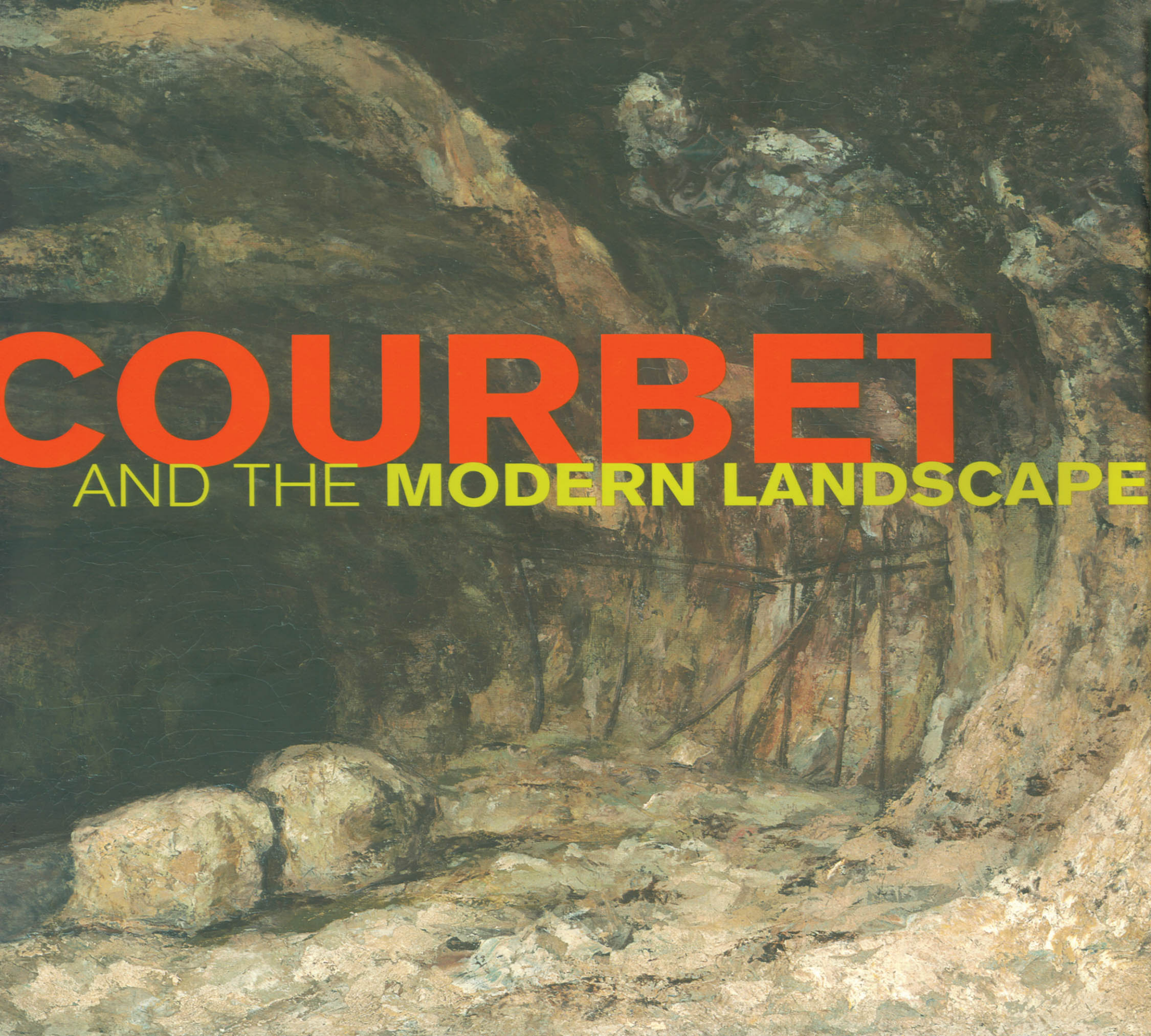
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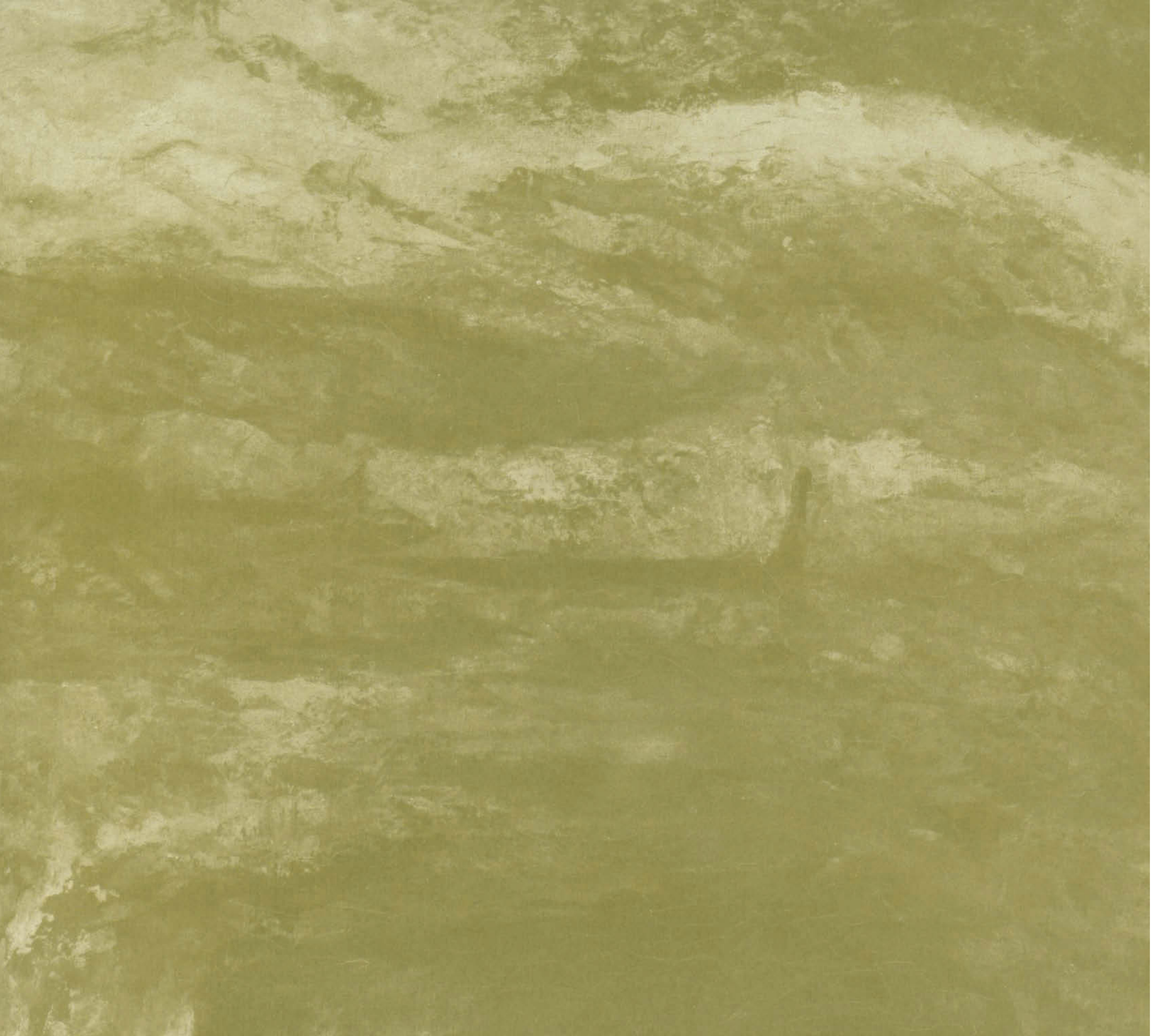

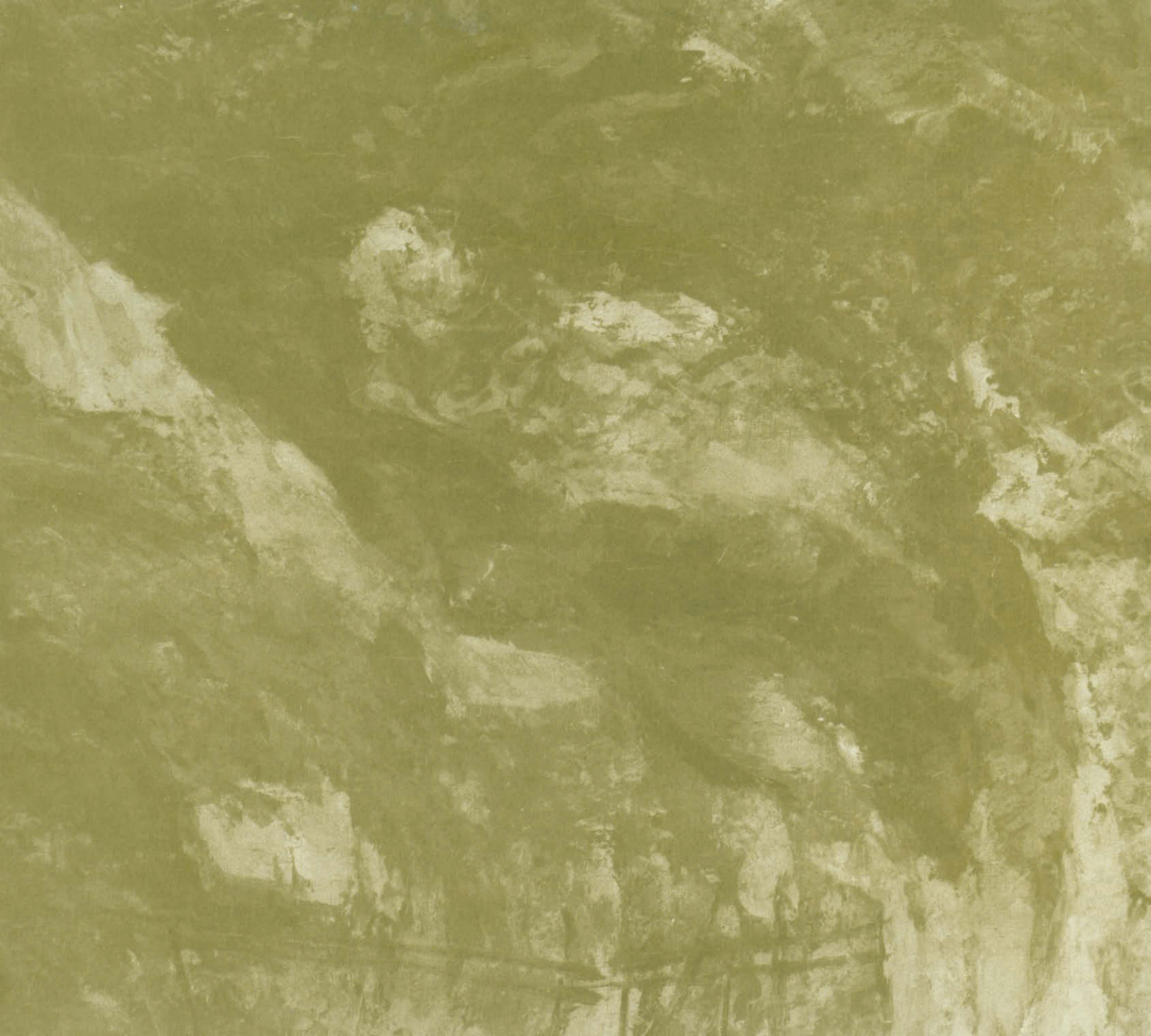

COURBET
AND THE MODERN LANDSCAPE

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COURBET AND THE MODERN LANDSCAPE

MARY MORTON | CHARLOTTE EYERMAN

with an essay by
DOMINIQUE DE FONT-RÉAULX

THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM | LOS ANGELES

This publication is issued in conjunction with the exhibition *Courbet and the Modern Landscape*, held at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, from February 21 to May 14, 2006; at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, from June 18 to September 10, 2006; and at The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, from October 15, 2006, to January 7, 2007.

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PAGE vi: Gustave Courbet, *Grotto of Sarrazine near Nans-sous-Sainte-Anne*, ca. 1864 (detail, pl. 20); PAGE xii: Gustave Courbet, *The Studio of the Painter: A Real Allegory of Seven Years of My Artistic Life*, 1855 (detail, fig. 2); PAGE 20: Gustave Courbet, *Stream in the Forest (Ruisseau dans la forêt)*, ca. 1862 (detail, pl. 10); PAGE 38: Achille Quinet, *Nature Study*, ca. 1870 (detail, fig. 30); PAGE 54: Gustave Courbet, *Valley of the Loue, possibly near Mouthier-Haute-Pierre*, late 1860s (detail, pl. 5); PAGE 66: Gustave Courbet, *Grotto of the Black Well (Puits Noir)*, 1865 (detail, pl. 15); PAGE 80: Gustave Courbet, *La Roche Pourrie*, 1864 (detail, pl. 19); PAGE 90: Gustave Courbet, *Roe Deer in a Snowy Landscape (Chevreuils dans un paysage de neige)*, ca. 1867 (detail, pl. 25); PAGE 100: Gustave Courbet, *Marine*, 1866 (detail, pl. 36); PAGE 120: Gustave Courbet, *Panoramic View of the Alps (La Dent du Midi)*, 1874–77 (detail, pl. 49).

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FOREWORD

AMONG THE MOST NOTORIOUS avant-garde figures in the history of Western art, Gustave Courbet is generally associated with his enormous public paintings, *Burial at Ornans* and *The Studio of the Painter*, both of which hang in close proximity to the more intimate but equally provocative *Origin of the World* at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris. Courbet's figural works have generated a voluminous amount of art historical interpretation and reinterpretation, from textbook surveys to highly focused dissertations. Courbet was very much an *artiste engagé*, and his biography from the beginning was inextricable from the reception of his art. A young turk from the provinces who made his mark in Paris, he promoted his image as an outspoken outsider, passionate, physically robust, and profoundly ambitious.

The acquisitions within the past five years by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, of the epic *Gust of Wind* and by the J. Paul Getty Museum of the *Grotto of Sarrazine* have generated a renewed enthusiasm for Courbet as a painter of landscapes. Art critics of his time recognized his skills in this genre, but in the intervening century and a half, Courbet fell from fashion and then was redeemed by art historians as essentially a figure painter. That Courbet defined some of the central issues of a powerful strain of Modernism through the unusual compositions and radically innovative techniques of his landscape painting has been grasped only vaguely. While negotiating a strikingly modern relationship with the art press and art market, he created paintings that rejected a narrative or anecdotal approach in favor of engaging viewers in a complex visual experience. Drawing inspiration from natural motifs, Courbet reset the course of French landscape painting to embrace immediacy, vitality, and painterly self-expression.

Courbet and the Modern Landscape is the first major museum exhibition to address the artist's extraordinary achievement in this genre. The exhibition brings together a highly selective group of landscapes datable from 1855 to 1877, most of them from the 1860s, when Courbet discovered in the countryside of his native Franche-Comté and on the shores of the Normandy coast a consistently rich source of stimulation. Many of the paintings — gathered from Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Holland, Japan, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States —will be new to regular museum visitors. The installation should be a revelation to both experts and amateurs alike.

We would like to thank the exhibition curators, Mary Morton and Charlotte Eyerman, who with the enthusiastic support and wise counsel of Scott Schaefer worked tirelessly with lenders to bring this exceptional group of pictures together. Coauthors of the

catalogue, they were joined by Dominique de Font-Réaulx, curator from the Musée d'Orsay, in contributing essays that shed new light on Courbet's landscapes and provide context for the exhibition.

Our most sincere gratitude goes to the international list of lenders, public and private, without whose generosity and collegiality the exhibition would not have been possible.

WILLIAM M. GRISWOLD
Acting Director and
Chief Curator
The J. Paul Getty Museum

PETER C. MARZIO
Director
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

GARY VIKAN
Director
The Walters Art Museum

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AN EXHIBITION ON THIS SCALE incurs an enormous debt of gratitude to all those who made it possible. The project was born at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, with the acquistion of Courbet's *The Gust of Wind*, made possible by the extraordinary generosity of Carolyn Weiss Law. With the encouragement of MFAH Director Peter C. Marzio and Edgar Peters Bowron, Audrey Jones Beck Curator of European Art, the concept grew into a checklist and then a three-venue exhibition. Additional MFAH colleagues who coaxed the project along with active interest, practical help, and good advice include Kathleen Crain, Melissa Gerecci, Alison Greene, Teresa Harson, Emily Neff, Wynne Phelan, Yuki Sato, and Karen Vetter.

At the J. Paul Getty Museum, the exhibition evolved with the keen input of a number of talented people. We would like to acknowledge the support of Deborah Gribbon (director, 2000–2004) and William Griswold, acting director and chief curator (2004–2005); our colleagues in Paintings, above all Scott Schaefer, whose conviction of Courbet's greatness as a painter continues to inspire the project, as well as Jean Linn, Tanya Paul, Audrey Sands, Jon Seydl, Julia Wai, and Anne Woollett; in Exhibitions, Sophia Allison, Morena Carter, Quincy Houghton, Amber Keller, and Paige-Marie Ketner; in Paintings Conservation, Mark Leonard and Yvonne Szafran; in Photographs, Gordon Baldwin, Anne Lacoste, Anne M. Lyden, Paul Martineau, and Weston Naef; in the Registrar's department, Cherie Chen, Sally Hibbard, Amy Linker, Meagan Miller, and Betsy Severance; in Exhibition Design, Malek Chalabi, Reid Hoffman, Silvina Niepomniszcze, and Merrit Price; in Museum Administration, Mikka Gee Conway, Barbara Smith, and Julia Tranner; in Preparations, Bruce Metro and his team; in Education, Mari-Tere Alvarez, Cathy Carpenter, Peggy Fogelman, Clare Kunny, Vivianne Meerbergen, and Peter Tokofsky; in Interactive Programs, Sandy Johnson and Anne Martens; in Public Programs, Laurel Kishi; in the Web Group, Vicki Porter; in Publications, Catherine Comeau; and at the Getty Research Institute, David Brafman, JoAnn Paradise, Marcia Reed, Barry Rusakis, Katie Taylor, Fran Terpak, and Kevin Young.

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Our work on this exhibition and catalogue is dedicated to the memory of Kermit S. Champa (1939–2004), who planted the seeds of the project long ago through his scholarship and devoted mentorship. We continue to be inspired by his impassioned understanding of French painting generally, and of Courbet in particular.

MARY MORTON and CHARLOTTE EYERMAN

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Boston, Museum of Fine Arts
Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique
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Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago
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Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum
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New York, Brooklyn Museum
New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
New York, Salander-O'Reilly Galleries
New York, Wildenstein & Co.
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Paris, Musée d'Orsay
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Vevey, Switzerland, Musée Jenisch
Washington, D.C., The National Gallery of Art
Wuppertal, Germany, Von der Heydt-Museum

TO CREATE A LIVING ART

RETHINKING COURBET'S LANDSCAPE PAINTING

MARY MORTON

IN AN ACT FAMOUS in the annals of modern French art for its revolutionary defiance and independence, Gustave Courbet (French, 1819–1877; fig. 1) staged a private one-man show during the 1855 Universal Exposition in Paris. Dissatisfied with the jury's selection of his works for the Salon, and hoping to capitalize on the thousands of tourists who would descend on the French capital for this international event, he installed forty of his paintings in the "Pavilion of Realism" off the Champs-Elysées as a retrospective of his work to date. At the center hung a newly completed chef d'oeuvre more than ten feet tall and twenty feet wide, titled *The Studio of the Painter: A Real Allegory of Seven Years of My Artistic Life* (fig. 2). The painting depicts a large studio filled with people related to his career in one way or another, at the center of which Courbet sits attentively painting a landscape of his native Franche-Comté while a nude model and a small boy look on with rapt attention.

An intentionally puzzling painting, *The Studio of the Painter* has been interpreted and reinterpreted by critics and art historians for 150 years. In the five monographs devoted to this picture, the fact that Courbet is painting a landscape is hardly remarked upon.[1] Yet in a work serving as the artist's midcareer summa—an epically scaled statement of his past, present, and future as an artist—the fact that Courbet defines himself as a landscape painter is certainly remarkable. Though the genre had been stimulated by the activities of the Barbizon school, and in particular by the achievements of Théodore Rousseau (French, 1812–1867) and Camille Corot (French, 1796–1875), landscape painting around 1855 was associated with a somewhat subversive political and artistic agenda and was slotted low on the hierarchy of Academy-approved genres. The standards of Academic painting depended on this hierarchy, with history painting—figural and narrative—at the top. For those influenced by the still-powerful Academy, landscape painting remained on the margins of respectable, ambitious practice.

Furthermore, Courbet had earned his considerable artistic fame as a figural painter, having caused a series of public scandals with the Salon exhibition of large-scale paintings of inappropriate subjects in an aggressively unidealizing style, works such as *The Stonebreakers* (1850, destroyed), *Burial at Ornans* (1850, fig. 3), *Young Women from the Village* (1852, The Metropolitan Museum of Art), *The Bathers* (1853, Musée Fabre), *The Wrestlers* (1853, Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest), and *The Meeting ("Bonjour, Monsieur Courbet")* (1854, Musée Fabre). Although Courbet continued to paint provocative figural works, as well as still lifes, portraits, and hunting scenes, landscape painting dominated the artist's oeuvre from the late 1850s on.

Despite Courbet's signal role in the canon of Western painting, and despite the fact that landscape constitutes more than two-thirds of his oeuvre, Courbet's landscape painting has yet to achieve a stable position in the scholarly canon.[2] This is due to several factors, from

Figure 1.
Unknown photographer. Photograph of Gustave Courbet, ca. 1860–65. Albumen silver print, 8.7 × 5.6 cm (3 7/16 × 2 3/16 in.). Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, 84.XD.378.42

Figure 2.
Gustave Courbet (French, 1819–1877). *The Studio of the Painter: A Real Allegory of Seven Years of My Artistic Life*, 1855. Oil on canvas, 361 × 598 cm (142 1/4 × 235 5/8 in.). Paris, Musée d'Orsay

the difficulty of dating the landscapes and establishing a sense of stylistic evolution, to extensive problems of attribution, to the disqualification of the landscapes as artistically substandard, commercial sellouts.[3]

A comprehensive look at his contribution to the genre of landscape, however, reveals a radically innovative practice in Courbet's choice of motifs and his compositions, use of color, and paint application. His landscapes initiated a vital current of Modernist painting, shifting the focus of ambitious painting away from narrative description — whether historical, mythological, poetic, religious, or political — to self-expression, with nature providing both a subject and a less regulated arena in which the artist could enact an original performance-in-paint. Through Courbet's work, the experience of viewing painting became less that of reading and interpreting a codified language of represented figural gestures than of witnessing the artist's expressive manipulation of paint on a two-dimensional surface.[4] Courbet's landscapes broke from the rhetorical tradition of reference and emulation — the backbone of French painting for two hundred years — to a practice ardently devoted to fresh vision, unmediated perception, and the direct expression of emotion, central tenets of avant-garde painting for the next hundred years.

A carefully selected group of the artist's best landscapes, *Courbet and the Modern Landscape* presents a powerful body of work, striking even now in the intensity of its imagery and in its technical experimentation. Rather than presenting a chronological survey of the landscapes across Courbet's career, the exhibition emphasizes the high points of his landscape production, in particular his work in the Franche-Comté and on the Normandy coast in the 1860s. These intensely vivid pictures are the fulfillment of the artist's mission, as stated in his foreword to the "Realist Manifesto" accompanying the 1855 exhibition of *The Studio of the Painter*, "to create a living art."[5]

Figure 3.
Gustave Courbet. *Burial at Ornans*, 1850.
Oil on canvas, 315 × 668 cm
(124 × 263 in.). Paris, Musée d'Orsay

THE "FREE COUNTRY"

Courbet's sensational 1855 exhibition enhanced a celebrity status the artist had been cultivating for over a decade. On arriving in Paris as a highly ambitious young art student in 1839, Courbet decided that in order to succeed as a painter he needed to make a big splash, quickly, and he began to master the art of self-promotion. Foremost in Courbet's self-constructed mythology was his identity as a native son of the Franche-Comté, or "Free Country," a geologically dramatic province in eastern France near the Swiss border with a history of political independence from Paris-centralized France.[6] In counterpoint to the urban sophistication of the modern Parisian, Courbet presented himself as a mountain man, physically robust, dynamic, and above all, independent. He exaggerated his provincial accent and behavioral traits and fashioned himself into a somewhat brutish naïf, a bohemian, and a populist.[7] "Shout loud and walk straight" was his mantra, inherited by his own account from his free-thinking Franc-Comtois grandfather, a "1793 Republican."[8]

The majority of Courbet's early paintings related to the Franche-Comté, including his first Salon success in 1849, *After Dinner at Ornans* (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille). At the same Salon, Courbet submitted seven landscapes under titles referencing specific sites near Ornans, the town where he was raised. Also known as the "Jura" for the region's mountain range (the term "Jurassic" is derived from its ancient rocky cliffs), the Franche-Comté is marked by spectacular topography. As a young man Courbet hiked, fished, and hunted in the valleys around Ornans, and he spoke passionately about the rugged beauty of the landscape. Picturing his native land was both natural for Courbet and strategically useful in the construction of his un-Parisian persona.

Alongside his figural works, Courbet consistently submitted landscapes of the Franche-Comté to the Salon. One picture accepted in the Salon section of the 1855 Universal Exposition was *The Stream* (pl. 11), a large painting of a picturesque bend in the river Brême just outside Ornans.[9] It was a well-known spot among locals, who referred to it as "Puits Noir," or Black Well, in reference to the cool, quiet shadiness of the site. The painting was well received, and Courbet painted several versions, one of which was acquired in 1866 by the French state (pl. 14). In the series devoted to this motif, Courbet's progressive abstraction is particularly evident. His experiments in spatial representation in *The Stream*, in which foreground, middle ground, and background are held within a shallow, trembling plane, come to a head in later versions (pls. 15, 16), in which the painter constructs a dramatically simplified scene with flat blocks of light and dark.

The Stream was Courbet's first public success as a landscape painter. He discovered a responsive market for landscapes and acknowledged as a strategy the connection between the public provocation of his large figural works and the increased salability of his landscapes.[10] As the publication of Courbet's correspondence and the scholarship it has inspired have shown, Courbet was a savvy careerist in a rapidly developing art market.[11] He aggressively courted critics, inviting writers and editors of journals to see his work in his studio, at the Salon, and in his private exhibitions. He promoted himself constantly, both in the press and in his paintings (between 1844 and 1855, he submitted a series of theatricalizing self-portraits to the Salon, making his face as well known as his name; see fig. 4). He certainly understood the benefits of bad press: "When I am no longer controversial, I will no longer be important," he proclaimed in 1852.[12]

Courbet's brazen manipulation of the rising art market and its system of dealers and critics was a central feature of his progressive approach, a hallmark of Modernism.[13] Though some scholars have blamed Courbet's complicity with the market for what they consider to be a decline in his work in the 1860s, Courbet himself credited the market for liberating him from the necessity of pandering to official arbiters of artistic taste (the government, the French Academy, the École des Beaux-Arts). Courbet saw the market as a more direct channel of address to more people than official commissions and exhibitions. And because the market encouraged certain aspects of Courbet's painterly production, the effect of influence moved in both directions. Indeed, Courbet saw his commercial success as confirmation of his view of himself as a "man of his time."

Courbet was encouraged by both personal and professional desire to maintain an intense identification with his native countryside, and his landscape production accelerated in the late 1850s and through the 1860s. According to Courbet's catalogue raisonné, from 1861 to 1865 he painted more than four times the number of landscapes that he had painted between 1856 and 1860, and continued increasing landscape production until the mid-1870s.[14] The scale of his landscapes also increased across his career. Landscape painting was, as contemporary critic Théodore Duret put it, his natural proclivity, a fact that was increasingly recognized by critics.[15]

"All Paris talks about him, in the provinces, in foreign countries: Courbet, always Courbet!" exclaimed the writer Champfleury (pen name of Jules Husson, French, 1821–1889) in 1860.[16] By the early 1860s, Courbet was at the center of artistic discourse, heatedly discussed in the journals, caricatured in the press and in the theater.[17] His Salon submissions of 1863 and 1864, however — *The Return from the Conference* (lost or destroyed), a bold critique

Figure 4.
Gustave Courbet. *Self-Portrait, Entitled "Man with a Leather Belt,"* 1845–46. Oil on canvas, 100 × 82 cm (39⅜ × 32¼ in.). Paris, Musée d'Orsay

of the rural Catholic Church, and *Venus and Psyche* (lost or destroyed), an erotically charged painting of female love — were rejected by the jury, and some critics noted that Courbet's bright star may have been waning. Champfleury, his early defender, was particularly harsh and may have influenced Courbet's retreat to Ornans, where in a newly constructed studio he spent a year painting the local landscape.[18]

Courbet was energized by his renewed contact with the vivid topography of the Franche-Comté. He traveled from Ornans to Salins and Pontarlier, painting noted geographical sites in between. The paintings Courbet produced in 1864 and 1865 are discrete in their intensity of focus and painterly innovation. Though some paintings, such as the magnificent Source of the Loue series (pls. 22, 23) and several variations of *Stream of the Puits Noir* (pls. 14, 15), have been firmly dated to this moment, there are others whose dates are not secure but which are so closely related to the experimental energy of these works that they should be seen together. These include the *Rocks at Chauveroche* (pl. 4), *Valley of the Loue, possibly near Mouthier-Haute-Pierre* (pl. 5), *Grotto of Sarrazine near Nans-sous-Sainte-Anne* (pl. 20), and *Source of the Lison* (pl. 21).

It was during this intense campaign that he developed his series of snowscapes, establishing an important new landscape subgenre. He called them *paysages de neige*, landscapes of snow, and they are distinct from his better-known winter hunting scenes in their empirical focus on the many ways that snow clings to various surfaces. Courbet employs his full range of experimental mark-making in these paintings (see, for example, pls. 24, 25), and his attempt to transcribe the specific color and light of snow would inspire younger painters such as Claude Monet (French, 1840–1926), Camille Pissarro (French, 1831–1903), Pierre-Auguste Renoir (French, 1841–1919), and Alfred Sisley (French and British, 1839–1899).[19]

PAYSAGES DE MER

Fresh from his 1864–65 painting campaign, Courbet visited an unfamiliar but equally dramatic natural environment, the Normandy coast. In the fall of 1865, he produced a series of paintings unprecedented in their speed of execution and coloristic complexity. Inspired, both visually and physically (his letters describe rapturous daily swims in the sea), Courbet boasted that in his two-month visit he produced thirty paintings. In works such as *Seacoast (Marine)* (pl. 34), and *Low Tide at Trouville* (pl. 35), Courbet strips down the composition to bands of sky, sea, and beach. Like the plein air painter Eugène-Louis Boudin (French, 1824–1898), a key influence in this series, Courbet concentrates on shifting conditions of light and atmosphere, exploring the distinct tonalities of the coastal sky.[20] This kind of serial attention, previously trained on motifs in the Franche-Comté, served as a precursor to the modern series of Monet and Paul Cézanne (French, 1839–1906) over the next couple of decades.

The marine paintings were successful commercially, selling for solid prices at an exhibition at Jules Lucquet's gallery in late 1865.[21] Courbet referred to them as *paysages de mer*, or landscapes of the sea, both to distinguish them from other marine paintings and to position them alongside his other landscape paintings.[22] Both Courbet and his collectors had moved beyond the Franche-Comté as Courbet's definitive landscape motif. Courbet and his painting style had come to signify attributes and elements that transcended his motifs, while being inspired by them: boldness, dynamic energy, masculine vitality, and originality. The spectacular nature of coastal skies, the flashing moods of the sea, the rawness, the wind, and the sea-beaten coastal rocks that he painted were corollaries to Courbet's self- and public image.

Courbet returned to the Normandy coast in 1866, painting the cliffs of Étretat, and again in 1869, when he focused in on one of his most spectacular themes: the crashing wave.[23] In their aggressive immediacy, Courbet's painted waves are the culmination of the artist's drive to rejuvenate French painting, to transform what he perceived to be an obsolete, effete tradition into an aesthetically powerful force. In the great Berlin *Wave* (fig. 10, in the following essay), among the largest and most powerful of the series, no figures distract from the fulminating body of water building beneath a stormy purple sky.

