MUSEUM BARBERINI

POTSDAM

Impressionism

The Art of Landscape

A publication series by the Museum Barberini
Edited by
Ortrud Westheider and Michael Philipp

Exhibition
Ortrud Westheider
with Julia Knöschke and Anke Daemgen

With contributions by
Anke Daemgen
Stephen F. Eisenman
Christoph Heinrich
Jenns E. Howoldt
Nancy Ireson
Julia Knöschke
Stefan Koldehoff
Linda Philipp-Hacka
Richard Shiff
Ortrud Westheider

PRESTEL Munich · London · New York

Lenders

Kunsthalle Bremen – Der Kunstverein in Bremen
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest
Denver Art Museum
Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth
Städel Museum, Frankfurt/Main
Hecht Museum, University of Haifa
Hamburger Kunsthalle
The Israel Museum, Jerusalem
Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Fondation Corboud, Cologne
Ordrupgaard, Copenhagen
Palais des Beaux-Arts de Lille
Musée des Beaux-Arts de La Boverie, Liège
Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris
Sammlung Hasso Plattner, Potsdam
Staatliche Eremitage, St. Petersburg
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Sammlung Bert Kreuk
Private collections

Contents

6 **Foreword**
8 **Introduction**

10 **Impressionism: The Art of Landscape**
Ortrud Westheider
26 **Marks of Low Resolution: Impressionism's Artistic Language**
Richard Shiff
38 **Impressionist Snowscapes: The Influence of Literature and Science**
Nancy Ireson
48 **Impressionism and the Climate Change:**
Environmentalism's Beginnings During the Impressionist Era
Stephen F. Eisenman
62 **Evolution Instead of Revolution:**
The Early Impressionist Landscape As a Witness to Industrialization
Stefan Koldehoff
74 **The Same, Yet Always Different:**
Monet's Series Paintings and the Path Toward Abstraction
Christoph Heinrich

Catalog of Exhibited Works

88 **The Vastness of the Sea: Eugène Boudin and Impressionism**
Jenns E. Howoldt
112 **Paths Into the Picture: Forest and Clearing**
Linda Philipp-Hacka
128 **The Sky in the River: Reflections and Mirror Effects**
Jenns E. Howoldt
154 **Against the Horizon: Poplars and Fields**
Julia Knöschke
170 **The Orchestration of Color: Garden Pictures**
Julia Knöschke
186 **Interplay with Nature: Water Lilies**
Ortrud Westheider
198 **White Light: Winter Landscapes**
Anke Daemgen
222 **Lightness and Melancholy: The South**
Julia Knöschke

Appendix

234 **Then and Now: Seeking Out the Motifs**
236 **List of Exhibited Works**
241 **Selected Bibliography**
246 **Image Credits**
247 **Authors**

Foreword

"Impressionism is nothing but immediate sensation," declared Claude Monet in an interview conducted in 1926. He used the French word *sensation*—in English one could use emotion or passion from which the *sensation* arises. The impressionists are undeniably sensational, because their paintings elicit sensations, perceptual experiences, in viewers. The Museum Barberini is being inaugurated with an exhibition of French impressionist works. The focus is on the impressionist landscape, and therefore on a form of painting that relies upon interaction with the viewer: the impressionist landscape does more than to simply depict a locale with its topographic peculiarities; it shows us this place at a very specific moment—in its luminous qualities, its momentary weather conditions. These works describe the prevailing atmosphere with such directness that when viewing Gustave Caillebotte's painting of the Seine, I find myself instinctively wanting to leap into the water. Monet's evening scene with sailing boats at Argenteuil makes me want to sail off into the distance, and his painting of a wheat field awakens in me a desire to wade through the billowing stalks.

The term "impressionism" is derived from the word "impression," atmosphere, but impressionism is by no means a type of saccharine mood painting. The composition, color scheme, and painterly technique of an impressionist painting unleash sensory impressions within me—*sensations*. I see the painting, perceive the depicted scene, but I do so with all of my senses in concert. Impressionist painting is characterized by a novel atmospheric multidimensionality. As early as Jacob van Ruisdael, we find convincingly realistic landscapes. But these are self-contained compositions; they do not invite me to take part in the scene, to become a part of the picture.

In the context of all of the diverse themes that are to be presented by the Museum Barberini in the coming years, this participation by the viewer, which is the legacy of the impressionists, will be the guiding principle. This by no means excludes the Old Masters, but it is our aim to narrate art history in such a way that the questions posed by people back then are connected to my own questions today. I am positioning the museum under the motto: "Experience the original. Share in the excitement." Since the museum collection is regarded as a work in progress, temporary exhibitions will be the focus during the coming years. Alongside them, and based on the permanent collection, we will be offering changing presentations which Ortrud Westheider, the director of the Museum Barberini, refers to as *art histories*. Here, the underlying idea is a dynamic alternation of themes, and the conviction that there is more than *one* art history.

