

ENG



Manet

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	MANET	HISTORY	ART, CULTURE AND SCIENCE
1832 - 1849	<p>1832. Manet is born on 23 January in Paris into a rich middle class family: his father a senior executive in the Ministry of Justice; his mother the goddaughter of the king of Sweden and the daughter of diplomats</p> <p>1844. At the lyceum he makes friends with his classmate Antonin Proust. He discovers the Louvre with his maternal uncle. He takes drawing lessons.</p> <p>1848. He does not want to study law. He would prefer Naval College, but is not accepted. In December he embarks on a training ship for Rio de Janeiro. During the crossing he does drawings and caricatures of his companions.</p> <p>1849. On his return, again rejected by the Naval College, he begins his artistic career.</p> <p>At the end of the year the Dutchwoman Suzanne Leenhoff is hired in Manet's home as a piano teacher.</p>	<p>1830-32. Insurrectionary uprisings in Europe. In France, from 1830, Louis Philippe d'Orleans is "King of the French"</p> <p>1837. Victoria queen of England</p> <p>1848. Revolutions and insurrection all over Europe. In Venice anti-Austrian revolution and proclamation of a republic. First Italian war of independence.</p> <p>In France, 22-25 February, revolutionary days and proclamation of the Second Republic with a liberal democratic constitution;</p> <p>in December, election of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte as president Austria, December: Franz Josef emperor</p> <p>1849. European revolutionary uprisings continue, but are repressed (republics proclaimed in Italy fall, authoritarian restoration)</p>	<p>1834. H. de Balzac, <i>Le père Goriot</i>; E. Degas is born</p> <p>1835. A. De Tocqueville, <i>Democracy in America</i></p> <p>1832-39. F. Chopin, Studies, Preludes, Fantaisie</p> <p>1839. Stendhal, <i>The Charterhouse of Parma</i>; Daguerre: invention of photography.</p> <p>C. Cattaneo, <i>Il Politecnico</i>; A. Sisley is born</p> <p>1840. Emile Zola, Claude Monet and Giovanni Verga are born</p> <p>1841. P.A. Renoir is born</p> <p>1842 H. de Balzac, <i>La Comédie humaine</i> (publication in volumes begins); N. Gogol, <i>Dead Souls</i></p> <p>1843 S. Kierkegaard, <i>Aut Aut</i></p> <p>1844. F. Nietzsche is born; S. Morse invents the telegraph</p> <p>1845. F. Engels, <i>The Condition of the Working Class in England</i></p> <p>1847. F. Liszt, <i>Hungarian Rhapsodies</i></p> <p>1848. K. Marx and F. Engels, <i>The Communist Manifesto</i>; R. Schumann, <i>Album für die Jugend</i></p>
1850 - 1856	<p>1850. Manet joins Thomas Couture's studio, along with A. Proust. Suzanne becomes his lover</p> <p>1851. He manifests opposition to Louis Napoleon, "destroyer" of the Republic</p> <p>1852. 29 January: Suzanne gives birth to Léon-Édouard Koëlla, called Leenhoff, probably Manet's son</p> <p>1853. September: travels in Italy (Venice then Florence and possibly Rome). He returns to Paris after visiting Germany and Austria (Kassel, Dresden, Munich, Prague and Vienna). He makes copies of the old masters</p> <p>1855. He and A. Proust meet E. Delacroix</p> <p>1856. Having left Couture in February, he takes a studio in rue Lavoisier with the painter Albert de Balleroy</p>	<p>1851. France, 2 December: authoritarian coup d'état of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte; Italy, Cavour prime minister of Piedmont kingdom</p> <p>1852. France, 21 November: proclamation of the Second Empire. Louis Napoleon Bonaparte becomes Napoleon III</p> <p>1853 Japan: Kanagawa Convention after centuries opens the country up to relations with the rest of the world: this marks the beginning of the Japanese influenced style in figurative and decorative art</p> <p>1854-56. Crimean War: Russia against Turkey, France and Great Britain (and the Piedmont Kingdom from '55) for control of the Balkans and the Mediterranean</p>	<p>1850. H. de Balzac dies; C. Dickens: <i>David Copperfield</i>; R. Wagner, first performance of <i>Lohengrin</i></p> <p>1851. G. Verdi, <i>Rigoletto</i>; J.M.W. Turner dies</p> <p>1853. G.E. Haussmann prefect of the Seine: he begins transforming Paris; First photos by Nadar (Gaspard-Félix Tournachon); V. van Gogh is born; G. Verdi: // <i>Trovatore, La Traviata</i></p> <p>Champfleury, <i>The Adventures of Mademoiselle Mariette</i></p> <p>1854. O. Wilde and A. Rimbaud are born</p> <p>1855. G. Courbet stages the <i>Pavillon du réalisme</i> on the fringe of the Universal Exposition;</p> <p>G. Verdi (in Paris): <i>Les vêpres siciliennes</i></p> <p>1856. S. Freud and J.S. Sargent are born</p>
1857 - 1862	<p>1857. He meets his colleague Henri Fantin-Latour at the Louvre. His father is ill with syphilitic aphasia. November: he returns to Italy in Florence</p> <p>1859. He possibly submits the first version of the <i>Absinthe Drinker</i> to the Salon. He makes friends with Baudelaire and meets Degas at the Louvre</p> <p>1860. He goes to live with Suzanne and Léon</p> <p>1861. He opens a studio in rue Guyot. He exhibits the <i>Portrait of Monsieur and Madame Auguste Manet</i> (cat. 16) and <i>The Spanish Singer</i> at the Salon, earning him an honourable mention. He exhibits at the Galerie Martinet, as part of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts of which he is a member along with T. Gautier, Fantin-Latour and others.</p> <p>1862. He exhibits some etchings with Alfred Cadart. He is one of the founders of the <i>Société des aquafortistes</i>. Baudelaire mentions him in his writings. Death of his father. He meets the model Victorine Meurent, who poses for <i>The Street Singer</i></p>	<p>1859. French-Piedmont alliance and second Italian war of independence. Lombardy annexes Piedmont</p> <p>1860 Central and southern regions of Italy annexed to the Piedmont Kingdom (with expedition of the Mille to Sicily organised by Garibaldi): ceding of Nice and Savoy to France</p> <p>1861. Italy, 17 March: proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy; USA: Lincoln president; Mexico: military intervention by France, Spain and England to obtain compensation for debts</p> <p>1862. USA: Abolition of slavery and start of the Civil War; Prussia: Bismarck chancellor</p>	<p>1857. C. Baudelaire, <i>Les fleurs du Mal</i>; G. Flaubert, <i>Madame Bovary</i></p> <p>1859. C. Baudelaire: <i>Théophile Gautier</i>; articles on Constantin Guys painter of modern life;</p> <p>C. Darwin, <i>On The Origin of Species</i>; F. Hayez, <i>The Kiss</i>; J.A.D. Ingres, <i>The Turkish Bath</i></p> <p>1861. R. Wagner (in Paris), new production of <i>Tannhäuser</i> in French</p> <p>1862. V. Hugo <i>Les Misérables</i>; Cezanne leaves his bank job to devote himself to painting full time;</p> <p>J.A. Whistler, <i>Symphony in White</i></p>
1863	<p>March: he exhibits 14 paintings at the Galerie Martinet, including <i>The Boy with a Sword, The Street Singer, The Gypsies</i> and <i>Lola de Valence</i> (cat.42), accompanied by a quatrain by Baudelaire. He arouses interest, the press is divided. He sends three paintings to the Salon, which are rejected by the jury. At the <i>Salon des refusés</i> he exhibits <i>Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe</i>, heavily criticised. 28 October: he marries Suzanne in Holland.</p>		<p>3000 works are rejected by the Paris Salon. Protest of the artists. Napoleon III authorises the <i>Salon des refusés</i> where Manet, Monet, Degas, Pissarro, Renoir, Whistler and others exhibit.</p> <p>Delacroix dies (Manet attends the funeral with Baudelaire)</p>

