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### **Masterpieces by Monet, van Gogh, Matisse and more travel to Adelaide next winter**

**Adelaide, Australia:** An Australian-exclusive exhibition of masterworks from the acclaimed Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio, United States, will open at the Art Gallery of South Australia in July 2026 as the debut exhibition in AGSA's new Winter Art Series. Featuring works never-before-seen in Australia, *Monet to Matisse: Defying Tradition* traces a ground-breaking period in art history through seminal works by the most influential European and American artists of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries including Paul Cézanne, Edgar Degas, Helen Frankenthaler, Henri Matisse, Piet Mondrian, Claude Monet, Berthe Morisot, Pablo Picasso, Robert Rauschenberg, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Vincent van Gogh and James McNeill Whistler.

Featuring 57 paintings from the Toledo Museum of Art's world-renowned collection, *Monet to Matisse* follows the development of modern art in Europe and the United States at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These works tell the story of succeeding generations of painters and how the styles they invented - from Impressionism to Cubism, Surrealism to Abstract Expressionism - defied tradition and transformed modern art. *Monet to Matisse* presents a rare opportunity for Australian audiences to

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experience landmark works by pre-eminent artists, from Impressionists such as Degas, Monet, Morisot and Renoir; to examples of the European and American avant-garde including Matisse, Mondrian, Picasso and Rauschenberg; through to bold abstract paintings by Frankenthaler and Josef Albers.

Amongst these celebrated paintings from the Toledo Museum of Art will be a selection of paintings and works on paper from AGSA's collection, including works by Manet, Matisse, Picasso and Whistler, and a remarkable drawing by Édouard Vuillard, highlighting the international significance of AGSA's collection.

Presented in partnership with the South Australian Government through the South Australian Tourism Commission, AGSA's Winter Art Series is a major new initiative that brings major international exhibitions exclusively to Adelaide during the winter seasons from 2026-29, celebrating Adelaide's position as a vibrant cultural destination through exhibitions from world-renowned art collections and complemented by curated experiences and events.

AGSA Director, Jason Smith, said, '*Monet to Matisse* will reveal one of art history's most transformative periods through a truly outstanding collection of 57 treasures from one of the United States' finest art museums. This important collaboration with the Toledo Museum of Art will see masterworks travel to Australia for the first time, on display exclusively at the Art Gallery of South Australia throughout winter 2026. From van Gogh's luminous haystacks to Monet's iconic water lilies, visitors will encounter paintings by some of the world's most influential artists - the innovators and trailblazers of their time whose work defied traditions and whose legacies continue to reverberate today.'

Adam Levine, Edward Drummond and Florence Scott Libbey President, Director, and CEO of the Toledo Museum of Art, said, 'The Toledo Museum of Art is renowned for the exceptional quality of its collection. Never before have so many of the Museum's masterworks travelled together, and we are proud to share them with audiences in Australia for the first time.'

Premier of South Australia, The Hon. Peter Malinauskas MP, said cultural tourism generates significant economic benefits and positive social impacts for South Australians.

'*Monet to Matisse* is a real coup for South Australia, bringing iconic paintings by artists including Vincent van Gogh and Henri Matisse to Adelaide for the first time. The Art Gallery of South Australia has cemented itself as a major tourism destination and AGSA's Winter Art Series will see blockbuster exhibitions exclusively in Adelaide over winter for the next four years, driving tourism visitation and delivering tangible economic growth to the state,' Premier Malinauskas said.

Chair of the Art Gallery Board, Sandy Verschoor says, 'We're thrilled that through the Winter Art Series, AGSA will be a premier destination to view extraordinary masterpieces rarely seen in Australia. *Monet to Matisse: Defying Tradition*, the inaugural exhibition in AGSA's new Winter Art Series, further consolidates AGSA's vision to be the most inspiring art destination in Australia.'

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Among the masterworks on display in *Monet to Matisse: Defying Tradition* are:

**Vincent van Gogh, *Wheat Fields with Reaper, Auvers, 1890***

Vincent van Gogh was fascinated by the vast fields of wheat that stretched above Auvers-sur-Oise, a town north of Paris where he lived the last two months of his life. He painted many views of these fields, including this landscape with a reaper cutting the golden grain while the stacked sheaves recede toward a village and the distant blue hills. For van Gogh, the reaper was sometimes a biblical metaphor of the final harvest when mankind will be reaped like ripe wheat. Though inspired by the observation of his immediate surroundings, van Gogh was not interested in mimicking what he saw. As he wrote in 1888 to his brother Theo, 'Instead of trying to reproduce exactly what I have before my eyes, I use colour more arbitrarily, to express myself more forcibly.' His thick, sculptural brushstrokes add to this forceful expression.

