

The Courtauld

Press Release
23 January 2025

SEURAT AND THE SEA

THE COURTAULD GALLERY TO PRESENT FIRST UK EXHIBITION ON GEORGES SEURAT IN ALMOST 30 YEARS

- Opening February 2026, *The Griffin Catalyst Exhibition: Seurat and the Sea* will be the first exhibition dedicated to the seascapes of the Neo-Impressionist painter Georges Seurat
- Follows recent exhibition *The Griffin Catalyst Exhibition: Monet and London. Views of the Thames* – the most successful exhibition in The Courtauld's history



Georges Seurat (1859–1891), *Seascape at Port-en-Bessin, Normandy*, 1888
Oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

The Courtauld will present the first ever exhibition dedicated to the seascapes of the French artist Georges Seurat (1859–1891). Opening on 13 February 2026, this major exhibition will be the first devoted to Seurat in the UK in almost 30 years. It will chart the evolution of his radical and distinctive style through the recurring motif of the sea.

The Griffin Catalyst Exhibition: Seurat and the Sea follows major Impressionist exhibitions at The Courtauld, such as *Cézanne's Card Players*, *Van Gogh. Self-Portraits* and, most recently, the acclaimed ***The Griffin Catalyst Exhibition: Monet and London. Views of the Thames***, which was seen by a record 120,000 visitors and sold out its entire run, including extended opening hours to meet demand.

The Courtauld holds the largest collection of works by Seurat in the UK. The artist is best known as the creator of the Neo-Impressionist technique, in which shapes and light are rendered by juxtaposing small dots of pure colour. Due to his early death at the age of 31, Seurat has a very small pool of works and exhibitions devoted to him are rare.

The Griffin Catalyst Exhibition: Seurat and the Sea will bring together around 23 paintings, oil sketches and drawings made by Seurat during the five summers he spent on the northern coast of France, between 1885 and 1890. Working in port towns along the English Channel, including Honfleur, Port-en-Bessin and Gravelines, Seurat captured their seascapes, regattas and port activity in his distinctive Neo-Impressionist technique. He sought, in his words, ‘to wash his eyes of the days spent in the studio [in Paris] and to translate in the most faithful manner the bright clarity, in all its nuances’.

These works are an important counterpoint to his Parisian works, which are better known and more widely studied. This exhibition will therefore provide a unique opportunity to reassess an important but often overlooked aspect of Seurat’s career. It will include loans from major private collections and public institutions, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; the Baltimore Museum of Art; the Indianapolis Museum of Art; the Minneapolis Institute of Art, the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City; the musée d’Orsay, Paris, the Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, Tate and the National Gallery, London.

The Griffin Catalyst Exhibition: Seurat and the Sea will be accompanied by a beautifully illustrated catalogue, which will showcase the results of research on Seurat’s seascapes, their technical development and their importance in disseminating the artist’s work beyond the monumental canvases for which he is best known.

Tickets will go on sale later this year. Further details to be announced.

The exhibition’s lead sponsor is Griffin Catalyst, the civic engagement initiative of Citadel Founder and CEO Kenneth C. Griffin. *The Griffin Catalyst Exhibition: Seurat and the Sea* is part of The Griffin Catalyst Exhibition Series, which The Courtauld is delighted to announce has recently been extended to 2028. This collaboration will continue to support the deeply researched and varied exhibitions programme that Kenneth C. Griffin has supported since The Courtauld’s reopening in 2021.

Professor Mark Hallett, Märit Rausing Director of The Courtauld said: “We are extremely grateful to Kenneth C. Griffin for his visionary support, which has already enabled The Courtauld to programme ambitious exhibitions that fuse world-class scholarship with a wide and diverse popular appeal. We look forward to the next chapter of our partnership.”

The next major exhibition to open at The Courtauld on 14 February 2025 is ***The Griffin Catalyst Exhibition: Goya to Impressionism. Masterpieces from the Oskar Reinhart Collection***. Featuring an exceptional selection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist masterpieces by artists including Manet, Van Gogh, Goya, Renoir, and Cezanne, this will be the first exhibition of paintings from the Oskar Reinhart Collection ‘Am Römerholz’ to be staged outside Winterthur, Switzerland. The Oskar Reinhart Collection ‘Am Römerholz’ in Winterthur, Switzerland, is one of the most remarkable art museums of its kind, with a collection that ranges from superlative old master paintings to the fabled group of Impressionist art that is the focus of this exhibition. Oskar Reinhart was a direct contemporary of Samuel Courtauld, founder of the Courtauld Institute of Art.

The Griffin Catalyst Exhibition: Goya to Impressionism. Masterpieces from the Oskar Reinhart Collection
14 February - 26 May 2025
Press View: 13 February, 9am – 12pm

Tickets on sale now:

<https://courtauld.ac.uk/whats-on/exh-goya-to-impressionism-masterpieces-from-the-oskar-reinhart-collection/>

Courtauld Friends get free unlimited entry to all exhibitions, access to presale tickets, priority booking to selected events, advance notice of art history short courses, exclusive events, discounts and more. Join at courtauld.ac.uk/friends

The Courtauld Gallery
Somerset House, Strand
London WC2R 0RN

Opening hours: 10.00 – 18.00 (last entry 17.15)

Temporary Exhibition tickets (including entry to our Permanent Collection and displays) –

Weekday tickets from £14; Weekend tickets from £16.

Friends and Under-18s go free. Other concessions available

MEDIA CONTACTS

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About The Courtauld

The Courtauld works to advance how we see and understand the visual arts, as an internationally renowned centre for the teaching and research of art history and a major public gallery. Founded by collectors and philanthropists in 1932, the organisation has been at the forefront of the study of art ever since through advanced research and conservation practice, innovative teaching, the renowned collection and inspiring exhibitions of its gallery, and engaging and accessible activities, education and events.

The Courtauld cares for one of the greatest art collections in the UK, presenting these works to the public at The Courtauld Gallery in central London, as well as through loans and partnerships. The Gallery is most famous for its iconic Impressionist and Post-Impressionist masterpieces – such as Van Gogh's Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear and Manet's A Bar at the Folies-Bergère. It showcases these alongside an internationally renowned collection of works from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance through to the present day.

Academically, The Courtauld faculty is the largest community of art historians and conservators in the UK, teaching and carrying out research on subjects from creativity in late Antiquity to contemporary digital artforms - with an increasingly global focus. An independent college of the University of London, The Courtauld offers a range of degree programmes from BA to PhD in the History of Art, curating and the conservation of easel and wall paintings. Its alumni are leaders and innovators in the arts, culture and business worlds, helping to shape the global agenda for the arts and creative industries.

Founded on the belief that everyone should have the opportunity to engage with art, The Courtauld works to increase understanding of the role played by art throughout history, in all societies and across all geographies – as well as being a champion for the importance of art in the present day. This could be through exhibitions offering a chance to look closely at world-famous works; events bringing art history research to new audiences; accessible and expert short courses; digital engagement, innovative school, family and community programmes; or taking a formal qualification. The Courtauld's ambition is to transform access to art history education by extending the horizons of what this is and ensuring as many people as possible can benefit from the tools to better understand the visual world around us.

The Courtauld is an exempt charity and relies on generous philanthropic support to achieve its mission of advancing the understanding of the visual arts of the past and present across the world through advanced research, innovative teaching, inspiring exhibitions, programmes and collections.

The collection cared for by The Courtauld Gallery is owned by the Samuel Courtauld Trust.