1864 - 1865	1864. At the Salon he exhibits <i>The Dead Christ with the Angels</i> , inspired by the works of Andrea del Sarto, and <i>Incident at a Bull Fight</i> , whose lower part, cut off, was to become <i>The Dead Toreador</i> . He paints <i>The Battle of the Kearsarge and the Alabama</i> . In summer he stays in Boulogne-sur-mer for the first time. 1865. May: <i>Olympia</i> (cat. 20) and <i>Jesus Mocked by the Soldiers</i> (cat. 30), shown at the Salon, create a scandal. August: he stays in Spain. At the Prado he is struck by Velázquez and the collection of ancient Italian and Nordic paintings. He meets the writer and art critic Théodore Duret	1864. First International; Mexico: Maximilian of Hapsburg emperor on behalf of the European powers; France: USA North v. South naval battle outside the port of Cherbourg 1865. Italy: Florence capital of the kingdom; USA: End of the Civil War	1864. Cézanne rejected at the Salon; L. Tolstoy, <i>War and Peace</i> ; L. Pasteur, pasteurisation 1865. E. and J. de Goncourt, <i>Germinie Lacerteux</i> •
1866 - 1869	1866. April: The Salon rejects <i>The Fifer</i> (cat. 44) and <i>The Tragic Actor</i> . Émile Zola defends them (Mon Salon, cat.58). He frequents the Café Guerbois with Renoir, Monet, Bazille and Cézanne. Autumn: he, Suzanne and Léon go to live with his mother, where they remain until 1878. 1867. In conjunction with the Universal Exposition, he holds an exhibition, at his own cost, with 50 paintings and prints. Fantin exhibits a portrait of Manet and Zola publishes a pamphlet on him (cat. 59). He produces works inspired by the shooting of Maximilian of Hapsburg and two etchings for Baudelaire's biography of C. Asselineau. 1868. At the Salon he exhibits the <i>Portrait of Émile Zola</i> (cat. 57). The writer dedicates <i>Madeleine Féral</i> to him. He meets Berthe Morisot and the politician Léon Gambetta. In August he travels to London. 1869. January-February: he is forbidden to exhibit <i>The Execution of the Emperor Maximilian</i> and the relative lithographs. Zola criticises this censure in the press. At the Salon he presents <i>The Balcony</i> (cat. 50, first appearance of Berthe Morisot as model).	1866. Prussian-Italian Alliance. Austrian-Prussian War. Third Italian War of Independence. Venice annexed to the Kingdom of Italy 1867. Mexico, 19 June: execution of the emperor Maximilian of Hapsburg 1869. Opening of the Suez Canal	1866. F. Dostoevsky, <i>Crime and Punishment</i> ; <i>Le Parnasse Contemporain</i> , poetry collection, 1st volume; A. Nobel invents dynamite; C. Monet, <i>Women in the Garden</i> ; G. Courbet, <i>The Origin of the World</i> 1867. Baudelaire dies; K. Marx, <i>Capital</i> ; G. Verdi (in Paris), <i>Don Carlos</i> ; G. De Nittis in Paris; Ingres dies 1868. Cézanne rejected by the Salon; Gauguin enlists in the navy 1869. R. Wagner, first performance of <i>Das Rheingold</i> ; B. Morisot, <i>The Mother and Sister of the Artist</i> ; A. Renoir, <i>Le Grenouillère</i> ; Monet, Sisley and Cézanne rejected by the Salon
1870 - 1871	1870. May: at the Salon he exhibits the portrait of his pupil Eva Gonzalès and <i>The Music Lesson</i> (cat. 55). During the summer he stays with the Italian painter Giuseppe de Nittis in Saint-Germain-en-Laye. In July, on the outbreak of the French-Prussian War, he sends his family to Oloron-Sainte-Marie (Pyrenees) and enlists with his brothers in the National Guard, like Degas. Zola and Monet flee. After two months he leaves the artillery for the General Staff. 1871. He joins his family in the Pyrenees and returns to Paris shortly after the end of the Commune. Henri Rochefort is one of the exiled Communards. In July, in Versailles, he follows the debates of the National Assembly (parliament) and spends time with Léon Gambetta	1870. France, 19 July: Franco-Prussian War; French defeat at Sedan; 4 September: deposition of Napoleon III, and proclamation of the Third Republic; 19 September: Prussian siege of Paris. The armed citizens of the National Guard defend it Italy, 20 September: Annex of Rome 1871. 18 January proclamation of the German Empire (William I King of Prussia). 28 January end of Paris siege; French capitulation and loss of Alsace and Lorraine. Government retires to Versailles; 26 March: the Commune, a provisional "alternative" government is settled in Paris. 21-28 May "The Bloody Week": regular government troops repress the Paris Commune. Thousands of Communards shot or exiled.	1870. C. Dickens dies; R. Wagner, first performance of <i>The Valkyrie</i> 1871. E. Zola, Publication of the <i>Les Rougon-Macquart</i> series of novels begins. <i>Histoire naturelle et sociale d'une famille sous le Second Empire</i> ; <i>Le Parnasse Contemporain</i> , poetry collection, 2nd volume; A. Rimbaud in Paris; G. Boldini in Paris
1872 - 1873	1872. January: the art dealer Durand-Ruel buys 24 of his paintings. He again exhibits <i>The Battle of the Kearsarge and the Alabama</i> at the Salon. He travels to Holland (Haarlem, Amsterdam). New studio in rue de Saint-Pétersbourg. He frequents the Café de la Nouvelle-Athènes along with Degas, Renoir, Monet and Pissarro. 1873. At the Salon he exhibits <i>Le bon Bock</i> , allegory of the events at Alsace. At Nina de Callias's (cat. 63) he meets Stéphane Mallarmé (cat. 64), with whom he establishes a strong and lasting friendship	1873. France: The reactionary Mac-Mahon president of the Republic	1872. T. Gautier dies A. Rimbaud, <i>Derniers vers</i> J. Verne, <i>Around the World in 80 Days</i> Pissarro at Pontoise and Monet at Argenteuil 1873. C. Monet, <i>The Poppy Field</i> ; B. Morisot, <i>The Cradle</i> A. Rimbaud, <i>Une saison en enfer</i> ; P. Verlaine, <i>Romances sans paroles</i> (publ. in '74) F. Nietzsche, <i>The Birth of Tragedy</i>
1874	The Salon jury admit only <i>The Railroad</i> and the watercolour <i>Punchinello</i> , an accusation against Mac-Mahon, while it rejects <i>The Swallows</i> and <i>Masked Ball at the Opera</i> (cat.52). Mallarmé criticises the jury in an article on "La Renaissance artistique et littéraire". Invited to the first Impressionist exhibition, he decides not to take part. During the summer he visits Monet, of whom he paints various portraits. In October he travels to Venice with Suzanne and James Tissot. 22 December: Eugène Manet marries Berthe Morisot		First exhibition of the <i>Société anonyme des artistes peintres</i> , at the studio of the photographer Nadar in Paris. Exhibitors include Astruc, Bracquemond, Boudin, Cezanne, Degas, Guillaumin, Morisot, de Nittis, Pissarro, Renoir, Sisley and Monet with the painting <i>Impression, Sunrise</i> from which the term Impressionism is derived. Sargent in Paris P.J. Tchaikovsky, <i>Concert No 1 for piano and orchestra, op. 23</i> C. Cros, <i>Le Fleuve</i> , with illustrations by Manet

1875 - 1878	1875. He exhibits <i>Argenteuil</i> at the Salon. He illustrates Edgar Allan Poe's <i>The Raven</i> , translated into French by Stéphane Mallarmé (cat. 65). 1876. April, the Salon rejects <i>The Laundress</i> and <i>the Artist</i> . So Manet presents his works at his own studio. New article in his favour by Mallarmé for which he had just illustrated <i>The Afternoon of a Faun</i> (cat. 66). During the summer, he completes numerous paintings, including a big portrait of his friend Carolus-Duran, a parody of the <i>Portrait of Philippe IV</i> by Velázquez. 1877. Only <i>Faure in the Role of Hamlet</i> is admitted to the Salon. <i>Nana</i> , rejected, is exhibited in the window of the art dealer Giroux in boulevard des Capucines. Great success and explosive article by Huysmans. 1878. Absent from the rooms of the Universal Exposition, Manet repeats his act of 1867 creating his own private exhibition space.	1875. Germany: Foundation of the Social Democratic Party (SPD)	1875. F. Millet dies; G. Bizet, <i>Carmen</i> ; C. Monet, <i>The Promenade</i> 1876. <i>Le Parnasse Contemporain</i> , 3rd volume of poetry collection; S. Mallarmé, <i>The Afternoon of a Faun</i> with illustrations by Manet; Wagner: first performance of <i>Götterdämmerung</i> at Weimar; H. Ibsen, <i>Peer Gynt</i> , music by E. Grieg, first performance; P.A. Renoir, <i>Dance at the Moulin de la Galette</i> ; A.G. Bell, Telephone patent 1877. E. Zola, <i>L'Assommoir</i> ; C. Pissarro, <i>The Red Roofs</i> ; Courbet dies 1878. G. De Nittis obtains success at the Paris Universal Exposition
1879 - 1881	1879. New, luxurious studio in rue d'Amsterdam. Life and painting take a more worldly turn. At the Salon he exhibits <i>Boating</i> and <i>Madame Manet in the Greenhouse</i> . Warmer critical reception. September-October: locomotive ataxia of syphilitic origin. Treated in Bellevue. 1880. January: the illness deteriorates. In April a solo exhibition at the <i>Galerie de La Vie Moderne</i> is well received by the press for the "Parisian" nature of the paintings with their fashionable figures. At the Salon he exhibits the <i>Portrait of Antonin Proust</i> and <i>Chez le père Lathuille</i> . His health deteriorates. He is once again admitted to Bellevue 1881. He exhibits the <i>Portrait of Henri Rochefort</i> at the Salon and wins a second class medal. Early summer: hospitalised in Versailles. November-December, his friend Antonin Proust, a new minister, nominates him a Knight of the Legion d'honneur.	1879. France: Radical victory at the elections Germany: Anti-Socialist repression 1880. France: Amnesty for the Communards. Proclamation of 14 July as a national holiday 1881. France: Antonin Proust Minister of Fine Arts; laws on free primary education, freedom of the press and of meeting, secularisation of the state	1879. S. Mallarmé, <i>Les dieux antiques</i> ; Fourth Impressionist exhibition 1880. G. Flaubert dies; E. Zola, <i>Nana</i> ; Fifth Impressionist exhibition; T. Edison patents the incandescent electric light 1881. Paris: first World Exposition of Electricity
1882 - 1883	1882. At the Salon he exhibits <i>Jeanne</i> and <i>The Bar at the Folies-Bergère</i> . He works on <i>The Escape of Rochefort</i> (cat. 79) destined for the following Salon. September: will (universal heirs Suzanne, and Léon after the death of his mother.) 1883. After the amputation of his left leg, Manet dies on 30 April. He is buried at the Passy cemetery. A. Proust, E. Zola and C. Monet are among the friends who hold the cloth draping the coffin	1882. Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria, Italy)	1882. G. Verga, <i>I Malavoglia</i> ; J.K. Huysmans, <i>A vau l'eau</i> (Downstream); R. Wagner, first performance of <i>Parsifal</i> at Bayreuth; R. Koch discovers the tuberculosis bacillus 1883. F. Nietzsche. <i>Thus Spake Zarathustra</i> ; Marx and Wagner die; First run of the Orient Express

The Salon

This is the name that in Manet's time was given to the official exhibition of the *Académie des beaux-arts* (Fine Arts Academy) in Paris

Founded in 1667 as an event restricted to members of the *Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture* (Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture), it then continued annually or biannually.

