

National Pride and International Rivalry—The Great International Expositions

The great international expositions of the second half of the nineteenth century perhaps best capture the *Zeitgeist*, or cultural essence, of that particular period. The predecessors of the world fairs of the twentieth century, they showed off the latest miracles of industry and technology, in a spirit of optimism and belief in progress. By exhibiting industrial and agricultural products and the machines and tools used to produce them, they offered a representative overview of contemporary material culture.

By encouraging rivalry among nations, the international expositions fanned Romantic nationalism, which, for better or worse, became a guiding political principle in the second half of the nineteenth century. At the same time, however, the exhibitions promoted a broad, international view of the world. From the very beginning an attempt was made to include contributions from non-Western nations, such as Japan and the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, as western European industrial powers stepped up their colonization efforts, the main imperialist nations (Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands) supplemented their national displays with colonial pavilions. There, they not only showed the agricultural and industrial products of their colonies but also presented visitors with ethnographic exhibits that were

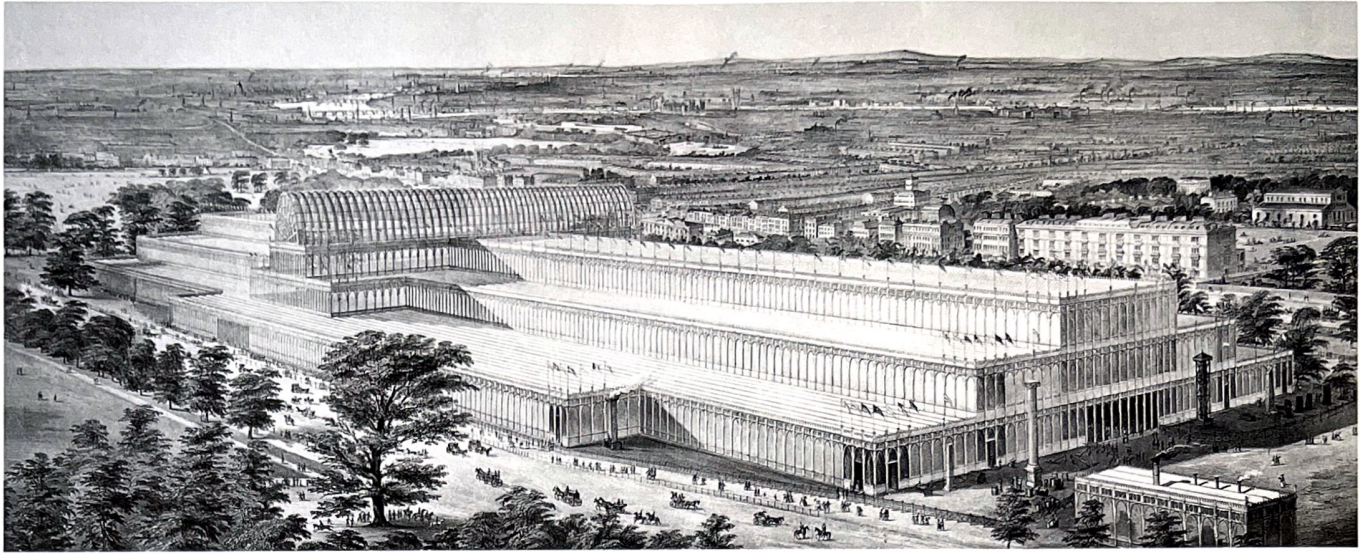
meant to familiarize them with native cultures in the colonial territories. Such exhibits would include tools, clothing, jewelry, furnishings, and ritual objects, and eventually even the natives themselves.

Origins of the International Expositions

Although the first international exposition was organized in Britain in the early 1850s, its origins went back to late eighteenth-century France. When the French economy slumped after the revolution of 1789, it looked to Britain as a model for recovery. Seeing that rapid industrialization could foster economic growth, the French government established several new schools and universities to train engineers, technicians, and artisans. At the same time, it decided to organize regular exhibitions of the "mechanical arts," featuring the latest industrial products and technological wonders. (The idea for such exhibitions may have come from the Salons, which had been initiated some one hundred years earlier in a similar effort to improve and promote the "fine arts" in France.)

The first "Public Exposition of the Products of French Industry" took place in Paris in September 1798. It was followed by ten further exhibitions between 1801 and 1849, each larger and more important than the one before. The exhibitions were strictly national affairs. Although they attracted some foreigners, they were primarily intended

Jean-Baptiste Krantz and Frédéric Le Play, *Exhibition Building and Pavilions, Universal Exhibition, 1867*. (Detail of FIG. 15-20.)



15-1 **Joseph Paxton**, Crystal Palace, 1851. London. (Re-erected in Sydenham, Kent, in 1852 and destroyed in 1936.)

for the French public. As time went on, however, their example caught on, and many other countries began to organize similar shows. A notable exception to this trend was Britain. The British, it seems, were so confident of their lead in the Industrial Revolution that they felt no need to promote themselves.

The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations

It is surprising, therefore, that the British took the initiative for the first international industrial exposition, held in London in 1851. The driving force behind the "Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations" was Henry Cole (1808–1882), a British civil servant with a passion for good design, particularly in the area of mass-produced goods. Cole co-founded the *Journal of Design and Manufactures*, which was to foster "the germs of a [design] style which England of the nineteenth century may call its own." He had visited the French exhibitions, and proposed to the British government that they hold a similar function to encourage and promote design in Britain.

The idea greatly appealed to Queen Victoria's consort, Prince Albert, who shared Cole's interest in product design. The prince suggested, however, that the exhibition be international rather than national, so that the products of different nations could be juxtaposed and compared. Albert was keenly aware that Britain would be the major star of an international exhibition of industrial products, and he believed that this might act to help the country to expand its international markets.

It is no coincidence that the organization of the Great Exhibition coincided with a concerted British effort toward the establishment of free trade, which Adam Smith had

advocated as early as 1776 in his book *The Wealth of Nations*. In the course of the 1850s several major trade restrictions between Britain and France were lifted, and in 1860 the two nations concluded the Anglo-French trade agreement, eliminating most remaining trade barriers.

The Crystal Palace: A Revolution in Architecture

To the organizers of the exhibition, it was crucially important that the architecture of the exhibition hall give expression to Britain's technical superiority by surpassing in size and ingenuity any structure that had been built before. When an architectural competition did not yield a satisfactory design, the commission for the exhibition building (FIG. 15-1) was given to Joseph Paxton (1801–1865), a gardener by trade. Paxton, who had much experience constructing hothouses, proposed plate glass as the principal building material. Glass, used at the time for skylights in museums and shopping arcades, admitted light, an essential requirement for a building in which viewing was the main activity. Moreover, it was inexpensive and relatively lightweight, and it could be mass-produced and easily transported by boat or train.

Paxton met the criteria for an exhibition building that was to be at once very large and easy to construct. He used three types of modular units: glass panes set in wooden frames, iron girders on which the panes rested, and cast-iron supporting pillars (an interior view is shown in FIG. 15-2) to construct the building. Prefabricated in different locations, these units were transported to the site in Hyde Park by train and assembled on the spot. The entire building, which measured 1,847 feet (563 meters) by 407 feet (124 meters), was put together in a little more than six months.



15-2 Crystal Palace, interior, view of the barrel-vaulted "transept," 1851. Etching. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

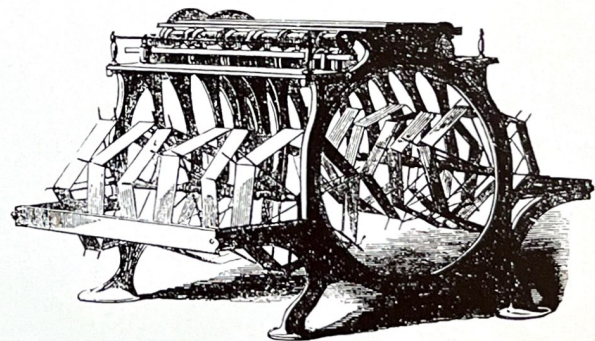
Machines at the International Exhibitions

The Crystal Palace exhibition featured a wide variety of manufacturing machines. These were of special interest to industrialists, who were able to compare their own equipment with that used by others. Yet they also fascinated the general public who, perhaps for the first time, got an idea of the multitude and complexity of the machinery that produced the consumer goods they had come to expect to find in department and speciality stores.

Because the textile industry was most advanced from the point of view of mechanization, many of the mechanized manufacturing tools at the exhibition were related to textile production. The device for winding silk threads (FIG. 15.1-1) may serve as an example. It was designed to transfer silk thread from the loosely coiled lengths that came from the mechanical spinning wheels on to bobbins. A machine such as this replaced the arduous task of hand winding, but it still needed workers to mend the threads as they broke in the course of the winding process. This task, as we are told in

the special issue of the *Art Journal* devoted to the exhibition (see page 357), required "the unwearied attention of children." Indeed, we learn that, at the time of the exhibition, there were about 8,000 children under 13 years of age employed in British silk factories.

Machines would be increasingly prominent at later exhibitions. Beginning with the Paris exposition of 1855, special exhibition halls were exclusively devoted to showing large-scale engines and machinery (see page 363).



15.1-1 Machine for winding silk thread. Invented by Mr Frost of Macclesfield. Illustration in *The Crystal Palace Exhibition Illustrated Catalogue*, London, 1851. Reprinted by Dover Publications Inc., New York, 1970.

Both the airiness of the construction and the exposure of all structural elements were unprecedented in a period when elaborately decorated historical revivalist or eclectic buildings were the norm. And although Paxton's contemporaries marveled at the shiny glass structure, nicknaming it the Crystal Palace, most thought of the building not as architecture with a big "A" but merely as a fancy temporary structure. Some astute observers, however, realized that this structure perfectly expressed the spirit of a new industrial age, and that it might well influence future architects. The German journalist Lothar Bucher (1817–1892), who would later become one of Bismarck's closest aides, claimed: "the Crystal Palace is a revolution in architecture from which a new style will date." Even he could not have predicted, however, how important Paxton's example would be for modernist architecture of the twentieth century.

