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Luminist Horizons: The Art and Collection of James A. Suydam

September 14 – December 31, 2006

(New York City) August: The first major exhibition in a quarter century to explore luminism in nineteenth-century American landscape painting, *Luminist Horizons: The Art and Collection of James A. Suydam*, will open on September 14, 2006 at the National Academy Museum. The exhibition features approximately fifty-five paintings by Suydam (1819–1865) and the artists of his circle, including **John F. Kensett, Asher B. Durand, Frederic Edwin Church, Sanford R. Gifford, Jasper Cropsey**, and many others. Suydam's collection, bequeathed in its entirety to the National Academy in 1865, documents the many American and European influences on Suydam and his peers as they explored qualities of light and atmosphere in the landscape. *Luminist Horizons* reveals the exceptional strength of the artist's collection and presents the first ever retrospective of Suydam's career, including his masterpiece, *Paradise Rocks, Newport* (1860).

Luminist Horizons contributes a new, individual perspective on the development of luminism in Civil War America. Often characterized by art historians as an aesthetic of solitary isolation, luminism was, instead, a gregarious experience for Suydam and his peers. His first acquisition was a landscape (1850) by Asher B. Durand depicting two artists conversing while admiring the landscape. Accompanied by close friends, such as Kensett, Gifford, and Worthington Whittredge, Suydam visited popular sites during the 1850s and 1860s, particularly in the Hudson River Valley, the Mt. Washington region, and along the Rhode Island coast. He made these iconic sites his own by interpreting their well-known vistas with his unique colorism, crisp geometry, and fresh compositional arrangements.

Suydam was a son of one of New York's early Dutch merchant families. He inherited a considerable fortune early in life that permitted him to tour Europe and the Middle East for several years after he completed his studies at New York University. His career in art began in middle age, as an amateur painter working under the influence of Durand and the instruction of Kensett, whose landmark *Bash Bish* (1855) Suydam owned.

By the later 1850s, Suydam transformed himself into a professional artist and was elected to full membership in the National Academy of Design in 1861, the same year as the onset of the Civil War. In the midst of national crisis, Suydam and his peers created an art of stability, peace, and order.

Luminist Horizons is co-curated by Mark D. Mitchell, Associate Curator of Nineteenth-Century Art at the National Academy Museum, and Katherine E. Manthorne, Professor of American Art at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. A full color catalogue by the curators with an introduction by Annette Blaugrund, Ph.D., and published by George Braziller Publishers will accompany the exhibition.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

ARTISTS' ESTATE PLANNING, A PANEL DISCUSSION

Thursday, October 5th, 6:30pm in the Huntington Library

Theodore N. Kaplan, Esq. leads distinguished lawyers and collectors through the issues associated with artists' estate planning. Frank Feldman, co-author of Art Law, and Harvey Shipley Miller, esteemed trustee and avid art collector, head this illustrious panel.

Admission is \$10 per person, \$5 for students.

THE REVIEW PANEL

October 6th, November 3rd, December 1st

6:45pm in the Huntington Library

Contemporary critics discuss the ideas, issues and aesthetics of current art exhibitions on view in New York City. Moderated by David Cohen, art critic for the New York Sun and editor of arcritical.com For more information please call 212 369 4880 x 225

LUMINISM REVISITED: A SYMPOSIUM

Saturday, October 28th, 1pm–6pm in the Huntington Library

Leading scholars present new research relating to luminism and the philosophical, ethical, and scientific ideas of mid-nineteenth century America.

Admission is \$25 per person, \$10 for students. Reservations required.

AN EVENING OF MUSIC AND ART

Wednesday, November 29th, 6:30pm at the National Academy Museum

Mark D. Mitchell, Ph.D., Associate Curator of Nineteenth-Century Art, introduces us to the life and collection of James A. Suydam, followed by Maria Miller performing the music of 19th-century America.

Admission is \$10 per person, \$5 for students/seniors. Free to Friends Members, and National Academicians Merchants House Museum Members and Mount Vernon Hotel Museum and Garden Members.

Reservations required.

DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES

Thursday, December 14th, 6:30pm in the Stone Room

The Asher B. Durand Society lecture series, will focus on the Luminist Horizons exhibition examines the significance of James A. Suydam's life, work, and collection. Admission is free. Speaker to be determined Reservations required.

For reservations, please phone 212.369.4880, x 300 or email education@nationalacademy.org.

General information:

The National Academy was founded in 1825, and is currently an honorary association of professional artists, a school of fine arts, and a museum. The Academy possesses one of the most distinguished collections of American art, and its paintings represent all of the major and minor movements from 1830 to the present. The Academy Museum presents changing exhibitions of paintings, sculpture, prints, drawings, and architecture. Fashioned after the great European academies of art, The School of Fine Arts offers classes in painting, sculpture, and printmaking for students of all ages and levels of experience.

Web site: www.nationalacademy.org

Where: 1083 Fifth Avenue at 89th Street

When: Wed. & Thur. 12 - 5pm; Fri., Sat. & Sun. 11am - 6pm. Closed Mon. & Tues.

Admission: \$10 adults, \$5 for seniors & students. Free for children under-12.