

Progress, Modernity, and Modernism—French Visual Culture during the Second Empire, 1852–1870

After the proclamation of the Second Empire in 1852, the economy of France expanded and the country prospered. Louis Napoleon, who now assumed the title Napoleon III (FIG. 12-1), was an able administrator who, like his contemporaries, believed that science, technology, and industry were the engines of progress.

The term “progress,” during the second half of the nineteenth century, implied advances in civilization leading to a better quality of life. The seeds of this concept can be found in the writings of the French philosopher Auguste Comte (1798–1857), who held that all pursuit of knowledge must be aimed at moral progress, or at increasing human integrity and happiness. Rejecting religion and metaphysics, Comte agreed with the British Empiricists that true knowledge must be based on the positive data of experience. Comte’s “Positivist” philosophy, moreover, overlapped with the views of the British Utilitarians, men such as Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806–1873). The former’s call for the “greatest happiness for the greatest number” and the latter’s advocacy of the widest possible expression of individual liberty became cornerstones of liberal political thought in mid-nineteenth-century Europe.

Eager to advance progress and prosperity in France, Napoleon III promoted public works and encouraged the

establishment of lending institutions to finance both public and private projects. He supported a massive program of railroad construction, which provided thousands of new jobs and also helped the rural industries to expand their markets. Unlike Louis-Philippe, who had encouraged the middle class to get rich with little regard for the workers, Napoleon III did not ignore the underclass. By controlling the price of bread and creating a variety of social programs, he remained true to his earlier concern with poverty (see page 263). Nonetheless, workers’ lives during the Second Empire remained miserable, since the Emperor was both unwilling and unable to enforce his progressive ideas in the realm of private enterprise.

Napoleon III continued Louis-Philippe’s colonial policies, and expanded French power in west Africa (especially modern-day Senegal) and Indochina (present-day Cambodia and Vietnam). He also, unsuccessfully, tried to gain a foothold in the New World by setting up a puppet regime in Mexico that was backed by French troops. On the European front, he was much more aggressive than Louis-Philippe and engaged in wars against Russia (the so-called Crimean War) and Austria. His belligerence eventually caused his demise. Defeated in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, he was ousted from the throne and forced to leave France for Britain.

Rosa Bonheur, *The Horse Fair*, 1853. (Detail of FIG. 12-24.)

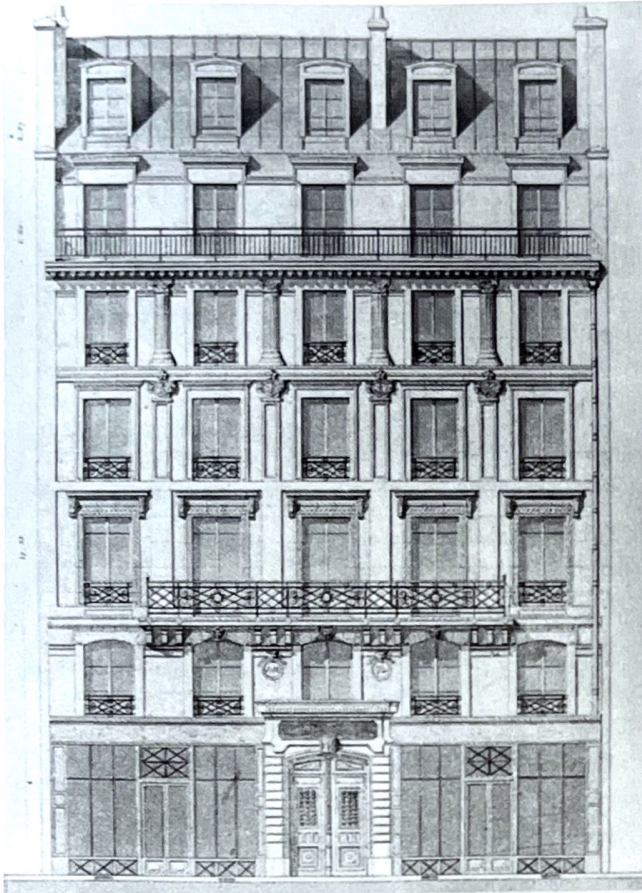


12-1 **Hippolyte-Jean Flandrin,** *Portrait of Napoleon III*, c.1860–61. Oil on canvas, 6'11" x 4'10" (2.12 x 1.47 m). Musée National du Château de Versailles, Versailles.

Emile Zola and Second Empire France

Life in Second Empire France is evocatively described in the novels of the French writer Emile Zola (1840–1902; see FIG. 12-37). Between 1870 and 1893 he wrote a series of twenty novels that give a detailed account of the fortunes and misfortunes of the Rougon-Macquarts, a fictitious family living during the Second Empire. Some members of the family become rich, others end up in the gutter. Together the Rougon-Macquart novels, many of which have been translated into English, provide a complete picture of high- and low-class life in Paris and the provinces and many of the institutions that characterized the period. Thus *Au bonheur*

des dames (The Ladies' Paradise) is centered on the department store, a revolutionary type of retailing that was first introduced during the Second Empire. *La Ventre de Paris* (The Belly of Paris) deals with the colossal Parisian wholesale food market; *Germinal* (1885) with life in the coal mines; and *La Terre* (The Earth), with peasant life. *Nana* (1880) describes the world of a Parisian *cocotte* (see page 292); while *L'Assommoir* (1877) gives an account of the lives of laundry women (see page 265). In *L'Oeuvre* (The Masterpiece), finally, Zola dealt with the lives of artists, a clear indication of the importance of the art world in Second Empire France.



