



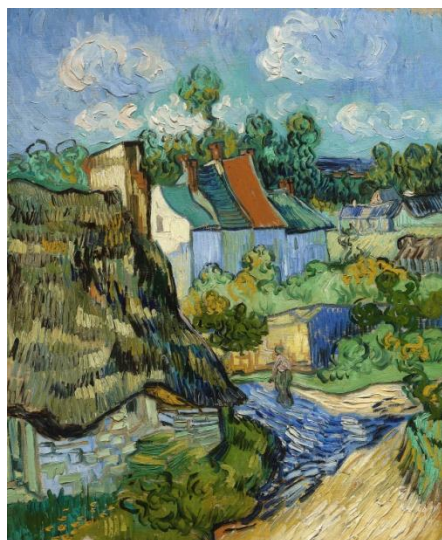
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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **VINCENT VAN GOGH'S *HOUSES AT AUVERS* VOTED BOSTON'S FAVORITE IMPRESSIONIST PAINTING**

#### **Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Unveils First “Crowdsourced” Exhibition, *Boston Loves Impressionism***



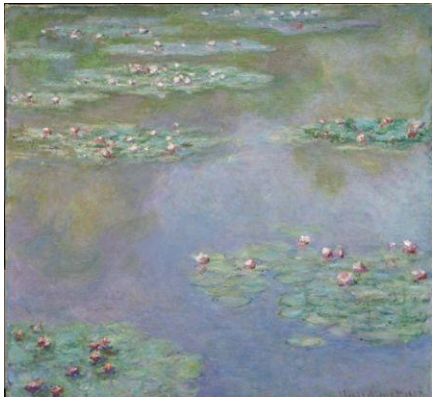
**Boston's #1 Favorite**  
*Houses at Auvers*, 1890,  
Vincent Van Gogh

BOSTON, MA (February 14, 2014)—After 24 days and 41,497 votes, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), today opens [\*Boston Loves Impressionism\*](#)—its first “crowdsourced” exhibition—and reveals Boston’s favorite Impressionist works of art. The public was given the opportunity to cast their votes on a group of 50 Impressionist and Post-Impressionist masterpieces from the MFA’s collection. They responded with passion, “Sharing the Love” from their phones, Facebook and by scanning heart-shaped QR codes found throughout the Museum. Voters made plain their love for Vincent Van Gogh’s masterpiece, *Houses at Auvers* (1890), which earned the most votes (4,464), edging out Claude Monet, who came in second place with 3,543 votes for his iconic *Water Lilies* (1907). Third place was taken by Edgar Degas’ *Little Fourteen-Year-Old Dancer* (original model 1878–81, cast after 1921)—the only sculpture in the contest. These three top vote getters hold a place of honor at the entrance of the *Boston Loves Impressionism* exhibition (on view February 14–May 26, 2014 in the Lois and Michael Torf Gallery), where they hang alongside 27 other works

chosen by the public, as well as five loans from local collectors. The exhibition was conceived by Malcolm Rogers, the MFA’s Ann and Graham Gund Director. While renovations take place in the large Sidney and Esther Rabb Gallery of European Impressionism, Rogers was looking for a way to keep many of the works on view, and had the idea to get the public involved in choosing which ones by asking them to share their favorites. *Boston Loves Impressionism* is sponsored by Toshiba.

“This exhibition of works chosen by the public is a landmark for the Museum and has provided new insight into Boston’s changing artistic tastes,” said Malcolm Rogers, Ann and Graham Gund Director at the MFA. “While the public’s longstanding love of Monet is

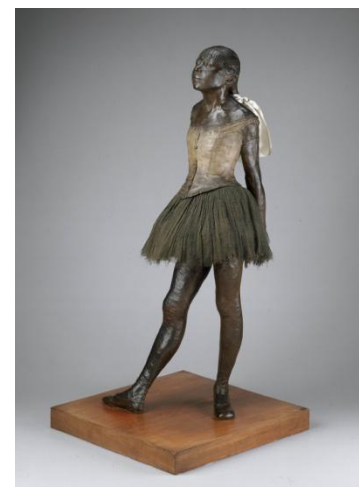
evident in the selection of 13 of the artist's iconic paintings for the exhibition, Van Gogh won the number one spot with his Post-Impressionist masterpiece, *Houses at Auvers*."