**Piet Mondrian, *Composition with Red, Blue, Yellow, Black, and Gray, 1922***

'Every true artist has been inspired more by the beauty of lines and colour and the relationships between them than by the concrete subject of the picture.' - Piet Mondrian. Dominated by a large white square surrounded by small colour planes that extend to the edges of the canvas, *Composition with Red, Blue, Yellow, Black, and Gray* expresses Mondrian's desire to balance opposing forces by concentrating on the subtle relationship between lines, shapes and colours. Mondrian believed his nonrepresentational style, which he called Neoplasticism, expressed the unity and order possible in nature when opposing forces are in balance. He hoped his images of absolute harmony, clarity and order would point the way toward a future universal utopia.

**Claude Monet, *Water Lilies, c.1922***

Plants, water and sky seem to merge in Claude Monet's evocative painting of his lily pond at his home in Giverny. The disorienting reflections, bold brushstrokes and lack of horizon line or spatial depth make *Water Lilies* appear almost abstract. Painted about 1922, it belongs to a grand project that Monet had conceived as far back as 1897: 'Imagine a circular room whose wall...would be entirely filled by a horizon of water spotted with [water lilies]...the calm and silence of the still water reflecting the flowering display; the tones are vague, deliciously nuanced, as delicate as a dream.' Monet began this ambitious project in 1914, finally completing it shortly before his death in 1926. Over those years he executed more than 60 paintings of his water garden, capturing the light conditions at different times of day and in different weather.

**Paul Klee, *Villas for Marionettes (Villen für Marionetten), 1922***

Paul Klee, along with Joan Miró, helped to prove that Modern art did not always need to be self-consciously serious. What at first seems to be a sober meditation on form and colour, upon closer inspection reveals visual puns and a humorously literal take on the whimsical title. The fractured construction of the painting consists of arches, staircases, windows, roof gables and basic forms like circles, rectangles and squares. It is a collage of viewpoints - side-on and from above, close-up details and faraway glimpses. The colour scheme suggests a night scene. The repeated curved shape recalls curtains drawn to one side - simultaneously implying a window and a stage. An incisive caricaturist early in his career, Klee matured into an internationally respected artist. In 1921 he was appointed to

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the faculty of the prestigious Bauhaus School of design in Weimar, Germany. As the Nazis came to political power, he fled Germany and lived in Switzerland until his death in 1940.

### **Henri Matisse, *Dancer Resting*, 1940**

Painted just before Henri Matisse abandoned painting for designs composed of paper cutouts, *Dancer Resting* incorporates interests that occupied him throughout his career: the human figure, bright colours, varied lines and patterns, all given equal attention. The woman, Lydia Delectorskaya, Matisse's favourite model at the time, leans back in her chair, her legs casually splayed. She gazes out matter-of-factly at the viewer, at ease with herself. One of Matisse's paintings of nudes rests on an easel in the upper right and provides a self-referential wink to the viewer. House plants and the large blocks of colour on the floor create patterns that reflect Matisse's lifelong interest in decorative motifs. Delectorskaya remained with Matisse as a studio manager, model, secretary, and finally, caregiver, until his death in 1954. Enigmatically known only as 'Madame Lydia' to studio visitors, she was pivotal in helping to produce his late work when his health was in rapid decline.

### **Helen Frankenthaler, *Blue Jay*, 1963**

'A line, colour, shapes, spaces, all do one thing for and within themselves, and yet do something else, in relation to everything that is going on within the four sides [of the canvas]. A line is a line, but [also] is a colour...It does this here, but that there. The canvas surface is flat and yet the space extends for miles. What a lie, what trickery - how beautiful is the very idea of painting.' - Helen Frankenthaler. Abstract Expressionist painter Helen Frankenthaler was a significant figure in the postwar American art scene, rising to prominence in the 1950s. By the 1960s, Frankenthaler increasingly utilised a technique she referred to as 'soak stain,' resulting in a watercolour-like appearance as seen in *Blue Jay*. This is achieved by painting directly onto an unprimed canvas with turpentine-diluted oil paints, which influenced artists such as Kenneth Noland and Morris Louis and led the way for Colour Field painting.

*Monet to Matisse: Defying Tradition* is on display at the Art Gallery of South Australia from 11 July to 8 November 2026 and will be accompanied by a series of public programs and events. To book tickets visit [agsa.sa.gov.au](https://agsa.sa.gov.au).

*Monet to Matisse: Defying Tradition* is organised by the Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio.

### **About the Toledo Museum of Art**

Established in 1901, the Toledo Museum of Art (TMA) is a beloved cultural institution in Toledo, Ohio, and a global leader in the museum field. It believes that art transforms people's lives and invites them to see differently. Its renowned collection features over 25,000 works, ranging from antiquity to contemporary art, with a particular strength in glass - recognised as one of the finest collections in the world. Situated on a 40-acre campus, TMA integrates art into people's lives through its world-class collection, engaging exhibitions, robust educational programs and community outreach.

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**Image caption:** Vincent van Gogh, born Zundert, Netherlands 1853, died Auvers-sur-Oise, France 1890, *Wheat Fields with Reaper, Auvers*, 1890, oil on canvas, 73.6 x 93.0 cm; Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment, Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey, Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio, United States of America.

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