The Great Exhibition and the Design Crisis in Britain

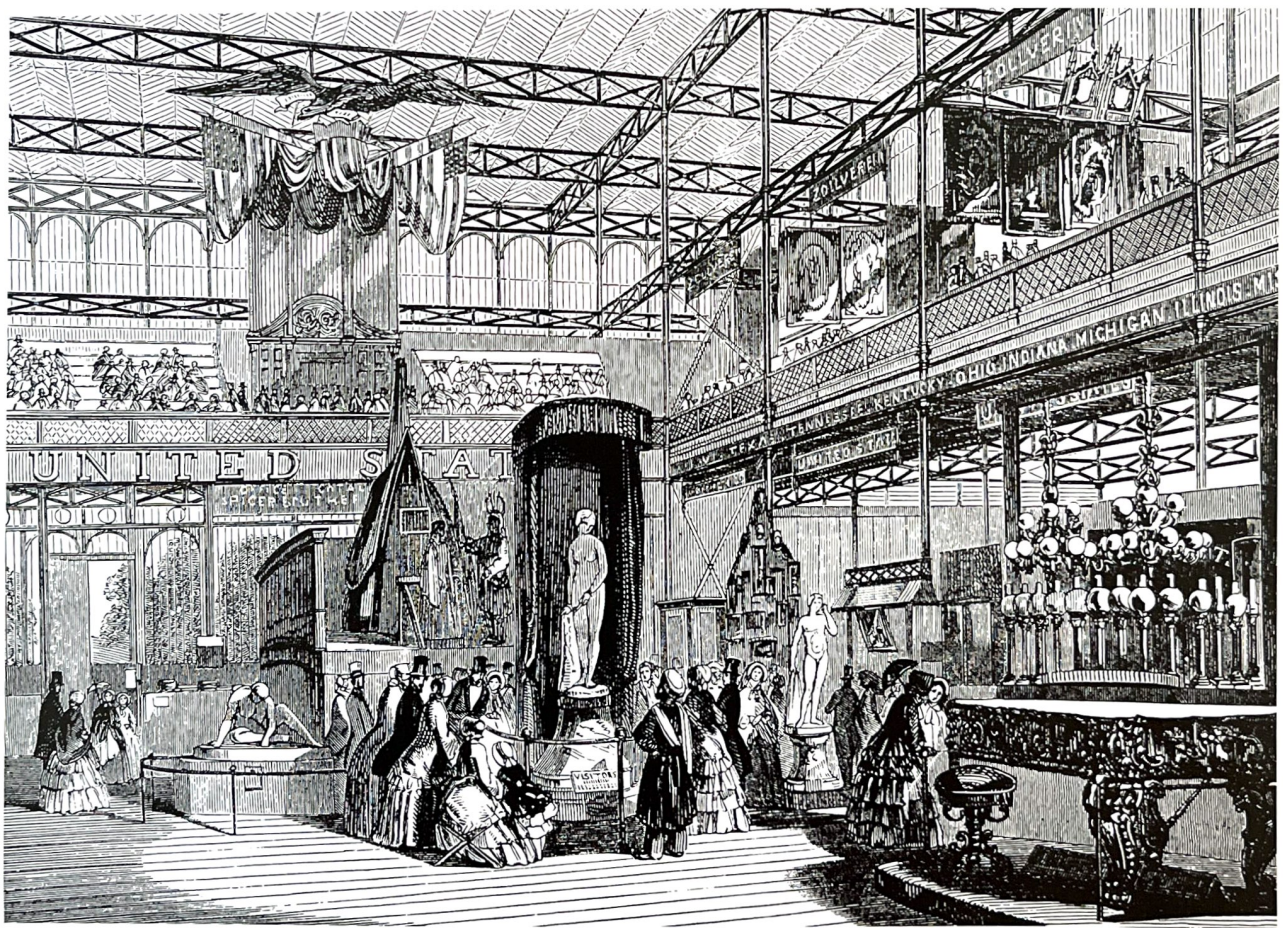
Inside the Crystal Palace, the public could admire a variety of consumer products, from kitchen wares to small-size decorative sculptures, intended for the bourgeois home. The exhibition also featured a variety of specialized machines, mostly modest in size, for the textile industry

(see *Machines at the International Exhibitions*, page 355). Each nation had a section for its products. That of the United States (FIG. 15-3) showed pianos, gas lamps, Hiram Power's famous *Greek Slave*, and an Indian tepee, complete with a life-size wooden Indian and his squaw.

From the numerous publications that accompanied the exhibition, many of them lavishly illustrated with wood engravings, we can form a fairly complete idea of what the public could see there. The combination clock and inkstand seen in FIG. 15-4 is typical of the kind of ornate domestic pieces that visitors came to admire. It reflects the ambition of the wealthy mid-nineteenth-century bourgeoisie to imitate the lifestyles of the aristocracy of the eighteenth century.

Unlike eighteenth-century objects, however, which were made fully by hand, this clock is a hybrid product of machine manufacturing and human craftsmanship. The clock itself is machine-made, while the elaborate case and stand were hand-carved by W. G. Rogers, well known in Britain for this kind of decorative work. Rogers's carving comprises ornamental forms from various decorative styles of the past: a Renaissance cartouche at the bottom, Rococo swirls and flowers in the middle and at the top, and a realistically carved little dog that seems to come straight out of a seventeenth-century Dutch painting. Such an odd

15-3 Crystal Palace, The United States' Department. Illustration in *The Crystal Palace Exhibition Illustrated Catalogue*, London, 1851. Wood engraving.





15-4 **W. G. Rogers**, Carved wooden clock and ink stand. Illustration in *The Crystal Palace Exhibition Illustrated Catalogue*, London, 1851. Wood engraving. Reprinted by Dover Publications Inc., New York, 1970.

combination of historical styles is typical of the eclecticism that had been fashionable in architecture and the decorative arts since the 1830s.

Since this piece was accepted by the exhibition jury, it and many others like it (see also FIG. 15-7) apparently represented good design, even though today we may feel that they are derivative and too ornate. It is noteworthy that some contemporary critics denounced the products at the exhibition as well, complaining that they failed to demonstrate an "educated" taste. The art critic Ralph Nicholson Wornum, in a special issue of the *Art Journal* devoted to the exhibition, complained that there was "nothing new in the Exhibition in ornamental design; not a scheme, not a detail that has not been treated over and over again in ages that are gone." The exhibition, he felt, revealed the creative poverty of eclecticism; he hoped that, in the future, designers and manufacturers would shy away from it and strive, instead, for the "cultivation of pure and rational individualities of design." Even the exhibition's main planner, Henry Cole, was disappointed with the "universal likeness" of all the objects. He urged artists to abandon the worn-out European styles of the past and turn elsewhere for inspiration.

New Attitudes toward Design: Owen Jones and John Ruskin

By highlighting the existing standards for the design of consumer products, the Great Exhibition caused a major reorientation in the thinking about design and ornamentation. One of the principal figures in this design "revolution" was the architect Owen Jones (1809–1874). As the person responsible for the interior decoration of the Crystal Palace and the arrangement of its displays, Jones had closely studied the exhibits. He concluded that, rather than slavishly imitating and randomly combining the ornaments of the past, designers should, instead, analyze the logical principles behind them. Only then could they begin to develop a suitable decorative style for the nineteenth century.

With the help of his friend Cole, Jones developed thirty-seven "axioms" of design, which appeared in his *Grammar of Ornament*, published in London in 1856. The book was innovative not only in its approach to design, but also because Jones selected his decorative art examples (all beautifully illustrated in color lithographs) from an unusually wide range of historical styles. Going far beyond the popular revival styles of the Renaissance, the Baroque, and



15-5 **Owen Jones**, Plate lxvii from *The Grammar of Ornament*, 1856. Color lithograph, 11" x 8" (28 x 20 cm). Private Collection, London.

the Rococo, he found inspiration in medieval manuscripts (FIG. 15-5) as well as Islamic and Far Eastern art.

Another important figure in the movement to reorient British design was John Ruskin (see page 331). This critic and amateur artist belonged to a group of theorists and designers, including Pugin (see page 334), who criticized the eclectic borrowing of historical ornament in contemporary design and complained that mass production degraded these forms and rendered them lifeless. Feeling that design and manufacturing were controlled by the materialist interests of industrialists, they lamented the loss of a spiritual element in the production process. They advocated that architects and designers should study the Gothic period, not merely to imitate its architectural and decorative forms, but to recapture the lofty spirit in which they were created.

In *The Stones of Venice*, a three-volume work published between 1851 and 1853, Ruskin hailed Gothic architecture and decorative arts, arguing that their forms were inspired by the faith and morality of their creators. Beginning with the Renaissance period, he said, these values had gradually waned until the Industrial Revolution had annihilated them completely. If architecture and design were to regain beauty and integrity, artists had to regain the spirituality of the medieval period. Only then, Ruskin felt, could they create buildings and objects that would truly touch contemporary society.

The International Exhibition in London, 1862

Although the organizers of the Great Exhibition had conceived of it as the first of a series of quinquennial (every five years) exhibitions, it was almost eleven years before the British organized a second exhibition, in 1862. Cole, again, was the prime mover, but this time he did not have the backing of Prince Albert, who had died in 1861.

Consumer goods were once more the principal focus of the exhibition. The organizers hoped to display the advances made in British design and manufacturing during the intervening years. Some of the most original products were found in the "Medieval Court," which featured the works of designers and manufacturers who, following the ideas of Ruskin and Pugin, had turned to medieval art for inspiration. A cabinet (FIG. 15-6) designed by Philip Webb (1831–1915) displays a formal simplicity that looks startlingly innovative when compared with some of the extravagant pieces of furniture that had appeared at the exhibition of 1851 (FIG. 15-7). Webb's cabinet is a rectangular box supported by four high posts that are connected at the bottom by a shelf. Lacking any kind of carved ornamentation, the decoration of the cabinet is limited to painting. Much of it is simple and abstract: bands of color or small geometric motifs. Only the two doors show a figurative scene, based on a drawing by the well-known artist Burne-Jones (see page 347).



15-6 **Philip Webb**, Backgammon cabinet, with figures painted after a drawing by Edward Burne-Jones, 1861. Painted pine, oil paint on leather, brass, and copper, height 6'1" (1.85 m). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

15-7 (below) **Mr Stevens of Taunton**, Carved wooden cabinet. Illustration in *The Crystal Palace Exhibition Illustrated Catalogue*, London, 1851. Wood engraving. Reprinted by Dover Publications Inc., New York, 1970.



Webb's cabinet was exhibited under the auspices of a new British design firm, founded in 1861 and called Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. The driving force behind the firm was the young William Morris (1834–1896), who was soon to become one of the most influential designers in Britain. An admirer of Ruskin, Morris shared his interest in medieval art and architecture. He admired the Middle Ages as a period when art was made by the people for the people, an ideal that he intended to revive in his time. To counter the negative effects of industrial mass production, he became a staunch advocate of handmade products. Through his writing and lectures, he inspired the Arts and Crafts Movement, an international movement that rejected machine production, promoting instead the practice of pre-industrial craft techniques.

Morris himself was primarily active as a wallpaper and textile designer and, later in life, as a graphic artist. His *Daisy* wallpaper (FIG. 15-8), designed in 1862 though not exhibited at the International Exhibition of that year, is



15-8 **William Morris**, *Daisy* wallpaper, 1862. Handprinted for the firm of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. by Jeffrey & Co. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

an early example of his output. Its flower motif, a favorite in his work, is simple and stylized, and appears to have been inspired by traditional folk art. Like all of Morris's wallpapers, this one was hand-printed and thus very expensive. Ironically, Morris's emphasis on manual rather than machine production was in conflict with his ideal of producing an art for "the people," since handcrafted products were inevitably more expensive than mass-produced ones.

The Japanese Court at the Exhibition of 1862

With the exception of the Turkish–Egyptian department and a small exhibit of Chinese objects belonging to a London trader, the Great Exhibition of 1851 had featured only products from Europe and North America. By contrast, the exhibition of 1862 included contributions from India, China, and Japan. The Japanese section, by far the most notable, was introduced to the public by the Japanese ambassador and his retinue, whose colorful kimonos struck an exotic note at the opening ceremonies.

Japan, which had been isolated from the rest of the world for centuries, had been forced to sign a trading agreement with the United States in 1854. The treaty was the direct result of military pressure: in 1853 Commodore Matthew C. Perry had sailed a fleet of warships into Tokyo Bay, forcing the Japanese to open their ports to United States ships to obtain supplies. The American maneuver

15-9 Japanese objects at the International Exhibition of 1862 in London. Illustration in J. B. Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art and Sculpture at the International Exhibition, 1862*, (London, 1863). Chromolithograph. Harvard University, Fine Arts Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts.





15-10 **E. W. Godwin**, Drop-leaf table with shelf, c.1872. Mahogany with lacquered brass braces, Ellen Terry Memorial Museum, Smallhythe, Kent.

brought an end to the reign of the feudal war lords, or *shoguns*, and marked the beginning of the modernization of Japan under the regime of the Meiji emperors.

