

## ***DoubleTake: Monet to Lichtenstein***

### **Exhibition Overview**

As curated by renowned Monet expert Paul Hayes Tucker, *DoubleTake: Monet to Lichtenstein*, challenges the public to see art in a new way. The exhibit pairs works from Impressionist and Post-Impressionist masters such as Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Edgar Degas and Vincent van Gogh with modern and contemporary works from such artists as Pablo Picasso, Mark Rothko, Jasper Johns and Roy Lichtenstein. Other artists featured in the exhibition will include Manet, Cezanne, Seurat, Gauguin, Bayer, Richter and de Kooning, among others.

Tucker's idea for the exhibit sprung from his belief that images by Impressionist masters have become such a pervasive part of the cultural landscape over the last 50 years that they have lost much of their subversive edge. By pairing great works of both centuries, he believes that all the works of art will be given a new context and new meaning, with the Impressionists regaining their original urgency. For each pairing in *DoubleTake*, Tucker selected works that initially might seem to be unrelated, but on closer analysis have a variety of common elements in style, subject and even intention.

For example, Renoir's *La Liseuse* (1877) and Lichtenstein's *The Kiss* (1962) are paired together. Each focuses on a woman – one having an independent, quiet moment in a private setting; the other in a “larger than life” embrace with a handsome airplane pilot. Both paintings are voyeuristic, with *La Liseuse* clearly set in reality – the details of her dress and environment carefully rendered – while *The Kiss* conveys wishful fantasy. The two works also share compositional tactics – the figures in the center of the canvas, held in place largely by the division of their respective backgrounds of darker and lighter sections. And finally, they share similar color relationships.

In another pairing, Monet's *Rouen Cathedral: Afternoon Effect* (1894) and Johns' *Numbers* (1978) reveal similar concerns about texture and relief, light and shade. The Monet painting, a part of what many scholars believe to be the artist's most accomplished series, uses thick paint and broken brushstrokes to suggest the physical dimensions of this gothic cathedral and its complex architectural details – all illuminated with a magical combination of light and shade, much like the Johns sculpture. By comparison, *Numbers* also demonstrates strong relief, and uses depth and shadow to create meaning.

Both Monet and Johns used loaded, iconoclastic images to comment on their respective societies. Monet features a symbol of France's history, identity and deep-rooted Catholicism, yet displays it almost dissolving into bright colors. Johns uses the most common of elements to cast his distinctly deadpan commentary on contemporary society.

There are 28 paintings in the exhibition in groupings of two, three and, in one case, four.

All the works are on loan from collector and philanthropist Paul G. Allen. Several have not been shown in public for nearly 50 years. Many others have only been shown in public once or twice.