12-2 Elevation of apartment building at 39 Rue Neuve-des-Mathurins, 1860. Architectural drawing. Bibliothèque des Arts Décoratifs, Paris.

Napoleon III and the "Haussmannization" of Paris

By far the most ambitious public project undertaken by Napoleon III was the complete overhaul of Paris, starting in 1853. The Emperor aspired to turn the largely medieval city, with its narrow, crooked streets, into a modern metropolis, with tree-lined avenues, parks, and public buildings. The architect and supervisor of this vast enterprise was Baron Georges Haussmann (1809–1891), who masterminded the new plan for the city and oversaw the design of most of its buildings. As well as churches and public buildings, these included elegant five- or six-story apartment houses for wealthy bourgeois, in the center of town (FIG. 12-2), and more modest tenements for workers, on the periphery. Most of the former were designed in a classically inspired style that was heavily indebted to the grandiose architecture of the Louis XIV period (see page 20). The term *Beaux-Arts* is often used to describe this style of building, which was taught at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* in Paris (see page 205) well into the twentieth century.

Haussmann's many innovations included a new sewer system, train stations in the heart of the city, and wide thoroughfares to accommodate the growing number of horse-drawn carriages. Haussmann also planned the installation of gas street lamps to illuminate the center of the city at night. This

encouraged a nightlife of outdoor cafés and street theaters that had been practically non-existent before this time.

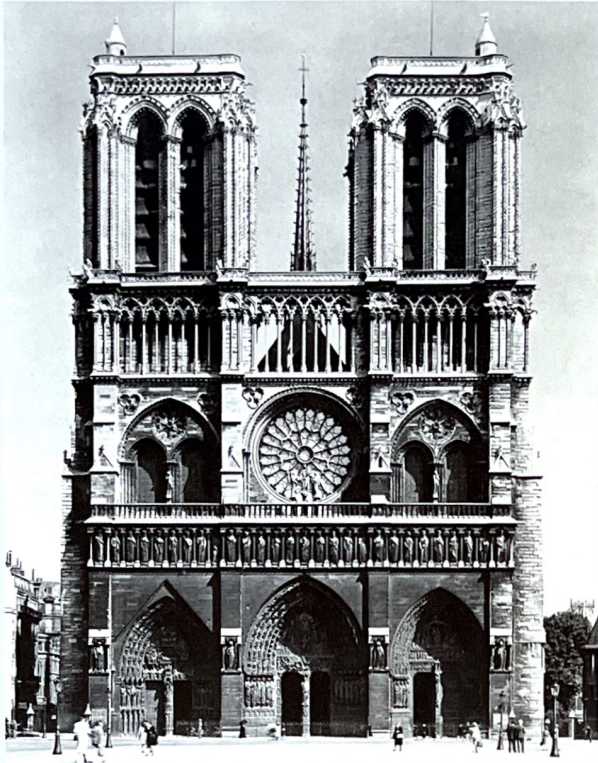
The "Haussmannization" of Paris made the city the place to be in Europe during the last third of the nineteenth century. While many praised the project, some criticized it on social or aesthetic grounds, or both. The German journalist–philosopher Karl Marx, who had lived in Paris in the years 1843–5, referred to the "vandalism of Haussmann," and accused him of "razing Paris for the Paris of the sight-seer." This point had some validity. The rebuilt city attracted wealthy foreign tourists and benefited the lucky few who could afford the expensive apartments in the center. But it drove poorer Parisians to the tenement houses on the outskirts of the city or, worse, to the shanty towns beyond.

Many Parisians also regretted the loss of the old picturesque streets, with their medieval and Renaissance dwellings, and bemoaned the uniformity of the new apartment buildings (see *Viollet-le-Duc and France's Gothic Heritage*, page 272). By 1868 the municipal government of Paris had begun to realize that Haussmann's urbanization plan was erasing a large part of the city's past. It ordered the photographer Charles Marville (1816–1879) to take pictures of the old streets before they were destroyed. Marville's photographs, such as the one seen in FIG. 12-3, demon-

12-3 Charles Marville, *Intersection in Old Paris*, one of 425 views of old Paris, c.1865–9. Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris, Paris.



Viollet-le-Duc and France's Gothic Heritage



12.2-1 Cathedral of Notre-Dame, west façade, thirteenth century. Nineteenth-century view, showing the gallery of kings with the figures made under the supervision of Viollet-le-Duc.

While Haussmann was busy destroying the medieval fabric of Paris, Eugène Viollet-le-Duc (1814–1879) was engaged in the restoration of the city's most famous medieval monuments, the Gothic cathedral of Notre-Dame (Our Lady) and the so-called Sainte Chapelle, or Holy Chapel, built by the canonized king Louis IX in the thirteenth century. Both of these projects were begun under the July Monarchy, when the interest in France's Gothic past peaked (witness the success of Victor Hugo's novel *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* of 1837), after its early beginnings during the Napoleonic and Restoration periods. The sustained interest in their completion indicates that, even while Paris was being filled with buildings in the popular Beaux-Arts style, Gothic still retained its attraction as France's national style *par excellence*.

