

May 1, 2006

**MASTERPIECES FROM STERLING AND STEPHEN CLARK'S COLLECTIONS
UNITED FOR THE FIRST TIME**

**EXHIBITION TO PRESENT MASTERPIECES BY RENOIR, CÉZANNE, MATISSE,
AND HOMER AND EXPLORE THE BROTHERS' CONNOISSEURSHIP,
DISTINGUISHED CULTURAL LEGACIES, AND INSTITUTION-BUILDING**

***The Clark to Premiere Exhibition June 4 through September 4, 2006
At The Metropolitan Museum of Art Summer 2007***

For Immediate Release

WILLIAMSTOWN, MA – The first exhibition to unite masterpieces from the remarkable collections of Sterling Clark and Stephen Clark will be presented at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute from June 4 to September 4, 2006. Featuring close to 70 paintings, *The Clark Brothers Collect: Impressionist and Early Modern Paintings* will examine the brothers' collecting and how they helped to define the changing taste for Impressionist and Early Modern art in the first half of the 20th century. It will explore their relationship, their rivalry, and the influential but ultimately divergent roles they came to play in the arts in the United States.



The Card Players, 1890-92, by Paul Cézanne.
Oil on canvas, 25 ¾ by 32 ¼ inches.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bequest
of Stephen C. Clark, 1960. (61.101.1) Photograph by
Malcolm Varon. Photograph © 1984
The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Among the highlights in the exhibition will be a number of iconic works from the 19th and 20th centuries, including Van Gogh's *The Night Café (Le Café de Nuit)* (1888, Yale University Art Gallery) from Stephen's collection, and Renoir's *At the Concert* (1881) from Sterling's collection, as well as a number of rarely exhibited works from private collections by artists such as Matisse and Vuillard. *The Clark Brothers Collect* will also feature American paintings including Homer's *Undertow* (1886) and Sargent's *A Street in Venice* (1880-1882), both owned by Sterling, and Eakins' *Dr. Agnew* (1889, Yale University Art Gallery) and Hopper's *House by the Railroad* (1925, The Museum of Modern Art) from Stephen's collection. Other artists in the exhibition from Sterling's collection include Degas, Monet, Pissarro, Remington, and Renoir, and from Stephen's collection Cézanne, Manet, and Seurat.

The Clark Brothers Collect will also be the first exhibition to reunite and explore Stephen's collection, whose European and American Modernist masterpieces form key holdings of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Yale University Art Gallery, and the Addison Gallery of American Art at Andover. It will also provide new insight into Sterling's collecting, which is noted for its Impressionist and French Academic masterpieces and serves as the foundation of the Clark. Each brother's collection is considered to be among the great collections of the early 20th

century, rivaling those of contemporaries such as Albert Barnes, Chester Dale, and Duncan Phillips.

“The Clark Brothers Collect is the perfect culmination of the Clark’s 50th anniversary celebration,” said director Michael Conforti. “The exhibition brings into sharp focus each brother’s rich and distinct legacy while highlighting the foundation upon which the Clark has flourished. It also presents two different approaches to institution-building that are still relevant for American collectors and museums today.”

Each a powerful force in the art world of New York, where they made their homes, the brothers had an extraordinary cultural impact – although in very different ways – through their roles as visionary institution-builders and philanthropists. Sterling became the better known collector because of the museum and research institute he founded in Williamstown. Stephen, on the other hand, was among the founding trustees of the Museum of Modern Art, where he served as chairman of the trustees from 1939 to 1946, and was also involved in creating numerous cultural institutions in Cooperstown.

This exhibition provides the opportunity to experience the masterworks from the two collections as they would have appeared if Sterling and Stephen had realized their early dreams of jointly founding an art museum. The brothers planned to establish their museum in their family’s hometown of Cooperstown, NY, or in New York City, but their relationship never recovered from a rift that formed in the early 1920s.

“The Clark Brothers Collect will provide a rare and revealing dialogue between the brothers’ works,” said Richard Rand, senior curator at the Clark. “Throughout the galleries, visitors will notice Sterling’s persistent love for the beautiful and seductive, and Stephen’s quest for the bold and forceful. While they brought different philosophies to their collecting, Sterling and Stephen each managed to acquire an extraordinary suite of masterpieces, and this exhibition will give viewers an unprecedented opportunity to view them side-by-side.”

Sterling and Stephen: Shared Vision, Singular Legacies

Heirs to the Singer Sewing fortune of their grandfather, Edward Clark, Robert Sterling Clark and Stephen Carlton Clark were raised in New York City. They both inherited their parents’ interest in collecting art and supporting living artists. The brothers’ culturally rich upbringing instilled in them a profound passion for collecting, particularly in the field of 19th century French painting. While early in their collecting they had often consulted one another and sought out works together, by the 1920s they were no longer on speaking terms. Their relationship suffered after disagreements over the family fortune. The brothers remained at odds for most of their lives, until 1952 when the death of Stephen’s son prompted Sterling to contact his brother.