From 1725 it was held in the Louvre, in the Salon Carré (hence the name), at times also occupying the Apollo gallery. The rules changed with the Revolution: in 1791 it became free and open to all, but then in 1798 an admission jury was instituted, which quickly took on a conformist nature. Removed in 1848 but reintroduced the following year, the jury maintained a rigid approach, refusing many candidates and any work not consistent with academic tastes.

But throughout the 19th century the Salon continued to be an important opportunity for an artist to gain official recognition and visibility.

For this reason Manet obstinately pitted himself against the Salon all his life, continuing to present his works, though with meagre results.

When the Salon jury rejected almost 3000 works in 1863, the artists' protests were such that the emperor Napoleon III ordered an exhibition of these excluded works to be held. This subsequently came to be known as the *Salon des Refusés* and was to show many painters destined to mark the subsequent history of art, including Manet, Monet, Degas, Pissarro, Renoir and Whistler.

Introduction

Edouard Manet (Paris 1832-1883) is known to all as the leader of an expressive revolution that was decisive in the subsequent development of painting. Manet “abolished” chiaroscuro and tints, preferring clear chromatic contrasts and rapid brush strokes, creating form with colour.

The “father” of the art of our time, he scandalised his contemporaries while liberally drawing with *insolent liberty* on the masters of the past, with whom he established a continuous, profound, attentive and unexpected dialogue. It was a dialogue that began with his visits to the Louvre then continued during his travels in Italy and Europe, and throughout his life.

Critics have long emphasised the role of Spanish painting among Manet’s sources of inspiration.

This exhibition studies, highlights and demonstrates the importance of the Italian Renaissance masters in the formation of his poetics: Manet studied, cited, interpreted and distorted works by artists such as Titian, Raphael, Andrea del Sarto and Tintoretto.

It was a reinterpretation that in the creative process also integrated and connected with references of a psychological and biographical nature, and was revealed through the entirely new outcomes of his painting methods and the very meaning of every composition. The extraordinary juxtaposition of Manet’s *Olympia* and Titian’s *Venus of Urbino* proposed by the exhibition for the first (and possibly only) time is a striking example of this.

Taking this particular interpretation, the exhibition allows one to reflect on Manet’s entire production by showing many famous masterpieces and making some comparisons with Renaissance masters (as well as with Titian, matches are also suggested with works by Carpaccio, Antonello da Messina and Lorenzo Lotto) because “if art has had a history and continues to have one, it is thanks to the work of artists and also to their inspection of previous works and the way in which they have appropriated them”.

The exhibition is arranged into nine sections, divided by themes that illustrate the genres, the development and the sensational innovation of Manet’s expressive language – often unrecognised by the main critics of the time. His leading role among the cultural avant garde of his day, from Baudelaire to Zola and Mallarmè, is highlighted, and an analysis made of the different meaning of his trips to Venice, 20 years apart. Some extreme outcomes of his research are then proposed in which themes relating to his republican civil engagement are interwoven with open and infinite marine views, in the new stimuli of a painting that was now looking to the future.

Edouard Manet in Venice. September 1853 and 1874.

Before entering the exhibition, a “tribute” to Manet’s *return* to Venice: memorable relics, curiosities, testimonies and documents on the city at the time of his stays and even traces of his moves through the city have emerged from the inexhaustible resources of the Musei Civici historic collections.

Venice, September 1853. The first stay

Manet arrived in Venice for the first time with his brother Eugène when he was 20, in 1853. After the uprising of 1848, the city had gone back under Austrian rule. The Manet brothers spent time in Venice with Émile Ollivier, a young French republican lawyer whose father was at the time in exile in Italy. Émile had also taken an active part during the revolutionary period in his country (and was to later be closely involved in political activities). So the armed military garrison of Austrian troops under the loggias of the Doge’s Palace would not have escaped these young men, who were well aware of the political dynamics of their time; nor would the prohibitions – spread about the city precisely in those days of September under the name of Field Marshall Radetzky - against taking part in “public demonstrations”, singing and carrying revolutionary signs, possessing “revolutionary pamphlets” and “posting stirring and inspiring revolutionary proclamations”. All this for the “maintenance of order, calm and public safety”.

Manet, among various, at times blithe activities in the city, also acted as guide to his friends in discovering 16th-century Venetian art. It is possible that he visited the Correr Collection, opened to the public in 1836 and at the time housed in the *palazzo* of Teodoro Correr, its founder. The works were arranged as can be seen in the drawings shown here. The two *Ladies* by Carpaccio and the *Ridotto* by Francesco Guardi can be recognised in the sheets. The Doge’s Palace, which at the time housed public offices including the court, and cultural institutions such as the Biblioteca Marciana, could in any case also be visited. The photos shown here are originals from that period.

The painter left the city at the beginning of October and went to Florence, where he was to return four years later, tracking down the old masters.

Venice, September 1874. The second stay

Twenty years later Manet was a renowned artist and his arrival in the city with his wife Suzanne Leenhoff on Sunday 13 September 1874 was noted in the *Arrivals and Departures* column of the *Gazzetta di Venezia*. They were no longer greeted by the white uniforms of the Austrians, but by the tricolour: since 1866 Venice had been annexed to the Kingdom of Italy, founded in 1861. Once again the *Gazzetta* informs us that on that day in Venice there had been a “very strong storm with ... lightning and thunder. The sea and lagoon very rough”. The usual end of summer storm, prelude to the splendid light of the Venetian September.

The “Signori Manet”, along with their painter friend James Tissot, took rooms at the luxurious Grand Hotel, a patrician residence near St Mark’s that, like

many others in that period, had recently been turned into an elegant place to stay for the European aristocracy and upper class. From here the view ranges from the monumental dome of the church of the Salute to the new bridge that from 1858 crossed the Grand Canal from Campo San Vidal to the riva della Carità, in front of the Accademia Gallery.

Manet painted two Venetian views that have come down to us staying in a boat moored near these banks. The exhibition features the one portraying the dome of the Salute and, on the left, the water door of the Palazzo Barbaro, which a few years later was to host J. Singer Sargent and the writers Robert Browning and Henry James

But, apart from painting, matching himself with the September light of the city, Manet once again, as 20 years earlier, loved to lose himself in lesser Venice or meander along the little canals and the Grand Canal in a gondola.

This second stay in Venice - fairly important, as we shall see, in the painter's expressive progression - lasted almost 20 days and, at the start of October, the "Signori Manet" returned to Paris".

I. Manet's Italys

The influence of Italian art in Manet's education and expressive research had deep and precocious roots. As a boy he discovered the Louvre with his maternal uncle, and already in 1850, a new pupil in Thomas Couture's studio, he was enrolled on the register of the museum's copyists. While his encounter with the *Pastoral Concert*, at the time attributed to Giorgione (now Titian) was fateful, his study of the Italian masters intensified after his first trip to Italy, in 1853, to Venice for almost a month, then Florence and possibly Rome. His copies of the intense *Self-portrait* by Tintoretto and Titian's *Pardo Venus*, for example, date from 1854.

In 1856 he left Couture's studio and the following year returned to Italy, to Florence, where he "sieved" its riches: he copied paintings and drawings at the Uffizi, Andrea del Sarto's frescoes in the Santissima Annunziata, Luca della Robbia's reliefs in the Duomo and much more, producing more than 140 works, mainly details, single figures and groups of people. This dialogue was to give rich results and leave visible signs, destined to remain, as boundless sources of inspiration, reformulation and memory in his subsequent paintings.

The works shown here carefully document this pathway and follow its developments through to the first masterpiece and the first scandal, the revolutionary, disturbing *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*. It was rejected by his contemporaries because of the impudence with which he overturned the meaning of explicit classical citations, the "coded" autobiographical references, the implied criticism of the social prejudices of the day, the strange, disturbing incommunicability that pervades it and, of course, his entirely new and incomprehensible painting methods.

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01.Édouard Manet (after Ridolfo del Ghirlandaio)

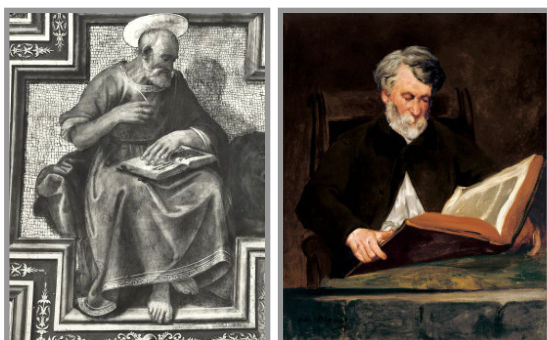
Saint Mark

c. 1857, black pencil

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

acquired by the Louvre in 1954

Manet studied hard during his long stay in Florence in 1857. He sketched this figure from the frescoes with the Evangelists in the vault of the Cappella dei Priori in the Palazzo Vecchio. It was to be one of the sources of inspiration for the The Reader of 1861, now at San Louis Art Museum (both reproduced below).