Viollet's restoration of the façade of Notre-Dame (FIG. 12.2-1) is representative of nineteenth-century methods. These were aimed not at preserving what was left but at re-establishing the building in its original state. Notre-Dame had suffered great damage during the revolution of 1789, when many of its statues (especially the row of Old Testament kings) were taken down and, in many instances, smashed to pieces (see page 108). Under Viollet-le-Duc's direction, they were newly made and reintegrated in what was left of the original Gothic façade. Such "inventive" restoration is no longer practiced today. It first came under attack at the end of the nineteenth century, when the emphasis began to shift from restoration to protection and conservation.

strate an important new role for photography. While initially it had been used primarily for portraiture, from the middle of the nineteenth century it was also used to document cities and other environments. Marville's photographs go beyond mere documentation, however. Their careful compositions and dramatic lighting make for startling, sometimes even haunting, images. They remind us that, like many photographers, Marville had a background as an artist. During the 1830s and 1840s he had worked as an illustrator, drawing pictures for novels and travel books.

The Opéra and Mid-Nineteenth-Century Sculpture

The Avenue de l'Opéra (FIG. 12-4) is one of the "high end" streets of Haussmann's Paris. This broad thoroughfare still looks much the way it did in the nineteenth century, even though the road bed was widened in the 1950s. The street is lined with luxury six-story shops and office buildings that are separated from the road by sidewalks, or *trottoirs*. Large enough to accommodate outdoor terraces and cafés, these encourage street life and make Paris a haven for pedestrians.



12-4 Avenue de l'Opéra. Paris.

The Avenue de l'Opéra leads to the spectacular Opéra (FIG. 12-5), begun in 1861 by Charles Garnier (1825–1898). Although not completed until after the fall of Napoleon III, this splendid building epitomizes the culture of the Second Empire. It was a time of optimism and wealth, a



12-5 **Charles Garnier**, Opéra, 1861–75. Place de l'Opéra, Paris.

"gilded age" when prosperous members of the bourgeoisie had both the means and the time to enjoy opera, theater, concerts, and restaurants. The Opéra accommodated lavishly staged grand operas by such popular composers as Richard Wagner (1813–1883), Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901), and Georges Bizet (1838–1875).

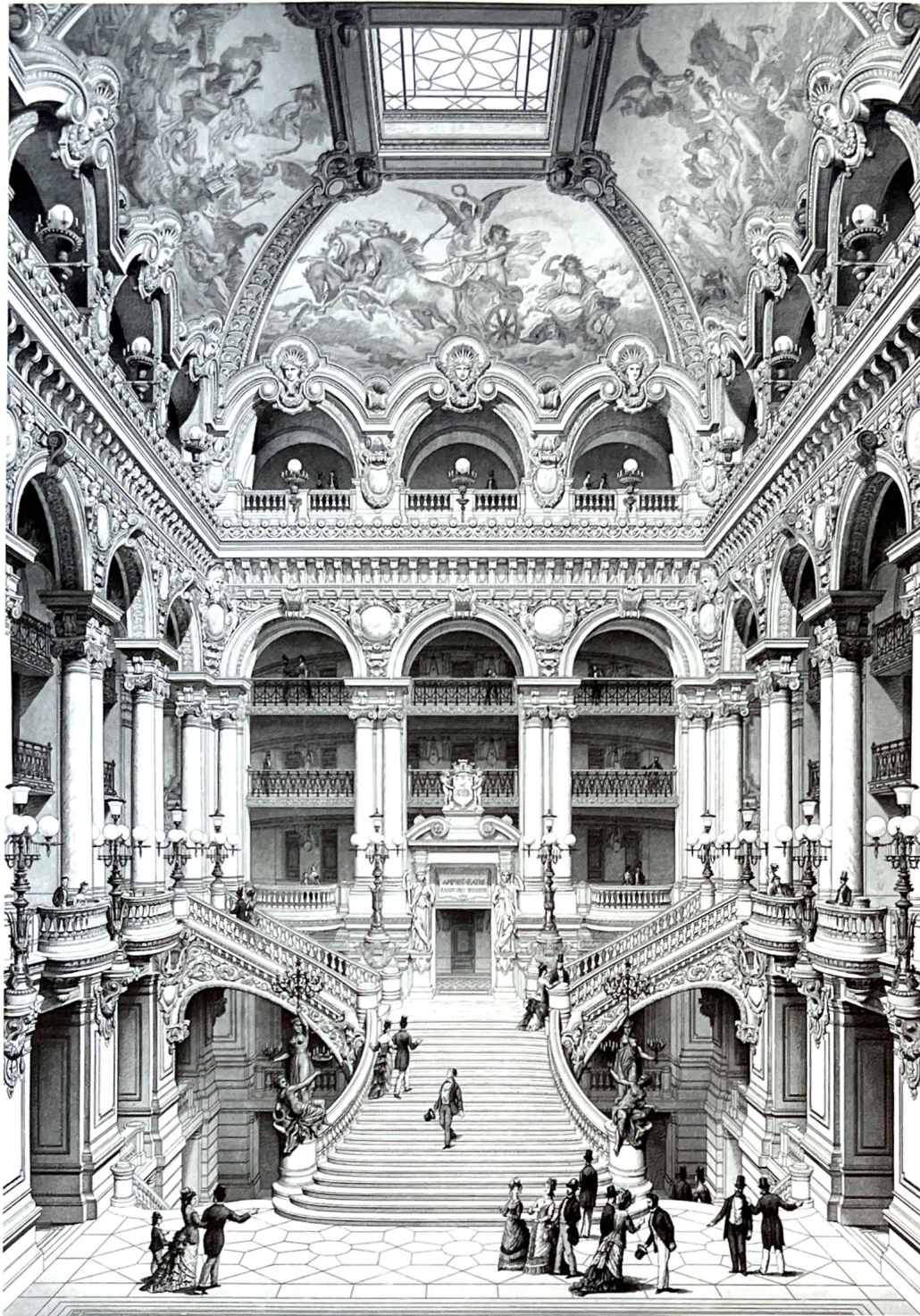
Built in an eclectic style recalling the seventeenth-century Baroque, the exterior abounds with architectural details and sculptural decorations. It is difficult to appreciate the building in a photograph, since its most striking feature is the way it "unfolds" as the visitor approaches it. From successive points on the Avenue de l'Opéra, the viewer encounters a series of different and striking views. Upon finally entering the building, an enormous, brightly lit hall and an opulent staircase (FIG. 12-6) complete the experience.