The reconstructed Barberini Palace is an ideal setting for displaying paintings, and it is a fortuitous coincidence that it was followed by the current reconstruction of Potsdam's historic center, the Alter Markt (Old Market). The idea for a museum at this location emerged from a meeting with Günther Jauch, who had already initiated the reconstruction of the palace in 2001 with his engagement for the Fortunaportal, and Matthias Platzeck, at that time prime minister of the Federal State of Brandenburg, as well as Jann Jakobs, the mayor of Potsdam. I would like to express my thanks to all of them for their receptivity to this singular opportunity and their unhesitating initiative. Less than twenty-four hours after this initial discussion came a meeting with Abris Lelbach, who had promoted plans for the reconstruction of the state capital of Potsdam initially as an investor, and who submitted his own plans for this site. For this, I owe him my gratitude. Now, an art museum would rise at a location that was regarded until the Second World War as one of the most beautiful baroque squares in all of Germany.

But this is not Potsdam's first art museum. In 1763, Frederick the Great inaugurated his picture gallery alongside Sanssouci Palace. For his gallery, he not only acquired works by Flemish and Italian masters based on the model of the princely art collections found in Düsseldorf, Dresden, and Vienna. He selected works with an eye toward genres and schools, collecting works

designed not to decorate his private rooms, but instead to form a canon that would serve an incipient historiography of art. He reported to his sister Wilhelmine: “In Sanssouci, I am having a picture gallery built—a new folly, you will say, but that is the way of the world, and history would be very brief if one registered only sensible behavior from the biographies of individuals.”

Occurring in 2013—when Frederick’s picture gallery was two hundred and fifty years old—was the groundbreaking ceremony for the rebuilding of the Palais Barberini, destroyed during the Second World War. The original was erected by Frederick the Great between 1771 and 1772 was based on the model of the Palazzo Barberini in Rome. The historically accurate reconstruction was realized by the architectural firm of Hilmer & Sattler und Albrecht. To Thomas Albrecht, we owe the classical museum-style interpretation of the gallery spaces, a *maison de plaisance* that features up-to-date security and climate control technology.

After the disastrous consequences of Prussianism and National Socialism, the World Culture Site consisting of the marvelously maintained palaces and gardens of Potsdam delight guests from Brandenburg, Berlin, and around the world. It is my hope that the Museum Barberini will make a significant contribution as a setting for a critical confrontation with international art, and one that stimulates all of the senses of our visitors and inspires their active participation.

Hasso Plattner
Founder, Museum Barberini

Introduction

The impressionist landscape is often regarded as spontaneous, as devoid of methodical planning. The filmmaker Klaus Wyborny sought out Claude Monet's motifs along the beaches of Normandy. In *Studies on Monet (In the Imaginary Museum)*, Wyborny filmed the steep coastline scenes and overlaid their silhouettes with illustrations of works painted there by the French artist. The results are astonishing: although the artist's handwriting is recognizable, and although he relied upon this effect, Monet never departed from the precise rendering of the topography, even in his most abstract works—a convincing argument against interpreting impressionism as capricious atmospheric painting. Instead, Monet seems to have pushed painting to extremes in order to arrive at an equivalent to nature.

For centuries, painters depicted nature in the form of allegorical personifications of the four elements: fire, water, air, and earth. In the course of the nineteenth century, in the wake of the development of the modern natural sciences, artists progressively discarded this approach to representing the world. The precise observation of natural phenomena gained in significance. *Plein air* painting responded to the changing forms of the appearance of luminous and atmospheric conditions. Employing cutout-like compositions, painters competed with photography by capturing the fleeting appearances of nature through the medium of the rapid oil sketch. Their brushwork was intended to endow observed phenomena with authenticity. Naturalistic, realistic, and impressionistic coloristic conceptions made France the driving force of artistic modernism.

Taking place in Paris even before the French Revolution was the first factional dispute between the advocates of line and color respectively—between an art of ideas and a painting of sensual perception. In 1863, in *Le Peintre de la vie moderne*, Charles Baudelaire proclaimed the new maxims of art as mobility, acceleration, and ephemerality. Now, vision gained ascendancy over the sense of touch, and color over line. Color does not represent light, it *is* light. Impressionist painting no longer narrates, but instead presents something to envisage. As a consequence, landscape—now emancipated from all historical or symbolic attributes—becomes the principal genre of the new school.

For the first time, the impressionists produced large, carefully composed paintings outdoors. From our perspective today, the association between impressionism and landscape seems apparent. But the impressionists regarded themselves as something more than landscape painters. Many painted portraits as well, and paired plein air painting with figural works. The artists who exhibited together between 1874 and 1886 were united by a commitment to modernity. Exhibitions such as *Impressionism: Art in the Making* (The National Gallery, London, 1990) and *Origins of Impressionism* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1994) have focused on this artistic attitude. Whether they were depicting a Parisian boulevard, a coffeehouse scene, or the Seine at Argenteuil, they were concerned solely with the here and now, and therefore repudiated the grand narratives that had typified the art of past centuries. And their contemporaries perceived this stance as a break with all hitherto accepted values.

