

David Milne Watercolours:

“Painting toward the Light”

7 July - 25 September 2005

Gallery 90

Admission Free

Organized by the Art Gallery of Ontario

David Milne (1882-1953) has long been recognised as one of Canada's most original and visionary painters. He first gained acclaim for five watercolours of New York city scenes which were included in the Armory Show of 1913. The formative years of Milne's career, before the First World War, were spent studying at the Art Students' League in New York and later living in upstate New York. From 1918-19, Milne travelled to Britain, Belgium and northern France, where he served as an official Canadian War Artist and produced 111 watercolours for the Canadian War Records. After the war, he lived in upstate New York before returning to his native Ontario in 1929.

Milne consistently pursued a search for the tranquillity, simplicity and seclusion which for him constituted the perfect 'painting place'. Watercolour was central to his practice, at first showing the influence of post-Impressionists such as Bonnard and their American followers. Milne was inspired by Henry David Thoreau's transcendentalism, developing a highly aesthetic interpretation of landscape which carried unmistakable echoes of Monet and Japanese woodcuts. From the late 1920s still-life gained importance in Milne's work, supplemented by a series of fantasy and religious subjects from the early 1940s onwards.

This exhibition of around 80 of Milne's finest watercolours and some of the colour drypoints for which he is also celebrated, is being organised by the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto in partnership with the British Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The British Museum, which is the first venue for the exhibition, is one of the few public collections outside Canada to own any of Milne's work and the exhibition will include three major watercolours purchased since 1990: *Dreamland Tower, Coney Island*, 1912; *The Boarding House, Boston Corners*, 1916 and *Reflections, Glenmore Hotel*, 1923. The remaining material will come from Canadian collections with a substantial loan from the National Gallery of Canada including the striking compositions that Milne produced as a Canadian War artist in army camps in Wales, Yorkshire and Hampshire in 1918, and the battle-scarred landscapes of Belgium and northern France.

For further information or images please contact Hannah Boulton on 020 7323 8522 email hboulton@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk or Alex Robat at Brunswick Arts on 0207 936 1296, Email: arobat@brunswickgroup.com

Notes to Editors:

- A catalogue *David Milne Watercolours*, published by the Art Gallery of Ontario, with contributions by leading authorities on Milne and the watercolour tradition in North America, will place the artist's work in an international context, introducing it for the first time to a British and American audience. It will be available from the British Museum shop.
- The exhibition is supported by the Canadian High Commission in London.
- David Milne Watercolours: "Painting toward the Light" will travel to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (8/11/05 - 19/1/06), and the Art Gallery of Ontario (25/2/06 - 21/5/06)