Almost as soon as the so-called Perry convention was signed, Japanese goods began to be shipped to Western markets. These created an immediate fascination with Japanese culture, which was further fanned by Japan's contribution to the exhibition of 1862. Most of the articles in the Japanese Court were utilitarian (FIG. 15-9). Their beautiful craftsmanship and simplicity attracted several designers, who saw Japanese decorative traditions as an alternative to the Gothic style. In a review of the exhibition, the architect William Burges (1827–1881) drew a direct parallel between the two styles, writing: "To any student of our reviving arts of the thirteenth century [i.e., the Gothic period] an hour or even two days spent in the Japanese Department will by no means be lost time, for these hitherto unknown barbarians appear not only to know all that the Middle Ages knew but in some respects are beyond them and us as well."

Together with Gothic architecture, Japanese decorative arts inspired those mid-nineteenth-century British designers who wanted to abandon historical eclecticism in order to develop a new, authentically nineteenth-cen-

tury style. A table designed by E. W. Godwin (1833–1886) exemplifies some of the lessons that Western architects learned from the Far East (FIG. 15-10). Devoid of all carved or painted ornament, it owes its visual attractiveness purely to the perfect craftsmanship and the design of its structural elements. One of the most striking features of the table is its asymmetry, a characteristic element of Far Eastern art and design.

Godwin's table seems strikingly innovative, even revolutionary, when compared to the average consumer furniture produced during the Victorian period. Not surprisingly, it would take a long time before the general public was ready to give up the frills of eclecticism to embrace the new, sparse simplicity that the most innovative designers of the period proposed.

The Universal Exposition of 1855 in Paris

Although the British "invented" the international exposition, the French most fully realized its potential, both as an instrument of national propaganda and as a showcase of innovation and progress. Between 1855 and 1900 five major "universal exhibitions" took place in Paris, each more

Major Nineteenth-Century International Exhibitions

Year	Place	Name
1851	London	Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations (Crystal Palace Exhibition)
1855	Paris	Exposition Universelle (first to include art exhibition)
1862	London	International Exhibition of 1862
1873	Vienna	Weltausstellung 1873 Wien
1876	Philadelphia	Centennial Exhibition
1878	Paris	Exposition Universelle
1889	Paris	Exposition Universelle
1893	Chicago	World's Columbian Exposition
1900	Paris	Exposition Universelle

lavish and comprehensive than the one before (see *Major Nineteenth-Century International Exhibitions*, left).

Napoleon III was the driving force behind the first exhibition, held in the spring of 1855. Aware of the success of the Crystal Palace exhibition, which had drawn huge crowds and earned £170,000 for Britain, the Emperor saw the initiative as a means of consolidating his imperial power (planning for the exhibition started less than a year after his coronation) and enhancing the prestige of France.

Unlike the Great Exhibition, which was entirely housed in the Crystal Palace, the Paris exposition of 1855 comprised a number of different buildings on the right bank of the Seine river. Most important among these was the Palais de l'Industrie or Industry Palace, which was designed with the aim of surpassing the Crystal Palace in size, beauty, and technology. Glass, once again, figured importantly in the construction of this building, but it was used more daringly. In the central hall of the building a series of enormous iron arches supported a vaulted glass ceiling, (FIG. 15-11) enabling a much wider span than had been possible in the Crystal Palace (see FIG. 15-2).

The main difference between the Palais de l'Industrie and the Crystal Palace, however, was its exterior appearance

15-11 The interior of the Palais de l'Industrie at the Universal Exposition of Paris, 1855. Wood engraving. Bibliothèque Nationale, Département des Estampes et de la Photographie, Paris.





15-12 The exterior of the Palais de l'Industrie at the Universal Exposition of Paris, 1855. Engraving. Bibliothèque Nationale, Département des Estampes et de la Photographie, Paris.

(FIG. 15-12). While the Crystal Palace clearly displayed its glass, wood, and steel construction on the outside, the Palais de l'Industrie in Paris was "clothed" in a traditional stone structure, complete with arched windows and a huge arched entrance, all in accordance with contemporary Beaux-Arts norms. From our twenty-first-century viewpoint, therefore, it seems less progressive than the Crystal Palace, in spite of the technological advances that mark its construction.

In addition to the Palais de l'Industrie, which was devoted to industrial products, the exhibition of 1855 featured a separate Hall of Machines (FIG. 15-13). Located along the bank of the Seine, it was much narrower than the Palais de l'Industrie but measured almost one mile in length. Lined up on one side of this long gallery was a series of enormous machines, which so fascinated visitors that, henceforth, machine galleries would be a standard feature of international exhibitions.



15-13 The Hall of Machines at the Universal Exposition of Paris, 1855. Wood engraving. Bibliothèque Nationale, Département des Estampes et de la Photographie, Paris.

The International Art Exposition

In an effort to emulate the British, Napoleon III and his advisors decided to add an international art exposition to their show. This would make the French exposition different from, and more comprehensive than, the Crystal Palace show. More importantly, art was a field in which the French could excel, something that they were unable to do in the industrial arena. Although the art exhibition was first scheduled to take place in the Louvre, in the end a special Fine Arts Palace, or Palais des Beaux-Arts, was constructed in the exhibition grounds. To encourage French participation in the show, the Salon of 1855 was cancelled.

The International Art Exposition of 1855 offered a first opportunity, for art critics and the general public alike, to see a large-scale exhibition of art from across Europe. Twenty-eight nations in all were represented. Britain, Germany, and Belgium made the strongest showing. Russia was notably absent since, at the time, it was at war with the French and the British in the Crimean peninsula.

Of the foreign artists whose works were shown at the exhibition, several were already known in France. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century there had been some interchange of influences in the art world. Foreign artists had exhibited works at the Paris Salons, and French artists had occasionally sent their works to exhibitions abroad, in Brussels, London, Munich, or Amsterdam. While in these earlier instances, however, artists had participated as individuals, in the International Art Exposition of 1855 they represented their countries. Each national exhibit was carefully selected by a committee composed of artists and government officials, so that it was truly representative of "national culture."

The French Show

The exhibit of French art eclipsed all others in the international exposition of 1855. It had been carefully orchestrated. The Imperial Commission in charge of the International Art Exposition had actively courted the artists whose works, they felt, would make a good show. A small number of artists, including, most importantly, Delacroix, Ingres, and Vernet, were honored with comprehensive retrospective exhibitions of their work.

While these and a few other featured artists were allowed to exhibit groups of paintings, all others were invited to submit works to a jury, which would select individual pieces for the exhibition. Composed of artists and *amateurs* (informed art lovers), the jury was dominated by older men who, for the most part, had little interest in promoting new and different forms of art. Hence, the exhibition was backward—rather than forward-looking, summing up the artistic accomplishments of the July Monarchy rather than

promoting the young artists who had emerged since the revolution of 1848. If their works were visible at the exposition at all, as were those of the Realist painter Gustave Courbet, it was due not to the exhibition jury but to individual initiatives.

Courbet's Private Pavilion

Gustave Courbet was nearing his mid-thirties as the Universal Exposition took shape, and he quickly spotted an opportunity for instant international recognition. He eagerly submitted no fewer than fourteen paintings to the jury of the International Art Exposition. Courbet must have known that this was an immodest number, since only the featured artists at the exhibition were expected to show that many paintings. Included among his submissions, moreover, was his recently completed *The Painter's Atelier: A Real Allegory of Seven Years of my Artistic Life* (FIG. 15-14), an enormous, self-indulgent work that summed up his artistic ideas and career to date.

Not surprisingly, this painting and two others were refused by the jury, so Courbet decided to organize an exhibition of his own. With amazing entrepreneurial skill, he arranged to rent a terrain on the exhibition grounds, opposite the Palais des Beaux-Arts. There he constructed a temporary pavilion for a retrospective exhibition of his work that featured no fewer than forty paintings, including his monumental *Atelier*.

Courbet was not the first artist to organize a private exhibition of his work. Several artists before him had shown off one or more works in their studios or in a rented space (see pages 58, 83, and 209). Courbet's initiative was novel and important, however, both for its scope and for the competitive context in which it occurred. His private exhibition was a powerful assertion of the artist's right and ability to show his work to the world, without the approval of a jury to legitimize it. This liberated the artist as well as the public; for once, people could judge an artist's work directly, unmediated by a panel of art "experts."

Courbet's *Atelier*, the centerpiece of his private exhibition, expressed how he saw his role as an artist in the modern world. Courbet is shown painting in his studio, surrounded by people. On the right side of the artist is a gathering of the friends, collectors, and critics who have supported him over the years; on the left, a motley group of popular types—veterans, street performers, hunters, peasants, beggars, and the like—are waiting to take their place in his painting. It is, as he wrote to a friend, "the world that comes to me to be painted."

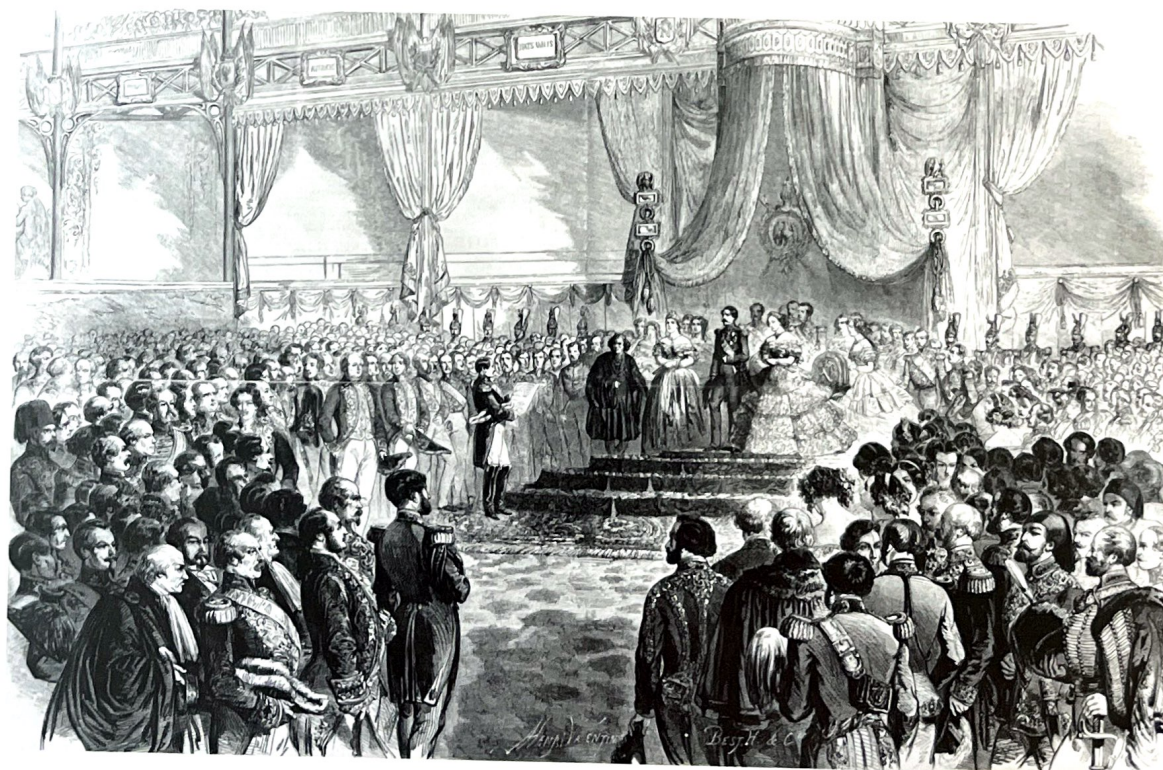
By titling his large canvas *A Real Allegory of Seven Years of my Artistic Life*, Courbet hinted at a parallel between Napoleon III and himself. Just as the International Art Exposition of 1855 was the culmination of seven years of



15-14 **Gustave Courbet**, *The Painter's Atelier: A Real Allegory of Seven Years of my Artistic Life*, 1854-5. Oil on canvas, 11'9" x 19'7" (3.59 x 5.98 m). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

15-15 **Henri Valentin**, *The Opening Ceremony of the Universal Exposition*, 15 May 1855. Wood engraving. Bibliothèque Nationale, Département des Estampes et de la Photographie, Paris.

