Impressionist Paris.
A Panoramic View of Paris in French Impressionism

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PARIS

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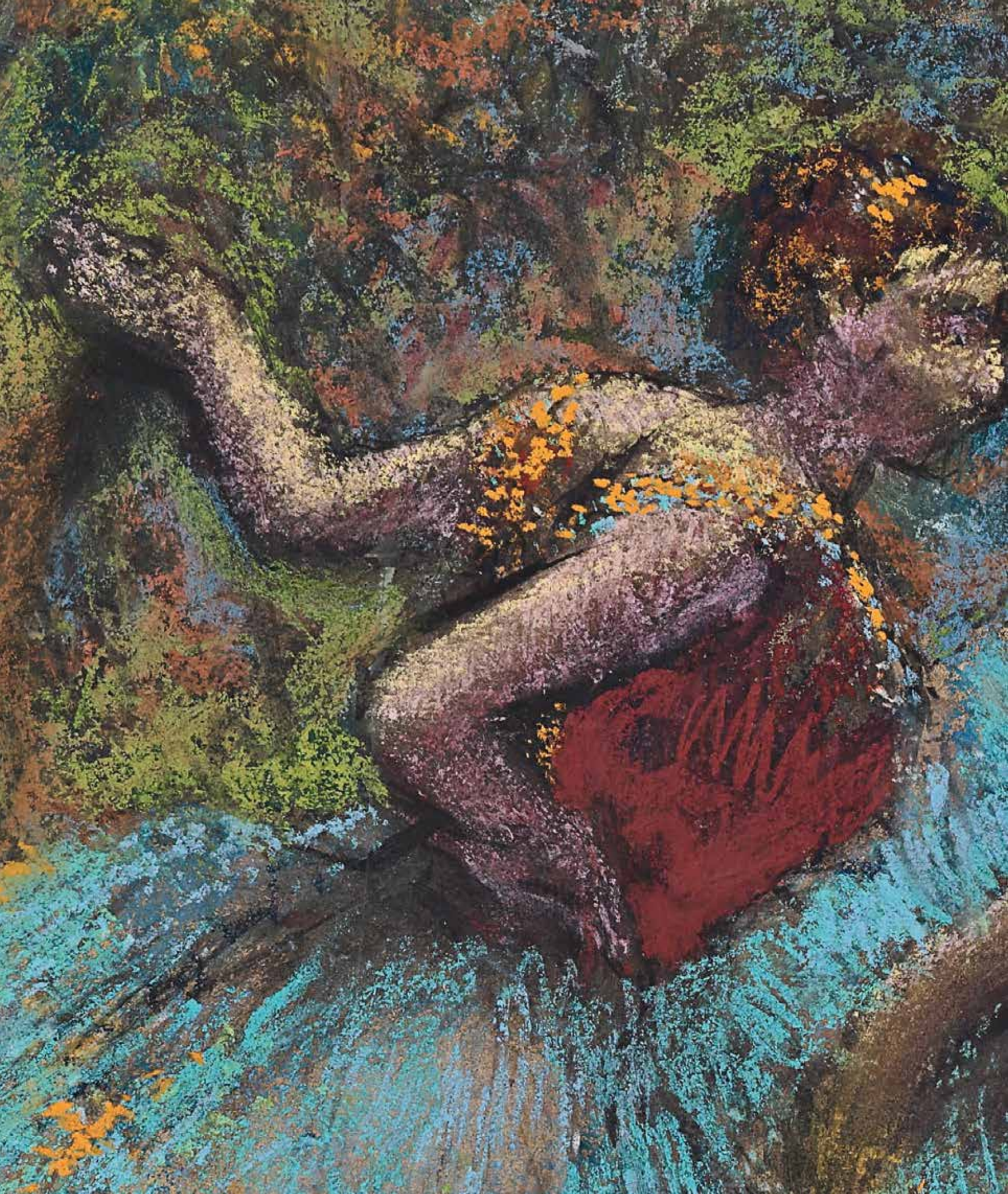
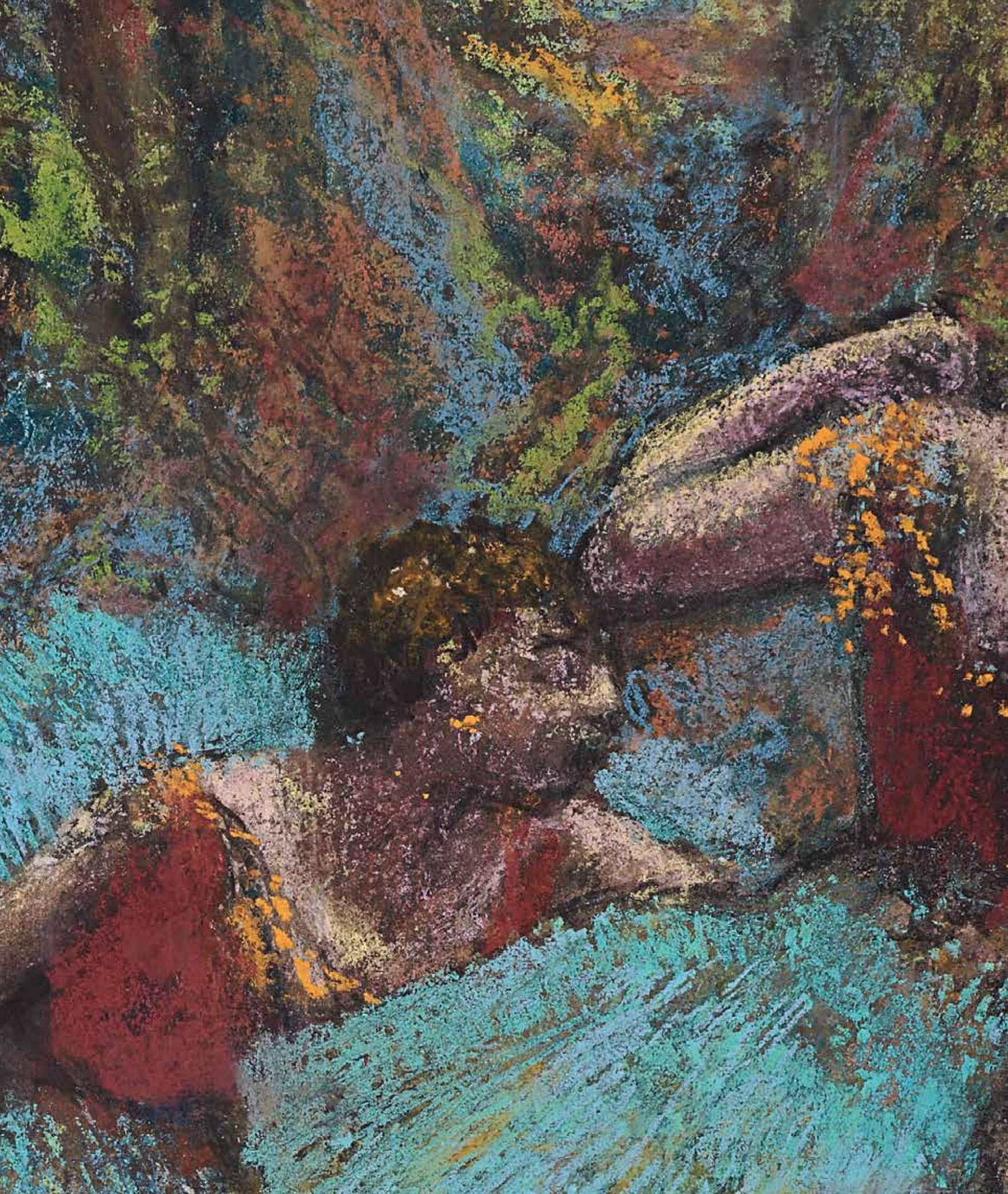
A Panoramic View of Paris in French Impressionism