03. Édouard Manet (after Luca della Robbia)

Group of children dancing

c. 1857, black pencil and ink

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

acquired from the Louvre in 1954

This drawing is taken from the relief with dancing putti (Et Choro) in the Cantoria of the Florence Duomo (now in the Museo dell'Opera). Memory of this plasticity perhaps remained in Nana of 1877, now in Hamburg, Kunsthalle.



04. Édouard Manet (after Fra' Bartolomeo)

Two figures

c. 1857, red chalk

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

acquired by the Louvre in 1954

In Florence he obtained access to the Drawings and Prints Room at the Uffizi, one of the most important graphic collections in the world (more than 150,000 works, mainly by Italian artists from the 14th century on), where he copied this and the next drawing.

02. Édouard Mamet (after Parmigianino)

Two studies of angels

c. 1857, black pencil and ink

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

acquired by the Louvre in 1954

Copied in Florence at the Drawings and Prints Room at the Uffizi, like the previous one.

35. Édouard Manet (after Benozzo Gozzoli)

Woman carrying a tray of fruit and child with tray

c. 1857, black pencil

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

acquired from the Louvre in 1954

At the Camposanto Monumentale in Pisa, Manet sketched these figures from the fresco on the north wall with the Stories of Abraham and Hagar by Benozzo Gozzoli (detail below). He was to take them up again two years later in the painting Cavaliers Espagnols (cat.37), shown in the fifth section of the exhibition.



05.Édouard Manet (after Andrea del Sarto)

Draped man standing

c. 1857, red chalk

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

acquired by the Louvre in 1954

During his stay in Florence, Manet also obtained permission to work in the SS. Annunziata Basilica, studying the frescoes of Andrea del Sarto, which were decisive, as we shall see, in the formation of his poetics. The drawing shown here is taken from the Procession of the Magi (1511) in the Chiostro dei Voti (detail below).



06.Édouard Manet (after Titian)

Infant Christ

c. 1857, Black pencil

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

acquired by the Louvre in 1954

This drawing, taken from the Virgin and Child with Saints Stephen, Jerome and Maurice in the Louvre (see below the detail to which the drawing refers), was made after his return from Florence. It may allude in some way to the maternal tenderness of Suzanne, Manet's lover, towards the son whose father was probably the artist.



07.Édouard Manet (after Tintoretto)

Self portrait

c. 1854, oil on canvas

Dijon, Musée des Beaux-Arts

Donation Eugène Spuller heirs, 1898

Manet copied this painting in the Louvre after his first trip to Italy (1853, main destination Venice). Struck by the intensity of the work, he took up the desolated face, on the brink of death. This spectral face was to be an ineludible reference six years later, when he was to paint the portrait of his parents (shown in the next room, cat.16)

09.Édouard Manet (after Titian)

Pardo Venus

c. 1854, oil on canvas

Paris, Musée Marmottan

Given by Anne Rouart in 1996

The Louvre's Pardo Venus (1535-40), also copied after his first trip to Italy, at the time enjoyed absolute prestige. Modern or mythological figures gravitate around a radiant nude, while the clear association between hunting and love was, to Manet and his contemporaries, a kind of erotic revelation, with the centrality of that bright body surrounded by vegetation, which attracts and holds the eye. A compositional strategy that Manet was to refer to, years later, in the Dejeuner sur l'herbe.

10.Édouard Manet

La Pêche (Fishing)

1860-62, oil on canvas

New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Purchase Mr and Mrs Richard J. Bernhard Gift, 1957

The painting was probably inspired by Rubens (Landscape with a Rainbow, Louvre, now in Valenciennes, Musée des Beaux-Arts) and Venetian styles. The figures in the foreground on the right are Manet himself and Suzanne, the boy fishing in the boat is Léon, the natural son of Suzanne and, very probably, the painter. His relationship with the woman was always kept secret from Manet's father and the two married only after his death. Léon was treated as his son but never officially recognised as such by Édouard.



13.Édouard Manet (after Veronese)

Woman walking to the right lifting her dress

c. 1857, black pencil and watercolour on blue paper

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

acquired by the Louvre in 1954

After his return from Florence, Manet thought of painting a big Moses Saved from the Waters, inspired by Veronese, but never did so. This drawing was copied from an etching of the painting (J.L. Delignon, in Galerie de Palais-Royal gravée d'après les tableaux des différentes écoles qui la composent, Paris, 1736-1808, detail below). This formulation of the semi-dressed female figure emerging from the water appears again in the background of the Dejeuner sur l'herbe.



11. Henri Fantin-Latour (after Titian)

Pastoral Concert

c. 1857, black ink

Grenoble, Musée de Grenoble

*Manet actually met Fantin-Latour at the Louvre. Both were attracted by the painting, at the time attributed to Giorgione. An allegory of poetry and music, it gives the nymphs a role of ideal beauty. They do not speak, nor are they visible to the young shepherds: communication - transcendental - is entrusted to the music and integrated into the landscape. Manet was to explicitly cite this painting in the *Dejeuner*, entirely distorting its meaning.*

12. Marcantonio Raimondi (after Raphael)

The Judgement of Paris

1517-c. 1520, burin

Venice, Museo Correr, Drawings and Prints Room

*This was another source of inspiration for the *Dejeuner*, in particular the three figures seated on the right.*

14. Édouard Manet

Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe (Luncheon on the Grass)

c. 1863, oil on canvas

London, The Courtauld Gallery, The Samuel Courtauld Trust

This is a smaller replica, painted for a friend, shortly after the clamorous reception of the larger version painted for the 1863 Salon (now in the Musée d'Orsay): rejected by the jury, it was therefore exhibited at the Salon des Refusés, and here too the object of ferocious criticism. The painting caused an outrage because it interpreted classical references in a contemporary context, without mythological or allegorical "justifications" (the male figures in civilian clothes, are Manet's and Suzanne's brothers; the woman, who indifferently turns her gaze to the public, is a professional model, Victorine Meurent). It was no less scandalous because of the way it was painted, then inconceivable, with patches of colour and violent contrasts. Overturning all conventions, Manet here opened the way to a new expressive freedom.

II. The Fates of Venus

In this room, dominated by the exceptional, unmissable juxtaposition of Titian's *Venus of Urbino* and Manet's *Olympia*, the special role of 16th-century Venetian painting in Manet's inspiration is highlighted. Titian and Veronese for the *Woman with the Jug* – the first depiction of Suzanne – and Tintoretto for the elaborate portrait of his parents: Venetian painting appreciated, studied and filtered through life itself. During his stay in Florence, Manet made a copy of the *Venus of Urbino*, amongst others. He reflected on it, worked on it (as also documented by the various sketches shown here) and gradually assimilated it. Six years later this creative process gave rise to *Olympia*, then presented at the Salon in 1865. The two paintings have much in common, despite their fairly different meanings: the nude highlighted by the presence of jewels (and slippers in *Olympia*), the posture, the animal (a puppy, symbol of loyalty in *Venus*, which Titian painted as a wedding picture; a cat, demonic symbol in *Olympia*), the vertical scanning of the space behind and the maids (serene, bright, familiar background in *Venus*, dark and pruriently evocative in *Olympia*), the light (warm and diffuse in *Venus*, cold and raw in *Olympia*), the left hand on the pubis (a soft touch in *Venus*, a kind of barrier in *Olympia*) and the gaze turned to the viewer. But while that of *Venus* transmits an erotic languor dense with promise, *Olympia* looks at the observer with an indifferent eye. It is thus sensuality that is missing in *Olympia*, and here Titian's model is transformed – with its decisive contrasts, the pictorial language even more audacious than the *Dejeuner* – from “object of desire” into “object of painting”. And it once again caused a scandal.

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15. Édouard Manet

Woman with a Jug

1858-1860, oil on canvas

Copenhagen, Ordrupgaard

This is the only remaining fragment of a powerfully “Venetian” vertical composition, in which influences of Titian - starting from the Pastoral Concert - and Veronese converge, tinged with a brilliant light, in which the refined sensuality of this first image of Suzanne is illuminated; she was to keep the painting for the rest of her life.

08. Édouard Manet

Portrait of M. and Mme Auguste Manet

1860, red chalk

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

Acquired By National Museums with funds of the Musée d'Orsay in 1979

16.Édouard Manet

Portrait de M.et Mme M[anet] (Portrait of Monsieur and Madame Auguste Manet)

1860, oil on canvas

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

acquired in 1977 with the help of the Rouart family, Mme J. Weil Picard and an anonymous foreign donor.

Exhibited at the 1861 Salon, it is a painting laden with meaning. In portraying his father who was ill and no longer master of himself, Manet avoids showing him with a now empty frontal look. He is once again inspired by Venetian painting, where the reference to Tintoretto's Self Portrait (cat.7) is an attempt to restore dignity to the ravages of old age and illness.

17.Édouard Manet

Study for Olympia

1860-1862, red chalk

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

acquired by the Louvre in 1935.

18.Édouard Manet

Odalisque

1861-c.1868, watercolour, Indian ink and gouache

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

acquired in 1926 by the Société des amis du Louvre for the museum.