Several important artists of the mid-nineteenth century contributed to the decoration of the Opéra. Among them was Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux (1827–1875), creator of *The Dance* (FIG. 12-7), one of four monumental allegorical sculptures on the first story of the façade. These stone sculptural groups represent the main artistic elements that enter into the making of an opera—composition, instrumental music, lyric drama, and dance. But while the first three sculptures are unimaginative in their repetition of Neoclassical mod-

els (FIG. 12-8), Carpeaux's *Dance* is both dynamic and exciting. Although the artist has followed the prescribed composition of a central allegorical personification surrounded by several secondary figures, he has rejected the standard use of a draped female. Instead, his allegory of dance is a young male nude, raising both arms and waving a tambourine. This graceful youth both animates and is worshipped by an entourage of nude and scantily dressed women. *The Dance* is hardly representative of the stylized, operatic ballets that were performed inside the building. Instead, the uninhibited joy and vitality of the figures suggest pagan bacchanalia, orgiastic festivals in honor of the wine god Bacchus, in which participants are supposed to have danced in drunken frenzy.

The Dance caused a minor scandal in its time, because many people were offended by the grouping of several nude females around a nude male figure, whose genitals, though hidden, are nonetheless suggested by a floating end of drapery. To make the sculpture even more scandalous, the women are not the remote, ideal beauties found in Classical art. Instead, they are all too real, with their plump bodies and drunken smiles. As one critic wrote:

Ah, if only those lost dancers were Greek women with their splendidly bodily attitudes and forms.



12-6 **Charles Garnier**, the Grand Staircase in the Opéra, 1861–75. Engraving from Charles Garnier, *Le Nouvel Opéra de Paris*, 1880, vol. 2, plate 8.

But no, no, look at those hard faces, which provoke the passerby with their furious grins. Look at those tired, sagging legs, those flaccid and deformed torsos, and, admit it, we are in the midst of the nineteenth century, in the midst of a diseased and undressed Paris, in the midst of realism.

In his *Dance*, Carpeaux defied the unwritten law that had governed public sculpture since the mid-eighteenth century—a law that dictated that public art, especially sculpture, should edify and instruct. Carpeaux's sculpture, by contrast, threatened public morality. A contemporary caricature shows a bourgeois couple running away from the depraved statue. The wife admonishes her husband: "Don't look at them, that excites them even more!"

12-7 **Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux**, *The Dance*, 1866. Echaillon stone, height 10' 10" (3.3 m). Musée d'Orsay, Paris. (Originally part of the sculptural decorations of the façade of the Opéra, it was removed to the Musée d'Orsay for safety reasons and replaced by a copy.)





12-8 **Eugène Guillaume**, *Instrumental Music*, 1865–9. Echaillon stone, height 10' 10" (3.3 m). Opéra, Paris. (Part of the sculptural decorations of the façade of the Opéra.)

Among the sculptures that decorate the interior of the Opéra is a bronze by the Swiss artist Adèle d'Affry, Duchess of Castiglione Colonna (1836–1879). Better known as "Marcello," she was among the first female sculptors to make a name for herself in France. Her *Pythian Sibyl* (FIG. 12-9), representing the ancient Greek prophetess at Apollo's sanctuary, was installed in the Opéra in 1875. In Marcello's sculpture the sibyl is seated on a tripod, her body convulsed as her mind receives the divine message. The subject seems appropriate since, in the nineteenth century, artis-

tic inspiration was often compared to religious rapture. It is said that Marcello made casts of her own shoulders and left hand to aid her in the modeling of this figure. Nonetheless, compared with the plump, drunken women in Carpeaux's *Dance*, the *Pythian Sibyl* strikes us as an idealized figure that lacks the realism that so offended Carpeaux's opponents. In that sense, Marcello's figure is more typical of mid-nineteenth-century academic sculpture, which rarely ventured far beyond the Classicist formulas that had been established early in the nineteenth century.



12-9 **Marcello** (pseudonym of Adèle d'Affry, Duchess of Castiglione Colonna), *Pythian Sibyl*, 1867–70. Bronze, height 9'6" (2.9 m). Opéra, Paris.

Salons and Other Exhibitions during the Second Empire

The art world of the Second Empire was marked by significant government involvement. When he became President in 1848, Louis Napoleon appointed as the Director-General of Museums Count Alfred de Nieuwerkerke (1811–1892). Nieuwerkerke was responsible for acquiring modern paintings and sculptures at the Salon. These became the property of the state, and the best among them were displayed in the Luxembourg Museum, the Parisian museum of contemporary art since 1818. Works would stay there until the artist's death, at which time they were sent on to the Louvre or to a museum in the provinces, depending on their perceived quality.

