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Luminous Horizons: Celebrating the Legacy of J.M.W. Turner Opens 9/20 at Newfields
Exhibition from the IMA's permanent collection examines landscape, nature and the watercolor discipline



INDIANAPOLIS, September 3, 2025 — In honor of J.M.W. Turner's 250th birthday, Newfields presents [*Luminous Horizons: Celebrating the Legacy of J.M.W. Turner*](#). Turner remains one of the most influential artists in history, revolutionizing landscape painting as a genre. His expressive brushwork laid the groundwork for the development of modernism, and he was among a group of artists who turned watercolor into a standalone art form. *Luminous Horizons* will present 17 landscape watercolors and drawings by Turner. These small but groundbreaking masterpieces show his development as an artist throughout his entire career and are accompanied by 10 works by some of his influential colleagues who contributed to watercolor's rise. These artworks beckon us to reflect on the timeless human journey — our awe of nature, the pursuit of the beautiful and sublime and the search for meaning in the world.

The Indianapolis Museum of Art houses one of the greatest collections of works by Turner, with over 3,000 objects including 38 beloved watercolors and drawings. The museum began collecting watercolors by Turner and his contemporaries over a century ago, but its current scope and renown is due to the efforts of Kurt F. Pantzer (1892–1979), an Indianapolis attorney and collector who was devoted to all things related to Turner.

"Since we have to be careful about how frequently we expose them to light, our Turner watercolors can feel like the hidden gem at the IMA," said Anna Stein, Associate Curator of Works on Paper at Newfields. "It's always special when we have an opportunity to show them to our guests, and this year it's especially exciting to do so as part of international celebrations of this artist and his legacy."

Despite the passing centuries and the sensitivity of their papers and pigments, the watercolors in *Luminous Horizons* still communicate the visual and emotional power of landscapes and the skill of their creators. Stylistic elements might look familiar because these artworks established so much of genre as we know it. One new addition to the group is a piece by the botanical illustrator Margaret Meen, helping represent some of women's historically overlooked contributions to watercolor.

Turner, born in London, England in 1775, remained a resident of the country his whole life. Among the notable moments and milestones of his career, he was the youngest member elected to the Royal Academy at age 26. Despite his love for the British countrysides, his travels to find new landscapes took him across Europe. His travels are reflected in many of his artworks both in this show and broader artistic portfolio. Over time, Turner's style became increasingly expressive. He traveled until his health declined in his later years, continuously exploring the watercolor technique and creating sketches of the landscapes he found himself in.

On September 19, in conjunction with the opening of Turner's exhibition, Newfields is hosting [Gallery Forward](#). The intimate gallery experience will be an evening of tours, food and drink for those wishing to learn more about recently opened exhibitions.

Luminous Horizons: Celebrating the Legacy of J.M.W. Turner will be on view from September 20, 2025, until January 4, 2026, in the Susan and Charles Golden Gallery on Floor 2 of the IMA. This exhibition is curated by Anna Stein, Associate Curator of Works on Paper. This exhibition is made possible due to Barnes & Thornburg LLP, Margaret Wiley, Monna Quinn and David Spoelstra and a gift made in memory of a friend, Linda Halcomb. In memory of our mom and docent, Linda Halcomb – from her family: Christie Haywood, Heather Marshall and Kim & Mark Botzum.

Image Credit: Joseph Mallord William Turner (English, 1775–1851), *Venice: The Rialto*, 1820-1821, watercolor over pencil on white wove paper, 11-1/4 × 16-1/4 in. Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields, Gift in memory of Dr. and Mrs. Hugo O. Pantzer by their children, 72.183.

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About Newfields:

Newfields offers dynamic experiences with art and nature for guests of all ages. The 152-acre cultural campus features art galleries, lush gardens, a historic home, performance spaces, a nature preserve and sculpture park. From inspiring exhibitions in the IMA Galleries, to concerts in The Tobias Theater, to a stroll through The Garden with a glass of something cold, guests are invited to interact with art and nature in exciting new ways. Newfields is home to the Indianapolis Museum of Art, among the ten largest and ten oldest general art museums in the nation; the Lilly House, a National Historic Landmark; The Garden, featuring 40 acres of contemporary and historic gardens, a working greenhouse and an orchard; and The Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park, one of the largest art and nature parks in the country. The Newfields campus extends outside of Indianapolis with Miller House and Garden in Columbus, Ind.—one of the nation's most highly regarded examples of mid-century Modernist architecture. For more information, visit [DiscoverNewfields.org](https://discovernewfields.org).

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