



RENOIR: INTIMACY

18 October 2016 to 22 January 2017

Curator: Guillermo Solana

Writing about his father, the filmmaker Jean Renoir said: "He looked at flowers, women and clouds in the sky as other men touch and caress." *Renoir: Intimacy*, the first retrospective in Spain to focus on the Impressionist painter Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841-1919), challenges the traditional concept that reduces Impressionism to the "purely visual". Rather, it emphasises the central role played by tactile sensations in Renoir's paintings, which are present in all the different phases of his career and are expressed through a wide range of genres including group scenes, portraits, nudes, still lifes and landscapes.

Curated by Guillermo Solana, Artistic Director of the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, the exhibition is sponsored by Japan Tobacco International (JTI) and presents a survey of 78 works by the artist loaned from museums and collections worldwide, including the Musée Marmottan Monet in Paris, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Pushkin Museum in Moscow, the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, the National Gallery in London and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. *Renoir: Intimacy* shows how the artist made use of the tactile qualities of volume, paint and textures as a vehicle to evoke intimacy in its various forms (friendship, the family or erotic ties) and how that imagery connects the work to the viewer through the sensuality of the brushstroke and the pictorial surface. The exhibition will subsequently be shown at the Bilbao Fine Arts Museum from 7 February to 15 May 2017.

Touch and intimacy

While the figures in the group portraits of artists such as Manet and Degas tend to maintain their distance with the viewer, Renoir imbued his figures with a palpable closeness. In scenes with two or more, these figures habitually participate in a process of alternation between visual and physical contact: pairs of siblings or mothers and children in which one looks at the other, while the second responds by touching them.

Images from left to right: Pierre-Auguste Renoir. *After the Luncheon*, 1879. Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main. / *Bathing on the Seine. La Grenouillère*, 1869. The State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscú.

More information and images:

Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza – Press Oficce. Paseo del Prado, 8. 28014 Madrid.

Tel. +34 914203944/913600236. Fax+34914202780.

prensa@museothyssen.org; www.museothyssen.org;

<http://www.museothyssen.org/microsites/prensa/2016/renoir/index.html>

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The Plait, ca. 1886-1887.
Museum Langmatt. Langmatt Foundation
Sidney and Jenny Brown, Baden

On occasions these exchanges are constructed around a shared activity such as reading a book. In the case of his individual portraits, Renoir aimed to offer an experience comparable to physical contact by bringing the viewer as close as possible. While Degas surrounded his models with a setting and attributes that represent them, Renoir tended to tighten up the composition, omitting the setting in order to concentrate our gaze on the figure's face.

Other details that refer to palpable sensations in Renoir's paintings include the figures' hair, which they play with and twist around their hands; the dogs held by women in these works; the pieces of cloth or towels that cover their breast or are wrapped round their thighs; the task of sewing; skeins of wool; or the dense texture of a garden.

Renoir: Intimacy is structured into five thematic sections: *Impressionism, Portraits, Landscapes, Family and domestic Scenes* and *Bathers*.

The **Impressionist phase**, from 1869 to 1880, occupies three rooms in the exhibition and features some of Renoir's most iconic works, including *After the Luncheon* (1879), a life study for *Le Moulin de la Galette* (1875-1876), and *Bathing in the Seine (La Grenouillère)* of 1869, one of the works that Renoir executed in La Grenouillère, a popular area for leisure activities on the outskirts of Paris where he worked with Monet. A selection of female portraits set outdoors or in interiors, including *Portrait of Madame Claude Monet* (1872-1874), portraits of couples such as *La Promenade* (1870), in addition to an Impressionist landscape, *Woman with a Parasol in a Garden* (1875), complete this section.



The Promenade, 1870. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

By 1881 the Impressionist approach seemed to be exhausted and the group's members moved apart. Renoir turned his gaze to the classical tradition, from Raphael to Jean-Auguste

Dominique Ingres. While maintaining the use of an Impressionist pictorial language, his works now reveal a greater emphasis on drawing.



From the late 1870s and during the rest of the following decade Renoir gained a growing reputation as a **portraitist**, becoming one of the most solicited by Parisian high society. His depictions of *Mlle. Charlotte Berthier* (1883), *Portrait of the Poet Alice Vallières-Merzbach* (1913), the portrait of his dealer *Paul Durand Ruel* (1910) and of his sons *Joseph Durand-Ruel* (1882) and *Charles and Georges Durand-Ruel* (1882) are among the examples of this facet of his output on display.

Mlle Charlotte Berthier, 1883. National Gallery of Art.
Washington D.C.



