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Water Lily Pond

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Water Lily Pond

1917/22

Claude Monet

(French; 1840–1926)

Oil on canvas; 130.2 x 201.9 cm (51 1/2 x 79 1/2 in.)

GIFT OF MRS. HARVEY KAPLAN, 1982.825



The Art Institute's rich collection of works by Claude Monet has long included examples of the paintings he began in 1895 after he purchased land south of his Giverny home, redirected the river, enlarged the pond, and planted his celebrated *nymphéas*, or water lilies.¹ While several of those canvases sprang from Monet's life-long obsession with painting out-of-doors, *Water Lily Pond* emerged out of his competing desire to make mural-like pictures that would create an all-over decorative environment. This objective was given official sanction in 1914, when the French state agreed to fund a monumental decorative cycle that was ultimately installed in the Orangerie of the Tuileries Gardens in 1926, four years after the artist's death.²

Water Lily Pond belongs to a series of nineteen paintings created between 1917 and 1922. Although Monet worked on these at the same time as similar subjects on canvases double and quadruple the size, the smaller works are not as directly preparatory to the Orangerie cycle. In these pieces, including *Water Lily Pond*, the artist moved from depicting a single motif—water lilies and the reflections of surrounding trees and plants—to a more personal, decorative conception. In this painting,

for example, he interrupted the fluid surface with broad swirls of scumbled pigments. Indeed, Monet used the series as a whole to experiment with ways of transforming a carefully studied fragment of nature into a larger artistic statement—a process that he explored to its fullest extent in the monumental canvases of the Orangerie ensemble. So important was this group to his evolving project that he allowed only five of the nineteen works to leave his studio.

The remaining canvases, including *Water Lily Pond*, stayed in the Monet estate until the 1950s, when they were eagerly purchased by collectors and institutions that perhaps saw in their large scale and gestural brushwork an affinity with the works of the Abstract Expressionists, then much in vogue. Over three decades earlier, however, in 1920, the great Chicago collector Martin A. Ryerson visited Monet at Giverny along with other Art Institute patrons and contemplated the purchase of thirty large water lily paintings. Although it is not known exactly which pictures were part of that selection, the museum was clearly interested in Monet's late decorative works, which are now, with the acquisition of *Water Lily Pond*, fully represented in our collection.

GLORIA GROOM



Food Vessel (Fangding), pp. 28–29.

1. See Chen Mengjia, *In Shū seidōki bunrui zuroku* [A Corpus of Chinese Bronzes in American Collections] (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1977), cat. A70. Doris Duke acquired the *fangding* in 1942. Chen also coauthored the Art Institute's 1946 catalogue *Chinese Bronzes from the Buckingham Collection*.

Shi Wang Ding, pp. 30–31.

1. This *ding* has appeared in important catalogues including Rentao Chen, *Jinkui lungu chui* [Essays on Chinese Antiquities] (Hong Kong: Yazhou shi yin ju, 1952), cat. 6; and Jessica Rawson, *Western Zhou Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections* (Harvard University Press, 1990), vol. 2, p. 297, fig. 21.6.

Group Pilgrimage to the Jizō Nun, pp. 32–33.

1. The painting was published in its current formation in Onshi Kyoto Hakubutsukan, *Ike no Taiga meigafu* [Master Works by Ike Taiga] (Kyoto: Benrido, 1933).
2. For more on Taiga's unusual techniques, see Joan Stanley-Baker, "Finger Painting in Tokugawa Japan," in Klaas Ruitenbeek, *Discarding the Brush: Gao Qipei (1660–1734) and the Art of Chinese Finger Painting*, exh. cat. (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum/Ghent: Snoeck-Ducaju and Zoon, 1992).

Delphine, pp. 40–41.

1. Carol Reese in "Conversation between Carol Reese and Diana Thater," in *Secession: Diana Thater; Delphine*, exh. cat. (Vienna: Secession, 2000), p. 23.
2. Diana Thater in *ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

Big Boy, pp. 42–43.

1. Yinka Shonibare in Kobena Mercer, "Art That is Ethnic in Inverted Commas," *Frieze* 25 (Nov. 1995), p. 41.

Near the Lagoon and Untitled, pp. 44–45.

1. Jasper Johns in Roberta Bernstein, *Jasper Johns' Paintings and Sculptures, 1954–1974: "The Changing Focus of the Eye"* (UMI Research Press, 1985), p. 34.

Mosaic Glass Dish, pp. 46–47.

1. For more on this technique, see Donald B. Harden et al., *Glass of the Caesars*, exh. cat. (Olivetti, 1987), p. 2. This object was previously published in Christie's, London, *The Collection of Egyptian, Greek and Roman Antiquities, Cameos and Intaglios formed by the Late Henry Oppenheimer*, Esq. F.S.A., sale cat. (July 22–23, 1936), lot 114.
2. For a similar bowl from the same period, see Sidney M. Goldstein, *Pre-Roman and Early Roman Glass in the Corning Museum of Glass* (Corning Museum of Glass, 1979), cat. 466.
3. See Suzanne R. Schnepp, condition report, Aug. 9, 2004, files of the Ancient Art collection.

Saint Michael and the Devil, pp. 48–49.