Edited by Frouke van Dijke

HANNIBAL KUNSTMUSEUM DEN HAAG





FOREWORD

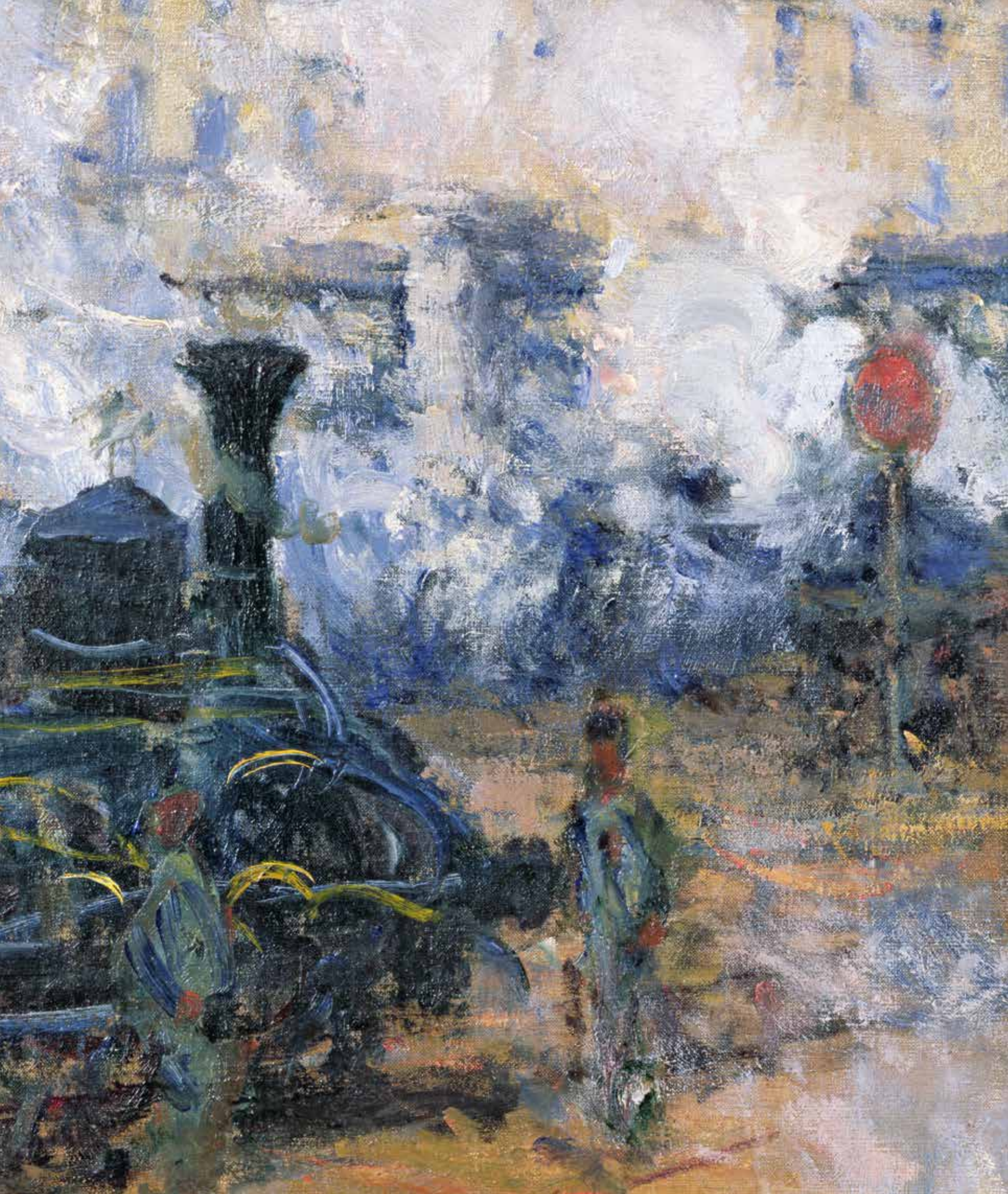
The Impressionists are known as painters of modern life, a reputation they owe primarily to their depictions of Paris. We are lucky enough to have one of the finest examples of an Impressionist Paris cityscape, *Quai du Louvre* by Claude Monet, in the collection of the Kunstmuseum Den Haag. The painting is not only one of the highlights of our collection, but it also marks a pivotal moment in art history. It is one of three cityscapes that Monet painted from the balcony of the Louvre in 1867. Thanks to a unique partnership with the Alte Nationalgalerie in Berlin and the Allen Memorial Art Museum at Oberlin College, Ohio, the Kunstmuseum is reuniting these three remarkable paintings. As a young artist, Monet turned his back on the hallowed old masters in the Louvre, choosing instead to paint modern life on the streets. For this reason, art historian Linda Nochlin characterised his three cityscapes as a true turning point in history. With this gesture, Monet settled his dues with the museum – and the stuffy past this institution stood for – and focused entirely on the future.

From the balcony, Monet looked out over a transformed city. Much of medieval Paris had been demolished to make way for new boulevards, squares and apartment buildings. Parks brought nature to the city, and theatres made the new Paris a cultural centre. This was the Paris we know and admire today. But progress had a downside. Modernisation also meant housing shortages, the expulsion of the poor and the exploitation of migrant workers: a harrowing process that we now term gentrification. Today's challenge of making cities liveable for everyone has many similarities with the Paris of the French Impressionists. Perhaps by reflecting on the past, the museum can use this exhibition to contribute to making better decisions for the future.