TECHNICAL PERFORMANCE

Courbet's fascination with painting technique was given free reign in the genre of landscape, a genre more open to experimentation than figural painting because it was not the heart of Academic practice. In contrast to the more routinized and methodical practice of studio work, the freedom to leave the Academy and studio, sit outside alone, and record one's personal visual impressions was part of the appeal of landscape painting. Many artists continued to paint landscapes as a means of maintaining freshness in their studio work, but Courbet brought it to the center of his pictorial discourse. It was his ideal genre.

Part of the excitement of Courbet's landscapes, and an essential feature of their modernity, is their revelation of process, of the artist's technical exploration. He often painted in large scale, working quickly and applying paint with a range of gestures and a

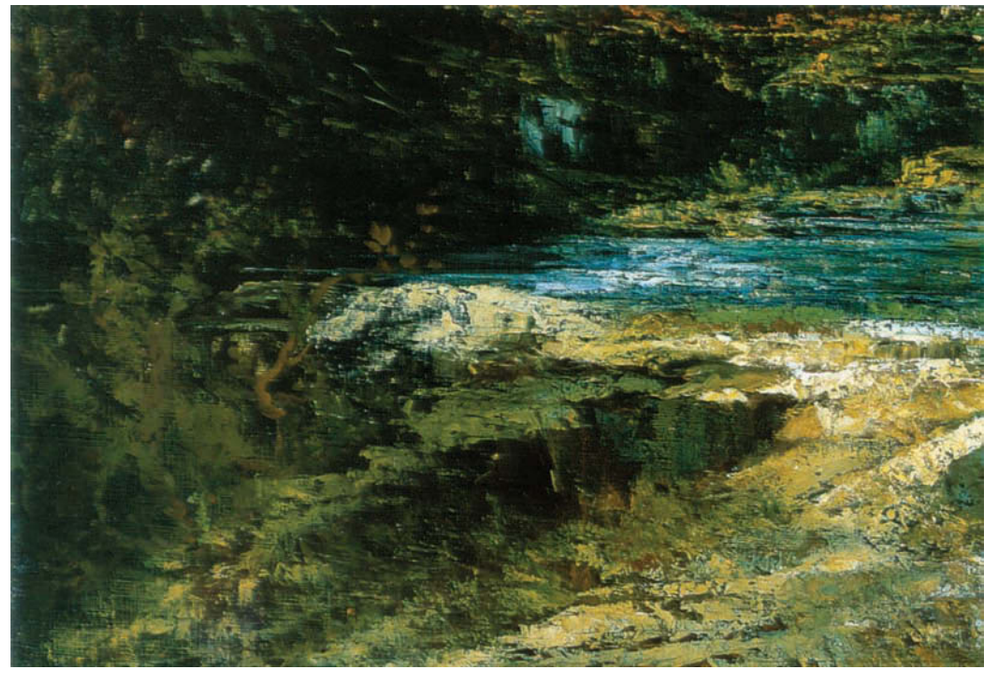


Figure 5.
Gustave Courbet. *The Gust of Wind*, ca. 1865 (detail, pl. 8).

variety of tools: large and small brushes, the palette knife, rags, even his thumb.[24] His completed pictures were often roughly finished, intentionally defiant of the polished *fini* characteristic of Academic paintings. The self-effacing elimination of all traces of the artist's labor was antithetical to Courbet's project.

The lack of finish in Courbet's landscapes belies their technical complexity. Critics frequently referred to Courbet's unusual manipulation of dense amounts of pasty pigment, scooped up with the palette knife and smeared onto the canvas. For all of their surface texture, however, Courbet's paintings maintain a surprising smoothness. Though a painting like *The Gust of Wind* (pl. 8) looks crusty and thick from afar, it is surprisingly even in surface. His technique involved building up layers of transparent glazes, and he scraped away paint as frequently as he applied it.[25] At close range one can see primary, secondary, and tertiary layers laid bare, with regular adjustments made between them inspired by a referent in nature and/or the exigencies of the paint itself (fig. 5).

Courbet achieved a range of nuance and drama with the palette knife that was without precedent in the history of painting. Traditionally, the knife was used to mix paints on the palette, not to apply paint to the canvas, a task considered too delicate for the knife's blunt edges. It was this tool that enabled Courbet to work on a larger than average scale, covering wide swaths of canvas quickly. The hard turquoise glow of Courbet's skies was achieved by the even coating allowed by the knife, as Courbet laid on paint much as the mason trowels cement into place. He also used the knife to create a distinct evocation of texture through scraping and scumbling paint, wet in wet and wet over dry. In contemporary criticism, Courbet's use of the knife was associated with his speed of execution, his spontaneity, and his vigor.[26]

Writers of Courbet's day often celebrated his use of color, and the distinct sense of space and light it created in his paintings.[27] Almost 150 years have taken their toll on many of Courbet's works, however, diluting the impact of his technique for contemporary viewers. His rich surfaces have been dulled by relining and surface treatments, and the depth of his color has been muted by aging bitumen, varnish, and overcleaning. Canvases in an exceptional state of preservation, such as the Getty Museum's *Grotto of Sarrazine* (see fig. 20), are arresting in the sophistication and delicacy of tonal ranges used by the artist to convey the seemingly colorless subject of rock face. Unlike the next generation of painters, who reveled in bright, strong, unmixed colors, Courbet's palette was earthy, but he was able to conjure hues of real complexity. The minimalist marine paintings done on the Normandy coast during the summers of 1865, 1866, and 1869 are essentially tonal studies, extremely nuanced representations of mercurial coastal light.

CRITICAL RECEPTION

For the 1867 Universal Exposition in Paris, Courbet again mounted a one-man show. Twelve years after his Pavilion of Realism, the exhibition was held at the Rond Point de l'Alma, just off the Expo grounds, and it included three times the number of pictures of the earlier show (almost half of them landscapes). In planning advertising, he intended to "go all out in the American way."[28] He sent out three thousand invitations and mailed a copy of his catalogue to artists throughout Paris.[29]

"Never before has the work of a painter been a more faithful image of the character of the man," Duret wrote in 1867.[30] So successful was Courbet's campaign of self-promotion that the reception of his paintings was profoundly inflected by his larger-than-life persona (fig. 6). His art was not about moral or spiritual instruction nor historical commemoration, things he derided as Academic. His art was about himself and the liberal values he embodied: freedom, independence, originality, innovation, and entrepreneurial energy. Contemporary writers referred to Courbet's strong instincts, physical vitality, and intense connection to nature. Courbet's landscapes seemed to serve as a kind of palliative myth for the urban male.

Despite the fact that he read widely and associated closely with French writers such as Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867), Max Buchon (1818–1868), Jules-Antoine Castagnary (1831–1888), Champfleury, and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865), critics and biographers frequently noted Courbet's unliterary nature. Accounts of his discomfort with language, his distaste for reading, his poor writing skills, and his woeful orthography were linked to descriptions of his physicality and sensualism, as if intellect and body were necessary opposites. The critic Castagnary, his primary defender in the 1860s, wrote that the "Idea" escaped Courbet, that he knew the world through form and color, and that by not reading, the artist remained closer to his instincts.[31] "Nature" for Courbet was not an ideal, or an intellectual concept, but a wholly sensual experience.[32]

Courbet's landscapes were perceived as expressions of masculine vitality with undercurrents of violence. Critics consistently referred to the power, force, and dynamism of Courbet's landscapes. Even Courbet's signature tool, the palette knife, was labeled a brutal weapon by critics, evoking images of the artist attacking his paint surface.[33] Calling critics

Figure 6.
André Gill (André Gosset de Guine) (French, 1840–1885). *Courbet, Painted by Himself.* Cartoon printed in *La Lune*, no. 66 (9 June 1867). Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Research Institute, 920048

who misunderstood Courbet "pale" and "impotent," Champfleury defended him alongside the epic German composer Richard Wagner (1813–1883)—a rather striking comparison.[34]

Courbet's success as a hunter, both in France and Germany, was well known. Castagnary wrote in the catalogue of Courbet's 1882 retrospective, "A hunter as much as a painter, he interrupted a nature study more than once to grab his gun and knock something down in passing."[35] Characteristics associated with the hunter — strong instincts, spontaneity of response, immersion in the landscape, and skilled, aggressive conquest — found perfect corollary in the painter of the Franche-Comté.

In a brilliant evocation of Courbet's mythology, Castagnary's 1882 critique continued:

> He discovered virgin lands where no one had yet placed a foot, aspects and forms of landscape that one could say were unknown before he painted them. . . . Each time he plunged into the bosom of deep nature, he was like a man who has penetrated a beehive and come out covered with honey; he returned charged with perfume and poetry. He descended into the deep irregular hollows where the spring is born of the trickle from rocks, he watched the drops of water collect, let slide between his fingers the silver of small waterfalls. . . . No one painted in strokes so frank, just that quivering humidity. One cannot contemplate *Stream of the Puits Noir, Source of the Loue, Shaded Stream,* all these fresh and bright landscapes . . . without receiving them like a gust of pure air right in the face.[36]

Another consistent theme in Courbet criticism is the association of the artist's work with sincerity and authenticity. Courbet himself wrote frequently in his letters and in prefaces to his exhibitions about "truth" as his essential artistic aim. He intended both

Figure 7.
Camille Corot (French, 1796–1875).
Souvenir de Mortefontaine, 1864.
Oil on canvas, 65 × 89 cm
(25⅝ × 35 in.). Paris, Musée du Louvre

his subject matter and his technique to be free of what he characterized as the idealizing falsifications and pretensions of mainstream Salon painting. His artistic frankness was celebrated and emulated in the literary world by writers such as Castagnary and Émile Zola (French, 1840–1902), who codified the avant-garde movement known as Realism or Naturalism (often interchangeable terms).[37]

Courbet criticism operated within the broader discourse of landscape painting in the 1860s. Leftist critics such as Zola, Théophile Thoré (French, 1807–1869), and Champfleury championed Barbizon school painting, which had achieved significant critical and commercial success by the 1860s, as an antidote to urban fatigue and dissolution.[38] Against the rhetorical, stylized tradition of painting that continued to dominate the Salon, critics posited the freshness, authenticity, and freedom of the Barbizon school. The association between Academic art and the old authority of the aristocracy and the Roman Catholic church on the one hand, and between the anti-institutional school of landscape painting and liberal democracy on the other, was fairly overt in the highly politicized field of midcentury art criticism.[39]

MODERNIST

Though building on the values of the Barbizon artists, Courbet's landscapes were quite different in their effect from the landscapes of Camille Corot (French, 1796–1875) or Théodore Rousseau (French, 1812–1867), Courbet's main competition.[40] All three artists built on the tradition of plein air painting in France established by Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes (French, 1750–1819) at the beginning of the nineteenth century, which posited the dual principles of the primacy of nature on the one hand and the painter's unmediated

Figure 8.
Théodore Rousseau (French, 1812–1867). *Gathering Wood in the Forest of Fontainebleau*, ca. 1850–60. Oil on canvas, 54.7 × 65.3 cm (21½ × 25⅞ in.). Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Bequest of Mrs. David P. Kimball, 23.399

vision on the other. Corot's work retained the Neoclassical influence of his teachers, Achille-Etna Michallon (French, 1796–1822) and Jean-Victor Bertin (French, 1767–1842); and though his work is undeniably forward looking, particularly in its influence on the Impressionists, his technique is more conservative than that of Courbet (fig. 7).[41] Compared with the pastoral, memory-misted, poetic subtleties of Corot's *Souvenir* paintings, Courbet's works are uncomposed and abrupt. The often repeated story about Courbet painting alongside Corot in 1849 suggests a telling difference between the two landscapists. While Corot shifted his canvas around outdoors to capture a particular point of view, Courbet is reported to have said, "Where I place myself is all the same to me; any location is good as long as I have nature before my eyes."[42] Indeed, in paintings such as *The Valley of Ornans* (pl. 1), *Valley of the Loue* (pl. 5), *The Fringe of the Forest* (pl. 9), and *Winter Landscape* (pl. 48), his compositions feel "found," randomly happened upon, enhancing their sense of realism.

Rousseau, who unlike Corot and Courbet defined himself from the outset as a landscape painter, was fairly traditional in his artistic process.[43] He frequently sketched outdoors, completing hundreds of drawings of extraordinary technical range. His landscape paintings, however, were exhaustively deliberated and carefully built up in the studio, inspired by his plein air sketches but completed in highly controlled indoor conditions. Rousseau generally painted with a refined, delicate touch, instilling his landscapes with a mildly romantic atmosphere and mood (fig. 8). His method serves as a counterpoint to Courbet's dynamic, purposeful improvisations-in-paint. Courbet skipped preparatory work, composing directly into paint, either on-site or in the studio.[44]

The modernity of Courbet's landscape paintings stems in part from his intense engagement with the process of painting, "the materially live event."[45] Scholar Kermit Champa describes Courbet's art as "improvisatory," pointing to *The Studio of the Painter* (in

which Courbet paints at the center of a room full of people) as the artist's proclamation of the performative activity of landscape painting. In such a practice, the content of the art resides in technique alone, as it does in concert music. Of course, Courbet's life was performative — he was himself a spectacle. As biographer Pierre Courthion noted, "Naturally inclined to performances, it was he who made the most noise, drank the most beer, shot the most game, executed in two hours an enormous landscape . . . in sum, he was an exhibitionist."[46] Courbet actually did enjoy painting for an audience, which witnesses found compelling.[47] He painted with great energy and could produce completed pictures in a single sitting. He claimed proudly (and with some exaggeration) that he did not retouch his pictures, preserving the painted object as a pure record of a single painting "event."[48] So contrary to the Academic method of premeditation, preparation, and slow, gradual completion, his work was scorned by some critics as hasty and careless, his unpolished pictures shameless displays of his shortcomings. Within ten years, however, the aesthetic of quick, spontaneous painting would become the hallmark of the avant-garde.[49]

Courbet's professed drive to create purely empirical landscape paintings also aligns his practice with a basic tenet of Modernism. Courbet's friend and early supporter, the poet Charles Baudelaire, asserted in his famous essay *Peintre de la vie moderne* (*The Painter of Modern Life*, 1863) that the archetypal feature of Modernism was purified, intense vision.[50] Courbet's refusal to paint what he couldn't see (exemplified by his famous proclamation, "Show me an angel and I'll paint it") was as much a total commitment to the exploration of visual perception as it was an anti-Academic position. "The expression of beauty is in direct relation to the power of perception," he proclaimed to a group of young painters in 1861.[51] Like Cézanne, who used the Realist master as a source of inspiration across his career, Courbet deflected the poetic, narrative tone that had characterized the landscape tradition by making consistent, almost obsessive references to the visual world. Though his landscape paintings are fairly straightforward in motif, their visual complexity — their color and facture — reward prolonged viewing.

"It all has to do with different ways of seeing," Courbet wrote in 1865.[52] As Dominique de Font-Réaulx writes in her essay in this catalogue, Courbet's interest in different ways of "seeing" may have been stimulated by his contact with photography. The advent of photography in the middle of the nineteenth century sensitized artists to the complications of visual perception.[53] Courbet was among the first painters to fall under its spell.

POSITIVIST PAINTING

Courbet's landscapes and the critical response to them correspond to the philosophical movement of positivism, which peaked in the 1860s. Defined against philosophical spiritualism and idealism, positivism asserted that knowledge was based on the data of empirical experience, to the exclusion of a priori or metaphysical speculation. Like Courbet's painting, positivism was progressive and was considered destabilizing to the status quo in its redistribution of power from institutions to individuals.

The correlations between Courbet's art and the writings of positivist critic and historian Hippolyte Taine (French, 1828–1893) are striking. Although there is no documented

exchange between them, Taine referred to Courbet as "of our style," and the connection between the two was poignantly if indirectly articulated in Zola's criticism.[54]

Taine's sensational application of positivism to literary and art history in his two series *L'Histoire de la littérature anglais* (*The History of English Literature*, 1863–69) and *La Philosophie de l'art* (*The Philosophy of Art*, 1865–69) galvanized critical discourse in the last decade of the Second Empire (1852–70).[55] Taine's theory was driven both by a professional mission to make art writing more objective and scientific and, paradoxically, by his personal sense of anxiety regarding the state of modern urban life. Running through Taine's art history is a sense of nostalgia for life during what he considered to be the high points of human culture—fifth-century Greece, the Italian Renaissance, and seventeenth-century Netherlandish culture—periods in which, in Taine's account, the balance between body and mind produced brilliant works of art. In Taine's narrative, these historical moments were marked by a vital corporeal culture characterized by physical health, masculine virility, sensuality, and sexual expression and fulfillment. Modern times, according to Taine, suffer from excessive cerebral activity, resulting in the neglect of the body and physical instincts. Emerging from Taine's text is an image of the modern urbanite as passive, impotent, and anxious, passing his time in his robe and slippers pacing his secure, carpeted apartment.[56]

Taine's antidote was a prescription for art very much like Courbet's: intensely vital, ardently empirical, and intimately connected to nature. Taine advocated the rejection of classical subjects and academic dictums in favor of the artist's immediate sensations of the world around him. Such perfectly positive pictures as Courbet's Source of the Loue series, and any one of the *paysages de mer* aptly address the anxieties and desires sublimated in Taine's texts.[57]

EXILE

Only months after Courbet's public—and, to many, heroic—renunciation of the Cross of the Legion of Honor,[58] and after his critically acclaimed exhibition of two landscapes at the Salon of 1870, accompanied by several private commissions, France was invaded by Prussia. The war was a disastrous and humiliating defeat for France and led to a bloody civil war waged in the streets of Paris and associated with the establishment of a resistant, revolutionary "Commune." In an early stage of recovery, the newly formed, postwar Third Republic pilloried Courbet, who had joined the Commune as an art administrator, as a scapegoat for some of the pain and destruction caused by this convulsive event. The French state demanded reparations well beyond the artist's means for the reconstruction of the Vendôme column, a public monument in Paris whose destruction was blamed unfairly on Courbet. When the state began confiscating his property in 1873, Courbet packed up and fled to Switzerland.[59]

Courbet's late paintings are as a group particularly troubled by issues of attribution. Desperate to raise money to pay off the debt imposed by the French state and earn his way home, he established a workshop or "studio" in La Tour-de-Peilz to increase production.[60] Though weakened by illness and alcoholism, Courbet continued to paint ambitious pictures and participate in exhibitions in Switzerland.[61] There are paintings of great quality from this period, works such as *Beach Scene* (pl. 44), *Sunset, Vevey, Switzerland* (pl. 45), and the epic

but unfinished *Panoramic View of the Alps* (pl. 49). Had he not been cut off from the artistic capital, and had he not died at the relatively young age of fifty-eight, one wonders what might have been. Had he had a "late period," as did Eugène Delacroix (French, 1798–1863), Jacques-Louis David (French, 1748–1825), Edgar Degas (French, 1834–1917), Corot, Monet, Renoir, Pissarro, and Cézanne, all of whom painted at least into their sixties, and in some cases into their eighties, what might his work have looked like?

COURBET'S REPUTATION

During Courbet's exile, his reputation in Paris suffered dramatically (see fig. 9). His overt self-confidence and egocentrism, appealing to some and tolerated by many during the Second Empire, was very much out of step in the battered French capital. Courbet's great success among artists and collectors in Germany, in Frankfurt and Munich in particular, was hardly an appealing attribute during a decade in which all things German were forced underground.[62] As respectable French collectors avoided the taint of his works, the market for Courbet's paintings plummeted.[63] Courbet's Swiss "studio" exacerbated the situation by flooding the market with paintings of questionable quality and authenticity, a stream that continued after his death, in 1877.

At the Universal Exposition of 1878, where Delacroix and Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (French, 1780–1867)—both of whom had died in the previous decade—were honored with individual galleries displaying their paintings, Courbet was represented by only one work, *The Wave* (1870, Musée d'Orsay).[64] In the four great collections left to the state during the second half of the nineteenth century (constituting the story of modern French painting at the Louvre), there were no works by Courbet.[65]

Among the writers who established the story of Modernism in France, such as Baudelaire, Zola, and Duret, Courbet's legacy was not definitive. During Courbet's early career, he befriended Baudelaire, and the poet and painter drew inspiration from one another. Baudelaire understood the revolutionary impact of Courbet's art in 1855 and marked its essence in his Salon review that year as the combination of positivism and a profound engagement with the act of painting.[66] Baudelaire is pictured in Courbet's *The Studio of the Painter*, but that year their friendship is reported to have ended.[67] Baudelaire's aesthetic was insistently urban, specifically Parisian. Courbet's art was in fact anti-urban, and one of the radical innovations of Impressionism was the application of Courbet's expressive, painterly technique and positivist approach to the subject of modern urban life.

Although Zola, in many ways the literary equivalent of Courbet, celebrated the painter, for him Courbet was yesterday's rebel, already surrounded by defenders. By 1866, with Zola's first Salon review, Courbet was already too much of an insider for him. Zola established his career as a critic defending the young generation—his generation—Édouard Manet and the Impressionists. In his Salon reviews, however, when he praises works by Monet and Pissarro, the traits he argues in favor of are essentially Courbetian.[68] He writes specifically about Pissarro's *Jalais Hill, Pontoise* (see fig. 33), among the artist's most Courbet-influenced painting, celebrating its simplicity, forceful immediacy, and heroic frankness. Calling the young painters Naturalists, he commends their positivist recording of unembel-

Figure 9.
Demare (French, 19th century).
The Revenge: "Let's 'Unbolt' Courbet!"
1872. Photolithograph. Reprinted from
La Chronique illustrée, May 6, 1872.

lished, unidealized nature and their original facture. "For me — for many people, I would hope — a work of art is . . . a personality, an individuality. That which I demand from the artist is not to give me tender dreams or horrifying nightmares: but to deliver himself, heart and flesh, to boldly affirm a powerful and particular spirit, a full strong temperament that takes nature firmly in his hands and plants before us that which he sees. I have the greatest disdain for . . . all the little historical theatrical glimpses and perfumed dreams [of mainstream Salon painting]. I have the most profound admiration for individual works, for those that come from a vigorous and unique hand."[69] Having achieved a level of notoriety both for his painters and for himself, in 1878, a year after Courbet's death, Zola credited Courbet as the father of Modernism.[70]

Duret, critic and early historian of Impressionism, appreciated Courbet's originality during the 1860s, articulating key aspects of the artist's project. Not until 1918, however, did he single out Courbet as a seminal Modernist. In his book on Courbet, Duret credits him with "enabling art to continue" after the death of Neoclassicism with Ingres and of Romanticism with Delacroix by "returning it to its point of departure: nature and the observation of life." Courbet alone, not Théodore Géricault (French, 1791–1824), Rousseau, Corot, or Jean-François Millet (French, 1814–1875), completely broke with old formulas, preparing the way for Impressionism.[71]

As late as 1929, Courbet's biographer Charles Léger noted that France had reproached Courbet for an inadmissibly independent spirit only foreigners could appreciate.[72] Even during his lifetime, Courbet's reception in Germany was more positive than in his native country. Perhaps given their national tradition of landscape painting, German collectors responded to Courbet's landscapes in particular. In his two-volume 1904 masterwork, *Die*

Entwicklungsgeschichte der modernen Kunst (*Modern Art: Being a Contribution to a New System of Aesthetics*), the great German art critic and historian Julius Meier-Graefe (1867–1935) recognized Courbet as the founder of modern painting, not only in France but across Europe from England to Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, and Germany. Meier-Graefe alone placed Courbet's landscape painting at the center of his achievement: "Courbet the landscape painter is the purer artist."[73]

Meier-Graefe's assertion was undoubtedly shared by the avant-garde painters who saw Courbet's work at his 1855, 1867, and 1882 exhibitions, artists like Pissarro, Cézanne, and Monet. As Charlotte Eyerman's essay in this catalogue argues, the impact of Courbet's landscapes on avant-garde painting practice extends well into the twentieth century. The dynamic, slashing brush marks of Franz Kline (American, 1910–1962) and Willem de Kooning (American, 1904–1997), the splats and "drips" of Jackson Pollock (American, 1912–1956), like Courbet's knife work, connote the physicality of the masculine artist, his energy, instinct, and freedom. Performing in paint, expressing themselves in original autographic marks that conflated the representational with the self-referential, these artists continued to revitalize and revolutionize painting along lines sketched by Courbet in the second third of the nineteenth century.

NOTES

1. This point is made by Klaus Herding (see Herding 1991, 69), whose scholarship on Courbet's landscape painting is exceptional. The classic monographs are René Huyge, Germain Bazin, and Hélène J. Adhémar, *Courbet: L'atelier* (Paris, 1944); Matthias Winner, "Gemalte Kunsttheorie. Zu Gustave Courbets 'Allégorie réelle' und der Tradition," *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 4 (1962): 150–85; Alan Bowness, *Courbet's "L'atelier du peintre"* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1972); Benedict Nicolson, *Courbet: The Studio of the Painter* (London, 1973); Hélène Toussaint, "The Dossier on 'The Studio' by Courbet," in Toussaint 1978, 249–80; Alex Seltzer, "Gustave Courbet, All the World's a Studio," *Artforum* 16 (September 1977): 44–50. See also Karl Emil Willers, "Courbet's Sources, 1848–1855," Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1998.

2. Morton 2005.

3. Marxist art historians have devalued Courbet's landscape painting, in part perhaps due to their active participation in the Second Empire art market. T. J. Clark's seminal 1973 volume on Courbet focuses on the artist's politically engaged painting of the late 1840s and the 1850s. He deems the artist's landscape paintings a failure, the weakest part of Courbet's oeuvre. See Clark 1973, 132–33. Anne Wagner studied the market orientation of Courbet's landscapes, censuring them for their fast, uncomplicated, immanent physicality. See Wagner 1981, 410–29.

   The exhibition catalogue for the great 1977–78 monographic exhibition in Paris and London by Hélène Toussaint notes the difficulty in dating the landscapes, as Courbet often put dates on them just prior to exhibition regardless of the year they were completed, and due to his nonlinear stylistic development. Toussaint writes, "as a rule Courbet's landscapes are of a narrative or historical character" in that they portray specific objects—an isolated rock or tree, a cluster of houses, some ruins. See Toussaint 1978, 161.

   In the 1988 Brooklyn Museum monographic exhibition, the landscapes composed only a quarter of the paintings in the exhibtion. See Chu 1988.

   The German scholar Klaus Herding alone has grappled with the landscapes in all their variety and complexity. See Herding's 1975 essay on Courbet's landscapes, translated into English in his 1991 book, in which the author reads Courbet's attitudes toward Second Empire politics in his landscapes. See Herding 1991, as well as Herding 1999 (Frankfurt) and Herding 2001. For more on the landscapes in Courbet scholarship, see Morton 2005, 1–2, and notes 3–5.

4. For an account of Courbet's formalist legacy to, among others, Abstract Expressionists, see Charlotte Eyerman, "Courbet's Legacy in the Twentieth Century," herein.

5. The closing section of Courbet's Realist Manifesto, as translated by James Rubin, reads, "To know in order to be capable, that was my idea. To be able to translate the customs, the ideas, the appearance of my epoch according to my own appreciation of it . . . in a word, to create living art, that is my goal." Rubin 1997, 158.

6. A common trope in Courbet criticism is the correspondence between Courbet the man and the rugged, elemental, untamed topography of the Jura. Klaus Herding argues convincingly for the iconographic significance of Courbet's paintings of the Franche-Comté, finding political intent in the artist's choice for a motif of a region with a strong tradition of independence from the French capital. Herding 1991, chapter 4.

7. For reports of Courbet's exaggerated accent and boorish swagger, see Gautier 1994, 43; Ideville 1878, 30–33; and Duret 1918, 38. Courbet writes in a letter of his bohemianism: "Yes, dear friend, even in our so civilized society, I must lead the life of a savage. I must break free from its very governments. The people have my sympathy. I must turn to them directly, I must get my knowledge from them, and they must provide me with a living. Therefore I have just embarked on the great wandering and independent life of the bohemian." Courbet 1992, 99.

8. Quoted from a letter of 1861, in which Courbet describes himself: "I act without calculation, without shame, and that I let the public itself see my shortcomings. . . . I have always had the courage to be only what I am, without balancing acts, without lashing out at anyone." Courbet 1992, 194.

9. Courbet exhibited a total of eleven paintings at the Universal Exposition of 1855, including *The Stonebreakers* and *Young Ladies of the Village*, and one additional landscape painting, Château d'Ornans.

10. He boasts in a letter of 1863 that *The Return from the Conference* (1863, location unknown), a painting of rural clergy stumbling drunkenly along a road as distressed peasants look on, was painted and submitted to the Salon as a planned publicity stunt: "I painted the picture so it would be refused. I have succeeded. That way it will bring me money." Courbet 1992, 220.

11. Courbet 1992, and Zutter and Chu 1998.

12. Courbet 1992, 106.

13. Scholar Petra Chu suggests that Courbet was "perhaps the first modern artist to fully realize his socio-economic position as a producer of commodities in a market-driven economy." Zutter and Chu 1998, 6. Though Courbet was not the first French artist to engage so aggressively with the art market, the rapidly developing state of that market and his conscious manipulation of its power distinguish his case.

14. According to Robert Fernier 1977–78, pre-1850 Courbet painted 22 landscapes; from 1851 to 1855, 22 landscapes; from 1856 to 1860, 33 landscapes; from 1861 to 1865, 140 landscapes; from 1866 to 1870, 166 landscapes; and from 1871 to 1873, 124 landscapes. I thank Getty Museum graduate intern Tanya Paul for her analysis of the evolution of scale and volume of Courbet's landscape paintings found in Fernier's 1977–78 catalogue raisonné.

15. Duret 1918, 37.

16. Champfleury 1968, 225.

17. In an undated citation, Courthion includes a quotation from the critic Marius Vachon: "The whole world is preoccupied with him. They argue about him in the big journals, caricature him, present him in the theaters. He is the lion of the day." Courthion 1948, 148.

18. Champfleury's exchange with Courbet at this time resulted in a rift that became permanent. Their friendship seems to have ended in 1863. See Courbet 1992, 223–26.

19. See *Impressionists in Winter: Effets de Neige* (Moffett et al. 1998). Though Courbet was frequently referred to in the exhibition catalogue, his seminal role in Impressionist snowscapes was not recognized by the exhibition organizers. See in particular page 14.

20. Boudin and Courbet were friends, spent time together on this first visit, and may have painted together.

21. Courbet 1992, 277. See also the introduction to "Seascapes," herein.

22. des Cars 2004.

23. For an extended account on Courbet's Wave paintings, see Herding 1999, "Gustave Courbet"; Rishel 2003; and des Cars 2004.

24. Alexandre Schanne, in Courthion 1948, 85.

25. My discussion of technique is indebted to conversations with painting conservators David Bull, Joe Fronek, Elisabeth Mention, Wynne Phelan, and Yvonne Szafran.

26. See, for instance, Duret 1867, 98. Castagnary wrote in the 1882 retrospective catalogue regarding Courbet's technique, "Courbet paints in full paste (*en plein pate*) but without slags or unevenness: his canvases are smooth as ice and brilliant as armor. He obtains at the same time volume and movement solely by balance of tone; and this tone, placed flat by the palette knife, achieves an extraordinary intensity. I do not know a richer or more distinguished coloration." Castagnary 1882, 24.

27. Klaus Herding claims that Courbet's really radical contribution to the history of painting is neither the redefinition of the artist's role in society, nor the shift to mundane subjects, but his innovations in color. See Herding 1991, 111.

28. Courbet 1992, 310.

29. Mainardi 1987, 139. Quoted from a letter from Frederic Bazille to Claude Monet; see Gaston Poulain, *Bazille et ses amis* (Paris, 1932).

30. "Jamais oeuvre de peintre n'a été une image plus fidèle et plus complète du caractère d'un homme." Duret 1867, 85. (Unless otherwise indicated, translations by Mary Morton.)

31. Courthion 1948, 156. Castagnary met Courbet in 1860. Already an admirer of his work, the critic became one of Courbet's primary defenders. He organized Courbet's posthumous retrospective at the École des Beaux-Arts in 1882. The correspondence between Castagnary and Courbet serves as a crucial document in Courbet studies.

32. Shapiro 1941, 182.

33. Théophile Silvestre, "Courbet d'après nature," in *Les Artistes français* (Brussels, 1861), quoted in Courthion 1948, 54.

34. Champfleury 1968, 112.

35. "Chasseur autant que peintre, il interrompit plus d'une fois l'étude commencée pour saisir le fusil et abattre quelque pièce au passage." Castagnary 1882, 18.

