

www.nelson-atkins.org

816.561.4000 Telephone
816.561.4011 Facsimile

The
Nelson-Atkins
Museum
of Art

4525 Oak Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64111

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nelson-Atkins to Unveil Bloch Galleries of European Art on March 11, 2017 *Galleries to feature Marion and Henry Bloch Collection, with Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art on view for first time in a decade*

Kansas City, MO (March 8, 2017)—On March 11, 2017, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art will open the Bloch Galleries in the museum's original 1933 Beaux-Arts building, featuring the Marion and Henry Bloch Collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art. Comprised of 29 masterpieces acquired by the Bloch family over the course of two decades and promised to the museum in 2010, the Bloch Collection nearly doubles the museum's current holdings of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art. In 2015, the Marion and Henry Bloch Family Foundation provided a \$12-million gift to support renovation of the museum's European art galleries to integrate the Bloch Collection into its existing collections to keep the work on permanent view.

"This transformational gift underscores the Bloch family's enduring commitment to our museum, and ensures that this unrivaled collection is a resource for visitors from Kansas City and beyond," said Julián Zugazagoitia, Menefee D. and Mary Louise Blackwell CEO & Director of the Nelson-Atkins. "We are deeply grateful to the Blochs for their unwavering support over the years, and we are pleased to integrate this collection into state-of-the-art galleries and within the context of the museum's European art collections."



This year also marks the 10th anniversary of the Bloch Building, a 165,000-square-foot expansion designed by Steven Holl. The expansion increased the museum's permanent collection space by 71% and boosted average annual attendance by 42% to over half a million visitors each year, also encouraged by their 15 year free admission policy.

One of the leading encyclopedic museums in the country, the Nelson-Atkins is recognized for its European collections, which contain more than 1,100 works of art ranging from the medieval period to

the early 20th century, including works by Caravaggio, Rembrandt, El Greco, and one of only 25 authenticated paintings by Hieronymus Bosch in the world. The Bloch Collection diversifies and deepens the Nelson-Atkins' Impressionist and Post-Impressionist holdings, which include masterpieces by Edouard Manet, Claude Monet, Vincent van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, Paul Cézanne and Henri Matisse.

With the renovation and reinstallation of the galleries, the Bloch Collection will be incorporated into the museum's permanent collection of European art, a project supported by consultations with Philippe de Montebello, former Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and Marc F. Wilson, Director Emeritus of the Nelson-Atkins, who succeeded Ralph T. (Ted) Coe and also worked with the Bloch family over the years to help them build their collection.

"Building this collection with Marion and the daily inspiration it provided in our home greatly enriched our lives," said Henry Bloch. "I look forward to these works going on view at the museum 10 years after their first exhibition, and I am especially pleased to share our collection permanently with the city I love so much."



The Bloch Collection made its public debut during the 2007 opening of the Bloch Building and was promised to the museum in 2010 in celebration of the Nelson-Atkins' 75th Anniversary. Henry and Marion Bloch started their collection over 40 years ago, beginning with the purchase of Auguste Renoir's *Woman Leaning on her Elbows* in 1976,

and completing their collection in 1997 with Camille Pissarro's *Chestnut Gove at Louveciennes*. Ralph T. [Ted] Coe, who served as director of the Nelson-Atkins from 1977 to 1982, following 11 years as the museum's curator of painting and sculpture, advised Marion and Henry Bloch in the earliest days of their collecting. One notable early purchase (in 1985) reflecting Henry's keen eye was Gustave Caillebotte's *Boat Moored on the Seine at Argenteuil*, which will be the second Caillebotte work to enter the Nelson-Atkins collection, a rare privilege as most museums are lucky to own even one.

Other noteworthy highlights from the collection include an oil painting by leading Impressionist female artist Berthe Morisot; a snow scene by Alfred Sisley; *White Lilacs in a Crystal Vase* by Edouard Manet, painted while he was bedbound in the last years of his life; Vincent van Gogh's *Restaurant Rispal at Asnières*, Paul Cézanne's *Man with a Pipe* and Pierre Bonnard's *The White Cupboard*.

“What a marvelous way to showcase the collection Marion and I acquired through the years thanks to the wonderful scholarship and advice of Ted Coe,” said Henry Bloch. “Our paintings will be right at home here. I hope everyone in Kansas City comes to see the beautiful Bloch Galleries.”

The renovation of the Bloch Galleries, designed by Kansas City-based BNIM Architects, encompasses 9,000 square feet of the original 1933 Nelson-Atkins Building. The expanded galleries will add more than 220 linear feet of wall space and create an open viewing experience with sightlines encouraging viewers to make connections among works. The installation will present themes within the general chronology of European art, presenting a fuller story of European art. The galleries will feature state-of-the-art technology, including tunable lighting that can simulate the environments for which the works were originally created.

“This renovation has completely transformed the Nelson-Atkins,” said Henry Bloch. “Each room in the new galleries is unique and very beautiful. I am looking forward to all the opening events with great anticipation.”

Curators and conservators at the Nelson-Atkins have already begun to conduct studies of works in the Bloch Collection to further the scholarly knowledge around these masterpieces of French painting. Their findings will enhance understanding of the works, both for display and for the French painting collection catalogue.

Photo credit: Joshua Ferdinand

About The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

Directed by Julián Zugazagoitia since 2010, the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art is recognized internationally as one of the finest general encyclopedic art museums in the United States. The Nelson-Atkins serves the community by providing free access and insight into its renowned collection of 40,000 art objects and is best known for its Asian art, European and American paintings, photography, modern sculpture, and new American Indian and Egyptian galleries. Housing a major art research library and the Ford Learning Center, the Museum is a key educational resource for the region. The institution-wide transformation of the Nelson-Atkins has included the 165,000-square-foot Bloch Building expansion and renovation of the original 1933 Nelson-Atkins Building.

Located at 45th and Oak Streets in Kansas City, the Nelson-Atkins is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10:00 a.m.– 5:00 p.m., with extended hours on Thursdays and Fridays until 9:00 p.m. Admission to the museum is free to everyone. For more information, please visit www.nelson-atkins.org or find the Nelson-Atkins Museum on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat.

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Media Contacts:

Kathleen Leighton
Nelson-Atkins Museum
kleighton@nelson-atkins.org
816-751-1321

Megan Ardery
Resnicow and Associates
mardery@resnicow.com
212-671-5178

Clarissa Marzán
Resnicow and Associates
cmarzan@resnicow.com
212-671-5173