An exhibition as ambitious as *New Paris: From Monet to Morisot* could not have been realised without the tireless support and dedication of all involved. First, I would like to thank Andria Derstine, director of the Allen Memorial Art Museum, and Ralph Gleis, new director of the Albertina Museum in Vienna and former director of the Alte Nationalgalerie, for their positive response to the Kunstmuseum's proposal to reunite Monet's three cityscapes. In addition, I am grateful to all the museums, libraries, archives and collectors for their generosity in lending their precious artworks. Their exceptional loans have made their way to The Hague thanks to the indemnity granted by the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands. The same generosity has been shown by our sponsors. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Turing Foundation, the Cultuurfonds, the Stichting Zabawas and the Gravin van Bylandt Stichting for their financial support of this project.

I would like to thank Tim Bisschop for the design of this beautiful book, and the team at Hannibal Books for its editing and production. And I am grateful to the authors Alexander Eiling, Judit Geskó, Kimberly A. Jones, Daniel Koep, Vera Merks, Paul Perrin, Michael Philipp and Joke de Wolf for their excellent contributions. In the Kunstmuseum's galleries, their stories are given wonderful form thanks to the design of Roland Buschmann. In addition, I express my gratitude to Gerard Forde for his excellent translations. Finally, I would like to thank Frouke van Dijke, curator of this exhibition, and all my colleagues at the Kunstmuseum for their enthusiasm and dedication.

Margriet Schavemaker
General director
Kunstmuseum Den Haag



THE MYTH OF PARIS

Frouke van Dijke

Paris is the city of contrasts – heaven and hell, mansions and basement dwellings – the city of great lives and menial jobs.[1]

Edmond Texier, 'Les petites industries', in *Paris guide*, 1867

Fig. 1 [p. 59]

Fig. 2 [p. 58]

Fig. 1
Johan Barthold Jongkind (1819–1891), *Demolition of the Rue des Francs-Bourgeois-Saint-Marcel*, 1868
Oil on canvas, 33.9 × 41.9 cm, Kunstmuseum Den Haag. Acquired with the support of the Rembrandt Association

Fig. 2
Charles Marville (1813–1879), Rue des Francs-Bourgeois-Saint-Marcel, as seen from the Place de la Collégiale, 5th/13th arrondissement, Paris, 1865–68
Albumen print, 21.7 × 36.2 cm, Musée Carnavalet – Histoire de Paris

Silhouetted against a cloudy spring sky that threatens rain, on a rooftop on the former rue des Francs-Bourgeois-Saint-Marcel (now boulevard Saint-Marcel) on the Left Bank, a group of men with hammers and pickaxes are chipping away at a building, brick by brick. The painted sign 'Fabrique de cuirs forts' (Hard leather factory) is visible on the facade, which – like the rest of Paris – is being demolished at a steady pace. Below, more workmen are removing the rubble from the street by horse and cart [fig. 1].

The scene was recorded in 1868 by the Dutch painter Johan Barthold Jongkind. Six years earlier, he had met the talented 22-year-old Claude Monet in Normandy and had advised him to paint outdoors as much as possible, leading Monet later to point to the Dutchman as his mentor. Before the Impressionists depicted Paris, Jongkind was already walking through the streets of the French capital with his sketchbook. Moreover, his painting *Demolition of the Rue des Francs-Bourgeois-Saint-Marcel* foreshadows typical Impressionist features: Jongkind painted the scene quickly but accurately with loose brushstrokes and strong contrasts between light and dark. Alongside his signature, he inscribed the date – 19 April 1868 – thus creating not only a modern cityscape, but also a document of the times: a page from the visual diary of a city in transition.

The Impressionists met each other in Paris in the 1860s, the heyday of Haussmann's urban renewal. Tens of thousands of masons, roofers and carpenters were constructing not only new houses and streets, but also the myth of Paris: the city of light, beauty and romance. And the Impressionist painters also played their part. Their cityscapes depict a city where the facades glisten, the streets are swept, and the sun (almost) always shines. This was exactly the image Haussmann had in mind with his all-encompassing design for a new Paris. But the creation of all this beauty went hand in hand with exploitation and oppression. Haussmann may have given Paris a new visage, but it was a city with two faces.

A centre of civilisation

On 22 June 1852, Emperor Napoleon III made Georges-Eugène Haussmann prefect of the Seine department, giving him responsibility for the entire department, including the city of Paris. The appointment was linked to a clear mission: Napoleon III wanted a large-scale redevelopment of his capital. The emperor, who had until recently led the country as president, seized absolute power in 1851 through a coup d'état, enabling him to fulfil his childhood dream of following in the footsteps of his famous uncle, Napoleon Bonaparte. The establishment of the Second Empire was intended to restore not only the honour and glory of France, but also that of the Bonaparte lineage. And so, under the pretext of a civilising offensive, Napoleon III colonised large parts of North Africa, Asia and South America, conquered trading posts and had the Suez Canal dug by thousands of forced labourers in order to secure control of the international market.[2] Amid this aggressive expansionism, the emperor focused his attention on Paris. The capital must fulfil its role as the symbolic centre of this new world power, or as Victor Hugo put it in 1867: 'Paris is the centre of civilisation.'[3]

These were rather grand words for a city that had for decades been choking on its own misery. In 1862, Haussmann reported that more than half of Parisians – about a million people – lived on bread rations. The city recorded the highest mortality rate in France, which continued to rise due to various epidemics.

Fig. 3

Fig. 3
Charles Marville (1813–1879),
Top of the rue Champlain (view to the right) (20th arrondissement), 1877–78
Albumen silver print from glass negative,
26 × 36.6 cm, Musée Carnavalet – Histoire de Paris

