

For Immediate Release

**MASTERPIECES BY COURBET, DELACROIX, AND MORE FEATURED IN
SUMMER EXHIBITION AT THE CLARK ART INSTITUTE**

WILLIAMSTOWN, MA (December 11, 2003) – Masterpieces by Gustave Courbet, Eugène Delacroix, Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, Camille Corot, Jean-Léon Gérôme, Alexandre Cabanel, and others are featured in an exhibition to open at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Massachusetts, June 27, 2004. *“Bonjour, Monsieur Courbet!”: The Bruyas Collection from the Musée Fabre, Montpellier* highlights some of the most influential images of 19th-century French painting, including the famous title painting by Courbet. Some 45 paintings, 20 drawings, and five sculptures, many of which have rarely been seen in the United States, will be on view. The exhibition is organized by the Musée Fabre, Montpellier, France, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia, and the Clark, with the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts and the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, under the auspices of FRAME (French Regional and American Museum Exchange).

“The Clark is delighted to be a part of this effort to bring these significant and beloved icons of French art to the United States,” said Michael Conforti, director of the Clark Art Institute. “Not only does the exhibiton feature masterpieces by Courbet, Delacroix, and others, but it also explores the practice of collecting and the importance the artist/patron relationship by examining the collection of an influential figure in the history of art, Alfred Bruyas, and his role in shaping the work of some of the world’s

foremost artists. It also represents an ongoing collaboration among French and American museums that will continue to share great works of art with new audiences in both countries.”

Courbet’s 1854 painting *Bonjour, Monsieur Courbet!* (also known as *The Meeting*) depicts his greatest patron, Alfred Bruyas, welcoming the artist to his town, Montpellier, in the south of France. In his day, Bruyas was one of the foremost collectors of contemporary art in France. His desire to showcase the best French painting led him to friendships with such renowned artists as Courbet, Delacroix, Octave Tassaert, and Cabanel. Bruyas’s tastes ranged from romanticism to realism, and he collected both traditional and what was then avant-garde art. The works in the exhibition are all drawn from Bruyas’s collection, which he gave to the Musée Fabre in two donations of 1868 and 1876.

In addition to *Bonjour, Monsieur Courbet!*, the exhibition features eight paintings by Courbet, including the monumental *The Bathers* (1853) and *Self-Portrait with a Striped Collar* (1854). Other highlights include the paintings *Michelangelo in His Studio* (c. 1850) and *Women of Algiers in their Apartment* (1849) by Delacroix, *Portrait of Alfred Bruyas* (1846) by Cabanel, and *Study for “Jesus Among the Doctors”* (c. 1842-51; assembled 1866) by Ingres. Among the drawings in the exhibition are Millet’s *Peasant Woman Feeding her Child* (1864-65) and Rousseau’s *Marsh at Villebussière, Berri* (1842). The five bronzes in the exhibition are all by Barye and include *Theseus Battling the Minotaur* (first edition 1857).

“The works collected by Alfred Bruyas represent the full richness and diversity of French art of his time,” said Richard Rand, senior curator at the Clark Art Institute. “It is

a wonderful opportunity to see these works here at the Clark, which is also known for an inclusive, encompassing collection of 19th-century French painting. Like Bruyas, Sterling and Francine Clark collected both traditional and avant-garde French art. Unlike Bruyas, the Clarks enthusiastically acquired Impressionist works, so exhibiting the Bruyas collection here in Williamstown provides a great overview of French art during this seminal period.”

Among the other artists represented in “*Bonjour, Monsieur Courbet!*” are: Paul Huet, Louis Boulanger, Jules Didier, Jules Laurens, Paul Chenavard, Achille Devéria, Edouard Antoine Marsal, Eugène Fromentin, Gustave Doré, Auguste Barthélemy Glaize, Paul Delaroche, Joseph-Desiré Court, Eugène Devéria, Léon Benouville, Joseph Nicolas Robert-Fleury, Paul Flandrin, Eugène Isabey, Thomas Couture, and Narcisse Virgile Diaz de la Peña.

About FRAME

The exhibition is a project of FRAME, a consortium of 18 museums in the United States and France. The group was founded in 1999 in order to promote regional museums in both countries, museums with important collections that are located outside of Paris and New York. The participating institutions share resources and expertise, exchange works of art, and develop joint exhibitions. The director of FRAME is Richard Brettell of the University of Texas, guest curator of the Clark Art Institute’s acclaimed 2001 exhibition, *Impression: Painting Quickly in France, 1860-1890*. Participating American museums are: the Clark, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Dallas Museum of Art, the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, the Minneapolis Institute of Art, the Portland Museum of Art, the Saint Louis Museum of Art, and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

French Museums participating are the Musée des Augustins, Toulouse, Musée des Beaux Art de Bordeaux, the Musée des Beaux Arts de Lyon, Musée des Beaux Art de Rennes, Musée Fabre, Montpellier, Musée de Grenoble, Musées de la Ville de Strasbourg, Musée de la ville de Rouen, and Palais des Beaux Arts de Lille.

Prior to opening at the Clark, the exhibition will be seen at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, March 26-June 13, 2004. It will later travel to the Dallas Museum of Art (October 17, 2004-January 2, 2005) and to the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (January 22-April 4, 2005).

Catalogue

A catalogue, published by the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Yale University Press, and the Réunion des Musées Nationaux will be available at the end of March 2004. The 256-page catalogue, edited by Sarah Lees, assistant curator of paintings at the Clark, will include approximately 100 color plates and contributions by 15 French and American scholars. Retail price for the catalogue will be \$60 hardcover, \$35 softcover.

The Clark

The Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute is one of the country's foremost art museums and also a dynamic center for research and higher education in art history and criticism. The Clark's exceptional collections of Old Master, Impressionist, and 19th-century American art on display in the museum's intimate galleries are enhanced by its dramatic 140-acre setting in the Berkshires.

The Institute is one of only a few art museums in the U.S. that is also a major research and academic center, with an international fellowship program and regular

conferences, symposia, and colloquia, and an important art research library. The Clark, together with Williams College, jointly sponsors one of the nation's leading M.A. programs in art history and encompasses one of the most comprehensive art history libraries in the world. Its Fellows and conference programs draw university and museum professionals from around the world.

In 2003, the Clark unveiled designs for its forthcoming building expansion and campus enhancement, designed by Pritzker-prize winning architect, Tadao Ando.

The Clark Art Institute is located at 225 South Street in Williamstown, Massachusetts. Throughout "*Bonjour, Monsieur Courbet!*," the Clark galleries will be open daily, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Adult admission during the season is \$10 (free to children 18 and under, students, and members). For more information, call 413-458-2303 or visit www.clarkart.edu.

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Press Contacts

Sherrill Ingalls
 (413) 458-2303, ext. 388 (telephone)
 (413) 458-2324 (fax)
singalls@clarkart.edu (e-mail)

Christine Ferrara, Resnicow Schroeder
 Associates
 (212) 671-5158 (telephone)
 (212) 595-8354 (fax)
cferrara@resnicowschroeder.com (e-mail)