

# MUSEUM BARBERINI

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## POTSDAM

### Press release

Potsdam, February 20, 2020

### Impressionism. The Hasso Plattner Collection

From September 5, 2020 at the Museum Barberini

**From September 5, 2020, the Museum Barberini in Potsdam will be showing Impressionist paintings from the collection of the museum's founder and benefactor, Prof. Dr. Hasso Plattner. More than 100 masterpieces by Monet, Renoir, Morisot, Sisley, Pissarro, Cross, Signac as well as other Impressionist and Post-Impressionist painters will be on permanent display at the Museum Barberini in the future. Among them are 34 paintings by Claude Monet alone. More works by Monet are nowhere else to be seen outside Paris in Europe. In total, over twenty artists will be represented in the permanent exhibition. Their works underline the central role that landscape painting played at that time.**

Hasso Plattner explains his passion for the Impressionists as follows: "Out of national resentment, French Impressionism was hardly collected in Germany at the time. My collection, especially here in eastern Germany, should therefore be a place of German-French friendship, cultural free spirit and international exchange."

Ortrud Westheider, Director of the Museum Barberini, underlines the importance of the new permanent display: "This collection is a great opportunity for us. With great passion and an infallible eye for quality, Hasso Plattner has assembled one of the most outstanding collections of Impressionist painting worldwide. In addition to important museums in Berlin, Bremen, Frankfurt, Cologne, Munich and Stuttgart, the German museum landscape is now gaining a further institution which boasts an superb collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist works – thanks to his generous support."

For the first time, the permanent display of the Plattner Collection will include paintings recently acquired by the Hasso Plattner Foundation, among them works by Caillebotte, Pissarro and Renoir, but also Monet's *Still Life with Spanish Melons* (1879), *Bordighera, Italy* (1884) and *The Flowered Meadow* (1885). The most famous of these works is his *Grainstack* from 1890, which was acquired for the museum. The painting is one of 25 variations of the motif of simple grainstacks that were located in the immediate vicinity of Monet's house in Giverny. The artist painted them at different seasons and times of the day in the early 1890s. When 15 of these works were exhibited at the Paris gallery of Paul Durand-Ruel in May 1891, Monet declared: "For me, a landscape does not exist in and of itself, because its appearance changes every moment; it lives through what envelops it – through the air and the light that constantly changes. (...) For me, the subject only acquires its true value through its environment."

At the end of the 19th century, Monet developed his signature serial procedure with the grainstack images, which he later continued with his water-lily paintings – a turning point in his work. In the Barberini's version from the series, the unusual diagonal arrangement endows the composition with a sense of dynamism, which is further emphasized by the intense coloring. This painting was acquired in 1892 by the Chicago art collector Bertha Palmer, who once owned one of the largest collections of French landscape painting outside Paris, including nine compositions from this first series by Monet.

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Museum founder Hasso Plattner elaborates on the importance of this acquisitions: "With Monet's *Grainstack*, the Hasso Plattner Foundation has acquired an icon of Impressionism for the museum. Masterpieces like these should not be locked away, but shown in public. At the Museum Barberini, the painting will be on display for everyone to see." Director Ortrud Westheider adds: "With Monet's *Grainstack*, the Museum Barberini is linked to collections such as the Art Institute of Chicago, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Musée d'Orsay in Paris and the Kunsthaus Zürich, which also own works from this same series."

Monet's painting *Grainstack* is on public display for the first time since 1945 in the context of the extensive retrospective *Monet: Places*, which held at the Museum Barberini from February 22 to June 1, 2020. In this exhibition, the painting is shown in a visual dialogue with two other variations of the *Grainstacks*: One painting comes from the private collection of Hasso Plattner. The other is on loan from the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra and was formerly also in the collection of Bertha Palmer.