Despite all of their commonalities, the differences are conspicuous: the circle of friends around Édouard Manet took up themes related to the society of the French capital. The exhibition *Images of a Capital: The Impressionists in Paris* (Museum Folkwang, Essen, 2010) was devoted to the dynamic attitude toward life that these painters endowed with expression by means of plunging perspectival lines. They enthused over elaborately decorated interiors or thematized the intimacy of a salon or a dressing room used by dancers. Found within this thematic complex as well, were portraits of the Parisian bourgeoisie, their features recorded with the studied indifference of the flaneur.

In contrast, the circle around Monet discovered their motifs along the periphery. While the preceding generation of painters had deemed the forest of Fontainebleau and the Normandy coastline as worthy of immortalizing artistically, the impressionists discovered the Parisian suburbs, the villages along the Seine, southern France. The exhibition *Impressionist France: Visions of Nation from Le Gray to Monet* (The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City), organized in 2013, explored the interdependency between landscape painting and national identity.
But the artists around Monet extended their fondness for the peripheral to their own gardens—a motif that eluded nationalistic appropriation. The times of the day and seasons of the year, the impetus driving this obsessive study of nature, situate their experiments and painting campaigns into proximity with natural science. Why did they subject themselves to icy cold or glaring sunlight? Why did they set their canvases, again and again, before the same motifs, painting them with the disinterested neutrality with which the urban flaneur regarded passersby—every brushstroke conveying specific information?
A number of monographic and thematic exhibitions have been dedicated to this phenomenon. Alongside numerous Monet exhibitions, the landscapes of Pierre-Auguste Renoir and Camille Pissarro have been analyzed (in 2006 at the Baltimore Museum of Art; in 2007 at the National Gallery in London), while others have investigated specialized topics such as the impressionists' depictions of water (in 2003 at the Royal Scottish Academy in Edinburgh; in 2007 at the Royal Academy of Arts in London).
The exhibition *Impressionism: The Art of Landscape* is the first systematic presentation of the themes laid claim to by the plein air painting of the impressionists—themes that retained their relevance later in modernism. In their depictions of marine landscapes and forest paths, the impressionists emancipated themselves from their forerunners, Eugène Boudin and the members of the Barbizon school. In paintings of gardens, they arrived at an unheard of freedom in the handling of paint and color. Winter landscapes became arenas of experimentation for the color white, with its refractions into the primary colors red, yellow, and blue. Southern landscapes, with their shimmering light effects, allowed these artists to interweave light and atmosphere, connecting the viewer to the observed phenomena, just as riverine landscapes were linked to their reflective surfaces. To an equal degree, it is a question of the artist's presence and the viewer's participation. Only the grouping together of works according to motif demonstrates how systematically and methodically these artists proceeded with their work.
In preparation for this exhibition, the Museum Barberini has organized its first international symposium. The contributions and the results of the ensuing discussions will appear in the first volume published by the Museum Barberini. Together with Michael Philipp, the curator of the Museum Barberini and coeditor of our publication series, I would like to thank the authors for their essays, which shed light on new aspects of the impressionist landscape.
For this project, Christoph Irrgang has photographed all of the sites where the exhibited works were produced, documenting their contemporary appearances.
Departing from the inventory of the Hasso Plattner Collection, we plan to organize future exhibitions on the topic of impressionism, based on international cooperation, in order to develop a special focus on this topic area. Together with the founder, we would like to thank all of the private collectors and museums for the confidence they have placed in us by parting from their paintings for the sake of this endeavor; their generous loans have allowed us to realize the inaugural exhibition of the Museum Barberini.

Ortrud Westheider
Director, Museum Barberini

Ortrud Westheider

Impressionism

The Art of Landscape

In Paris in 1874, Claude Monet's painting *Impression, Sunrise* caused a sensation (ill. 1). At the first group exhibition of the artists' association that shortly thereafter became known as the impressionists, the work's compositional freedom spurned the first scandal to ever emerge around an image depicting a landscape. Critics regarded it as unfinished. They perceived the artist's individualism and his search for a radically renewed form of painterly realism. Also seen as provocative was the programmatic orientation of this group of painters, which included, alongside Monet, Alfred Sisley, Auguste Renoir, and Camille Pissarro, who also presented themselves through landscapes.[1]

This essay addresses the role of landscape for the self-understanding of the impressionist painters, and asks how this genre could have developed such a revolutionary and explosive force so late in the nineteenth century.[2] During the nineteenth century in Europe and the United States, landscape painting became the leading genre within the visual arts, and came to serve as the touchstone of artistic strivings for emancipation. This was, however, a phenomenon of romanticism, and in the following will be demarcated from impressionism.

The development of *plein air* painting in France was an equally decisive component for the impressionist landscape. Monet, Renoir, Pissarro, and Sisley saw themselves as belonging to this tradition. The art they presented to the public was not entirely novel. They had no intention of breaking with precedent, planned no radical new beginning. This is why a boundary is introduced in the second part of this essay as well, because the novelty contemporaries regarded as subversive is inherent in precisely that difference.