**Boston's #2 Favorite**  
*Water Lilies*, 1907, Claude Monet

The exhibition premieres on Valentine's Day with a full schedule of love-themed (including lovelorn) events and activities planned throughout the weekend—including gallery tours, special merchandise in the MFA bookstore and shop, and sweet treats and sparkling wine available in the Museum's restaurants. Custom-made, MFA- and art-themed Sweethearts candies will be given to the first 5,000 visitors, marked with phrases like "Cezanne of Love" and "MFA 4Ever." Everyone who voted received a voucher for free Museum admission for two, but all lovebirds and lonely hearts are welcome to attend the MFA's special Valentine's weekend exhibition premiere. For a full list of opening weekend events, visit [here](#).

Voting for *Boston Loves Impressionism* began on January 6, when fans selected their favorite Impressionist works from a different themed group each week—"On the Water" (seascapes), "From the Land" (landscapes and still lifes) and "Of the People" (portraits). Each week, participants were served a new selection of works, with the top 30 overall vote getters earning a spot in the exhibition. A final three-day round of voting had the top ten vying to be ranked from one to ten, with the top three earning a special spot at the entrance of the exhibition. In the final hours of the last day of voting, Degas' *Little Dancer* came from behind to earn a place in the top three, edging out a victory by 30 votes over Monet's *Boulevard Saint-Denis, Argenteuil, in Winter* (1875)—propelled by social media appeals from its fans. Childhood attachments to the sculpture were revealed, with one fan saying on Facebook, "Degas! It's one of the first pieces of art I ever completely fell head over heels in love with when I was a little girl." The top two works, Van Gogh's *Houses at Auvers* and Monet's *Water Lilies*, held strong leads throughout the voting process. "Van Gogh, he speaks about my DREAMS! Monet, he speaks about my soul," wrote one voter.



**Boston's #3 Favorite**  
*Little Fourteen-Year-Old Dancer*,  
original model 1878–81, cast after  
1921, Edgar Degas

**The top 10 works selected by the public are identified (1-10) by hearts on the labels in the exhibition:**

1. *Houses at Auvers*, 1890, Vincent van Gogh (4,464 votes)
2. *Water Lilies*, 1907, Claude Monet (3,543 votes)
3. *Little Fourteen-Year-Old Dancer*, original model 1878–81, cast after 1921, Edgar Degas (2,869 votes)
4. *Boulevard Saint-Denis, Argenteuil, in Winter*, 1875, Claude Monet (2,839 votes)

5. *Meadow with Poplars*, about 1875, Claude Monet (2,523 votes)
6. *In the Loge*, 1878, Mary Stevenson Cassatt (2,254 votes)
7. *Morning on the Seine, near Giverny*, 1897, Claude Monet (2,212 votes)
8. *Girls Picking Flowers in a Meadow*, about 1890, Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1,721 votes)
9. *Two Peasant Women in a Meadow (Le Pré)*, 1893, Camille Pissarro (1,577 votes)
10. *Fruit Displayed on a Stand*, about 1881–82, Gustave Caillebotte (1,501 votes)

For a list of works on view and the final vote totals, visit [here](#) or the MFA's [Pinterest board](#).

### ***Boston Loves Impressionism*, by the Numbers:**

- **Final Tally:** 41,497 votes were counted over 24 days, an average of 1,729 votes per day.
- **A Passion for Post-Impressionism?:** With 4,464 votes, Van Gogh's *Houses at Auvers* won the top prize, perhaps indicating the public's shifting allegiance from Monet and the Impressionists towards Post-Impressionism. However, Cézanne—who can also be categorized as a Post-Impressionist—has only one work voted into the show.
- **Mad for Monet:** Of the 30 crowd-selected works that earned a spot in the exhibition, 13 were paintings by Monet (the most of any artist in *Boston Loves Impressionism*). With four in the top 10 (receiving a total of 11,117 combined votes), Boston is still mad for Monet.
- **Elite Eight:** The 30 works chosen by the public represent eight artists: Claude Monet (13 works), Pierre-Auguste Renoir (six works), Edgar Degas (four works), Vincent van Gogh (two works), Gustave Caillebotte (two works), Mary Stevenson Cassatt (one work), Camille Pissarro (one work), and Paul Cézanne (one work).
- **Ladies First:** One of only three women, and the only American, to exhibit with the French Impressionist circle in their day, Mary Cassatt stands out as the only woman (and the only American) represented in the exhibition.
- **Sweethearts for Sweet Arts:** The MFA custom-ordered Sweethearts candies for Valentine's visitors, with 20 different art- and MFA-themed phrases just for the occasion. Some favorite sayings are “Monet Can't Buy Love” and “Red Hot Renoir.”

