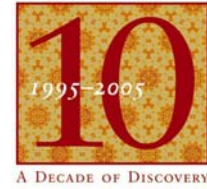


# DAHESH MUSEUM OF ART

THE DAHESH COLLECTION: CELEBRATING A DECADE OF DISCOVERY  
May 24 – September 22, 2005



*The Dahesh Collection* will mark the Dahesh Museum of Art's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary by looking back even as it points out new directions. Utilizing a dense display of wide-ranging mediums set against golden-hued walls, the curatorial team will show how the Museum grew out of the prescient collecting of Dr. Dahesh, how it has helped fuel interest in 19<sup>th</sup>-century European art of the academic tradition, and how its growing holdings illustrate the grand themes that defined the period. Filling the Museum's entire 6,000-square-foot suite of galleries, this will be the largest presentation ever of its permanent collection, serving both as recap and a visual manifesto for future investigations of art made between 1789 and 1914.

The exhibition will open with a room introducing the Lebanese philosopher/author Dr. Dahesh (1909-1984) as a collector who perceived—long before most others—the merits of the academic paintings and sculptures that once dominated 19<sup>th</sup>-century culture, but were cast aside after World War I. Selected from Dr. Dahesh's own collection, the artworks in this gallery will anticipate the overarching themes examined closely in subsequent galleries. These are religion, classical history and myth, landscape and rustic life, political history, literature and narrative, and Orientalism. The importance of drawing as the touchstone of all academic artmaking will be underscored in a focus gallery filled with works on paper that reflect both tireless labor and free-wheeling inspiration. The Museum is particularly honored to highlight numerous drawings donated recently by private individuals who recognize the Museum's distinctive contributions to scholarship.

Before exploring these themes, some visitors may be surprised to learn, in a separate gallery, how central academies were in 19<sup>th</sup>-century culture—teaching talented youngsters to draw, paint, sculpt, and design; exhibiting and marketing their creations to enormous crowds; and trumpeting the fame of the greatest talents through elevation to Art's officialdom. Special attention will be paid to Paris's Ecole des Beaux-Arts and Salon—the school and exhibiting venue emulated from St. Petersburg to Buenos Aires to Melbourne. Later accused of stuffiness, these academies were—in their heyday—lively centers of activity that linked artists, a very broad public, educators, millionaire collectors, journalists, and bureaucrats in a complex web of beauty, ideas, and commerce.

This exhibition's signature image will be the Museum's widely recognized *Water Girl*, a large oil painting on canvas painted in 1885 by Adolphe-William Bouguereau (1825-1905). This glowing masterwork distills perfectly many of the issues surrounding 19<sup>th</sup>-century academic art: its cosmopolitan transformation of classical forms, in this case ancient sculpture; its assured drawing and deft brushwork; and its prestige among public and public collectors, including the titans of Gilded Age America.

EXHIBITION PARTNERS:

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