

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

UNRULY NATURE: THE LANDSCAPES OF THÉODORE ROUSSEAU

At the J. Paul Getty Museum, Getty Center, June 21, 2016 – September 11, 2016

By the late nineteenth century, the stature of Théodore Rousseau (1812–1867) as one of Europe's preeminent landscapists was firmly established, and he was celebrated internationally as a leader of the Barbizon School, named after the village on the edge of the Forest of Fontainebleau where he and other pioneering artists had taken up residence in the 1840s and 1850s.

After a few years of academic training, Rousseau came to the fore in the 1830s as one of the Romantic era's great independents and a controversial exemplar of the period's new spirit of naturalism. Restlessly inventive, he skipped the time-honored trip to Italy and instead found a lifetime's inspiration in the varied regions of his native France, which he approached with great sensitivity and ecological awareness. Few landscapists before him had tackled such an array of subjects or paid such attention to the variable effects of season, weather, and time of day, and few had experimented with such a range of graphic and painterly styles and techniques in the process. Exploratory and open-ended in its pursuit of new formulas of expression, Rousseau's oeuvre was a fundamentally unruly one, testifying to an exciting moment of discovery in French art when the once-lowly genre of landscape became one of the most consequential, a generation before the Impressionists came on the scene.

This is the first major international loan exhibition in North America devoted to Rousseau's work. The paintings and drawings have been selected to highlight the full range of his production—small and large, private and public, finished and unfinished—over the course of his career.

This exhibition has been co-organized by the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen.

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Chronology of Rousseau's Career

1827–29: Finds his vocation and starts sketching in the environs of Paris and studying landscape paintings in the Louvre. Frequents the studio of Jean-Charles-Joseph Rémond (1795–1875), who in 1821 had won the prestigious Prix de Rome for *paysage historique*, the idealizing, narrative mode of landscape painting promoted by the Academy.

1829: Fails in his attempt at the Prix de Rome. Consequently never makes the trip to Italy that the scholarship prize would have enabled, devoting himself instead to native French sites.

1830: Travels to the remote Auvergne region in central France, the first of many trips around the country. The remarkable studies produced attract the attention of the well-established painter Ary Scheffer (1795–1858), who exhibits them in his Paris studio, helping to launch Rousseau's career.

1831–35: Begins exhibiting at the Paris Salon and is identified as a promising member of the new Romantic generation of landscape painters who were pushing the boundaries of style and subject matter as they explored the expressive possibilities of naturalism.

1836: Is refused entry to the Salon by its conservative jury, dominated by aging members of the Academy. For the next five years, Rousseau's work is systematically rejected, making him a cause célèbre for progressive critics and artists.

1841: Resolves to stop submitting to the Salon after yet another jury rejection. He is fortunate to have a small group of patrons willing to support his career outside of official auspices.

1842–46: Extensive travels around France inspire some of Rousseau's greatest work, though his public visibility remains practically nonexistent.

1847: Rents a house in the village of Barbizon on the edge of the Forest of Fontainebleau, which he had been visiting for years and which would become a second home for the rest of his life.

1848: Revolution puts an end to the French monarchy. The institution of the Second Republic involves a shakeup in the arts administration that benefits Rousseau and others who had suffered at the hands of the Salon jury under the previous regime; he briefly enjoys state patronage.

1849: Returns to the Salon for the first time since 1835 and wins a medal. Goes on to exhibit regularly at the Salon for the rest of his career.

1850: Under financial pressure, he goes direct to auction with a large number of works, a novel marketing strategy at the time.



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1851: Shows seven paintings at the Salon, his largest public exhibition to date. The December coup staged by President Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte (1808–1873), nephew of Napoléon Bonaparte, marks the end of the Republic and ushers in the Second Empire.

1852: Noteworthy purchases at auction by the Duc de Morny (1811–1865), half-brother of the new emperor, signal Rousseau's newfound prestige among the Second Empire's political and financial elite. Rousseau joins the ranks of the Legion of Honor after the Salon.

1855: Enjoys major international exposure at the Exposition Universelle in Paris, where he exhibits thirteen paintings. Rousseau's market grows rapidly.

1857–59: Despite the good market for Rousseau's work, critics cool to his latest Salon paintings.

1861–63: Tries his hand at auction two more times, both in response to pressing debts and as a way to exhibit a wider range of new work than was possible at the Salon, where his critical reputation was slipping.

1866: Bullish on Rousseau's market potential, dealers Paul Durand-Ruel (1831–1922) and Hector Brame (1831–1899) purchase from the artist's studio a bulk lot of works, mostly early studies and sketches, for a colossal sum of a hundred thousand francs.

1867: A capstone year. Durand-Ruel and Brame exhibit 109 of their newly acquired works to acclaim at the Cercle des Arts, an exclusive amateurs' club. Rousseau participates in his final Salon and the Exposition Universelle, for which he also served as president of the painting jury. He is promoted to the rank of *officier* in the Legion of Honor and awarded a Grand Medal of Honor—dramatic testimony to the newly heightened status of landscape in French art. Rousseau dies shortly thereafter.

1868: The artist's estate sale releases hundreds of studies, sketches, and pictures in varying states of finish onto the market. Over the next half-century, Rousseau's art is widely disseminated over France, continental Europe, the United Kingdom, and the United States.



Object Labels

Authors: Scott Allan (SA) and Edouard Kopp (EK)

1.

Landscape with Figures

About 1828–32

Pen and ink, ink wash, and graphite on beige wove paper

17.7 x 23.3 cm (6 15/16 x 9 3/16 in.)

University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, The Paul Leroy Grigaut Memorial Collection, 1969/2.100

With its agitated lines, energetic wash technique, tempestuous mood, and mountain scenery, this imaginative study conveys Rousseau's youthful Romantic ardor in the years around 1830. Never ceasing to explore the expressive potential of ink drawing, Rousseau would nonetheless submit his technique in subsequent landscapes to the discipline coming from the close and patient observation of nature (see *Alley of Chestnut Trees* [#16], for example). (SA)



Catalogue number 5

EX.2016.1.56

2. **The Loing River at the Edge of the Forest of Fontainebleau**

About 1830

Pen and black ink and gray wash on laid paper

21.6 x 28.1 cm (8 1/2 x 11 1/16 in.)

