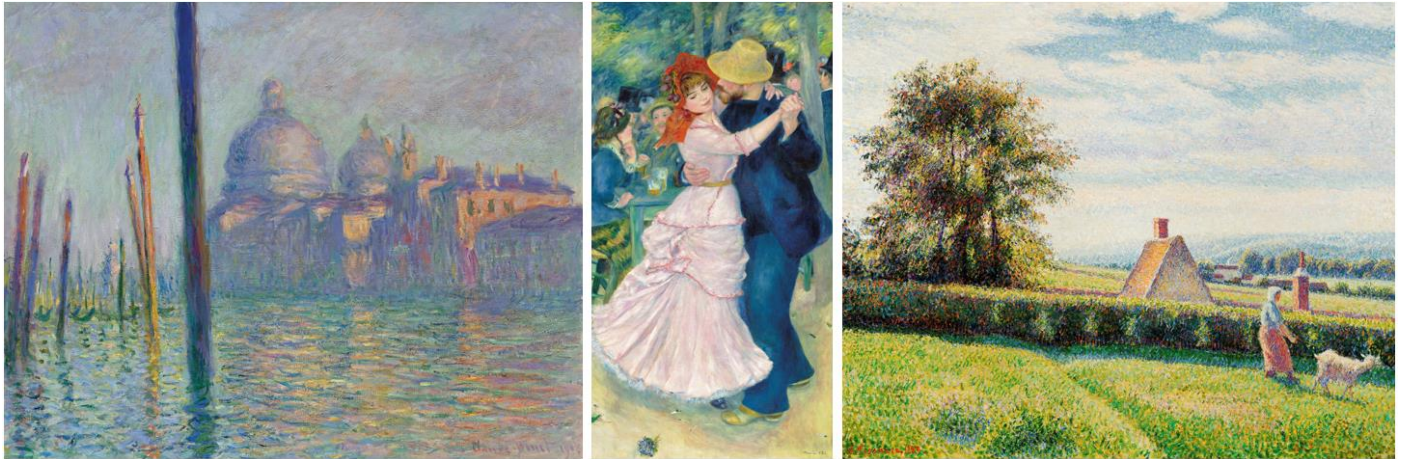


First Impressions get a second chance: 100+ masterpieces of French Impressionism return to Melbourne direct from Boston’s Museum of Fine Arts

French Impressionism | NGV International | 6 June – 5 October 2025 | Admission fees apply



24 October 2024: Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Edgar Degas, Camille Pissarro, Mary Cassatt, Berthe Morisot and more head to Melbourne for the NGV’s international-exclusive presentation of the major Melbourne Winter Masterpieces® exhibition, *French Impressionism*, from 6 June 2025. Presented by the NGV in partnership with the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), an institution renowned world-wide for its rich holdings of Impressionist paintings, the exhibition features more than 100 iconic paintings, including additional works never-before-seen in Australia.

Originally presented at NGV in 2021, the exhibition closed just after it opened due to the global pandemic. The 2025 presentation of *French Impressionism* gives Australian audiences a rare, second chance to experience one of the largest and most significant collections of French Impressionism ever to visit Australia – all exclusively on loan to the NGV from the MFA’s renowned collection in Boston.

French Impressionism charts the trajectory of the late-nineteenth century artistic movement, highlighting the key figures at the centre of this period of radical experimentation who boldly rejected the conventions of the state-sponsored Salon and exhibited their ‘impressionistic’ works independently. The exhibition evokes the artistic energy and intellectual dynamism of the period by placing emphasis on the thoughts and observations of the artists themselves, as captured through letters, journals and articles. Their voices reveal the social connections, artistic influences and personal rivalries that united the group of rebellious practitioners at the centre of this new art movement.

Moving through a brand-new immersive exhibition design, audiences will experience the hallmarks of Impressionism, including distinctive brushwork, unique points of view, arresting use of colour, as well as places dear to the artists, such as Paris, Fontainebleau Forest, Pontoise, Giverny, the Normandy coast and the South of France. Many artists also recorded movement and change in urban and domestic realms; still life paintings, intimate interiors and modern urban subjects will also feature.

An exhibition highlight will be a breathtaking display of 16 canvases in one gallery by Claude Monet. Painted over a thirty-year period, these paintings depict many of Monet’s most beloved scenes of nature in Argenteuil, the Normandy coast, the Mediterranean coast and his extraordinary garden in Giverny. Together, these paintings demonstrate the full scope of the artist’s immeasurable contribution to the Impressionist movement.

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A unique section of the exhibition also examines early works by Monet and his forebears, Eugène Boudin and painters of the Barbizon School rarely exhibited in Australia. These works illustrate their profound influence on Monet's use of the then radical method of painting outdoors *en plein air* ('in the open air') to capture changing conditions in nature. The exhibition also explores in-depth the careers of Renoir and his experimentation with pictorial effects in the 1880s, and Pissarro and his role as mentor to a number of other artists.

MFA Boston's significant collection of French Impressionism benefitted from the collecting efforts of individual Bostonians, some of whom visited the artists in France during the height of the movement.

These masterworks will be displayed within a reimagined immersive exhibition design developed especially for this new presentation of *French Impressionism*. Referencing late nineteenth century East Coast American and European interiors, the exhibition's design will bring forth the stories of the artists, exhibitions and collectors that shaped this renowned movement in art history.