From a contemporary perspective, the association between impressionism and landscape seems self-evident. But the impressionist artists no longer regarded themselves as landscape painters. Many of them occasionally painted figures, by preference under open skies, or alternated between various subjects; this was a heterogeneous group. More important was the circumstance that the dispute concerning the genres involved a rejection of a discourse that had for centuries been dominated by the powerful Académie des Beaux-Arts. This essay concludes by asking: What does it mean to paint landscapes without regarding oneself as a landscape painter? The localization of landscape within impressionism is then primarily a positioning within an artistic development. For this reason, the works analyzed here are those chosen by the artists themselves for their group exhibitions, since that selection conveyed a personal statement.[3]

A New Understanding of Mood: Delimitation from European Romanticism

In the course of the nineteenth century, under the new conditions of industrialization, the natural sciences, and tourism, painters throughout Europe sought out the natural world; individual observation became increasingly important. Because individual perception came to the fore now alongside a preoccupation with traditional themes, studies executed en plein air were seen as an attack on the royal academies, and therefore as politically volatile. The growth of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by the emergence of a market for small-format paintings depicting French landscapes.

In England, the field of landscape benefited from the aristocratic tradition of the Grand Tour and the accompanying popularization of watercolor painting. During the late eighteenth century, tourism in the Rhineland, the Alps, and Italy created a demand for illustrated travel literature, providing artists such as William Turner the opportunity to specialize in one subject, through which he would position himself against the academic tradition of history painting as a professor of perspective at the Royal Academy. With the painting entitled *The Fighting Temeraire Tugged to Her Last Berth To Be Broken Up* (ill. 2), which depicts the celebrated warship,

1) Claude Monet
Impression, *Sunrise*, 1872
Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris

2) William Turner
The Fighting Temeraire
Tugged to Her Last Berth
To Be Broken Up, 1838
The National Gallery, London

3) Claude-Joseph Vernet
The Shipwreck, 1772
National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.,
Patrons' Permanent Fund
and Chester Dale Fund

on its final journey, as it is maneuvered into the harbor by a tugboat, he created a symbol of the transition to a new age. Displayed on the right-hand side of the scene, as prominently as the maritime scene itself, is the setting sun, which makes an equal claim to modernity through its use of color. In creating this scene, Turner employed the elementary tones red, yellow, and blue. In his view, colored light should fill the space, and every surface should reflect it. According to him, a painter ought to be capable of transposing this reflective atmospheric space into painting.

In contrast to Turner's image, Monet's painting *Impression, Sunrise* renounces narrative elements. His painting of the harbor of Le Havre was executed in connection with a stay in London, where he sought refuge from the Franco-Prussian War in 1870–71. With the smokestacks visible on the horizon on the left-hand side of the picture, Monet—like Turner—presents an insignia of modernity (cf. Stefan Koldehoff's contribution in the present volume, pp. 62–73), juxtaposing it with a natural spectacle—the sunrise—on the right-hand side. Monet's adopted Turner's reduction of the palette to the elementary colors red, yellow, and blue. The horizon, however, is set approximately one third higher. For Turner, modernity involved the registration of atmosphere, for Monet, the depiction of the reflective water. While for Turner the emphasis is on space, Monet emphasizes surface.

John Ruskin coined the slogan "the innocent eye" for Turner's painting.[4] According to him, a painting should be as truthful as possible. A generation later, Monet thematized the gaze and the perceptions of the viewer. The rough execution of the image, regarded by contemporaries as unfinished, makes no attempt to conceal the fact that the image consists of paint. In examining the image, the picture, the viewer is always conscious of the fact that she is confronted by a work of art. Monet's painting is no longer in the service of a message, it describes nothing, and instead simply offers itself to the gaze. Nevertheless, through the plausibility of the luminous reflections on the water's surface, the momentary shifting shapes of the clouds, and the persuasive power of the registration of space present the eye with reality—or at least with the experience of reality.

Despite the degree to which Monet regarded himself as allied with Turner's open manner of painting, and to his scientifically-inspired analyses of light and color, the romantic principle of worldliness no longer played a role for him, any more than it did for impressionism as an artistic movement. This becomes evident when we compare *Impression, Sunrise* with the paintings—so alien to Monet—of Caspar David Friedrich. Friedrich comprehended the romantic landscape as a universal genre that stood above paintings depicting religious narratives.[5] A painting such as *The Monk By the Sea* (Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin) portrays the protagonist as a solitary observer at the water's edge.[6] Nature and the therein suspended time are sublime, the human an insignificant part of the whole.[7] In contrast, Monet's shadowy figure in the boat is deprived of any symbolic quality, and is an inescapable element of the landscape: nature is no longer staged as an unattainable counterpart.