Louis Napoleon's reign over France, so Courbet's exhibition crowned seven years of artistic prominence. And while Napoleon, through his exhibition, hoped to place himself at the center of the political world (FIG. 15-15), Courbet wished to put himself at the center of the artistic world.





15-16 **Hendrik Leys**, *The Thirty-day Mass of Berthel de Haze*, 1854. Oil on canvas, 35 x 52" (90 cm x 1.33 m). Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels.

Foreign Artists at the International Exposition of 1855

The art exhibits at the Palais des Beaux-Arts, like those in the Palais de l'Industrie, were organized by country. This encouraged critics and visitors to compare them and to reflect on the "character" of each nation.

The search for "national character" in the art and culture of different countries was a favorite intellectual pastime in the nineteenth century, when nationalism was a powerful sentiment and the definition of a nation's character became a matter of serious concern. Indeed, national juries selecting the exhibits saw it as their task to bring together those paintings that best represented their nation. Such selections typically included paintings inspired by national history, genre paintings depicting scenes from daily life in the nation (preferably in the countryside, where regional customs and costumes were still preserved), and landscape paintings depicting nationally specific scenery (Norwegian fjords, Swiss mountains, Dutch polders, Scottish highlands, etc.).

The Thirty-day Mass of Berthel de Haze (FIG. 15-16), by the Belgian painter Hendrik Leys (1815–1869), is typical of the history paintings that could be found in nearly all national exhibits. It depicts the mass that was said on the

thirtieth day after the death of Berthel de Haze, a sixteenth-century Belgian hero from Antwerp, Leys's home town. Leys's painting shows the meticulous attention to detail that we have encountered in the works of Delaroche and Meissonier in France and Piloty in Germany. It also shows the influence of traditional Flemish painting, recalling the works of such sixteenth-century artists as Jan Gossaert (c.1478–1532), also called Mabuse, whose portraits (FIG. 15-17) seem to have served as prototypes for Leys's figures. Because his work was in the tradition of Flemish painting, and treated a subject from Flemish history, Leys was admired as an eminent representative of his nation. At the exhibition of 1855 he was awarded one of only ten grand medals of honor, making him the premier painter of Belgium.

Perhaps even more popular than paintings of national history were scenes of daily life in the different nations represented in the exhibition. Pictures of rural "folk" life, especially, were widely admired. The *Service in the Chapel of Lövmokk in Lapland* (FIG. 15-18), by the Swedish painter Johan Fredrik Höckert (1826–1866), for example, was exceedingly well received. This gigantic canvas represents a gathering of Laplanders, in traditional costumes, attending a service in a small wooden chapel. Remarkable for its



15-17 **Jan Gossaert** (Mabuse), *Two Portraits of Donors*, probably 1525–32. Oil on panel. Each panel 27 x 9" (70 x 23.5 cm). Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels.

15-18 (below) **Johan Fredrik Höckert**, *The Service in the Chapel of Lövmokk in Lapland*, 1855. Oil on canvas, 9'6½" x 13'2⅝" (2.91 x 4.03 m). Konstmuseum, Norrköping, Sweden.



detail, in the rendering of the architecture as well as the furnishings and costumes, this painting today serves as an important ethnographic document of Lapland life in the mid-nineteenth century. This may explain why the French state, which bought the huge canvas at the time of the 1855 exhibition, decided to return it to Sweden in 1952.

Landscapes depicting national scenery could also be found throughout the exhibition. In the Swiss pavilion, many visitors were drawn to the work of Alexandre Calame (1810–1864), whose *Lake of the Four Cantons* (FIG. 15-19) would be awarded a first-class medal. Paintings such as Calame's appealed to the public's growing interest in travel, facilitated by the expansion of the railroads and the development of a tourist industry that included travel agencies, hotels, and printed travel guides.

Of course, not all paintings in the International Art Exposition fell into the three categories outlined above. Portraits, bourgeois genre scenes, animal paintings, and still lifes could be found in all the national exhibits. Although they varied stylistically, the differences between them had more to do with the individual temperaments of artists than with their "national character." Indeed, from a stylistic point of view, European painting at the exhibition presented a relatively homogeneous picture, owing in large part to the enormous influence of the academies,

which offered a similar training throughout the continent.

This artistic homogeneity was even more obvious in the area of sculpture. Restricted to figures, whether human or animal, sculptors had less flexibility than painters in terms of subject matter. In most national exhibits one encountered similar female nudes, either standing or reclining, now called "Venus," then "Greek Slave." Even the sculptures of national heroes looked very similar, since kings or generals on horses and scholars in gowns differed only in the details of their clothing and physiognomies.

The Paris Universal Exposition of 1867

In 1867, still during the regime of Napoleon III, a second exhibition opened its doors in France. (It followed the International Exhibition in London of 1862, just as the Universal Exposition of 1855 had followed the Great Exhibition of 1851.) The site chosen for the Universal Exposition of 1867 was the so-called Champ de Mars, or Mars Field, located on the left bank of the Seine. The main exhibition building was planned to be round, symbolizing the globe, but in the end site restrictions forced the architect to design it as an ellipse, measuring 1,608 feet (490 m) long by 1,266 feet (386 m) wide (FIG. 15-20). The ellipse contained seven concentric galleries, the outermost of

15-19 **Alexandre Calame**, *Lake of the Four Cantons*, 1855. Oil on canvas, 5'7" x 8' (1.7 x 2.44 m). Abegg-Stiftung, Riggisberg, Switzerland.





15-20 **Jean-Baptiste Krantz and Frédéric Le Play**, *Exhibition Building and Pavilions, Universal Exhibition, 1867*. Champ de Mars, Paris. Hand-colored engraving. Private Collection.

which was the machine gallery. The next five galleries, moving inwards, held clothing, furniture, raw materials, the history of work, and the fine arts. The innermost gallery contained a garden with palms and statues. According to the official catalogue of the exhibition, circling through the galleries was "literally to go around the world. All peoples are here, enemies live in peace side by side."

The Fine Arts Exhibition of 1867

The fine arts exhibition of 1867 was less comprehensive than the one of 1855. First of all, the conservative jury for the French exhibit had selected only 550 paintings, less than one-third of the number that had been exhibited in 1855. Most of these were works by themselves or their artist friends, so that the exhibition was far from an adequate reflection of what was happening in the art world at the time. French artists were so disgusted that they insisted that there be a Salon concurrently with the fine arts exhibition at the Universal Exposition. Moreover, as in 1855, Courbet, and now also Manet, set up their own private exhibition pavilions on the exhibition grounds.

Further weakening the art exhibition of 1867 was the

fact that several countries, including Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Bavaria, and Japan, decided to present their own art exhibitions in national pavilions scattered around the Champ de Mars. Their absence from the art exhibition was partly compensated for by the presence of Russia, which had not been represented at the earlier exhibition. Indeed, for the first time in 1867, the French public could see a substantial body of work by contemporary Russian painters and sculptors.

Among the works that were admired as "most Russian" were the rural genre paintings of Vasily Perov (1834–1882), an artist in his early thirties, who was born in Siberia and trained in Moscow. In 1863–4 he had lived in Paris and had become acquainted with the works of Realist painters such as Courbet, Millet, and Breton. On returning to Moscow, Perov painted a number of scenes of peasant life. In contrast to his earlier, satirical works, these paintings show a sympathetic, even sentimental view of the poor. No fewer than five of Perov's paintings were shown at the exhibition of 1867, including *Troika: Apprentices Fetching Water* (FIG. 15-21), a painting that one year earlier had caused Perov to be elected to the Russian Academy of Arts. *Troika* represents three children, unpaid apprentices to a master craftsman, who are pulling a sled carrying



15-21 **Vasily Perov**, *Troika: Apprentices Fetching Water*, 1866. Oil on canvas, 4'1" x 5'6" (1.23 x 1.67 m). State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

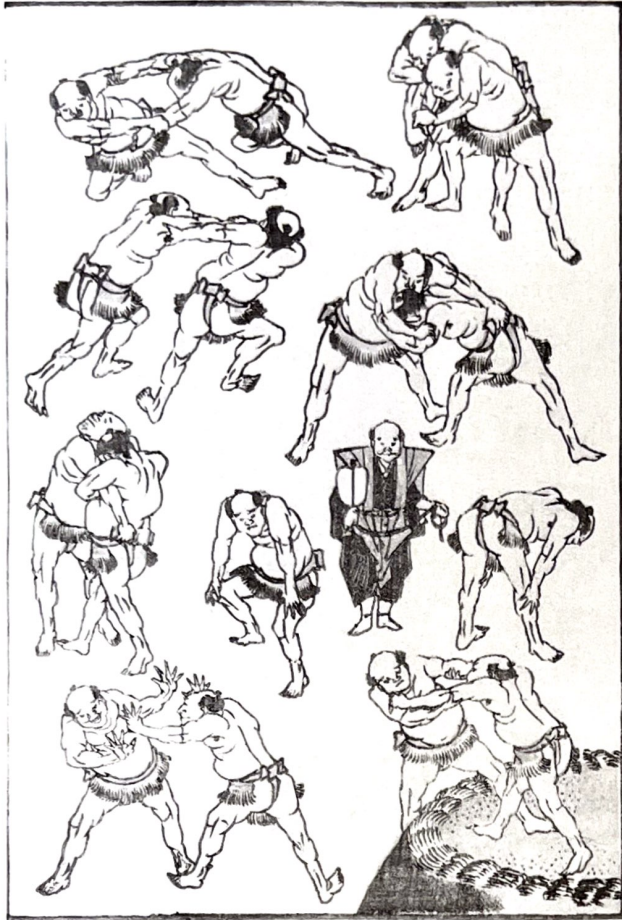
a huge water barrel. The scene is set in the dead of winter. Snow covers the street and the buildings, and the water leaking over the edge of the barrel has frozen into a thick coat of ice. Struggling against the ice-cold wind, the pale-faced children, dressed in rags, involuntarily elicit the viewer's sympathy. To the public of the 1867 exhibition, Perov's painting confirmed a stereotyped view of Russia as a cold, harsh country where life, especially among the lower classes, was an endless string of hardships.

The Japanese Pavilion

The organizers of the Paris exhibition of 1867, like those of the London exhibition five years earlier, had secured the participation of Japan. This country, once again, showed off its handmade furniture and decorative objects for the home. But perhaps the most admired items in the Japanese section were several paintings and woodblock prints after sketches by the recently deceased Japanese artist Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849). Numerous pages of Hokusai's *Manga*, a multi-volume work reproducing the artist's

random sketches, were shown. Among these was a page showing several sketches of wrestlers (FIG. 15-22). Western viewers were especially struck by Hokusai's ability to reduce the subject to its bare essence. Confining himself largely to contour, Hokusai, like all Asian artists, did not use *chiaroscuro*. In his prints and drawings, he managed to suggest depth and three-dimensionality without the distribution of light and shade that Western artists relied on.

The absence of *chiaroscuro* was seen as a unique quality of Japanese art in the 1860s and 1870s. Already in 1863, the British critic John Leighton, in a lecture on Japanese art (inspired by the exhibit of the previous year), had pointed out that the Japanese "never produce a picture, because the principal element of pictorial art is wanting: light and shade—a cloak with us [Western artists] that covers a multitude of sins—they know not of." To Leighton, however, this did not mean that the Japanese were not great artists. On the contrary, "Art of the highest kind may, and often does exist without *chiaroscuro*; for instance, the divine compositions of Flaxman owe none of their world wide fame to shade or color."



15-22 **Katsushika Hokusai**, *Manga* (Sketches), vol. 3 (1815). British Museum, London.