36. "Il découvrit des terres vierges où personne n'avait encore posé le pied, des aspects et des formes de paysage dont on peut dire qu'ils étaient inconnus avant lui... Chaque fois qu'il se plongeait ainsi au sein de la nature profonde, il était comme un homme qui aurait tranversé une ruche et qui en sortirait couvert de miel: il revenait chargé de senteurs et de poésies. Il descendit dans les anfractuosités où la source naît des suintements du rocher; il vit se rassembler les gouttes d'eau, laissa glisser entre ses doigts l'argent des cascatelles.... Nul ne peignit jamais, en traits si francs et si justes, cetter humidité frémissante et vivante. On ne peut contempler *le Ruisseau du Puits noir, la Source de la Loue, le Ruisseau couvert,* tous ces paysages frais et éclatants, où les rochers gris, les feuillages verts et les eaux courantes se combinent de tant de façons heureuses, sans recevoir comme une bouffée d'air pur en plein visage." Castagnary 1882, 17–18.

37. See excerpt from William Bürger's *Salon of 1866,* in d'Ideville 1878, 60; and Champfleury 1968, 262. There is a discrete bibliography on the subject of the different usages of Realism versus Naturalism. See Gerald Needham on Naturalism and J. H. Rubin on Realism in the Grove Dictionary of Art. For more on "truth" in Courbet's art, see Klaus Herding, "Truth in Courbet and Millet: A Discourse about Anti-Realism," in Burmester 1999, 274–94.

38. The Barbizon school was named after a village in the forest of Fontainebleau southeast of Paris, where painters began to congregate in the 1830s.

39. See Thoré 1870; Champfleury, "Du role important des paysagistes à notre epoque," *Courier artistique,* 15 February 1862, quoted in Clarke 1998, 93; Émile Zola, *Mon Salon,* 1866 and 1868, reprinted in Zola 1991. See also Zimmerman 1999, 35; Shiff 1999; and Herding 1991.

40. Charles Daubigny was also, alongside Corot and Rousseau, one of Courbet's main competitors. The scholarship devoted to Daubigny is rather thin, however, and his achievement not at all well understood, a situation which will be rectified by a major monographic exhibition devoted to Daubigny organized by the Taft Museum and Cincinnati Art Museum in the coming years.

41. See Woudhuysen-Keller 1999.

42. Mack 1951, 68.

43. "He deliberated as long as any Academician or Old Master." Thomas 1999, 141.

44. The body of Courbet's landscape drawings is relatively small given his vast painted production.

45. Champa 1991, 137.

46. "Nature portée aux performances, il est celui qui fait le plus de bruit, qui boit le plus grand nombre de chops, qui abat le plus gros gibier, qui exécute en deux heures un très grand paysage.... En somme: exhibitionniste." Courthion 1948, 14.

47. Courthion 1948, 129. During Courbet's visit to Munich in 1869, young German painters clamored to watch Courbet paint. See Courthion 1948, 243. Expressing great pleasure, Castagnary watched Courbet paint, gaining insight into the artist's unusual technique. Courthion 1948, 156.

48. Courbet 1992, 97. He claimed that the powerful painter should be able to repeat himself in paint ten times in a row in order to prove his skill and talent. See Courthion 1948, 53.

49. See Brettell 2000.

50. Baudelaire's essay was originally published in Figaro on November 26 and 28 and December 3, 1863. See Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays,* trans. and ed. Jonathan Mayne (New York, 1964), 1–42. Meyer Shapiro placed Courbet as the transitional figure in the Modernist shift from the cultured artist of history painting to the artist of the second half of the nineteenth century (and Impressionism), the artist of the eye and individual sensibility. Shapiro 1941, 180–81.

51. Courbet 1992, 203–4.

52. Courbet 1992, 263.

53. In addition to Font-Réaulx's essay in this catalogue, see Font-Réaulx 2004, 30–36.

54. In his 1866 preface to *Therese Raquin,* Zola claimed Taine as his theoretical master. See Morton 1998, 146–50. The connection between Taine and Courbet was made by the great German art historian Julius Meier-Graefe, in his two-volume 1904 *Die Entwicklungsgeschichte der modernen Kunst (Modern Art: Being a Contribution to a New System of Aesthetics).* See in particular Meier-Graefe 1908, vol. 1, 222. Taine does not mention contemporary painters in his *Philosophie de l'art* (see note 55), but in a volume published on his travels around France in 1863, he notes that Courbet is "of our style." See Hippolyte Taine, *Carnets de voyage, notes sur la province (1863–1865)* (Paris, 1897), 276.

55. In addition to his publications, Taine's ideas were relayed to several generations of young artists in Paris during his tenure as professor of art history and aesthetics at the École des Beaux-Arts from 1865 until 1884. See Morton 1998. Hachette, Paris, published *La Philosophie de l'art* in two volumes in 1881, which contains all five volumes in the series after Taine's lectures: *La Philosophie de l'art* (1865), *La Philosophie de l'art en Italie* (1866), *De l'Idéal dans l'art* (1867), *La Philosophie de l'art dans les Pays-Bas* (1868), *La Philosophie de l'art en Grèce* (1869).

56. Morton 1998, 106.

57. Not to mention Courbet's nonlandscape works, such as *The Origin of the World* (1866, Musée d'Orsay) and *Burial at Ornans,* which strip away centuries of idealization from perhaps the two most potent human realities: sex and death.

58. Though he yearned for official recognition during much of his career, Courbet's refusal to accommodate strictures and suggestions from official art authorities limited state support. By 1870, he had clashed so regularly with the state over artistic issues that accepting the official French honor for excellence, the Cross, would not have been appropriate. His denial of the Cross made him a hero among radical young painters.

59. Courbet fled in July, 1873, to Verrières, Switzerland, and then settled in La Tour-de-Peilz, next to Vevey on Lac Léman (Lake Geneva).

60. See "Le Commerce des Faux Courbet," in Robert Fernier 1977–78, vol. 2, 340–41; and Herding 1991, chapter 7.

61. See Chessex 1982, 47.

62. Courbet first visited Germany on a trip to Munich in 1851, then to Frankfurt from August 1858 to February 1859. He was acclaimed by young painters and developed a following. In October and November of 1869, he traveled to Munich to receive the prestigious Order of St. Michael.

63. See Duret 1918, 118–19. Only with the retrospective at the École des Beaux Arts in 1882, after his death, did Courbet's reputation and his market value begin to recover. Efforts by dealers with significant Courbet stock, Durand-Ruel and Bernheim-Jeune, as well as by the artist's family encouraged the recovery of prices for Courbet paintings.

64. See Zola 1959, 200. For more on Courbet's reputation in the 1870s, see Chang 1998 and Nochlin 1982. Sarah Faunce notes that in 1878, the same year as the Universal Exposition, some thirty paintings by Courbet could be seen at Durand-Ruel's gallery in an exhibition titled *Artistes Moderne.*

65. This is a point made by Duret, who lists the four collections as Thomy-Thierry, Chauchard, Moreau, and de Camondo. See Duret 1918, 120.

66. Baudelaire 1965, 131.

67. See Bowness 1977, 198.

68. Zola 1959, 128–29.

69. "Pour moi — pour beaucoup de gens, je veux l'espérer — une oeuvre d'art est, au contraire, une personnalité, une individualité. Ce que je demande à l'artiste, ce n'est pas de me donner de tendres visions ou des cauchemars effroyables; c'est de se livrer lui-même, coeur et chair, c'est d'affirmer hautement un esprit puissant et particulier, une nature âpre et forte qui saisisse largement la nature en sa main et la plante tout debout devant nous, telle qu'il la voit. En un mot, j'ai le plus profound dédain pour . . . tous les coups de théâtres historiques de ce monseiur et pour toutes les rêveries parfumées de cet autre monsieur. Mais, j'ai la plus profounde admiration pour les oeuvres individuelles, pour celles qui sortent d'un jet d'une main vigoureuse et unique." Zola 1959, 61.

70. Zola 1959, 226, 240.

71. Duret 1918, 134.

72. Léger 1929, introduction.

73. Meier-Graefe 1908, vol. 1, 225.

COURBET'S LEGACY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

CHARLOTTE EYERMAN

La peinture, c'est moi—La nature, c'est moi—La vérité, c'est moi.
[I am painting, I am nature, I am truth.]

—Quote attributed to Gustave Courbet on the title page of the Courbet exhibition catalogue, Wildenstein Gallery, New York, 1948[1]

Painting is self-discovery. Every good artist paints what he is.[2] *I am nature.*[3]

—Jackson Pollock

GUSTAVE COURBET'S appearance on the New York art scene in 1948 might be seen as something of a renaissance for the nineteenth-century French artist. At the very least, it affirmed his currency as a modern painter. The Wildenstein Gallery mounted a major retrospective of Courbet's work, on view from December 2, 1948, to January 8, 1949. It included forty-three paintings, more than half of which were landscapes. Making Courbet's painting available to a new generation, the exhibition and its catalogue argued for its relevance:

> Today Courbet becomes not a problem of rediscovery, but of reevaluation. He creates an art which is positive, objective, and vigorous, with an emphasis on essence and form. Himself deeply rooted in tradition, he cleaned off the rubble and pushed open the door for things to come. Whatever he meant as a man or politician, today his art stands on its artistic values. Unappreciated and misjudged in his time, he now occupies, proudly and undisputedly, an important chapter in the history of art.[4]

These sentiments were echoed in a review of the exhibition by Clement Greenberg, best known (then and now) as the primary champion of the abstract painter Jackson Pollock. Greenberg was undoubtedly aware of how Courbet's example might nourish the pictorial imaginations of the contemporary abstract painters he wrote about. In his review of the Wildenstein show, Greenberg seizes on Courbet's paintings as proto-abstractions and suggests that he jump-started the modern tendencies of Manet and the Impressionists:

> One might think that his desire to convey the solidity of nature, and the emphatic modeling this required, would have induced a strong illusion of three-dimensional form, but his simultaneous desire to make the picture itself solid and palpable worked against this

Figure 10.
Gustave Courbet. *The Wave*, 1869–70. Oil on canvas, 112 × 144 cm (43 11/16 × 56 3/16 in.). Berlin, Nationalgalerie

> in a subtle way. True, we get a vivid impression of mass and volume from Courbet's art; yet he seems to have wanted to render the palpability of substance and texture even more. Thus in his landscapes and marines, he tends to suppress atmospheric recession in order to bring the background forward so that he can make evident the texture — even if it is only the color texture — of cliffs, mountains, water, or sky . . . his marines also arrive at a clarity of color and a sudden flatness that anticipate the impressionists. . . . Most of the impressionists began painting under the influence of Courbet.[5]

Not incidentally, only a few months before, Greenberg had written an essay entitled "The Role of Nature in Modern Painting." In this account, which identifies a lineage from Courbet to Paul Cézanne to Cubism to abstraction, Greenberg declares: "The best modern painting, though it is mostly abstract painting, remains naturalistic in its core, despite all appearances to the contrary. It refers to the structure of the given world both outside and inside human beings. The artist who . . . tries to refer to anything else walks in a void."[6]

In his review of the 1948–49 Wildenstein show, Clement Greenberg noted the strength of the landscapes, specifically the subgenre of seascapes:

> The completely satisfying pictures in this show are the seascapes and, to a lesser extent, the landscapes. The artist seems, during the last twenty years of his life, to have been able to handle best what was inanimate and removed somewhat by physical distance — especially those things one is unable to take between one's fingers, like light, water, and the sky. For all his adoration of the solidity of nature, Courbet came in the end to feel its intangibility with the most truth.[7]

Figure 11.
Jackson Pollock (American, 1912–1956). *Number 1, 1949* (1949). Enamel and metallic paint on canvas, 160 × 259.1 cm (63 × 102 in.). Los Angeles, Museum of Contemporary Art, The Rita and Taft Schreiber Collection, 89.23

We may never know whether Pollock saw this show at Wildenstein. Certainly, though, he was aware of Greenberg's review, for Pollock and his Abstract Expressionist cohorts (including Willem de Kooning, Franz Kline, Clyfford Still [American, 1904–1980], and Mark Rothko [American, 1903–1970]) were acutely attuned to the critic's assessments. The following month, in February 1949, Greenberg reviewed Pollock's second exhibition at the Betty Parsons Gallery, which ran from January 24 to February 12. Greenberg's ideas about Courbet (e.g., fig. 10), nature, modern art, and Pollock (e.g., fig. 11) come into focus in terms absolutely informed by each other.

Writing about Pollock's *Number 1, 1948* (Museum of Modern Art), Greenberg claims:

> I do not know of any other painting by an American that I could safely put next to this huge baroque scrawl in aluminum, black, white, madder, and blue. Beneath the apparent monotony of its surface composition it reveals a sumptuous variety of design and incident, and as a whole it is as well contained in its canvas as anything by a Quattrocento master . . . Pollock is one of the major painters of our time.[8]

The coincidence of the Wildenstein Courbet exhibition and the Pollock show at Betty Parsons within a few weeks of each other in January 1949 is surely serendipitous. But the fact that Greenberg reviewed both shows alerts us to unexpected connections between Courbet and the new generation of New York painters emerging at that time.

Courbet's legacy registers in many instances of continuity between the nineteenth-century painter and later artists who responded to his example and his pictorial achievement. In many cases, artists themselves acknowledge a debt to Courbet. For instance, two notable

Figure 12.
Paul Cézanne (French, 1839–1906).
Bridge at Maincy, 1879–80.
Oil on canvas, 58.5 × 72.5 cm
(23 × 28 9/16 in.). Paris, Musée d'Orsay

modern painters, Cézanne and de Kooning, identified Courbet as a source of inspiration — and both men furnished a convenient trail of published quotes. Otherwise, scholars, curators, and critics make the connections. Aside from textual sources, Courbet's importance to subsequent generations can be observed visually. Indeed, his landscape painting seems to resonate most strongly with artists working in an abstract (or an abstracting) mode.

Occasionally, an artist will directly quote from a Courbet composition; a key instance, among many in nineteenth- and twentieth-century painting, is Cézanne's *Bridge at Maincy* (1879–80, fig. 12), which squarely invokes Courbet's *Shaded Stream* (1865, pl. 14). In other cases, the connections to Courbet are less literal, rooted in technique, notably in his revolutionary use of the palette knife and in his performative, patently physical manner of painting. The question of Courbet's influence is a recurring trope in accounts of artists working at different times and places, in different pictorial styles and media.

For instance, the hunt for iconographic sources leading to Courbet can yield surprising results, including not just twentieth-century painting but contemporary photography as well. In a 1997 exhibition catalogue on the work of Jeff Wall (Canadian, b. 1946), the iconographic lineage of his photograph *The Drain* (1989, depicting figures in a shaded stream, fig. 13) is traced back to Courbet, via Cézanne, referring to the same works (see fig. 12 and pl. 14).[9] Wall's constructed scene is more a cinematic tableau than a Realist observation of nature. His inclusion of figures lends a narrative element, but his compositional and iconographic roots clearly point to a Cézanne/Courbet genealogy.[10] Wall makes it clear that he is making art from art, and that his practice has been informed by a variety of pictorial sources.

The fictional, constructed quality of Wall's photograph underscores an important element of Courbet's work, one that runs contrary to much received wisdom about his paint-

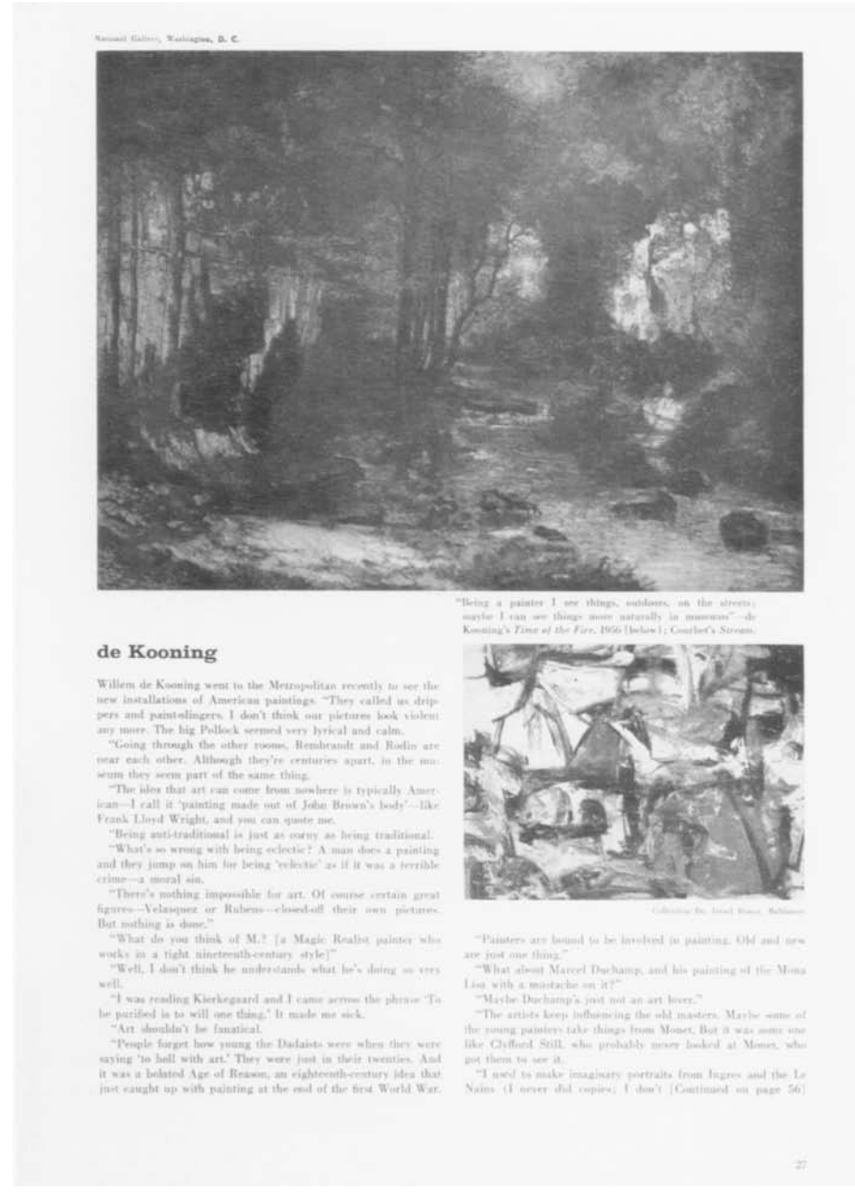
Figure 13.
Jeff Wall (Canadian, b. 1946).
The Drain, 1989. Transparency in lightbox, 229 × 288 cm (90¼ × 113 in.).
Jeff Wall Studio

ings, and about his landscapes in particular.[11] Scholars and critics have emphasized Courbet's Realism — his connection to place, his habit of working directly from nature, and the commercial aspects of his landscape practice.[12] Furthermore, much Courbet scholarship insists on the inextricable links between his work and the mid-nineteenth-century sociopolitical contexts in which he painted.[13] Until now, however, his landscape paintings have not been understood in the illuminating, exclusive context of other Courbet landscapes.

Of course, Courbet painted specific, real sites in Ornans and elsewhere.[14] However, his painted vision of landscape was not uniformly faithful to capturing, in a mimetic way, what those landscapes really look like. The sustained experience of looking at Courbet's landscapes (especially the valley, wave, and snow pictures) reveals how truly constructed, invented, and imagined the paintings are. Courbet certainly observed and responded to particular sites in his native region, but his inventiveness has not been sufficiently addressed.

Courbet consistently and assertively uses geometry to organize the landscape compositions. When seen together, Courbet's paintings might be regarded as variations on a theme: powerful diagonals (see *The Valley of Ornans*, *The Gust of Wind*, and *La Roche Pourrie*, pls. 1, 8, 19) and vortex-like contours (see *Grotto of Sarrazine near Nans-sous-Sainte-Anne* and *The Wave*, pls. 20, 40). While it is true that some motifs are faithful to the places Courbet painted (as in the Source of the Loue series), Courbet was a frequent practitioner of the *paysage composé* (composed landscape), as in the case of the late pictures and in pictures painted from memory or from his imagination (see *Composed Landscape: Spring in the Rocks of Doubs*, *The Gust of Wind*, and *Seascape*, pls. 6, 8, 33).

The terrain of Courbet's pictorial imagination was as powerful as his lived experience of the landscape. And his way of painting capitalized on the physical energy of applying paint on canvas in order to suggest the power of nature. The surface marks on a painting like *The*



National Gallery, Washington, D. C.

"Being a painter I see things, outdoors, on the streets; maybe I can see things more naturally in museums"—de Kooning's *Time of the Fire*, 1956 [below]; Courbet's *Stream*.

de Kooning

Willem de Kooning went to the Metropolitan recently to see the new installations of American paintings. "They called us drippers and paint-slingers. I don't think our pictures look violent any more. The big Pollock seemed very lyrical and calm.

"Going through the other rooms, Rembrandt and Rodin are near each other. Although they're centuries apart, in the museum they seem part of the same thing.

"The idea that art can come from nowhere is typically American—I call it 'painting made out of John Brown's body'—like Frank Lloyd Wright, and you can quote me.

"Being anti-traditional is just as corny as being traditional.

"What's so wrong with being eclectic? A man does a painting and they jump on him for being 'eclectic' as if it was a terrible crime—a moral sin.

"There's nothing impossible for art. Of course certain great figures—Velasquez or Rubens—closed-off their own pictures. But nothing is done."

"What do you think of M.? [a Magic Realist painter who works in a tight nineteenth-century style]"

"Well, I don't think he understands what he's doing so very well.

"I was reading Kierkegaard and I came across the phrase 'To be purified is to will one thing.' It made me sick.

"Art shouldn't be fanatical.

"People forget how young the Dadaists were when they were saying 'to hell with art.' They were just in their twenties. And it was a belated Age of Reason, an eighteenth-century idea that just caught up with painting at the end of the first World War.

Collection Mr. Ismael Benet, Baltimore

"Painters are bound to be involved in painting. Old and new are just one thing."

"What about Marcel Duchamp, and his painting of the Mona Lisa with a mustache on it?"

"Maybe Duchamp's just not an art lover."

"The artists keep influencing the old masters. Maybe some of the young painters take things from Monet. But it was some one like Clyfford Still, who probably never looked at Monet, who got them to see it.

"I used to make imaginary portraits from Ingres and the Le Nains (I never did copies; I don't [Continued on page 56]

27

Figure 14.
Art News article, "Is Today's Artist with or against the Past?" (Summer 1958), illustrating pl. 11 and fig. 15 (opposite).

Gust of Wind are exerted with such force that the work seems to anticipate the terms of Harold Rosenberg's seminal essay, "The American Action Painters": "At a certain moment the canvas began to appear to one American painter after another as an arena in which to act — rather than as a space in which to reproduce, re-design, analyze, or 'express' an object, actual or imagined. What was to go on the canvas was not a picture but an event."[15] Courbet, it seems, was an action painter *avant la lettre*, which a new generation of Abstract Expressionists evidently recognized.

In 1958 *Art News* posed the question to a group of living artists, "Is today's artist with or against the past?"[16] Responding to the editors' inquiry, de Kooning made his engagement

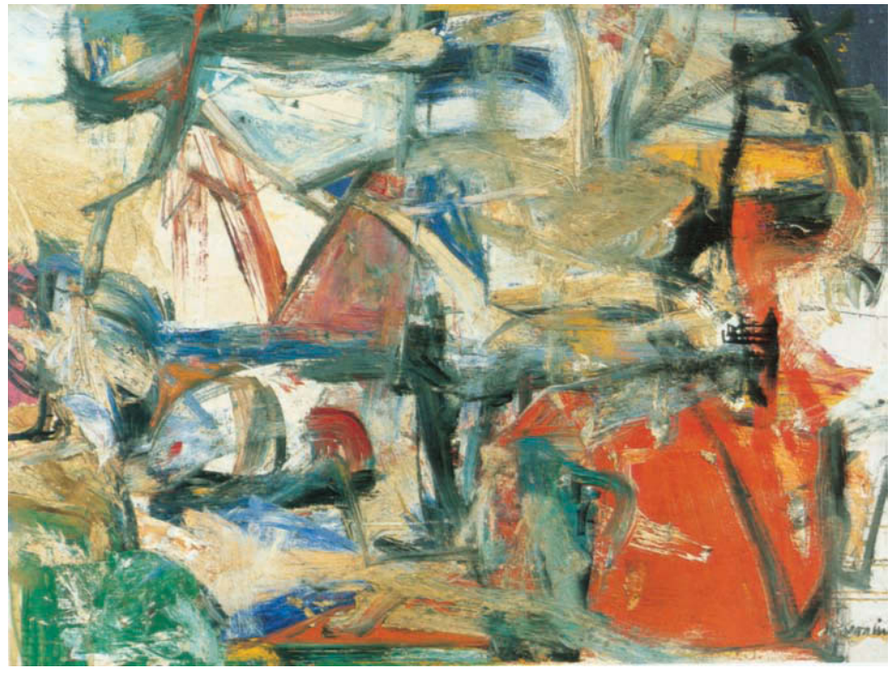


Figure 15.
Willem de Kooning (American, b. Dutch, 1904–1997).
The Time of the Fire, 1956.
Oil and enamel on canvas,
150.5 × 200.7 cm (59¼ × 79 in.).
Private collection

with tradition clear: "Painters are bound to be involved in painting. Old and new are just one thing." De Kooning proposed the compelling idea that "[contemporary] artists keep influencing the old masters. Maybe some of the young painters take things from Monet. But it was some one like Clyfford Still, who probably never looked at Monet, who got them to see it."[17] The idea that an Abstract Expressionist work can shed new light on Impressionist painting reframes the notion of artistic influence. It is in this spirit that Courbet's legacy in the twentieth century can be situated and understood.

In de Kooning's formulation, influence is not just a matter of older art nourishing the pictorial imaginations of subsequent generations. De Kooning's declaration of interest in Courbet inflects how we respond to Courbet's art; the midcentury artist's words — and his paintings — invite us to see the nineteenth-century painter in a new light. In the 1958 interview, de Kooning claimed Courbet as a point of reference:

> Now I'm very interested in Courbet. He could walk in a forest and see something, concretely, just the way it is; be obsessed by the bark on a tree. His painting is not tradition or nature or style, but there it is. Being a painter I naturally see things, outdoors, on the streets; maybe I can see things more naturally in museums.[18]

Importantly, de Kooning confirms that seeing works of art in person is crucial to engendering dialogues between living artists and the art of the past.

The de Kooning interview was illustrated in *Art News* (fig. 14) with juxtaposed reproductions of a Courbet landscape, *The Stream* (pl. 11), and a de Kooning abstract painting, *The Time of the Fire* (fig. 15). The de Kooning painting does not literally resemble the Courbet, but when the mid-twentieth-century painter expresses his admiration for Courbet, we are

invited to see both pictures through that lens. Although the bold color in *The Time of the Fire* bears no relation to the comparatively subdued palette in Courbet's *Stream*, the juxtaposition (a choice likely orchestrated by the editors at *Art News*) reveals a similar notion of the pictorial surface as divided by zones of light and dark and unified by an overall painterliness.

By claiming Courbet as one source of inspiration, de Kooning casts his own work in terms of a named and identifiable genealogy.[19] Furthermore, de Kooning quite self-consciously engaged in the pastoral tradition, acknowledging the seminal importance of landscape (its imagery and conventions) to his abstract paintings.[20] Certainly, his admiration for Courbet is just one strand in de Kooning's artistic DNA, but his declaration invites the question: What did he — and so many of his peers, working in New York in the 1950s — respond to in Courbet's art, and in the landscapes in particular? Perhaps it is attributable to "zeitgeist," but Courbet was very much on the radar in midcentury America, an artistic moment inextricably associated with Abstract Expressionism.[21]

Late in 1959 another major Courbet retrospective was mounted, by the Philadelphia Museum of Art, traveling to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in 1960. Of the eighty-six paintings on view in the exhibition, nearly half were landscapes. In the catalogue for the show, Courbet's relevance to contemporary art of the moment was explicitly stated: "There is no real contradiction between Courbet's way of seeing things and that of the Abstract Expressionists; instead, there is a progressive development from one to the other, almost a lineal descent, paradoxical as this may seem when judged superficially."[22] And in *Mainstreams of Modern Art* (1959), John Canaday elaborates on Courbet's technique in terms germane to Abstract Expressionism, with language evocative of painterly freedom:[23]

> And always there is the paint, its own fat oiliness a part of the expressiveness of the painted objects. Courbet frequently applied paint with his palette knife, the thin flexible blade that is ordinarily used to mix colors on the palette. He would strike in the side of a rock with the flat of the knife, or with its tip he would flick in a sparkle of light. He painted whole pictures in this way, a technique familiar enough today, but with him an innovation.[24]

Indeed, like Courbet's painting, "action painting" — as practiced variously by Pollock, de Kooning, and Kline — was performative: gestural, physical, and emphatically painterly. Rosenberg's 1952 article had given a name to the new kind of painting practiced by these Abstract Expressionists, all of whom worked in quite distinct manners. What they shared, however, was a celebratory approach to the materiality of paint.

Among the 1950s American painters who admired Courbet (according to artist and writer Elaine de Kooning [American, 1920–1989], Willem's wife) was the Pennsylvania-born Franz Kline, best known for his dramatic black-and-white paintings.[25] Kline's abstract paintings elevate the brushstroke to an epic scale and confirm painterliness itself as the content of his art. Like Courbet, he identified with his native landscape and often gave titles to his pictures that connect to specific places, such as *Bethlehem*, which refers to the town in Pennsylvania (1959–60, fig. 16). Kline's title also points to his roots as a landscape painter.[26] The bold geometry of this abstract painting recalls Courbet's compositions that similarly

Figure 16.
Franz Kline (American, 1910–1962).
Bethlehem, 1959–60. Oil on canvas,
158.1 × 198.8 cm (62¼ × 78¼ in.).
Saint Louis Art Museum,
Given by Sam J. Levin and
Audrey L. Levin, 24:1992

divide the canvas into regions of squares, rectangles, and triangles. It compares interestingly with *The Valley of Ornans* (1858, pl. 1), which likewise evokes place through pictorial drama and an overriding sense of geometry. Courbet's *Valley of Ornans* displays, according to the art historian Kermit Champa,

> an enormous range of constructive paint markings and a highly unconventional division of color zones between the dark foreground and the complex topographical and architectural motif of the middle ground and background. . . . There is no imposed atmospheric unification of tone or color value. Instead, Courbet's paint deposit is allowed to exert very openly both its descriptive and its abstractly tactile intensity.[27]

If we read Champa's words with Kline's *Bethlehem* in mind, they seem entirely apt.

The strong diagonals and geometric "carving" of space in Courbet's *Valley of Ornans* are evident in works by other artists as well, from both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: Camille Pissarro's *Jalais Hill, Pontoise* (1867, see fig. 33) and Richard Diebenkorn's Ocean Park series, which translates a specific location in Venice, California, into lyrical and colorful arrangements of triangles, rectangles, and squares (a representative work would be Diebenkorn's *Ocean Park, 140*, 1985).