In France beginning in the late eighteenth century, it was regarded as the task of philosophy, literature, and painting to provide a nature conceived as sublime, monumental, and wild—inclusive of a human point of reference. The landscape was not to be represented in a way that was devoid of emotion, but instead as a mirror of human tragedy. Claude-Joseph Vernet took the viewer into account (ill. 3). Figures that served to present the terrifying drama of a natural catastrophe became surrogates within the space of a stage. As early as the Salon exhibitions of the eighteenth century, landscape painting exploited this strategy of participation to compete with history painting, whose mythological or biblical themes had meanwhile begun to encounter an indifferent public.[8]

As early as the seventeen-seventies, Vernet had championed visual study beneath the open sky, convinced that the observation and rendering of shifting light conditions was the only path capable of leading painting away from the formulaic conventions for which history painting was reproached.[9] He wished to convey an impression to the viewer that was adequate to his or her own experience. As a contemporary of the Enlightenment, Vernet incorporated the public's powers of judgment so that already in the eighteenth century, the viewer's relationship to the depicted scene had beforehand become a criterion of a successful work of art. With this commission to the painters of the Academy, issued in October of 1774, to produce "an interesting view of the vicinity of Paris," Jean-Baptiste Marie Pierre, court painter to Louis XVI, set the stage for a development whose impact was felt into the nineteenth century, and which prepared for both the Barbizon school and impressionism.[10]

A comparison between Vernet's dramatically staged shipwrecks and Monet's view of the harbor of Le Havre in morning light demonstrates just how remote impressionism was from the sentimental painting of the eighteenth century. For the impressionists, mood was no longer linked with emotion, but was instead aligned exclusively with the luminous atmosphere and visual registration of momentary phenomena.

An Impressionistic Subgenre: Delimitation from Plein Air Painting in France

Despite the fact that landscape occupied the lowest ranking in the hierarchical system of the French academic tradition alongside still life painting, and although painting outdoors was never an aspect of the academic curriculum, plein air painting must be regarded as a French invention. In Rome, Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes initiated a fashion for cloud studies that dissuaded artists on the Grand Tour from studying antique statues and sensitized them to fleeting atmospheric phenomena and shifting light effects.

In 1800, Valenciennes published his treatise *Éléments de perspective pratique*, which devotes considerable space to the novel practice of painting oil studies outdoors. The painting is to be executed quickly, "for the depicted object is illuminated by the sun, hence light and shadow are transformed continuously by the movement of the earth, so that it is impossible to linger very long with the recording of nature, without the chosen light effect changing so quickly that before long, the original state is no longer recognizable."[11] Through this text, Valenciennes would also transform the gaze of the artist who was sent to Italy, namely to Rome, on scholarship by the Paris Academy in order to accumulate a repertoire of sketches of antique statues and architecture upon which he could draw throughout his artistic career. Against this practice of copying and reproducing the eternally valid, Valenciennes proposed a fleeting landscape as the decisive criterion.[12]

Camille Corot relayed a knowledge of the interplay between light effects and the landscape and the value of sober observation to the impressionists. They revered the teacher of Camille Pissarro and Berthe Morisot, who they knew as le père Corot.[13] In 1825, Corot had traveled to Italy, where he had spent three years painting in the Roman Campagna. For the first group exhibition of the impressionists, Pissarro submitted a painting that amounted to an homage to Corot (ills. 4, 5).[14] He extended the panoramic format Corot had adopted from Valenciennes, transferring it to the French landscape.

Visitors to the first impressionist exhibition were able to compare this work with Monet's *Poppy Field (Argenteuil)* (Musée d'Orsay, Paris). In these paintings, Pissarro and Monet presented a new genre of landscape painting, one that went beyond Corot—fields: vastness, clouds, and luminous atmosphere and almost geometrically organized interplay of colored surfaces.

4) Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot
Dardagny, Morning, 1853
The National Gallery, London,
Presented by William Edward Brandt,
Henry Augustus Brandt, Walter Augustus
Brandt and Alice Mary Bleecker
in memory of Rudolph Ernst Brandt

5) Camille Pissarro
June Morning at Pontoise, 1873
Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe

6) Pierre-Auguste Renoir
The Reapers, 1873
Private collection

7) Gustave Courbet
Winter Landscape Near Ornans, 1865–1870
Von der Heydt-Museum, Wuppertal

8) Camille Pissarro
Hoarfrost at Ennery, 1873
Musée d'Orsay, Paris

9) Claude Monet
Seascape Near Fécamp, 1881
Private collection

Renoir too modified Corot's schema (ill. 6). The critics regard these paintings as a travesty of the conception of landscape held by their predecessors.[15] It was already clear to contemporaries how closely the impressionists were oriented toward the Barbizon school, and they found the differences disturbing.[16] Eight years later, Monet exhibited *Wheatfield* (cat. 50), and Sisley *Meadows at Veneux-Nadon* (cat. 49) at the seventh impressionist exhibition. These contributions testified to their continuous work on the themes that would lead to an impressionist pictorial formula that was destined to remain decisive for subsequent generations as well—Van Gogh, for example.[17]

Alongside Corot, it was Eugène Boudin, Gustave Courbet, and other Barbizon school painters who provided a point of departure for the impressionist landscape.[18] With their forest paths and riverine landscapes, Théodore Rousseau, Charles François Daubigny, Constant Troyen, and Narcisse Díaz de la Peña had made plein air painting respectable in France (cat. 21–23). During the eighteen-fifties, landscape paintings represented one third of the works displayed at the annual state exhibition,[19] and even the emperor acquired them.[20] Renoir, Monet, and Pissarro had worked together with the Barbizon painters in the forest of Fontainebleau where they had further developed the theme of the wooded landscape.