After the voting period ended (at midnight on January 29), Exhibition Curator Emily Beeny and MFA educators and designers had just two weeks to interpret the story of Impressionism in Boston and install the exhibition. Through the lens of voters' choices, the exhibition tells the story of Boston's long-standing love for Impressionism, which began in the 1870s and 1880s and continues to the present day. In the exhibition, visitors will enjoy seeing which works from the MFA's preeminent collection of Impressionist art were selected by the public, such as Degas' *Racehorses at Longchamp* (1869)—the first work by the artist purchased by any American museum; Caillebotte's *Man at His Bath* (1884)—the MFA's first Impressionist nude; and Renoir's *Girls Picking Flowers in a Meadow* (about 1890)—one of six works by the artist in the exhibition, second only to Monet. Collecting Impressionism and

Post-Impressionism continues in New England today, and the conclusion of the exhibition includes five loans of Impressionist works by Monet, Paul Signac and Theodore van Rysselberghe from private collectors around Boston. The exhibition also includes a case of letters, including one from Monet (to Boston collector Thomas Sergeant Perry) as well as photographs, newspaper clippings and exhibition catalogues tracing the early history of Impressionism in Boston and at the MFA. MFA Guides (available at the Sharf Visitor Center) offer a mobile tour of the exhibition, taking a deeper look at six works and offering a rare glimpse inside the world of the artists—from a black and white film of Monet painting at Giverny to a sonnet Degas wrote about the *Little Dancer*, spoken in French and English.

“The exhibition presents both an opportunity to engage our public in a new way and a chance to celebrate the extraordinary history of our collection,” said Emily Beeny, the MFA’s Assistant Curator of Paintings, Art of Europe. “Bostonians loved Impressionism in the 19th century and—as the response we’ve seen proves—they still do today.”

### **Share the Love on Valentine’s Day Weekend**

Guests who visit the MFA on Valentine’s weekend have the opportunity to enjoy music, free gallery tours and special dining offers. On **Friday, February 14**, the Museum will open the doors to *Boston Loves Impressionism* at 10 am, allowing visitors the first opportunity to see what works were chosen by the public. In the afternoon, a free gallery talk on French Impressionism in Boston will be led by exhibition curator Emily Beeny. Two different tours of works throughout the Museum’s collections—*Love and Lovers at the MFA* and *Broken Hearts*—will also be offered in the evening, along with a screening of the romantic comedy classic *When Harry Met Sally*. On **Saturday**, three free gallery talks on *A Mania for Monet!* explore the artwork of one of Boston’s most-loved Impressionists. The Museum will also host three free *Color and Light in Impressionism* talks on **Sunday**, and feature an in-depth lecture about the MFA’s renowned Impressionist collection with Beeny (\$10 MFA members, seniors, and students; \$13 nonmembers). Throughout the weekend, red velvet cupcakes will be available for purchase at the Garden Cafeteria as well as New American Café and Taste Café and Wine Bar—which will also offer sparkling wine. Guests can also peruse the Museum shops for a special Valentine’s memento for a loved one. See below for a full schedule of activities.

### **Impressionism in Boston**

In the 1870s and early 1880s, when many critics and collectors in Paris still laughed at Monet, Degas, Cézanne and Renoir, Bostonians began buying works by members of the Impressionist avant-garde. Impressionist pictures were relatively cheap in those days, and Boston collectors—many of whom had trained as painters or maintained close ties with artists working abroad—knew a bargain when they saw one. Today, the collection includes masterworks by Degas, Renoir, Cézanne, Caillebotte, Sisley, Pissarro and an astonishing 37 paintings by Monet. Though the collection continues to grow and change, it remains marked by the many individuals who have shaped and loved it through the decades.

*Boston Loves Impressionism* is on view through May 26, 2014, while the MFA's large European Impressionism gallery—the Sidney and Esther Rabb Gallery—undergoes renovations before its reopening on June 4, 2014. Filled with Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings and sculpture chosen by the MFA's curatorial team, the gallery will provide an in-depth look at avant-garde artists working in France between 1870 and 1900. *The renovation of this gallery was made possible with support from the Vance Wall Foundation.*

Fans who want to stay up-to-date with MFA exhibitions, events and information year round, can follow along on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#) and [Twitter](#).