In 1863 Nieuwerkerke was promoted to Superintendent of Fine Arts. This guaranteed him unprecedented

authority in the art world. As Superintendent he instituted various reforms in the Salons as well as the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. While these measures curtailed the much-maligned power of the Academy, they replaced it by increased state control, which, to most artists, was equally objectionable.

Throughout the Second Empire, innovative artists continued to experience difficulty in gaining admission to the Salon. By 1863 their discontent had become so acute that the imperial government decided to open a parallel Salon. This was the notorious Salon des Refusés (Salon of the Refused), an exhibition of all the works that had been rejected by the jury of the official Salon of that year. Although it contained much mediocre and even bad art, the Salon des Refusés also featured a number of shockingly original works by artists such as Edouard Manet (see page 293), who pioneered new artistic content and forms. The exhibition thus played an important role in confronting the public, for the first time, with the newest trends in contemporary art.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century, the Salon was the only venue where French artists could show their works, unless, like David and Géricault, they organized private exhibitions (see pages 58 and 214). Beginning in the 1850s, however, the rise of commercial art galleries offered new exhibition opportunities. Although art dealers had been active in France since at least the eighteenth century, they had generally sold works by Old Masters. By the beginning of the Second Empire, however, a number of dealers had become interested in the sale of contemporary art. At first they ran their businesses like shops, where people could come and browse. Then, following the example of British dealers, they held exhibitions of the works of artists they represented in "galleries," showrooms for art that were accessible to anyone who chose to walk in from the street (see FIG. 16-20).

Such was the story of the famous Durand-Ruel Gallery, which began as an art supply store during the Restoration period and became and remained one of the most famous galleries in Paris until its closure in 1974. During the Second Empire, it represented most of the artists of the Barbizon school. Its real fame and fortune, however, were tied to the Impressionists, whom the gallery represented during the final quarter of the nineteenth century (see page 411).

Popular Trends at the Second Empire Salons

Visitors to the Salons of the Second Empire were confronted with a bewildering variety of works, differing in size, subject, and style. The trend toward smaller paintings, begun in the July Monarchy (see page 225) continued. Historical genre scenes, Orientalist scenes, and female nudes (in the form of Venus, nymph, odalisque, etc.) became increasingly popular. The Salon of 1863 was so glutted with female nudes that the critic Théophile Gautier dubbed



12-10 **Jean-Louis-Ernest Meissonier**, *The Painting Connoisseurs*, 1860. Oil on panel, 14 x 11" (35.5 x 28.5 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

it the "Salon of the Venuses," and Daumier drew a cartoon with the caption "Venuses and more Venuses."

Landscape paintings, widely collected during the Second Empire, continued to be an important staple of the Salon. Indeed, so popular was landscape that many figure painters, including Courbet, turned to it as the ultimately marketable genre. Animal painting and hunting scenes were popular subcategories of landscape. Realist peasant painting developed into a major category, one that was encouraged by the Second Empire government, particularly if farm life was cast in a palatable, idyllic form. In addition, scenes from contemporary urban life began to be shown by a few younger artists. Finally, portraiture, always popular, continued to be a presence at the Salon, despite the growing competition from photography. Sculpture also remained a staple, though, increasingly, it became secondary to painting. Lack of patronage forced sculptors to produce small sculptures for the home.

History through a Magnifying Glass: Meissonier and Gérôme

Meissonier's *The Painting Connoisseurs* (FIG. 12-10) is representative of a new trend in historical genre painting. The modest-size picture shows an eighteenth-century artist at work in his studio, surrounded by three admiring connoisseurs. Although Meissonier continued the

historical genre traditions of Empire troubadour painters and July Monarchy artists such as Paul Delaroche, his work surpasses theirs in its high degree of "authenticity." The artist has done his utmost to achieve historical accuracy: even the smallest detail of clothing and furniture has been carefully researched. Moreover, there is a verisimilitude in the rendering of faces, hands, and the postures of figures that seems to bring the figures to life. Meissonier's works are highly detailed and meticulously finished. This lends them a miniaturist quality that was both admired and scorned in the artist's own time. The poet Baudelaire, disturbed by Meissonier's popularity among the general public, criticized the artist for having introduced a "taste for littleness."

Following the example of Horace Vernet, Meissonier painted a number of scenes commemorating the battles of Napoleon III and the military exploits of his uncle Napoleon I. *The Emperor at Solferino* (FIG. 12-11) shows Napoleon III surveying the battlefield at Solferino, Italy, where the French helped the Piedmontese in their fight for independence from Austria. Like *Painting Connoisseurs*, it reflects Meissonier's obsession with historical verisimilitude. In contrast to the Romantic battle painters before him, he does not show the Emperor heroically entering into the fray. Emperors' lives, he knew, were much too valuable to be risked on the battlefield. In his work we see the real situation of the battlefield, rendered in minute detail of landscape and military paraphernalia.

12-11 **Jean-Louis-Ernest Meissonier**, *The Emperor at Solferino*, 1863. Oil on panel, 17 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 30" (43.5 x 76 cm). Musée National du Château, Compiègne.