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 97.GA.67

Using brown or black line work and gray wash, Rousseau created subtle contrasts of tone and mood with the warmth of the brown ink and the coolness of the gray wash. The sky occupies most of the composition, a feature typical of seventeenth-century Dutch landscapes, which he greatly admired. As Rousseau would often do, he surrounded the composition with an ink framing line, which suggests that he deemed the sheet finished. With its soft linearity, this early drawing was meant to emulate the appearance of an etching, yet no related print is known, so it was apparently conceived as an autonomous work. (EK)



Catalogue number 3



3. **A Village in a Valley**

Late 1820s

Oil on paper, mounted on canvas

23.2 x 40.6 cm (9 1/8 x 16 in.)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Friedsam Collection, bequest of Michael Friedsam, 1931 (32.100.133)

Catalogue number 2

EX.2016.1.60

As part of his academic training, Rousseau honed his landscape skills by sketching outdoors in the environs of Paris. This panoramic scene exhibits the broad handling and fragmentary view that one might expect of an informal plein-air sketch, but its deliberate artfulness is equally apparent. The measured succession of diagonally interlocking planes reveal a sophisticated sense of compositional order, and the level of precise detail in select areas suggests that Rousseau took pains to elaborate his work back in the studio. (SA)



Image: www.metmuseum.org

4. **The Cave**

About 1828–30

Oil on paper, mounted on canvas

36.8 x 24.8 cm (14 1/2 x 9 3/4 in.)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of Frank Heller and the European Painting Acquisition Fund, M.90.17

Catalogue number 1

EX.2016.1.41

Rousseau was heir to a well-established academic tradition of painting landscape studies outdoors. Such *études* were understood to play a fundamental role in training one's hand and eye and stocking one's memory. They were the analytical prelude to the more creative work of imaginative synthesis: the painting of idealized compositions in the studio. This early study of Rousseau's has much in common with those of the Neoclassical generation before him, especially its high level of detail and its methodical build-up from a thin, brownish layer to brighter, more opaque colors and highlights. (SA)



Photo: www.lacma.org

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5. **Hamlet in the Auvergne**

1830

Oil on paper, mounted on canvas

34.9 x 55.3 cm (13 3/4 x 21 3/4 in.)

Private collection

Catalogue number 9

EX.2016.1.73

Rousseau's 1830 trip to the Auvergne was decisive for his artistic development. The rugged, mountainous terrain of this remote region in central France appealed to his Romantic imagination, and the oil studies he produced there are remarkable for their intense color, fluid and powerful brushwork, and sensitivity to atmospheric effects. Upon Rousseau's return to Paris, the well-established painter Ary Scheffer (1795–1858) was so impressed by these works that he displayed them in his studio and took the younger artist under his wing, helping to launch his career. (SA)



Photo: Bruce Schwarz

6. **Mountain Stream in the Auvergne**

1830

Oil on paper, mounted on canvas

31 x 37 cm (12 3/16 x 14 9/16 in.)

National Gallery of Art, Washington,
Chester Dale Fund, 1997.24.1

Catalogue number 8

EX.2016.1.46

In the early 1800s, French landscape theorists encouraged the exploration of France as a viable alternative to the traditional voyage to Italy. The oil studies that Rousseau made in 1830 on a formative trip to the Auvergne exemplify this new nationalist spirit of discovery. Loosely and energetically painted, this vigorous work epitomizes the Romantic aesthetics of the sketch, even as it maintains a classical sense of compositional order. Organized around an arched bridge spanning a rocky gorge, it anticipates some of his most highly meditated pictures with their similarly centralized focal points. (SA)



Photo courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington



7. **Valley in the Auvergne Mountains**

1830

Oil on paper, mounted on canvas

21.9 x 31.1 cm (8 5/8 x 12 1/4 in.)

Saint Louis Art Museum, Friends Fund,
170:1966

Catalogue number 6

EX.2016.1.58

During Rousseau's lifetime, oil studies like this one were generally understood as informal, private works not suitable for public exhibition or intended for the market. Although they typically came on the market only posthumously, in artists' estate sales, Rousseau violated this custom, auctioning several in 1850 and selling a bulk lot to the dealers Paul Durand-Ruel (1831–1922) and Hector Brame (1831–1899) in 1867. When they exhibited them in Paris that year, they were a revelation to critics, who preferred them to Rousseau's more painstakingly executed Salon paintings (some of which are in this exhibition). (SA)



8. **Waterfall in Auvergne**

1830

Graphite on heavy laid paper

43.5 x 29.5 cm (17 1/8 x 11 5/8 in.)

Private collection

Catalogue number 7

EX.2016.1.67

Around 1830, while experimenting with watercolor and exploring atmospheric effects in panoramic landscapes, Rousseau kept making detailed studies of natural sites in graphite, such as this one. The large size of the sheet, along with the carefully framed motif of the waterfall, gives this drawing a sense of monumentality. Rousseau showed particular sensitivity to the rhythms and accents of mineral and organic forms in this rugged bit of nature and made it look alive. While his approach was detailed, he did not lose the sense of the whole. (EK)



Photo courtesy Jill Newhouse Gallery

9. **The Valley of the Seine**

1831

Black chalk and graphite on paper

22 x 30.5 cm (8 11/16 x 12 in.)

Musée des beaux-arts de Dijon, D.G.

328

Catalogue number 11

EX.2016.1.16

In the 1830s and early 1840s, Rousseau developed a distinctly tonal drawing style using charcoal or black chalk along with extensive stumping. *The Valley of the Seine* is a fine example of this manner. The draftsman created subtle contrasts of tone and texture between the soft and silvery graphite (in the far distance) and the darker, more friable black chalk (in the middle ground). The way Rousseau suggested the forms of the trees and the diffusion of light through them are particularly successful. His tonal style most likely derived from the contemporaneous rise of landscape lithography. (EK)



Image © Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon. Photo François Jay

10. **The Old Park of Saint-Cloud**

About 1831–32

Oil on canvas

66.6 x 82.5 cm (26 1/4 x 32 1/2 in.)

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Purchased 1977, 18904

Catalogue number 13

EX.2016.1.1

Blurring the distinction between outdoor study and finished painting, this vivid work is larger and more ambitious than the *études* Rousseau typically painted on paper in the early 1830s, but it shares their sense of immediacy and directness. The painting's restless, energetic brushwork, intensely green palette, and bracing atmosphere suggest that Rousseau may have been painting on the spot in the royal park of Saint-Cloud on the outskirts of Paris, which had long been a favored sketching ground for artists. (SA)



Photo © NGC

11. **The Pheasantry in the Forest of Compiègne**

1833

Oil on canvas

53 x 65 cm (20 7/8 x 25 9/16 in.)

Lent by the Saint Louis Art Museum, funds given by Mr. and Mrs. John Peters MacCarthy; and gift of Justina G. Catlin in memory of her husband, Daniel Catlin, by exchange.

Few early works demonstrate Rousseau's coloristic daring and sophistication as well as this ghostly nocturne. When the painting was auctioned in 1898 (the last time it was seen in public before its recent rediscovery), the catalogue described it as "a superb tableau where the preoccupation of giving a true impression of the play of light at night, without recourse to facile oppositions, has led the painter on a pursuit without analogy in the work of any artist. Despite the apparent blacks of the trees in the foreground, when one looks attentively there is actually nothing in this picture that is not perfectly limpid. It seems like it was painted yesterday." (SA)



Catalogue number 12

EX.2016.1.63

12. **View of Arbois**

1834 or 1862

Watercolor heightened with gouache on paper

21 x 32 cm (8 1/4 x 12 5/8 in.)

Musée des beaux-arts de Dijon, D.G. 501

In the early 1830s, Rousseau began exploring the potential of watercolor, a medium he would use, more or less sparingly, at different points in his career. Here he employed it extensively, in combination with gouache, to produce a richly layered work in which the watercolor's translucent quality is mitigated by the opaque gouache. The result is an eerie and lyrical view of a village in the Jura region, which he visited in 1834 on his way to Switzerland and again in the early 1860s (hence the uncertainty about the work's date). The soft, atmospheric quality of Rousseau's style evokes the fluidity of Turner's expansive and misty manner of painting. (EK)



Catalogue number 14

EX.2016.1.17

Image © Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon. Photo François Jay

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13. **View of Salève, near Geneva**

1834

Oil on paper, mounted to canvas

39 x 62 cm (15 3/8 x 24 7/16 in.)

