A note from Executive Producer and Co-Writer Phil Grabsky

One of my favourite paintings is The Railway by Edouard Manet - both the piece and the artist have fascinated me for some time. Naturally I was delighted therefore when I heard that our good friends at the Royal Academy of Arts in London had decided to hold an exhibition of Manet's portraits.

Manet is such an intriguing personality – on the one hand a relatively bourgeois individual who liked to dress well but, on the other, sometimes quite unpredictable and even scandalous. He loved his swiftly evolving Paris but also seemed to worry about how it was changing. He brings us modernity while clearly feeling nostalgic for the past too. He’s an impressionist in many ways and yet never exhibited with them – and certainly ignored their dictat to avoid the use of black. A show that concentrates on portraits is a wonderful way to enter into his biography – to meet his friends, family and favourite models. It also offers us a clear narrative – his life story. To many he is perhaps the greatest, most significant, of the revolutionary band of artists at the middle and end of the 19th century. I hope this film offers more than a glimpse of why that is the case.

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY
BEN HARDING & PHIL GRABSKY

PRESENTED BY
TIM MARLOW

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FEATURED WORKS

Music in the Tuileries Gardens, 1862
Street Singer, c.1862
Luncheon on the Grass, 1862-63
Olympia, 1863
Eva Gonzalès, 1870
The Railway, 1873
The Monet Family in their Garden at Argenteuil, 1874

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