

## MILAN GALLERY: THE MASTERS – IMPRESSIONISTS EXHIBITION



### [ CHALLENGE ]

The Milan Gallery is one of the leading art galleries in the North Texas region. In the fall of 2008, the gallery hosted an exhibition that provided the Fort Worth/Dallas community with an opportunity to purchase impressionist artwork from some of the greatest museum masters, including Renoir, Pissarro and Degas. It also featured special guest Alexandre Renoir, a noted impressionist painter and the great-grandson of Pierre-Auguste Renoir. The gallery hired Witherspoon to maximize exposure for the exhibition and to secure interviews for Alexandre Renoir in daily newspapers and television news programs, which in turn would help the gallery sell numerous works of art.

### [ STRATEGY ]

To ensure maximum media coverage, Witherspoon tied the exhibition to the impressionists show that was on display at Fort Worth's Kimbell Art Museum. The Kimbell show brought some of the finest impressionists paintings from the Art Institute of Chicago to Fort Worth, and by tying the two exhibits together, the Milan Gallery could generate more media interest in its event. It would also make Fort Worth a destination for connoisseurs of impressionist artwork and drive attendance to the Milan Gallery during the exhibition. Moreover, the event was coinciding with the national financial crisis of 2008, and Witherspoon believed that additional interest could be drawn from investors who might be interested in investing in art, rather than an ailing stock market.

### [ SOLUTION ]

Witherspoon developed a press kit for the exhibition, which included a press release and several media advisories. Witherspoon also compiled a comprehensive media list that featured regional art critics, entertainment reporters, financial sector writers, online blogs and morning television talk shows. The Witherspoon public relations team rolled out a two-week plan, pitching several different story ideas, to generate news coverage in the North Texas region.

### [ RESULTS ]

The exhibition was a feature in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram's GO! weekend guide, and the paper ran a full-length article on the career and family connections of Alexandre Renoir. Witherspoon also coordinated two separate television appearances for Renoir, including a full segment on WFAA's "Good Morning Texas." The combined earned media coverage topped 300,000 audience impressions. More importantly, the Milan Gallery sold a majority of the artwork on display during its run.

