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Alfredo Ramos Martínez, *Two Women Before the Crucifixion*, ca. 1942. Charcoal on paper. Anonymous Gift.



Jules Breton, *The Pardon*, 1872. Oil on canvas. Gift of Kenneth W. Watters in memory of Elizabeth Converse Strong Watters.

### *The Art of Storytelling*

**Santa Barbara Museum of Art continues to be a leader in a new way of presenting art with *Picture Stories: The Art of Europe and the Americas* Opens September 10**

*September 8, 2005* – Through a fresh, innovative model to museum practice, established during *Art of the Americas: Latin America and the United States, 1800 to Now!* in 2004, the Santa Barbara Museum of Art tells compelling stories of ideas and beliefs, tradition and innovation, the human body, and the power of place through the reinstallation of its permanent collection in *Picture Stories: The Art of Europe and the Americas*. Featuring approximately 150 paintings, drawings, prints, photographs, and sculpture, ranging from the age of discovery and colonization to the present global and digital era, this new installation reveals likenesses while giving equal emphasis to the powerfully different meanings that works of similar form and subject may have depending on their place of origin and the time they were created.

Curated by Diana C. du Pont, SBMA Curator of Modern & Contemporary Art, this presentation builds on the foundation of a new model for the interpretation and display of museum collections developed by SBMA. *Art of the Americas* was the first major permanent collection exhibition to

feature together, with some considerable depth and scope, Latin American and United States art from the nineteenth to twenty-first centuries. *Picture Stories* expands this model by adding the art of Europe and broadening the artistic time period covered in this rich and varied installation, which spans over six centuries and presents intriguing juxtapositions that encourage fresh interpretations.

This new reinstallation offers an extensive sampling of artwork that makes up the Museum's permanent collection, which tells a host of different stories through thematic sections and coherent passages, as opposed to an overall unifying narrative. The stories emerge through the careful and innovative groupings of artwork, spurring discussions between likely, and sometimes unlikely, characters.

In addition to freely combining media and crossing time and regional boundaries, *Picture Stories* aims to enhance the viewer experience by using color and lighting to create an atmosphere. Custom-made furniture is strategically placed to allow visitors an opportunity to pause and ponder.

Soft hues highlighted with satin gloss stripes, reminiscent of rich fabric wallpaper, transform the Preston Morton Gallery into the interior of a French salon. Within this gallery, paintings, sculpture, and works on paper, some presented in a salon style configuration, showcase the breadth of figurative art. Featuring both historic and contemporary art, the reinstallation traces significant changes in attitude toward representing the human form. The story of the body in motion in contrast to the body in repose is told through Marius Jean Antonin Mercié's sculpture, *Gloria Victis*, after 1874, and Edward Weston's photograph, *Nude*, 1936.



Marius Jean Antonin Mercié, *Gloria Victis* after 1874. Bronze with gilding. Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Museum purchase with funds provided by the Nineteenth Century Art Acquisition Fund.



Edward Weston, *Nude*, 1936/ later print by Brett Weston. Gelatin silver print. Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Gift of Arthur and Yolanda Steinman.

The Ridley-Tree Gallery presents a constellation of rural and urban landscapes that demonstrate how landscape surpassed history painting as a major genre in the nineteenth century, culminating with a remarkable suite of French Impressionist paintings by Claude Monet and Alfred Sisley. The SBMA boasts one of the largest holdings of works by Monet of any Museum in California.

The story of landscapes also illustrates the changes in society from a rural to an urban culture and the emergence of new heroes, as represented by images of the worker, such as in Jules Bastien-Lepage's *Les Blés murs* (The Ripened Wheat), 1884, and of new roles, as represented by images of women, highlighted by Berthe Morisot's *View of Paris from the Trocadero*, 1871-72.



Jules Bastien-Lepage, *Les Bles murs*  
(The Ripened Wheat), 1884. Oil on canvas.  
Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Museum purchase  
with funds provided by Suzette and Eugene Davidson  
and the Davidson Endowment Fund.



