

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## ***Claude Monet's Secret Garden* highlights a major body of paintings produced in Giverny**



Image: Claude Monet, *Nymphéas*, 1903, oil on canvas, Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris, Photo: © Bridgeman Giraudon/Press

Media is invited to an exhibition preview of *Claude Monet's Secret Garden* on **Thursday, June 22, 2017, 9:00 a.m.** at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Media attending please RSVP to Justin Mah ([jmah@vanartgallery.bc.ca](mailto:jmah@vanartgallery.bc.ca))

**May 29, 2017, Vancouver, BC** – Opening on **June 24, 2017**, the Vancouver Art Gallery is pleased to present the most comprehensive exhibition of French painter Claude Monet's work in Canada in two decades. ***Claude Monet's Secret Garden*** will present thirty-eight paintings spanning the career of one of the most important figures in Western art.

*Claude Monet's Secret Garden* culminates in a phenomenal body of work produced in Giverny, a small village in northern France where Monet resided from 1883 to the end of his life in 1926. A creative endeavour in their own right, the gardens that Monet designed and cultivated in Giverny became the central inspiration of his art. Its waterlilies—populated with exotic strains from as far as South America and the Middle East—weeping willows and the famed Japanese bridge endure as some of the most iconic imagery in art. These audaciously expressive works represent the summation of Monet's lifelong dialogue with nature that guided him into radically new territories of painting.

“Monet’s unique vision, remarkable output and reputation as an intrepid documenter of nature gave full expression to modern life in France. We are proud to bring to Vancouver these pioneering artworks drawn from the unparalleled collection of the Musée Marmottan Monet in Paris. They trace the arc of a career that spanned over sixty years and that continually overturned conventions to experiment with new ways of rendering the world,” says Gallery Director, Kathleen S. Bartels. “We welcome audiences to immerse themselves in the extraordinary and innovative vision that transformed European painting and paved the way for avant-garde modernist art movements in the 20th century.”

*Claude Monet’s Secret Garden* maps out Monet’s career beginning in the late nineteenth century during his involvement with the Impressionist group of French painters. Monet’s 1872 painting *Impression, Sunrise* gave the movement its name and encapsulates its insistence on the primacy of immediate visual perception. The Impressionists cast off historical subject matter and turned to the world around them. Their art gave expression to modern life in France, a country rapidly altered by industrialization and urbanization in their time.

“This sensation of an ever-changing world reverberates through Monet’s art. Together with the other Impressionists, Monet spearheaded a radically new approach to painting,” says Ian M. Thom, Senior Curator–Historical. “In Monet’s art, technical innovations arose from the desire to find a means of expressing his individual perceptions of the world; and above all it was the experience of nature that was the driving catalyst of his painting.”

*Claude Monet’s Secret Garden* also surveys the diversity of subjects in his art, from the portrayal of modern life in his early figure studies to the inventive treatment of light in his scenes of the Parisian countryside and views of the River Thames. These works attest to Monet’s dedicated experimentation and novel approach to painting, which sought to capture the fleeting appearances and colours conjured by variable light with unique sensitivity.

Collaboratively organized by the Musée Marmottan Monet in Paris and the Vancouver Art Gallery, this exhibition is curated by Marianne Mathieu, Deputy Director of the Musée Marmottan Monet, responsible for Collections and Communication; and Ian M. Thom, Senior Curator–Historical at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

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#### **About the Vancouver Art Gallery**

Founded in 1931, the Vancouver Art Gallery is recognized as one of North America's most respected and innovative visual arts institutions. The Gallery's innovative ground-breaking exhibitions, extensive public programs and emphasis on advancing scholarship all focus on the historical and contemporary art of British Columbia and international centres, with special attention to the accomplishments of Indigenous artists and the art of the Asia Pacific region—through the Institute of Asian Art founded in 2014. The Gallery's programs also explore the impacts of images in the larger sphere of visual culture, design and architecture. [www.vanartgallery.bc.ca](http://www.vanartgallery.bc.ca)

The Vancouver Art Gallery is a not-for-profit organization supported by its members, individual donors, corporate funders, foundations, the City of Vancouver, the Province of British Columbia through the BC Arts Council, and the Canada Council for the Arts.

#### **About the Musée Marmottan Monet**

The Musée Marmottan Monet in Paris holds the world's largest collection of works by Claude Monet, including ninety-four paintings as well as numerous drawings and sketches. Formerly a private residence, the building was purchased by Jules Marmottan in 1882 and converted by his son Paul to display the family's collections of French paintings and decorative arts of the First French Empire (1802-14). The building and collections were bequeathed by Paul Marmottan to the Institut de France and opened to the public as the Musée Marmottan in 1934.

The museum acquired its first Impressionist works in 1957 through Victorine Donop de Monchy's donation of her father Georges de Bellio's art collection, including works by Monet, Morisot, Pissarro, Renoir and Sisley. Among the six Monets was the famed *Impression, Sunrise* (1872), which gave Impressionism its name. When Claude Monet's son Michel died in 1966, his will entrusted the extensive collection of art inherited from his father to the Marmottan. The majority of the works in this collection date to Monet's later life in Giverny. The museum was renovated to accommodate the bequest and a special wing for the Monet collection opened in 1971. The museum is currently undergoing extensive renovations to allow for the better display of works by Monet and other Impressionist artists.