The connection between Courbet and twentieth-century artists was declared in the *Art News* review "The Artist's Artist," lauding the 1959–60 Courbet exhibition: "Courbet, seen in a magnificent loan show at the Philadelphia Museum, later to travel to Boston, generally ignored by the modern public, but adored by modern artists."[28] The article discusses the kinship between Courbet and Pollock, identifying it in terms of "an empirical

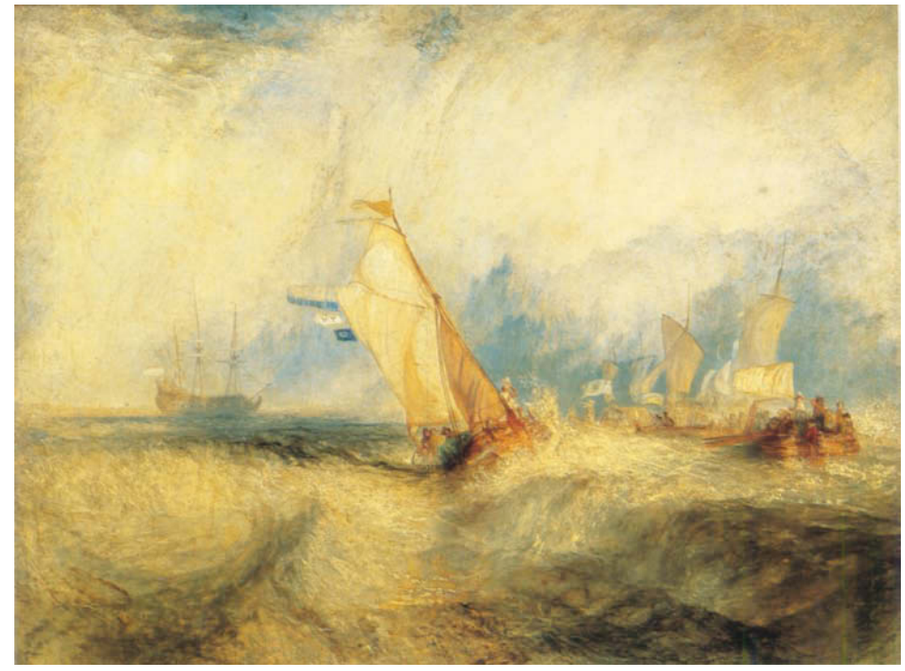


Figure 17.
J. M. W. Turner (English, 1775–1851). *Van Tromp*, 1844. Oil on canvas, 91.4 × 121.9 cm (36 × 48 in.). Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, 93.PA.32

but absolutely pictorial rhythm; and a bravura and command in paint handling which never obscures the solidity and clarity of implied structure yet seems to come pure out of nature, leaving conscious art behind."[29] It draws explicit parallels between Pollock's work and Courbet's landscape paintings, especially his Source of the Loue and wave paintings (see pl. 22 and fig. 10 for examples). Courbet's wave series is also identified as sharing the pictorial power of J. M. W. Turner's seascapes (fig. 17). Both Courbet's and Turner's dramatic marines are cited as precursors to the pure abstractions that Pollock achieved in his "poured" paintings (see fig. 11).[30]

In keeping with de Kooning's notion of the two-way street of influence, Courbet's reception in 1960, the *Art News* critic argues, owes something to Abstract Expressionism. Like Greenberg before him, the writer responded most powerfully to Courbet's seascapes:

> The last great wave pictures (there are at least a dozen, in various countries) are the high point of Courbet's career and his unique contribution to the history of landscape painting. . . . At the same time Courbet remains a peasant and a near German one at that; his vehement masculinity may well have been a handicap to his public reputation over the past generation. . . . Possibly his appreciation will improve in a day beginning to respond to the rugged frontality of de Kooning and Kline. . . . Courbet stands — likewise apart from his social and political roles which possibly have been overrated — as one of the supreme colorists and formal inventors of his century. Surely it was in response to such achievement that Cézanne, as we are told, if the name of the master of Ornans was mentioned, would solemnly and silently raise his hat.[31]

Cézanne (and Pablo Picasso [Spanish, 1881–1973], building on his example) was the godfather of Modernism, a point reinforced not just by critics and art historians,[32] but by artists as well. For example, asked about the roots of modern art, Pollock drew the map: "It didn't drop out of the blue; it's part of a long tradition dating back with Cézanne, up through the cubists, the post-cubists, to the painting being done today."[33]

"Cézanne's Courbet" was an important touchstone for mid-twentieth-century critics and artists alike. Indeed, the debt that Cézanne owed to Courbet as a modern painter has been well documented and continues to be discussed.[34] However, Courbet's landscapes have not been recognized as avant-garde to the same degree that Cézanne's have. It is illuminating, therefore, to rethink Courbet's achievement in light of Cézanne's enthusiasm for Courbet's art and his landscapes in particular. As Cézanne was the clear progenitor of modern painting (according to mid-twentieth-century zeitgeist), Cézanne's admiration for Courbet only confirms his vanguard status. The links between Cézanne and Courbet may seem very clear, particularly since they are underscored by Cézanne's own words and by strong visual relationships, as noted earlier.

Courbet, according to Cézanne, was "a builder":

> He slapped paint on the way a plasterer slaps on stucco. A real color grinder. He built like a Roman mason. But he was also a real painter. There hasn't been another in our century who can beat him. . . . He is profound, serene, velvety. . . . He always created compositions in his mind. His vision remained the vision of the old masters. It's like his palette knife, he used it only in landscapes. He is sophisticated, meticulous. . . . I say that it was force, genius that he put underneath the finish. And then, ask Monet what Whistler owes Courbet, from the time when they were together. . . . No matter how big, he made things subtle. He belongs in museums.[35]

Cézanne and Courbet, provincials who specialized in the familiar sites of their native regions, shared many painterly fascinations. Both painters' reputations became inextricably tied to their hometowns, Aix-en-Provence and Ornans, respectively, because they moved back and forth between Paris and the country. If Paris was the crucible of making an artistic reputation, the provinces provided the raw material with which to work. Of course, both men enjoyed long careers that yielded an exceptionally eclectic array of subjects painted. Both, too, experimented with different styles at different moments, depending on the scale and subject of the picture. The identification with place is but one point of intersection; Cézanne's Mont Sainte-Victoire series and Courbet's Source of the Loue series are likely the most familiar.[36] Both artists worked from specific sites and comparably distilled those observations through the process of painting them over and over again.

Cézanne and Courbet often painted nature repeatedly, perhaps obsessively. They observed and recorded rocks, trees, streams, mountains of extremely familiar local sites. Cézanne's late *Bibemus Quarry* (ca. 1895, fig. 18), while not a direct or literal descendent of Courbet's *Grotto of Sarrazine near Nans-sous-Sainte-Anne* (ca. 1864, pl. 20), resonates strongly with the earlier picture. Cézanne seizes on the formal and chromatic possibilities offered by rocky terrain and rock surfaces as Courbet had done thirty years earlier. It is certainly possible that Cézanne saw Courbet's *Grotto*, whose first owner was a major avant-garde collector of the "Impressionist" painters while their work was still considered radical.[37]

Figure 18.
Paul Cézanne. *Bibemus Quarry*, ca. 1895. Oil on canvas, 65 × 80 cm (25⅝ × 31½ in.). Essen, Museum Folkwang

Certainly Cézanne would have discovered rocks in the landscape of his native region without the mediating influence of Courbet, but would he have understood their full pictorial possibilities without it? What Courbet offered Cézanne and other Impressionist painters of landscape was a way to approach the genre as anti-narrative (in the traditional, literary sense).[38] Courbet's "pure landscapes," those unpopulated by human beings, suggest a drama contained within the landscape — a drama revealed by the painter's pictorial construction.

Here is Cézanne, rhapsodizing:

> The great *Vagues* [*Waves*], the one in Berlin, is marvelous, one of the important creations of the century, much more exciting, more full blown than the one here [referring to *Stormy Sea (The Wave)*, 1870, Musée d'Orsay]. Its green is much wetter, the orange much dirtier, with its windswept foam, and its tide which appears to come from the depth of the ages, its tattered sky, and its pale bitterness. It hits you right in the stomach. You have to step back. The entire room feels the spray.[39]

Cézanne's words bring to life the energy of Courbet's Berlin *Wave* (see fig. 10).

In addition to making connections between Courbet and other artists, the 1960 *Art News* critic characterized Courbet as "a peasant and a near German one at that." No explanation was offered (could it be attributed to cold war–era art critical code?), but it does remind us that Courbet and his art had especially strong ties to Germany. During his lifetime, Courbet successfully established an international reputation. He traveled extensively and had a broad network of extremely loyal patrons in France, Belgium, the United States, and, especially, in Germany.[40] He traveled there numerous times between 1856 and 1869. The trips,

primarily to Cologne, Frankfurt, and Munich, included hunting excursions, which Courbet enjoyed immensely. His travels in Germany cemented a strong base of patron support. He also exhibited numerous times in Germany in the 1860s and 1870s.[41] To this day, German museums have exceptionally strong holdings in Courbet's landscapes, most of which were purchased (directly by museums or by private collectors who later donated them) during the nineteenth century or in the early twentieth century.

The visionary German museum director Hugo von Tschudi bought Courbet's *Wave* for the Nationalgalerie Berlin in 1904.[42] A comparable work, *The Wave* (see pl. 40) went to Frankfurt in 1907. This powerful picture is an object lesson in modern painting. The Berlin *Wave* evokes, and indeed anticipates, the seascapes of German Expressionist painter Emil Nolde (1867–1956). While it is clear that Nolde and his Expressionist brethren drew on many sources, the debt to Courbet's image and his use of the palette knife is visually palpable.[43] Nolde and his confreres were very "museum literate" and would have been familiar with the collections in Berlin. He produced a great number of seascapes characterized by compositional energy and thick, painterly surfaces that evoke Courbet's inventiveness in treating the motif. The relationship between the cresting wave and the dramatic sky in *Autumn Sea XII* (fig. 19) seems particularly close to that in the Berlin *Wave*.[44]

Figure 19.
Emil Nolde (German, 1867–1956).
Autumn Sea XII, 1910. Oil on canvas,
70 × 89.5 cm (27 5/16 × 34 7/8 in.).
Frankfurt, Deutsche Bank AG

Courbet's legacy as a landscape painter registers powerfully throughout twentieth-century German art, from the first decade to the last.[45] In addition to Nolde's painterly response to Courbet, the French Realist was a major subject of early-twentieth-century German art historical writing.[46] Courbet enjoyed a prominent place on the stage of the German art world from his first trip there in the 1850s. Given the strengths of Courbet holdings in public and private German collections, he still does.

The pictorial power of the Berlin *Wave*, its muscular application of paint on the surface, and the work's verging-on-abstract composition share many features with the Getty Museum's *Grotto of Sarrazine* (see pl. 20, and detail, fig. 20). The *Grotto*'s dynamic composition draws the viewer in with the concentric circular pattern framing the mouth of the cave. At the same time, in echt Modernist fashion, Courbet's technique dramatizes the flatness of the canvas. Using the palette knife to evoke the texture of the rock strata and the mottled colors of the mineral deposits, Courbet used oil paint in a radically innovative way.

In the *Grotto*, many different techniques are in play. In some areas, he laid it on, scraped it off, laying and scraping over and over again to achieve a kind of a marbleized effect in the craggy rocks in the upper right of the picture. The surface is varied and rich. In some places (the pellucid blue stream at left) Courbet delicately applies glazes. In other sections, he works the paint, wet on semi-dry, to create a rough, chalky texture (in the lower right).[47] The range and the richness of his color are astonishing: mossy green, crystalline blue, ocher, mustard, brown, mauve, blue, gray, black, yellow, cream. Courbet is not often discussed (in the art historical master narrative that depends on the massive, somber paintings *Burial at Ornans*, fig. 3, and *The Studio of the Painter*, fig. 2) as an artist sensitive to or associated with color.[48] To take a sustained look at his landscapes, though, is to rethink his oeuvre (or at least his art historical status) entirely.

The stunning modernity of a picture like *Grotto of Sarrazine* resonates with innovative painting by artists previously discussed in this essay: Cézanne, Nolde, Pollock, de Kooning, and Kline. Surprisingly, perhaps, it also evokes the work of the contemporary German

Figure 20.
Gustave Courbet. *Grotto of Sarrazine near Nans-sous-Sainte-Anne,* ca. 1864 (detail, pl. 20).

painter Gerhard Richter (b. 1932). Like Courbet's work, Richter's cannot be tied down to a singular style or technique, for it defies traditional conventions and art historical categories.[49]

Richter's *November* (fig. 21) is an enormous diptych that, in terms of scale and ambition, is akin to the epic claims of Courbet's *Burial at Ornans.* Like that gigantic, dark, challenging painting, Richter's *November* is somber, serious, and undeniably ambitious. Yet it is also a work of astonishing lyricism, quite unlike the Realist brutalism of Courbet's *Burial.* In the Richter, surface texture evokes the idea of seasonality, the darkness of winter, the inevitable flux of weather and nature. Richter's technique of application and removal results in a complex, delicate, and thoroughly mysterious surface.[50] The connections between Courbet's use of the palette knife and Richter's technique of layering, removing, adding, and subtracting to achieve both narrative and visual effects present compelling parallels.[51]

More than one hundred fifty years after Courbet put landscape at the center of his public reputation (with *The Studio of the Painter* at the Pavilion of Realism exhibition in 1855), his avant-garde legacy endures. We can only imagine the delight with which he would respond to the achievements of Cézanne, Nolde, Pollock, de Kooning, Kline, and Richter (to name only a few). One wonders how looking at their innovations in painting would have inspired Courbet in turn. As an artist who pushed conventional limits, he would have undoubtedly thrilled at the new possibilities that twentieth-century artists forged. The language of painting remains dynamic and relevant, even for artists working in other media.[52] Undoubtedly, the traditions that Courbet engaged and challenged will continue to evolve in the twenty-first century and beyond.

Figure 21.
Gerhard Richter (German, b. 1932).
November, 1989. Diptych. Oil on canvas,
320 × 200 cm (126 × 78¾ in.).
Saint Louis Art Museum, Funds given
by Dr. and Mrs. Alvin R. Frank and
the Pulitzer Publishing Foundation,
30:1990a, b

NOTES

1. Wildenstein Gallery 1948, frontispiece. The exhibition was held at the Wildenstein Gallery, December 2, 1948–January 8, 1949. No citation was offered for the Courbet quote, and efforts to track it down have not yielded a reference.
2. Jackson Pollock, June 1956 interview with Selden Rodman, reprinted in O'Connor 1967, 73.
3. An undated statement made by Pollock in response to teacher and artist Hans Hoffman's comment, "You do not work from nature," per Lee Krasner in a 1967 interview. See Glaser 1967, cited in Karmel 1999, 28. Also cited in O'Connor 1978, 101. Discussing Pollock's *Autumn Rhythm: Number 30, 1950* (1950, The Metropolitan Museum of Art) and Hans Namuth's capturing of that work's creation on film, O'Connor links Pollock to Charles Baudelaire (French, 1821–1867), a contemporary of Courbet: "the great French writer and the great American painter both understood the essential link between artistic and natural processes. That Pollock could assert pragmatically that 'I am nature' places him at the conclusion of a 'romantic' tradition which Baudelaire began by articulating the role of the artist as intermediary between the inner and outer worlds." Indeed, Courbet aligned with the same ideas.
4. Wildenstein Gallery 1948, 39.
5. Clement Greenberg, "Review of an Exhibition of Gustave Courbet," *The Nation*, 8 January 1949, reprinted in Greenberg 1986, 276, 277. The connection between Pollock and the Impressionists was made by MoMA chief curator William Rubin in a series of essays published in *Artforum*; see especially Rubin 1967; he discusses Cézanne and Monet primarily, and the rubric of painterly freedom is a predominant theme.
6. *Partisan Review*, January 1949, reprinted in Greenberg 1986, 275.
7. *The Nation*, 8 January 1949, reprinted in Greenberg 1986, 279.
8. *The Nation*, 19 February 1949, reprinted in Greenberg 1986, 285–86. For an analysis of this Pollock painting, as well as of Greenberg's criticism, see Clark 1999, 309–14.
9. Brougher 1997, 33, 99. Brougher mentions Courbet's Source of the Loue series and specifically cites *The Shaded Stream* (pl. 14). The latter is illustrated with Cézanne's *Bridge at Maincy* (fig. 12 in this essay), 33. Once the Courbet connection is established, the titles of Wall's photographs included in the exhibition resonate with Courbet's paintings and other nineteenth-century sources: *A Sudden Gust of Wind (after Hokusai)* (1993), 125; *A Hunting Scene* (1994), 131. In addition to landscapes, Wall's penchant for self-portraiture, socially conscious portraits of workers, and trenchant, staged genre scenes in a "Realist" idiom further underscores the persistence of Courbet's example into the late twentieth century.
10. Likewise, the contemporary German artist Thomas Demand (b. 1964) creates scenes (often inspired by photographs), reconstructs them in his studio, and then photographs them. *Clearing* (2003), "his version of a forest, made up of 270,000 individually cut leaves" (per Kimmelman 2005), exhibited at a MoMA retrospective in 2005, similarly evokes the density and chiaroscuro of one of Courbet's Puits Noir pictures.
11. See Mary Morton, "To Create a Living Art," herein; see also Faunce 1988, 1, and Linda Nochlin's entry in that catalogue on the political/historical meanings of Courbet's *The Oak at Flagey* (1864, Murauchi Art Museum), 150–51. For an incisive analysis of the *Courbet Reconsidered* exhibition and catalogue, see Herding 1989.
12. For an account of the literature, see Morton, "To Create a Living Art," herein, note 3.
13. Faunce 1988, 1. On the landscapes, see Chu 1988, which offers a very good précis on the scholarly literature on landscape. See also Herding 1991, especially chapter four, "Equality and Authority in Courbet's Landscape Painting," 62–98.
14. See Mary Morton's and Dominique de Font-Réaulx's essays herein for a discussion of this issue and for an account of Courbet's assertions about painting particular places.
15. Rosenberg 1952. On the political meanings of Rosenberg's argument, and the marginalization of Rosenberg in light of Clement Greenberg's criticism, see Orton 1991; on the performative quality of Courbet's painting (and his habit of painting before an audience), see Morton, "To Create a Living Art," herein.
16. "Is Today's Artist with or against the Past?" 1958.
17. "Is Today's Artist," 27.
18. "Is Today's Artist," 56. On de Kooning's engagement with Courbet see also the recent biography Stevens and Swan 2004, 278, 434. The de Kooning picture evoked in relation to Courbet (and to de Kooning's interest in him) is *Door to the River* (1960, Whitney Museum of American Art).
19. Abigail Solomon Godeau addresses the link between Courbet and later generations in her entry on *Snowy Landscape with Boar* (ca. 1866–67, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen), in Faunce and Nochlin 1988, no. 71, 183: "Courbet might equally well have said, thereby anticipating modern critical formalism, that a painting is in fact made up of paint itself, which then comes to stand for the physical objects in the material world. But if such a formulation was unavailable to Courbet in 1861, it is nonetheless a perceptible element of his art and one of the reasons he was so profoundly esteemed by later, purely abstract painters."
20. See Cooke 1993.
21. Courbet's importance to/influence upon mid-twentieth-century painters was not limited to those working in the United States: the French Surrealist André Masson painted a version of *Source of the Loue* in 1955, in addition to numerous erotic drawings that invoke Courbet's nudes. See Jean-Jacques Fernier 1991, 25. And Balthus's 1937 *The Mountain* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art) responds to Courbet in its treatment of figures and the landscape.
22. Huyghe 1959.
23. The association of Abstract Expressionism with an ethos of liberty echoes the discourse about Courbet: "Courbet's artistic protest against hierarchical structures, fixed systems of perspective, the ostensibly unalterable nature of things and the values associated with them nevertheless contained implications that were not to be fully explored until the twentieth century." Herding 1991, 98. On Jackson Pollock, B. H. Friedman wrote in *Art in America*, December 1955: "Pollock's reality, his vision, is *freedom* which is one of those important words which has unfortunately become muddied in our time"; cited in O'Connor 1967, 73.
24. Canaday 1959, 106. Certainly, many Abstract Expressionists, like Courbet, were not limited to abstraction but also painted landscapes and the human figure. For an informative and intelligent discussion of this strain of representational painting in the 1950s, see Schimmel, Stein, et al. 1988. For a critical account of Abstract Expressionism's relationship to the past, see also Clark 1999, 370–403.
25. de Kooning 1962, 10.
26. On this painting see St. Louis Art Museum 2004, 292, entry by Robin Clark.
27. Entry on *The Valley of Ornans* in Champa 1991, 138.
28. Sedgwick 1960, 40.
29. Ibid.
30. Regarding the connection to Pollock, the author specifically cites *Ocean Greyness* (1953, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum); see also the "Seascapes" section (by the present author) herein and fig. 17. From February 14 to June 12, 2005, Jackson Pollock's *Number 1, 1949* (fig. 11) was installed in the "Impressionist and post-Impressionist" gallery of the J. Paul Getty Museum as part of the INTERJECTIONS initiative with the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. The Getty's Courbet *Grotto* (pl. 20) was hanging in the adjacent gallery, and one could see both works across a rather large expanse of gallery space. The ability to see the works in proximity to one another shed light on connections between these "performative" painters. Strong relationships in terms of composition, movement, and chromatic sophistication were also evident. On the MOCA painting, see Clark 1999, 312–13.
31. Sedgwick 1960, 66. See also a review by Douglas Cooper (Cooper 1960), which takes a less celebratory view of both Courbet and contemporary art in 1960.
32. As of this writing, an exhibition titled *Cézanne and the Twentieth Century* was being planned by the Philadelphia Museum of Art for 2008; see also Fondation Beyeler 1999.
33. Jackson Pollock, interview with William Wright, The Springs, Long Island, New York, late 1950.

Broadcast on Radio Station WERI, Westerly, Rhode Island, 1951, and cited in Karmel 1999, 21. Barnett Newman (American, 1905–1970) also linked the pictorial practices of Cézanne and Courbet, cited in Pissarro 2005, 37.

34. See Cachin et al. 1996, 26, 96, 186–88, 371–73. The references to Courbet occur both in nineteenth-century criticism and in the catalogue entries by that exhibition's curators, Joseph Rishel and Françoise Cachin. On Cézanne in the twentieth century, see Rishel 1996. Likewise, in the 1948 Wildenstein catalogue, the foreword invokes Cézanne, who, following in Courbet's footsteps, "devoted his life to renew and reaffirm . . . the same view of nature. . . . Courbet's meeting with nature was marked by this broad tradition. But he in turn enriched this by offering it his own discovery of the pictorial values of earth and sea, rocks and clouds, peasants and workers, stones and trees, of all of which he left us such a strikingly living and forceful picture." Wildenstein Gallery 1948, 11. Herding (1991) also identifies the "planarity" of Courbet's landscape compositions as anticipating Cézanne, 81 and 98. See also Yve-Alain Bois, "Cézanne: Words and Deeds," trans. Rosalind Krauss, *October* 84 (Spring 1998): 31–43; on Courbet and Cézanne, 37. Courbet's importance for and influence on Cézanne was a subject of animated debate at the recent symposium "Pioneering Modern Painting: Cézanne and Pissarro, 1865–1885," held September 10, 2005, at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

35. Doran 2001, 143.

36. Clement Greenberg, in his 1949 review of the Courbet exhibition at Wildenstein, cited the Philadelphia Museum of Art's *Mont Sainte-Victoire* (1902–4) as an example of Cézanne's "recapitulating Courbet's effort to seize the substantial reality of nature." Greenberg 1986, 277.

37. The collector, Ernst Hoschedé, was a department store magnate whose most famous purchase (in retrospect) was Monet's *Impression. Sunrise* (1872, Musée Marmottan); infamously, his wife later left him for Monet. Facing financial crisis in the 1870s, Hoschedé sold the Courbet Grotto (as *La Grotte humide*) on April 20, 1875, lot 32 at the Hôtel Drouot sale, "Collection H . . . , *Tableaux modernes.*" The unillustrated sale catalogue (Paris: Imprimerie de Jules Claye) indicates that the work was engraved by H. Toussaint (though we have not located this print). Another engraving, from a Durand-Ruel catalogue (*Recueil d'estampes gravées à l'eau forte* 4, no. 195; Paris, 1873–75), by C. Deblois, depicts the Getty picture as *Grotte de la Source de la Loue.* On Hoschedé's collection see Distel 1989.

38. On the anti-narrative tradition in modern painting see Fried 1990, 284–90; on Courbet's influence on Gauguin, see Richard R. Brettell, Anne-Birgitte Fonsmark, *Gauguin and Impressionism,* exh. cat., New Haven 2005, 180–81.

39. Doran 2001, 144.

40. See Hofmann and Herding 1978 (see also Morton, "To Create a Living Art," herein). On Courbet's collectors in Germany see also Pophanken and Billeter 2001.

41. One wonders if Courbet's ties to Germany played a role in his political fortunes, particularly in light of his exile and the punishment he endured for his alleged role in the destruction of the Vendôme column (see the "Exile" section of Morton, "To Create a Living Art," herein).

42. On the Berlin *Wave* see Hohenzollern and Shuster 1997, 42–45. Hugo von Tschudi bought four other Courbet landscapes for the museums he directed in Berlin and Munich. On Tschudi see Jensen 1994. On Courbet's love of Germany see Herding 1989, 246 (and his note 4).

43. See, for example, *Die Explosion der Farbe* 1998; see also Selz 1963, 9–16. Avant-garde, early-twentieth-century German painters were exposed to artists like Courbet, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Matisse, etc., through the selling and collecting activities of German galleries, collectors, and museums.

44. The Städel, Frankfurt, also has an impressive Courbet *Wave* from about the same period (pl. 40). Furthermore, the sea paintings of Caspar David Friedrich (German, 1774–1840; such as *Monk by the Sea,* 1808–10, at the Nationalgalerie in Berlin), would have been an important touchstone for Nolde's marines, as well as for Courbet. On the importance of Friedrich see Rosenblum 1975, 10–40. Rosenblum argues that Abstract Expressionism grows out of this tradition.

45. See also Kirsten Menneken's essay on Courbet's influence on the nineteenth-century German painter Carl Schuch (Austrian, 1846–1903); Menneken 2000; as well as Fried 2002, which discusses Adolf Menzel (German, 1815–1905), his reception in France, his debt to French painting, and his resonances with Courbet through a different paradigm.

46. Richard Muther published *Courbet* (the forty-eighth volume in a series of sixty-four *Die Kunst* books, of which he was also the editor). He illustrates numerous landscapes and writes eloquently of the constructedness of the seascapes. While Muther does not discuss Courbet's vitality nor his relationship to contemporary practices of painting, he does tie Courbet back to the great tradition. This same trope occurs in Julius Meier-Graefe's work on Courbet, in which the Realist is granted the gilded status of being compared to Frans Hals (Dutch, ca. 1581–1666) and Rembrandt (Dutch, 1606–1669). He wrote two books on Courbet, Meier-Graefe 1912 and 1924.

47. The conservation report on the painting (a part of the acquisition process) is exceptionally illuminating. I quote a section that vividly evokes Courbet's technical mastery: "Courbet's extravagantly textured composition retains the lively surface characteristics of an unlined canvas. The artist's virtuosity in manipulating oil paint with both palette knife and brush is seen throughout the painting. He superimposes smooth, opaque passages with glassy transparent glazes upon which he presses plaster-like smears and coarse, dry nugget-like particles. In describing the scaffolding he drags fluid, calligraphic strokes that contain dry, coarse particles; in a few areas, the thin, transparent paint of the scaffolding has faded, leaving only the clear impression of the brushstroke behind. The milky, mineral rich water emerging from the grotto is created by heavy, vigorous scumbling over a deep blue underpaint. In a sense, the structure of the paint imitates the geological layering that he aims to represent." Condition report on *Grotto of Sarrazine near Nans-sous-Sainte-Anne* by Elisabeth Mention (Associate Conservator Emerita, J. Paul Getty Museum), December 16, 2003. Elisabeth and I worked closely together on this acquisition, and I am grateful to her for her insights, her poetic prose, and her uncanny ability to look at and understand paintings as processes. Though this sentence didn't make it into the official report, Elisabeth once commented that this painting showed the most innovative use of oil paint she had ever seen, because of the way Courbet used the palette knife to mix the paint, work the surface, and literally "stretch" the oil paint to the limit of its possibilities.

48. See Morton, "To Create a Living Art," herein, for further discussion of Courbet's use of color; see also Herding 1991, 111–34.

49. On Richter see Storr 2003. Richter also made marine imagery reminiscent of Courbet's seascapes (and of German precedents such as works by Nolde and Friedrich); see also Homburg 2003.

50. For a brief and incisive commentary on Richter's *November* and the two related works, *January* and *December* (both diptychs, 1989, all in the Saint Louis Art Museum), see Bevan 1990; on *November* see page 161. See also Saint Louis Art Museum 2004, entry by Robin Clark.

51. A request to interview Mr. Richter on the subject of Courbet and his example was sent to the Richter studio, which cordially responded that Mr. Richter was not able to participate. While it would have been instructive and interesting to learn whether the artist has thought about Courbet in these terms, the works of art themselves provide us sufficient fodder on which to ponder the connections.

52. In 2004 and 2005 the Musée d'Orsay and The Metropolitan Museum of Art presented installations by video artist Tony Oursler (American, b. 1954) that riff on Courbet's *Studio of the Painter.* The Musée d'Orsay presented *Courbet—Tony Oursler* as an iteration of its "Correspondances" contemporary art program. It was on view sharing a gallery with Courbet's *Studio of the Painter* and *Burial at Ornans* from October 26, 2004, to January 23, 2005. Oursler's *Studio: Seven Months of My Aesthetic Education (Plus Some)* (NYC version, 2005, mixed-media installation, Private collection) was on view at The Metropolitan from May 17 to September 18, 2005. See also the related publication, Vannier 2004. From January 30 through April 30, 2006, the Musée d'Orsay is presenting, as part of its "Correspondances" contemporary art program, an installation featuring work by the contemporary painter Brice Marden (American, b. 1938) in dialogue with Courbet.

REPRODUCING REALITY

LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY OF THE 1850s AND 1860s
IN RELATION TO THE PAINTINGS OF GUSTAVE COURBET

DOMINIQUE DE FONT-RÉAULX
Translated from the French by
Teresa Lavender Fagan

GUSTAVE COURBET'S PASSION for landscape painting, for representing the landscapes of the Franche-Comté of his childhood in particular, has often been discussed. As the majority of critics and historians have emphasized, Courbet's landscapes are the aesthetic declaration of a profound connection that joined the artist to his native land. The painter's landscapes are imprinted with an intimate knowledge of the places represented, with a strong, carnal, loving union between the artist and the valleys where he grew up. The painter was happy to assert, on many occasions, that he painted only what he knew. He protested strongly against "vedutistes," those painters who believed every landscape was worthy of representation:

> Don't those people have a land of their own? . . . There [are] a bunch of idiots who take a box of paints and go plant themselves in one place or another. They bring back their paintings and tell you: "that's Venice, that's the Alps." What a joke! To paint a land you have to know it. I know my land and I paint it. That undergrowth — it comes from our land. That river — it's the Loue, that one is the Lison. Those rocks, those are in Ornans and le Puits Noir. Go look, you'll recognize all my paintings.[1]

Even today, traveling down from the Franche-Comté plateau into Ornans can create the sensation of entering one of Courbet's paintings. One must be careful, however, not to consider his landscape painting as only the limited unveiling of a familiarity acquired since childhood or the nostalgia of an artist living far from his childhood home.

Courbet's approach to studying and re-creating these scenes was, as Bruno Foucart has noted, profoundly original compared with the artists of his time, in particular the Barbizon painters.[2] In a letter of July 1863 to the philosopher Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Courbet, no doubt out of bravado, somewhat awkwardly wished to appear as a theoretician and wrote: "Works of art are conceived all at once, and the composition, once it is well established and firmly outlined in the mind in all its details, is cast into its frame on paper or on canvas in such a way that there is no need to modify it in the course of the execution. The beauty of the execution results from the clarity of the conception."[3] Drawings of his in sketchbooks in the Louvre (collection of the Musée d'Orsay) show well how Courbet, before painting, defined the focal points of the terrain. His attachment to the Franche-Comté landscapes thus drew as much from his vision as a painter, more cultivated than he admitted, as from his sensibility as a man.

The strength of Courbet's compositions brings him closer to Camille Corot than to Théodore Rousseau, or even, as Foucart stresses, not without irony, to the Neoclassical

painters of the first half of the century. The geological, telluric presence of the landscapes of the Loue and of Ornans offered the painter the possibility of a classical construction — one that is well balanced and harmoniously proportioned — using rock formations, in which different natural elements, even water, take on a solid dimension that grounds the painting. The cliffs of the Loue, the rock expanses of the Jura, allowed him to apply his joy of painting his native landscape to constructing a powerful scene whose pictorial composition was supported, almost naturally, by the elemental strength of the whole.

Courbet's ability to intuitively capture the composition of the scenes "all at once," both in his mind (thanks to his knowledge of the landscape, which enabled him to choose the right point of view from which to construct his paintings) and on paper or canvas, not only set him apart from other landscape artists, but also connected him to early photographers of his time. His method of constructing his paintings also bore similarities to the process of photography. Courbet covered his canvases with a red or black background, out of which the light emerges. This practice intrigued the sculptor Max Claudet (French, 1840–1893), a close friend of Courbet's and one of his first biographers (in 1878, scarcely one year after the painter's death, he brought out his *Souvenirs, Gustave Courbet*). "It surprises you," the painter from Ornans told him, "that my canvas is black. Nature without the sun is black and dark: I am doing what the light does, I illuminate what protrudes from on high.... Follow this comparison: we're surrounded by the darkness of the morning before the first hours of dawn; objects are almost invisible; the sun rises; things are illuminated by degrees and are finally fully exposed. Well, I paint my landscapes the way the sun acts in nature."[4] Likewise, photographers will often wait for the sun to shine on the landscape they're photographing.