19.Édouard Manet

Olympia

Etching and aquatint [sixth state].

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Print Room, Moreau-Nélaton collection

20.Édouard Manet

Olympia

1863, oil on canvas

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

donated to the state in 1890 thanks to a subscription instigated by Claude Monet

The model is Victorine, the name Olympia is that of a prostitute. A ribbon around her neck, bracelet and slippers on her feet, she is neither beautiful nor languid. The maid behind her is black. Is the bunch of flowers the latter is holding a tribute from an admirer/client? The animal at her feet is a sulphurous black cat. The hand on her pubis is open, decisive, the gaze turned to the observer cold and distant. Presented at the 1865 Salon, Olympia caused a scandal. The traditional theme of the nude reinvented once again, as in the Dejeuner, in contemporary style, aroused violent negative reactions. The judgement of the painting quality was similar. Baudelaire and Zola defended its modernity.

21.Titian

Venus of Urbino

1538, oil on canvas

Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi,

Istituti museali della Soprintendenza Speciale per il Polo Museale Fiorentino

This is a nuptial painting, commissioned by Guidobaldo II Della Rovere, to celebrate conjugal physical love. Venus is placed in a setting that is not mythological but contemporary; the languid gaze is turned to the observer, the hand covers the pubis, while the other clasps some red roses, symbol of love and the transience of beauty. The puppy at her feet is the symbol of loyalty, while among the jewellery, the pearl in her ear is a symbol of purity. In the background there are busy maids and on the window sill a myrtle plant, symbol of fertility.

III. North/South (Still Life)

Manet, who although preferring “history painting”, with articulate compositions and figures, also produced a large number of still lifes, mainly as an effective way of ensuring some critical acclaim. As Zola wrote, “The most explicit enemies of Édouard’s talent allowed that he was able to paint inanimate objects well”, and, on the other hand, they are also a frequent presence in large compositions – from the overturned basket in the *Déjeuner sur l’herbe* to the bunch of flowers in *Olympia*.

Manet’s still lifes speak of life and death, in keeping with the traditional meaning of this genre, and were inspired on one hand by the styles of the Northern school (Dutch in particular) and the French and Italian schools on the other.

But the transience of things is rethought, revolutionised: the more “Dutch” paintings, of fish, oysters and so on, are connected to the relationship with his wife. Painted during bathing holidays, at times they associate physical pleasures and those of taste with a kind of sacrificial atmosphere, in which the white tablecloth evokes the altar and in which echoes can be perceived of the 17th-century Italian still life (of which the exhibition presents two significant examples, to suggest parallels and references). Many of the small paintings were to be given away: to friends like Antonin Proust (*The Lemon*, cat.27) and Champfleury (*White Peonies and Secateurs* cat.22), critics like Théophile Thoré (*Stem of Peonies and Secateurs* cat.23) and collectors like Charles Ephrussi (*Asparagus*, cat.28).

These works also often contain references to the anguish of transience, with their cut flowers, fruit and vegetables. The still lifes were frequent before the 1870s, but became more scarce in the next ten years. The last return to this genre was after 1880 and the onset of his illness, almost a farewell to the world, to virility, to life.

The small, precious Stucco Room that houses this section of the exhibition presents two sacred scenes at each side of the door leading to the next room. They portend the theme of the next section and so have been integrated into the exhibition pathway.

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22.Édouard Manet
White Peonies and Secateurs
c. 1864, oil on canvas
Paris, Musée d’Orsay
Count Isaac de Camondo bequest to the Louvre, 1908

23.Édouard Manet
Stem of Peonies and Secateurs
1864, oil on canvas
Paris, Musée d'Orsay
Count Isaac de Camondo bequest to the Louvre, 1908

24.Felice Boselli
Still Life with Fish
1710-c.1720, oil on canvas
Lecco, Si.M.U.L. (Sistema Museale Urbano Lecchese) – Galleria Comunale d'Arte

25.Felice Boselli
Still Life with Fish
1710-c. 1720, oil on canvas
Lecco, Si.M.U.L. (Sistema Museale Urbano Lecchese) – Galleria Comunale d'Arte

26.Édouard Manet
Eel and Mullet
1864, oil on canvas
Paris, Musée d'Orsay
Albert Charpentier gift to the Louvre, 1951

27.Édouard Manet
The Lemon
1880-1881, oil on canvas
Paris, Musée d'Orsay
Count Isaac de Camondo bequest to the Louvre, 1908

28.Édouard Manet
Asparagus
1880, oil on canvas
Paris, Musée d'Orsay
Sam Salz gift to the Louvre, 1959

At each side of the door leading to the next room

Giuseppe Salviati (1520-1575)
Holy Family
mid-16th century, oil on canvas

Giovanni Antonio de' Sacchis, called Pordenone (c. 1483-1539)
Dead Christ Supported by Two Angels
c. 1530, oil on wood

IV. Solitude of Jesus

Manet was a republican, but not anticlerical. Raised in the Catholic faith, he tried his hand at some moving representations of Christ and His Passion. The Italian sources of inspiration play a fundamental (and long underrated) role for these, too, as shown by the works exhibited here. One of the two drawings is a recent, extraordinary discovery, exhibited to the public here for the first time. It is a pained Christ in the solitude of the sepulchre, naked, desolate, almost monochrome.

Manet copied it in 1857 from one of the frescoes by Andrea del Sarto in the Santissima Annuziata Basilica in Florence. The other is a watercolour that shows the dead Christ with angels, presented – unsuccessfully – at the 1864 Salon, in which the references not only to Andrea del Sarto’s fresco clearly emerge, but also to iconographies like that of Antonello da Messina’s masterpiece shown here precisely to highlight the possible references.

The other wall is occupied by Manet’s *Jesus Mocked by Soldiers*, shown at the 1865 Salon along with *Olympia*. More theatrical and Baroque than the Christ of the year before, like that (and *Olympia*) it was heavily criticised, thought offensive and too ugly to be looked at.

Manet was actually not seeking “provocations” but the universal and modern meaning of Christ’s humiliation, perpetrated in every incidence of man’s violence to man, and – looking mainly at Titian – the expressive power that the masters of the past were able to give this subject.

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29. Édouard Manet (after Andrea del Sarto)

Christ as Man of Sorrows

c. 1857, graphite and red pencil

France, private collection

This extraordinary drawing, made during his stay in Florence in 1857 and never exhibited to the public until now, takes up one of the frescoes by Andrea del Sarto in the Santissima Annuziata Basilica (now detached and held at the Museo del Cenacolo a San Salvi, reproduced below). It was to be the main source of inspiration for the Christ with the Angels present at the 1864 Salon, of which a preparatory drawing is shown here (cat.31).



32. Antonello da Messina

Dead Christ Supported by Three Angels

1475, oil on wood

Venice, Museo Correr

Although damaged by early restorations, this sole work remaining from the artist's Venetian period (1475/76) retains its expressive power. In the foreground, seated on the corner of the sarcophagus, the dead Christ is supported by three angels without haloes, with the appearance of boys, whose celestial nature is revealed only by their big pointed wings. One caresses His hand with his face, another supports His arm. The landscape in the background, with the apses of the church of San Francesco in Messina, is Antonello's tribute to his birthplace.

31. Édouard Manet

Le Christ aux anges (Dead Christ with the Angels)

c. 1864, graphite, watercolour, gouache, pen and Indian ink

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

Mme Zola gift to the state with right of usufruct, 1918

This watercolour takes up the composition of the painting of the same name exhibited at the 1864 Salon (now in the Metropolitan Museum of New York). Apart from the influence of Andrea del Sarto's fresco, it also refers to an iconography close to that of Antonello's panel shown here, in the Correr collection open to the public from 1836. There is not, however, any certainty that Manet saw it during his stay in Venice in 1853.

30. Édouard Manet

Jesus insulté par des soldats (Jesus Mocked by Soldiers)

1864, oil on canvas

Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago

Presented along with Olympia at the 1865 Salon, it was also heavily criticised, as had been the case with the Christ shown the previous year. It is a disturbing composition because of the static nature of the figures, the drama accentuated by the crossed looks and the strong chromatic contrasts. The Christ Mocked by Titian in the Louvre (reproduced below) may be identified as one of the sources of its inspiration.



V. A very hybrid Spain

Manet visited Spain only in 1865. At the Prado he was astonished by Velázquez, but he had already had the chance to appreciate the Louvre's paintings by Goya, El Greco and Velázquez himself; artists that, from 1838 to 1848, made up Louis Philippe's "Spanish gallery". Hispanicism was on the other hand much in vogue in Paris at the time and it was by exhibiting a *Spanish Guitarist* at the 1861 Salon that Manet obtained a success that was not to be repeated in subsequent years. But Manet's "Spanish" paintings are derived from a more hybrid, linked and less linear pathway than that which has long been held to be the case by scholars.

They embody different sources of inspiration – often including works and styles of the Renaissance and the Italian Baroque, but also contemporary stimuli, like photography – along with the aim of adhering to the fashion of the moment. In any case there are genuine masterpieces among them.

Lola Melea – called Lola of Valencia - was the star of a Spanish dance company that had enormous success at the Paris Hippodrome.

Baudelaire dedicated her a quatrain and many were crazy about her.

Manet depicted her in a celebrated portrait originally conceived against a monochrome background in the spirit of Velázquez, which he was to alter years later. The pose is taken from Goya but the volume of the skirt refers to Watteau.