### **VALENTINE'S DAY WEEKEND ACTIVITIES**

*All activities are free with Museum admission unless otherwise noted  
Those who voted receive free admission for two with their voucher*

#### **ALL WEEKEND LONG**

##### ***Boston Loves Impressionism* exhibition**

Torf Gallery

##### **Treats for Two—Check out the MFA's Sweet Dining Spots**

Red velvet cupcakes and sparkling wine (available for purchase)  
New American Café and Taste Café and Wine Bar

Red velvet cupcakes (available for purchase)  
Garden Cafeteria

Sparkling wine (available for purchase)  
Bravo Restaurant (Friday Lunch, Saturday and Sunday Brunch)  
25% discount for Members (Feb 1–Mar 31)

##### **Last-Minute Love**

Gifts available for your Valentine in the MFA bookstore and shop.

#### **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14**

10am–9:45pm

##### ***Boston Loves Impressionism* Exhibition Premiere**

10am–9:45pm, Torf Gallery  
Custom Sweethearts candies distributed to visitors (while supplies last).

##### **Gallery Talk: *Impressionism Comes to Boston***

1 pm, Torf Gallery  
A first look at the *Boston Loves Impressionism* exhibition and insight on the history of city's love of the movement, with curator Emily Beeny.

**Gallery Talk: *Love and Lovers at the MFA***

6-7 pm, Meet at Sharf Visitor Center

Visitors discover works of art that celebrate the themes of love and romance in both painting and poetry.

**Gallery Talk: *Broken Hearts***

7-8 pm, Meet at Sharf Visitor Center

This gallery talk peers into the heart when it has been broken, from Greek coins, to medieval panels and cubist masterpieces.

**Movie: *When Harry Met Sally***

7-9 pm, Alford Auditorium

**Prix Fixe Valentine's Day Dinner (SOLD OUT)**

5:30–8:30 pm, Bravo Restaurant

\$55 per person, free parking

25% discount for Members (Feb 1–Mar 31)

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15**

10am–4:45pm

**Spotlight Talks: *A Mania for Monet!***

1-1:15, 2-2:15 and 3-3:15 pm, Torf Gallery

Visitors can dig deeper into Monet and his work on these 15-minute tours of the exhibition.

**Music: Handel and Haydn Society, *Vivaldi Concerti* (SOLD OUT)**

2 pm, Remis Auditorium

\$16

Vivaldi's influence over composers of his time spread throughout Europe as his concerti, always in demand, were sent to and performed in the farthest corners of the continent. The brilliance and imagination inherent in his violin concerti are on ample display in his more rarely-heard cello concerti. The instrument was just on the cusp of gaining recognition as a worthy solo vehicle when Vivaldi pushed the limits of cellists' technique with some of his 27 cello concerti. Four of these, as well as works for strings, lute and harpsichord by Vivaldi, Purcell, Durante and others, will be performed by cellist Guy Fishman and principal players from the Handel & Haydn Society, led by concertmaster Aisslinn Nosky and keyboardist Ian Watson.

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16**

10am–4:45pm

**Spotlight Talks: *Color and Light in Impressionism***

1-1:15, 2-2:15 and 3-3:15 pm, Torf Gallery

These fifteen-minute tours look more closely at the use of color and light in Impressionist works.

**Lecture: *A Collection Of Collections: Impressionism At The MFA***

2-3 pm, Remis Auditorium

\$10 MFA members, seniors, and students; \$13 Nonmembers

A lecture about the Museum's collection with exhibition curator Emily Beeny.

*The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), is recognized for the quality and scope of its encyclopedic collection, which includes an estimated 450,000 objects. The Museum's collection is made up of: Art of the Americas; Art of Europe; Contemporary Art; Art of Asia, Oceania, and Africa; Art of the Ancient World; Prints, Drawings, and Photographs; Textile and Fashion Arts; and Musical Instruments. Open seven days a week, the MFA's hours are Saturday through Tuesday, 10 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.; and Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. – 9:45 p.m. Admission (which includes one repeat visit within 10 days) is \$25 for adults and \$23 for seniors and students age 18 and older, and includes entry to all galleries and special exhibitions. Admission is free for University Members and youths age 17 and younger on weekdays after 3 p.m., weekends, and Boston Public Schools holidays; otherwise \$10. Wednesday nights after 4 p.m. admission is by voluntary contribution (suggested donation \$25). MFA Members are always admitted for free. The MFA's multi-media guide is available at ticket desks and the Sharf*

*Visitor Center for \$5, members; \$6, non-members; and \$4, youths. The Museum is closed on New Year's Day, Patriots' Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. For more information, visit [mfa.org](http://mfa.org) or call 617.267.9300. The MFA is located on the Avenue of the Arts at 465 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02115.*

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