Thus Courbet does not remain on the surface of the nature he is representing. The power of his work with the knife — which, as Théophile Silvestre writes, "places color on the canvas with a striking and brutal frankness"[5] — gives the objects that emerge from the darkness a profound, hidden dimension, as if the painter were enabling us to read the landscape from the inside and, as Foucart writes, to reach "the awareness of the third dimension of things in which one breathes the deepest, the most intensely."[6] Once again, in this regard Courbet broke away from the technique of the Barbizon painters, from the tangible surface of foliage painted by Narcisse-Virgile Diaz de La Peña (French, 1808–1876) and from the composition based on luminous clarity in Rousseau's canvases.

The similarity in motif, the power of massive formations that determine the landscape Courbet painted, and his way of favoring the whole over its details can be related to the first photographs on paper taken at the end of the 1840s by Gustave Le Gray (French, 1820–1882) at Fontainebleau and by Henri Le Secq (French, 1818–1882) in the forest of Montmirail. The connection between Courbet's painting and the photography of his time has already been studied on several occasions.[7] The painter frequented photography workshops, and he was one of the first artists to reproduce his works through photography, beginning in 1853. In 1855, during the stunning coup of the Pavilion of Realism, which occurred beyond the halls of the Universal Exposition, he had the intention of illustrating the critic Champfleury's text with photos of the paintings being exhibited. Disappointed by the results obtained by Victor Lainé (act. 1847–57) — who had done his portrait for Silvestre's *Histoire des artistes vivants* (History of Living Artists, 1856) — Courbet decided not to use them. He mentions his disappointment in a letter of May 11, 1855, to his patron Alfred Bruyas, whose own interest in

photography may have influenced Courbet: "I will sell photographs of my paintings, which M. Lainé is making for me at this moment. He uses collodion and I am very dissatisfied. I am about to dismiss him."[8] This aborted undertaking would have been the first example of a catalogue illustrated with photography. It reveals Courbet's attentive, precise awareness of photographic technique and confirms his interest in the diffusion of his work.

Furthermore, it seems that Courbet, when he was working in Ornans on *The Studio of the Painter* (1855, fig. 2), used a photograph by Vallou de Villeneuve (French, 1795–1866) of the woman who was the model for *The Bathers* (1853, Musée Fabre).[9] By his own admission the painter kept "hundreds of photographs of naked women," which, most unfortunately, disappeared in the 1871 destruction of the studio on la rue d'Hautefeuille (after the Paris Commune), and then from the studio in Ornans. Laurence des Cars noted the similarity between the pornographic photographs of Auguste Belloc (French, 1786–1866) and the canvas painted for Turkish diplomat Khalil Bey, *The Origin of the World* (1866, Musée d'Orsay), a close-up of a nude woman with spread legs, depicted from her torso to her thighs.[10] Recently, Paul-Louis Roubert has brilliantly shown how contemporary criticism of Courbet's paintings was constructed around a pejorative analysis of the photographic model, finding parallels between his work and the stark realism of photographs.[11]

However, the connection between Courbet's work and the photographic creations of his time should not be seen as one of influence and subordination. In its very materiality — the strength of the knife work, the density of the color — as well as in its dimensions,[12] the painter's work appears quite different from the smooth surface of photographs, their small size, and their inability, until many long years to come, to reproduce the colors of nature. Moreover, Courbet was an indoor painter; although all of his landscape paintings were based on close attention to nature, he mainly worked in his studio. The connection between Courbet and the landscape photographers of the 1850s and 1860s is established foremost by the similarity in their subjects and by their attempt to reproduce a landscape from direct observation. Furthermore, notably in the cases of Le Secq and Eugène Cuvelier (French, 1837–1900), it is expressed by a desire to reproduce a familiar, intimate landscape, that of Montmirail for Le Secq and of a frequently traveled part of Fontainebleau for Cuvelier (who married the daughter of the innkeeper Ganne).[13] Like Courbet in Ornans, the two photographers had a sensitive and profound knowledge of the landscapes they were reproducing. Ultimately, the connection is revealed in the aesthetic similarities between their photographs and Courbet's paintings. The limits of photographic technique, although brilliantly overcome by these photographers, required a construction using large forms, in addition to the dark background shared by the painter. Also, the length of exposure time prevented these early photographers from capturing the effects of weather. Thus, their landscapes were closer to Courbet's dark rock paintings than to works reflecting the slight atmospheric changes painted by their Barbizon friends. In 1851 Francis Wey, wishing to praise the quite recent photography on paper as opposed to the daguerreotype, wrote: "However, photography is very flexible, especially in the reproduction of nature; sometimes it proceeds with large masses, scorning detail like a talented master, justifying the theory of sacrifices, and here giving the advantage to form and there to the contrasts in tones."[14]

Like Le Gray and Charles Nègre (French, 1820–1880), Le Secq was a student of the painter Paul Delaroche (French, 1797–1856). His pictorial training was, just as it was for his two codisciples, determinative in his work as a photographer. He practiced photography

Figure 22.
Henri Le Secq (French, 1818–1882). *Rocks and Birch Barrels, Forest of Montmirail,* negative, ca. 1853; print, ca. 1870. Photolithograph, 22.4 × 32.4 cm (8 13/16 × 12 3/4 in.). Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, 84.XM.832.2

on paper at the end of the 1840s. In 1851, along with Le Gray, Édouard Baldus (French, ca. 1813–ca. 1882), Auguste Mestral (French, 1812–1884), and Hippolyte Bayard (French, 1801–1887), he participated in the Mission héliographiques, a survey commissioned by the Administration of Historical Monuments to document ancient French sites. His architectural photographs show his talent for rendering the power of monuments and for enhancing, as in his interior shot of the cathedral of Laon (a veritable technical feat given the constraints of lighting and of exposure time), the pomposity and magnitude of the great Gothic cathedrals. By 1852 Le Secq's photographs were being praised by critics for their artistic qualities and for the exactitude of the painter/photographer's eye. Henri de Lacretelle wrote in *La Lumière,* the journal founded in 1851 by the Société Héliographique, "We have long perused the inexhaustible album of M. Le Secq. The young artist, nobly devoted to the double mission he has given himself, leaves the paintings on his easel only for those in his darkroom."[15]

Having inherited a property near the forest of Montmirail from his wife's family, Le Secq took many photographs of the underbrush, the thickets, the paths, and the rocks of the forest, revealing an attentive observation of and a profound attachment to the landscapes (fig. 22). Instead of vast, luminous scenes, he preferred the shadows of the woods, the tangle of the undergrowth (fig. 23), the stream that flowed between two rocks. He took particular care with the composition of these images, favoring great rock formations or tree stumps to establish the construction of the whole. The choice of angle is essential for the photographer, as the chronicler of *La Lumière* stressed in 1860: "The photographer must seek and choose that angle much more than the painter, because he doesn't have, as the painter does, the ability to add and subtract from his scene, an ability which is used and abused so widely."[16] Confronted with this constraint, Le Secq carefully chose the landscape to be represented; his process, guided as much by his pictorial training as by his sensitivity to the nature he was

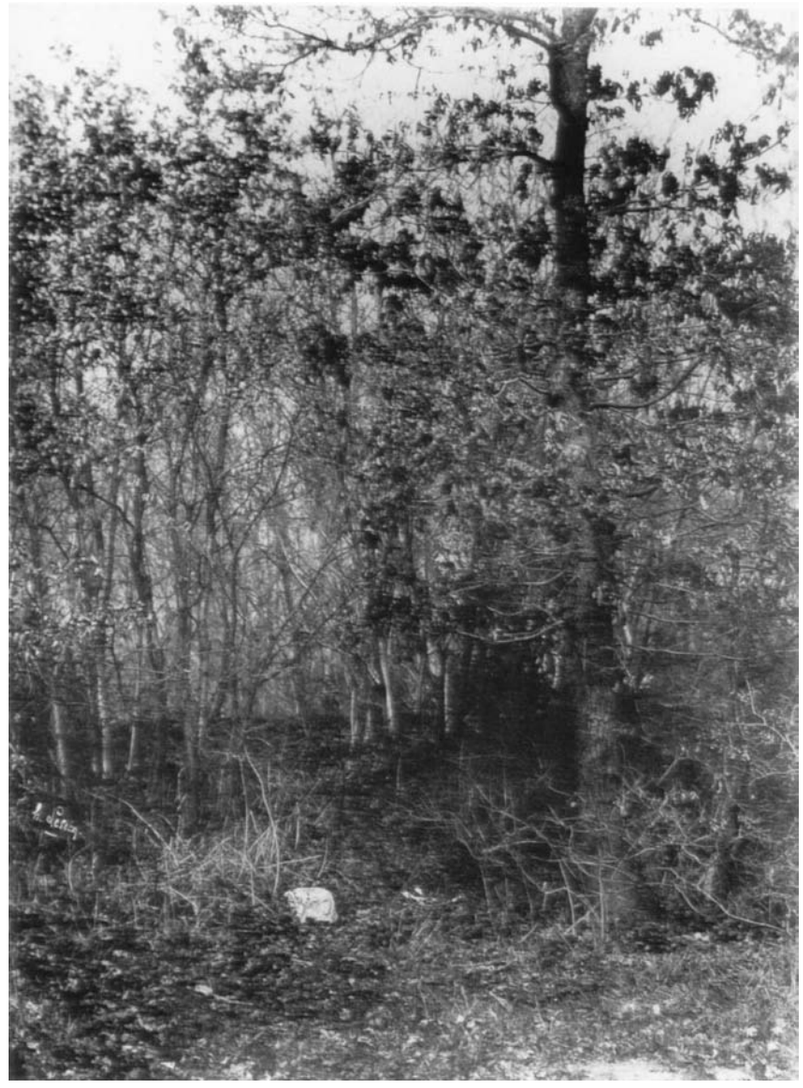


Figure 23.
Henri Le Secq. *Thicket*, 1852–53.
Paper print from waxed paper negative,
50.5 × 37.8 cm (19⅞ × 14⅞ in.).
Paris, Bibliothèque des arts décoratifs,
cat. 458

reproducing, is thus reminiscent of that of Courbet. The painter took advantage of the physical power of the Franche-Comté cliffs to compose landscapes faithful to his attachment to the real as well as to the rules of classical landscape painting. As *La Lumière* went on to describe, the technical difficulties associated with the paper negative's weak sensitivity to light also forced the photographer to choose carefully the time and season for shooting the scene: "Independent of the choice of the site, the photographer must still choose the hour in which the landscape will be best illuminated, the day when nature will be most beautiful, for nature, among its most beautiful days, has some that are more preferable than others."[17]

Le Secq triumphed over technique with a subtle attention to the light illuminating the forest, using the rays of the sun to enhance the image, the variety of leaves, and the bark of trees. "These are studies of trees and grounds," wrote Ernest Lacan in 1854 regarding Le Secq's photographs of landscapes. "But the artist was not content simply to reproduce the trunk or the leaves of a tree, or a few meters of grass or rocky soil taken haphazardly in the countryside. The size of his plates enabled him, on the contrary, to obtain a complete, interesting motif as well as precious details in their depth and precision. Thus, in one of the prints composing the series that has just appeared there is a large tree completely stripped.... This

Figure 24.
Henri Le Secq. *Forest Stream*, 1852–53. Paper print from waxed paper negative, 37.8 × 50.8 cm (14⅞ × 20 in.). Paris, Bibliothèque des arts décoratifs, cat. 467

sort of skeleton stands out over a magnificent tree full of leaves that stands behind it, as if to serve as contrast. That tree is full of vigor. . . . Other smaller trees form a gracious and animated background that completes the scene. There is air, truth, and life in this print, which on canvas would become a charming landscape."[18]

Le Secq's shadows acquire a depth that is dark and thick, which the soft focus of the negative reinforces further; coming out of the darkness, protruding in the full light, trees border the forest path or the rocks between which a stream flows. This same stream, because of the length of the exposure time, acquires a telluric dimension; it becomes stone while preserving, thanks to Le Secq's talent for lighting, the sparkling reflections of the flowing water (fig. 24). With his technical ability and the sensitive accuracy of his painter's eye, Le Secq obtained an image whose depth, as well as the intimate knowledge of the landscape it reveals, evokes Courbet's hidden meandering streams of the Franche-Comté valleys, those "Puits Noirs," or Black Wells, where the dark shadow of the open source — the stream's origin — seems to pull the viewer in (see pl. 16 [*The Shaded Stream at the Puits Noir*, Baltimore Museum of Art]).

The elemental power of water, as captured by photographers, takes on exceptional proportions in a beautiful image by André Giroux (French, 1801–1879; fig. 25). The photograph, whose composition is solidly fixed by two tall cliffs, reproduces the expanse of the landscape, the savage beauty of the mountains. The composition and the subject are similar to Courbet's *Gour de Conche* (see fig. 35). Like Courbet, Giroux — trained as a painter and the son of a manufacturer of Daguerre's first cameras — closes the perspective with the mountains, which fill the image, and one's attention is drawn to the fine rendering of the grain of the rocks, the outcrops of stone, the leaves of a few trees that grow valiantly at the top of the cliff. By the 1850s Giroux was proving to be a superior landscape photographer:

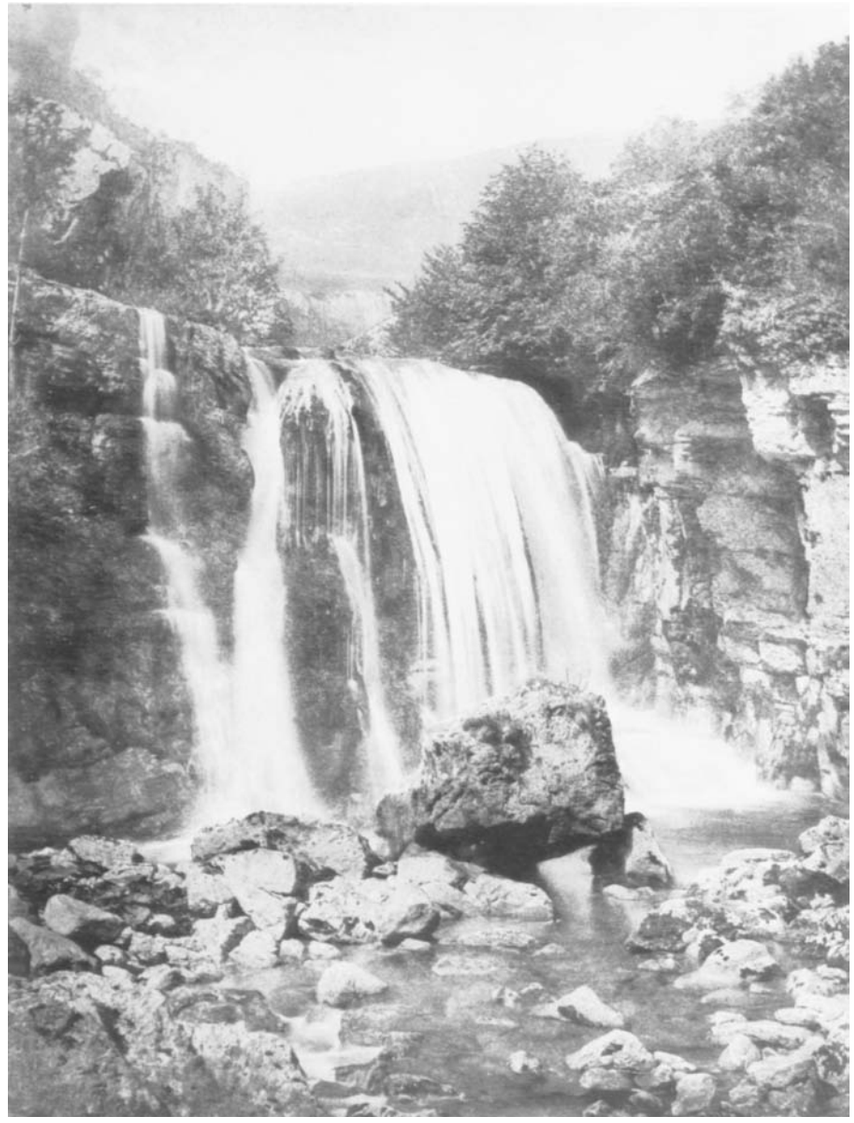


Figure 25.
André Giroux (French, 1801–1879). *Waterfall in the Sassenage Ravine, Near Grenoble*, 1855. Salted paper print, 35.9 × 27.3 cm (14⅛ × 10¾ in.). Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, 84.XP.457.7

"Mr. André Giroux is a talented painter. If one didn't know this it would be easy to guess by looking at his photographic landscapes."[19] His subjects — a cottage on the side of the road, a willow tree bending over a stream — and the style of his photographs, however, generally evoke the Barbizon painters more than Courbet, as a critic notes: "In Mr. Giroux's frame there are landscapes that recall the canvases of Jules Dupré and Théodore Rousseau.... These prints are full of a lyrical melancholy."[20]

The shadow that attracts and draws in the viewer's gaze takes on an even greater dimension in Courbet's work throughout his series of grottoes or sources of the Loue, painted at the beginning of the 1860s. A source of life, a shadowy mouth that opens into the unknown, the subject here blends the geological force of the stone and the fluidity of the original tide; the search for a secret, intimate world is realized in a composition that appears

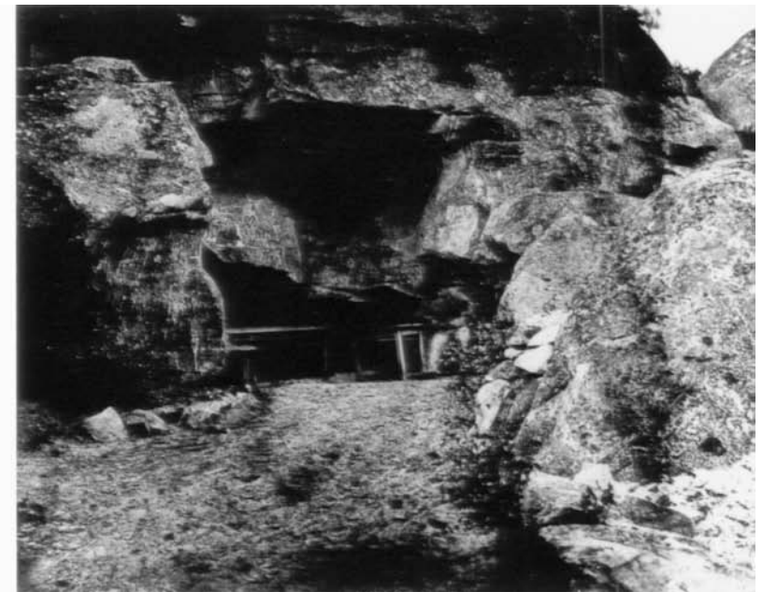


Figure 26.
Robert MacPherson (Scottish, 1811–1872). *Cloaca Maxima*, ca. 1858. Albumen print from glass negative, 31 × 37.2 cm (12¼ × 14⅝ in.). New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gilman Paper Company collection, 2005.100.58

Figure 27.
Georges Balagny (French, 1837–1919). *The Franchard Canyon, Threshold of the Crying Rock*, ca. 1877. Albumen print from glass negative, 32 × 26 cm (12⅝ × 10¼ in.). Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, E0265

naturally fixed by the landscape itself, thanks to the rocky crevices. Laurence des Cars adeptly connected these paintings of the sources of the Loue with *The Origin of the World.*[21] The works have a similar theme, that of a universal source, an original womb; a similar composition, the thighs of the woman forming two cliffs between which the grotto opens up; a similar palette blending ochers, browns, reds, and grays; and paint applied in a powerful manner, with large movements of the knife.

The theme is reminiscent of certain photographs of grottoes and sources from the 1850s and 1860s. The subject was difficult to photograph. The grotto, without light, does not allow the photographer to easily capture it; the risk here is reducing the photo to a great black circle. The Scottish photographer Robert MacPherson (1811–1872), living in Rome, in 1858 shot the outlet of the sewers constructed for the Roman emperors, in *Cloaca Maxima* (fig. 26). Thanks to an extended exposure time, by waiting for strong but not glaring sunlight, he succeeded in picturing the opening where water flowed through stonework half-hidden by vegetation. At the end of the 1870s, Georges Balagny (French, 1837–1919) photographed, more anecdotally, the Franchard Canyon (fig. 27), that fabled place in the forest of Fontainebleau celebrated by the writer Claude-François Denecourt (French, 1788–1875) and admired by the painter Gaspard-Gustave de Coriolis (French, 1792–1843), the unfortunate hero of *Manette Salomon* by Edmond and Jules de Goncourt: "He stood facing those gaping grottos where the Desert seemed to be at home, in front of those dens of wild beasts, where one is shocked to see not lion prints, but wheel marks." The photographer shows the detail of the natural grotto formed by heavy rock formations, rendering the hollows and the ridges with great precision. The photo also includes, in an amusing way, a disruption of the timelessness of the scene, by the inclusion of tables that transform the natural site into a "little café" where a man sits at a table, posing for the camera.

In addition to depicting local grottoes and streams, Courbet was fond of painting the snowy landscapes of his Franche-Comté; he enjoyed winter hunting outings, when the snow

Figure 28.
Louis Adolphe Humbert de Molard (French, 1800–1874). *Argentelle: Snowy Landscape*, ca. 1850. Paper print from salt paper negative, 11.7 × 21.7 cm (4⅝ × 8½ in.). Paris, Musée d'Orsay

Figure 29.
Eugène Cuvelier (French, ca. 1830–1900). *Fontainebleau, near the Porte de Rochefort*, ca. 1860. Salt print from waxed paper negative, 19.7 × 25.8 cm (7¾ × 10⅛ in.). Munich, Collection of Dietmar Siegert

covered everything, when the dazzled eye looked for the slightest blemish, the ear strained to hear the slightest noise stifled by the snowy cloak. The snow offered the painter the density of its matter, its depth, and the possibility of a subtle palette, where whites, blacks, and browns could all be in play. Although photographers also admired these landscapes, in the 1850s photographing snow constituted a major accomplishment. If a photographer did not have any particular technical abilities, his attempt could prove to be a failure in which the leaden sky and snow-covered ground were confused in the same gray color that took over the image. An early successful example is that of Louis Adolphe Humbert de Molard (French, 1800–1874), who photographed his property of Argentelle covered with snow about 1850 (fig. 28). With his mastery of paper negatives, the photographer was able to bring out the willowy profile of the trees. The composition, very studied, creates four successive planes that capture the viewer's gaze and break the potential monotony of the white ground.

Another successful example is that of Eugène Cuvelier, whose photography (fig. 29)—in its representation of nature devoid of any human presence—evokes certain of Courbet's landscapes. Like the painter, the photographer uses images of a familiar landscape—here, the forest of Fontainebleau—to construct an image of great beauty: the trees and rocks that border the snow-covered path give rhythm to the composition, the forest closes the background. The gray rock formations, the knobby trunks of the trees, attract the viewer's attention. By rendering the surface of the stone as well as the tree bark, the photographer gives his work a grain, a depth, that emphasizes the density of the landscape represented. Through a subtle study of light (an indefatigable hiker, he must have waited for the right hour) aided by a great technical talent, Cuvelier succeeded in distinguishing the white of the snow—heavy, opaque, deep—from that of the sky—airy, illuminated by the light of a winter sun. An intimate knowledge of the forest enabled the photographer to establish his composition and his lighting with the help of the landscape. Although Cuvelier was connected to the Barbizon painters since childhood—his father, Adalbert, was a friend of Corot's, then of

Figure 30.
Achille Quinet (French, act. 1850s–1880s). *Nature Study*, ca. 1870. Albumen print from glass negative, 19.1 × 24.2 cm (7½ × 9½ in.). Paris, Musée d'Orsay

Rousseau's — his appropriation of the photographed places, of reproducing a both personal and faithful vision of them, brings him closer to Courbet than to his companions of the forest.

Like Cuvelier, Achille Quinet (French, act. 1850s–1880s) photographed the forest of Fontainebleau on several occasions. A professional photographer, he exhibited his *Études d'après nature* (Nature Study) series (fig. 30), which earned him praise from the critics: "While examining these animated landscapes in which the light and the air circulate freely, one no longer dreams of protesting the granting of the name of art to photography which, in able hands, can render nature so well in all its very attractive aspects."[22] One of these prints (acquired by the Barbizon painter Théophile-Narcisse Chauvel (French, 1831–1910) and preserved, along with his entire collection of photographs, in the Musée d'Orsay) is reminiscent of certain paintings by Courbet. In Quinet's photograph several cows are lying in a field next to a river, whose current is highlighted by a group of trees. In the distance one can see a hill that closes the composition. Rather than focus on the landscape, whose background is blurred, the photographer has chosen instead to detail the animals, whose profiles seem to stand out from the grass of the field. The precise rendering of their hides and the faithfulness with which their massive bodies are reproduced give the impression that Quinet added those cows at a later time. The precision of the collodion negative, very well mastered here by the photographer, produces an effect that is rather close to the one given by Courbet in Quinet's composition. The clarity of the scene and the power of the animals evoke Courbet's *Siesta at Haymaking Time* (fig. 31).

Courbet, as we've recalled, was a man of the mountains, of stone, of rock, of the water that courses and flows. For a long time the ocean remained a realm unknown to him, difficult to grasp, much less to paint.[23] "We finally saw the sea," he wrote to his parents in the spring of 1841 while he was traveling in Normandy with his boyhood friend Urbain Cuenot, "the

Figure 31.
Gustave Courbet. *Siesta at Haymaking Time*, 1867. Oil on canvas, 212 × 273 cm (83½ × 107½ in.). Paris, Musée du Petit Palais, 90 PPA 0149. © PMVP/Degraces

horizonless sea — how odd for a valley dweller."[24] He painted the sea on that trip and again in 1854 (*Seacoast at Palavas*, Musée Fabre), during one of his first visits to his patron Bruyas in Montpellier. The canvas is well known: alone before a slightly indistinct, immense liquid body — the painter did not yet know how to grapple with the expanse of water — the fragile but determined silhouette of Courbet greets the sea. It is like *The Meeting ("Bonjour, Monsieur Courbet")* (1854, Musée Fabre), in which nature herself seems to pay homage to the young painter who has come to visit. Returning to the shores of Palavas in 1857, Courbet went on to paint the Mediterranean on several occasions.

At the same time a talented photographer, as well known for his work as for the photography courses he offered to wealthy Parisian amateurs, stayed at Sète, on the Mediterranean. There Gustave Le Gray (French, 1820–1884) realized a series of exceptional photographs in which his talent as a painter is married to his mastery of photographic technique. The two men probably did not meet (although given the interest Bruyas showed in photography, he surely would have introduced them if he'd had the opportunity). Even if they never met, a comparison of the work of the painter and the photographer might be relevant.

Like Courbet, Le Gray was seduced by the calm of the Mediterranean in the light of spring, and then of summer. Like the painter in his earliest marines, the photographer was nourished by a romantic idea, that of the powerful, immense, seductive sea — a romanticism that, as Gloria Groom recounts, runs through French poetry and painting in the first half of the nineteenth century, from Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850) to Victor Hugo (1802–1885), from Delacroix to Paul Huet (1803–1869).[25] Champfleury's remark regarding Courbet's Mediterranean paintings might also be applied to Le Gray's photographs: "Who among the modern masters has been able to give a more poetic idea of deserted beaches, of the sea, of the spectacle of clouds, without intrusions or false picturesqueness?... nothing but the drama

of these immensities."[26] The painter, like the photographer, indeed went beyond the temptation of the picturesque, of the episodic, of the incidental, to give a vision of the sea as powerful and vast. Both men emphasize the strength of the horizon, dividing the sea and the sky into almost equal parts by that imaginary line which from the shore is nonetheless observed by all spectators of the sea. While Courbet did not progress beyond his initial approaches to the Mediterranean, and while (whatever Champfleury might have said) his marines did not yet have the violence he later gave to the waves he painted from 1865 to 1870 during his stays in Normandy, Le Gray achieved exceptional force and dramatic intensity in his marine photographs of 1857 (see *The Great Wave, Sète*, fig. 40).

To reproduce a seascape in all its grandeur, giving his photographs an epic quality, he took advantage of his great mastery of technique to unite "science and art," as he wanted to do in all of his photographic work. As noted earlier, Le Gray first learned the art of painting, with Paul Delaroche. He was initiated into photography in the 1840s, early on manifesting a growing interest in its techniques and in improving the quality of prints. Delaroche's former student was also an inventor, brilliant and talented, as well as an accomplished chemist. His photographs of the Mediterranean are the fruit of his technical research. He uses collodion in *The Great Wave*, which renders a precise image that he further enhanced by toning it with gold chloride, a method Le Gray said that he "highly recommend[s] . . . to those who love beautiful prints."[27] But his stroke of genius, his personal mark, was to combine two negatives. Indeed, the constraints of lengthy exposure times for exterior shots often forced one to sacrifice the sky. It could appear as a dull gray mass, deadening the upper part of the image. To avoid these effects, some photographers used masks that enabled them to have different exposure times for the two parts of the landscape. Le Gray innovated by successively printing complementary parts of two negatives onto the same proof: a landscape and the sky of his choice, photographed elsewhere (fig. 32). He applied this technique to his marines in particular, taking advantage of the flat horizon line that eased the joining of two negatives, thereby emphasizing the horizon's presence and strengthening the force of the resultant image. The effect is stunning: the alliance of the power of the sea and on it the play of light with the luminous and changing aspect of the sky gives a unique quality to Le Gray's seascapes. The critics sang his praises, and his photographs of the sea were often exhibited and sought after. This technical mastery produced a powerful aesthetic effect; beyond the beauty of the prints, it enabled him to break with the idea of a single perspective, a single focal point, to render the sea and the sky in their immensity and thus to connect the viewer with the landscape as it is experienced in nature.

Courbet returned to painting ocean scenes in the 1860s, in Normandy. The English Channel, with its storms and its ever-changing skies, which the painter particularly appreciated, took the place of the Mediterranean. Between 1865 and 1870 Courbet painted many marines, or *paysages de mer* ("landscapes of the sea"), as he liked to call them (see pls. 31–39). At the time he was painting to sell, that is certain; marine paintings sold well and for a lot of money. But if the lure of profit was a motivation for Courbet, this part of his work still cannot be reduced solely to a desire to earn money. His love of painting animated and carried him. His evolution from the marines of the 1850s was great. The painter gave up the luminous palette of the seashores painted in Palavas; the sea lost its immensity but became more violent and moved closer. It was no longer as foreign to his universe. The force of the waves

Figure 32.
Gustave Le Gray (French, 1820–1884).
An Effect of the Sun, Ocean #23, 1857–59.
Albumen silver print, 32.1 × 41.8 cm
(12⅝ × 16⁷⁄₁₆ in.). Los Angeles,
J. Paul Getty Museum, 84.XM.347.10

and waterspouts is obvious, and in spite of the exoticism of these marine scenes for the painter from Ornans, Courbet's appropriation of them is profound.

For many years critics have connected Courbet's paintings with the photographs of Le Gray. Aaron Scharf noted their similarity in 1968 in *Art and Photography*. More recently, Barthélémy Jobert compared the works of the two artists by highlighting the similarity of their conceptions. He is surprised at the silence on this point of contemporary criticism of the two artists. Nevertheless, as Jobert points out, the words of the critic Jules Castagnary regarding Courbet's marines might just as well apply to those of Le Gray: "The sea also occasioned many triumphs. . . . He never forgot that empty space takes up more room than occupied space, and from the start he hit upon the right proportions of the three elements of these pictures: earth, water, sky. . . . It is almost always the sky that is the subject of these pictures. Throughout these mists, these downpours, these rays of sunlight, all of these atmospheric shifts, his palette knife is surprisingly agile."[28]

Although the photographs of Le Gray are not mentioned explicitly by Courbet's critics or biographers, the painter must have seen and studied them, as they were exhibited in Paris on numerous occasions. Courbet's seascapes, like those of Le Gray, give the sky strength and distinct expressivity. The painter's knife and palette give the scenes life, as did the photographer's mastery of exposure times and of printing techniques. The emphatic presence of a horizon line, the representation of a landscape that one doesn't look at but by which one is encompassed, the will to go beyond the incidental to attain permanence — all connect the two artists. It is not an eternal beginning again that Courbet painted and Le Gray photographed; it is the power of a moment fixed forever. They did not replicate the bursting explosion that Huet painted or that Hugo described, the foaming, surging sea; it is the stilled

elemental aspect of the sea. By capturing a precise moment, photography doesn't render the ephemeral, but permanence. The wave that breaks in Le Gray's photography is fixed; from liquid it turns solid, no longer moving, it is eternally immobile. As Klaus Herding notes, "It is this short duration that guarantees the long duration of the event, in other words, it is precisely this technique of instantaneous crystallization that transforms the fleeting moment into an eternal monument."[29] Photography might have given Courbet the intuition of a sea that was no longer liquid and changing but telluric and immobile, no longer exotic and foreign but close and familiar — close and familiar like those cliff landscapes of his native land, from which the sea acquired solid textures and its brown, gray, and green color (see *The Wave*, fig. 10). It no longer died on the beach, blending its dying wave into the sand; it sets up a solid, rocky ridge that halts and absorbs the viewer's gaze. The painter was able, as he was with his cliffs, to use the powerful sea as an element of pictorial composition.

