THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM ANNOUNCES THE ACQUISITION OF ÉDOUARD MANET’S SPRING (JEANNE DEMARSY), 1881

LOS ANGELES—The J. Paul Getty Museum announced today the acquisition at auction of Spring (Jeanne Demarsy), 1881 by the celebrated French painter Édouard Manet (1832–1883). The auction took place at Christie’s in New York the evening of Wednesday, November 5.

“Spring was the last of Manet’s Salon paintings still in private hands, and universally recognized as one of his great masterpieces,” said Timothy Potts, director of the J. Paul Getty Museum. “It is a work of extraordinary quality and beauty, epitomizing Manet’s influential conception of modernity, and executed at the height of his artistic powers—but, tragically, when he was already afflicted with the illness that would soon lead to his early death. Although he did not consider himself an Impressionist, Manet was intimately associated with that circle of artists, and this painting will make a spectacular addition to our Impressionist/Post-Impressionist gallery. I have no doubt that it will soon become one of the most iconic images in the Getty’s painting collection, representing the highest achievement of late nineteenth-century French painting in a landmark work by its greatest and most influential master. Together with our other Manet paintings, watercolor and recently-acquired pastel, Spring also makes the Getty a must-visit destination for anyone with a serious interest in this artist’s remarkable achievement.”

Spring is a portrait of Parisian actress Jeanne Demarsy (1865–1937) as the embodiment of spring. Manet intended it as the first of a series of the four seasons representing fashionable Parisian women. However, he lived long enough only to complete two of the series: Spring and Autumn (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nancy).

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Spring was exhibited in the 1882 Paris Salon along with Manet's celebrated masterwork Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère, 1882 (Courtauld Gallery, London). Spring was perhaps the most unalloyed success of Manet's long and notorious Salon career. Critics found Jeann utterly charming and exquisite—a highlight of Manet's career, in which he took great pride. Having been in the collection of the same family for more than a century, the 29-by-20-inch-painting is in exceptionally fine condition.

The newly acquired Manet joins the Museum's notable collection of works by the artist, which includes two paintings: the early Portrait of Madame Brunet (1860–63) and the painterly social critique, The Rue Mosnier with Flags (1878), as well as the watercolor Bullfight (1865) and the pastel Portrait of Julien de la Rochenoire (1882).

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The J. Paul Getty Museum collects in seven distinct areas, including Greek and Roman antiquities, European paintings, drawings, manuscripts, sculpture and decorative arts, and photographs gathered internationally. The Museum's mission is to make the collection meaningful and attractive to a broad audience by presenting and interpreting the works of art through educational programs, special exhibitions, publications, conservation, and research.

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