The Importance of the International Exhibitions of the 1850s and 1860s

The international exhibitions of the 1850s and 1860s, notably the ones held in London and Paris, were catalysts for many changes in the arts that would come to fruition in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century. In architecture, the exhibitions led to advances in building technology, such as the use of prefabricated modules, which made the construction of large buildings cheaper and easier. In addition, some exhibition buildings pioneered an entirely new architectural aesthetic, in which the structural elements were not clothed within traditional historical forms but left exposed to become themselves the "beauty" of the building.

By focusing attention on the visual aspects of manufactured goods, the exhibitions gave rise to a new, critical attitude toward product design, albeit only among a select group of critics, architects, and designers. These men (for there were very few women among them) rejected the eclecticism so in vogue in the middle of the nineteenth century and called for a new rationality, honesty, and purity

in design. What is more, by featuring manufactured products from different parts of the world, the expositions encouraged creative exchange. Exposure to new products and styles inspired artists to think about design in new and different ways.

In the fine arts, as in design, access to non-Western art had a liberating influence. Certain axioms that had been considered unshakable in the West, such as perspective and *chiaroscuro*, were apparently unimportant, if not entirely irrelevant, in other artistic traditions. For some of the artists who visited the expositions, it seemed that the pillars of academic teaching had come tumbling down.

Another important lesson taught at the expositions was that artists could take their fate into their own hands. Courbet's successful challenge of the art establishment in 1855 showed that juried, government-sponsored exhibitions were not the only way to gain public exposure. By organizing and financing his own show, Courbet set an example for Manet, in 1867, and, subsequently, for a group of younger artists, nicknamed the "Impressionists," who would organize their first private group show in 1874.

The Third Republic and the Demise of the State-Sponsored Salon

The Third Republic marked a crisis in the state-sponsored Salon that would lead to its demise in 1880. This crisis had to do with the nagging question of the role of the Salon, which came to a head in the early 1870s. Was the Salon, as originally envisioned, an exhibition where the nation showed off the very best its artists had to offer? Or



16-13 **Jean-Paul Laurens,**
St Geneviève on her Deathbed,
installed in 1882. Oil on canvas,
15'1" x 10'8" (4.6 x 3.3 m).
Panthéon, Paris.

SAINTE GENEVIÈVE VESQVIT EN CEST SIECLE PLEINE DE VERTVS, HONVRÉE DES PARISIENS, PLUS DE LXXX ANS ET TRESPASSA LE TIERS IOVR DE JANVIER MCCCXII. PVIS FVT ENTERREÉ AV MONT DE PARIS MAINTENANT DIT MONTAGNE SAINTE GENEVIÈVE, DANS L'ÉGLISE QVE LE ROY CHLODVG AVOIT FONDÉE EN LHONNEVR DE SAINT PIERRE ET DE SAINT POL, A LA REQVESTE DE LA ROYNE CLOTE SA FEMME.

was it, as it had become during the July Monarchy and the Second Empire, a vast marketplace where the public could find works of art to decorate the home? The implications of this question were important. For the answer determined what would be shown at the Salon—large paintings depicting lofty scenes from history and literature, or midsize and small landscapes, genre paintings, portraits, and still lifes. Related to the question of the role of the Salon was the issue of the jury. Was it to be selected by academicians only, or by a democratic vote of all artists?

The conservative ministers or "directors" of Fine Arts, who were in charge of the Salons during the 1870s, felt that it was crucial for the prestige of the Third Republic that the Salon return to being a showplace of artistic excellence. As Charles Blanc, Director of Fine Arts between 1870 and 1873, said, "the state exhibits [art] works and not products; it sponsors a Salon and not a bazaar." Although Blanc and his successor, Philippe de Chennevières (Director, 1873–8), both wished to remake the Salon into an exclusive place for serious art of the highest quality, they were not successful. While Blanc managed to keep the number of admissions to the Salons of 1872 and 1873 down to a little more than 2,000, under Chennevières the numbers climbed up again, reaching an all-time high of 7,289 admissions in 1880. Seeing that the state could not gain effective control of the Salon, the government cut the exhibition loose and handed its organization over to artists. Henceforth, the Salons were run by the Society of French Artists. The state, meanwhile, sponsored an exclusive triennial exhibition of the loftiest examples of French art.

The Society ran nine Salons between 1881 and 1889, but before long it was challenged by artists who found its leadership to be just as conservative and oppressive as the government's had been. A number of these objectors founded the Society of Independent Artists, which organized its first Salon in 1884. In 1890 the Society of French Artists itself split into two rival associations, each of which organized its own Salon. In addition, in 1883 and 1886 the state sponsored two triennial exhibitions, to be followed by the Paris World Fair exhibition in 1889. With so many large art shows, Paris continued to be the art capital of Europe. But it had lost the artistic core that the official Salon had provided since the late eighteenth century.

Academic and Realist Art at the Salons of 1873–90

During the last ten years of its existence, the official Salon still played a major role in the artistic life of France. The numbers of exhibited works set all-time records, and the public came in hordes. The Salon of 1874 drew 400,000 visitors in six weeks. On the first Sunday opening (when entrance was free of charge) 30,000 visitors attended. Even after it was taken over by the Society of French Artists, the Salon continued to attract both numerous submissions

from artists and large crowds of visitors. Indeed, it was not until the Society split in 1890 that the importance of the Salons began to decline.

Throughout the 1870s and 1880s most artists, conservative or *avant-garde*, continued to look to the Salon as a vehicle for gaining both exposure and recognition. As late as 1881 the Impressionist painter Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841–1919) wrote to his dealer, Durand-Ruel: "In Paris there are barely fifteen collectors capable of liking a painter without the backing of the Salon. And there are another eighty thousand who won't buy so much as a postcard unless the painter exhibits there."

Among the most celebrated artists who regularly showed works at the Salons of the 1870s and 1880s was William Bouguereau (1825–1905). His *Young Girl Defending Herself against Eros* (FIG. 16-14), shown at the Salon of 1880, exemplifies the polished, seductive prettiness of much academic painting in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The painting's subject is rather absurd, at least to modern eyes. A young girl seated on a block of stone is warding off Cupid, who must be read as an allegory of masculine libido. Her struggle does not show much conviction, however, because she pushes away Cupid playfully, coyly showing off her naked body to its best effect. The mild eroticism of the scene is matched by the sensuous contours of the two bodies, the subtle *chiaroscuro*, and the muted colors. Nothing here is dramatic or tense; everything is soft, pretty, and relaxed. No wonder that Bouguereau's paintings had a tremendous appeal in North America, where the busy tycoons of the Gilded Age snapped up his works to decorate their newly built homes.

While Bouguereau represents popular academic art of the Third Republic, Jules Breton (1827–1906) represents popular Realism. To the extent that his paintings became more sentimental, in the course of the 1870s and 1880s, they became more popular with the general public. *Song of the Lark* (FIG. 16-15), of 1884, shows a young peasant girl, sickle in hand, on her way to work in the early morning. As the sun rises dramatically behind her, she looks up to listen to the song of a skylark. The painting's positive image of an ingenuous peasant girl awakening to the beauty of the world could not fail to appeal to a bourgeois public that liked to think of the lower classes as content with the little pleasures life had to offer. Like Bouguereau's works, Breton's were extremely popular in the United States. *Song of the Lark* was bought by an American collector and ended up in The Art Institute of Chicago. It even inspired a novel, Willa Cather's *Song of the Lark* (1915), which deals with a girl from the prairie who becomes an artist.

OPPOSITE

16-14 **William Bouguereau**, *Young Girl Defending Herself against Eros*, 1880. Oil on canvas, 5'3" x 3'9" (1.6 x 1.14 m). University of North Carolina, on loan to the North Carolina Museum of Art, Wilmington.





16-15 **Jules Breton**, *Song of the Lark*, 1884. Oil on canvas, 43 x 33" (1.1 m x 85.7 cm). The Art Institute of Chicago.

Naturalism at the Salons of 1870–90

In addition to Breton, a number of other peasant painters emerged at the Salons of the 1870s and 1880s. Best-known among them was Jules Bastien-Lepage (1848–1884), a prime representative of a new direction in painting referred to by contemporary critics as Naturalism. While the exact definition of Naturalism has been and continues to be much debated, it was basically a revised form of Realism, without the political or sentimental overtones of the works of Courbet, Millet, or Breton. In addition, Naturalism was devoid of all overt references to past art. Instead, it was based on the direct observation of carefully staged scenes that imitated real-life situations. Naturalism differed from contemporary Impressionism, which also placed a pre-

mium on direct observation, in its preference for detail and careful finish. Many Naturalist painters, including Bastien-Lepage (who had studied with Alexandre Cabanel), followed a technical procedure that was similar to academic painting. Naturalists, moreover, were primarily attracted to the depiction of peasant life, while the Impressionists, as we shall see, focused on the leisure pursuits of the bourgeoisie.

The Haymakers (FIG. 16-16), exhibited at the Salon of 1878, exemplifies Bastien-Lepage's Naturalist mode of painting. It shows a young peasant couple resting in a field after their midday soup. The man is fast asleep, his straw hat pulled over his eyes, but the woman is sitting up, dazed from her nap, staring vacantly into the distance. Bastien-Lepage's painting differs from Courbet's *The Stonebreakers* (see FIG. 11-7),



16-16 **Jules Bastien-Lepage**, *The Haymakers*, 1878. Oil on canvas, 61 x 70 $\frac{7}{8}$ " (1.55 x 1.8 m). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

Millet's *The Gleaners* (see FIG. 12-25), or even Breton's *Song of the Lark* in its light, fresh tonality. Like the Impressionists, the Naturalists put a premium on *plein-air*, or open-air, painting, preparing their sketches and sometimes even their finished paintings entirely out of doors. Their light, true-to-life colors, combined with a meticulous finish, give their paintings an almost photographic effect.

Recent research has shown that many Naturalists, in effect, used photographs as aids in painting their pictures, although some vehemently denied this and destroyed all evidence. (Bastien-Lepage may have been among them, for no preparatory photographs for his works are known.) Other painters, however, were quite candid about their use of photography and carefully kept their negatives, just as they kept their preliminary drawings. In assessing

the relative importance of photography for the Naturalists, it is important to remember that color photography had not yet been invented. Thus photographs were important primarily as reference tools for composition and drawing. For color, artists still had to rely on the study of real life.

The photographic quality of Bastien-Lepage's work is even more pronounced in his famous *Joan of Arc Listening to the Voices* (FIG. 16-17), which must be called a naturalistic work even though it depicts a historical subject. The painting received a mixed reception at the Salon of 1880 precisely because it occupied such an ambiguous position midway between history painting and the depiction of real life. The subject of Joan of Arc, popular throughout the nineteenth century, had gained renewed poignancy after the



16-17 **Jules Bastien-Lepage**, *Joan of Arc Listening to the Voices*, 1879. Oil on canvas, 8'4" x 9'1" (2.54 x 2.79 m). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Franco-Prussian War, because the Germans had annexed the Lorraine region of north-eastern France, where Joan of Arc was born. Bastien-Lepage, himself a native of Lorraine, chose to depict the French heroine not in the usual way—clad in full armor leading the French troops to victory—but as a young Lorraine peasant girl receiving her divine calling. Joan is standing behind her parents' little cottage in the hamlet of Domrémy, seemingly enraptured by the sound of saintly voices speaking to her. The viewer is awed by the verisimilitude of the picture, both in the representation of Joan herself and in the rendering of the peasant garden. Yet as the eye turns from Joan to the spinning wheel, which she has knocked over in this moment of ecstasy, one becomes aware of the ethereal forms of saints Michael (in armor), Margaret, and Catherine. Con-

temporary critics criticized Bastien-Lepage for the way in which he combined elements of reality and fantasy in his picture. They failed to realize that he wished to emphasize the reality of Joan's vision in order to explain her extraordinary accomplishments in the months to come. His ingenuous blending of realism and fantasy is matched by his combination of areas that are extremely finished with others that are loosely brushed, almost resembling Impressionist works.