The room devoted to **landscapes** includes views of the Normandy coast and the Channel Islands, such as *Hills around the Bay of Moulin Huet, Guernsey* (1883), Provence, where he shared pictorial motifs with his friend Cézanne, among them *Mont Sainte-Victoire* (ca.1888-1889) and various locations in southern Italy, including *The Bay of Salerno (Landscape of the South)* of 1881.

The Mount of Sainte-Victoire, ca. 1888-1889
New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery. Ordway
Collection

The exhibition continues with **family and domestic scenes** featuring the artist's children, such as *Coco eating his Soup* (1905) and *Jean dressed as a Hunter* (1910); the artist's wife Aline, depicted in *Motherhood* (1885), painted to mark the birth of their first son Pierre, and in *Aline Renoir Nursing her Baby* (1915); and other members of his closest circle. The latter included Gabrielle Renard, the family's nanny and a distant relative of Aline, who became one of Renoir's favourite models, seen here in *Boy with an Apple* or *Gabrielle, Jean Renoir and a Girl* (ca.1895-1896), and Andrée Heuschling, who would marry Renoir's son Jean after the artist's death, seen here in *The Concert* (1918-1919).



Jean as a Huntsman, 1910.
Los Angeles County Museum of Art



The nude was among Renoir's preferred subjects, although with the exception of Degas the Impressionists tended to avoid it as they considered it an academic theme. Engaged in his own stylistic evolution, Renoir achieved one of the high points of his career with his scenes of **bathers**: a series of nudes set outdoors in which the artist celebrated a type of timeless nature devoid of any reference to the modern world. The result is an idyllic vision characterised by the sensuality of the models, richness of colouring and plenitude of the forms.

The Source, 1906. Foundation E.G
Bührle Collection, Zurich

ASSOCIATED ACTIVITIES: Film cycle and Monographic course

In addition to a **film cycle** on Saturdays in November and December, which will include a range of titles relating to Renoir's work (free entry), from 26 October to 14 December this year, the Museum is organising the **monographic course *Domestic Angels? Women and images of domestic intimacy, from Renoir to the avant-garde movements***. This course will look at the depiction of intimacy in late 19th- and early 20th-century painting from a gender perspective. Directed by Patricia Mayayo, director of the department of Art History and Art Theory in the Faculty of Philosophy and the Arts of the Universidad Autónoma in Madrid, it takes its starting point from the role that the bourgeoisie conferred on women at the time, relegating them to

the home in the role of daughters, wives and mothers, in order to present other realities such as those offered by women artists who reassessed the very concept of bourgeois femininity through their works. The course is divided into eight sections led by university professors, academics and researchers from Spanish and international institutions, including Ana Paula Cavalcanti, professor of the sociology of art and culture at the Institute de Estudos Brasileiros, Universidade de São Paulo; Charlotte Foucher, researcher at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris; Lynda Nead, professor of art history at Birkbeck College, London University; Estrella de Diego, senior professor of contemporary art at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid and Guillermo Solana, artistic director of the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza and the exhibition's curator.



*Portrait of Madame Claude Monet, hacia 1872-1874.
Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbonne*

EXHIBITION INFORMATION:

Title: *Renoir: Intimacy*

Organiser: Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza

With the Patronage of: Japan Tobacco International (JTI)

Venue and dates: Madrid, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, 18 October 2016 to 22 January 2017.
Bilbao Fine Arts Museum, 7 February to 15 May 2017

Curator: Guillermo Solana, Artistic Director of the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza

Technical curator: Paula Luengo, Exhibitions curator at the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza

Number of works: 78

Publications: Catalogue with texts by Guillermo Solana, Colin Bailey and Flavie Durand-Ruel Moureaux, with a chronology by Paula Luengo. Published in English and Spanish editions. Educational guide and digital publication on the Thyssen Kiosk app.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza

Address: Paseo del Prado, 8. 28014 Madrid

Opening times: Tuesdays to Fridays and Sundays, 10am to 7pm; Saturdays, 10am to 9pm
Last entry one hour before closing time

Single entry ticket for the Permanent Collection and the temporary exhibitions:

Standard ticket: 12 Euros

Reduced price ticket: 8 Euros for visitors aged over 65, pensioners, students and Large Families with proof of status

Free entry: children aged under 12 and officially unemployed Spanish citizens

Advance ticket purchase at the Museum's ticket desks, from its website and on tel: 917 91 13 70

More information: www.museothyssen.org

Audio guides, available in various languages

PRESS INFORMATION:

<http://www.museothyssen.org/microsites/prensa/2016/Renoir/index.html>