The boy in uniform portrayed in *Le Fifre (The Fifer)* is indecipherable and dramatic. His empty gaze and the tragic air of the image standing out against the background, also empty, are forcefully striking, evoking a kind of silent solitude (despite the musical instrument).

The background is again that of Velázquez, but the figure has the same fragility as the *Boy Carrying a Sword* inspired by Benozzo Gozzoli.

Manet intended winning the Salon public of 1866 with this painting, but it was not even accepted. Zola defended him passionately: "Our fathers laughed at Courbet and now we fall into ecstasy before his paintings, we laugh at Manet and it will be our children who go into raptures before his pictures".

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33.Édouard Manet

The Dead Toreador

1862, etching and aquatint [third state]

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Print Room, Moreau-Nélaton coll.

The subject of the dead man, lying in this particular perspective view, refers not only to the Orlando Muerto, by an unknown painter of north Italy at the time attributed to Velázquez, but also to various different Renaissance representations of Christ.

34.Édouard Manet

L'Espada (Woman dressed as toreador)

1862, etching and aquatint [first state]

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Print Room, Moreau-Nélaton coll.



The pose of the young woman dressed as a toreador takes up an archetype of the Italian Renaissance, Raphael's etching of Marcantonio Raimondi with Temperance: here, too, Manet masters a form to then overturn its meaning.

36.Édouard Manet

L'Enfant à l'épée (Boy Carrying the Sword)

1862, etching

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Print Room, Moreau-Nélaton coll.

Léon is the model for this boy. The clothes are in Spanish style, but the pose recalls those Manet took from the frescoes of Benozzo Gozzoli in Pisa, of which a drawing was seen in the first room.

37.Édouard Manet

Cavaliers espagnols (Spanish Knights)

1859-1860, oil on canvas

Lyon, Musée des Beaux-Arts

The figures in this painting, like the Boy Carrying the Sword, are also substantially derived from those taken by Manet from the frescoes of Benozzo Gozzoli in the Camposanto of Pisa, of which a drawing showing a woman and boy were seen in the first room. And these horsemen actually have the features of Suzanne and Léon.

38.Édouard Manet

Spanish Ballet

1862, pen and ink wash with watercolour and gouache highlights

Budapest, Szépművészeti Múzeum

This is one of the preparatory sketches for the painting of the same name, shown below.

39.Édouard Manet

Le Ballet espagnol (Spanish Ballet)

1862, oil on canvas

Washington, The Phillips Collection

The Spanish company in which Lola of Valencia danced is captured here posing. She is shown seated on the left, with a dancer standing beside her. Further right are the director and first dancer, Mariano Camprubi, with the nimble dancer Anita Montez. The whole scene occurs in the illusory space of a "false snapshot" constructed in the studio, in which the people shown frontally suggest certain compositions by Pietro Longhi or Francesco Guardi.

40.Édouard Manet

Lola de Valence

1862, etching and aquatint [third state]

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Print Room, Moreau-Nélaton coll.

41.Édouard Manet

Lola de Valence

1862, pencil and pen with ink, watercolour and gouache

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

Count Isaac de Camondo bequest to the Louvre, 1908.

Both the drawing and the etching, dating from 1862, presage the first version of the painting, with the monochrome background.

42.Édouard Manet

Lola de Valence

1862-1863, altered after 1867, oil on canvas

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

Count Isaac de Camondo bequest to the Louvre, 1908

Manet portrays Lola in the static moment that precedes movement, with her feet apart, one hand on her side, the other grasping a fan and her semi-rotated body ready for the snapshot. The centre of the composition is the full dress, on which all the colours are concentrated. The look is assured, proud and sensual. The background, originally monochrome, was later altered, placing Lola behind the wings of a theatre, whose proscenium can be seen on the right.

43.Édouard Manet

Angelina

1865, oil on canvas

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

Gustave Caillebotte bequest, 1894

Lady at the Window (study) was the original title of this work, in which the proud face of the model stands out, dominated by deep blacks and browns. More than a portrait it is a fantasy inspired by Goya's Capricci, painted after the trip to Spain.

45.Édouard Manet

Combat de taureaux (Bull fight)

1865-1866, oil on canvas

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

acquired by donation in 1976 with the participation of the Société des Amis du Louvre

It seems a picture from life, a kind of pictorial reportage of a bull fight in the Plaza de Toros. The painting is actually based on a photograph, possibly one of the prints that appeared in the Critique illustrée in June 1865.

44.Édouard Manet

Le Fifre (The Fifer)

1866, oil on canvas

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

Count Isaac de Camondo bequest, 1908



The work by Velázquez that most struck Manet at the Prado was the Portrait of Pablo di Valladolid, a celebrated court jester, in which, he said, "the background disappears: it is the air that surrounds this figure completed dressed in black and absolutely alive". He took up this idea in the Fifer. His is not a famous adult jester but a contemporary boy - portrayed in flat, sharp, even colours - whose solitude stands out in the grey of the completely stark background. The painting, rejected by the 1866 Salon, was strenuously defended by Zola.

VI. Between music and theatre

This room and the next two illustrate Manet's relationship with the culture and society of his time from different perspectives.

Music played a fundamental role such as, for example, in the artist's painting education (one thinks of the importance in this of the already noted *Pastoral Concert*, to which we will later return), in his private life – Suzanne entered his life as a piano teacher – and his social relations, like those established in the drawing room of Mme Éléonore Meurice, where music was played every fortnight and the Manets met people like Baudelaire, along with other writers, poets, painters, art critics, musicians and republican intellectuals. The works exhibited in this room again highlight the classical allusions (the *Pastoral Concert* in the *Music Lesson*, the symbology of music as the “art of time” in the *Young Lady at her Piano*) and greater attention to the tastes and society of the time, but also – as always – the artist's creative independence and his placing of himself outside conventions. This is why the *Balcony* – apparently part of a genre then in vogue, that of a scene of upper middle-class life – depicts three elegant people who are unable to communicate, each of them turning a different and isolated look to the world, as if lost in their own interior dream. It is precisely this that suggested the matching in the exhibition with Carpaccio's *Two Venetian Ladies*, also “lost” in a suspended situation, and immersed in secret, indecipherable thoughts. The incommunicability that seeps from the silent trio shown in the *Balcony* is positioned, however, at the antipodes of society imagination and fashion. Presented at the 1869 Salon, the painting once again aroused criticism and incomprehension.

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46. Édouard Manet

La Lecture (The Reading)

1865/1866-1873, oil on canvas

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

Winnaretta Singer princess of Polignac bequest to the Louvre, 1944

The painting is drenched in summer light, created in a new way, for Manet, of using whites.

The boy on the right is Léon. The scene was composed in two stages, first the portrait of Suzanne and then the addition of Léon, who appears as a young man, in '73.

47. Édouard Manet

Woman in profile writing

1862-1864, graphite

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

acquired by the Louvre in 1954

Another domestic interior, whose composition refers to that of the painting shown below.

48.Édouard Manet

Jeune Dame à son piano (Mme Manet at her piano) (Young woman- Madame Manet- at her piano)

1867-1868, oil on canvas

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

Count Isaac de Camondo bequest, 1908

Suzanne plays the piano with an intense expression. The mirror on the right reflects a precious pendulum clock, decorated with Cupid kissing Psyche. The clock refers to music, the art of time, while painting is the art of space. The painting in this way "doubles" and from family scene becomes an allegory of music as communion.

50.Édouard Manet

Le Balcon (The Balcony)

1868-1869, oil on canvas

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

Gustave Caillebotte bequest, 1894

The people are Berthe Morisot, painter, here acting as a model for Manet for the first time, with a dark look and closed fan, the landscape artist Antoine Guillemet behind her, standing with Fanny Claus, violinist and friend of Suzanne, on his left. The boy in the background - with teapot - is Léon. The evident representation of incommunicability in the painting, along with the decisive chromatic choices - the green of the shutters and the railing, the contrast between the white of the clothes and faces and the shadows of the background, plus the sketching of the faces, less defined than the flowers - were once again to cause outrage.

49.Vittore Carpaccio

Two Venetian Ladies

c. 1495, oil and tempera on wood

Venice, Museo Correr

*This is a symbolic depiction of social life. The painting is the lower half of a larger composition that was completed with *Hunting in the Lagoon* (now in the P. Getty Museum of Malibu). The ladies seated in the loggia are thus awaiting their men intent on hunting. Surrounded by symbols of loyalty and purity (dog, turtle-dove, pearls), they seem lost in their thoughts. It is not known whether Manet saw this painting on his first visit to Venice, whose subject was thought to be *Two Courtesans* (it was not then known that it was part of a larger painting). Some references certainly seem intriguing and Carpaccio was in any case one of his most preferred Venetian artists.*

52.Édouard Manet

Bal masqué à L'Opéra (Masked Ball at the Opéra)

1873-1874, oil on canvas

Washington, National Gallery of Art

The painting describes a crowded masked ball at the Opéra, characterised by men in formal evening dress and top hats and cheerful, scantily clad, masked girls. One, the only one without a mask, openly flirts with one of the gentlemen in the centre of the composition; at the top a pair of legs dangle from the gallery balustrade. Manet portrays himself at the right of the painting: he is the man with the blond beard looking at us with an ironic expression. At his feet a dance programme with his name signs the painting that, considering the obvious criticism of the right-minded people/participants, was to be rejected at the 1874 Salon.