Although Bastien-Lepage's artistic output was limited, because of his early death at the age of thirty-six, his influence was far-reaching and long-lasting. He may be seen as the father of an international Naturalist movement that, in some countries, lasted well into the twentieth century (see page 447).

When the Eiffel Tower Was New

In the mid-1880s the government of the Third Republic decided to organize a monumental international exposition in order to celebrate the centennial of the French Revolution. It was to be the largest such event to date, and the French hoped for maximum participation from other nations. Edouard Lockroy, its chief organizer, wanted the exhibition to highlight that the revolution had been not just a glorious event in French history but "a European event, welcomed by enthusiastic nations; the point of departure, for the entire world, of a new era." Although the 1889 exposition was undoubtedly a huge success, it was not as universal as Lockroy had hoped. A number of nations, including the Ottoman Empire, declined to participate in order to show their disapproval of the ideals of the French Revolution.

The Universal Exposition of 1889 was to be situated on the so-called Champ de Mars (literally, the field of Mars, the Roman god of war) in Paris. This large open area on the right bank of the Seine river had been the site of earlier international expositions as well as several important revolutionary celebrations. The exposition was to include the obligatory gallery of machines, and various exhibits of industrial products and fine and decorative arts. Moreover, colonial displays, which had been a regular feature since the Great Exhibition of 1851 at the Crystal Palace in London, were vastly enlarged and enhanced with "live" exhibits.

The Eiffel Tower

The planners of the Universal Exposition wanted a monumental gateway at the entrance that would express the ideas of revolution, renewal, and progress that underlay its conception. A competition was organized, and more than 100 designs were submitted. Significantly, the commission for the gateway went not to a traditionally trained architect but to an engineer who specialized in bridges and industrial buildings. It was the fifty-five-year-old Gustave Eiffel (1832–1923) who, with the help of a young assistant, designed and built the monumental entrance tower that has become the hallmark of Paris (FIG. 18-1).

The Eiffel Tower was an unprecedented structure that combined features of the Roman triumphal arch and the Gothic spire. It had a dual function as both a monumental entrance and a giant beacon. Measuring 984 feet (300 metres) in height, it was by far the tallest structure of its time. Elevators took visitors up to the top, where they were treated to a panoramic view that surpassed any they had seen before. No wonder that, during the seven months' exposition alone, nearly 2 million people visited the tower, a record number for any tourist site at that time.

The Eiffel Tower's unprecedented height was made possible by an entirely new technique of wrought-iron construction which combined strong supporting girders with open latticework. To make the building windproof, and also for aesthetic reasons, Eiffel designed it so that the



18-1 (above) **J. Kuhn**, *The Champ de Mars and the Eiffel Tower*, c. 1889–90. Photograph, 8 x 10" (20.9 x 27.3 cm). Davison Art Center Collection, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut.

18-2 **H. Sicard**, *The Eiffel Tower at Night*, 1889. Chromolithograph, 8⁷/₈ x 6" (22.6 x 15.8 cm). Private Collection.

tower rested on four enormous lattice-girder piers, connected by arches. The piers tapered inwards to form a tall, slender spire. The rapid and economic construction (it took only twenty-six months and 250 men on-site to construct the tower) was facilitated by the off-site prefabrication of standard modular parts (compare the Crystal Palace, discussed on page 354) which were assembled on the spot. Among its more remarkable features were the glass-cage elevators. Designed by the Otis Elevator Company in New York, they ascended on a curve as they made their way from one of the piers to the viewing platform near the top of the tower.

For the exhibition, the Eiffel Tower was coated with iridescent paint that shimmered in the sunlight. At night, lit by gas and electricity, it emanated a rosy glow. A lithograph of the period (FIG. 18-2)—one of the numerous mass-produced souvenirs of the time—conveys something of the miraculous spell that the tower must have cast over the thousands of visitors from across the world that crowded around it every night.



The Gallery of Machines

Passing through the arched openings of the Eiffel Tower, visitors entered a vast courtyard formed by the main exhibition building in the rear and the fine arts and "liberal arts" wings on either side. Behind these three buildings was the immense Gallery of Machines (FIG. 18-3), a glass and steel behemoth approximately 350 feet wide and nearly one-third of a mile long. It surpassed all previous structures in length and width, including St Pancras Station in London, which for more than twenty years had been the largest roofed space in the world. The Gallery of Machines had two floors, housing a vast array of exhibits. To gain access to the second floor, visitors stepped on a moving crane that transported them from one end of the hall to the other. Up to 100,000 passengers rode these "rolling bridges" every day, a measure of the extent to which people were mesmerized by machines and the progress they were thought to bring.

By far the most popular exhibit in the Gallery of Machines was the display of the products developed by Thomas Alva Edison, which featured examples of Edison's newly invented phonograph and "fountains of light," made with hundreds of electrical light bulbs.

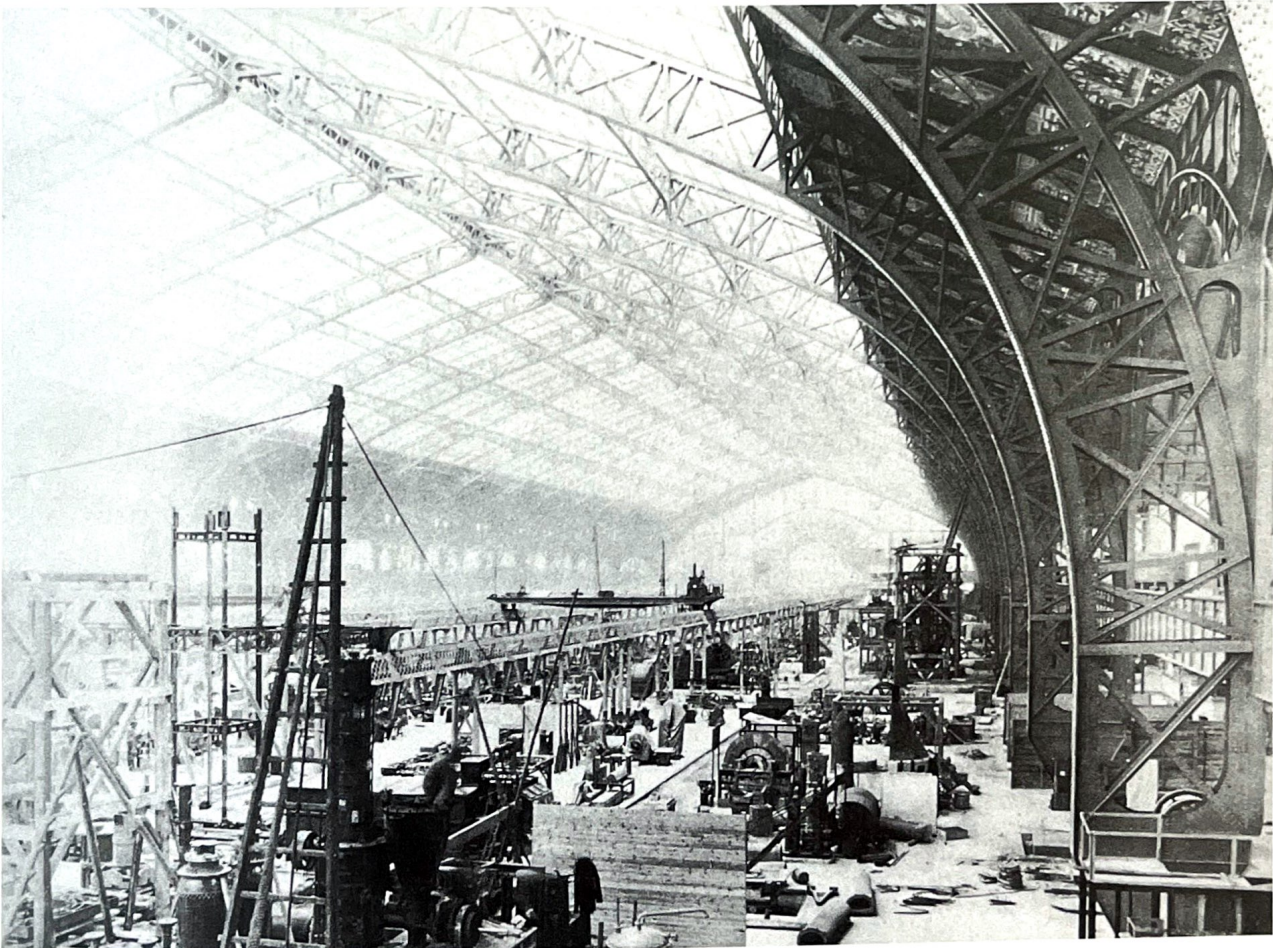
The History of Habitation Pavilions

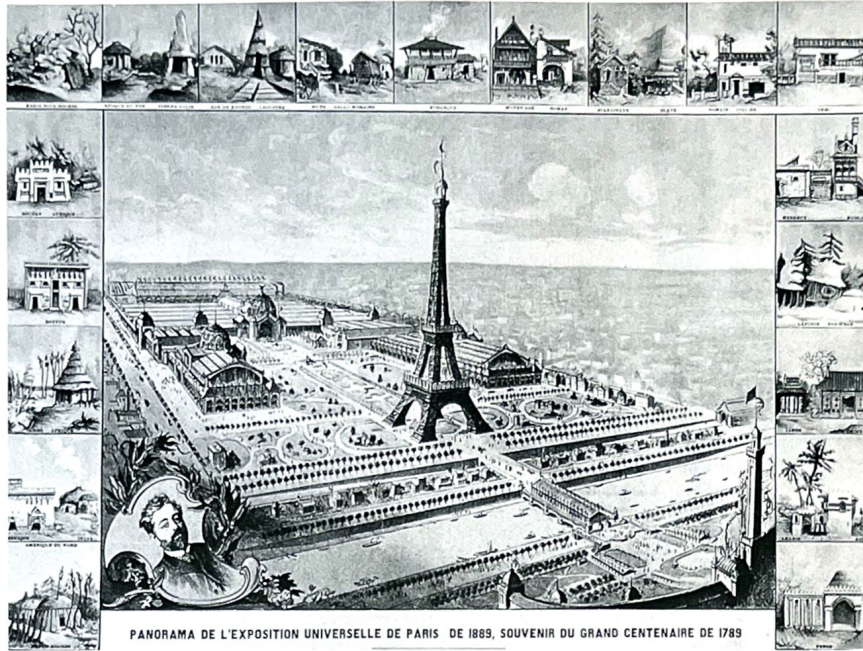
The technological progress exemplified in the Eiffel Tower and the Gallery of Machines was juxtaposed with the "History of Habitation" street, a walkway along the Seine that was lined with forty-four dwellings that told the story of "the slow but inevitable march of humanity" through the ages. A contemporary illustration (FIG. 18-4) reproduces several of these dwellings, which included grottoes, tents, straw huts, cottages, and villas from different parts of the world. Designed by Charles Garnier, architect of the Paris Opéra (see page 272), some of the dwellings, such as the Egyptian house, were representative of a bygone past. Others, such as the nomadic tent, were still in use in certain parts of the world. Seen against the backdrop of the Eiffel Tower, these domestic structures emphasized the progress that had been made in architecture, most notably in the "civilized" Western world, of which Paris was featured as the center.

Colonial Exhibits

Ever since the Great Exhibition of 1851, the organizers of international expositions had made an effort to combine

18-3 **Anonymous**, *Gallery of Machines*, 1889. Photograph, 9 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 12" (24.5 x 30.5 cm). Library of Congress, Washington, DC.