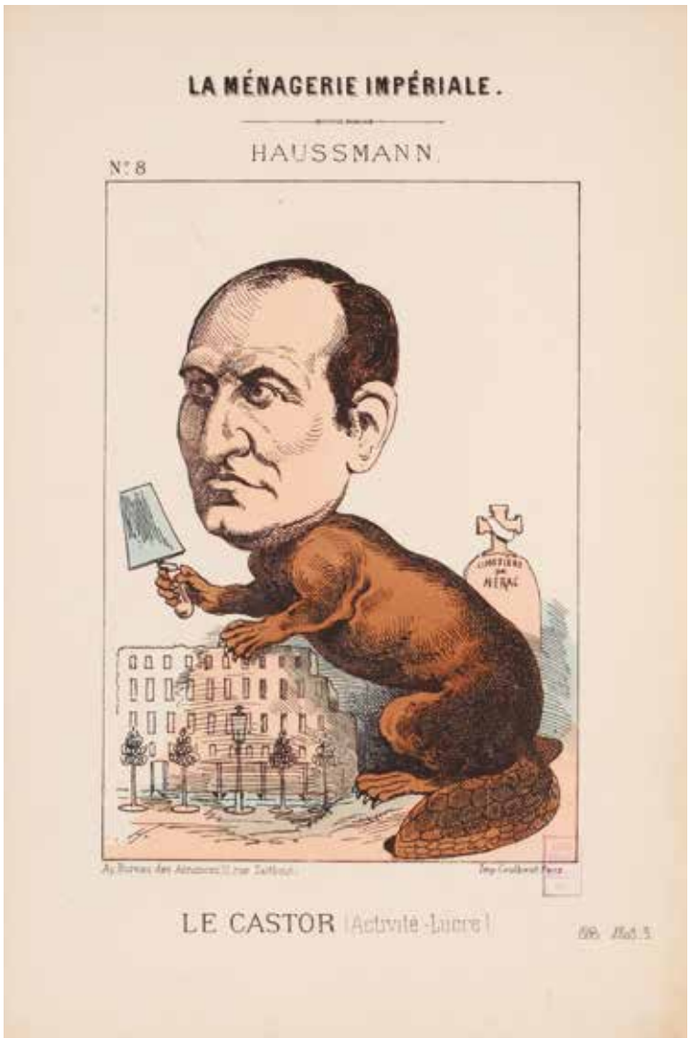


Fig. 4

Some 40,000 people had succumbed to cholera in the previous 20 years. The Seine was both a water supply and a sewer, a foul-smelling river full of excrement and food waste mixed with chemicals from the laundries located along its banks. The small island at its centre, the Île de la Cité, was home to 14,000 people, living in cramped conditions.[4] The city itself was like a patchwork of islands, the tangle of unplanned streets and alleyways so dense that the route from one arrondissement to another was like navigating a maze.

In this respect, Napoleon's vision of Paris cannot be dismissed as one man's megalomaniac project. Indeed, the emperor was not the first to devote himself to transforming the city. Since the Enlightenment, philosophers had regarded the pitiful city as a utopian experiment: a testing ground where well-considered reorganisation could result in a better society. But it was Haussmann who translated these ideas into a grand, comprehensive and strategic plan, implemented at breakneck speed.

Throughout Paris the sound was heard of shovels breaking ground and chisels against brick. Haussmann built houses, schools and hospitals, police stations and fire stations, covered markets and department stores, and laid out squares and parks. Thanks to the wide streets, daylight and oxygen finally streamed in through the windows. Gas lamps and the first experiments with electric lights brought the excitement and thrill of nightlife. New theatres and museums made Paris a centre of culture. Haussmann untangled the city and drew a clear street plan with wide boulevards that cut their way straight through the centre. In all these respects, his eye for detail was unparalleled, ensuring, for example, that the population density – the highest in Europe – was almost the same in each district. The maximum height of buildings, the corresponding proportions of windows and doors and the design of lampposts, newspaper kiosks, benches and even the gutters: everything was a carefully considered component in Haussmann's city as *gesamtkunstwerk*.

This radical transformation garnered praise from some quarters, but also created unrest among Parisians, who no longer recognised their familiar surroundings. Cartoons depicted Haussmann as an overly destructive beaver who left no corner of the city untouched [fig. 4]. Viewed from above the city, the sight evoked a feeling of powerlessness in the photographer and balloonist Nadar: 'These rascals have destroyed, ransacked everything in our country, even the memory.... And, old Parisians... awake each morning like the traveller who arrived yesterday in a foreign city...'[5] By the time Victor Hugo somewhat pompously described Paris as the centre of civilisation, Haussmann had indeed skilfully erased any memory of the city's history of poverty and disease. The great clean-up was complete and with the Universal Exposition of 1867 Napoleon III invited the world to his house-warming party. Visitors were able to inspect every nook and cranny of the new Paris, whether looking down from Nadar's hot-air balloon or on a spectacular tour of the sewer system deep beneath the newly paved streets.[6]

Fig. 5 [p. 67]

Fig. 6 [p. 66]

Fig. 4
Louis Valentin Émile de La Tremblais (1821–1892), *Haussmann/The Beaver (Profitmaking Activity)*
In: Paul Haldol (1835–1875), *La Menagerie Imperiale*, 1870–71, Bibliothèque nationale de France

Fig. 5
Honoré Daumier (1808–1879), From the series *Tenants and Owners*: 'It's a bit hard to be obliged to live in a barrel when one wasn't born to be a cynic', 1854
Lithograph, 27.6 × 35 cm, Musée Carnavalet – Histoire de Paris

Fig. 6
Honoré Daumier (1808–1879), From the series *Tenants and Owners*: 'Your house seems to me to be a good product. – I think so… I made two basements… and when by chance one of these accommodations is vacant, I will grow mushrooms there', 1856
Lithograph, 27.1 × 35.8 cm, Musée Carnavalet – Histoire de Paris

Urban colonisation

The Universal Exposition was not only the city's calling card but also a celebration of industry, where France and foreign nations exhibited their latest inventions and feats of technology. Industrialisation was the catalyst for the new Paris, the engine behind the growing population and the newly acquired wealth of the bourgeoisie. While this elite of industrialists, engineers, bankers and stockbrokers may have lacked noble titles, they certainly had no shortage of money or leisure time. They were a new type of city dweller with new needs, their lives revolving around consumption: imbibing culture in the theatres, eating in restaurants, drinking in bars and nightclubs, and shopping for the latest fashions in department stores. They were the proprietors of Haussmann's Paris, which was designed largely to cater to their lifestyle.

All this was at the expense of the other half, or perhaps the majority, of Parisians: the lower middle classes, the workers, the immigrants. Their homes were demolished and the new apartments built in their place were unaffordable. The 14,000 people on the Île de la Cité were forced to move out. Although Haussmann was concerned with the aesthetics of his city down to the smallest detail, he left the actual construction to the free market. This led to large-scale expropriation and speculation, with slum neighbourhoods bought up, gentrified and sold again at exorbitant prices.[7] Savvy entrepreneurs took their chances. The main character of Émile Zola's novel *The Kill* (1872) is one such speculator, the wily Saccard, who works his way up through the world of real estate via a combination of insider knowledge and bluff. The game had few winners and many losers. In her book *Dividing Paris* (2022), Esther da Costa Meyer characterises the gentrification process as nothing less than a 'brutal act of colonization' of the city.[8] Much of the city's original population was forced to leave, and previously autonomous surrounding villages such as Batignolles, Montmartre and Montparnasse were annexed in 1860, an administrative intervention that in some cases split existing communities in two.[9] The new suburbs now had to pay taxes to Paris. These were partly invested in the beautification of the city centre, in return for which these neighbourhoods received the poor who were driven from the heart of the city and had to suffer the stench of the tanneries and the pollution of the match factories, crucial industries that the inhabitants of the city centre would rather be rid of.

