaces with fine and decorative arts from throughout Europe, shaping the taste of Russian court society with French paintings, fashions, and luxury goods. During the reign of Peter's daughter Elizabeth (r. 1741–61), French became the preferred language at court, and, under Catherine the Great (r. 1762–96), the formation of the Hermitage art collection secured the primacy in Russia of French art. Throughout the nineteenth century, noble families, prosperous businessmen, scholars, and clergy followed Catherine's lead; by the beginning of the twentieth century, Russia was in the enviable position of possessing the greatest collections of French painting anywhere outside of France.

The cataclysmic events in Russia in the early twentieth century forever changed the shape of these collections. After the Revolution of 1917, private collections were nationalized and museum collections redistributed. Whereas once the Hermitage had been the sole significant repository of European art in Russia, now there was a second great collection: the State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow. The Pushkin opened to the public in 1912; in less than forty years it had become one of the finest collections of French painting anywhere in the world.

The purpose of this exhibition is to introduce the Pushkin Museum's superb collection to American audiences. Until now, American presentations of French art from Russia have relied primarily on the holdings of the Hermitage Museum,

along with smaller numbers of paintings from the Pushkin included in thematic or monographic exhibitions. This exhibition consists of seventy-six works that range chronologically from the classicist Nicolas Poussin to the modernists Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse. Fifty-three of these paintings have never before been seen in the United States, including important works by François Boucher, Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Camille Corot, Gustave Courbet, Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro, and Paul Cézanne. Of the remaining twenty paintings—among which are Matisse's *Nasturtiums* and *The Dance* and Vincent van Gogh's *The Prison Courtyard*—few have been on view in Houston, Atlanta, or Los Angeles.

The exhibition—*Old Masters, Impressionists, and Moderns: French Masterworks from the State Pushkin Museum, Moscow*—was organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and the State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, in cooperation with the Foundation for International Arts and Education, an organization based in Bethesda, Maryland, and dedicated to preserving the cultural heritage of the countries of the former Soviet Union. It is a milestone in a partnership among these three institutions that will include additional exhibitions, long-term exchanges of individual paintings, and an ambitious publications program.

After opening in Houston in December 2002, the exhibition will travel to the High Museum of Art in Atlanta and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The partnership, exhibition, and national tour have been sustained from their inception by the generous support of Philip Morris Companies, whose faith in the value of these projects ensures that our

vision for this international exchange is realized.

Our gratitude goes to Janet Landay, curator of exhibitions at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, for her energy, insight, and hard work as project director of the partnership and as an organizing curator of this exhibition. Edgar Peters Bowron, the Audrey Jones Beck Curator of European Art at the MFAH, selected the works on view, and Mary G. Morton, MFAH associate curator of European art, contributed her expertise to the project. We are indebted to the staff at the Pushkin Museum, particularly Vitaly Mishin, deputy director of research; Maria Kostaki, head of the foreign office; Zinaida Bonami, deputy director of exhibitions and foreign affairs; Tatyana Potapova, chief curator; and Elena Sharnova, curator of French painting, for their able assistance in all aspects of organizing this exhibition. Building on the material provided by the Pushkin, Charlotte Eyerman, catalogue author; Theresa Papanikolas, MFAH associate editor; and Christine Waller Manca, MFAH assistant publications director, produced the excellent catalogue manuscript. We thank Yale University Press for publishing this catalogue and for its commitment to reaching a wide audience of readers. For navigating the legal complexities we thank Natalia Morosova and her colleagues at Vinson and Elkins, L.L.P., as well as Dennis Whelan and Xenia Menshova of the Russia Law Center. A complete list of the many people who devoted their talents and energy to making this exhibition possible appears on page x.

All of us involved in organizing this international loan exhibition believe in the power of cultural exchanges to bring people closer together. To share these artistic treasures

between nations affirms our commitment to celebrating the great achievements of human creation. As current events make such an undertaking increasingly difficult, they also make the pleasures it brings all the more precious.

Irina Antonova

Director

State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts

Peter C. Marzio

Director

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Gregory Guroff

President

Foundation for International Arts and Education

Michael E. Shapiro

Director

High Museum of Art

Andrea L. Rich

Director

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

SPONSOR'S STATEMENT

THE ARTS are a foundation for bridging communities around the world—they foster freedom of expression, transform lives, provoke thought, uplift, and inspire. That is why we at Philip Morris are proud to sponsor this unprecedented exhibition of French masterpieces from the State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, many of which have never been exhibited outside of Russia. American audiences will see some of the greatest French paintings and will experience the depth of the Pushkin Museum's extraordinary collection.

We are equally pleased to support the unique partnership between two of the most distinguished cultural institutions in the world, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and the State Pushkin Museum in Moscow. It is through the leadership and vision of these remarkable museums that an exhibition of the caliber of *Old Masters, Impressionists, and Moderns: French Masterworks from the State Pushkin Museum, Moscow* could become a reality.

During the past forty-five years, the Philip Morris family of companies has supported thousands of charitable organizations and helped to make a difference in people's lives. As a

major international company, we are an active member of the 180 communities around the world where we do business, and we have a commitment to address the needs of these communities to help them grow and thrive. We would like to thank the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and the State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, for their commitment and shared belief that the arts are for everyone. Through this exhibition and catalogue, they will educate and inspire audiences all over the world.



