

Press Release
June 2026

The New Vision: Monet and the Contemporary Gaze

June 17, 2026 – April 7, 2027

Pola Museum of Art, Hakone, Japan

Claude Monet (1840–1926) is one of the great masters of Impressionism. The Pola Museum of Art holds nineteen oil paintings by Monet, the largest collection of its kind in Asia. Ranging from landscapes of the Seine, Saint-Lazare Station, leisure resorts, and the seaside, to the London and Venice series and the late “Water Lilies,” this collection covers major works from every stage of Monet's career. Marking the centenary of Monet and the 25th anniversary of the museum, *The New Vision: Monet and the Contemporary Gaze* presents this remarkable collection in its entirety.

Monet possessed an eye that astonished even his contemporary Paul Cezanne. He was also a pioneer who proposed a radical aesthetic vision, one that departed decisively from the artistic traditions of the past. Why is it that Monet's paintings, seen from our vantage point a century after his death, continue to shine with ever greater intensity? Where does the secret of their inexhaustible fascination lie? This exhibition revisits the museum's Monet collection through five themes: Camera, Time, River, Life, and Garden.

The technique of divided brushwork developed by Monet and his contemporaries approached the very mechanism of vision itself: bright touches of color were placed side by side and mixed within the viewer's eye. Monet deliberately employed bold compositions and framings that recall camera pans and zooms, or even the aerial perspectives familiar from drone imagery. He created a new form of expression in the “series paintings,” such as “Rouen Cathedral,” which captured the passage of time. At the same time, his paintings register the contradictions of modernity—such as water and air pollution—as part of the world that unfolded before his eyes. While presenting this new vision, Monet also realized an artistic vision of his own: the garden at Giverny, a subject for painting that he created with his own hands.

Clement Greenberg once observed that Monet's paintings belonged to the future. Even in the 21st century, Monet's gaze remains remarkably inspirational. Through the eyes of eighteen contemporary artists and groups from Japan and abroad—among the most acute observers of our time—this exhibition reconsiders the act of seeing, a primordial way in which we touch the world. What emerges is a new vision for seeing nature, cities, and the environments that surround human life in an age of constant change.



Fujiko Nakaya, *Tales of Ugetsu, Fogfalls #47670*, 2008, Installation view: Yokohama Triennale 2008, Japan, Photo: Fujiko Nakaya



Claude Monet, *Houses of Parliament, Symphony in Rose*, 1900, Pola Museum of Art

Artists

Claude Monet, Emile Gallé, Georges Seurat, Lucas Arruda, Allora & Calzadilla, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Noémie Goudal, Roni Horn, Pierre Huyghe, Yojiro Imasaka, Amar Kanwar, Kapwani Kiwanga, Nile Koetting, Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, Ritsue Mishima, Fujiko Nakaya, Hinako Omori, Thao Nguyen Phan, Susan Philipsz, Wolfgang Tillmans, Su-Mei Tse and others.



Allora & Calzadilla, *Graft*, 2021 and *Penumbra*, 2020, Installation view: *Antille*, Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2022, Photo: Martin Argyroglo

Five Themes

CAMERA

Monet did not make direct use of photography in the making of his paintings. Yet his work resonates deeply with new forms of visual expression opened up by photography and by Japanese ukiyo-e prints of his time. By cutting off motifs at the edges of the canvas, enlarging or reducing them, and shifting the viewpoint upward, downward, or to the side, Monet freed landscape from the conventions of a fixed view. Such compositions unsettled the traditional perspective from which the world was surveyed from a single point, giving rise instead to a modern vision shaped by movement. This floating point of view may even call to mind the fluid, aerial sensation familiar today in images captured by drone cameras.



Claude Monet, *Water Lilies*, 1907, Pola Museum of Art

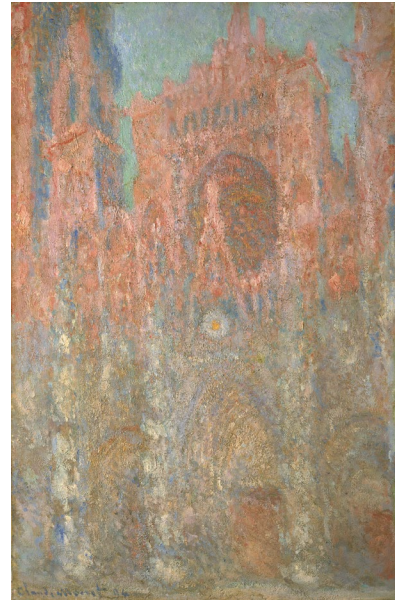


Su-Mei Tse, *Gewisse Rahmenbedingungen 3 (Altes Museum, Villa Farnesina, Villa Adriana)* (Detail), 2015-2017 ©sumeitse

TIME

For Monet, time was not simply the movement of clock hands; it appeared through changes in light and atmosphere. In his landscapes, the whiteness of snow, the shadow of clouds, and the shimmer of water are not rendered as fixed colors, but as phenomena that change over time.

