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Théodore Rousseau, *Vallée de Saint-Féjoux, Doubs* ca. 1860-1862.
Oil on canvas, 38" x 52". Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara
Museum of Art, Gift of Lady Ridley-Tree in honor of Phillip M. Johnston.

Ridley-Tree Gift Honors Museum Director

Inaugural Rousseau Marks Farewell of Retiring Phillip Johnston

October 23, 2007— While the proverbial gold watch is not expected to don the wrist of retiring Santa Barbara Museum of Art Director, Phillip Johnston, when he says his final farewell, the institution is being presented with a gift of invaluable measure in honor of his tenure. Lady Leslie Ridley-Tree, current Trustee, former Board Chair, and ongoing supporter of the Museum, is giving the painting *Vallée de Saint-Féjoux, Doubs* by renowned French Barbizon School artist, Théodore Rousseau. The gift marks the first Rousseau in the Museum's collection.

"I think it is a fitting piece for the fine work that Phillip has done [at the Museum]", notes Lady Ridley-Tree. "It is a very academic piece - a very stirring piece. Not many people are aware of this work by Rousseau, but there is so much to learn from it. The more you look at it, the more you love it."

The large-scale painting shows in the foreground the Saint-Ferjeux Valley of Doubs in eastern France with the sunlit Jura mountain range in the distance. It was unveiled to an intimate gathering during an appreciation event for Phillip Johnston, and is anticipated to be placed on view to the public soon.

"I am truly honored by the wonderful gift that Lady Leslie Ridley-Tree has made to the Museum," notes Phillip Johnston. "It is an important addition to the SBMA collection and I hope it reminds

us of the significant role the quality of this assemblage plays in continuing to inspire our community and visitors.”

About the artist:

Théodore Rousseau (1812-1867) developed an appreciation for the French countryside early in his life; by the age of fourteen he had already begun sketching. As he began to paint, his influence came from such naturalist painters as Ruisdael and Constable. Then in the late 1840s, Rousseau with Jean-Francois Millet, rejecting the classical landscape style and insisting upon direct study of nature, founded the Barbizon School, named for his favorite village in the forest of Fontainebleau. Rousseau's work became well known and sought after in the 1850s. However, he preferred to remain in his cottage in Barbizon, where he died in 1867.

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