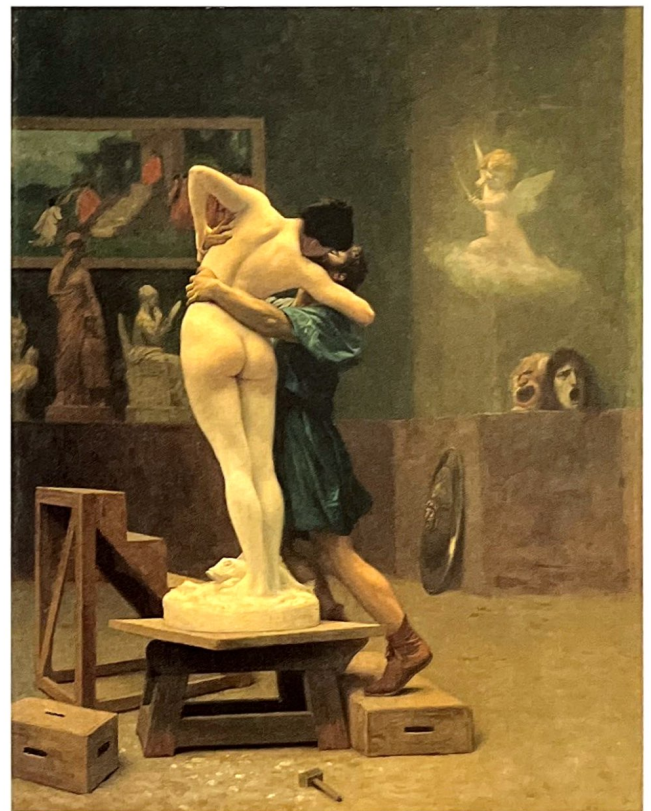


12-12 **Jean-Léon Gérôme**, *The Cock Fight*, 1847. Oil on canvas, 4'8" x 6'9" (1.43 x 2.04 m). Musée du Louvre, Paris

12-13 **Jean-Léon Gérôme**, *Pygmalion and Galatea*, c.1890. Oil on canvas, 35 x 27" (88.9 x 68.6 cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

While Meissonier focused primarily on recent and contemporary history (the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824–1904) preferred Classical antiquity. Gérôme made his reputation with *The Cock Fight* (FIG. 12-12), exhibited at the Salon of 1847. It represents a young Greek boy, naked, spurring on two roosters. A young girl looks on, with a mixture of aversion and fascination. This painting is a far cry from David's vision of antiquity, with its heroes and philosophers and its moral didacticism. Gérôme's painting is to be enjoyed for the window it provides on daily life in ancient times and for its eroticism. Enormously popular at the Salon of 1847, *The Cock Fight* ushered in the *Néo-Grec* style—a trend in painting and interior design aimed at recreating daily life in Classical antiquity.

Gérôme, who remained active as an artist until shortly before his death in 1904, produced *Néo-Grec* works throughout his long career. Perhaps his best-known work in this vein is *Pygmalion and Galatea* (FIG. 12-13), dating from about 1890. Although it represents a scene from Greek mythology (Pygmalion's love of his sculpture of "ideal womanhood"



makes the statue come alive), it has all the qualities of a genre painting. Like Meissonnier's *Painting Connoisseurs*, it offers a glimpse into the studio of a historical artist, rendered in carefully researched detail.

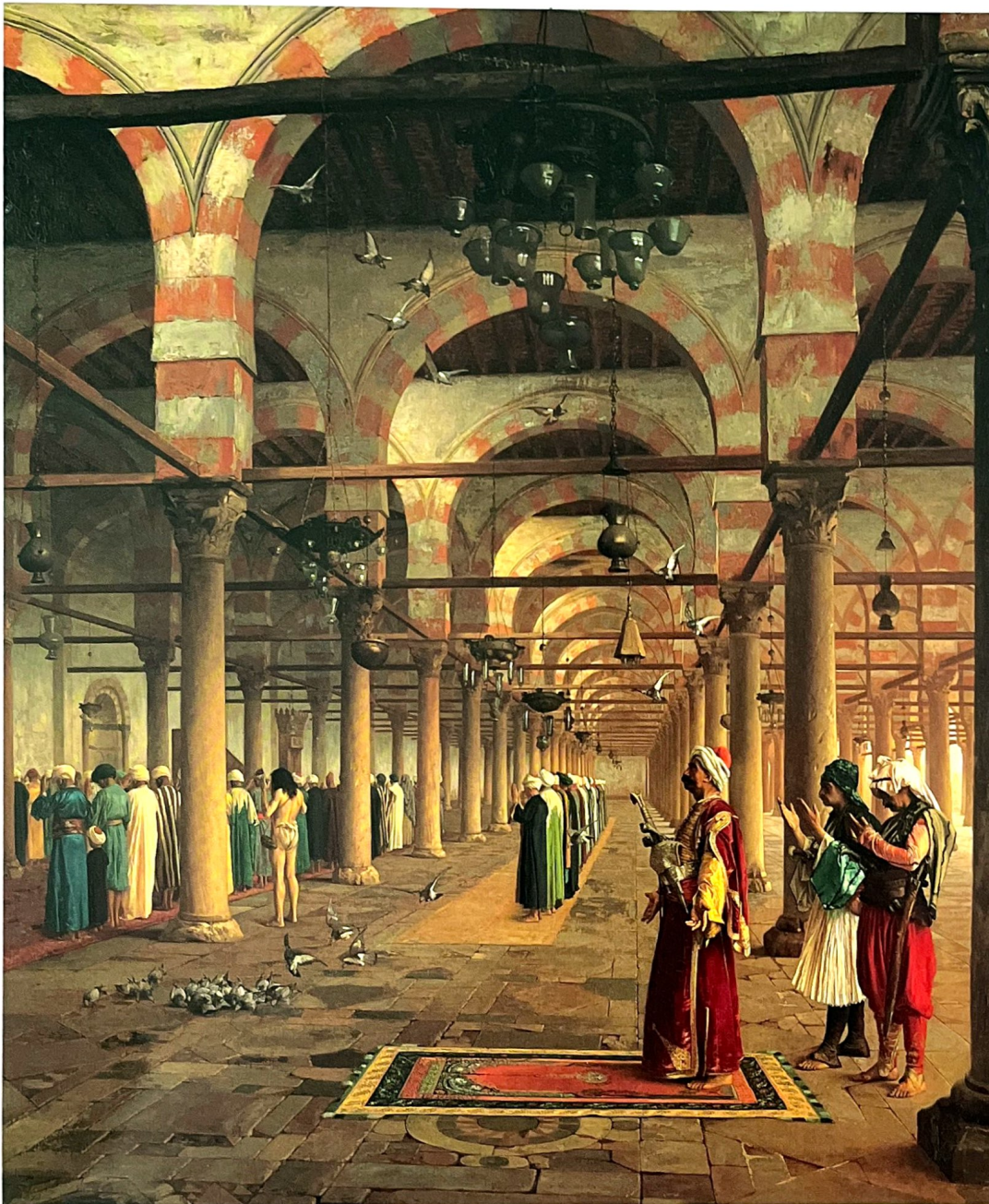
Second Empire Orientalism: Gérôme, Fromentin, Du Camp, Cordier