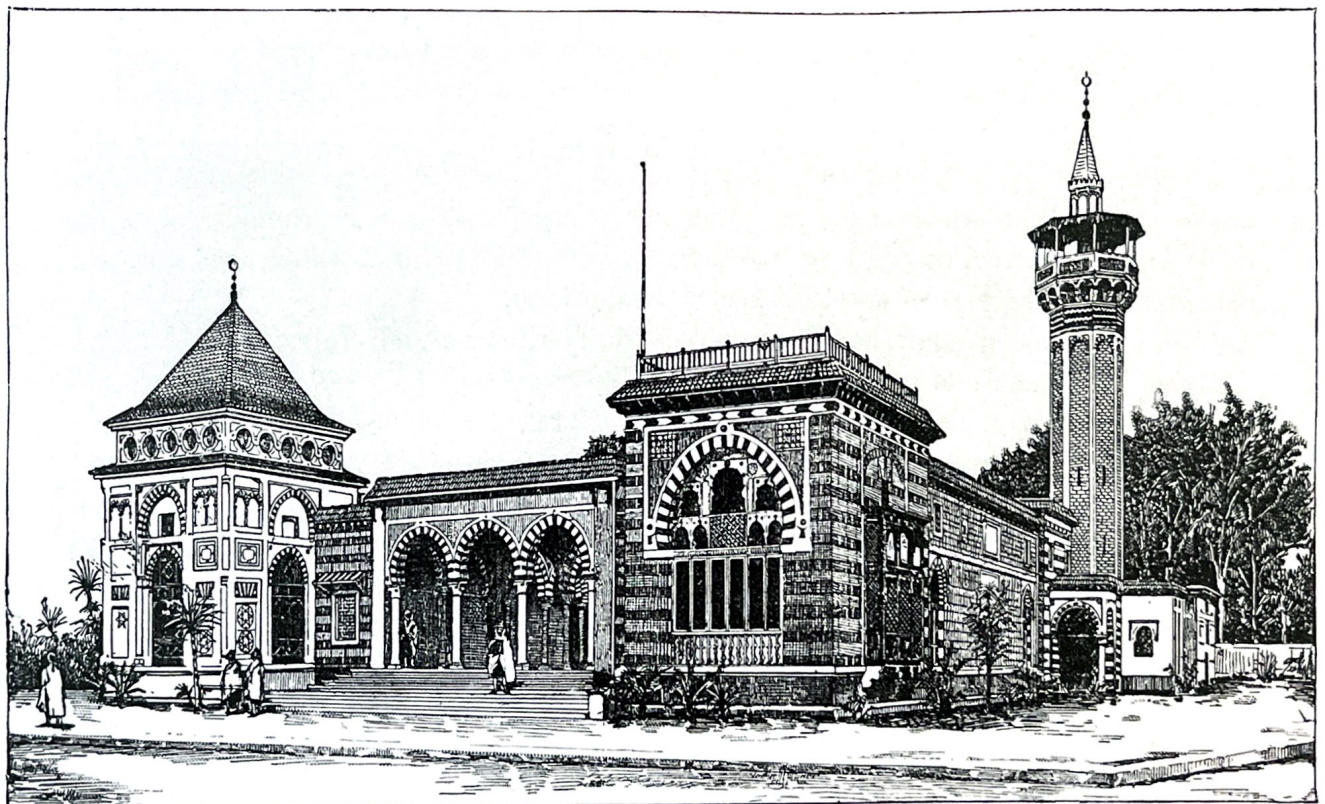


18-4 **Anonymous**, *Panorama of the 1889 Exposition*. From *Magasin du Printemps*, 1889. Chromolithograph, 22 x 28" (55.9 x 71.2 cm). Private Collection.

displays of industrial and artistic progress in Europe and North America with displays featuring the non-Western world. The latter focused on the Far East (Japan, China), South Asia (India, Indonesia), the Orient (a vague term that denoted the Near and Middle East, Egypt, and north Africa), and what was then thought of as the "primitive" world of central Africa and Polynesia. Non-Western exhibits

took on ever greater importance as European nations became increasingly imperialistic (see *Nineteenth-Century Imperialism*, page 445). Countries with important overseas colonies mounted huge exhibits in special "colonial palaces." These were built in fantastic styles that combined Western plans with eclectically borrowed native motifs. The Tunisian Palace at the 1889 exhibition (FIG. 18-5), for exam-

18-5 **Henri-Jules Saladin**, *The Tunisian Palace at the 1889 Exposition* (destroyed). Illustration in E. Monod, *L'Exposition Universelle de 1889* (vol. 2), Paris, 1889. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.



Nineteenth-Century Imperialism

Colonization, a western European practice since the sixteenth century, changed and expanded dramatically in the course of the nineteenth century. The vastly increased productivity made possible by the Industrial Revolution caused Europeans to look for new sources of raw materials as well as for new markets. Merchants found that the best places for trade were outside Europe. It soon became clear, however, that for overseas trade to flourish, colonies or protectorates were essential, because they alone could offer security and stability. Already, in the middle of the nineteenth century, the British (whose experience in colonization went back to the seventeenth century) held colonies in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, India, and various African countries, while the French were in control of north Africa. Increasingly,

colonialism turned into imperialism, which involved heightened political control of the colonized countries to the point where they became integral parts of the "mother" country.

The 1880s witnessed the beginning of the so-called new imperialism, a desperate scramble among western European nations to annex as much as they could of the non-Western world, most notably Africa. Although the race for empire was won unquestionably by Britain, which at the time of Queen Victoria's death in 1901 was the greatest colonial power in the world, many nations took part in it, most notably France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium. The consequences of the "new imperialism" would be felt for most of the twentieth century, and continue to affect the world today.

ple, had a façade derived from the Great Mosque at Kairouan, a dome and minaret resembling the Islamic center of Sidi Ben-Arus in Tunis, and verandas borrowed from traditional Tunisian domestic architecture.

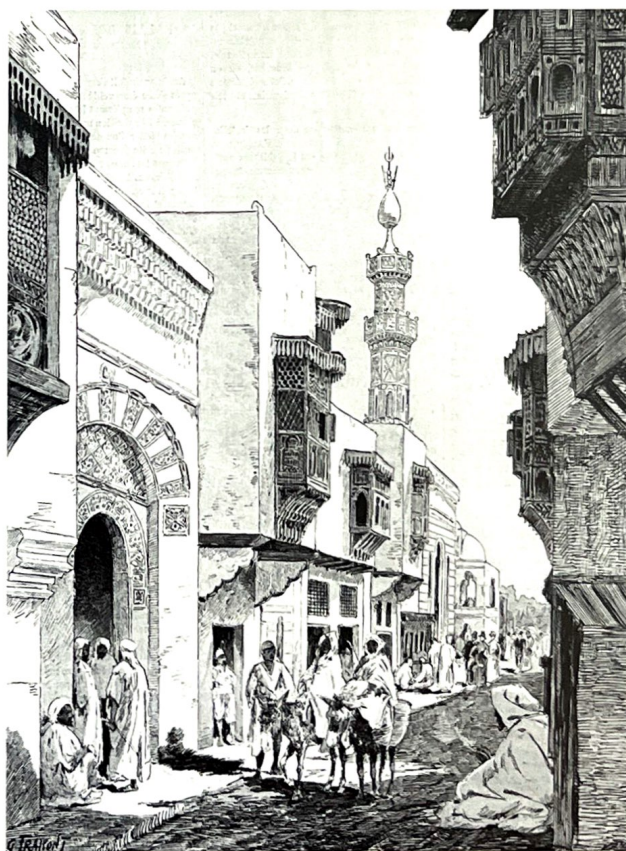
While most of the first colonial exhibits, in 1851 and 1855, featured products (both raw materials and goods manufactured in the colonies), later ones were aimed at acquainting Westerners with the cultures of colonized peoples. Inside the colonial pavilions one could admire native tools, costumes, and photographs documenting the lives and the people of the colonies. (Thus the international expositions became the precursors of twentieth-century anthropological museums.)

Another and more direct way of familiarizing visitors with the cultures of colonized people was through the "colonial villages." These were especially constructed native settlements populated by between 50 and 200 native Africans or Asians temporarily imported for the purpose. For the duration of the exhibition they would go about their daily lives (as far as was possible in urban Paris) so that visitors could see how they worked, played, dressed, talked, prepared their food, etc. The purpose of the colonial villages was both educational and imperialist. While teaching live lessons in anthropology, they also brought together the colonizers and the colonized, reminding both that they shared the same nationality. Moreover, by demonstrating the "primitive" circumstances under which most native people lived, the colonial villages served as a justification for the colonial enterprise, which was hailed for bringing modernization and progress.

In addition to the colonial villages, the exhibition of 1889 included the popular "Cairo Street" (FIG. 18-6). Designed (and perhaps also financed) by a wealthy Frenchman who had lived in Egypt for many years, it was a reconstruction of a street in old Cairo, containing some architectural fragments from demolished buildings in that

city. Unlike the "native villages," which were supposedly educational, Cairo Street was devised for amusement. The street was populated by musicians, dancers, artisans, camels, and donkeys imported from Egypt. To the horror of Islamic visitors, it included a mosque that served as a coffeehouse, complete with dancing girls and other forms of exotic entertainment.

18-6 *Cairo Street, Exposition of 1889*. Wood engraving. Bibliothèque Nationale, Département des Estampes et de la Photographie, Paris.





18-7 **Pascal-Adolphe-Jean Dagnan-Bouveret**, *Brittany Pardon*, 1886. Oil on canvas, 45 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 33 $\frac{3}{8}$ " (1.15 m x 84.8 cm).
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Despite their frequent lack of authenticity, the non-Western exhibits at the 1889 Universal Exposition contributed greatly to familiarizing the public with the world outside Europe. For artists, in particular, the acquaintance with non-Western architecture, art, and artifacts was of great importance because it stimulated them to rethink traditional Western forms and techniques.

The Fine Arts on Exhibit

The Fine Arts Palace at the Universal Exposition had several distinct exhibitions that showed off a great number of paintings and sculptures. The "Centennial Exhibition" provided an overview of French art between 1789 and 1889. It included works by every famous French artist from David to the present. Another exhibition, the Decennial, emphasized the art produced during the last decade. Each country, moreover, had its own section in the Fine Arts Palace, featuring works selected by national committees. And, as if this were not enough, the exhibition coincided with the annual Salon, which opened its doors on May 1 with no fewer than 5,810 entries.

Visitors to the Fine Arts Palace of the 1889 exhibition or, for that matter, to the contemporary Salon, would have looked in vain for the works of Seurat or Signac, Van Gogh or Cézanne, or even the Impressionists. The works of these artists were known to only a small number of critics, collectors, artists, and aficionados of contemporary art. This does not mean that truly interested visitors to Paris in 1889 would not have been able to find them. At the Salon des Indépendants, held in the late summer and early fall, visitors could have seen works by Seurat, Signac, Van Gogh, and Toulouse-Lautrec (see page 471). At the Gallery Georges Petit some 145 works by Monet were on exhibit, together with a number of sculptures by Rodin. And works by other Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, and Symbolist artists were shown in several more or less prominent galleries, and even in cafés. Yet none of these exhibitions came even close to attracting the numbers of visitors who crowded the Fine Arts Palace every day.

The Triumph of Naturalism

Both the Decennial Exhibition and the Salon of 1889 were dominated by Naturalism, which by the late 1880s had become an international style, practiced across Europe and in the Americas. Although Bastien-Lepage, the prophet and apostle of Naturalism, had been dead for almost five years, several of his works—including the famous *Haymakers* and *Joan of Arc Listening to the Voices* (see FIGS. 16-16 and 16-17)—were shown at the Decennial Exhibition, a clear indication of his eminent status in his own time. *Joan of Arc* was lent by the American

collector Erwin Davies, who, that same year, donated it to the Metropolitan Museum in New York, where it can still be seen today.

