



Media only: Laura Baptiste (202) 633-8494

April 29, 2011

Media website: americanart.si.edu/pr

Fact Sheet
“The Civil War and American Art”

Exhibition

“The Civil War and American Art”

Nov. 16, 2012 – April 28, 2013

Location

Smithsonian American Art Museum, Eighth and F streets N.W.

Description

The Smithsonian American Art Museum is organizing a major exhibition that examines how America’s artists represented the impact of the Civil War and its aftermath. Winslow Homer, Eastman Johnson, Frederic Church and Sanford Gifford—four of America’s finest artists of the era—anchor the exhibition. It will include approximately 60 paintings as well as vintage photographs. The artworks were chosen for their aesthetic power in conveying the intense emotions of the period. Homer and Johnson grappled directly with issues such as emancipation and reconciliation. Church and Gifford contended with the destruction of the idea that America was a “New Eden.” Most of the artworks in the exhibition were made during the war, when it was unclear how long it might last and which side would win. The exhibition also includes battlefield photography, which carried the gruesome burden of documenting the carnage and destruction. The visceral and immediate impact of these images by Mathew Brady, Alexander Gardner, Timothy H. O’Sullivan and George Barnard freed the fine arts to explore the deeper significance of the Civil War, rather than chronicle each battle. Eleanor Jones Harvey, chief curator at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, is organizing the exhibition.

Publication

A major scholarly catalog about the coming of age of American art during the Civil War, written by Harvey, will accompany the exhibition.

Tour

The exhibition will travel to The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City (May 21, 2013 - Sept. 2, 2013).

The Smithsonian American Art Museum is located above the Gallery Place/Chinatown Metrorail station. Museum hours are 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily, except Dec. 25. Admission is free. Follow the museum on Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, ArtBabble, iTunes and YouTube. Museum information (recorded): (202) 633-7970. Smithsonian Information: (202) 633-1000; (202) 633-5285 (TTY). Website: americanart.si.edu.

###