Louis C. Camilleri
President and Chief Executive Officer
Philip Morris Companies Inc.

HIGH LIFE

APRIL | MAY 2003

1:00PM

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of art

05/17/03

FRENCH MASTERWORKS FROM THE STATE PUSHKIN MUSEUM, MOSCOW, OPENS APRIL 5!

4 EXHIBITIONS



A 244-page, fully illustrated catalogue for this exhibition is available in the Shop.

This exhibition is organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and the State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, in cooperation with the Foundation for International Arts and Education.

The exhibition and its national tour are sponsored by



Altria

Additional funding is provided by the Trust for Mutual Understanding. An indemnity has been granted by the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

In Atlanta, additional support is provided by the Forward Arts Foundation Endowment Fund, NDCHealth, and friends of the Museum.



PAUL CÉZANNE, *Pierrot and Harlequin*, 1888, oil on canvas, 40 x 31⁷/₈ inches, The State Pushkin Museum, Moscow.

Works from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries include paintings by Nicolas Poussin, Claude Lorrain, Charles-Joseph Natoire, François Boucher, Carle Van Loo, Hubert Robert, and Jacques-Louis David. The nineteenth century is represented by Ingres, three paintings by Corot, Jean-François Millet, Courbet, Charles-François Daubigny, Eugène Fromentin, Auguste Renoir, Monet, Alfred Sisley, Pissarro, Edgar Degas, Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, Édouard Manet, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Eugène Carrière, Vincent van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, and four powerful works by Cézanne. The twentieth-century paintings are equally wonderful, including works by Édouard Vuillard, Pierre Bonnard, Henri-Edmond Cross, Henri Rousseau, André Derain, Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, and Henri Matisse.

This exhibition is organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and the State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, in cooperation with the Foundation for International Arts and Education, and is sponsored by Altria Group, Inc. The exhibition opened in Houston in December 2002. After Atlanta, the exhibition will travel to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

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Atlanta raises the curtain on *French Masterworks from the State Pushkin Museum, Moscow*. Discover some of the greatest paintings by Picasso, Cézanne, van Gogh, and more — here from Russia for the first time. Don't miss it!

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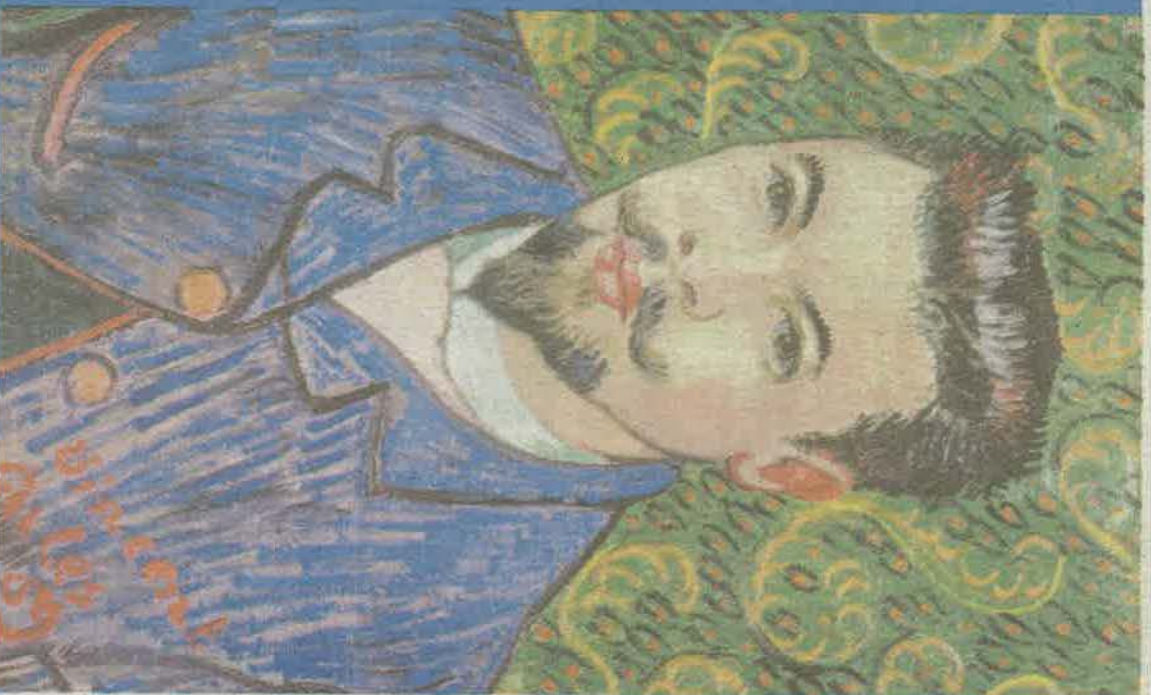
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The exhibition is organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and the State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, in cooperation with the Foundation for International Arts and Education. Additional funding is provided by the Trust for Personal Understanding. An indemnity has been granted by the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities. In Atlanta, additional support is provided by the Forward Arts Foundation Endowment Fund, NECHLASH, and Friends of the Museum. Visitation is subject to review by the Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium Authority.