Berthe Morisot, *View of Paris from the Trocadero*,  
1871-72. Oil on canvas. Santa Barbara Museum of  
Art, Gift of Mrs. Hugh N. Kirkland.

With the advent of photography in 1839, landscape soon became as popular a subject for photographers as it was for painters. In the United States, painters and photographers alike braved great physical risks in order to capture the majesty of nature. These awe-inspiring images of unspoiled wilderness and unlimited resources came to shape a young country's national and cultural identity. This is most poignantly illustrated through a strikingly similar pose of the majestic North Dome in Yosemite National Park by Thomas Hill's painting, *North Dome from Bridge*, 1870s-1880s, and William Henry Jackson's untitled photograph from the early 1870s.



Thomas Hill, *North Dome from Bridge*,  
1870s-80s. Oil on canvas. Santa Barbara  
Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. William T. Swain.



William Henry Jackson  
Untitled (Mountains and Stream), ca. 1872  
Albumen print. Santa Barbara Museum of Art,  
Gift of Arthur and Yolanda Steinman.

Also in the Ridley-Tree Gallery, a section of abstract works carry the narrative begun with modern Impressionist painting to its logical conclusion, isolating and emphasizing the fundamental building blocks of painting and sculpture—color, form, line, and texture—in order to heighten visual experience. For example, in Hans Hofmann's *Simplex Munditis*, 1962, blocks of vivid color are suspended in a planar field and arranged in a patchwork design. Their placement and juxtaposition create a dynamic sense of three-dimensionality on a two-dimensional surface. The artist viewed this “push-pull” effect as a metaphor of the forces and counterforces at work in the universe.



Hans Hofmann, *Simplex Munditis*, 1962.  
Oil on canvas. Santa Barbara Museum  
of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Hans Hofmann.

Moving to the Campbell, Gould, and Sterling Morton East and West galleries, groupings demonstrate artistic expressions of religious and spiritual ideas and beliefs, from realistic descriptions of Christ and the Virgin Mary to abstract mediations on the invisible and the otherworldly.

Nineteenth-century New Mexican *retablos*, juxtaposed with Russian icons from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, emphasize how the drive to reproduce another dimension can also arise from popular, material culture rather than a formally trained, academic setting.

Italian and Spanish Baroque religious painting create a narrative of religious inspiration, power, and dominance in seventeenth-century Europe. A suite of etchings by Albrecht Dürer and Rembrandt Van Rijn illustrate stories from The Bible and are early examples of the printed image, demonstrating how printmaking played a key role in disseminating art to a larger public.



Albrecht Dürer, *St. Philip*, 1526.  
Engraving. Santa Barbara Museum of Art,  
Gift of Margaret Mallory in honor of Ala Story.



Rembrandt Van Rijn, *The Crucifixion*, ca. 1635.  
Etching. Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Gift  
of Estate of Alice F. Schot

Many may ask why the more traditional presentation of a collection with works organized chronologically or clustered in geographic sections needs to be changed at all? The answer is not simply for the sake of change, but to reacquaint the public with a significant permanent collection. It is also to encourage fresh interpretations through a sense of surprise, and acknowledgement of similarities, but also critical differences in art, shaped by related, yet diverse, histories.

This exhibition has been made possible through the generous support of the Cheeryble Foundation and an anonymous donor.

Also on view at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art are *A Tribute to Paul Mills: A Life in Art Remembered* through October 2, 2005 and *First Seen: Portraits of the World's Peoples (1840-1880)* through January 15, 2006.

The Santa Barbara Museum of Art is a privately funded, not-for-profit institution that provides internationally recognized collections and exhibitions and a broad array of cultural and educational activities as well as travel opportunities around the world.

**Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1130 State Street, Santa Barbara, CA. Open Tuesday - Sunday 11 am to 5 pm. Closed Monday. Free every Sunday. 805.963.4364 [www.sbmanet](http://www.sbmanet)**