Why expel these labourers 'after making them contribute generously to the embellishments of the city of Paris for 20 years', a group of workers asked themselves in 1867 in a report on various trades in France, published on the occasion of the Universal Exposition.[10] They felt neither nostalgia for the old Paris nor love for the new: 'We do not regret those sordid old homes, poorly lit and unhealthy.… But neither do we like these splendid buildings where the stairs are polished, and the corridors are of stucco: where the bourgeois of the third floor no longer sees the oeuvrier [worker] go by in his working clothes.'[11]

In Haussmann's apartment buildings, different classes lived alongside each other with as little contact as possible. In most cases, the ground floor was intended for shops or employees. The floors above were occupied by the bourgeoisie. The longest climb was, of course, reserved for the poorest residents. The *sixièmes* (sixth-floor rooms) were small, uncomfortable spaces directly under the roof that were freezing cold in winter and boiling hot in summer. Some people made the best of it. For example, a handyman from Montparnasse reported that the residents on the uppermost floors of several adjoining buildings had demolished the walls between them, creating a kind of alley. There, high above Haussmann's street plan, they had created a parallel Paris that met *their* needs.[12]

Art and class

The cartoonist Bertall took a slice through an apartment building to illustrate a cross-section of Parisian society [fig. 7]. His drawing shows the contrast between the comfortably furnished homes of the middle classes and the bare rooms on the top floor, where Bertall depicts a poor couple who cannot feed their children, a poet sheltering from a leaking roof and… two penniless artists.

The Impressionists found themselves in a very particular position, navigating between the different classes in a way that few other Parisians could, with one foot in the elite salon and the other in cafés in the working-class neighbourhoods where they could find affordable spaces to live and work. To keep costs down, Monet, perennially short of money but always immaculately dressed, shared a studio with his friends Frédéric Bazille and Auguste Renoir. Most of the Impressionist artists were born into bourgeois families that were either comfortably off or even extravagantly wealthy. Some no longer received financial support from their families because of their unconventional career choice, while others, such as Gustave Caillebotte, Edgar Degas and Berthe Morisot, were able to hold on to their avant-garde ideals thanks to their well-to-do backgrounds.

The Impressionists were not blind to the city's social divisions. In 1863, the wealthy Bazille was surprised at 'how the people living in smart neighbourhoods are crassly ignorant of everything except the races and the theatre'.[13] Not long thereafter, he made a large painting of an Italian street musician [fig. 8]. Her age is difficult to estimate since her face has both childlike and adult features. With a violin in her hand, she stands at the intersection of two streets, with the city looming behind her squat figure. Around the same time, Auguste Renoir also painted a monumental portrait of a violin-playing artiste, in this case a clown, probably from the popular Cirque Napoléon [fig. 9]. Both artists took their example from Édouard Manet, who in the 1860s was mainly interested in figures on the fringes of society: rag-pickers, street vendors and vagabonds, who for centuries had defined the city's streetscape. But Haussmann's attention was focused largely on the new elite and soon the Impressionists' interests shifted along with it, resulting in numerous depictions of horse racing and the theatre.

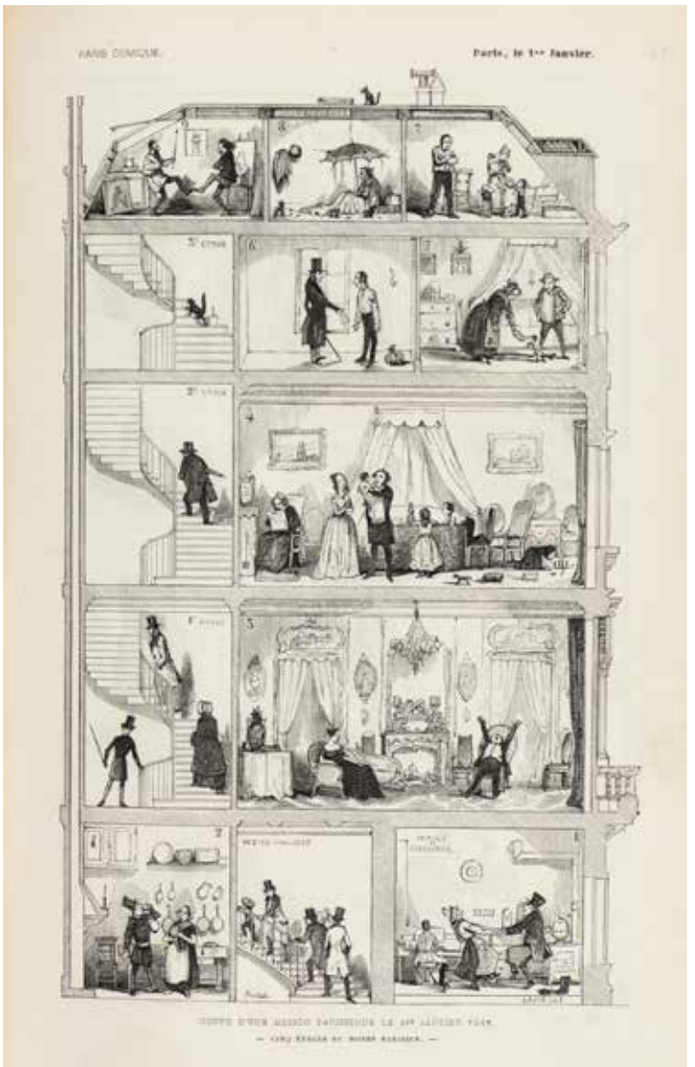


Fig. 7

Fig. 7
Bertall (1820–1882), Section of a Parisian house on 1 January 1845 – five floors of the Parisian world
In: George Sand et al., *Le Diable à Paris, Paris et les Parisiens*, Paris, 1845

Fig. 8
Frédéric Bazille (1841–1870), *Little Italian Street Singer*, 1866
Oil on canvas, 131 × 98 cm, Musée Fabre de Montpellier

Fig. 9
Auguste Renoir (1841–1919), *The Clown*, 1868
Oil on canvas, 193.5 × 130 cm, Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo

Fig. 10
Édouard Manet (1832–1883), *A Game of Croquet*, 1873
Oil on canvas, 72.5 × 106 cm, Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main, property of the Städelscher Museums-Verein e.V.