In his series of thirty views of "Rouen Cathedral," the same façade assumes different appearances in the morning and evening, in sunlight and under clouded skies. Seen together, the series brings differences of color to the fore more forcefully than differences of form, making time itself visible. These variations represent the transience of nature; at the same time, they are also bound to a modern sensibility that measures, divides, and compares time in quantitative terms.



Claude Monet, *Rouen Cathedral*, 1892,
Pola Museum of Art

RIVER

For Monet, rivers were not only surfaces of water that reflected light; they were also places into which modernity flowed. On the Seine, boats, bridges, railways, and signs of industrialization are reflected in the water; on the Thames, fog and coal smoke blur the contours of the landscape. In these works, the water's surface is no quiet mirror. It drifts, reflects, sometimes grows turbid, and continually changes as it gives back the movements of nature and human activity alike. Even the transformations brought about by urban growth and atmospheric pollution become, under Monet's brush, phenomena of light. In rivers, his eye discovered a new kind of modern landscape, where nature and industry meet.



Claude Monet, *Flowered Riverbank, Argenteuil*, 1877,
Pola Museum of Art



Thao Nguyen Phan, *Becoming Alluvium (Detail)*, 2019
Produced by the Han Neffkens Foundation Courtesy of the artist

LIFE

Monet was not a painter who depicted emotion directly. Even so, his landscapes quietly harbor the fluctuations of private feeling. In works painted only a few months after the death of his wife, Camille, the thawing ice floating on the frozen Seine and the stillness of a sinking winter sun seem to resonate with a profound sense of loss. Grief is not narrated as a story; it resides instead in pale blues and reds, in gray, and in the silence of cold water. Daily life, the absence of a loved one, and the passing of the seasons overlap within these quiet landscapes. Monet's originality lies in the way he expressed emotion within landscape, through changes in light and color.



Claude Monet, *Sunset on the Seine in Winter*, 1880,
Pola Museum of Art



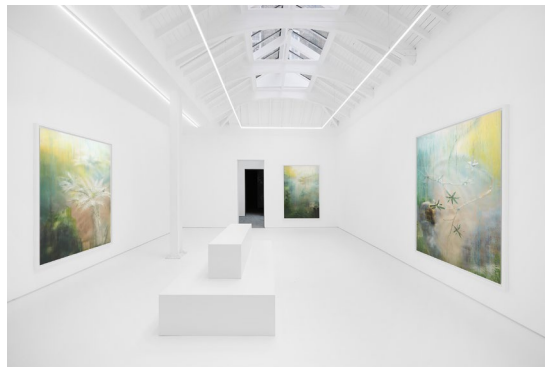
Felix Gonzalez-Torres, *"Untitled" (Portrait of Marcel Brient)*, 1992,
Pola Museum of Art

GARDEN

The garden at Giverny was not simply nature as Monet found it. It was an environment he created: he drew water from a branch of the Seine, planted water lilies in the pond, built a Japanese-style bridge, and cultivated trees and flowers from France and abroad. Monet did not merely copy nature. He made the landscape itself in order to see it, and in order to paint it. On the surface of the pond, the reflected sky, clouds, and trees mingle with plants beneath the water, unsettling any stable sense of up and down, depth and surface. In the late "Water Lilies" series, figures and horizon disappear, and only the gaze seems to drift across an endlessly spreading surface of water. When we stand before these landscapes, they rise before us as spatial environments, producing the elusive sensation of being enveloped. Monet's garden was at once natural and artificial: a landscape and, at the same time, a self-contained world that surrounds the viewer.



Claude Monet, *Water Lily Pond*, 1899,
Pola Museum of Art



Noémie Goudal, installation view: *And yet it still moves*,
Edel Assanti, 2025, Photo by Tom Carter © Noémie Goudal
Courtesy the artist and Edel Assanti

Centenary of Monet / 25th Anniversary of the Pola Museum of Art

The New Vision: Monet and the Contemporary Gaze

Dates

June 17, 2026 – April 7, 2027

Open daily during the exhibition period, except December 1.

Venue

Pola Museum of Art

Galleries 1, 2, and 4; Atrium Gallery; Lobby; Outside

Organizer

Pola Museum of Art, Pola Art Foundation

Curators

Yoko Iwasaki, Chief Curator, Pola Museum of Art

Kota Suzuki, Senior Curator, Pola Museum of Art

Also on View

COLLECTION CINEMA: Christian Marclay, Gerhard Richter

Cezanne Legend



Claude Monet, *Haystacks at Giverny, 1884*, Pola Museum of Art