The difference between Courbet's marines of the 1850s and those of the 1860s cannot be linked to a simple geographical change. It was not only passing from the Mediterranean to The English Channel that brought on that change from luminous immensity to dark violence, from water to a rock. At work is the painter's maturity, his ability, as Foucart emphasizes, to look beyond the picturesque and the inessential in nature to find a secret life and a hidden depth.[30] Observing Le Gray's photographs surely nourished Courbet's reflection; studying them could have certainly awakened in him the intuition of a relationship between that fixed, elemental sea and his native cliffs.

Photography is not the model here — Courbet very early on developed the talent to integrate any model, any source of inspiration, into his own work. But perhaps photography was a connection, a passage, offering the painter the ability to be faithful both to the classical rules of composition and to the sole representation of reality. The photography he saw left him free to transform that external reality with the wealth of his inner world — the sole subject of his work.[31]

Furthermore, although Courbet was not, it would seem, consciously quoted by the photographers mentioned here (most of them — Cuvelier, Giroux, and Quinet, in particular — identified more with the Barbizon painters, whom they spent time with at Fontainebleau), their need to discover and to compose in nature itself, using its rocks, cliffs, streams, clearings, and woods; the landscapes they photographed; and the constraints they encountered — the lighting, the exposure time, the reduced sensitivity of the paper negatives, in comparison with those of collodion on glass — bring them close, in fact, to the pictorial practices of Courbet. They echoed both his method of approaching his subject in utilizing the features of the landscape to construct the composition, and his painting of it, favoring a dark background where the sun, and the palette, came to illuminate the salient and significant elements of the whole. The photographers, like the painter, also reached beyond the temptation to represent trivial, picturesque, incidental landscapes. They achieved this through the strength of their compositions, which were based on classical construction but which found balance in the elements of the landscape themselves, and through the subtle rendering of the reliefs. In Courbet's case, this was achieved through his use of a palette and a technique that were original to him; for the photographers, through an exceptional technical mastery of photography; and for both, through a close and intimate observation of the landscape, of its features and blocks.

NOTES

1. Fermigier 1994, 14.
2. Foucart 1995, 108.
3. Courbet 1992, 230 (Courbet 1996, 207).
4. Silvestre 1856, 58.
5. Ibid.
6. Foucart 1995, 111.
7. In Scharf 1968 and in Font-Réaulx 1997.
8. Courbet 1992, 141 (Courbet 1996, 129).
9. On this subject see Font-Réaulx 1997.
10. Roubert 2004.
11. Ibid.
12. With regard to size, the nineteenth-century artist and critic Étienne-Jean Delécluze's comparison between the large *Burial at Ornans* (1850, fig. 3) and a daguerreotype might seem absurd if it did not reveal in both creations an identical denial of the precepts of ideal beauty.
13. The Barbizon painters gathered at L'Auberge Ganne when they were in the region.
14. Wey 1851, 3.
15. Lacretelle 1852, 50.
16. "L'art et la photographie," 1860.
17. Ibid.
18. Lacan 1854, 119.
19. Lacan 1855.
20. Ibid.
21. des Cars 1995.
22. Lacan 1876.
23. On this subject see Haudiquet 2004 and, in particular, Font-Réaulx 2004.
24. Courbet 1992, 38 (Courbet 1996, 40).
25. Groom 2003.
26. Champfleury 1867, 179, cited in Cachin 2000, 22.
27. Aubenas 2002, 266.
28. Castagnary 1912, 22, cited in Jobert 2002, 246.
29. Herding 1999, "Gustave Courbet," 19.
30. Foucart 1995, 111.
31. It would seem that he used photographs similarly in his approach to the female model; on this subject see Font-Réaulx 1997.

IF COURBET'S ROOTS in the Franche-Comté played a significant role in his art generally, the region was the guiding force, his true muse, in his landscape painting. It was associated with an independent, somewhat savage spirit and a rugged, primal energy—characteristics that critics associated with both Courbet's personality and his art. Painting his native landscape was a kind of autobiography, an extended self-portraiture. There was a general sense that the dramatic nature of the region's topography, its steep valleys and stony protrusions, determined the originality of Courbet's painting.

The Valley of Ornans (pl. 1), among the earliest landscapes in the exhibition, is composed of two slices of land coming in from the edges to converge at a clump of light-struck trees. The paint is applied in wide swaths, and the color values are narrow in range. The painting's drama is created by the deep shadow of the foreground in silhouette against the middle and background cast in late summer light, with the clear, bright sky backlighting the whole. Courbet avoids the kind of atmospheric unification through tone and color found in the work of Barbizon school painters such as Théodore Rousseau, Charles-François Daubigny (French, 1870–1878), and Camille Corot.[1] There is a simplicity, an avoidance of detail and any trace of fussiness, that conveys strength and immediacy. Its originality caught the attention of young painters such as Camille Pissarro, whose *Jalais Hill, Pontoise* (1867, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; fig. 33) and *L'Hermitage* (ca. 1868, Guggenheim Museum) were so clearly inspired by Courbet's example.

Courbet spent part of most every year with his family in Ornans, and in 1859 he purchased land there and started construction on a studio, which was finished in December 1860. His movements between Paris and Ornans created a productive pattern of shifting between city and country characteristic of the Modernist movement.

In the summer of 1864, following a particularly demoralizing Salon season in Paris, Courbet returned to Ornans and stayed for a full year, resulting in one of his most prolific painting campaigns.[2] It was a turning point in his career as a landscape painter. He was energized and inspired by the renewed contact with his native countryside, and he painted numerous landscapes, including his famous Source of the Loue series and additional versions of *Le Puits Noir* (pls. 14–17).[3]

Landscape near Ornans (pl. 2) is likely from this campaign. Though the landscape is clearly the Franche-Comté, it seems not to be an accurate representation of a particular site, but rather a composite view of the river Loue and the Roche du Mont, a cliff high above the town of Ornans.[4] As in *The Valley of Ornans*, Courbet firmly organizes the composition with bands of light and dark, held together here by a winding path that is oddly flat in the foreground, then picks up speed in its middle-ground curve (a device that calls to mind later

Figure 33.
Camille Pissarro (French, 1830–1903). *Jalais Hill, Pontoise*, 1867. Oil on canvas, 87 × 114.9 cm (34¼ × 45¼ in.). New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of William Church Osborn, 51.30.2

landscapes by both Pissarro and Cézanne). Again, detail is avoided in favor of bold movements of the palette knife used to sculpt the rock faces in the lower right and upper left.[5]

Courbet's intense fascination with the depiction of rock face is exercised in *The Rock of Hautepierre* (pl. 3), in which a hulking cliff known to locals by name dominates the composition.[6] As in the similarly scaled *Rocks at Chauveroche* (pl. 4), strong morning or evening light rakes across peaks and jags, here illuminating tiny sparks of color, orange and powder blue, embedded in the rock surface. Courbet builds a strong sense of volume and texture out of the dark purple-brown of the toned ground using thickly loaded brushes and his palette knife. In the left background of *The Rock of Hautepierre*, he inserts a cool, luminous body of water and a distant range of hills, providing a visual counterpoint to the massive cliff. This element is not included in the other painted version of this site (Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.), which also leaves out the cluster of houses in the center.

Unusual compositions (Champfleury referred to Courbet's "horreur de la composition") were part of the artist's Realist strategy, giving some of his landscapes a sense of having been simply happened upon and directly recorded.[7] *Valley of the Loue, possibly near Mouthier-Haute-Pierre* (pl. 5) depicts an anonymous corner of the countryside near Ornans on a large canvas. The valley walls extend to the edges of the frame, creating a feeling of immersion in the layers of landscape, but with no single motif to latch on to. The pristine condition of this painting reveals the full range of marks constituting its surface: the sharp strokes of the bare tree branches at the right, the knifed-on facets of rock face, the velvety green of the foreground grass, the dry smears of water falling, the smooth hard glow of the sky.

Courbet's tendency to construct compositions from his memory and/or imagination advanced through the 1860s and 1870s. In paintings such as *Composed Landscape* and *The Torrent* (pls. 6, 7), Courbet created simple compositions, achieving expression primarily through color and surface technique. The spectacular, recently rediscovered *Gust of Wind* (pl. 8) is an extraordinary example of Courbet's composite landscape painting. The view depicted is reminiscent of both the Jura and the forest of Fontainebleau, but is securely attributed to neither.[8] The grand scale of the canvas, the subject of an approaching storm in an unidentified region, and the bravura paint handling all point to the painting's probable origin as a commission to decorate a new palais in Paris.[9]

Preserved in excellent state, *The Gust of Wind* offers a vivid display of Courbet's technical brilliance. The hills in the background, still cast in sunlight, are painted in small delicate brushstrokes, as is the rushing, darkening sky immediately above. The foreground is painted in bold, sweeping gestures of the knife and brush, the sheer dynamism of which grips the viewer standing at close range. Contrasting with these more aggressive marks are the oily drags of a soft brush articulating the tree trunks and branches at the right, and the vague brown stipple marks in the foreground at the left denoting foliage.

The painting serves as a kind of résumé of Courbet's landscape effects: the expressive skies of his marines; the rocks, rivers, and trees of paintings of the Franche-Comté; and the curving compositional pull toward the center that structures the grotto pictures. It may be Courbet's greatest performance, commissioned by a patron interested less in the particular landscape depicted than in the autographic virtuosity displayed. Both from a distance and at close range, the painting is a tour de force, among the most staggering examples of nineteenth-century French landscape painting.[10] (MM)

NOTES

1. Champa 1991, 138.
2. See Mary Morton, "To Create a Living Art," herein; Courbet 1992, 221.
3. See Courbet 1992, 243–44.
4. Ann Dumas in Faunce and Nochlin 1988, 152.
5. A smaller version, probably a sketch, hangs in Neue Pinakothek in Munich, and a similarly scaled but less finished version is in the Des Moines Art Center, Iowa.
6. Robert Fernier dates this picture "1848?"— certainly too early (Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, 52)— while the Chicago object file currently dates it about 1869. Sarah Faunce suggests that it may have been exhibited at the 1855 Pavilion of Realism, no. 26 or 37, as *Les Rochers d'Ornans (le matin) (The Rocks of Ornans, the Morning)*, but stylistically it fits better in the late 1860s (personal communication).
7. The reference to Champfleury's description of Courbet's "horror of composition" is from Shapiro 1941, 166, who quotes it from Champfleury, *Souvenirs et portraits de jeunesse* (Paris, 1872), 173.
8. Sarah Faunce in her catalogue raisonné entry, forthcoming.
9. According to research by Alexandra Murphy, the work may have been a commission through the architect Alfred Feydeau for a grand palais he was building on boulevard Beaujon (later boulevard Haussmann) for a Monsieur Thomas, who called himself the Duc de Bojano. See Murphy's entry on lot 9, Christie's 1998.
10. This account of *The Gust of Wind* is largely taken from Morton 2005, 115–16.

PLATE 1.

The Valley of Ornans, 1858

Saint Louis Art Museum

PLATE 2.
Landscape near Ornans, 1864
Toledo Museum of Art

PLATE 3.

The Rock of Hautepierre, ca. 1869

Art Institute of Chicago

PLATE 4.
Rocks at Chauveroche, 1864
Private collection

PLATE 5.

Valley of the Loue, possibly near Mouthier-Haute-Pierre, late 1860s

Courtesy of Salander-O'Reilly, New York

PLATE 6.

Composed Landscape: Spring in the Rocks of Doubs, 1871
Besançon, Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie

PLATE 7.

Stream in the Jura Mountains (The Torrent), ca. 1872–73
Honolulu Academy of Arts

PLATE 8.

The Gust of Wind, ca. 1865

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

COURBET'S *SOUS-BOIS* PAINTINGS, or landscapes with a forest cover, offered (primarily urban) viewers a sense of refuge and solitude.[1] Although most of them represent the woods of the Franche-Comté, there are some scenes of the forest of Fontainebleau southeast of Paris. Courbet was not a member of the Barbizon school of landscape painting, which was associated with the scenic colors and topography of the Fontainebleau Forest, but he did visit the area during his career.

The Fringe of the Forest (pl. 9), the date of which has been disputed,[2] has a palette characteristic of Barbizon pictures, of the ochers, russets, yellows, and browns of landscapes by Narcisse-Virgile Diaz de La Peña and Théodore Rousseau. However, the image is painted at an extremely, rather uncomfortably close range. This is not an unusual strategy in Courbet's oeuvre, and in fact it distinguishes some of his most radical works, including *Grotto of the Black Well* (see pl. 15), *Grotto of Sarrazine near Nans-sous-Sainte-Anne* (see pl. 20), *The Wave* (see pl. 40), and some of his more provocative figural works.[3] As in these paintings, the subject in *Fringe of the Forest* presses forward, filling the optical range of the viewer and denying depth or any traditional point of entry. Attention is thus focused on textures — bark, foliage, mossy grass, and rocks — as well as on the texture of the painted canvas.

Another non-Jura landscape that inspired Courbet was the Saintonge in southwestern France, where Courbet stayed for several months with his friend and patron Etienne Baudry in 1862.[4] Camille Corot was also a guest of Baudry's at this time, and the two painters worked alongside one another. *Stream in the Forest* (pl. 10) is perhaps the most resolved of the Saintonge landscapes.[5] Courbet's treatment of the trees suggests the graphic, graceful representations of trees that populate Corot's works (see fig. 7). The painting's unusual vertical format may have been chosen by Courbet to accommodate the tall, slender elms. More extraordinary is the way in which the river reflection takes on a life of its own, transforming the lower register into a play of abstract color and line.

Courbet's best-known *sous-bois* paintings, which received his most extensive serial treatment aside from the tidal paintings of the Normandy coast, are of a favorite spot near his native Ornans that locals called "Le Puits Noir," or the Black Well. The subject was quite lucrative for Courbet: in a letter of 1866 he boasted to his friend Urbain Cuenot that he had earned twenty to twenty-two thousand francs from the more than a dozen Puits Noir paintings he had completed to date. In the same letter, he partially credits his donkey, Gérôme, alluding perhaps ironically to the myth of Courbet walking into the gorge with his art supplies strapped on his beast to paint on-site, directly from nature.[6]

It is unlikely that Courbet painted the first of the series, the 1855 *The Stream* (pl. 11), on-site, given its scale and the time it must have taken to paint. As with many of his land-

Figure 34.
Unknown photographer. *The Stream of the Puits Noir*, n.d. Reprinted from Fernier et al. 1989, 78. Courtesy Musée Gustave Courbet

scapes, this painting was built up in layers, with Courbet allowing each layer to dry before applying the next. It could not have been painted in one sitting, and it seems unlikely that he would repeatedly lug a canvas this large to such a difficult-to-reach location. *The Stream* was probably painted in the studio, inspired by repeated visits to the site (fig. 34).[7] Lorenz Eitner writes that the painting's ambitious scale "constitutes a radical instance, still uncommon in its time, of a landscape represented for its own sake only, without narrative or human interest."[8] There is no single focal point, there are no figures or animals. Rather, Courbet deflects a readerly approach in favor of a visual, experiential immersion in nature. He disperses visual attention across the canvas, filling the viewer's peripheral vision in an overall strategy suggestive of John Constable's landscapes but pulled up closer to the subject.

The painting was displayed alongside eleven others at the 1855 Universal Exposition in Paris and was acquired almost immediately by a Franc-Comtois industrialist named Vauthrin. It was included in the artist's 1858 exhibitions in Bordeaux, Le Havre, Dijon, and Besançon; in 1866 in Lille; in his 1867 private exhibition in Paris; and in his posthumous retrospective at the École des Beaux-Arts in 1882. It passed through many hands, including the great Impressionist collectors Louisine and Henry Havemeyer, before their descendents gave it to the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., in 1943.[9]

A less weathered version of the same view, but smaller and looser in handling, the Montreal *Stream of the Puits Noir* (pl. 12) may have served as a sketch for *The Stream*.[10] The paint is relatively oily, and among the sensual long strokes of the branches at right, the dry drags of the knife across the foreground, and the stipple of a dry brush for foliage, the range of marks is characteristically rich. Often quoted in the literature, Courbet claimed to paint like the sun at dawn, bringing volume and depth out of the darkness into the light.[11] His technique, however, was less a gradual, overall lightening of the canvas from its dark ground than a constant movement between darks and lights, building up the surface with layers of opaque paint and scraping back to the dark ground. Sometimes the darkest layers are applied last, as in his depiction of rocky cliffs in which he applies strokes of black paint over light-struck rocks to create a sharp facet. Line has little role, but rather space is defined by light and dark paint applications of various textures and shapes.

Stream of the Puits-Noir at Ornans (pl. 13) depicts a similarly angled view, but in winter, without the lush green foliage. Of the dozens of paintings by Courbet of the site (there are twenty-six in Robert Fernier's catalogue raisonné), this is the only non-summer/spring view, and it has a more graphic sensibility than the other versions.[12] The painting shows the full spectrum of Courbet's paint application: his use of the palette knife for the smoothed-in sky and the thicker surface strokes; flat brushes for the spare, dry leaves; thin, delicate glazes painted over thicker paint in the rock faces; scraped-down paint layers that let the dark ground show through; and scoring in the cliffs, done with a sharp pointed stick or the back end of a brush, to describe fine tree branches.[13] The handling is enormously complex and carefully considered, belying the image's sense of freshness and immediacy.

A decade after the original 1855 version, during Courbet's prolific campaign in the Franche-Comté in 1864 and 1865; he took up the motif again. He exhibited *The Shaded Stream* (pl. 14) at the Salon of 1865, in 1866, it was acquired for Napoleon III by Comte de Nieuwerkerke, superintendent of fine arts, further enhancing the popularity of the subject.[14]

The paintings of this site from a private collection, the Cone Collection in Baltimore, and Columbus (pls. 15–17) are considerably more abstract than the earlier versions. Courbet has moved closer to the rocky cliff at the left of the gorge and has further eliminated detail so that the composition becomes a focused study of light and dark. The painter's description of space is entirely unconventional. He defines volume at dramatic junctures, mostly at the edges of rocky facets, and then allows the illusion of three-dimensionality to drain away to the flat painted surface. The climax of Courbet's fixation with this motif, these pictures lay the groundwork for Paul Cézanne's central project: creating art out of the tension between the flat surface of the canvas and the illusion of space and volume.

The radicalism of these paintings is linked to the concentrated, serial treatment of this single motif. Courbet was able to shift back and forth between such abstracting projects and more representational modes, as in the luminous *Roe Deer at a Stream* (pl. 18). The constuction of the rock face at the right has all the attributes of sophisticated paint handling one finds in works such as the *Grotto of Sarrazine* (pl. 20), but space is more penetrable, the palette is lighter, and the artist has inserted a deer that looks out, startled, at the viewer. (MM)

NOTES

1. Courbet titled one of his works from the Puits Noir series *Solitude*, painted for his patron Alfred Bruyas (1866, Musée Fabre).
2. Robert Fernier puts the picture at about 1856, having dated the very similar *Fontainebleau Forest* (1856, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen). Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, 120. Douglas Cooper wrote that it is too radical for 1856 and is more likely to be from the early 1860s. Cooper 1960, 245. According to Klaus Herding, Courbet first visited the area around Fontainebleau in 1841, and he returned throughout the early 1840s. Herding 1999, "Beyond Reality," 283. Barbizon was a short train ride from Paris, and of course Courbet could have visited at any point in his career.
3. The most infamous of which is *The Origin of the World* (1866, Musée d'Orsay).
4. Courbet stayed almost a year in the Saintonge, from May 1862 to April 1863, not all of it with Baudry. For this period of Courbet's career, see Roger Bonniot, *Gustave Courbet en Saintonge, 1862–1863* (Paris, 1973).
5. Robert Fernier dates the painting about 1868, perhaps due to its "striking Modernism" ("modernisme étonnant qui fait penser à Cézanne"). Fernier 1977–78, vol. 2, 58.
6. Courbet 1992, 277. Significant in the naming of Courbet's donkey, Jean-Léon Gérôme was a very successful official painter in Paris whose aesthetic was the antithesis of Courbet's.
7. Eitner 2000, 108.
8. Eitner 2000, 106.
9. Such an active life has taken a toll on the National Gallery painting. The work differs somewhat from an 1896 photograph of it, and there have been at least three campaigns of cleaning, retouching, and overpainting (though it has not been touched since 1944). My thanks to Getty conservator Elisabeth Mention and National Gallery paintings conservator Anne Hoeningswold for their observations.
10. Lorenz Eitner thinks that the Montreal painting (see pl. 12) is a study. Eitner 2000, 108.
11. See Dominique Font-Réaux, "Reproducing Reality," herein, for her discussion of this quotation.
12. Hélène Toussaint (1978, 164) considered this a very fine variant of the view represented in the Orsay *Shaded Stream* (see pl. 14).
13. My thanks to conversations with Joe Fronek, paintings conservator at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, for his sensitive and studied observations on the Norton Simon *Puits-Noir* (see pl. 13).
14. Other paintings depicting the exact same angle include those at Montpellier, Besançon, Toulouse, Chicago, and Vienna. The version in Montpellier is not a variant, according to Sarah Faunce, but an exact artist's replica, done for Courbet's patron Alfred Bruyas (personal communication).

PLATE 9.

The Fringe of the Forest, ca. 1856

Philadelphia Museum of Art

PLATE 10.

Stream in the Forest, ca. 1862

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

PLATE 11.

The Stream, 1855

Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art

PLATE 12.

Stream of the Puits Noir, ca. 1855

Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal

PLATE 13.

Stream of the Puits-Noir at Ornans, 1868

Pasadena, Norton Simon Art Foundation

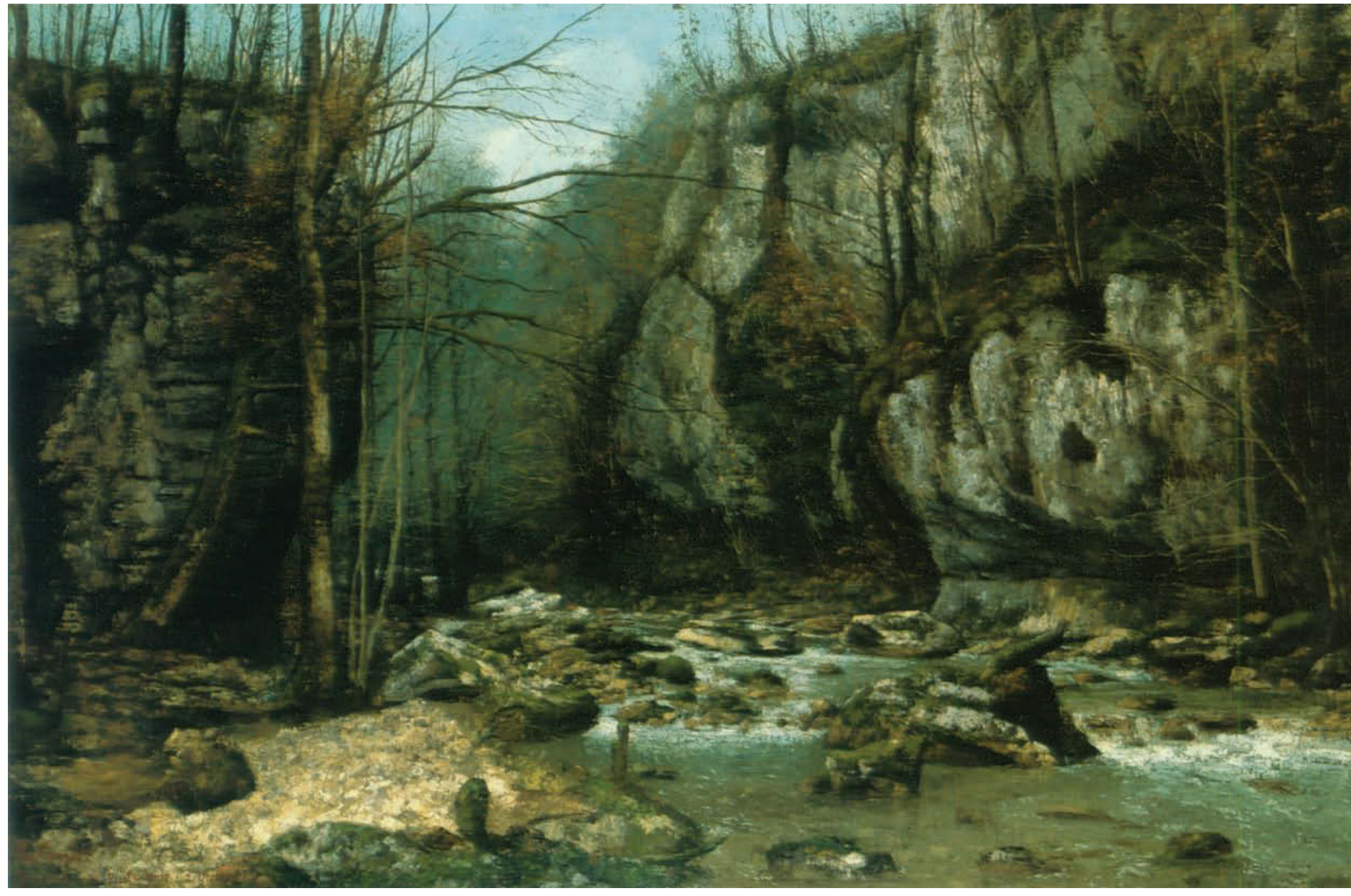


PLATE 14.

The Shaded Stream, 1865

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

PLATE 15.

Grotto of the Black Well, 1865

Private collection

PLATE 16.

The Shaded Stream at the Puits Noir, ca. 1860 – 65

The Baltimore Museum of Art

PLATE 17.

The Stream at the Puits Noir, 1865

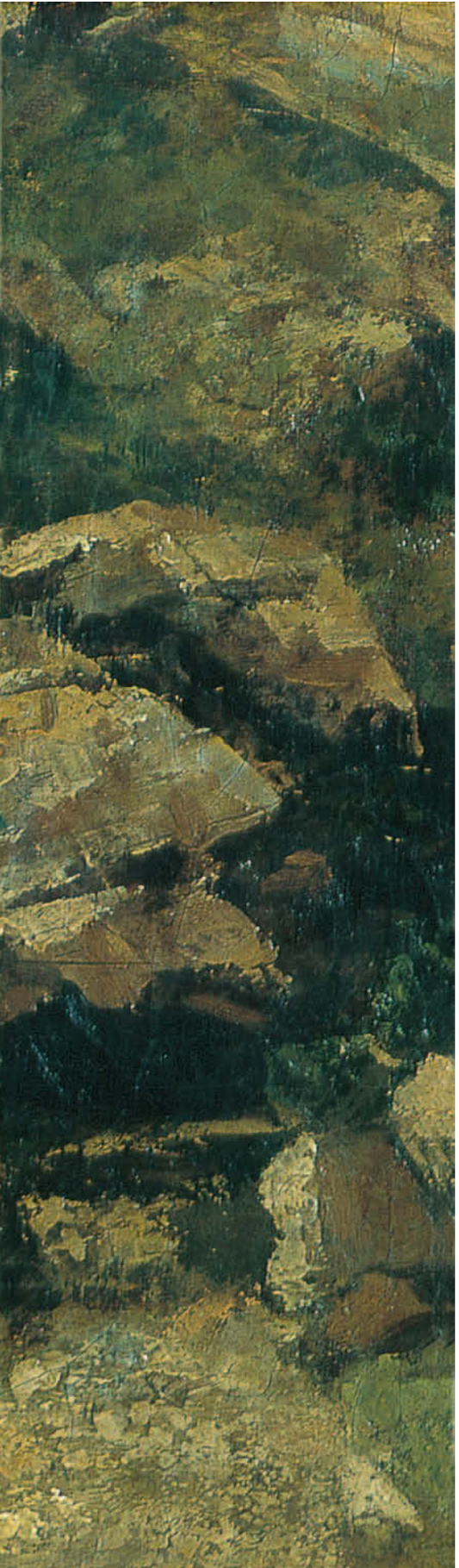
Columbus Museum of Art

PLATE 18.

Roe Deer at a Stream, 1868

Fort Worth, Kimbell Art Museum


Courbet



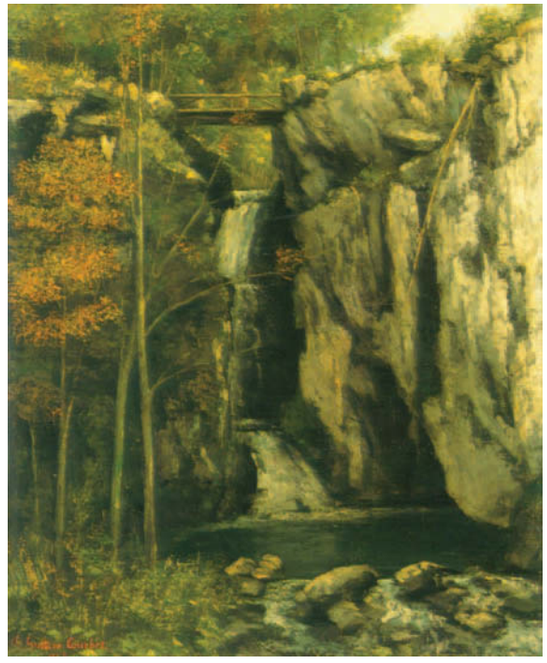
COURBET'S ENGAGEMENT with the geology of his native region coincided with the rise of that science and the parallel rise of the tourism industry in nineteenth-century France.[1] While Courbet's paintings were not intended to be documentary, they hint at the attraction these sites held for the artist and for contemporary travelers to this area. The rock, grotto, and source paintings share the anti-narrative qualities that typify so much of Courbet's landscape practice. The human presence is rare and, when in evidence, diminutive. In *Le Gour de Conche*, for instance, Courbet depicts a waterfall that visitors could view from a bridge (fig. 35). The painting suggests nature's overwhelming power, with the tiny figures dwarfed by the scene, and the composition privileges the viewer of the painting, allowing a frontal, slightly elevated view of the waterfall.

These geologically themed paintings rigorously avoid depicting manual or agrarian labor.[2] Instead, the primary drama is visual: Courbet uses his brushes and knives to create surfaces that evoke natural processes wrought over millennia. Though thoroughly modern in technique and composition, these works celebrate the pace of glacial time.[3]

The lovely *La Roche Pourrie* (pl. 19) is a subtle celebration of the geologist's passion. The composition consists of three distinct zones: a pyramidal foreground defined by chunky boulders, a wall-like expanse of shale at right, with vegetation growing on top, and a jutting rock face that abuts a structure at upper left. The geometric compositional dynamics resemble those employed in Courbet's cliff and valley pictures and in some of the snowscapes.