51. Francesco Guardi

Il Ridotto di Palazzo Dandolo a San Moisè

1740-c. 1750, oil on canvas

Venice, Ca' Rezzonico, Museo del Settecento Veneziano

An early work by Francesco included in the Correr Collection, it shows the swarming wave of the crowd in the Palazzo Dandolo casino at San Moisè. This was also a venue for more or less clandestine pastimes and meetings, sheltered by masks, that was opened in 1638 and closed by the Great Council in 1774. In the crowd, the ambiguity of the mask, the contrast between the black of the capes and tricorns and the light of the female clothing, it is possible to venture a play of references with Manet's Masked Ball.

53. Édouard Manet

La Chanteur espagnol (The Spanish Singer)

1862, etching, dry-point and aquatint [third state]

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Print Room, Moreau-Nélaton coll.

This etching takes up the painting created in 1860 and exhibited in 1861 at the Salon where - the only time in 20 years of participation - it earned him an honourable mention and the favour of the critics.

54. Édouard Manet

La Plainte Moresque

1866, Lithography on rice paper [first state]

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Print Room, Moreau-Nélaton coll.

Plainte moresque is a score that the Catalan guitarist Jaime Bosh - frequenter like Manet of the musical events at the Meurices - dedicated to the painter and for which he produced this lively and suave picture.

55. Édouard Manet

La Leçon de musique (Music Lesson)

1870, oil on canvas

Boston, Museum of Fine Arts

Anonymous centennial gift in memory of Charles Deering

Manet's friend Zacharie Astruc, painter, sculptor, poet, musician and art critic is portrayed here with his wife. He plays, she follows the score with her finger. It brings to mind the figures in the Pastoral Concert, transported into a contemporary interior, though made unstable by the indeterminate nature of the place. The work, exhibited at the 1870 Salon, was very badly treated by the press.

VII. Contemporary Parnassus

A friend of Baudelaire, Zola and Mallarmé, Manet was the only painter who put himself into contact with all the writers and poets of his time, including the lesser ones. And he was also the only one to have broken down the barriers between different aesthetics, communicating with Naturalism, poetic Parnassus and early Symbolism, in a dense weave of rich and strategic relations for the painter's art and life.

This room presents illustrations, documents and testimony of these, along with the famous paintings. Zola stood to defend Manet several times – against the dominant criticism that, as seen, invariably savaged him – publishing articles and a pamphlet dedicated specifically to him. In 1867 Manet exhibited the portrait of Zola at the Salon, making it a kind of manifesto of a cultural brotherhood.

At the same time he was open to collaboration with other avant-gardes of the time, taking part, for example, in the *Sonnets et eaux-fortes*, a collection of 42 paired poems and etchings by the same number of artists. He came into contact with Stéphane Mallarmé in October 1873 in the circle of the multi-faceted poet and inventor Charles Cros and of Nina de Callias. The two were never to leave one another: together they transformed Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven* into an art book and, still together, gave rise to another great production, *The Afternoon of the Faun*, a masterpiece of poetic hermeticism and editorial luxury. Manet portrayed his poet friend in the same year: the cigar smoke in the painting is a metaphor for the rarefaction of Mallarmé's poetry.

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56. Lorenzo Lotto

Portrait of Young Gentleman in his Study

c. 1530, oil on canvas

Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia

The identity of the young aristocrat portrayed here is not known, but the various objects surrounding him describe his preferences and personality. He turns his back on pleasures like music and hunting (lute, hunting horn, dead bird). His gaze turned towards us, he is leafing through a book on the table where there are three letters, a blue cloth, a lizard and a basin, all symbols of his interests: the lizard, for example, symbolises cold blood and the search for light. The matching with the portrait of Zola is suggested precisely by the presence of characterising attributes, as well as by some chromatic assonances.

57. Édouard Manet

Portrait of Émile Zola

1868, oil on canvas

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

gift of Mme Zola to the state with right of usufruct, 1918

In the manner of the Renaissance humanists, Zola - shown in profile - is surrounded by significant objects: on the wall a reproduction of Olympia, the painting by Manet that was

appreciated and defended by Zola, and, behind, one by Velázquez, a passion common to the painter and his writer friend; at the side, a Japanese print like the screen on the left, emphasising the role of the “discovery” of Far Eastern art in the aesthetic research of the period. Among the books on the table is the blue pamphlet on Manet published by Zola (and exhibited in the showcase alongside cat.59). So the painting is a genuine tribute to their cultural ties.

58.Émile Zola

Mon Salon

1866, Paris, Librairie centrale.

Paris, Pierre Bergé coll.

A collection of art criticism, among which there is a long article dedicated to Manet. Zola passionately manifests his admiration for the artist and his appreciation of works like the Dejeuner, Olympia and Le Fifre, all particularly mauled by the dominant critics. This copy is the one he personally dedicated “To Édouard Manet as a mark of admiration and fondness”.

59.Émile Zola

Ed. Manet. Etude biographique et critique

1867, Paris, Dentu

Paris, Stéphane Cromant collection

This is the pamphlet depicted in the portrait of Zola. It is a biographical and critical study, illustrated with a portrait of the artist and an etching of Olympia. It was published on the occasion of the solo exhibition that Manet organised in conjunction with the Universal Exposition in Paris in 1867. Zola wrote: “I want the praise ... to appear on the same day as his exhibition opens..., so certain I am of great success and ... honoured to have been the first to salute ... a new master”.

60.Philippe Burty (ed.)

Sonnets et Eaux-Fortes

1869 [printed on 20 December 1868], Paris, Alphonse Lemerre.

Paris, private collection

The collection contains 42 poems and the same number of etchings by various artists. The poets were mainly Parnassians and, among the artists, as well as Millet, Corot and others, is Manet, who illustrated Exotic Flower by Arnaud Renaud. The subject is a woman who “comes from the East where life is mystery...”, but which Manet interprets with a figure inspired by Goya, mantilla, fan and flower in her hands.

61.Charles Cros

Le Fleuve. Eaux-fortes d'Édouard Manet

1874, Librairie de l'Eau-forte

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Rare Book Collection

This is an unbound booklet, printed in 100 copies. Here, in 200 lines, Charles Cros (1842-1888) sings the destiny of a river, in a progression rich in ideas. Manet described them in eight illustrative etchings, where landscapes, figures and naturalist motives in Japanese style follow one another in a delicately melancholy atmosphere.

62. Champfleury

Les Chats, 1869

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale

This is a classic of “feline literature” recounting history, customs, observations and anecdotes about cats. The author is another of Manet’s friends, the realist novelist Jules

Husson (1821 – 1889), known by the pseudonym Champfleury. The painter created the etching Cat and Flowers for the book, rich in Japanese motives and irony, which was also intended to remember Baudelaire a year after his death. He had dedicated a good three poems to cats and their disturbing spirit in Les Fleurs du Mal.

63. Édouard Manet

Portrait of Nina de Callias

1873-c.1874, gouache and graphite on wood

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

gift of Victor Rosenthal, 1920

Separated wife of the journalist and nobleman Hector de Callias, Anne-Marie (called Nina, 1843-1884) was a vibrant writer, poet and musician, and an intimate of Charles Cros in one of the most brilliant literary and artistic circles in Paris. Manet portrayed her in a celebrated painting now in the Musée d'Orsay, Dame aux éventails, in which she appears seated on a divan. This drawing focuses on her face, with a slight hint of melancholy and loss.

64. Édouard Manet

Portrait of Stéphane Mallarmé

1876, oil on canvas

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

Acquired by the Louvre in 1928 with the assistance of the Amis du Louvre and M. David-Weill

The painter and poet had known each other for three years, saw each other frequently and had already begun working together. Friendship, complicity and admiration exude from Mallarmé's relaxed pose. He is settled on the divan in Manet's studio, one hand in his pocket while the other, resting on a pile of papers (with his writings?), holds a big lit cigar giving off a light smoke, alluding to the poet's rarefied and complex language.

65. Édouard Manet

Five illustrations for

Le corbeau (The Raven) – poème d'Edgard Poe traduit par Stéphane Mallarmé-illustré de cinq Dessins de Manet (The Raven - poem by Edgar Poe translated by Stéphane Mallarmé - with five illustrations by Manet)

1875, Richard Lesclide éditeur, Paris

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Moreau-Nélaton coll., Rare Book Collection

The Raven is a poem published by Edgar Allan Poe in New York in 1845. It recounts the mysterious visit of a talking raven to a disturbed lover in very musical lines. The word "Nevermore" repeated at the end of each verse indicates the abandoning of all hope. Mallarmé, who taught English, came to the Raven through Baudelaire and decided to translate it into French, trying to keep the evocative and musical effects of the original. These were reinforced by the collaboration of Manet, who produced the figurative counterpoint, giving rise to an absolute masterpiece (and a model) of the Artist's book.

66. Stéphane Mallarmé

L'Après-midi d'un faune. Eglogue par Stéphane Mallarmé (The Afternoon of a Faun. Eclogue of Stéphane Mallarmé) with four engravings on wood by Edouard Manet

1876, Paris, Alphonse Derenne

Paris, Pierre Bergé coll.

The theme of the loss of a loved one returns in the other great publishing production by the Mallarmé/Manet duo. In the poem a faun on waking from an afternoon sleep speaks, in a kind of dreamy monologue, of the nymphs he met in the morning. A fundamental work of French literary symbolism, the association with Manet results in a perfect correspondence

of visions and vague sensations that are diffused through the book by the pictures. Debussy was inspired by the work for his symphonic poem Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune of 1894, a paradigm of musical impressionism.