Although Gérôme first made his name as a *Néo-Grec*, his reputation, ultimately, rests on his paintings of life in north Africa and the Near East. During the Second Empire he embraced Orientalism, a trend that had started during the

July Monarchy (see page 235) and continued to flourish throughout the nineteenth century.

Gérôme traveled to Turkey in 1853, and made several trips to the Near East and north Africa in later years. From the 1850s onward, he produced a steady flow of pictures depicting life in the various countries he visited. *Prayer in the Mosque* (FIG. 12-14) was based on drawings made during a trip to Egypt in 1868. The seventh-century mosque of 'Amr in old Cairo is the setting for his painting. Like the artist's historical genre scenes, it is painted in meticulous detail. Architecture, furnishings, clothing, and people are rendered with photographic accuracy. Gérôme is known to have relied on photographs for many of his paintings

12-14 **Jean-Léon Gérôme**, *Prayer in the Mosque*, c. 1872. Oil on canvas, 35 x 29" (88.9 x 74.9 cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.





12-15 **Eugène Fromentin**, *Arab Falconer*, 1863. Oil on canvas, 42 x 28" (1.08 m x 73 cm). Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia.

and, at the end of his life, acknowledged the importance of photography in bringing about a new artistic vision. Yet the verisimilitude of his pictures is not due to photography alone. It also reflects contemporary travelogues and the reports of missionaries and colonial administrators, whose careful descriptions of the land and people of north Africa and the Near East anticipated those of late nineteenth-century ethnographers.

Gérôme's Orientalist scenes were enormously popular, and the artist had many followers, eager to capitalize on his success. Yet his highly colored and detailed style, ultimately derived from the harem scenes of Ingres, was not the only mode of Orientalist painting. Other artists of the period developed a different approach, more akin to the Orientalist works of Gros and Delacroix. The paintings of Eugène Fromentin (1820–1876), for example, differ considerably from those of Gérôme. For example, Fro-

mentin, who made three trips to north Africa in the late 1840s and early 1850s, concentrated on outdoor, rural scenes. Moreover, his paintings show none of the sharp-focus realism found in Gérôme's work. Instead, they are loosely painted, recalling the African battle and hunting scenes of Delacroix (see FIG. 10-14). Fromentin's *Arab Falconer* (FIG. 12-15) of 1863 is a case in point. The artist has aimed at capturing the action and movement of the agile horseman, the excited horse, and the diving falcons, rather than at painstakingly recording every detail.

The Orient attracted photographers as well as painters. Maxime Du Camp (1822–1894), who traveled to Egypt between 1849 and 1851, was an early pioneer of photography in the Near East. Financed by the French Ministry of Public Education, he had instructions to record ancient Egyptian monuments and inscriptions. He also photographed several non-archaeological views, however. On his return to



12-16 **Maxime Du Camp**, *View of Cairo: The Citadel and the Mohammed Ali Mosque*. Salt print, 6 1/8 x 8" (15.5 x 20.5 cm). Agfa Foto Historama, Cologne.

France, Du Camp published his photographs in the form of a pictorial travel album, a first in nineteenth-century France.

View of Cairo: The Citadel and the Mohammed Ali Mosque (FIG. 12-16) is one of Du Camp's views of a contemporary urban scene in Egypt. The artist seems to have set up his camera so as to include the maximum number of picturesque details. Two slender minarets rise amidst a jumble of dilapidated structures, which are punctuated by an elegant Islamic arch and occasional pieces of latticework. Du Camp's photograph bridges the gap between the contrived picturesque illustrations in the *Voyages Pittoresques* (see FIG. 10-18) and modern travel photography. Although his camera has recorded the site faithfully, the artist has chosen his viewpoint carefully so as to create a visually interesting effect.