Monet submitted three paintings to the 1877 group exhibition, all variations on the path through a forest (cat. 24). The same motif was also developed further by Renoir (cat. 25), and in the same year by Pissarro.[21] In their works based on this motif, they aimed to endow color with greater intrinsic value. While in the mid-nineteenth century, the forest path motif had still been a test of light-dark and chromatic values, the impressionists strove to give light and shadow chromatic equivalents. The continuity of the choice of motif was opposed to a new conception of color. As their theme, the impressionists chose the leaf canopy of the forest and the light that penetrated it, rendering its detailed structure by means of the flecks and dabs of their brushwork. During the eighteen-sixties, Renoir,[22] who had taken Courbet's practice—involving the use of deep black bitumen—as his point of departure, was influenced by Narcisse Díaz de la Peña to lighten his color palette. But Renoir was not concerned exclusively with brightening. In *Shaded Path* (cat. 25), he renounces black almost entirely, replacing it with blue. In this way, even the darkest areas of the undergrowth are rendered in chromatic hues.

The preoccupation with Courbet's snowy landscapes on the part of the impressionist painters signals this shift in interest (cf. Nancy Ireson's contribution in the present volume, pp. 38–47). Beginning in the eighteen-sixties, Courbet had begun painting winter scenes by applying layers of white paint with the palette knife in a way that emphasized its dense materiality (ill. 7). This manner of painting was consistent with his understanding of realism in art, which he conceived as simple and honest. The impressionists adhered to this demand for an intimate connection to reality, but employed atmosphere, reflected light, and ephemeral impressions in order to gain a different mode of access to the experience of nature. They chose a winter landscape theme, that of the hoarfrost, that displays the greatest possible sense of lightness in contrast to the compact character of the mantle of snow. Already in the first group exhibition, Pissarro called attention to this phenomenon. With the painting *Hoarfrost at Ennery* (ill. 8), he explored the potential of reflected sunlight falling onto a landscape covered in ice crystals—a motif that was important to Monet and Sisley alongside the snowy landscape (cat. 72, 73, and 75). Unlike Courbet, the impressionists exploited the winter landscape in order to thematize light phenomena. Their observations of hoarfrost sensitized them to the fact that a snow-covered landscape too consisted of colored shadows.

The impressionists sought out the locations along the coast of Normandy where Courbet had worked during the eighteen-sixties, adopting his artistic practice of subjecting themselves to

elemental nature. The repeated depiction of a single motif led to painting in series (see Christoph Heinrich's contribution in the present volume, pp. 74–87). In 1882, Monet presented his most comprehensive series to date, consisting of nine works.[23] The series was devoted to the view from the steep cliffs at Fécamp (ill. 9), breaking now with marine scenes in emulation of Boudin, with whom he had been close in Le Havre during the eighteen-sixties. Now, the view from the cliffs was oriented toward the elementary convergence of land and sea, the movements of the waves and clouds, and the light effects at varying times of day. Courbet had organized his seascapes as vast, empty spaces set parallel to the picture plane (*Calm Sea*, 1866, National Gallery, Washington D.C.). In contrast, Monet positions the edge of the surf diagonally along the surface. He shifts the viewer away from the upward surge of the waves. The spectacle is existentially less tangible as if staged visually. The elevated standpoint creates a sense of distance; not the individual waves (ill. 10), but rather the ocean as a mirror of the sky. This interplay allows it to appear dark and impenetrable, transparent, either motionless or animated. The clouds are registered as dark shadows on the surface of the water. The sea becomes a field of experimentation for painting.

Following Charles Daubigny's example, Monet painted the reflective surface of the Seine (ills. 11 and 12). Like Daubigny, he purchased a boat in order to paint directly above the water, renewing his commitment to the model of the landscapes of the Barbizon painters. Again and again, Monet varied this perspective, initially at Argenteuil, and later at Vétheuil. At the same time, he also focused on motifs that had been deliberately avoided by the previous generation of painters. At the second group exhibition, held in 1876, he presented the paintings *The Railway Bridge at Argenteuil* (private collection) and *The Bridge at Argenteuil* (Musée d'Orsay, Paris),[24] which were echoed and heightened that same year in Sisley's *The Bridge at Hampton Court* (Kunstmuseum Winterthur), and which, as late as the eighteen-eighties, would inspire Caillebotte's *The Argenteuil Bridge and the Seine* (cat. 33).