Art Institute of Chicago, through prior gift of Henry Morgen, Ann G. Morgen, Meyer Wasser, and Ruth G. Wasser, 2008.399

In 1834 Rousseau undertook a life-altering trip to the Jura, in eastern France. Showing a range of mountains just south of Geneva and conveying the spatial immensity that so impressed Rousseau in the region, this beautifully preserved oil study is remarkable for its large size, energetic handling, and sensitively nuanced palette. (SA)

Photography © The Art Institute of Chicago, <http://www.artic.edu>



Catalogue number 16

EX.2016.1.48

14. **Mont Blanc Seen from La Faucille, Storm Effect**

Begun 1834

Oil on canvas

143 x 240 cm (56 5/16 x 94 1/2 in.)

Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, MIN 1783

This engulfing storm scene, presenting the Alps from a vantage point in the Jura Mountains on the other side of Lake Geneva, epitomizes the Romantic feeling for the sublime in its superhuman scale and elemental drama. Hugely ambitious for the artist, the painting was conceived during his 1834 trip to the region and then retained in his studio for the rest of his life. Rousseau identified artistic creation with natural creation, finding here an expressive equivalent for the turbulent spectacle of nature in an effusive liberation of paint. (SA)



Catalogue number 17

EX.2016.1.11

Photographer: Ole Haupt



15. **Rocky Landscape, Forest of Fontainebleau**

About 1835–40

Oil on canvas, mounted on board

31.8 x 43.2 cm (12 1/2 x 17 in.)

Private collection

Catalogue number 18

EX.2016.1.70

Rousseau was often drawn to the most desolate corners of nature, the kinds of sites traditionally deemed unworthy of art. This audacious study of a rising slope covered in scrub and mossy, lichenous rocks is among the most radically unpicturesque of his career. It is evident that this small piece of forsaken ground, filling the picture plane and inspiring intricate, chaotic layerings of paint, contained a world of botanical and geological interest for the artist. (SA)

Photo courtesy Jill Newhouse Gallery



16. **Alley of Chestnut Trees**

1837 or 1839

Black crayon and brown wash,
heightened with red chalk on paper

20 x 36.5 cm (7 7/8 x 14 3/8 in.)

Musée du Louvre, Département des
Arts Graphiques, Paris, RF 12294

Catalogue number 19

EX.2016.1.24

Rousseau made this magnificent drawing on the grounds of the château owned by the family of his friend and early champion Charles Le Roux (1814–1895). It is one of several preparatory studies for an important painting, *An Alley of Chestnut Trees*, which captured the imagination of many Romantic artists and critics when they first saw it in the 1840s. Encapsulating Rousseau's reverence for nature in all its vitality and profusion, the overgrown alleyway was likened by his contemporaries to a cathedral. (SA)

© RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY



UNRULY NATURE

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17. **Forest in Boisrémond**

1842

Black chalk on laid paper

28.1 x 45 cm (11 1/16 x 17 11/16 in.)

The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2002.3

Catalogue number 22

In 1842 Rousseau went to the Berry, in central France, where he was enthused by the austere beauty of the area and developed new kinds of compositions and new approaches toward nature that would set his art on a new course. The drawings he made during that trip are almost always in black crayon or black chalk—as in this instance. Ever careful in the selection and framing of his subject matter, the draftsman focused here on one of his favorite motifs, namely the edge of a forest, where trees can be seen to emerge out of the bare soil. (EK)



18. **Under the Birches, Evening**

1842

Black chalk on brown wove paper

29.4 x 46 cm (11 9/16 x 18 1/8 in.)

Toledo Museum of Art, Frederick B. and Kate L. Shoemaker Fund, 1976.8

Catalogue number 20

EX.2016.1.3

See label text for #19

Photo Credit: Toledo Museum of Art



19. **Evening (The Parish Priest)**

1842–43

Oil on panel

42.3 x 64.4 cm (16 5/8 x 25 3/8 in.)

Toledo Museum of Art, gift of Arthur J. Secor, 1933.37

Catalogue number 21

EX.2016.1.6

From 1836 to 1841, Rousseau's submissions to the Salon were entirely rejected by its conservative academic jury. Refusing to submit anymore, he went into retreat, taking a long trip to the Berry in central France in 1842. It was a period of great self-doubt but also major artistic breakthroughs. Faced with the region's flat plains, he had to devise new strategies to organize the pictorial field and channel his passionate feelings for nature. Rousseau emulated seventeenth-century Dutch art in this painting by establishing a shadowy band in the foreground to set off the luminous distance. To focus attention in the middle ground, he deployed a screen of trees, adapted from one of his black chalk studies (see #18). And to intensify the impression of the humble scene, he maximized the contrast between the autumnal hues of the foliage and the deep blue of the sky. The resulting picture became one of the great icons of Romantic naturalism. (SA)



Photo: Chris Ridgway

20. **Trees in a Thicket (La Mare aux Évées, Forest of Fontainebleau)**

About 1845

Conté crayon on wove paper

31.1 x 41 cm (12 1/4 x 16 1/8 in.)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, purchase, Rogers Fund and David L. Klein Jr. Memorial Foundation Inc. Gift, 1976 (1976.53)

Catalogue number 30

EX.2016.1.61

Rousseau often visited the Forest of Fontainebleau before settling in the nearby village of Barbizon in 1847. He gained an intimate knowledge of the different parts of the forest. Among his preferred areas were wild ones with dense thickets—a complex motif that evidently fascinated him. Here he used a favorite organizational device of his maturity, namely the silhouetting of skeletal tree limbs in winter against the sky and the formless vegetal masses around them. This sheet has a remarkable graphic vitality and a variety of marks that include shading, hatching, and stumping as well as rubbing. (EK)



Image: www.metmuseum.org



UNRULY NATURE

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21. **The Fisherman (*Le Pêcheur*)**

About 1840–45

Pen and brown ink and brush, gray and black wash (scratched away in places), with touches of pink watercolor, on beige wove paper

20.9 x 28 cm (8 1/4 x 11 in.)

The Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund, 1980.18

This quiet, gray-toned work, with just a hint of color, is a signed presentation drawing of a sort that started becoming popular with private collectors in the 1850s. One of the first Rousseau drawings ever shown in public, it featured in a special exhibition organized at the dealer Martinet's fashionable premises in 1860. Théophile Gautier (1811–1872) concluded his review of the event by evoking Rousseau's idyllic scene: "Unfurling its rays like a fan of gold, the sun rises on the horizon of a landscape with a river flowing between gentle banks, the water shimmering in the morning air." (SA)



Catalogue number 23

Image © The Cleveland Museum of Art

EX.2016.1.77

22. **Farm in Les Landes**

About 1844–47

Charcoal, dilute paint (medium undetermined), and touches of white oil paint on canvas

64 x 98 cm (25 3/16 x 38 9/16 in.)

Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, SMK 3269

This extraordinary mixed-media monochrome represents the culmination of a sequence of drawings that originated in Rousseau's 1844 trip to the region of Les Landes, in southwestern France. It was in reference to such minutely developed "grisailles in oil" or "drawings in grisaille," without parallel in nineteenth-century French landscape practice, that Rousseau's biographer Alfred Sensier (1815–1877) coined the term *dessin-peinture*. This "drawing-painting" ultimately served as the basis for a highly meditated version in color (see #38). The two pictures are shown together here for the first time in over a century. (SA)



Catalogue number 24

Photographer: Ole Haupt

EX.2016.1.9



23. **Trees and Cottage**

After 1844

Black chalk, transfer drawing
(counterproof)

49.2 x 63.8 cm (19 3/8 x 25 1/8 in.)

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, gift of
Mrs. John S. Ames, 66.943

Catalogue number 26

EX.2016.1.53

This transfer drawing is the reverse impression, or counterproof, of a drawing that Rousseau made for a painting of the same dimensions. Such full-scale compositional studies attest to the fundamental role he assigned drawing in the preparation of his most important paintings, in keeping with his academic training. In their extraordinary level of detail and precision, such drawings exceeded typical notions of the preparatory sketch, and they were prized as accomplished works in their own right when they entered the market after the artist's death. (SA)

Photograph © 2016 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



24. **The Old Oak**

About 1845

Black chalk, pen and brown ink, brown
wash, and watercolor on paper

14 x 18.5 cm (5 1/2 x 7 5/16 in.)

Private collection, France

Catalogue number 33

EX.2016.1.31

The works displayed on this wall are particularly fine examples of Rousseau's maturity and late career as a draftsman. Dating from the mid- 1840s, *The Old Oak* depicts a tree—a kind traditionally symbolic of strength—that has splintered. It is a highly original and dynamic composition, whose motif, palette, and facture would have appealed to Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890), an admirer of Rousseau's work. By contrast, Rousseau made the three other, later works (see #35, 53, 61) using short, nervous, tremulous strokes and a limited color range. As his biographer Alfred Sensier (1815–1877) remarked, "[T]hese curious watercolors, almost all in india ink, sometimes heightened with pen strokes [and] small brushstrokes of color, were drawn briskly from nature and slowly reworked in the shelter of his studio, during the good periods of his life."



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25. **Hoarfrost**

1845

Oil on canvas

63.5 x 98 cm (25 x 38 9/16 in.)

The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore,
Maryland, 37.25

Catalogue number 27

EX.2016.1.50

Rousseau painted this meditative scene of a frosty vale under a dying sun during a stay near L'Isle-Adam, just north of Paris. He reportedly completed the work in eight days, a short time for such an ambitious landscape. Early commentators described it as a mere sketch on account of its loose handling, but it was eventually hailed as one of his greatest masterpieces, at once highly attuned to nature's fleeting effects and, in its aching sense of solitude, penetrated with deeply personal and poetic feeling. (SA)



26. **Edge of the Forest, Sun Setting**

About 1845–46

Oil on canvas

41.3 x 62.9 cm (16 1/4 x 24 3/4 in.)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art,
purchased with funds provided by the
William Randolph Hearst Collection by
exchange, 86.1

Catalogue number 29

EX.2016.1.40

This elegiac scene, featuring a solitary tree in the aftermath of a harvest, is one of Rousseau's most finely executed paintings, built up slowly with translucent glazes and textured dabs. When he exhibited it at the 1849 Salon, critics saluted him as a "colorist of the first order." This Salon was his first since 1835, the artist having abstained after years of rejection by the academic jury under the July Monarchy (1830–48). When the 1848 Revolution ushered into power a more progressive arts administration, Rousseau was once more willing to participate in the official exhibition. (SA)



Photo: www.lacma.org



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27. **Autumn**

About 1845–50

Oil on panel

19 x 24 cm (7 1/2 x 9 7/16 in.)

Private collection

See label text for #52

Photo: Bruce Schwarz

Catalogue number 38

EX.2016.1.72



28. **A Swamp in Les Landes**

About 1846

Oil on panel

41.7 x 56.7 cm (16 7/16 x 22 5/16 in.)

The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland, 37.991

This painting was inspired by Rousseau's 1844 trip to the southwestern French region of Les Landes. Next to the sublime and picturesque subjects that attracted him in the 1830s, the flat, scrubby marshland of Les Landes presented an essentially featureless scene. Employing a favorite pictorial device, Rousseau structured this atmospheric composition around a luminous center, a break in the rainclouds that lights the far distance. The painting's dominant sky and low horizon recall seventeenth-century Dutch landscape painting, much admired by Rousseau and his patrons. (SA)

Catalogue number 28

EX.2016.1.51



29. **Felling Trees on the Ile de Croissy
(The Massacre of the Innocents)**

1847

Oil on canvas

95 x 146.5 cm (37 3/8 x 57 11/16 in.)

The Mesdag Collection, The Hague,
hwm0293

Catalogue number 31

EX.2016.1.38

For Rousseau, the destruction of forests was an epic tragedy comparable to the biblical massacre of the innocents. His biographer Alfred Sensier (1815–1877) tells the story of how, on an excursion to an island on the Seine, "Rousseau was horribly distraught by what he saw; they were felling all the large trees he had so often studied; all his friends were being executed." This picture, which he left unfinished, was the result. It is perhaps telling that he lavished so much attention on his beloved trees, while only sketchily indicating the figures hauling on a rope to bring them down. (SA)

Image Not Available

30. **A Clearing**

About 1848–50

Oil on panel

48 x 66 cm (18 7/8 x 26 in.)

Private collection

Catalogue number 35

EX.2016.1.71

For Rousseau the study of trees, an elemental academic exercise, became an end in itself and in many ways came to constitute his identity and reputation as an artist. In commanding works like this one, he invested proud, individualized specimens with tremendous expressive power. Reducing human figures to a minimum and eschewing the mythological and biblical subjects associated with traditional academic landscape painting, Rousseau made it clear that trees were his main protagonists. (SA)

Photo: Bruce Schwarz



31. **Climbing Path, Forest of Fontainebleau**

About 1848–50

Graphite, watercolor, and gouache on paper

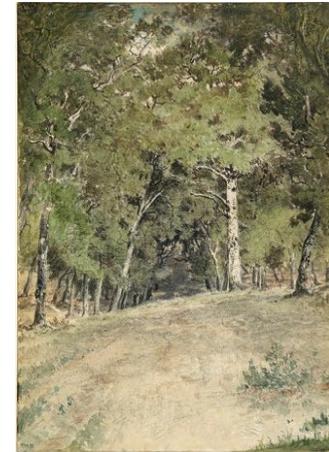
28.5 x 20 cm (11 1/4 x 7 7/8 in.)

Private collection

Catalogue number 32

L.2013.41

One of Rousseau's finest accomplishments in the realm of watercolor, this work exemplifies how intensely colored Rousseau's autonomous drawings could be. The medium is virtually as fresh today as it would have been when this sheet left the artist's studio. Dating from his maturity, it shows the full extent of his sensitivity as a landscapist and his ability to wed line and color harmoniously. The surface of the page is brought to life through extensive pencil work and a delicate application of color washes. (EK)



32. **Brook in the Forest of Fontainebleau**

1849

Oil and pencil on panel

26.9 x 35 cm (10 9/16 x 13 3/4 in.)

