

Edgar Degas. Ballet Scene from Meyerbeer's Opera 'Robert le Diable', 1876, oil on canvas, 76.6 x 81.3cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Image © V&A Images / Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Degas & the Ballet:

Picturing Movement

The Exhibition will contain 85 works of art by Degas

The Royal Academy of Arts

17th September - 11th December 2011

In the autumn of 2011 the Royal Academy of Arts will stage a landmark exhibition focusing on Edgar Degas's preoccupation with movement as an artist of the dance. *Degas and the Ballet: Picturing Movement* will trace the development of the artist's ballet imagery throughout his career, from the documentary mode of the early 1870s to the sensuous expressiveness of his final years. The exhibition will be the first to present Degas's progressive engagement with the figure in movement in the context of parallel advances in photography and early film; indeed, the artist was keenly aware of these technological developments and often directly involved with them. The exhibition will comprise around 85 paintings, sculptures, pastels, drawings, prints and photographs by Degas, as well as photographs by his contemporaries and examples of early film. It will bring together selected material from public institutions and private collections in Europe and North America including both celebrated and little-known works by Degas.

Highlights of the exhibition will include such masterpieces as the celebrated sculpture *Little Dancer Aged Fourteen* (1880-81, cast. c1922, Tate, London), which will be displayed with a group of outstanding preparatory drawings that together show the artist tracking around his subject like a cinematic eye; *Dancer Posing for a Photograph* (1875, Pushkin State Museum of Art, Moscow); *Dancer on Pointe* (c1877-78, Private collection); *The Dance Lesson* (c1879, The National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC); *Dancers in a Rehearsal Room with a Double Bass* (c1882-85, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York); and *Three Dancers* (c1903, Beyeler Foundation, Basel).

Degas and the Ballet: Picturing Movement will explore the fascinating links between Degas's highly original way of viewing and recording the dance and the inventive experiments being made at the same time in photography by Jules-Etienne Marey and Eadweard Muybridge and in film-making by such pioneers as the Lumière brothers. By presenting the artist in this context, the exhibition will demonstrate that Degas was far more than merely the creator of beautiful images of the ballet, but instead a modern, radical artist who thought profoundly about visual problems and was fully attuned to the technological developments of his time.

Hilaire-Germain-Edgar Degas was born in Paris in 1834. His father was a banker from a Neapolitan family and his mother a French Créole from New Orleans. After studying briefly at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, Degas travelled in Italy, largely teaching himself by copying works of art in museums and churches. From 1865 to 1870 he regularly submitted large historical compositions to the Salon, but in around 1870 he began to concentrate on subjects from modern life, including the dance. A leader of the Impressionists, Degas exhibited regularly at their group exhibitions. Apart from the dance, racehorses and bathing women were his principal subjects. Increasing blindness forced Degas to give up working in around 1912. He died in Montmartre in 1917.

Degas and the Ballet: Picturing Movement has been curated by Richard Kendall, Curator at Large, The Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, USA; Jill DeVonyar, independent curator; and Ann Dumas, Exhibition Curator, Royal Academy of Arts.

Woody Kerr, Vice Chairman of EMEA, BNY Mellon said, "With Degas and the Ballet, the Royal Academy continues to demonstrate a high level of scholarship and inventiveness in bringing top quality art to London. Despite the challenging environment for arts funding in the UK, this exhibition will demonstrate why London continues to be a global leader in artistic education. BNY Mellon is very proud to be supporting the RA and this remarkable body of work."

Visitor Information:

Open to public: Saturday 17 September - Sunday 11 December 2011. 10am - 6pm daily (last admission 5.30pm). Fridays until 10pm (last adm. 9.30 pm). Saturdays until 10pm (last adm. 9.30pm).
£14 full price; £13 Registered Disabled and 60+ years; £9 NUS / ISIC cardholders; £4 12-18 years and Income Support; £3 8-11 years; 7 and under free; RA Friends go free.
Tickets are available daily at the RA. Advance bookings: Telephone 0844 209 0051 or visit www.royalacademy.org.uk. Groups of 10+ are asked to book in advance.
Telephone 020 7300 5995, fax 020 7300 5781 or email groupbookings@royalacademy.org.uk



Edgar Degas. 'La Danse Grecque (Dancing Ballerinas)', 1885-90, pastel on joined paper laid down on board, 580 x 490mm. On loan from the Honorable Earle I. Mack Collection



Dancers, c. 1899 Pastel on tracing paper laid down on board, 588 x 463mm. Princeton University Art Museum. Bequest of Henry K. Dick, Class of 1909. Image Bruce M. White.



Edgar Degas. Dancer (Préparation en dedans), c1880- 85, Charcoal with stumping on buff paper, 336 x 227mm. Trinity House, London and New York.



Edgar Degas. The Rehearsal, c1874, oil on canvas, 58.4 x 83.8cm. Lent by Culture and Sport Glasgow on behalf of Glasgow City Council. Gifted by Sir William and Lady Constance Burrell to the City of Glasgow, 1944. Image © Culture and Sport Glasgow (Museums).



Edgar Degas. The Dance Lesson, c1879, oil on canvas, 38 x 88cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, 1995.47.6. Image © National Gallery of Art, Washington.



Edgar Degas. The Little Dancer, aged Fourteen, 1880-1, cast c1922, painted bronze with muslin and silk, 98.4 x 36.5cm. Tate. Purchased with assistance from The Art Fund 1952. Image © Tate, London, 2010



Edgar Degas. Dancer Adjusting her Strap c1895-6, gelatin silver print from a glass collodion plate, 180 x 130mm. © Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris / Department of Prints and Photographs.



Edgar Degas. 'The Red Ballet Skirts', c1895-1900, pastel on tracing paper, 813 x 622mm. Lent by Culture and Sport Glasgow on behalf of Glasgow City Council. Gifted by Sir William and Lady Constance Burrell to the City of Glasgow, 1944. Image © Culture and Sport Glasgow (Museums)