Fig. 11
Claude Monet (1840–1926), *The Tuileries*, 1876
Oil on canvas, 54 × 73 cm, Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris, Gift of Eugène and Victorine Donop de Monchy, 1940

Fig. 8 [p. 64]

Fig. 9 [p. 65]

The right to saunter

It was no coincidence that the Impressionists' careers began in Paris. In addition to access to the best art training and exhibition opportunities, the city provided abundant inspiration. The early cityscapes of Manet, Monet and Renoir are linked to the vision of Charles Baudelaire, the poet who had a love-hate relationship with Paris. Baudelaire saw the city as the modern landscape and believed that the artist should respond to it. The Industrial Revolution had replaced the cliffs with apartment blocks and the forests and meadows with urban parks. For Baudelaire, modern art was about capturing the 'transient' and the 'fleeting'. And what environment embodied this phenomenon better than the ever-changing streets of Paris?[14] Sauntering was the essence. The arrival of pavements and attractive shop windows radically altered the use of public space. Whereas the elite once ventured out only by horse and carriage – and commoners on foot – strolling had become a popular activity among the middle classes.[15] Baudelaire characterised the painter of modern life as a *flâneur*: a figure who wanders aimlessly through the streets, without a mapped-out route or predetermined plan, with the sole purpose of absorbing the city's impressions.

The Impressionists observed urban life on café terraces and in the theatre. They painted picnics and boat trips: the leisure activities of the rich middle classes, to which they belonged. This is exemplified in *A Game of Croquet* [fig. 10] in which Manet has depicted his friends playing the popular ball game in the garden of the Belgian painter Alfred Stevens. He had bought a stately house on rue des Martyrs, equipped with an English landscaped garden. He lived there for only for a few years, because his house too was eventually demolished. 'Behind every house there was a garden,' Renoir later recalled bitterly about the lost Paris.[16] His house on place du Carrousel was demolished to make way for the expansion of the Louvre.

Renoir's resentment is somewhat misplaced. A private garden in Paris was an exception. Moreover, the city's parks were privately owned. Napoleon III was aware of the value of nature in the city, also for the working classes. One of the most important nineteenth-century urban interventions in the capital was the greening of public spaces.[17] Nothing was too extravagant for the emperor: artificial waterfalls and ponds, rock formations, and an army of botanists who forced thousands of exotic plants into the French soil with great skill and ingenuity. These public parks were popular with the Impressionists. Caillebotte and Monet, who both loved gardening, returned time and again to the flower beds of Parc Monceau, established by the Duke of Chartres.

In 1876, Monet captured the enviable view from the fifth-floor apartment of the art collector Victor Chocquet, looking out over the garden of the old Tuileries Palace [fig. 11]. This now public park had formerly been open to the public only a few days a year. But the *pièce de résistance* of Parisian parks was the Bois de Boulogne, a grand former hunting ground in the wealthy west of the city, where the bourgeoisie gathered to walk, ride horses and network. It was a favourite subject of Morisot, who lived only a stone's throw away.

Fig. 10 [p. 45]

Fig. 11 [p. 197]

Fig. 12

Fig. 12
Two prints depicting the plants
of the Bois de Boulogne
From: Adolphe Alphand, *Les Promenades de Paris*, 1867–73,
Lithograph, 45 × 63 cm, Kunstmuseum Den Haag

Fig. 13
Claude Monet (1840–1926),
The Pont de l'Europe. Gare Saint-Lazare, 1877
Oil on canvas, 65 × 81 cm, Gift of Eugène and Victorine
Donop de Monchy, 1940, Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris

Fig. 14
Gustave Caillebotte (1848–1894),
Paris Street. Rainy Day, 1877
Oil on canvas, 54 × 65 cm, Musée Marmottan
Monet, Paris, Michel Monet bequest, 1966

The public urban park is a fascinating phenomenon. Here a mixing of classes took place that led to some nervousness among the elite. In her article 'La rêverie à Paris' (1867), George Sand made a case for the importance of daydreaming, regardless of rank or position. She praised Paris as the capital of the *flâneur*, mainly thanks to its parks. Here the landscape stimulates the imagination. Under the motto 'luxury for everyone!', Sand declares sauntering (one's head full of creativity and free from worries) as a basic right.[18] Despite Napoleon III's progressive point of departure, Paris showed little eagerness when it came to the democratisation of these urban oases. High fences and the enforcement of regulations were designed to keep out and demotivate the unwanted stroller. The Bois de Boulogne was difficult to reach on foot, while the omnibus was more expensive on Sundays – the only day off for workers – than on weekdays. Workers did not saunter, they walked, every day and for hours, from the suburbs to the city centre because the horse-drawn tram was too expensive, or its timetable did not correspond with their working hours.[19]

Fig. 13 [p. 95]

Fig. 14 [pp. 134–135]

Sand praises the hardworking gardeners who maintained the beauty of the Bois de Boulogne, but forgets the foreign labourers who helped to shape Paris's parks. She compares her visit to the greenhouses full of exotic flowers, agaves and banana trees to a tale from *The Thousand and One Nights*. The flora came partly from French colonies such as Algeria, where botanical gardens provided a supply of plants and animals. The Parisian park was thus part of the emperor's colonial ambition. The message was clear: everything exotic can be tamed thanks to superior French engineering.[20] Even Sand, a woman with radically progressive ideals for her time, was trapped in this colonial perspective when she expressed her admiration for the 'tropical forms' of the Bois de Boulogne, for which courageous French naturalists had braved 'distant worlds' and the 'harmful appetite of wild animals and native cannibals, some of whom are fond of white flesh in tomato sauce'.[21]

Embracing the new Paris

The desire for nature was fuelled by the rise of industry. While Haussmann kept the city centre as free as possible from factories, the railways symbolised progress and modernity. In the *Paris guide* of 1867, Léon Say describes the railway stations as the real gateways to Paris, while not hiding his disdain for the working class: 'The other [gateways] are only service entrances for market gardeners, quarrymen, for a few backward messengers.'[22] Particularly in the 8th arrondissement, around Gare Saint-Lazare, the Impressionists celebrated the new world of steel, steam and cast iron as the visual language of the future.

Initially, the young Impressionists preferred to stroll around the old and familiar Paris. Renoir in particular was less than charmed by the uniformity of Haussmann's new edifices, complaining that the multiplicity of the city's striking buildings had been exchanged for one and the same facade: 'cold and lined up like soldiers at a review'.[23] Most of Monet and Renoir's early cityscapes depict locations around the Pont Neuf, despite its name the oldest bridge in Paris. When Monet painted three different views from the balcony of the Louvre in 1867, he focused on several historic monuments that Haussmann had spared from demolition. But the new Paris eventually seduced the Impressionists. Monet painted a series of views near the railway tracks of Gare Saint-Lazare with the modern lattice pattern of the cast-iron Pont de l'Europe prominently featured [fig. 13]. The master of capturing an atmosphere was clearly drawn to this peculiar mix of heavy metal and immaterial clouds of steam. Even more than Monet, the lesser-known Impressionist Armand Guillaumin considered this area his home. Unlike his colleagues, Guillaumin came from humble origins. He worked as a ticket seller for the railways, and later in the department of bridges and hydraulic engineering at the city hall.[24] His paintings, depicting industrial activity along the Seine, including smoking factory chimneys and cranes, fitted seamlessly with his background.