Steve Dimopoulos, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events, said: 'The Melbourne Winter Masterpieces series continues to showcase our city as a global cultural destination – bringing world-renowned art to our shores, creating unforgettable experiences for visitors and providing a major boost for our economy.'

Colin Brooks, Minister for Creative Industries, said: 'Our Melbourne Winter Masterpieces series brings the world of art to Victoria, giving local audiences the opportunity to see and experience masterpieces that rarely travel, right here at home. At the same time, exhibitions of this quality draw visitors from far and wide, injecting millions into our economy. French Impressionism is no exception, and we're pleased to give this extraordinary exhibition the run it deserves.'

Tony Ellwood AM, Director, NGV said: 'One of the core roles of the NGV as a public institution is to share art and culture with all Victorians – and we are delighted to be able to finally share the MFA Boston's important collection with local audiences. Their collection has the unique ability to narrate the entire trajectory of the Impressionist movement – from its precursors to its zenith – with rich detail and nuance. We have worked closely with our colleagues in America to once again secure this exhibition for Australian audiences. We are incredibly grateful to them for entrusting us with these extraordinary and art historically important masterpieces and for their commitment to this ambitious presentation.'

Matthew Teitelbaum, Ann and Graham Gund Director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, said: 'We are delighted to have a second chance to share this meaningful exhibition with the people of Australia. *French Impressionism* is truly a revelation that brings together masterpieces of this transformational moment in the history of art—and foregrounds the voices of the artists at the center of it all. We are grateful to the National Gallery of Victoria for their partnership and their extraordinary vision in creating an experience for visitors that is truly one of a kind.'

The 2025 exhibition will feature three additional works from the MFA Boston's collection including *Self-portrait*, c. 1876, by Victorine Meurent. Best known for being Édouard Manet's favourite model (and appearing in renowned works such as *Street Singer*, 1862, which also features in this exhibition), she was also an artist in her own right and successfully entered a work into the Paris Salon in 1876 and again in 1879. In *Self-portrait*, Meurent paints herself in partial profile, her shoulders enrobed in butter yellow silk with a deep purple bow tied at her breast.

Alongside the new work by Victorine Meurent, another addition to the exhibition is *The Garlic Seller*, c. 1880, a painting by Jean-François Raffaëlli, who was a prominent presence in the fifth and sixth Impressionist exhibitions. Raffaëlli took an interest in painting the people and the sights he encountered in Paris's outer suburbs. Both paintings have never been exhibited previously in Australia.

Also joining the ten other works by Degas included in this exhibition is the 1869-72 painting *Degas's Father Listening to Lorenzo Pagans Playing the Guitar*. In this intimate double portrait, the artist has captured his father engrossed in listening to Spanish singer and musician Lorenzo Pagans. This painting recently underwent a dramatic conservation treatment and this will be the first time it will be on display post-treatment.

Two featured works were displayed in the first exhibition organised by the group of artists now referred to as the Impressionists in 1874, which celebrates its 150th anniversary in 2024. These include Pierre-Auguste Renoir's still life painting *Mixed flowers in an earthenware pot*, c. 1869, and Edgar Degas' *At the races in the countryside*, 1869, which depicts a family in a horse-drawn carriage. Degas provides immediacy to the work through his abrupt compositional cropping, with part of the carriage cropped out of the frame.

In 2025, the exhibition will also feature three Impressionist works from the NGV Collection, allowing visitors to see these beloved works for the first time in their broader context. They include Berthe Morisot's *Embroidery*, 1889, which depicts the artist's daughter and step-niece embroidering a dynamically rendered textile, and Paul Signac's *Gasometers at Clichy*, 1886, one of the first works painted by Signac according to the Neo-Impressionist principles of placing blocks of colour side by side. Louise Abbéma's portrait of her close friend, Renée Delmas de Pont-Jest, will also be included in the exhibition. Abbéma was a painter, sculptor, designer and ever-present figure in the art world of fin-de-siècle France and in 1906 she became only the fourth woman to be decorated with the Légion d'Honneur, France's highest order of merit.

French Impressionism, presented by the National Gallery of Victoria in partnership with the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, is on display 6 June to 5 October 2025 at NGV International, St Kilda Road, Melbourne. Further information is available via the [NGV website](#).

About the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

This exhibition is organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), where art inspires connections. Showcasing ancient artistry and contemporary masterpieces, the Museum's collection of nearly 500,000 works tells a multifaceted story of the human experience that holds unique meaning for everyone. For more than 50 years, the MFA's traveling exhibition program has partnered with museums and cultural institutions across the globe to share artworks and scholarship. We invite you to experience the MFA in Boston, online at mfa.org and around the world.

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Images:

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/wpuitgw84th607q0luym9/AJ4Ns7o44IZmIZ976Cep_eM?rlkey=8cjz3jlnk1yxmhsmed4vo2orx&st=vhu1d02m&dl=0

Image caption: Claude Monet, *Grand Canal, Venice* 1908, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Bequest of Alexander Cochrane, Photography © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. All Rights Reserved; **Pierre Auguste Renoir**, *Dance at Bougival* 1883, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Picture Fund, Photography © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. All Rights Reserved; **Camille Pissarro**, *Spring pasture* 1889, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Deposited by the Trustees of the White Fund, Lawrence, Massachusetts, Photography © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. All Rights Reserved

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