During the eighteen-nineties, in the *Water Lilies* series, Monet radically rejected the compositional schema of his models, directing the gaze now at the surface of the water itself rather than at the horizon (cat. 65, 67, and 68). The level of abstraction toward which he strove in these works had been prepared for by years of obsessive study of the water's surface (cat. 12–14, 29, 31, 32, and 43). Here, too, is also instance in which he applies all of the chromatic colors unmixed alongside green, brown, and yellow tones; there is no evident link to tradition. The subgenre of the garden painting too lacks any precedent. Monet developed it in connection with the large-format works commissioned by the department store owner Ernest Hochedé (cat. 24). In the latter's park, he painted rosebushes, which he shifts close to the foreground and has extend above the horizon line of the park lawn in the preliminary study he exhibited at the third impressionist exhibition of 1877 (cat. 58), and in the later large-format version (Hermitage, St. Petersburg). The flecks of paint that symbolize the blossoms constitute a vertical level between the viewer and the pictorial space, pressing the image into the surface. The painting therefore prepared for the abstract tendencies Monet would develop consistently all the way up to his water lilies of the eighteen-nineties.[25] This theme too supplied impulses for the exhibition society. In 1886, Morisot exhibited a garden painting (1884, Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris) in which the colors of a flowerbed are superimposed like a web on the elements—the fence and the corner of her house in Bougival—that describe the location.

These examples show that the impressionist landscape developed in continuity with an older generation of Barbizon painters with whom the younger artists cultivated personal relationships, whose financial success they emulated, and whose counsel they sought. This tradition represents a point of departure; the Barbizon painters developed an original pictorial subject

10) Gustave Courbet
Surging Waves, circa 1870
Kunsthalle Bremen

11) Charles Daubigny
Banks of the Oise, 1859
Musée des Beaux-Arts, Bordeaux

12) Claude Monet
Autumn Effect at Argenteuil, 1873
The Courtauld Gallery, London,
The Samuel Courtauld Trust

that allowed them to focus on the emancipation of painterly resources while providing an arena for their understanding of color. Even when they adopted the compositional schema and themes of earlier landscape artists, the public perceived their intensification of motifs as artistic capriciousness. The proceedings conjures an earlier dispute, one that had divided art lovers in France into two camps ever since the foundation of the Academy in the seventeenth century—the Poussinistes, who were committed to the line and regarded Nicolas Poussin as authoritative, and the Rubenistes, who prized Peter Paul Rubens's unconstrained handling of color.[26] The Barbizon painters had influenced the impressionist decidedly more than the latter's academic instructors, among them the history painter Charles Gleyre, in whose studio Monet, Bazille, Renoir, Sisley, Pissarro, and Cézanne had become acquainted. None of these young artists regarded the Swiss native as their teacher. Gleyre, however, granted them the freedom to find their own paths outside of the École des Beaux Arts.

Figure and Landscape: A New Chapter in the Dispute between Line and Color

Frederic Bazille's painting *Studio on the rue Condamine* (1870, Musée d'Orsay, Paris) provides testimony to the intersection of two circles of friends, the figure painters around Édouard Manet and the landscape painters around Monet. Depicted from right to left are Renoir, Emile Zola (Zacharie Astruc?), Manet, Monet, Bazille, and at the piano, a friend of Bazille's, the musician and collector Edmond Maître. Belonging to Manet's circle were the artists Edgar Degas and Berthe Morisot—neither are portrayed—who had numbered among the impressionists exhibition since 1874. Missing from Bazille's studio from the circle of friends around Monet were Alfred Sisley and Camille Pissarro, both painters who had worked en plein air with the greatest consistency; nor is Paul Cézanne represented. He had drawn attention to himself with obscure Manet adaptations before achieving success as a landscape painter who would carry the modernist potential of impressionism into the twentieth century. In 1870, figural painting still dominated in the circle of artists, who would exhibit together beginning in 1874 and enter art history as the impressionists.

Resonating as late as 1870 was the scandal surrounding Manet's painting *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1862–63, Musée d'Orsay, Paris), which had been rejected by the Salon seven years earlier. Drawing upon Marcantonio Raimondi's engraving after Raphael's *Judgment of Paris*, Manet staged a modern picnic on the banks of the Seine at Argenteuil. It was rejected by the jury because the juxtaposition of gentlemen attired *à la mode* with classically nude ladies might have led to public offense. The allusions to antiquity and the Renaissance, however, may have moved the Emperor Napoleon III to give the painting a second chance. He had a *Salon des Refusés* organized, thereby allowing Manet to achieve a *succèss de scandale*.[27] It was the act of painting outdoors that appalled the critics. According to them, both the manner of painting and the work's morality were degenerate.

The scandal generated by this painting prompted Claude Monet to portray, on a canvas measuring 6 by 4.6 meters, twelve young Parisians on an excursion into the forest of Fontainebleau—among them, seated on the ground, Gustave Courbet (*Luncheon on the Grass*, 1865–66, Musée d'Orsay, Paris). Monet sought to take advantage of Manet's success by attempting to realize Bazille's suggestion for depicting life-sized figures in a landscape.[28]