But no one embraced Haussmann's Paris more warmly than Caillebotte. As one of the youngest and richest of the Impressionists, he embodied the bourgeois, moving in the highest circles regardless of his artistic ambitions. In 1877, he painted the work *Paris Street. Rainy Day* [fig. 14], a departure from the

Fig. 15 [pp. 38–39]

Fig. 16 [p. 37]

usual sunny Impressionist views of the city.[25] Caillebotte does not specify the exact intersection, so recently constructed it did not yet bear a name. We now know it to be the area around the place de l'Europe but, above all, Caillebotte's cityscape symbolises every new, identical-looking street in Paris.[26] Shortly afterwards, he moved with his brother to a luxury apartment on boulevard Haussmann, named after the prefect himself. From their balcony, he painted several views of the city's new skyline, including the gleaming gold sculptures on the facade of the new Opéra Garnier [figs. 15–16].

Caillebotte was fond of playful perspectives, giving the Impressionist cityscape a new dimension. His painting *View Seen Through a Balcony* (1880) provides the merest glimpse of the street scene, viewed through the decorative metalwork of a typical Haussmannian balcony [fig. 17]. This point of view reflects Caillebotte's interest in modern photography, his background as an engineer and his social origins. Caillebotte, Monet, Renoir and Pissarro often painted their views of Paris from a comfortable apartment, either their own or one made available to them by one of their hospitable clients. This choice was, of course, partly based on practical considerations: an interior or a balcony offered the opportunity to work in peace. Moreover, painting on the street sometimes required a permit. But the bird's-eye view is also the perspective of the bourgeois, who sees and experiences Paris from the vantage point of his own class. For them, the myth of Paris was often a reality.

This does not mean that the Impressionists were blind to the other side of Paris. Caillebotte painted not only views from bourgeois apartments, but also shirtless men on their knees scraping a parquet floor. Degas depicted the strong upper arms of women starching businessmen's white collars. But they are exceptions to the rule. Some art historians have accused the Impressionists of being complicit in the gentrification of Paris through their sunny and therefore promotional images of Haussmann's city. But the ideas of the emperor and the prefect also stemmed largely from good intentions: necessary reforms, whose execution sadly was dominated by the needs, interests and taste of the rich. The temptation of their Paris was too great, the myth too enchanting.

Fig. 15
Gustave Caillebotte (1848–1894),
Rue Halévy, View from the Sixth Floor, 1878
Oil on canvas, 59.5 × 73 cm, Museum Barberini, Potsdam

Fig. 16
Gustave Caillebotte (1848–1894),
Rue Halévy, View from the Balcony, 1877
Oil on canvas, 54 × 65.5 cm, Museum Barberini, Potsdam

Fig. 17
Gustave Caillebotte (1848–1894),
View Seen Through a Balcony, 1880
Oil on canvas, 65.6 × 54.9 cm, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam. Purchased with support from the VriendenLoterij, the Vincent van Gogh Foundation, the Mondriaan Fund, the Rembrandt Association, thanks in part to the Culture Fund, and the VSB Fund

Fig. 17 [p. 34]

1 Edmond Texier, 'Les petites industries' in *Paris guide par les principaux écrivains et artistes de la France*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1867), p. 963.
2 Emmanuelle Guenot, 'Napoleon III and France's Colonial Expansion: National Grandeur, Territorial Conquests and Colonial Embellishment 1852–70', in Robert Aldrich and Cindy McCreery (eds.), *Crowns and Colonies: European Monarchies and Overseas Empires* (Manchester, 2016), pp. 211–220.
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CAMILLE PISSARRO (1830–1903)

L'Avenue de l'Opera, 1898
Le Boulevard Montmartre, Mardi Gras, Sunset, 1897
Boulevard Montmartre, Dusk, 1897

On a sunny winter's morning in early 1898, Camille Pissarro painted the view from his room at the Hôtel du Louvre, located on the corner of the place du Palais Royal in Paris, where he stayed from the winter of 1897 to the spring of 1898. Pissarro looked out on the place du Théâtre français and the avenue de l'Opéra, where the Palais Garnier (also known as the Opéra Garnier) stands at the end of the wide boulevard. This newly built opera house served as the focal point for the surrounding streets in the chic quartier de l'Opéra.[1] The construction of the avenue de l'Opéra, formerly the boulevard Napoléon, was completed in 1877. In a letter to his son Lucien, Pissarro describes the view of the avenue thus: 'It may not be very aesthetic,... but [in fact] so silvery, so bright, so vibrant with life.'[2]

For many years, Pissarro had mostly painted landscapes and scenes of peasant life. In the last years of his career, he travelled to large cities such as London, Rouen and Paris. There he discovered a new theme: the cityscape, in which the energy of the city and its inhabitants is central.[3] However, Pissarro did not participate in the bustling life of the city himself, but instead painted it from a distance. Tormented by a recurring eye infection, he had been advised by his doctor to avoid wind and bright light. Although he took this advice with a pinch of salt, Pissarro made many of his paintings from the windows of apartments and hotel rooms where he stayed temporarily.[4] This position allowed him to take a step back, as it were, to rise above the teeming city and experiment with different vantage points and perspectives.[5] Below him, pedestrians and traffic swarmed around the two roundabouts on the place du Théâtre français before disappearing into the adjacent streets.

From his room in the Hôtel du Louvre, Pissarro attentively observed the lively city from morning to night and the changes it underwent with the coming and going of the seasons. The sun rose from behind the hotel, in the lower right of the composition. The carefully chosen shades of warm yellow, orange and silvery blue bring the ever-changing atmosphere to a pause. The movement of the busy city and its inhabitants is thus briefly halted on this early winter morning.