The Mesdag Collection, The Hague, hwm0290

Catalogue number 34

EX.2016.1.36

This exquisite picture is equal parts drawing and painting. Following a pencil drawing, Rousseau drily brushed thin, brownish paint over the panel's white ground, purposefully leaving it exposed in places (to indicate the reflective surface of the stream, for instance), much as one would use the white paper in a watercolor. Sparse color accents and highlights, which also suggest the transposition of drawing practices into painting, subtly enhance the intimate scene. This grisaille was acquired in the 1880s by the Dutch artist Willem Hendrik Mesdag (1831–1915), who admired the experimental diversity of Rousseau's styles and techniques. (SA)

Image Not Available

33. **Forest of Fontainebleau, Cluster of Tall Trees Overlooking the Plain of Clair-Bois at the Edge of Bas-Bréau**

About 1849–52

Oil on canvas

90.8 x 116.8 cm (35 3/4 x 46 in.)

The J. Paul Getty Museum,

Los Angeles, 2007.13

Catalogue number 37

Restrained in palette but lively in execution, this large-format landscape challenged nineteenth-century distinctions between sketch and finished work. For all its apparent spontaneity, it actually derived from a small preliminary sketch. Moreover, Rousseau made artful adjustments to the composition along the way, extending the blasted trunk to the right of the principal oak for dramatic effect and introducing the herdsman and cattle, whose small scale underscores the trees' grandeur. The painting was among the private works that the Parisian dealers Paul Durand-Ruel (1831–1922) and Hector Brame (1831–1899) bought from Rousseau's studio near the end of his life and exhibited to acclaim in 1867. (SA)



34. **Forest Interior**

About 1850

Crayon on off-white wove paper

27.1 x 31.4 cm (10 11/16 x 12 3/8 in.)

Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, gift of Anne and Malcolm McHenry, 1995.17.5

Catalogue number 36

EX.2016.1.43

With its multidirectional hatching and alternating patches of light and shade, this forceful drawing stands in stylistic contrast to Rousseau's pen-and-ink drawings with their more nervous and refined linear idiom. It resonates closely, however, with some of the large-format charcoal drawings on canvas that Rousseau made in his later years. See, for instance, *Forest Interior* in this exhibition (see #65), which attempts to preserve the energy associated with small sketches on a grander scale. (SA)



Image © Crocker Art Museum

UNRULY NATURE

The Landscapes of Théodore Rousseau

35. **Landscape with a Pond**

About 1850

Black ink and gray wash on cream laid paper

13.5 x 17.6 cm (5 5/16 x 6 15/16 in.)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975 (1975.1.699)

Catalogue number 39

EX.2016.1.62

See label text for #24

Image copyright © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, NY



36. **Morning Effect**

About 1850

Oil on canvas

99.7 x 134.6 cm (39 1/4 x 53 in.)

Norton Simon Foundation, Pasadena, F.1976.14.P

Catalogue number 41

EX.2016.1.5

Shown at the 1850–51 Salon, this painting challenged traditional standards of finish for public exhibition pieces. While Rousseau carefully elaborated certain parts, notably the two principal trees, he was much more summary elsewhere. Note how he left large areas of the thin, brownish underlayer exposed, using it to evoke the humid ground beneath the rocks and scrub in the foreground and the masses of foliage in the vaporous background. Most critics charged Rousseau with exhibiting an *ébauche*, an unfinished work, but a few understood that his technique was intrinsic to the picture's radiant effect. (SA)



37. **Morning**

About 1850

Oil on panel

30.8 x 53 cm (12 1/8 x 20 7/8 in.)

Cincinnati Art Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Albert P. Strietmann, 1954.25

Catalogue number 43

EX.2016.1.74

Trees were the heroes of an absorbing ecological drama for Rousseau, and starting in the 1840s he made a specialty of featuring individual examples in carefully executed easel pictures. As one critic described this work when it was exhibited in the 1852 Paris Salon: "Behind a large tree rising solitary above the ground, the [sun's] luminous rays filter through the clouds in a sky charged with aqueous vapors. The tree grips the ground firmly and stands out finely and vigorously against the bright sky, the branches and foliage carefully detailed. One senses throughout the feeling for nature." (SA)



38. **Farm in Les Landes**

About 1852–67

Oil on canvas

64.8 x 99.1 cm (25 1/2 x 39 in.)

Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts, 2009.8

Catalogue number 25

EX.2016.1.54

This picture was one of Rousseau's great obsessions. Commissioned in 1852 by the industrialist Frédéric Hartmann (1822–1880), it was based on the grisaille at left (see #22) and eventually exhibited in the 1859 Salon. Skeptical critics felt the work was too laboriously executed, that the painter's meticulous touch was too repetitive (like needlepoint and tapestry, they said), and that his palette assailed the eye with its uniform intensity of tone. Rousseau was also dissatisfied with the work, retaining it in his studio and making further alterations. Only after the artist's death in 1867 did his patron finally take possession of the painting. (SA)



Image © Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts. Photo by Michael Agee

39. **Landscape with Group of Trees**

1853

Black and colored chalks on paper

25 x 41 cm (9 13/16 x 16 1/8 in.)

Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen,
MIN 1918

Catalogue number 44

EX.2016.1.12

One of very few drawings or paintings that Rousseau both signed and dated, this early autumn scene demonstrates a wonderful economy of means. The black chalk of the shady grove of trees in the middle ground plays against the green and ochre of the sunny background, while light touches of white suggest scattered clouds and help define the contours of the trees against the sky. The warm, natural tone of the paper serves as a harmonizing middle tone throughout. (SA)



Photographer: Ole Haupt

40. **A Plain at Sunset**

1850s

Charcoal, heightened with pastel, on
pink paper

27.5 x 43.5 cm (10 13/16 x 17 1/8 in.)

Musée du Louvre, Département des
Arts Graphiques, Paris, RF 29900

Catalogue number 45

EX.2016.1.92

A lone figure, hunched forward, slowly makes his way through a vast, inhospitable landscape of rocky escarpments and sparsely wooded plateaux. Twilight's chill is not far off as a fading sun sinks on the horizon. With charcoal, some touches of pastel, and the pink of the paper support itself, Rousseau proves here how adept he was at evoking mood with minimal means. Just as he used colored papers to great effect in drawings like this one, he also experimented with tinted grounds or priming layers in his painting (see the large *Sunset on the Sand Dunes of Jean-de-Paris* [#64], for example). (SA)



© RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY

UNRULY NATURE

The Landscapes of Théodore Rousseau

41. **Landscape with Boatman**

About 1855–60

Oil on panel

19.4 x W: 26.3 cm (7 5/8 x 10 3/8 in.)

National Gallery of Art, Washington,
gift of R. Horace Gallatin, 1949.1.10

Catalogue number 48

EX.2016.1.47

See label text for #42

Photo courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington



42. **Morning**

About 1855–60

Oil on panel

42 x 64.3 cm (16 9/16 x 25 5/16 in.)