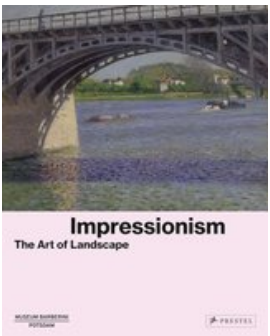
Monet sought to outdo his role model Manet pictorially by integrating these figures, painted en plein air, convincingly into the landscape. Manet consistently composed his figures as though in a frieze. Often, the background consisted of little more than planar expanses of paint that are reminiscent of Francisco Goya's portraits, and that endow the figures with an enigmatic

indifference. Monet's large-scale project would have been quite different in this regard, but after intensive work in the summer of 1865, he ceased work on it without reaching any satisfying conclusion. Finally, he sent a rapidly executed substitute picture to the Salon, which portrays his future wife Camille Doncieux in a green dress (Kunsthalle Bremen)—significantly, in the darkness of an interior room.[29] Monet's grand project for reconciling figures and landscape in the monumental format of history painting had met with failure. The attempt shows Monet's ambition to achieve recognition—and through Bazille's support, for the entire group as well. Figure painting and its effective staging in the Salon, however, remained the suitable means. Only the group exhibitions of the artists' association finally broke with this schema.

The eight exhibitions organized by the impressionists between 1874 and 1886 was a reaction to the rejection of their works by the Salon. But they also represented a response to the transformation of public perceptions. The economic boom that followed the war made it possible for the public to attend numerous exhibitions in addition to the Salon. The idea originated with Renoir and Monet, whose initial discussions went back to 1869, and who had secured the assistance of Corot, Courbet, Díaz, and Daubigny, who also wanted to contribute paintings. The Franco-Prussian War, from 1870 to 1871, interfered with the planned exhibition.[30] The siege of Paris and the internal French struggles after the abdication of Napoleon III brought cultural life to a standstill. A range of positions was found within the artistic community: from Republican-minded patriots like Manet to Communards like Courbet, and all the way to artists like Monet, who fled to London in exile.[31] Even in the capital, comprehensive reconstruction work hindered public life after the withdrawal of the occupiers. But an economic boom arrived before long, and it had a revolutionizing character for art. The art dealer Paul Durand-Ruel, who had already established a public following by holding exhibitions of Barbizon school works in his gallery, purchased entire ensembles of works from Manet, Renoir, and Monet.[32] At the Hôtel Drouot, landscape painters held individual auctions. Exhibitions in the provinces expanded marketing opportunities, while smaller format works and oil studies proved saleable as well.

Monet and Renoir commenced their idea once again, and although Manet continued to court success at the Salon and declined to participate in the group exhibitions, the link to his circle of friends endowed the enterprise with dynamism. Edgar Degas became the driving force, and through his contacts with the Vicomte Ludovic-Napoléon Lepic and Henri Rouart, brought additional painters and collectors from affluent families into play. Degas's engagement shaped the exhibitions dramatically as well. Lepic's seascapes, inspired by Eugène Boudin, represented the sole landscape painter in Degas's network. Everyone else shared his preference for modern life in the metropolis. Because Dégas and his friends were as strongly represented quantitatively as the landscape painters Pissarro, Monet, and Sisley, the character of the exhibitions was also shaped by depictions of urban settings, of theaters and coffeehouses, as well as by portraits.

In the first exhibition, Claude Monet reacted to the failure of his large-format project with a drastic shift of perspective. Distance and indifference characterize his depiction of the hurrying passersby on the *Boulevard des Capucines* (ill. p. 30). Monet had painted this work a year earlier from the window of the studio of the photographer Félix Nadar, where it was now on view. In this painting, human figures are registered as blue shadows, a procedure Monet not only used for his townscapes, but would also apply to his views of the environs of Paris. A semantic shift was consummated through the painterly integration of the figures. The failure of the integration of the figure into the space of the landscape had compelled Monet toward radical renewal. The indifference that constituted Manet's modernity and which characterized his



Ortrud Westheider, Michael Philipp

Impressionism
The Art of Landscape

Gebundenes Buch mit Schutzumschlag, 248 Seiten, 24,0 x 30,0 cm
194 farbige Abbildungen
ISBN: 978-3-7913-5629-7

Prestel

Erscheinungstermin: Januar 2017

This breathtaking survey takes a multi-faceted approach in its study of 90 seminal works of Impressionist art. Accompanying the inaugural exhibition of the new Museum Barberini in Potsdam, Germany, the book features contributions by six leading scholars who examine a wide range of themes, from the use of repetition and variation to the ecological climate in which the artists worked. Underlying and unifying these perspectives is the inexorable change of the landscape itself. Poised on the brink of the Modern Era, the Impressionists documented the effects of industrialihation on French landscapes. Amid these transitions, the artists used the landscape itself to advance their own explorations into the field of color theory. The book also explores the influence of modern poetry and photography on the creation of these paintings. With beautiful reproductions from the masters-including Monet, Pissarro, Sisley, and Renoir-this volume takes an exciting new approach to the study of Impressionism, while introducing audiences to the holdings of a remarkable new museum.

With essays by Anke Daemgen, Stephen F. Eisenman, Christoph Heinrich, Jenns E. Howoldt, Nancy Ireson, Julia Knöschke, Stefan Koldehoff, Linda Philipp-Hacka, Richard Shiff, Ortrud Westheider.