67.Édouard Manet

Two salamanders and a large fly

1880-1883, watercolour on notebook page

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

acquired by the Louvre in 1954

72.Édouard Manet

Portrait of Clemenceau

1879-80, oil on canvas

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

gift of H.O. Havemeyer to the Louvre, 1927

Georges Benjamin Clemenceau (1841-1929) a fervent republican, was a radical leader at the time of his relationship with Manet. The painting, probably taken from photographic images, introduces the next section dedicated to various aspects of the painter's links to the society of his day.

VIII. Manet society painter

The 1870s began with the dramatic events of the Franco-Prussian war (in which Manet took part), the Paris Commune, the fall of the Second Empire and the advent of the Third Republic. In 1872 one of the most renowned art dealers of the time, Paul Durand-Ruel (1831-1922), bought 24 of Manet's works in a job lot, and the artist then moved to a new studio. Subjects related to contemporary society were the main inspiration in this period: the face of Berthe Morisot (friend, colleague, model and, from 1874, Manet's sister-in-law) best expresses this tendency. In 1874, the Salon jury rejected two paintings out of the three presented. Degas, Renoir, Monet and Pissarro invited him to take part in the exhibition that was to be held in April of that same year in the studio of the photographer Nadar and open up the way to Impressionism, but Manet declined the offer. He also began painting subjects set "in exteriors" - such as *On the Beach*, shown here - but remaining faithful to a profound psychological base and the formulation of a "history painter". The paintings presented at the 1876 Salon were also rejected, so Manet opened up his studio to the public. In 1880, while the fifth Impressionist exhibition was taking place, he successfully exhibited ten oils and fifteen pastels with fashionably dressed, exquisitely urban subjects at the Galerie de la Vie Moderne. In the meantime, in 1879, the government had been taken over by the radicals and Manet, having moved to another, larger studio, surrounded himself with admirers, critics, musicians, painters and politicians such as his long-time friend Antonin Proust, who in 1881 became a government minister, and Georges Clemenceau, whose portrait we have just seen, painted with a few strokes, without background and a great sense of empathy.

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68.Édouard Manet

Berthe Morisot au bouquet de violettes (Berthe Morisot with a Bouquet of Violets)

1872, oil on canvas

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

Acquired by the national museums in 1998 with the participation of Fonds du Patrimoine, Fondation Meyer, China Times Group and a patron, coordinated by the "Nikkei" daily paper

This is one of four portraits of Berthe painted after the opening of the studio in rue Saint-Pétersbourg and one of Manet's masterpieces, in which the play of intense, lateral light combines with the virtuoso use of blacks. The painting also heralds the pastels of the following years, linked to the representation of Parisian fashion of the time.

69.Édouard Manet

Berthe Morisot à l'éventail (Berthe Morisot with a Fan)

1874, oil on canvas

Paris, Musée d'Orsay, on deposit at the Palais des Beaux-Arts di Lilla

bequeathed by dation to the national museums in 1999

This is the last portrait of Berthe painted by Manet, shortly before her marriage to Eugène, the painter's brother. Assertive look, tapered hands, Berthe took an active part in the first Impressionist exhibition that year.

70.Édouard Manet

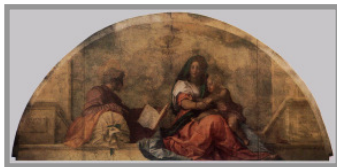
Sur la plage (On the Beach)

1873, oil on canvas

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

gift of M. J. T. Dubrujeaud and son to the Louvre 1970

Painted during a holiday at the sea, it shows Suzanne from behind, absorbed in reading, and Manet's brother Eugène in the same position he was portrayed ten years earlier in the Dejeuner. Both turn their backs to the observer and seem isolated in their thoughts. The painting, although painted outside, is a long way from the Impressionist spirit. The composition refers to Andrea del Sarto's Madonna del Sacco, carefully copied some time earlier in 1857.



71.Édouard Manet

La Partie de croquet (The Croquet Game)

1873, oil on canvas

Frankfurt, Städel Museum. Property of the Städelcher Museums -Verein e.V.

Alfred Émile Stevens (1823-1906), a very successful Belgian painter who had moved to Paris was a friend of Manet (he presented him to the dealer who in 1972 bought a good 24 paintings). He often organised long games of croquet in his garden, which Manet takes up in this painting. The figures arranged diagonally and the way of painting the vegetation are more reminiscent of Titian than the Impressionists.

76.Édouard Manet

La Serveuse de bocks (The Waitress)

1879, oil on canvas

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

From the Kojiro Matsukata collection and assigned to the Louvre in 1959

France lost the territories of Alsace-Lorraine in the Franco-Prussian war. A big canvas showing an Alsatian beer hall, which Manet was later to cut into two sections, was linked to this event. The painting shown here is a contemporary variant of one of these. Alongside this "political" evocation, the theme of the painting is related to the artist's interest at this time in depicting scenes of ordinary people and everyday life, which also appears in the "snapshot" drawings taken in a Parisian cafe shown alongside.

74. Édouard Manet
A Café, place du Théâtre Français
1880-81, ink and graphite
Paris, Musée d'Orsay
acquired by the Louvre in 1954

75. Édouard Manet
At the café, study of legs
c. 1880, watercolour on squared paper
Paris, Musée d'Orsay
acquired by the Louvre in 1954

73. Édouard Manet
Portrait de M.B. [run] (Portrait of Monsieur Brun)
c. 1879, oil on stiffened paper
Private collection
In top hat, buttoned frock coat and light trousers, Brun is a typical example of a rich Parisian elegant on holiday, depicted with the usual technique of immediate and here particularly bright painting. Exhibited at Manet's solo exhibition in 1880, after his death the painting went into the collection of his colleague Degas.

IX. The Boundless Sea

The theme of the sea, to which Manet was to return in about 40 works, was influenced by his youthful experience (departure on a training ship at the age of 16), by frequent holidays from 1865 on the north coast of France and by the commercial possibilities of the genre. It was precisely one of the paintings in this room, *Moonlight on Boulogne Harbour*, that prompted the dealer Paul Durand-Ruel to buy this and many other works by Manet, giving a turn to his career. Another collector, the baritone Jean-Baptiste Faure, favoured the seascapes and it was he who in 1875 bought the *View of Venice* shown here, one of the finest examples of the artist's production in this period, in which an incredible range of light and colour is unfurled.

The painting was created during Manet's second stay in Venice, in September 1874, by then a renowned painter who was reflecting on his own formal research, among other things. He had not taken part in the Impressionist exhibition, but during the summer he had visited Monet and had discussion with Renoir. This stay in Venice thus occurred at an important creative moment, when he decided to devote himself to light, to subjects in movement and the broken brushstroke: in all this, Venice was an inevitable and strategic source of inspiration. But this work, too, as always with Manet, is the result of a process of reflection in which the rendering of the visible is accompanied by intellectual work and reformulation in the studio, nourished by various cultural references. Such is also the case in the other works related to the sea, which acts as a source of realistic views but is always connected to literary allusions or political or social references. The *Escape of Rochefort*, shown here, is for example Manet's last big project, conceived for the 1883 Salon, which the artist was not to attend, having been struck down by his illness on 30 April. The theme of the escape of a contemporary political opponent is here woven into the eternal and romantic one of the infinite vastness of the ocean.

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77. Édouard Manet

Steamboat, marine

1864-65, oil on canvas

Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago

The sea is calm but the unfurled sails of the small pleasure boats suffer the aggressive intrusion of the dense black smoke from the ship in the background. The layout of this painting recalls another larger work, painted in the same period to show the naval battle between United (North) and Confederate (South) States fought off Cherbourg (in France), during the American Civil War.

78.Édouard Manet

Moonlight on Boulogne Harbour

1868, oil on canvas

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

Count Isaac de Camondo bequest to the Louvre, 1908

The dealer Paul Durand-Ruel fell in love with this painting at first sight, giving rise to his purchase of a good 24 paintings by Manet. It is not a romantic night view, but rather the portrayal of a compelling, suspended and slightly anxious atmosphere (the women waiting for their husbands to return from the sea).

80. Édouard Manet

Le Grand Canal à Venise (The Grand Canal, Venice)

1874, oil on canvas

Private collection

This is one of the two paintings that have come down to us painted in Venice during his stay in 1874. The composition is constructed on intelligent diagonals and skilled foreshortening of which the gondolier marks the junction precisely, playing a fundamental role in the whole. The "real" view of the city, in the splendour of the September light, combines with the carefully studied insertion of its sombre figure, which in some ways darkens the overall effect: a Venice divided between eternal romanticism and its modern dissolution.

79.Édouard Manet

L'Évasion de Rochefort (Escape of Rochefort)

1880-81, oil on canvas

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

Acquired by donation to the national museums in 1984

Manet, now ill and near his end, intended exhibiting a painting of "contemporary history" at the Salon, portraying the incredible escape of Count Henri de Rochefort-Luçay - restless opponent of Napoleon III and leading figure of the Commune - from prison in New Caledonia in 1874. The blond figure rows at the mercy of the waves with his fellow adventurers at his side. The dark immensity of the sea, which fills the entire canvas and contrasts with the tiny boat, evokes the danger and drama of the situation. Apart from the topical nature of the subject, it is an extraordinary representation of the universal fragility of the human condition.