1. For a reproduction of Van Eyck's *Madonna of Canon van der Paele*, see Till-Holger Bochert, ed., *The Age of Van Eyck: The Mediterranean World and Early Netherlandish Painting, 1430–1530*, exh. cat. (Thames and Hudson, 2002), p. 78, fig. 92.
2. For this comparison and for Pedro Millán's *Saint Michael* in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, see Dorothee Heim, *Der Erzengel Michael von Pedro Millán* (Munich: privately printed, 2002), pls. 12, 18.
3. For an illustration of this work, see Judith Berg Sobré, *Behind the Altar Table: The Development of the Painted Retable in Spain, 1350–1500* (University of Missouri Press, 1989), p. 66, fig. 28.

Crucifix, pp. 50–51.

1. For more on Algardi's life and career, see Jennifer Montagu, *Alessandro Algardi* (J. Paul Getty Trust/Yale University Press, 1985), esp. vol. 2, pp. 327–39.
2. For more on these casts, see Jennifer Montagu, ed., *Alessandro Algardi: l'altra faccia del barocco*, exh. cat. (Rome: Edizioni de Luca, 1999), cats. 33, 93. The Art Institute's version came to light after Montagu's 1985 and 1999 publications were issued.

3. This is mentioned as "un Crocifisso di bronzo, d'Alessandro Algardi Bolognese," in Francesco Bartolomeo dal Pozzo, *Le vite de' pittori, degli scultori, et architetti veronesi* (Verona, 1718), p. 309.

4. This drawing, now in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., represents a variant on the bronze Christ and may be a preliminary study for it; see Catherine Johnston, "Cristo sulla croce," in Montagu (note 2), cat. 93.

Wine Jug, pp. 52–53.

1. Two identical wine jugs were sold in 1907; see Christie's, London, *Catalogue of Fine Old English Silver*, sale cat. (June 13–14, 1907), lot 45. In 1908 one was purchased by the Kunstgewerbemuseum, Berlin, where it remains to this day; the other was bought by the Kunstgewerbemuseum, Cologne. For more on silver by the Kändler, see Peter Cameron, "Henry Jernegan, the Kändler, and the Client Who Changed His Mind," *Silver Society Journal* 8 (Autumn 1996), pp. 487–501.
2. For more on this possible relationship, see Cameron (note 1).

Sideboard, pp. 54–55.

1. For these quotations, see, respectively, Juliet Kinchin and Paul Stirtion, *Is Mr. Ruskin Living Too Long? Selected Writings of E. W. Godwin on Victorian Architecture, Design, and Culture* (Oxford: White Cockade Publishing, 2005), p. 373; and Susan Weber Soros, *The Secular Furniture of E. W. Godwin: With Catalogue Raisonné* (Bard Graduate Center/Yale University Press, 1999), p. 15.
2. For illustrations of these, see Soros (note 1), cats. 304–304i.
3. Hermann Muthesius, *The English House*, ed. Dennis Sharp, trans. Janet Seligman (London: Crosby Lockwood Staples, 1979), p. 157.

The Nativity, pp. 56–57.

1. For an illustration of the *Mystical Nativity*, see Richard Lightbown, *Sandro Botticelli* (London: Elek, 1978), vol. 1, pl. 9.

Portrait of a Gardener and Horn Player, pp. 58–59.

1. Although we do not know the sitter's name, Schindler confirmed his identity in writing; on the verso of the frame is a paper label inscribed *Ein Mohr / Waldhornbläser / Gärtner in Laxenburg bei Sr Maj. / dem Kaiser Franz I. / gemalt von Natur Albert Schindler* (A moor / horn player / gardener in Laxenburg to his Majesty / Emperor Francis I / painted from life Albert Schindler).

Water Lily Pond, pp. 60–61.

1. For more on the Art Institute's water lily canvases, see Daniel Wildenstein, *Monet* (Taschen, 1996), vol. 5, cats. 1628, 1683, 1833, and 1889.
2. For more on the Orangerie cycle, see Paul Hayes Tucker, *Monet in the Twentieth Century*, exh. cat. (Yale University Press, 1998), p. 252–79.

Interrelation of Volumes from the Ellipsoid, pp. 62–63.

1. For the series, which probably comprised seven works, the artist drew on conventional and ancient mathematical systems; for his sources, see Georges Vantongerloo, "Principe d'unité," *I 10 internationale review* 1, 3 (1927), pp. 94–96.
2. Georges Vantongerloo, as quoted by Joshua Kind, *The Geometric Impulse: Selected Works from the Lillian H. Florsheim Foundation for the Fine Arts* (De Kalb, Ill.: Swen Parson Gallery, Northern Illinois University, 1981), p. 29.
3. See Jan Ceuleers, *Georges Vantongerloo, 1886–1965*, exh. cat. (Antwerp: Snoeck-Ducaju and Zoon, 1996).

Venus de Milo with Drawers, pp. 64–65.

1. Salvador Dalí, "Objets surréalistes," in *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* 3 (Dec. 1931), p. 16.
2. Salvador Dalí, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, trans. Haakon M. Chevalier (Dial Press, 1961).
3. Sigmund Freud, *Der Wahn und die Träume in W. Jensens "Gradiva"* (Vienna: F. Deuticke, 1907).
4. For illustrations of *Atmospheric Chair* (1989.56) and *City of Drawers* (1963.3), see Robert Descharnes and Gilles Néret, *Salvador Dalí, 1904–1989: das malerische Werk* (Taschen, 1993), cats. 516, 625.
5. I am grateful to Robert Descharnes and Patrick Derom for helping me clarify the history of the plaster *Venus*. The ten bronzes, painted white to look like plas-