Musée d'Orsay, Paris, gift of Eduardo
Mollard, 1961, RF 1961-24

Catalogue number 49

EX.2016.1.28

Rousseau held that the careful study of nature and tradition in one's early years funded the memory that would constitute the artist's chief resource for future work. Many of Rousseau's later paintings were therefore categorized as imaginative "souvenirs" and are variations on a repertoire of favorite motifs and compositions. This is most evident in the small paintings he produced for the market during the 1850s and 1860s. Note how these examples (#41, 42) organize pictorial space through a similar succession of horizontal planes (darkened foreground, reflective water, distant plain) and focus the viewer's attention with assorted motifs in the middle ground. (SA)



© RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY



43. **The Forest of Fontainebleau: Gorges d'Apremont**

About 1855–60

Oil and pencil on panel

42.8 x 64 cm (16 7/8 x 25 3/16 in.)

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam
(Vincent van Gogh Foundation),
50444V1994

Catalogue number 46

EX.2016.1.35

This stark scene lays bare the preliminary stages of Rousseau's painting process. Over a rudimentary graphite design that includes ruled perspective lines, he has used a thin brownish paint (*sauce* in French studio parlance) to articulate the ground topography, model rocks, and indicate scrub. A light scumble of blue suffices for the sky. Although this relatively unfinished work bears the hallmarks of an *ébauche* (the initial lay-in of a painting), Rousseau has used the tone of his *sauce* to aesthetic effect, as a fitting expression of a desolate expanse exposed to the elements. (SA)

Image Not Available

44. **Valley of the Rouars in the Gorges d'Apremont**

About 1855

Oil and pastel on panel

40 x 64 cm (15 3/4 x 25 3/16 in.)

Private collection

Catalogue number 47

EX.2016.1.29

Showing a similar expanse of rocky heath in the Forest of Fontainebleau as the panel from the Van Gogh Museum (see #43), this work exhibits a slightly higher degree of coloration, the comparison providing insight into Rousseau's process. Over a preliminary drawing and thin brownish underlayer, he has introduced greens for the turf and foliage, grays for the scattered boulders, and yellow ochre for the sandy path wending its way into the distance. In such thinly painted and minimally colored landscapes, Rousseau was self-consciously emulating seventeenth-century Dutch masters like Jan van Goyen (1596–1656), whose work can be seen in the Getty Center's East Pavilion. (SA)



45. **Winter Landscape**

About 1855-65

Pen and brown ink on paper

11.7 x 13 cm (4 5/8 x 5 1/8 in.)

Private collection

Catalogue number 59

EX.2016.1.69

Among Rousseau's most original works were some small and intense drawings executed in ink with pen or brush in the 1850s and 1860s. *Winter Landscape* is a particularly refined and expressive example of the draftsman's virtuosic mark-making in his later years. The technique is so free that one wonders whether it was not a variation improvised in the studio rather than a record made on site. *Entrance to the Old Forest of the Reine-Blanche* (see # 55) is a highly wrought line drawing made up of a dense web of multi-layered and multidirectional kinetic lines. The structural character of the pen work contrasts dramatically with the more unbridled, ardent technique of some of his earlier wash drawings.



Photo courtesy Jill Newhouse Gallery

46. **The Gorges d'Apremont (Forest of Fontainebleau)**

1857

Oil on canvas

64.8 x 100.3 cm (25 1/2 x 39 1/2 in.)

Collection of Middlebury College Museum of Art, Vermont. Gift of Mrs. Louis Alexander Turner, Princeton, New Jersey, in memory of her father, Frank Jewett Mather, Jr., 1969.006

Catalogue number 53

EX.2016.1.79

If an overall intensity of tone characterizes the surreal *Farm in Les Landes* (see #38), this understated painting, also shown at the 1859 Salon, orchestrates its lower-key colors within a structure defined by value contrast. Here is one critic on the experience of seeing it in William H. Vanderbilt's grandiose gallery in New York in 1887: "From ten meters away it seemed to be composed of only two values. Frank and sober in effect, it destroyed the adjacent paintings. What one saw was a deep, pale sky over a large, dark mass whose silhouette was formed by the rounded tops of some rocky hillocks and grand oaks. In front of these, one could make out in the reddish-brown scrub a pond. As I approached, the work seemed to grow richer; one could analyze the modeling of the oaks and the grassy heath, interrupted here and there by a grey rock or a powerfully green gorse. This harmony of grey, greens, and russets nevertheless retains a profound unity, and the eye can wander through the landscape at length, experiencing with increasing intensity the impression given by nature." (SA)



47. **Forest Interior**

1857

Oil on panel

31.5 x 44.1 cm (12 3/8 x 17 3/8 in.)

From the collection of Janice and Bruce Miller, Los Angeles, CA

Catalogue number 51

EX.2016.1.42

The edges and interiors of forests exerted a pull on Rousseau throughout his career. In this classic *sous-bois*, or forest interior, scene, trees to the right and left form a shady avenue that opens onto a sunlit clearing in the center, an overhanging branch forming a natural arch at its threshold. Rousseau thus draws the viewer irresistibly into the heart of the forest, perhaps to identify with the solitary figure already immersed there. Richly colored and thickly built up with textured dabs and strokes mimicking dense vegetation, such sensuous pictures regaled urban collectors who shared the Parisian artist's Romantic tastes and longings. (SA)



48. **The Great Oaks of Old Bas-Bréau**

1857

Pen and ink drawing in sepia on paper

22.4 x 30.8 cm (8 13/16 x 12 1/8 in.)

The Mesdag Collection, The Hague, hwm0296

Catalogue number 54

EX.2016.1.39

As his biographer Alfred Sensier (1815–1877) recounted, Rousseau conceived this superb drawing as a tour de force expressing his religious devotion to nature: "He gave himself the task of pushing a drawing after nature to the utmost refinement, and each day he went to Bas-Bréau [in the Forest of Fontainebleau] to accomplish this monkish task. He patiently brought this drawing to its most intricate expression, without trouble, accident, or the slightest change. As in a Rembrandt etching, there is not a line or stroke without expressive purpose. This drawing overwhelmed us by its perfect execution." (SA)

Image Not Available



49 **The Oaks**

About 1858

Oil and graphite on canvas

53.3 x 64.1 cm (21 x 25 1/4 in.)

Indiana University Art Museum,
Bloomington, Evan F. Lilly Memorial,
70.87

Catalogue number 55

EX.2016.1.2

An elaborate drawing, partially visible to the unaided eye and fully revealed through infrared, underlies this picture of one of Rousseau's favorite motifs. He painted economically, applying a restricted palette in thin layers so as to accentuate rather than obscure his initial design. It was on the basis of Rousseau's intensive preparations as a draftsman that such paintings—really painted drawings—could be appreciated by sympathetic artists, critics, and connoisseurs as wholly satisfying artistic expressions, despite their low degree of painterly elaboration and lack of conventional finish. That Rousseau felt similarly is suggested by the signature at lower left. (SA)

Photograph by: Kevin Montague



50. **Edge of the Woods (Plain of Barbizon near Fontainebleau)**

About 1859

Oil on canvas

54.6 x 65.4 cm (21 1/2 x 25 3/4 in.)

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, bequest
of Mrs. David P. Kimball, 23.399

Catalogue number 56

EX.2016.1.4

Showing the high level of finish characteristic of Rousseau's later exhibition pieces, as opposed to more private, experimental works like *The Oaks* (see #49), this autumn scene sent the critic Zacharie Astruc (1833–1907) into raptures at the 1859 Salon: "Oh! You can imagine nothing happier than this charming canvas. Its color is excellent. The power of reproduction is astonishing: it's as if the trees are wafting, the sky moving, and the grasses stirring. Let us wander through this work, my friend, and take a deep breath of these rustic scents." (SA)

Photograph © 2016 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



51. **The Rock Oak (Forest of Fontainebleau)**

About 1860–61

Oil on panel

88.9 x 116.8 cm (35 x 46 in.)

