



Paul G. Allen's Landscape Collection Begins National Museum Tour

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by Hamptons Art Hub Staff

PORTLAND—Selections from Paul Allen's landscape painting collection are embarking on a two-year traveling exhibition set to appear in art museums throughout the United States. "Seeing Nature: Landscape Masterworks from the Paul G. Allen Family Collection" debuts at the [Portland Art Museum](#) on October 10, 2015. It will remain there through January 10, 2016 before traveling to four additional American museums.

"Seeing Nature" will be exhibited at [The Phillips Collection](#) in Washington, D.C. (February 6 – May 8, 2016), the [Minneapolis Institute of Art](#) (July 10 – September 18, 2016) and the [New Orleans Museum of Art](#) (October 14, 2016 – January 15, 2017) with its final stop at the [Seattle Art Museum](#) (February 16 – May 21, 2017).

"Seeing Nature: Landscape Masterworks from the Paul G. Allen Family Collection" features 39 masterpieces exploring the evolution of European and American landscape painting. The paintings span five centuries of art history and include works by [Paul Cézanne](#), David Hockney, Edward Hopper, Gustav Klimt, Claude Monet, [Thomas Moran](#), Georgia O'Keeffe, Gerhard Richter and [J.M.W. Turner](#).



"Grand Canyon of Arizona at Sunset" by Thomas Moran, 1909. Oil on canvas, 30 x 40 inches. Paul G. Allen Family Collection.

The exhibition is co-organized by Portland Art Museum, the Seattle Art Museum and the Paul G. Allen Family Collection.

"I am excited to be sharing the 'Seeing Nature' exhibit with others," said Paul G. Allen. "These are really exceptional pieces of art and there's something about landscapes that is universally attractive, which is why I find them so interesting. By sharing these paintings with the public, it is my hope that people will have the same eye-opening experiences I had when I first saw these pieces."



“Birch Forest” by Gustav Klimt, 1903. Oil on canvas, 42 1/4 x 42 1/4 inches. Paul G. Allen Family Collection.

The exhibition explores the development of landscape painting, from a small window on the world to interpretations of artists’ personal experiences with their surroundings on land and sea. It reveals the power of landscape to locate the viewer in time and place—to record, explore, and understand the natural and man-made world.

“These works will live on far beyond any of us,” said Mary Ann Prior, director of arts collections, Vulcan Inc. “As temporary custodians of these masterpieces, we take great care and responsibility in being their cultural conservators.”

In the 19th century, the early Impressionists focused on direct observation of nature. This exhibition is particularly strong in the works of [Claude Monet](#).

Five [Monet](#) landscapes spanning 30 years are featured, from views of the French countryside to one of his late representations of water lilies, *Le Bassin aux Nymphéas* of 1919. [Cézanne](#) and his fellow Post-Impressionists used a more subjective approach to creating works such as *La Montagne Sainte-Victoire* (1888-90). Also on view is Austrian painter [Gustav Klimt](#)’s rare landscape masterpiece, *Birch Forest* of 1903, exhibited for the first time since its restitution in 2006.



“Le bassin aux nymphéas” by Claude Monet, 1919. Oil on canvas, 39 1/2 x 79 inches. Paul G. Allen Family Collection.

Several works in the exhibition offer varying interpretations of a single location.

Venice’s romantic vista is seen through multiple lenses, from Canaletto’s detailed renderings, to J.M.W. Turner and Thomas Moran’s dreamy visions, to Manet’s photographic crispness and Monet’s nearly abstract composition. The Grand Canyon’s immensity is seen in Moran’s intimately scaled depiction, Arthur Wesley Dow’s mesmerizing pattern of ridged peaks, and [David Hockney](#)’s multi-canvas composition.



“The Grand Canyon” by David Hockney, 1998. Oil on canvas, 48 1/2 x 169 1/2 inches. Paul G. Allen Family Collection.

The last part of the exhibition explores the paintings of 20th century artists, such as [Georgia O’Keeffe](#), [Edward Hopper](#), David Hockney, [Gerhard Richter](#), and [Ed Ruscha](#), who brought fresh perspectives to traditional landscape subjects. For example, O’Keeffe’s *Black Iris IV*, though a close-up of a single flower, represents a microcosm of full-scale landscape vistas.



“Black Iris VI” by Georgia O’Keeffe, 1936. Oil on canvas, 36 x 24 inches. Paul G. Allen Family Collection.

Each museum will develop unique programming to complement the exhibit. The Portland Art Museum will present a variety of related programs in conjunction with “Seeing Nature”. The Museum is collaborating with [Allen Institute for Brain Science](#), [Oregon Health & Science University’s Brain Institute](#), [NW Noggin](#) and other regional partners to bring a neuroscience lens to the Museum’s featured exhibition.

Through “The Nature of Seeing” an interpretive gallery inside the exhibition visitors will have unique opportunities to explore what emerging research tells us about how our brains respond when we view landscape paintings and the natural world. This exploration will be developed further through multimedia content and public programs.



“The Five Senses: Sight” by Jan Brueghel the Younger, 1625. Oil on panel, 27 5/8 x 44 5/8 inches. Paul G. Allen Family Collection.

BASIC FACTS: “Seeing Nature: Landscape Masterworks from the Paul G. Allen Family Collection” opens on October 10, 2015 at the Portland Art Museum. The museum is located at 1219 SW Park Avenue, Portland, OR 97205. www.portlandartmuseum.org.

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