While Du Camp focused on monuments and urban views, other photographers traveled to the Orient to document indigenous people. There was a healthy market for such photographs, which appealed to the contemporary public both for their exoticism (FIG. 12-17) and for the scientific information they provided. The middle of the nineteenth century was the time when the interest in racial classification peaked and photographs were an important tool in the development of typological categories. Indeed, the anthropology gallery of the Museum of Natural History in Paris featured a number of photographs which, together with skulls and casts of heads of people of different ethnic groups, were intended as objects of study.

One artist who was fascinated by racial variety was the sculptor Charles Cordier (1827–1905). A student of Rude, he made his mark at the Salon of 1851 with a bust of Seïd



12-17 **H. Béchard**, *Egyptian Peasant Girl*, c.1880. Albumen print, 10 1/2" x 8 1/4" (27 x 21 cm). Private Collection, London.



12-18 **Charles Cordier**, *Negro of the Sudan in Algerian Costume*, c. 1856–7. Silvered bronze and Algerian jasper on porphyry, height 38" (97 cm) without base. Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minnesota.

Enkess, a freed black slave who had become a studio model in Paris. He re-exhibited the work, which he titled *Saïd Abdallah, of the Mayac Tribe, Kingdom of Darfur*, at the Great Exhibition in London, that same year. Not only did he receive a honorable mention but Queen Victoria bought it and commissioned a female pendant, called *African Venus*. The French state immediately commissioned copies of both works for the anthropology room at the Museum of Natural History.

Subsequently, plans were formulated by the Museum to create a "gallery of the principal human types" and Cordier received a series of grants that allowed him to make study trips to Algeria (1856), Greece (1858–9), and Egypt (1865) to make sculptural renderings of men and women of different ethnic groups before (as Cordier wrote in one of his grant applications) they ended up "merging into one and the same people." In 1860, he organized a first major exhibition of his "Anthropological and Ethnographic Gallery"

in Paris and a year later he repeated the exhibition in London. Cordier's works were widely admired and the artist made numerous copies of his ethnographic busts for sale to private collectors. To enhance the appeal of these copies, he executed them in different materials, often combining more than one material in the same sculpture. *Negro of the Sudan in Algerian Costume* (FIG. 12-18) may serve as an example of this practice. It carefully records the physiognomy of a young Sudanese man and the rich Algerian costume in which he is dressed. The artist has used a combination of bronze and striated jasper, creating a striking polychrome (multicolored) effect. While the combination of stones of different colors, with or without bronze, had been popular in Roman times as well as in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it had fallen into discredit during the Neoclassical period. Cordier gave a major impetus to the revival of polychrome sculpture, which would become especially popular at the end of the nineteenth century.

12-19 **Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres**, *Venus Anadyomene*, 1808, reprinted 1848. Oil on canvas, 64 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 36" (1.63 m x 92 cm). Musée Condé, Chantilly.



The Nude

Although large-scale history painting, long the pride of the Academy, gradually lost its pre-eminence, the nude remained the ultimate academic test. Ingres, who had anchored the female nude into the academic program, also created its most famous prototypes—the *Grande Odalisque* (see FIG. 9-19), exemplar of the reclining so-called “display nude,” and the *Venus Anadyomene* (FIG. 12-19), the standard for the standing frontal nude. Both types originated in Renaissance painting—the reclining nude in works by Venetian Renaissance painters such as Giorgione and Titian (see FIG. 12-36), the standing nude in Botticelli’s famous *Birth of Venus*.

First conceived in 1808, but repainted in 1848 and exhibited at the Salon of that year, Ingres’s *Venus Anadyomene* was hailed by the critic Théophile Gautier as a work that could give modern viewers an idea of the beauty of the lost masterpieces of Greek painting. This work, representing the newborn Venus rising from the sea (in Greek, *anadyomene*), exemplifies the nineteenth-century aestheticized nude—streamlined, smoothly polished, and devoid of unsightly sexual markers such as pubic hair and genitalia. Like a modern Barbie doll, Ingres’s Venus has been de-sexed to make her suitable for public display. De-sexed, however, does not mean de-eroticized; her soft curves and smooth skin lend the painting a sensuality that is in marked tension with her forbidden body.

The Birth of Venus (FIG. 12-20), by the celebrated academic painter Alexandre Cabanel (1823–1889), was one of the

most popular derivatives from Ingres’s prototypes. Exhibited at the Salon of 1863, the painting was immediately acquired by Napoleon III for his private collection; Cabanel made numerous replicas for eager collectors. In accordance with Classical mythology, Cabanel’s painting shows Venus washed ashore by the waves of the sea. Her “birth” is suggested by a gesture of awakening: Venus opens her eyes just a little to peek out at the viewer from behind her folded arm. In the sky above her float several cupids, little messengers of love. Like the nudes of Ingres, Cabanel’s *Venus* sends a contradictory message. The goddess’s idealized form gives her an unattainable aura, which is belied by the seductive forward thrust of her chest and the coy expression of her face.

The implicit hypocrisy of Cabanel’s *Venus* and the numerous other representations of nude Greek goddesses that crowded the walls of the Salons of the 1860s was a perfect match for the shallow pretense of virtue made by the period’s wealthy French bourgeoisie. Napoleon III himself set the example for the countless men whose marriages were nothing but a façade for numerous extramarital affairs.

12-20 **Alexandre Cabanel**, *The Birth of Venus*, 1863. Oil on canvas, 4’4” x 7’6” (1.32 x 2.29 m). Musée d’Orsay, Paris.