Private collection

Catalogue number 57

EX.2016.1.95

This painting of unruly ancient oaks rooted among mossy rocks was Rousseau's sole submission to the 1861 Salon. At a moment when interest in his art was flagging, he hoped it would bolster his reputation. One of the largest he ever painted on panel and the only one he reproduced through etching, the picture staggered critics. Rousseau seemed to be pushing realism to fantastic extremes in his drive to grasp the plenitude of nature in its darkest, most obscure corners. "There is no adjective capable of describing this tree," one critic marveled. "Such oaks only exist in fairy tales." (SA)



52. **The Farm (Cottage at the Edge of a Marsh)**

About 1860

Oil on panel

21.8 x 29.2 cm (8 9/16 x 11 1/2 in.)

Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts, USA, 1955.849

Catalogue number 50

EX.2016.1.55

The emergence of dealers specializing in contemporary painting gave the Paris art market a major boost in the mid-nineteenth century. There was a brisk trade in so-called *tableautins*, or little pictures, that were well scaled to the living quarters of urban collectors, and Rousseau catered to this market as he rose to prominence. His small panel paintings, often no bigger than his drawings, were especially prized for their richness of color and texture, their vigorous yet precious execution, and their vivid evocation of particular seasons, weather conditions, and times of day. (SA)



Image © Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts. Photo by Michael Agee

53. **Woodland Landscape**

About 1860

Pen and brown ink (iron gall?) under dark brown and blue watercolor on cream laid stationery paper with high gloss

13.2 x 14.8 cm (5 3/16 x 5 13/16 in.)

Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco,
Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts
Endowment Fund
1971.23

Catalogue number 58

EX.2016.1.44

See label text for #24

Image © Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco



54. **Heath with Scrub**

About 1860

Charcoal, brown wash, white and some colored pastel on beige paper, mounted on canvas

59.5 x 89 cm (23 7/16 x 35 1/16 in.)

Musée Fabre, Montpellier
Méditerranée Métropole, 876.3.140

Catalogue number 61

EX.2016.1.19

One of Rousseau's graphic masterpieces, *Heath with Scrub* beautifully demonstrates his ability to create powerful, dramatized landscapes on paper. He achieved intense, fantastical effects of light and dark by contrasting the areas applied with strokes of charcoal and the beige middle tone of the paper with highlights in white, yellow, and green. Unusually large for the artist, this ambitious drawing appears to be in a relatively unfinished state. It represents the full maturation of Rousseau's style as a draftsman, which was intensely graphic and painterly at the same time. (EK)

Image Not Available

55. **Entrance to the Old Forest of the Reine-Blanche**

About 1860

Brown ink on grayish blue paper

13.3 x 20.7 cm (5 1/4 x 8 1/8 in.)

Musée des beaux-arts de Dijon,

D.G. 880

Catalogue number 60

EX.2016.1.18

See label text for #45

Image © Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon. Photo François Jay



56. **Glade of the Reine Blanche in the Forest of Fontainebleau**

About 1860

Oil on canvas

82.6 x 145.4 cm (32 1/2 x 57 1/4 in.)

Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk,
Virginia, gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr.,
71.2054

Catalogue number 63

EX.2016.1.80

Along with the painting at left (see #57), this work was part of a series on the four seasons that the artist never completed. It first appeared in Rousseau's posthumous studio sale, where it was catalogued as a "Spring Effect" and further qualified as being not quite finished ("*presque terminé*"), presumably on account of the foreground's summary handling. This may have been strategic, however, for it helps to draw us into the scene and focus our attention upon the distance. There, on a snaking path framed by lush trees, we find a tiny figure in red (a favorite accent color) about to vanish into the forest. (SA)



57. **The Gorges d'Apremont**

After 1862

Oil on canvas

80 x 145 cm (31 1/2 x 57 1/16 in.)

Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen,
MIN 1338

Catalogue number 62

EX.2016.1.10

This lofty view of one of the most dramatic and rugged sites in the Forest of Fontainebleau nostalgically recalls a time before the systematic plantation of non-native pines, a source of great consternation for Rousseau. The painting was ultimately left unfinished and thus categorized as an *ébauche* at the artist's 1868 estate sale. Notice how he had only just begun the process of coloring in the sky, after having boldly delineated the clouds in thin black paint. Rousseau often began his compositions with such a painted drawing. (SA)



Photographer: Ole Haupt

58. **The Woods and the Apple Trees of Belle-Marie**

About 1860-62

Ink or water-based paint, with touches
of oil paint, on canvas

38.2 x 57 cm (15 1/16 x 22 7/16 in.)

Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen,
MIN 1759

Catalogue number 64

EX.2016.1.8

Depicting a site near Rousseau's home in Barbizon, this work directly adapts his pen-and-ink drawing technique to canvas, challenging clear-cut notions of finish in the process. Is this a finished drawing on canvas? Or only the beginning of a painting? Hard questions to answer, since the conscientious Rousseau refined the procedures of preliminary design to such an extent that the results could be considered satisfying works in their own right. As an 1876 commentary on this picture paradoxically suggested: "He wanted to push the execution of the design as far as possible: his initial work is enough to indicate what the finished work would have been." (SA)



Photographer: Ole Haupt



59 Sunset near Arbonne

About 1860-65

Oil on panel

64.1 x 99.1 cm (25 1/4 x 39 in.)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, bequest of Collis P. Huntington, 1900 (25.110.4)

Catalogue number 65

EX.2016.1.59

Imbued with pathos, this sunset scene represents a rocky plain at the edge of the Forest of Fontainebleau near the village of Arbonne, not far from Rousseau's home in Barbizon. It was characterized as a sketch when it first appeared at his 1868 estate sale. Rousseau's biographer Alfred Sensier (1815–1877) bought it for just a few hundred francs, later arguing that while such paintings did not have "the perfect execution of a gallery picture," they still offered "all the breadth of his vision [and] the height of his poetry." It was becoming a commonplace that Rousseau's more sketch-like work was his most expressive and true. (SA)

Image: www.metmuseum.org



60 Cottage in Arbonne

About 1860-65

Pen and brown ink and watercolor on paper

12 x 19.7 cm (4 3/4 x 7 3/4 in.)

Private collection

Catalogue number 66

EX.2016.1.68

In the late 1850s and 1860s, Rousseau explored the theme of the rustic, thatched-roof cottage in a number of finished drawings such as this one. The theme was closely associated with Dutch precedents of the seventeenth century—paintings, drawings, and prints—in which cottages are often placed in the middle ground and connected to the foreground by a path. Adapting this basic compositional scheme, this example combines lively, emphatic pen work with a generous application of watercolor. (EK)

Photo courtesy Jill Newhouse Gallery



61. **Hilly Landscape (The Lizon River Gorge)**

About 1861–63

Pen and sepia ink on paper

12.7 x 17.7 cm (5 x 6 15/16 in.)