Pissarro painted 15 paintings from his hotel room, like a series of snapshots.[6] He exhibited some of them in June 1898 at the famous gallery of the art dealer Paul Durand-Ruel, who, like Pissarro himself, considered these cityscapes a high point in his career as a painter.[7]

[VERA MERKS]

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Camille Pissarro (1830–1903), *L'Avenue de l'Opéra*, 1898
Oil on canvas, 73.3 × 92.3 cm, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Reims

Camille Pissarro (1830–1903), *Le Boulevard Montmartre, Mardi Gras, Sunset*, 1897
Oil on canvas, 54 × 65 cm, Kunst Museum Winterthur. Acquired in 1947

Camille Pissarro (1830–1903), *Boulevard Montmartre, Dusk*, 1897
Oil on canvas, 54 × 65 cm, Museum Barberini, Potsdam

PAUL CÉZANNE (1839–1906)

At Quai de Bercy in Paris, c. 1875–76

Paul Cézanne did not paint *At Quai de Bercy in Paris* in the open air – as was usual among the Impressionists – but in his studio. His canvas is a copy of a painting that his colleague, the Impressionist Armand Guillaumin, had made a little earlier on the north bank of the Seine. The two painters met in 1861 at the Académie Suisse in Paris and remained friends throughout their lives. They often walked together through the new Paris. Both exhibited at the first Salon des Refusés in 1863, and in 1874 they participated in the first Impressionist exhibition. In 1873, while staying at the estate of Dr Gachet, the physician who treated Vincent van Gogh during his final years, Cézanne made a portrait of his friend Guillaumin, sitting relaxed in a meadow. The small etching is a lasting testimony to their friendship.

The painting shows the beginnings of the modernisation of the quai de Bercy. A floating crane rises high into the sky above the five arches of the Pont National. Next to it is a barge, probably transporting building materials. A man with a horse-drawn cart and another with a wheelbarrow are working on the construction of the embankment.

The period after the monarchy of Napoleon III marked the birth of the Third Republic. In 1875, the National Assembly approved a constitution that provided for the democratic election of a senate and a president. With the organisation of several vast Universal Expositions and the construction of the metro, Paris experienced enormous industrial and technological progress. It was the beginning of the Belle Époque, whose prosperity also stemmed from France's relentless colonial expansion.

The atmosphere of change in the metropolis is palpable in the painting. The two artists' painting styles are also innovative. A comparison between the two works shows that Cézanne went a step further than Guillaumin. His colours are brighter and more contrasting, the black is more intense, the contours are stronger and more clearly defined. In contrast to Guillaumin's original, Cézanne does not allow the figures, horses and working materials to blend completely with their environment. He gives the cloud formations a concrete form with parallel, diagonal brushstrokes. In this way, he searches for a way to capture a fleeting atmosphere in a solid painterly structure.

Cézanne strove to replace the spontaneous snapshots of Impressionism with images that make tangible the organising principles that structurally underlie all visible phenomena. More so than the Impressionists, he sought balance in his compositions. He did so by reducing scenes to more geometric forms and planes. As a 'Post-Impressionist' he would become a role model for the later Cubist artists and would have a lasting influence on twentieth-century modern art.

[DANIEL KOEP]

Paul Cézanne (1839–1906), *At Quai de Bercy in Paris*, c. 1875–76
Oil on canvas, 59.5 × 72.5 cm, Hamburger Kunsthalle

Armand Guillaumin (1841–1927), *At Quai de Bercy in Paris*, c. 1874

Oil on canvas, 56.1 × 72.4 cm, Hamburger Kunsthalle.
Acquired with funds from the Campe Historical Art Foundation, 1983

Gustave Caillebotte (1848–1894), *View Seen Through a Balcony*, 1880

Oil on canvas, 65.6 × 54.9 cm, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam. Purchased with support from the VriendenLoterij, the Vincent van Gogh Foundation, the Mondriaan Fund, the Rembrandt Association, thanks in part to the Culture Fund, and the VSB Fund

Etienne Moreau-Nélaton (1859–1927), *Paris Seen from Notre-Dame*, c. 1898
Oil on canvas, 61.5 × 88.3 cm, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart. Gifted by the artist 1901

GUSTAVE CAILLEBOTTE (1848–1894)

Rue Halévy, View from the Balcony, 1877
Rue Halévy, View from the Sixth Floor, 1878

Many of Gustave Caillebotte's cityscapes have a daring vantage point, are painted from surprisingly close up, or contain remarkable details. Caillebotte fundamentally changed the view of the city from a balcony, a motif that Claude Monet had introduced into Impressionist painting. His *Rue Halévy, View from the Sixth Floor* offers a spectacularly steep view from a mansard roof on to a wide street that leads our gaze to the distance. The height of the recently built apartment blocks with classicist sandstone facades and zinc roofs is further emphasised by the Lilliputian pedestrians and carriages sketched with loose blue-black brushstrokes. The buildings' architectural unity was more important to Caillebotte than the passers-by, whose fleeting depiction is reminiscent of Monet's painting *Boulevard des Capucines* (Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City), painted just a few years earlier.

Caillebotte had taken up residence in a building at the end of rue La Fayette, where it meets boulevard Haussmann, and looked southwest down rue Halévy. This street had been built only 20 years earlier after the demolition of old buildings. The neighbourhood in the 9th arrondissement is dominated by the Opéra Garnier, commissioned by Napolean III in 1858 and inaugurated in 1875. On the right of the painting, we can see one of the gilded group of figures that surmounts the opera house. Caillebotte was not interested in the magnificent neo-baroque building itself, but in the image of the modern metropolis as Baron Haussmann had planned it and as it had taken shape here for the wealthy bourgeoisie. While the evening sun creates a harmonious play of pastel pink and violet shades, the height of the viewpoint creates a sense of elevation. This is reinforced by the sloping roofline on the left, which indicates that the painter is standing on a balcony. It is clear that the bold perspective is the artist's decision and that he involves the viewer in it.

The emphasis on the painter's position is even stronger in *Rue Halévy, View from the Balcony*, painted a year earlier at the same location. Here, the blue-green leaves of the plants in the foreground partially obstruct the view. In any case, the street blurs in the violet morning light in which a pale sun makes the zinc roofs glisten. The palette evokes a calm, pleasant atmosphere that gives no hint of the bustling city below.

Shortly after the paintings were created, in 1879, the 31-year-old Caillebotte moved into an apartment in the block on the right with access from 31 boulevard Haussmann. There he made more paintings with a view of the wide, tree-lined street from the balcony. The fortune he had inherited meant he could afford an apartment on one of the most beautiful new streets in Paris. But the choice of this address also testifies to his positive attitude towards urban modernity.

[MICHAEL PHILIPP]

Gustave Caillebotte (1848–1894), *Rue Halévy, View from the Balcony,* 1877
Oil on canvas, 54 × 65.5 cm, Museum Barberini, Potsdam

Gustave Caillebotte (1848–1894), *Rue Halévy, View from the Sixth Floor*, 1878
Oil on canvas, 59.5 × 73 cm, Museum Barberini, Potsdam

Auguste Renoir (1841–1919), *The Institute at the Quai Malaquais, Paris*, 1875
Oil on canvas, 46 × 56 cm, Private collection, courtesy of Connery & Associates

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