It is in differentiating the various rocky areas, though, that Courbet truly sings. He uses the knife to lay on thick slabs of gray blue at upper left, while delicately applying earth-colored glazes to the rock face at right. The boulders in the foreground are likewise laid in with the palette knife, almost like relief sculptures. It takes a while for the eye to register that among those boulders is a tiny figure concentrating on the rock. It is a portrait of the geologist Jules Marcou, who commissioned the painting. Marcou undoubtedly chose Courbet because the geologist was familiar with Courbet's prowess as a painter of the rugged landscape.[4]

Courbet's paintings of rocks, grottoes, and sources directly address the elemental power of the landscape and often provide the viewer with close-up, frontal views. The rocky forms are visually captivating in terms of their enormous scale and their multifaceted, often shimmering surfaces. In works like *Grotto of Sarrazine near Nans-sous-Sainte-Anne* (pl. 20) and the Source of the Loue paintings, Courbet investigates the architecture of nature, created over time by erosion and glacial movement. The intense interest in the rock surface as well as the severely cropped, decidedly modern composition resonate with contemporary photography, such as the anonymous daguerreotype *Study of Rocks* (fig. 36). In *Grotto of Sarrazine*, Courbet varies his technique and his palette to describe different colors and textures of the



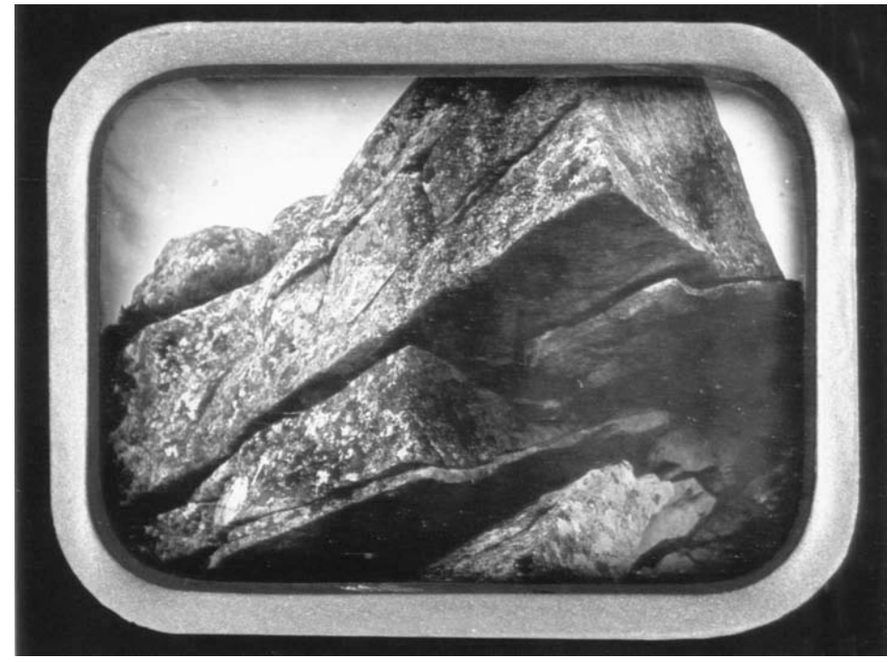


Figure 35.
Gustave Courbet. *Le Gour de Conche*, 1864. Oil on canvas, 70 × 60 cm (27⅝ × 23⅝ in.). Besançon, Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie

Figure 36.
Unknown photographer, *Study of Rocks*, ca. 1845. Half-plate daguerreotype, 10.4 × 14.7 cm (4⅛ × 5¾ in.) Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, 84.XT.183

site: mossy and lichenous greens; liquid and mineral blues; rich browns and mauves; chalky whites.[5] The thin strip of water that leads the eye back into the cave is a tributary of the Lison River, whose source Courbet painted in 1864 (pl. 21).[6]

Though inspired by his visits to the site, Courbet's pictorial construction departs dramatically from how it actually looks. A visit to the Grotto of Sarrazine today reveals an oblong opening, rather than the concertedly circular one depicted in the painting.[7] Courbet employs dramatic compositional devices — arcs and diagonals — to hone in on the chromatic richness of the rocky surfaces. Indeed, the look of the cave, and of the streambed, is captured more directly in *Source in the Jura* (fig. 37), even though the site is not specified in the title. In this work, which seems to depict a different season, Courbet emphasizes the verdant plant life surrounding the cave. Feathery green stalks and brush flank a pyramidal mound of moss-covered rocks. The range of marks suggesting rock, void, vegetation, and water hints at Courbet's fascination with elemental contrasts. It is an untamed landscape, as opposed to the subtle incursion of human activity suggested by the delicate scaffolding that limns the right side of *Grotto of Sarrazine.*

Regardless of their fidelity to the sites they represent, Courbet's paintings are governed by pictorial choices. His Source of the Loue paintings convey a heightened and — at the same time — partial reality of that site.[8] Courbet painted this subject numerous times, varying the compositional elements but maintaining a consistent interest in the great void that cuts into the mountain of stone, leading the eye back into seemingly endless darkness.[9]

The Source of the Loue paintings in the exhibition (from the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, pls. 22, 23) are representative examples of Courbet's non-narrative and narrative modes. The Brussels painting

is not populated by human beings or by any evidence of human industry, whereas the New York version includes a mill. The inelegance of the structure is striking in relation to the natural architecture.

In this series, Courbet treats one of the most dramatic sites in his native landscape with both energy and reverence. Physically, visually, and aurally, it is breathtaking: gigantic, steep walls tower over terraced pools of water flowing from the source, which create a constant, thundering sound of rushing water. In each iteration of the series, the compositions are cropped to emphasize the mouth of the cave. Courbet intentionally elides from view the surrounding walls that project hundreds of feet upward. He suggests that the walls continue beyond the frame, but the paintings do not convey their majesty. In choosing to omit the vertical rock faces, the artist instead focused on the black hole that draws the eye back into space.

In the Brussels painting, the faceted, rocky arches of the source of the Loue are perfect vehicles for Courbet's knife work. Fit together like mosaics, the constituent parts are built up with slabs of paint, laid on with various thicknesses and colors to express the particular formation of the place. Courbet seems to revel in juxtapositions: impenetrable rock surface that frames the looming, dominant void; shimmering, reflective water (deceptively smooth, as if still), giving way to white-capped rapids. From one work to another he makes slight adjustments, but all the Source of the Loue pictures share these fundamental qualities and contrasts: light and dark, stone and water, materiality and immateriality.

In these various paintings of rocks, caves, and springs, Courbet's compositional choices create fictional views. They alter reality, providing close-up, cropped (and often impossible) access to these scenes while maintaining fidelity to the muscular contours of the landscape. These dramatic works invite the viewer to ponder nature's timeless power, grandeur, and mystery through the lens of Courbet's direct experience, distilled by his pictorial imagination. (CE)

Figure 37.
Gustave Courbet. *Source in the Jura*, 1872–73. Oil on canvas, 50 × 61 cm (19 1/16 × 24 in.). Private collection

NOTES

1. See Lavallée 2000; Thomas 2000; and Nicholas Green, *The Spectacle of Nature: Landscape and Bourgeois Culture in Nineteenth-century France* (Manchester, England, 1990), on the rise of tourism and the popularity of French landscape destinations.
2. These pictures contrast markedly with works like *The Stonebreakers* (1849, formerly Dresden, destroyed in World War II), which focuses on the human drama of the anonymous workers who toil in the landscape. On this work see Fried 1990, 99–110; Clark 1982, 74. Robert Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, no. 102, illustrates another, smaller version.
3. See Chu 1988.
4. See Clarke 1998, 89. Courbet referred to the Marcou commission in a letter addressed to Max Buchon, written in early January 1865. Courbet 1992, 254–55.
5. See Charlotte Eyerman, "Courbet's Legacy in the Twentieth Century," herein.
6. Courbet mentions the 1864 *Source of the Lison* in a letter to his family. Courbet 1992, 247. On the bodily metaphors that this work may evoke, see Morton 2005, 112. Two other versions are recorded in Robert Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, 222, nos. 402 and 403.
7. It is also entirely possible, given the unreliability of titles, that this Courbet painting represents a different cave, which has yet to be identified. If it does, in fact, represent the Grotto of Sarrazine (which we know Courbet visited), an equally plausible explanation is that the artist has altered the way the cave looks. Robert Fernier illustrates another version of *Grotto of Sarrazine* in which the cave's opening is oblong; see Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, 225, no. 407.
8. There are six known versions, two of which are included in the present exhibition. Courbet discusses his visit to the site, and four paintings he made depicting it, in a letter written in July or August of 1864. See Courbet 1992, 243, note 2, which suggests that those views may include the versions (all 1864) currently housed at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., and Kunsthalle, Hamburg. Ann Dumas, in Faunce and Nochlin 1988 (153, no. 47), suggests that the Buffalo version (which Robert Fernier misdated to 1850) should be included in that group.
9. These paintings have generated a great deal of scholarly interpretation, much of it focused on their subject being analogous to the orifices of the body, and there is much fascinating literature on them. See, in particular, Fried 1990, 209–14, which gives a thorough account of these arguments as articulated by Jack Lindsay, Werner Hoffmann, and Neil Hertz, as well as the catalogue entries 47 and 48 by Ann Dumas on Source of the Loue paintings in Faunce and Nochlin 1988, 155–57.

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PLATE 19.

La Roche Pourrie, 1864

Salins-les-Bains, France, Musée Max-Claudet

PLATE 20.

Grotto of Sarrazine near Nans-sous-Sainte-Anne, ca. 1864

Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum

PLATE 21.

Source of the Lison, 1864

Berlin, Nationalgalerie

PLATE 22.

Source of the Loue, 1864

Brussels, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique

PLATE 23.

Source of the Loue, 1864
New York, The Metropolitan
Museum of Art

AS A SUBGENRE OF LANDSCAPE, snowscapes are most closely associated with the traditions of Flemish and Dutch painting of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In Courbet's era, the most famous — and epic — snowscape was Antoine-Jean Gros' *Battle of Eylau* (1808, Musée du Louvre; fig. 38), an enormous contemporary history painting that recorded and celebrated Napoléon Bonaparte's defeat of the Prussian army in February 1806. Whereas Gros employed his illusionistic skills to suggest the freezing temperatures and frightening realities of battle in winter, Courbet's snowscapes generally do not have such grand ambitions. Although steeped in the traditions of French painting, particularly the grand historical school that Gros represented, Courbet self-consciously reacted against them.

Courbet's enormous *The Kill: Episode during the Deer Hunt in a Snowy Terrain* (fig. 39), exhibited at the Salon of 1869 (and previously shown at his private exhibition in 1867),[1] may have been intended as a kind of contemporary history painting. It offers a counterpoint to the "modern life" subjects so current among Courbet's peers, presenting a large-scale image of a heroic, decidedly nonurban pursuit — a "leisure" activity shot through with pathos and violent energy. Here, Courbet's "heroes" are not Napoleonic soldiers (à la Gros) but big-game hunters; the vanquished are not Prussians but the felled and humiliated buck. Courbet used the grand scale of history painting to emphasize the dramatic confrontation between man and nature. On the one hand, it is an operatic painting due to its large size and the violence of the subject matter; on the other, Courbet includes anecdotal, even amusing notes, especially in his observations of canine behavior.[2] Because the human figures drive the action in *The Kill* (the most narrative of Courbet's *paysages de neige*, or snowscapes), this winter scene is less modern, in its subject matter and execution, than the smaller, non-narrative pictures on view in the exhibition.[3]

Courbet's snowscapes display great variety yet share bold, geometric compositions, bravura paint handling, and sophisticated uses of color. Some of the snowscapes are anecdotal in their inclusion of animals (usually deer, pls. 24 – 26), and only one of the snowscapes in the exhibition includes the human figure, *The Wounded Deer* (pl. 27). The winter landscape engulfs the diminutive hunter, whose red coat picks up the falling stag's red tongue, a restrained acknowledgement of the animal's blood that will soon stain the white snow.

With the notable exception of Courbet's hunting scenes (he expressed fondness for the "violent exercise" of hunting),[4] his snowscapes tell no story, instead drawing our attention to nature's formal and elemental power.[5] The paintings record only the artist's observed, remembered, or imagined record of the winter landscape, evoking the sculptural contours of Courbet's native region, the Franche-Comté, punctuated by craggy outcroppings of rocks, massive boulders, icy streams, and thick woods.[6] He employs the full range of his painting techniques to convey ice and snow in all their chromatic and textural variety.

Figure 38.
Antoine-Jean Gros (French, 1771–1835). *The Battle of Eylau*, 1808. Oil on canvas, 521 × 784 cm (165¾ × 308¾ in.). Paris, Musée du Louvre

Figure 39.
Gustave Courbet. *The Kill: Episode during the Deer Hunt in a Snowy Terrain*, 1867. Oil on canvas, 355 × 505 cm (138½ × 197 in.). Besançon, France, Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie

The Roe Deer's Shelter in Winter (pl. 24) is a stellar example of Courbet's highly sophisticated approach to a deceptively straightforward subject. The pictorial organization relies on a rigorous geometry: the painting can be divided up into a series of intersecting triangles. The most dominant ones are the sloping hill at left, anchored by thick tree branches; the expanse of snow that leads back to the distance; and the smaller rise at right in the foreground, heavy with a thick, frozen crust.

The convention of the triangle becomes more apparent the longer one looks at the work: even the deer become a microcosm of the composition. The bodies of the two reclining deer form a triangular unit; the standing deer's open back legs form a pyramidal shape, echoed by the elegant triangular pedestal of the closed front legs. Even the deer's head, seen in silhouette as decidedly triangular, coheres with this unifying compositional trope. Although Courbet's ostensible subject is "deer in a snowy landscape," his highly disciplined compositional strategy is a forceful reminder that nature serves the artist's vision. Courbet is no mere recorder.

The palette is equally complex. An olive green underlayer is visible along the bottom edge, upon which Courbet builds the forms and surfaces of the snow-encrusted landscape using an astonishing array of color. The snowy areas are constructed using an array of blues that heightens the perception of icy whiteness: periwinkle, teal, light blue. In contrast to these cool colors, the rocks, trees, branches, and leaves consist of warm browns and reds, delineated with occasional passages of black to suggest mass and structure. The sketchily rendered deer lend an animating coziness to the scene, but their presence is incidental. If anything, they only underscore the dynamics of the emphatically triangular composition and establish scale.

The main event here is paint: Courbet uses the palette knife, especially in the foreground, to convey the crusty accumulation of snow on the sculptural forms of the landscape (boulders, rocks, rises). His paint handling emphasizes how the bright snow mingles with the brown leaves hanging heavily along the edges and the upper half of the painting. The deep perspective is underscored by a little zigzagging path at which the deer gazes. This

seemingly — deceptively — simple and prosaic subject matter allows Courbet to wring out incredible pictorial variety within a rigorous composition.

Snow itself is Courbet's central fascination in these pictures: it is ephemeral, transmutable, and inherently unstable.[7] Yet the snowscapes are equally concerned with the enduring forms of nature, subject though they are to seasonal changes, elemental extremes, and occasional incursions. As a group, the snowscapes are extremely tactile and emphatically material (pls. 24–30), and they have a sculptural quality, in terms of both composition and surface. Courbet's thick slabs of paint emulate muscular rocks with a thick frosting of snow on top, while elegant dabs and flecks suggest snow-laden leaves. One feels the heavy storms that laid the foundation (not unlike the artist laying on his ground, adding layer upon layer), while a fresher snowfall laces the trees, adding a jewel-like shimmer to the foliage and branches. Like his seventeenth-century Dutch forebears, Courbet typically used a ground of brown-red that peeks through, lending texture and depth and cropping up in unexpected ways. He uses dominant palettes (tending either toward icy blues or russet browns) to unify the compositions. In some cases, Courbet deploys tree trunks and branches to further underscore that unity, punctuating a painting with strong verticals or horizontals (see pls. 25, 26).

In the snowscapes, Courbet creates vigorous fields of rocks, trees, and water whose power is heightened by expanses of snow and ice that issue from the painter's tools. There are areas of pictorial calm, as well as zones of great energy, both compositionally and technically. Courbet seems to revel in dynamic tensions and inversions, for his snowscapes are at once delicate and forceful, like great symphonic music. (CE)

NOTES

1. Toussaint 1978, 44; Herding 1991, 84–88.
2. The most amusing passages are the dogs in the center (one on its hind legs, tail between them, chomping at the not-yet-dead deer) and in the lower-left corner (on its back, lounging just above Courbet's initials, "G.C.," its reproductive anatomy displayed with almost comical directness). In spite of the canvas's enormous scale (and, accordingly, its pretensions), Courbet seems to be winking at the viewer, poking fun at the genre of history painting in this overblown hunting scene — as he had done with *Burial at Ornans* (1850) and *The Studio of the Painter* (1855) (both Musée d'Orsay) years before.
3. Courbet used the term *paysages de neige* to set his snowscapes apart from his other landscapes at his private exhibition at the Rond-Point de l'Alma in 1867; see Abigail Solomon-Godeau in Faunce and Nochlin 1988, 183, no. 70.
4. Courbet 1992, 129.
5. In addition to *The Kill*, Courbet's earlier work often included or referred to hunting: for example, *The Quarry* (1856–57, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston); *The Hunt Breakfast* (1858, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum); *Battle of the Stags* (1861, Musée d'Orsay); and *Stag Taking to the Water, or The End of the Run* (1861, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Marseille). Courbet's hosts in Germany introduced him to stag hunting in 1858–59. Faunce and Nochlin 1988, 84, 134–39.
6. Exceptionally heavy snowfalls occurred in the Franche-Comté in the winter of 1866–67, the most fecund period of his snowscape production. Toussaint 1978, 174–75. He wrote to a friend in January 1867, "I have a series of snow landscapes that will be similar to the seascapes"; and to another in November 1868, "I am out landscaping in spite of the snow." Courbet 1992, 303, 347.
7. Impressionist painters such as Monet, Pissarro, and Sisley likewise took up this subgenre of landscape painting; see Moffett et al. 1998.

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PLATE 24.

The Roe Deer's Shelter in Winter, ca. 1866

Lyon, Musée des Beaux-Arts

PLATE 25.

Roe Deer in a Snowy Landscape, ca. 1867

New York, Wildenstein & Co.

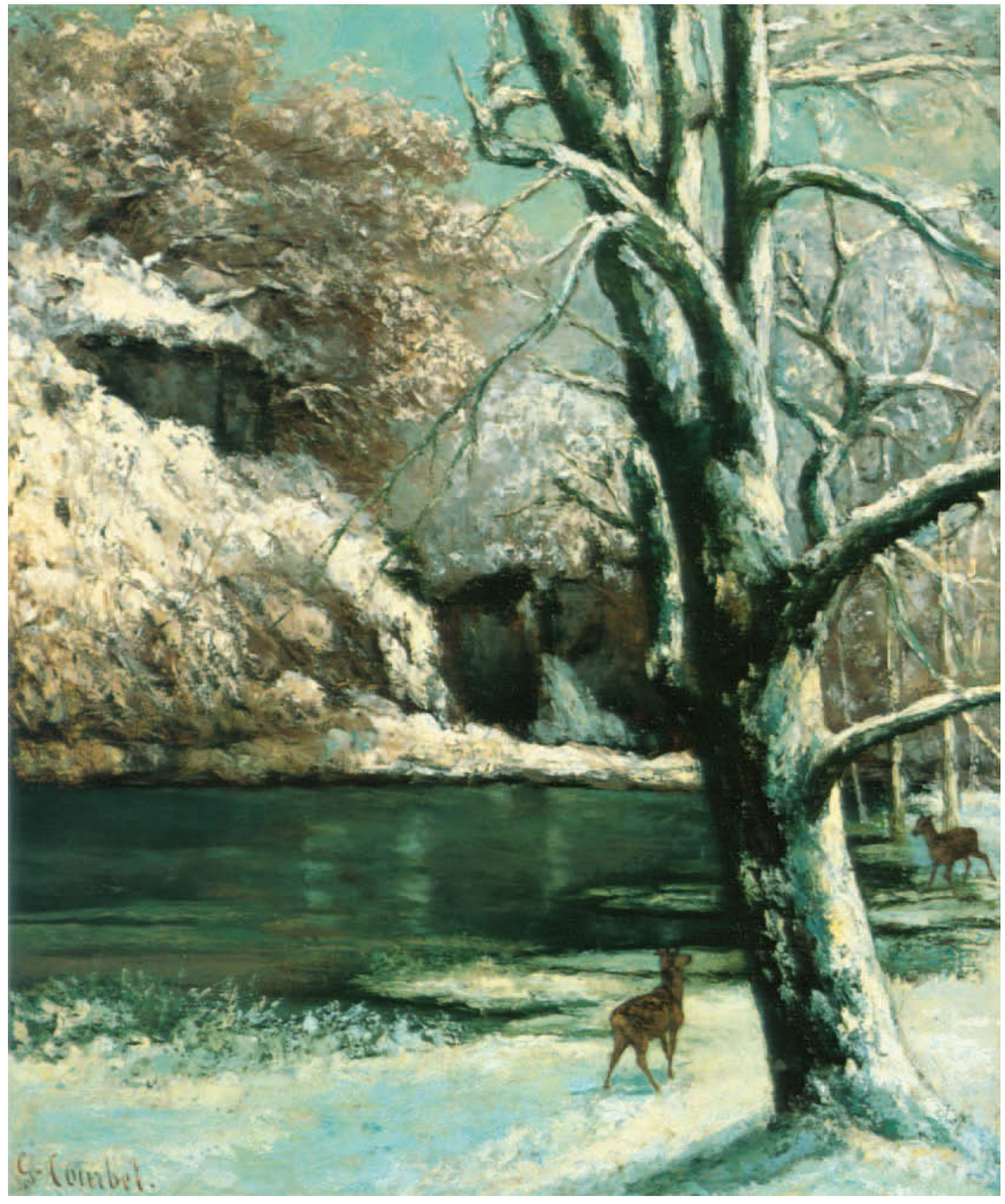

PLATE 26.

The Shelter of the Deer, ca. 1868

New York, Wildenstein & Co.

PLATE 27.

The Wounded Deer, ca. 1869

Hachioji, Japan, Murauchi Art Museum

PLATE 28.

Trees in the Snow, 1865

Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland

PLATE 29.

The Forest in Winter, 1860

Cincinnati Art Museum

PLATE 30.
Winter Landscape near Ornans,
1865–70
Wuppertal, Germany,
Von der Heydt-Museum

When it comes to water — he's the Raphael of water. He knows all its movements, whether deep or shallow, at every time of day.

—Édouard Manet on Courbet's seascapes[1]

COURBET'S SEASCAPES REFER TO his direct experiences of the sea, as well as to later distillations of those experiences.[2] In his landscape oeuvre, the seascapes have garnered the most attention (from critics, scholars, and fellow artists) for their visual power and pictorial innovation.[3] Surely, Manet's reference to Courbet as the "Raphael of water" was intended to compliment his facility as a painter, but Courbet was not in the old master business. Perhaps Manet meant it ironically, in light of Charles Baudelaire's comment that Courbet's art was the antithesis of "Raphaelesque Beauty" in favor of "external, positive, and immediate Nature."[4] Manet's insight that Courbet was intimately familiar with the rhythms of the sea and its many aspects is entirely apt, however, for beginning in the 1860s Courbet's engagement with the sea might even seem obsessive.

Courbet's earliest seascape dates to 1841, when he first visited the Normandy coast. He approached the subject again with a series of paintings in 1854, when he went to Montpellier on the Mediterranean.[5] Seascapes did not become a major preoccupation of his landscape practice nor his exhibition strategy until his later trips to Normandy, in 1859, 1860, 1865, 1866, and 1869. There he was introduced to the genre by Eugène-Louis Boudin, an established master of beach and sea scenes (whom Courbet called "the king of skies"), and he met the young artists James McNeill Whistler and Claude Monet, who likewise produced avant-garde seascapes.[6] His experiences in Normandy inspired Courbet to launch his landscapes in a new direction.

In 1866 he wrote to a friend of his commercial success with seascapes that he claimed to have painted "in two hours" in Trouville, on the Normandy coast.[7] Courbet's habit of painting *en plein air*, directly from the subject, as well as his choice of sites in Normandy responded to earlier examples by French artists (such as Eugène Delacroix and Eugène Isabey) and anticipated the course the Impressionists would follow in the 1870s and 1880s.[8] Courbet contributed two seascapes to the Salon of 1870, *Cliff at Étretat* and *Stormy Sea (The Wave)* (both 1870, Musée d'Orsay), which definitively established his critical and commercial reputation as a painter of seascapes.[9]

Marine painting has a long history that connects Courbet to its great practitioners in seventeenth-century Holland and nineteenth-century Britain (chiefly J. M. W. Turner; see fig. 17).[10] The great tradition of marine subjects celebrated triumphs of shipping for mercantile or military purposes and of human ingenuity over powerful elemental forces. In Turner's swirling composition, sea and sky are vehicles for exploring color and the sublime power of

Figure 40.
Gustave Le Gray (French, 1820–1884).
The Great Wave, Sète, ca. 1857.
Albumen silver print, 34.3 × 41.9 cm
(13½ × 16½ in.). Los Angeles,
J. Paul Getty Museum, 84.XM.637.1

Figure 41 (opposite).
Anthony Friedkin (American, b. 1949).
Breaking Wave, Zuma Beach, 1992.
Gelatin silver print, 20.8 × 32.4 cm
(8³⁄₁₆ × 12¾ in.). Los Angeles,
J. Paul Getty Museum, 2002.44.2
Gift of Sue and Albert Dorskind.
© Anthony Friedkin

nature. Ultimately, however, the presence of ships and sailors underscores the narrative qualities of the painting, even if the specific story being told is unknown.[11] While Turner's achievements were familiar to Courbet, the most famous — and epic — sea painting that Courbet would have experienced was *The Raft of the Medusa* (1819, Musée du Louvre) by Théodore Géricault. The monumental work depicted a tragedy at sea resulting from the ineptitude, selfishness, and bad planning of government officials. First entitled *A Scene of Shipwreck,* when exhibited at the Salon of 1819, the history-scale painting was intended as a political statement, an indictment against the ruling monarchy and its agents. Géricault thus employed the sea as a stage for human — and pointedly political — drama, rather than as a subject unto itself.[12]

Courbet forged an avant-garde response to these various marine traditions in his radically unpeopled, often non-narrative seascapes.[13] Courbet's term for these works, *paysages de mer* (landscapes of the sea), suggests his self-consciousness about their innovative status within the conventions of the landscape genre. His interest in the sea resonates more, in terms of form and content, with that of his contemporary, the French photographer Gustave Le Gray, particularly in the investigation of light and its relationship to water and sky.[14] Le Gray's seascapes of the 1850s, such as *The Great Wave, Sète* (fig. 40), were undoubtedly familiar to Courbet and were very likely a source of pictorial inspiration, given the complete absence of human figures in the photographs.

The seascapes fall into two major groups in Courbet's oeuvre and were often titled accordingly as either "marines" or "waves." In both types, he includes the occasional boat, but these worlds are nearly devoid of the human presence. The sea, whether calm or stormy, allows Courbet to explore new uses of color, composition, and painterly technique. The serial sea paintings are variations on a theme that consistently probe the edges of abstraction within the conventions of landscape, held firmly in place by the ubiquitous horizon line.

Courbet's marines (of which he produced about thirty-five), painted mostly about 1865 and 1866, uniformly depict the sea at low tide (pls. 31–39). They represent calm seas with color-saturated, cloud-filled skies that convey the lyrical beauty of refracted light rather than the threat of stormy weather. Even when these paintings include rain or dark clouds, for instance in *The Waterspout* (pl. 31) or *Seacoast and Sailboat in the Face of an Approaching Storm* (pl. 32), a chromatic harmony pervades the compositions.[15] The skies of the calm sea paintings are infused with rich, warm palettes. Dispersed clouds hold and distribute luminous fields of yellow, lavender, and steely blue, flecked with lighter areas. Courbet's paint handling differentiates sky from land. The beaches are constructed from dark grounds with color mixed in, most likely laid on, scraped off, and laid on again with the palette knife. In many of the marines (pls. 33–39), this effect evokes the oily blackness of tar deposits that appear on beaches today, a consequence of industrialization.[16]

The great series of wave paintings, which includes about thirty works, fixates on the motif of the cresting wave to suggest the ocean's raw force and its churning tides.[17] A friend visiting Courbet on the Normandy coast in 1869, the novelist Guy de Maupassant, colorfully described Courbet's mode of painting waves:

> In a great bare room a fat, dirty, greasy man was spreading patches of white paint on to a big bare canvas with a kitchen-knife. From time to time he went and pressed his face against the window pane to look at the storm. The sea came up so close that it seemed

to beat right against the house, which was smothered in foam and noise. The dirty water rattled like hail against the window and streamed down the walls. On the mantelpiece was a bottle of cider and a half-empty glass. Every now and then Courbet would drink a mouthful and then go back to his painting. It was called *The Wave* and it made a good deal of stir in its time.[18]

The wave paintings are among Courbet's most abstract pictures, and many seem resolutely invented rather than observed (pls. 40–43). *The Wave* (see fig. 10), which so inspired Cézanne (see Eyerman, "Courbet's Legacy in the Twentieth Century," herein), has all the force of lived experience, though it may have been painted from memory. In this series, Courbet expresses the rumbling power of nature conveyed by a succession of waves, lining up one after another. Gathering clouds (verging on purple, they are so dark) echo the relentless waves and form menacing rolls just over the horizon line. The sublime beauty of these paintings resides in their dynamic, nearly centrifugal compositions.[19]

The painter demonstrates a profound understanding that waves are like liquid sculpture, created at the intersection of water, air, and land.[20] Anthony Friedkin's *Breaking Wave, Zuma Beach* (fig. 41) continues the tradition Courbet forged with his first wave paintings of the late 1860s. Courbet's waves capture the tension between movement and solidity, between the passing moment and the endless future.[21] In these works, Courbet created monumental and seemingly three-dimensional, solid forms through his efforts to represent the most mutable elements: water and light. (CE)

NOTES

1. Édouard Manet, quoted in Rishel 2003, 163.
2. Courbet employed the term *paysages de mer* in a letter to his family, 17 November 1865. See des Cars 2004, 22–23; for an excellent, concise account of Courbet's seascapes, see Rishel 2003, 159–63.
3. Looking at Courbet's *Stormy Sea (The Wave)* (1870, Musée d'Orsay), the twentieth-century Spanish artist Joan Miró noted: "One feels physically drawn to it, as by an undertow. It is fatal. Even if this painting had been behind our backs, we would have felt it." Cited in Fried 1990, 215; quote appeared originally in Pierre Schneider, *Louvre Dialogues*, trans. Patricia Southgate (New York, 1971), 38. See Charlotte Eyerman, "Courbet's Legacy in the Twentieth Century," herein, for comments on Courbet's seascapes by Paul Cézanne, Clement Greenberg, and others.
4. Baudelaire 1965, 131–32. Baudelaire (1821–1867), poet and critic, was a friend of Courbet and Manet.
5. On the earliest documented painting, *The Mouth of the River Seine* (ca. 1841, Musées des Beaux-Arts, Lille), see Toussaint 1978, 79–80, no. 2, and des Cars 2004, 24, note 13. Courbet's host in Montpellier was his patron Alfred Bruyas, who purchased his 1854 *Seacoast at Palavas* (Musée Fabre), which features Courbet standing by the sea, addressing it with a broad wave. On Courbet and Bruyas see Chang 1996; on the seascapes he painted in 1854, 590. See also Rishel 2003, 159–60.
6. See "James McNeill Whistler" by Richard Dorment (186–99) and "Claude Monet" by John Leighton (200–225) in Wilson-Bareau and Degner 2003.
7. Courbet 1992, 277.
8. While Monet's views of Étretat on the Normandy coast may be more familiar today, Courbet painted there well before the Impressionist painter (though, unfortunately, none of Courbet's Étretat paintings figures in this exhibition). On the range of nineteenth-century artists who painted there, see Tapié 2001; see also Herbert 1994 and Mathieu 1999.
9. They were also seized on by caricaturists: see Herding 1991, 167–68, figs. 80 and 81, for reproductions of caricature in *La Charge* (1870), which lampooned Courbet's *Stormy Sea (The Wave)*, and *Le journal amusant* (1867), which lampooned *The Waterspout* (1866, Philadelphia Museum of Art).
10. On this history see the essays by Lloyd Dewit, "Manet and the Dutch Marine Tradition" (1–15), and John Zarobell, "Marine Painting in Mid-Nineteenth-Century France" (16–33), in Wilson-Bareau and Degner 2003.
11. On this painting see Hamilton 2003, 93; see also *Masterpieces of Painting in the J. Paul Getty Museum*, 5th ed. (Los Angeles, 2003), 116–17, no. 64, entry by Perrin Stein.
12. The scholarly literature on this painting is immense; for a compelling recent interpretation, see Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, *Extremities: Painting Empire in Post-Revolutionary France* (New Haven, 2002).
13. On literary meanings of the sea, see Groom 2003, 34–53.
14. See Font-Réaulx in this catalogue for more on Le Gray and on Courbet's relationship to him. On the relationship between Le Gray, Courbet, and nineteenth-century painting in general, see Jobert 2002; on Courbet's *Wave* (fig. 10), see 245–46.
15. See Dumas in Faunce and Nochlin 1988, 157–61, nos. 50, 51, 52.
16. The Caen painting (pl. 33) was certainly painted from memory while Courbet was detained at Sainte-Pélagie. Toussaint 1978, 190–91, no. 117.
17. See Haudiquet 2004.
18. Guy de Maupassant, "La vie d'un paysagiste," *Gil Blas*, 28 September 1886, reprinted in Toussaint 1978, 228–30, no. 147; the painting to which he refers is *Stormy Sea (The Wave)*.
19. On the Frankfurt version (and the waves generally), see Herding 1999, "Gustave Courbet," 16–29; see also Ann Dumas' entries in Faunce and Nochlin 1988, 188–91, nos. 75 and 76, in which she characterizes Courbet's treatment of the wave as "an image of radical simplification."
20. I am indebted to photographer Anthony Friedkin for these insights, offered in conversation, June 2005. See also Friedkin 1997.
21. See Paul Souriau, *The Aesthetics of Movement*, trans. and ed. Manon Souriau (Amherst, 1983). Souriau characterizes Courbet's "famous Wave" (most likely the Musée d'Orsay version) as a "sea of plaster."