Detroit Institute of Arts, bequest of John S. Newberry, 65.168

Catalogue number 67

EX.2016.1.57

See label text for #24

Image: Bridgeman Images



62. **The Great Oaks of Bas-Bréau**

1864

Oil on canvas

90.2 x 116.8 cm (35 1/2 x 46 in.)

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, museum purchase funded by the Agnes Cullen Arnold Endowment Fund, 72.87

Catalogue number 70

EX.2016.1.78

Based on a pen-and-ink drawing made years before (see #48), this work was described in the late nineteenth century as an *ébauche*, a work-in-progress. Rousseau's signature, however, might indicate that he ultimately felt that the picture was sufficiently resolved. Masterfully integrating painterly and graphic techniques, he combined washes of brown and green paint—to suggest the masses of thick foliage—with sharp strokes of dark, lean paint resembling ink—to accentuate the design and add tone. Rousseau also used the end of his brush to scratch paint away, invigorating the surface and giving the trees a sense of airy volume. (SA)

Image: Bridgeman Images



63. Footpath in the Barbizonnières

1864

Pen and brown and black ink, with watercolor, over graphite, on ivory wove paper

12.3 x 20.4 cm (4 13/16 x 8 1/16 in.)

Art Institute of Chicago, Margaret Day Blake Fund, 2008.210

Sometime in the early 1860s, Rousseau became passionate about Japanese prints, which had just started to become available in the West. He was seduced by their clear, precise economy of line; pure, bright colors; and a daringly decorative sense of flatness. A highly stylized sheet such as *Footpath in the Barbizonnières* may be understood in this light. Here, the lines are simplified, often reduced to successions of dots; the space appears relatively flat; and the shadows and cast shadows are almost nonexistent, as is usually the case in Japanese prints. (EK)



Catalogue number 68

Photography © The Art Institute of Chicago, <http://www.artic.edu>

EX.2016.1.49

64. Sunset on the Sand Dunes of Jean-de-Paris

About 1864-67

Oil on canvas

90.2 x 117.5 cm (35 1/2 x 46 1/4 in.)

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT. Gift in honor of Helene and Mark Eisner, by exchange, 2005.31.1

Inspired by a site in the Forest of Fontainebleau, this thinly painted work has an extraordinary pink underlayer, which both masks an earlier design and establishes the twilight mood of the final scene. Rousseau's biographer Alfred Sensier (1815-1877) recalled how he prevented the obsessive artist from further elaborating the work: "'It is not painted enough,' he said, 'I have to continue.'—'No, Rousseau, you will not touch it any more, for you would be committing a crime against your talent. This stunning spectacle takes one by the throat. Make a copy and push it to the point of exhaustion if you must, but do not deprive us of this picture.'" (SA)



Catalogue number 69

Photo: Allen Phillips/Wadsworth Atheneum

EX.2016.1.45



65 Forest Interior

1865

Charcoal, heightened with white oil paint, on prepared canvas

90.5 x 118.5 cm (35 5/8 x 46 5/8 in.)

Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, KMS6240

Catalogue number 74

EX.2016.1.15

Among the works remaining in Rousseau's studio at the time of his death were several remarkable drawings on canvas. It is not entirely clear whether these were conceived as independent drawings or as preparations for paintings, although the broad, sketch-like execution of this particular example may suggest the latter. Charcoal was commonly recommended for preliminary underdrawings on larger canvases, as it allowed artists to establish the basic design and principal tonal masses quickly and efficiently prior to painting. (SA)

Photo © SMK Photo



66 Landscape with Cottage

About 1865

Watercolor with crayon over graphite on beige laid paper

31.8 x 37.7 cm (12 1/2 x 14 13/16 in.)

The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland, 37.966

Catalogue number 71

EX.2016.1.52

This view of a peasant's thatched cottage on a rise was likely informed both by sites Rousseau had seen on his travels and his familiarity with the Dutch tradition. He may not have intended to represent a specific location but rather a more generalized and imaginative interpretation of nature. Rousseau demonstrates his sophisticated technique of adding subtle watercolor washes and touches of gouache over pencil and black crayon. Unlike his friend Jean-François Millet (1814–1875), he produced few presentation drawings in mixed media for the market such as this one. (EK)



67. **A Path in the Forest, Autumn**

See label text for #45

Image Not Available

About 1865–66

Graphite with touches of watercolor on paper

13.2 x 21 cm (5 3/16 x 8 1/4 in.)

Musée Fabre, Montpellier
Méditerranée Métropole, 876.3.138

Catalogue number 72

EX.2016.1.20

68. **Trees and Rocks on a Plain**

See label text for #45

About 1865–66

Pen and ink, heightened with watercolor, on paper

13 x 15.7 cm (5 1/8 x 6 3/16 in.)

Private collection, France

Catalogue number 73

EX.2016.1.30



69 **The Pond**

About 1866

Oil on canvas

38.7 x 46.7 cm (15 1/4 x 18 3/8 in.)

Bequest of Charles Phelps and Anna Sinton Taft, Taft Museum of Art, Cincinnati, OH, 1931.429

Catalogue number 76

EX.2016.1.76

Like the work on the right (see #70), this picture derived from a small black crayon sketch. While the painting's relatively small size and rough, broad handling might suggest that it served as an advanced study for the larger composition, it is more properly considered an independent variant, given the notable differences of palette, atmosphere, and staffage. Rousseau frequently produced studio variations of favorite compositions, particularly in his later years when there was increasing demand for his art. (SA)

Image courtesy of the Taft Museum of Art, Cincinnati, Ohio.
Photo: Tony Walsh, Cincinnati, Ohio



70. **Summer Sunset**

1866

Oil on canvas

76.8 x 95.9 cm (30 1/4 x 37 3/4 in.)

Cincinnati Art Museum, bequest of Mary M. Emery, 1927.418

Catalogue number 77

EX.2016.1.75

Featuring a pond with watering cattle and trees silhouetted against the sky over an extensive plain, this picture is a late instance of a compositional type Rousseau had employed for years. But here everything takes on an iconic, almost otherworldly intensity, as if he were intent on probing nature for the deepest of metaphysical truths. The work's densely painted surface, the exaggerated theatrical grandeur of its backlit trees, and the strong colors of its clouds and sky make it, in the words of critic Léon Roger-Milès (1859–1928), an "astonishing, unsettling picture, where a whole world of thoughts takes wing." (SA)



71. **View of Mont Blanc, Seen from La Faucille**

About 1863-67

Oil on canvas

91.4 x 118.4 cm (36 x 46 5/8 in.)

Minneapolis Institute of Art, The Putnam Dana McMillan Fund, 2010.62

Catalogue number 78

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Based on topographical drawings that Rousseau made during a trip to the Jura Mountains in 1863, this picture repeats the view of *Mont Blanc Seen from La Faucille, Storm Effect* (see #14) but dramatically departs from the earlier work's turbulent Romantic sensibility. Its preternatural calm, meticulous detail, enamel-like brilliance, and loftily suspended viewpoint signaled the aging artist's desire to transcend the fleeting and subjective and convey something of the permanent and universal. Critics scarcely appreciated the painting when Rousseau exhibited it at the 1867 Salon, just months before his death. To them it was little more than a stylistic curiosity. (SA)

Photo: Minneapolis Institute of Art