In spite of the brothers’ estrangement, Sterling and Stephen followed paths that were largely parallel. Sterling founded the Clark in Williamstown in 1955. Stephen established a number of cultural institutions in Cooperstown, including the Fenimore Art Museum (to which he donated his outstanding collection of American Folk Art and a group of important American paintings), The Farmers’ Museum, and the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. Stephen was also instrumental in relocating the New York State Historical Association to Cooperstown and provided the institution with a permanent home.

While Sterling maintained his privacy during his lifetime, rarely lending pictures, and doing so only on the condition of anonymity, Stephen played a much more visible role in the art world. He had an active position in the arts community of New York, often traded paintings to make new acquisitions, and loaned to a variety of institutions. He gave works to public institutions throughout his life and did so strategically, keeping strong suites of works together and selecting works by artists to enhance existing collections.

Both brothers created and endowed distinguished arts research, academic and professional training programs. Sterling established the Clark as one of few institutions in the nation that serves as both a public art museum and a leading research and academic center. The Clark, in partnership with Williams College, offers a master's program in art history, and Clark Fellowships draw leading figures from universities and museums around the world to the Clark to pursue independent research. Stephen was central to the development of the Cooperstown Graduate Program, a joint training program for museum professionals of the State University of New York College at Oneonta and the New York State Historical Association.

Sterling and Stephen also set up foundations that remain active today and reinforce their commitment to philanthropy. The Robert Sterling Clark Foundation, located in New York City, provides grants to a variety of cultural and healthcare organizations. Based in Cooperstown, the Clark Foundation (founded by Stephen) supports local institutions and provides college scholarships to young people in the area.

The Collections: A Contrast in Connoisseurship

Masterpieces owned by Sterling and Stephen will be integrated in the galleries, allowing visitors to examine both the complementary and divergent interests and tastes revealed through their collecting. Although the brothers collected works from the same period, they had different aesthetic sensibilities and approaches to collection-building. Both envisioned their collecting as a highly personal undertaking and chose works without the assistance of advisors, relying on their own sense of connoisseurship to build their collections. Sterling consciously built a cohesive collection, a permanent assemblage of great objects that he intended to stay together and present to the public after his death. He admired artists who upheld the classical traditions of painting and exhibited great draftsmanship, paint handling, and sense of color. He collected artists in depth, becoming particularly passionate about the Impressionists later in his collecting career.

Personal interests also drove Stephen's collecting, but he began to acquire works with the intention of strengthening the existing collections of institutions and was dedicated to serving as a major patron to living artists. While he chose works that ranged in artistic styles, Stephen had a strong interest in Modernism and was especially attracted to works that showed a sense of directness, intellectual rigor, and a highly personal vision.

The exhibition was organized by the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute in collaboration with The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Following its premiere at the Clark, the exhibition will be presented at The Metropolitan Museum of Art from May 22 to August 19, 2007.

Catalogue

The exhibition will be accompanied by a major, illustrated publication (the Clark in association with Yale University Press) featuring essays on the Clark family, the brothers' impact on the American museum, as well as new scholarship on Stephen following the first examination of archival materials on the collector. The catalogue will include contributions by Michael Conforti, Clark director; James A. Ganz, curator of prints, drawings and photographs at the Clark; Gilbert T. Vincent, former director of the New York State Historical Association; Neil Harris, professor of history, the University of Chicago; Richard Rand, senior curator at the Clark; Marc Simpson, curator of American art at the Clark; and Sarah Lees, associate curator of European art at the Clark.

50th Anniversary

The Clark Brothers Collect is the final exhibition in a year-long series of programs and initiatives celebrating the Clark's 50th anniversary during the 2005-2006 season. These include the establishment of a new prize for arts writing and *Collecting the Impressionists: Masterpieces from the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute*, the first national tour of masterpieces from its permanent collection. The program also featured several special exhibitions including *Paper Trails: 100 Great Drawings, Prints, and Photographs from the Clark*, highlighting the Clark's greatest works on paper and the surprising links between them; *Winslow Homer: Making Art, Making History*, the largest showing from the Clark's extensive Homer holdings in decades; and *Jacques-Louis David: Empire to Exile*, the first exhibition to examine the artist's post-Revolutionary years.

The Clark

Set amidst 140 bucolic acres in the picturesque Berkshires, the Clark is one of the few major art museums in the United States that also serves as a leading international center for research and scholarship. In addition to its extraordinary collections, the Clark organizes groundbreaking special exhibitions that advance new scholarship and presents an array of public and educational programs. The Clark's research and academic programs include an international fellowship program and regular conferences, symposia, and colloquia. The Clark, together with Williams College, jointly sponsors one of the nation's leading master's 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.

The Berkshires, a region of rolling hills in western Massachusetts, have been a haven for cultural activity since the first half of the 19th century. The Berkshires are home to a wealth of cultural institutions that in addition to the Clark include: Tanglewood, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, MASS MoCA, the Norman Rockwell Museum, Williams College Museum of Art, and the Williamstown Theatre Festival, among many others. For more information, visit www.clarkart.edu or call 413-458-2303.

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