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PLATE 31.

The Waterspout, 1866

Philadelphia Museum of Art

PLATE 32.

Seacoast and Sailboat in the Face of an Approaching Storm, ca. 1869

Staatsgalerie Stuttgart

PLATE 33.

Seascape, 1872

Caen, France, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Caen

PLATE 34.

Seacoast, 1865

Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum

PLATE 35.

Low Tide at Trouville, 1865

Liverpool, The Walker Art Gallery

PLATE 36.

Marine, 1866

Pasadena, Norton Simon Foundation

PLATE 37.
Calm Sea, 1869
New York, The Metropolitan
Museum of Art

PLATE 38.

Channel Coast at Trouville, the Black Rocks, ca. 1865–66

Private collection, New York

PLATE 39.
View of the Mediterranean at Maguelonne, 1858
Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum

PLATE 40.

The Wave, 1869

Frankfurt, Städel Museum

PLATE 41.
The Wave, ca. 1871
Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland

PLATE 42.

The Wave, 1869

New York, Brooklyn Museum

PLATE 43.
Wave in Stormy Weather, 1869
Private collection

COURBET'S "LATE" PICTURES are generally not marked by the kind of authoritative mastery found in those of other nineteenth-century painters, such as Eugène Delacroix, Edgar Degas, Claude Monet, and Paul Cézanne. As with Édouard Manet (French, 1832–1883), whose life was cut short at a relatively young age, one wonders what Courbet might have accomplished had he not spent most of the 1870s in a state of political persecution and his last four years in Swiss exile, and had he not died at the age of fifty-eight. Courbet's final years were nothing short of tragic: cut off from Paris, his center stage, far from his family and friends, he drank heavily and weakened with disease.[1] The quality of his late paintings is wildly uneven, and with or without his assent, his "studio" produced a stream of pictures of dubious authenticity. Members of his studio included painters who had worked with him in Ornans, including Marcel Ordinaire, Chérubino Pata (Swiss, act. 1868–84), Jean-Jean Cornu (French, 1819–1876), and Alexandre Rapin (French, 1839–1889), to whom he paid commissions for paintings they prepared for him.[2]

Despite these difficult circumstances, Courbet produced a number of accomplished landscapes. There is a rather haunting, melancholic tone to many of them, particularly the lake scenes, which are often painted at sunset. Courbet lived in La Tour-de-Peilz on Lake Geneva (also known as Lac Léman) and painted numerous views of the mountain peaks, the sky, the glassy lake, and the rocky shore. In their highly sensitive exploration of color and light, these works are similar to the tidal paintings of the Normandy coast (see pls. 31–38). *Beach Scene* (pl. 44) was painted on a double layer of colored ground, brownish pink beneath a dark reddish brown, over which Courbet laid multiple layers of pigment to convey the shore, water, and sky of his composition. *Sunset, Vevey, Switzerland* (pl. 45), given to the Cincinnati Art Museum by Ohio governor George Hoadly in 1887 (the first of Courbet's works to enter an American museum), is a tonal study, the roseate hues of dusk harmonized with the grays of the rocky shore in the foreground.[3] The contrasts between the gritty clefts of the foreground painted by knife and the smoother paint application of lake and sky provide some of the visual drama in this large "marine."

The Swiss pictures also relate to the Normandy coast paintings in their intended audience and market. Tourists came from all over Europe to enjoy the dramatic natural beauty of Lac Léman (pl. 46).[4] Among the popular destinations on the lake was the Château de Chillon, a picturesque medieval castle a few miles from Courbet's home. The castle appealed to the Romantic fascination with medieval times, further fueled by Lord Byron's popular poem *The Prisoner of Chillon* (1816), which was inspired by a sixteenth-century political prisoner named Bonivard who spent four years chained to a column in the dungeon. However, in his classic painting of the site (pl. 47), Courbet seems less inspired by Romanticism than

Figure 42.
Adolphe Braun (French, 1811–1877). *The Castle of Chillon, Switzerland,* ca. 1862. Albumen silver print, 39.6 × 47.4 cm (14⅜ × 18 11/16 in.). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Lucy Dalbaic Luard Fund

by photography, specifically Adolphe Braun's photograph of the site taken in 1867 (fig. 42), one of several documented uses by the painter of the relatively new medium.[5] There was a high demand for reproductions of the château, met by the flourishing publication of travel books and postcards. Courbet painted numerous versions of the view, of varying quality (Robert Fernier counts twenty in his catalogue raisonné), and he employed his studio assistants to manufacture even more.[6]

The Musée Gustave Courbet version is his finest. The cluster of towers forms a cubic core at the heart of the picture, anchoring local cliffs and the arching rocky shore, distant mountains, reflecting lake, and cloudy sky. The light-reflective qualities of different surfaces are emphasized, while the compact composition holds the varied textures in place. The painting was given by one of Courbet's sisters, Juliette, to the city of Ornans, which still owns it.[7]

Proof of Courbet's sustained ambition through his final year is the epic *Panoramic View of the Alps* (pl. 49). Twice the size of *Winter Landscape* (pl. 48), a haunting work depicting the same mountain range, *Panoramic View* was intended for the 1878 Universal Exposition, and Courbet supposedly worked on it until May 16, 1877. According to the critic Jules-Antoine Castagnary, the fall of Minister Jules Simon on that day quashed all of Courbet's hopes of pardon.[8] Whether it was Courbet's realization that his chances of returning to France were slim, or whether it was his mounting depression, alcoholism, or disease, he stopped work on the canvas.

The painting depicts the mountain range across the lake from La Tour-de-Peilz known as Grammont and, off to the left, the seven peaks called the Dents du Midi (the Teeth

of the South), a view Courbet knew well. His representation of the mountains is breathtaking in its refined, delicate portrayal of the icy, jagged range. Courbet captures the majesty of the distant snow-capped peaks using mostly the palette knife, pulling white across glazed layers of underpaint. In the unfinished lower right, one sees clearly Courbet's dark reddish ground. The lower left, a sketch of a grassy plane with a reclining girl and some goats, is unresolved, and neither the palette nor the subject are in concord with the upper two-thirds of the composition. It was Courbet's last major work. He died on December 31, 1877. (MM)

NOTES

1. Various references to Courbet's disease include edema and palsy. For a brief account of his exile, see Mary Morton, "To Create a Living Art," herein.
2. Herding 1991. See also Toussaint 1978, 194; Callen 1980, 49; Chessex 1979; and Caterina Pierre, "Unjustly Neglected: Gustave Courbet in the 1870s," M.A. Thesis, Hunter College, 1996. Pierre lists seven principal assistants to Courbet: Ernest-Paul Brigot, Theophile Morel, Andre Slomszynski, aka Slom, and the four artists listed in the text.
3. Hoadly recounts in a letter to the museum's director that he felt a political affinity with Courbet, constituting part of the artist's appeal. See his letter in the Cincinnati curatorial file and Denys Sutton, "Queen City of the West," *Apollo*, no. 93 (April 1971): 240–42. See also Courbet's letter of 1873 to Moncure Conway regarding Hoadly's commission. Courbet 1992, 482.
4. Zutter and Chu 1998, 49.
5. See Ann Dumas' entry on the painting in Faunce and Nochlin 1988, in which she notes that the castle was painted by J. M. W. Turner (English, 1775–1851) and that Delacroix painted *The Prisoner of Chillon* (1835, Musée du Louvre). Furthermore, the vicinity of Chillon was the location for Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloise* (1761). On Courbet's use of Braun's photograph, see Scharf 1968, 101–2, and Chessex 1982, 62.
6. Pierre notes that Pata painted at least four and signed them "Gustave Courbet." Pierre 1996, 6 (see note 2).
7. Toussaint 1978, 196.
8. On May 16, 1877, President MacMahon dismissed the left-wing minister Jules Simon, the only man Courbet felt might be sympathetic to his plight. See Herding 1991, 147–8; Toussaint 1978, 230.

PLATE 44.

Beach Scene, 1874

London, The National Gallery

PLATE 45.

Sunset, Vevey, Switzerland, 1874

Cincinnati Art Museum

PLATE 46.

Sunset on Lac Léman, 1874

Vevey, Switzerland, Musée Jenisch

PLATE 47.

Château de Chillon, 1874

Ornans, France, Musée Gustave Courbet

PLATE 48.

Winter Landscape, 1876

Hamburg, Hamburger Kunsthalle

PLATE 49.

Panoramic View of the Alps, 1874–77

Cleveland Museum of Art

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CHECKLIST

NOTE: Selected references listed here direct the reader to specific discussions about paintings in the exhibition. With the exception of a few major publications, only works published after Robert Fernier's catalogue raisonné are cited. Sarah Faunce, whose Courbet catalogue raisonné is forthcoming, was enormously helpful in compiling references. All titles are provided in English; for those lenders who provided the French title, it follows the English. All works are oil on canvas.

CLIFFS AND VALLEYS

1. *The Valley of Ornans*
1858
60 × 85 cm (23 11/16 × 33 9/16 in.)
Saint Louis Art Museum

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, no. 240; Champa 1991, 136–39; Tinterow and Loyrette 1994, 357.

2. *Landscape near Ornans (Paysage des environs d'Ornans)*
1864
88.9 × 127.3 cm (35 × 50 1/8 in.)
Toledo Museum of Art; Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment, Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, no. 412; Courthion 1985, no. 390; Faunce and Nochlin 1988, 152.

3. *The Rock of Hautepierre*
ca. 1869
80.2 × 100.3 cm (31 1/2 × 39 1/2 in.)
Art Institute of Chicago, Emily Crane Chadbourne Fund, 1967.140

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, no. 89; Courthion 1985 no. 83; Brettell 1987, 117; Fried 1990, 243, 245; Bajou 2003, 227.

4. *Rocks at Chauveroche (Paysage de Chauveroche dans les Vaux d'Ornans)*
1864
81 × 100 cm (31 7/8 × 39 3/8 in.)
Private collection

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, no. 410; Courthion 1985, no. 388.

Los Angeles only

5. *Valley of the Loue, possibly near Mouthier-Haute-Pierre*
late 1860s
116 × 138.5 cm (45 11/16 × 54 1/2 in.)
Courtesy of Salander-O'Reilly, New York

Selected References: Faunce 2003, 48–49.

6. *Composed Landscape: Spring in the Rocks of Doubs (Paysage composé: Source dans les rochers du Doubs)*
1871
65 × 81 cm (25 9/16 × 31 7/8 in.)
Besançon, France, Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 2, no. 789.

Los Angeles and Houston only

7. *Stream in the Jura Mountains (The Torrent)*
ca. 1872–73
59.1 × 72.4 cm (23 1/4 × 28 1/2 in.)
Honolulu Academy of Arts, Purchase, gifts of Mrs. Philip E. Spalding, Mrs. Clyde Doran, Renee Halbedl, Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Marcus, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred J. Ostheimer, by exchange; and with funds given in memory of William Hyde Rice, 1981 (4946.1)

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 2, no. 840.

8. *The Gust of Wind (Le Coup de vent)*
ca. 1865
143.5 × 228.5 cm (56 1/2 × 89 15/16 in.)
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Gift of Caroline Wiess Law

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, no. 186; Courthion 1985, no. 180.

FORESTS AND STREAMS

9. *The Fringe of the Forest (L'Orée de la forêt)*
ca. 1856
88.3 × 115.2 cm (34 3/4 × 45 3/8 in.)
Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Louis E. Stern Collection, 1963

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, no. 194; Courthion 1985, no. 201; Faunce and Nochlin 1988, 141.

10. *Stream in the Forest (Ruisseau dans la forêt)*
ca. 1862
156.8 × 114 cm (61 3/4 × 44 7/8 in.)
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of Mrs. Samuel Parkman Oliver

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 2, no. 637; Courthion 1985, no. 634; Faunce and Nochlin 1988, 142; Shackelford and Wissman 2000, 54–55.

11. *The Stream (Le Ruisseau du Puits-Noir; vallée de la Loue)*
1855
104.1 × 137 cm (41 × 53 15/16 in.)
Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. P. H. B. Frelinghuysen in memory of her father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer; 1943.15.2

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, no. 174; Courthion 1985, no. 169; Faunce and Nochlin 1988, 121, 123–24; Fried 1990, 100, 108, 342; Rubin 1997, 225–28; Zutter and Chu 1998, 129; Eitner 2000, 105–112; Bajou 2003, 246, 252, 390.

12. *Stream of the Puits Noir (Le Ruisseau de Puits Noir)*
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64.8 × 81.3 cm (25 1/2 × 32 in.)
Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal, Purchase, John W. Tempest Fund

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, no. 177; Eitner 2000, 108–9.

13. *Stream of the Puits-Noir at Ornans*
1868
100 × 150.5 cm (39⅜ × 59¼ in.)
Pasadena, Norton Simon Art Foundation, Gift of Norton Simon

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, no. 196; Eitner 2000, 109; Thomas 2000, 75.

Los Angeles only

14. *The Shaded Stream (Le Ruisseau couvert)*
1865
94 × 135 cm (37 × 53⅛ in.)
Paris, Musée d'Orsay

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, no. 462; Callen 1980, 93; Courthion 1985, no. 441; Mainardi 1987, 138–42, 175–76; Fried 1990, 213, 217, 238, 241, 254; Courbet 1992, 275, 277; Faunce 1993, 114; Georgel 1995, 90–91; Bajou 2003, 245.

Los Angeles only

15. *Grotto of the Black Well (Puits Noir)*
1865
82.6 × 96.5 cm (32½ × 38 in.)
Private collection

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, no. 472; Courthion 1985, no. 450; Ives and Barker 2000, 212–13.

Baltimore only

16. *The Shaded Stream at the Puits Noir (Le Puits Noir)*
ca. 1860–65
64.2 × 79.1 cm (25¼ × 31⅛ in.)
The Baltimore Museum of Art; The Cone Collection, Formed by Dr. Claribel Cone and Miss Etta Cone

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, no. 380; Courthion 1985, no. 365; Fried 1990, 213–17, 238, 241, 254; Johnston and Robinson 2000, 90–91.

17. *The Stream at the Puits Noir*
1865
63.8 × 81.3 cm (25⅛ × 32 in.)
Columbus Museum of Art Museum Purchase, Derby Fund

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, no. 470.

18. *Roe Deer at a Stream (La Remise aux Chevreuils)*
1868
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Fort Worth, Kimbell Art Museum

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 2, no. 644; Courthion 1985, no. 621; Zutter and Chu 1998, 143, no. 50.

ROCKS AND GROTTOES

19. *La Roche Pourrie*
1864
59.7 × 73 cm (23½ × 28¾ in.)
Salins-les-Bains, France, Musée Max-Claudet

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, no. 409; Courthion 1985, no. 387; Zutter and Chu 1998, 137; Bajou 2003, 234, 238.

20. *Grotto of Sarrazine near Nans-sous-Sainte-Anne*
ca. 1864
50 × 60 cm (19¹¹⁄₁₆ × 23⅝ in.)
Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, 2004.47

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, no. 392; Courthion 1985, no. 373.

21. *Source of the Lison*
1864
65.5 × 80.5 cm (25¹³⁄₁₆ × 31¹¹⁄₁₆ in.)
Berlin, Nationalgalerie

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, no. 388; Hofmann and Herding 1978, 548; Courthion 1985, no. 369; Forster-Hahn et al. 2001, 168; Wesenberg and Förschl 2002, 102.

Los Angeles and Houston only

22. *Source of the Loue (Les Sources de la Loue)*
1864
80 × 100 cm (31½ × 39⅜ in.)
Brussels, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, no. 390; Courthion 1985, no. 371; Font-Réaulx 2004, 37.

23. *Source of the Loue*
1864
99.7 × 142.2 cm (39¼ × 56 in.)
New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, no. 387; Courthion 1985, no. 368; Georgel 1995, 73; Bajou 2003, 248–50.

SNOWSCAPES

24. *The Roe Deer's Shelter in Winter (La Remise des Chevreuils en hiver)*
ca. 1866
54 × 72 cm (21¼ × 28⁹⁄₁₆ in.)
Lyon, Musée des Beaux-Arts

Selected References: Lindsay 1973, no. 65; Fernier 1977–78, vol. 2, no. 560; Hofmann and Herding 1978, 554; Callen 1980, 97; Courthion 1985, no. 560.

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25. *Roe Deer in a Snowy Landscape (Chevreuils dans un paysage de neige)*
ca. 1867
65.5 × 54.7 cm (25¹³⁄₁₆ × 21⁹⁄₁₆ in.)
New York, Wildenstein & Co.

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 2, no. 616; Courthion 1985, no. 599.

26. *The Shelter of the Deer (Remise de cerfs)*
ca. 1868
60 × 73 cm (23⅝ × 28¾ in.)
New York, Wildenstein & Co.

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 2, no. 647; Courthion 1985, no. 626.

27. *The Wounded Deer (Le Cerf blessé)*
ca. 1869
65 × 81 cm (25⁹⁄₁₆ × 31⅞ in.)
Hachioji, Japan, Murauchi Art Museum

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 2, no. 650; Courthion 1985, no. 717.

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28. *Trees in the Snow*
1865
72.4 × 92.1 cm (28½ × 36¼ in.)
Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, no. 486; Courthion 1985, no.457; Rubin 1997, 245–48.

29. *The Forest in Winter*
1860
69.9 × 109.2 cm (27½ × 43 in.)
Cincinnati Art Museum

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, no. 266.

30. *Winter Landscape near Ornans*
1865–70
51 × 60 cm (20⅛ × 23⅝ in.)
Wuppertal, Germany, Von der Heydt-Museum

SEASCAPES

31. *The Waterspout (La Trombe)*
1866
43.2 × 65.7 cm (17 × 25⅞ in.)
Philadelphia Museum of Art; John G. Johnson Collection, 1917

Selected References: Miquel 1975, 729; Fernier 1977–78, vol. 2, no. 595; Courthion 1985, no. 510; Faunce and Nochlin 1988, 161; Bajou 2003, 296–98; des Cars 2004, 27.

32. *Seacoast and Sailboat in the Face of an Approaching Storm*
ca. 1869
60 × 73.5 cm (23⅝ × 28¹⁵⁄₁₆ in.)
Staatsgalerie Stuttgart

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 2, no. 701; Courthion 1985, no. 674; Courbet 1992, 277.

33. *Seascape (Paysage de mer)*
1872
38 × 45.8 cm (14¹⁵⁄₁₆ × 18¹⁄₁₆ in.)
Musée des Beaux-Arts de Caen

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 2, no. 817; Callen 1980, 108; Bordes, Jourdan, and Marie 1985, 61; Herding 1991, 152; Bajou 2003, 378–79; Haudiquet 2004, 96–97.

Los Angeles only

34. *Seacoast (Marine)*
1865
53.5 × 64 cm (21¹⁄₁₆ × 25³⁄₁₆ in.)
Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, WRM 2905

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, no. 498; Courthion 1985, no. 464; Faunce and Nochlin 1988, 161; Herding 1991, 93–94, 153; Zutter and Chu 1998, 139; Bajou 2003, 293–94.

35. *Low Tide at Trouville*
1865
59.6 × 72.6 cm (23⁷⁄₁₆ × 28⁹⁄₁₆ in.)
Liverpool, The Walker Art Gallery

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, no. 519; Courthion 1985, no. 490; Faunce and Nochlin 1988, 155–59; Georgel 1995, 83; Zutter and Chu 1998, 140; Bajou 2003, 293.

36. *Marine*
1866
50.2 × 61 cm (19¾ × 23⅝ in.)
Pasadena, Norton Simon Foundation

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 1, no. 499; Courthion 1985, no. 465; Faunce 1993, 110.

Los Angeles only

37. *Calm Sea (Mer calme)*
1869
59.7 × 73 cm (23½ × 28¾ in.)
New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 2, no. 712; Wagner 1981, 423; Tinterow and Loyrette 1994, 364.

38. *Channel Coast at Trouville, the Black Rocks*
ca. 1865–66
50.2 × 62.2 (19¾ × 24½ in.)
Private collection, New York

Selected References: Faunce 2003, 34–35.

39. *View of the Mediterranean at Maguelonne*
1858
92 × 135 (36¼ × 53⅛ in.)
Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum

Selected References: Courthion 1985, no. 230.

Houston and Baltimore only

40. *The Wave (La Vague)*
1869
63 × 92 cm (24¹³⁄₁₆ × 36¼ in.)
Frankfurt, Städel Museum

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 2, no. 686; Hofmann and Herding 1978, 553, pl. 16; Courthion 1985, no. 659; Herding, "Gustave Courbet," 1999, 16; Bajou 2003, 298–99.

Los Angeles only

41. *The Wave*
ca. 1871
46 × 55 cm (18⅛ × 21¹¹⁄₁₆ in.)
Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 2, no. 681; Hofmann and Herding 1978, 151; Courthion 1985, no. 654.

42. *The Wave (La Vague)*
1869
65 × 88 cm (25⁹⁄₁₆ × 34⅝ in.)
New York, Brooklyn Museum, Gift of Mrs. Horace Havemeyer

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 2, no. 688.

43. *Wave in Stormy Weather*
1869
65 × 81 cm (25⁹⁄₁₆ × 31¾ in.)
Private collection

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 2, no. 680; Courthion 1985, no. 653; Rishel 2003, 161.

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SWITZERLAND

44. *Beach Scene (Vue du Lac Léman par ciel nuageux)*
1874
38 × 55.5 cm (14¹⁵⁄₁₆ × 21⅞ in.)
London, The National Gallery

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 2, no. 950; Courthion 1985, no. 944; Herding 1991, 152–53; Zutter and Chu 1998, 48, 98, no. 72; Bajou 2003, 391, 393.

45. *Sunset, Vevey, Switzerland*
1874
65.4 × 81.3 cm (25¾ × 32 in.)
Cincinnati Art Museum, Gift of George Hoadly

Selected References: Courbet 1992, 482–83.

46. *Sunset on Lac Léman (Coucher de Soleil sur le Lac Léman)*
1874
54.5 × 65.4 cm (21⁷⁄₁₆ × 25¾ in.)
Vevey, Switzerland, Musée Jenisch

Selected References: Foucart 1977, 88; Fernier 1977–78, vol. 2, no. 948; Callen 1980, 111; Bordes, Jourdan, and Marie 1985, 65; Herding 1991, 135, 154; Rubin 1997, 289–93; Zutter and Chu 1998, 148; Bajou 2003, 391–92.

47. *Château de Chillon*
1874
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Ornans, France, Musée Gustave Courbet

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 2, no. 937; Callen 1980, 112; Bordes, Jourdan, and Marie 1985, 65; Faunce and Nochlin 1988, 203–4; Rubin 1997, 289–93; Zutter and Chu 1998, 148–49; Bajou 2003, 302, 390.

Los Angeles only

48. *Winter Landscape*
1876
73 × 101 cm (28¹⁵⁄₁₆ × 39¾ in.)
Hamburg, Hamburger Kunsthalle

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 2, no. 1027; Hofmann and Herding 1978, 322–23.

49. *Panoramic View of the Alps (La Dent du Midi)*
1874–77
151.2 × 210.2 cm (59½ × 82¾ in.)
Cleveland Museum of Art

Selected References: Fernier 1977–78, vol. 2, no. 955; Hofmann and Herding 1978, 65; Faunce and Nochlin 1988, 204–6; Herding 1991, 147–52; Faunce 1993, 45; Georgel 1995, 126–27; Rubin 1997, 300; Zutter and Chu 1998, 149; d'Argencourt 1999, 164–65; Bajou 2003, 393, 397.

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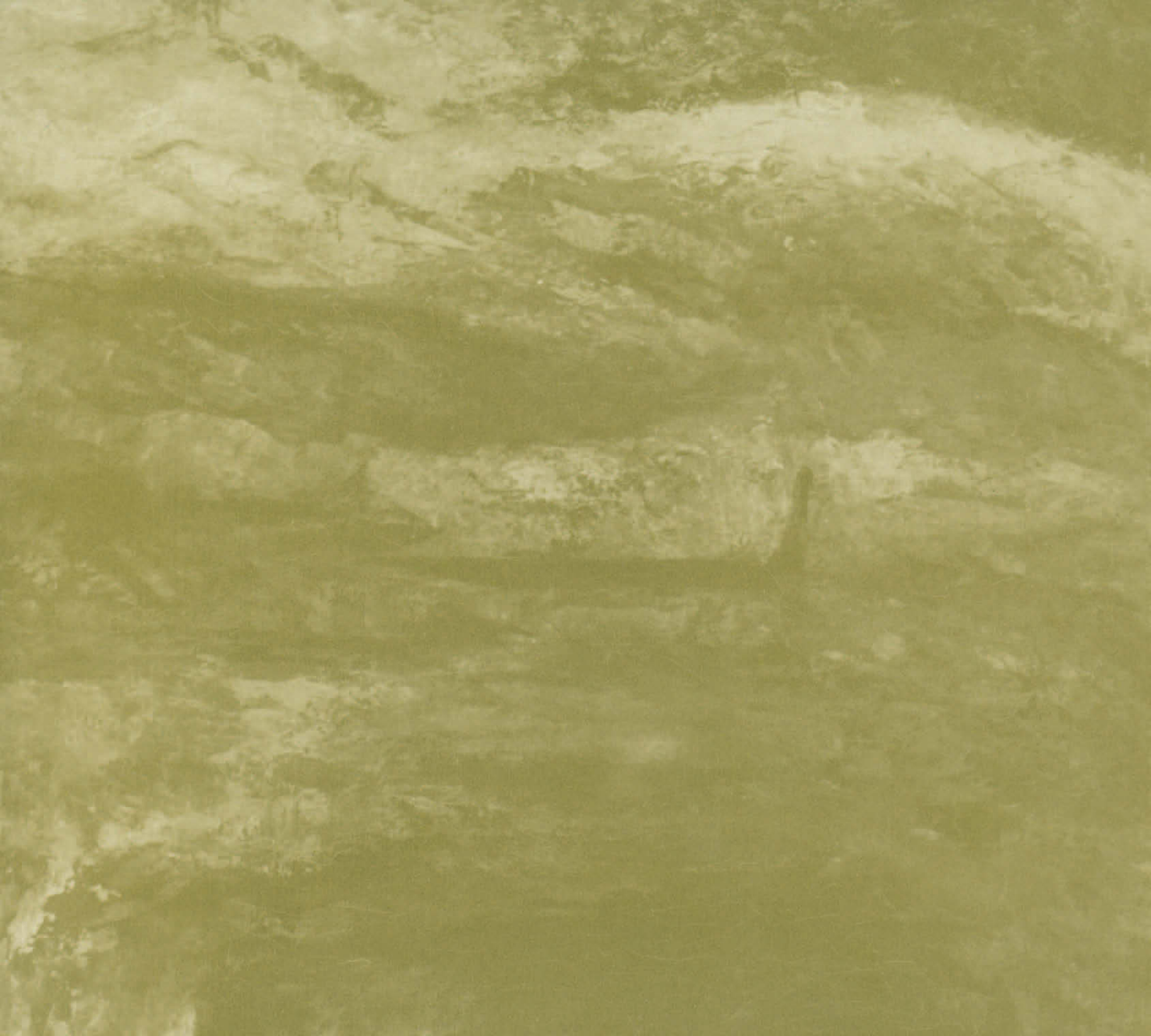

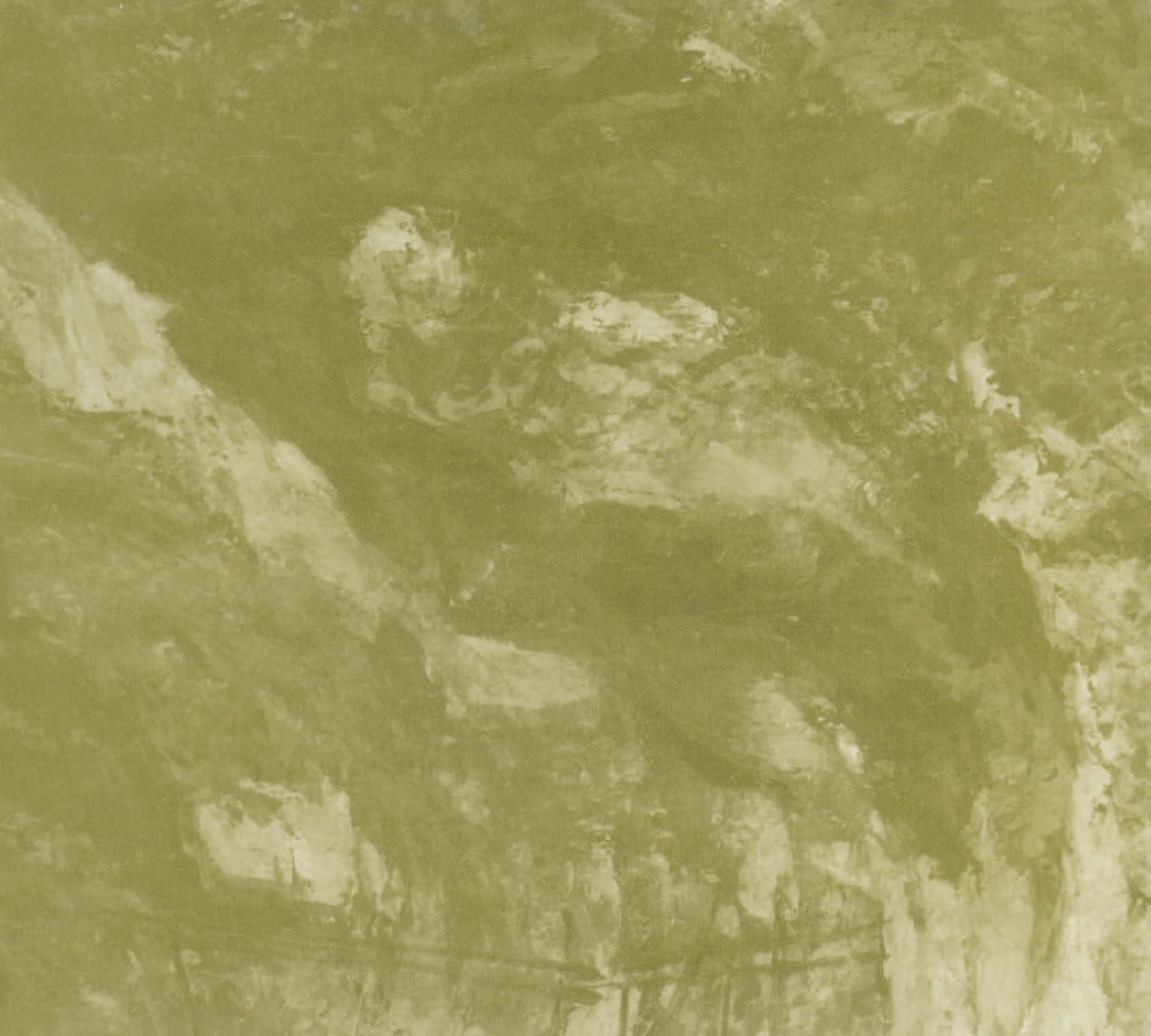

COURBET AND THE MODERN LANDSCAPE explores Gustave Courbet's radical innovations in landscape painting. The authors reconsider Courbet's achievements in this genre in relation to his controversial career, to the importance of his landscape work in the emergence of Modernism, and to nineteenth-century landscape photography.

Forty-nine paintings, dating from 1855 to 1877, are beautifully reproduced here and organized thematically into six parts. Each part corresponds to the subject matter that inspired Courbet's emotionally charged landscapes: the primal energy of cliffs and valleys; the solitude of forest and streams; the glacial time of rocks and grottoes; the changing rhythms of the sea; the elemental structure of snow; plus the late, melancholic visions of lakes and mountain ranges painted during Courbet's exile in Switzerland.

This handsomely illustrated volume offers a fresh look at Courbet's signal importance to modern art.

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