It was generally acknowledged in 1889 that Bastien-Lepage's role as torchbearer for the Naturalist movement had been passed to Pascal-Adolphe-Jean Dagnan-Bouveret (1852–1931), whose *Brittany Pardon* (FIG. 18-7) was one of the most widely admired works at the exhibition. The painting, also now in the Metropolitan Museum, depicts a religious custom practiced in the French province of Brittany. In a "Pardon," villagers moved in procession around the church—some barefoot, others crawling on their knees—in order to show penitence for their sins.

Dagnan-Bouveret brought something new to Naturalism, namely the use of photography. Although, like Bastien-Lepage, he followed the academic painting practice of preparing careful preliminary drawings for each figure, he incorporated the photograph into this routine as yet another step or, sometimes, as a substitute for a drawing. For the woman in the foreground of *Brittany Pardon*, for example, he relied on a photograph of a volunteer model (the mother of his friend, the painter Gustave Courtois), carefully posed and dressed for the purpose (FIG. 18-8).

Contemporary critics (who may or may not have been familiar with Dagnan-Bouveret's method) praised the photographic exactitude of his paintings, which they admired the more as it was applied to subject matter that

18-8 Gustave Courtois's mother models for the foreground figure in *Brittany Pardon*. Photograph. Archives Départementales, Vesoul.





18-9 Jules Bastien-Lepage, *London Bootblack*, 1882. Oil on canvas, 52 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 35" (1.33 m x 89.5 cm). Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris.

recorded rapidly disappearing national and regional traditions. Dagnan-Bouveret, as one critic observed, had answered the call that a beautiful work should contain everything from ancient art united with the modern spirit.

Not all French Naturalists focused on traditional rural scenes. Bastien-Lepage himself, in the early 1880s, had painted a number of paintings of urban types, mostly children forced to make a living on the street. His *London Bootblack* (FIG. 18-9), painted during one of several trips to London, may serve as an example. It shows a young boy, dressed in the red cap and jacket of the London Shoe Black Brigade, leaning against a street corner post. As he is waiting listlessly for a customer, the city traffic rushes behind him. Hansom cabs stop and go, following the directions of a policeman. Pedestrians crowd the busy sidewalks.

Although different in spirit from his rural scenes, Bastien-Lepage's *London Bootblack* shows the same attention to detail, all for the purpose of lending the painting a feeling of authenticity.

Work (FIG. 18-10), of 1885, by Alfred Roll (1846–1919), likewise depicts an urban scene, though on a more monumental scale. The painting represents a construction site at Suresnes, near Paris, where in the 1880s a dam was built on the Seine river. Measuring some 14 feet by 19, it documents, in great detail, the varied activities of the construction workers. In its mural size and its focus on "work" as a state of life, the painting functions both as an image of a specific event and as a generic representation of urban labor. Neither Bastien-Lepage's *London Bootblack* nor Roll's *Work* was shown at the exhibition of 1889, but several similar paintings of urban life were included in it.



18-10 **Alfred Roll**, *Work*, 1885. Oil on canvas, 14'5" x 19'8" (4.39 x 6 m). Musée Municipal, Cognac.

Nordic Naturalism: Nationalism and Naturism

Among the foreign art exhibits, the greatest surprise was caused by the Nordic countries, which were better represented than ever before, with works from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland. Many, if not most, of the artists whose works were shown in the Nordic pavilion had studied in Paris. Some had attended the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, others the city's private art schools or "academies," such as those run by Rodolphe Julian, a former wrestler, or Filippo Colarossi, an expatriate Italian sculptor. Frequented especially by foreign art students and by women (who were not allowed to attend the Ecole des Beaux-Arts), the Julian and Colarossi academies were important breeding grounds for international Naturalism.

More than in other European countries, Naturalism in the Nordic countries was closely bound up with nationalism. Nordic Naturalist painters had a special preference for scenes of rural life that typified the "national character." This preoccupation with nationalism coincided with

movements aimed at political or cultural independence, including the Norwegian movement towards independence from Swedish rule, and the movement to make Finnish (rather than Swedish) the official language of Finland.

Peasant Burial (FIG. 18-11), by the Norwegian painter Erik Werenskiold (1855–1938), a huge success at the 1889 exhibition, may serve as an example. Werenskiold had studied in Munich before moving to Paris in 1881. A famous illustrator of Norwegian folk tales, he also painted large-scale paintings of Norwegian country life. In *Peasant Burial* a group of male peasants of different ages stand around a freshly dug grave mound, on which a cross has been formed with dirt. On the left, a young schoolmaster, standing in for an absent clergyman, reads from a small pocket Bible. Behind him stands a single woman, perhaps the wife or daughter of the deceased.

It is instructive to compare this painting with Courbet's *A Burial at Ornans*, (see FIG. 11-3), painted almost thirty years earlier. In the Realist painting the artist's aim was not in the first instance to provide an accurate representation



18-11 **Erik Werenskiöld**, *Peasant Burial*, 1883–5. Oil on canvas, 40 x 59" (1.02 x 1.5 m). Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo.

of a scene from real life. In fact, Courbet is known to have painted it in his studio. His foremost aim in the *Burial* was to lend to the modest subject of a country burial the aura of a historic event.

In his Naturalist rendering of a country burial Werenskiöld had no interest in making the scene look grander than it was. Instead, he aimed at the faithful representation of a simple scene in the Norwegian countryside. His purpose was anthropological rather than political. It was an attempt to record for future generations the beautiful simplicity of life in the Norwegian countryside, as yet untouched by industry. Indeed, to Werenskiöld, as to other Nordic artists who had traveled abroad, their homeland seemed preciously virgin and pure compared with the industrialized nations of western Europe.

The work of the Finnish painter Albert Edelfelt (1854–1905), winner of a Grand Prize of Honor at the 1889 exhibition, likewise exemplified Nordic nationalism. His *Old Women of Ruokolahti on the Church Hill* (FIG. 18-12), of 1887, represents four women from the small town of Ruokolahti (in southeastern Finland) chatting after church. The elderly woman on the far left appears to be talking, while the other three are listening. Edelfelt has beautifully captured their expressions, which range from ones of

incredulity to skepticism and inattention. If the painting resembles the work of Bastien-Lepage, it is not surprising. Edelfelt was a close friend of the French artist and wrote about him in the Finnish press. Like many Nordic artists, Edelfelt divided his time between Finland, where he found most of his subject matter, and Paris, where he exhibited and marketed his work.

The Swedish painter Anders Zorn (1860–1920) also spent a good deal of time in Paris, where he took an interest not only in Naturalist painting but also in the works of the Impressionists. This may explain why many of his works show a pronounced interest in *plein-air* effects. Although Zorn painted numerous scenes from Swedish country life, in his own time the artist was especially known for a group of paintings, done from the late 1880s onwards, of female nudes in natural surroundings. To paint these works, Zorn actually posed female nude models outside, to capture the play of light on the unclothed human body. In the prudish social climate of the late nineteenth century, this was a daring and unconventional method that few Impressionists had undertaken. To paint his *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (see FIG. 12-31), for example, Manet had still posed his nude models in the studio, and so had Renoir for his *Bathers* (see FIG. 17-17). But for *Outside* (FIG. 18-13),



18-12 **Albert Edelfelt**, *Old Women of Ruokolampi on the Church Hill*, 1887. Oil on canvas, 51 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 62" (1.31 x 1.59 m). Ateneum, Helsinki.

18-13 (below) **Anders Zorn**, *Outside*, 1888. Oil on canvas, 4'4" x 6'5" (1.33 x 1.98 m). Konstmuseum, Göteborg.





18-14 **Wilhelm Leibl**, *Three Women in Church*, 1882. Oil on canvas, 44 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 30 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (1.13 m x 76.8 cm). Kunsthalle, Hamburg.

one of the successes of the Salon of 1889, Zorn actually took his models outdoors. There he would sketch and photograph them as they were bathing, walking, or climbing up rocks. The result of this practice was a series of paintings and large watercolors in which the human body appeared truly as a natural form at one with other forms of nature—rocks, trees, water. Bathed in the same sunlight and brushed with the same brush, Zorn's nudes seem to belong in their surroundings, unlike the nude in Manet's painting, who appears quite literally as a "foreign body" in the woods.

Zorn's paintings seemed to advocate a new, liberated attitude toward the female body that has often been identified with Swedish culture. This attitude defied the custom of lacing the body up in corsets and imprisoning it in crinolines; Zorn's nudes coincided with a call for loose clothing, for physical fitness, and for a wholesome life style that began in the last fifteen years of the nineteenth century and culminated early in the twentieth century. Indeed, Zorn's paintings and photographs of nudes anticipated the beginnings of the "naturist" or "nudist" movement, which was aimed at stripping the sexual connotations from nudity to emphasize instead its naturalness.

Naturalism in Germany: Max Liebermann and Fritz von Uhde

In Germany, the work of Wilhelm Leibl (see page 318) formed a crucial link between mid-nineteenth-century German Realism, influenced by Gustave Courbet, and the international Naturalism that triumphed at the Salon of 1889. Leibl was well represented at the exhibition with works such as *Three Women in Church* (FIG. 18-14), painted in 1882. Unlike his earlier *Village Politicians* (see FIG. 13-19), a generic image of peasant life, *Three Women in Church*, both through its title and the careful attention to costume, reflects a new interest in pictures celebrating national identity.

While Leibl represented an older generation of German painters at the 1889 exhibition, "new" German Naturalist painting was exemplified by the work of Max Liebermann (1847–1935). Like Zorn, Liebermann was familiar with French painting. He was close friends with several French Naturalist painters, including Bastien-Lepage and Dagnan-Bouveret. He also knew the works of the Impressionists, which he admired for their *plein-air* effects. Many of Liebermann's paintings depict scenes in the Netherlands, where

18-15 **Max Liebermann**, *Amsterdam Orphan Girls*, 1882. Oil on canvas, 30 x 42" (78 cm x 1.08 m). Städelsches Institut, Frankfurt-am-Main.





18-16 **Fritz von Uhde**, *Last Supper*, 1886. Oil on canvas, 6'9" x 10'8" (2.06 x 3.24 m). Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.

18-17 (below) **Léon Frédéric**, *Chalk Sellers*, 1882-3. Oil on canvas. Left panel: *Morning*, 1882, 6'6" x 3'9" (2 x 1.15 m), central panel: *Noon*, 1882, 6'6" x 8'9" (2 x 2.68 m), right panel: *Evening*, 1883, 6'6" x 3'9" (2 x 1.15 m). Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels.



he spent most of his summers. *Amsterdam Orphan Girls* (FIG. 18-15), revealed at the 1889 exhibition, shows the courtyard of an orphanage in Amsterdam during recess. While the painting is clearly representative of Naturalism, it also shows an interest in capturing effects of light, confirming Liebermann's close study of Impressionism.

Fritz von Uhde (1848–1911) was another major German Naturalist painter. His early paintings resemble Liebermann's, especially because they also depict Dutch scenes. After the mid-1880s, however, he gave Naturalism a new twist by applying it to religious subject matter. In his *Last Supper* (FIG. 18-16), a prizewinning painting at the 1889 exhibition, he dressed Christ and the apostles as German workmen and placed them in an interior that resembled a nineteenth-century tavern. Gone are the idealized facial features and the long classicizing gowns that were obligatory in the religious paintings of the German Nazarenes. Von Uhde tried to imbue religious painting with new life, by transposing biblical scenes into modern times and into the social milieu to which the apostles had truly belonged.

Naturalism in Belgium

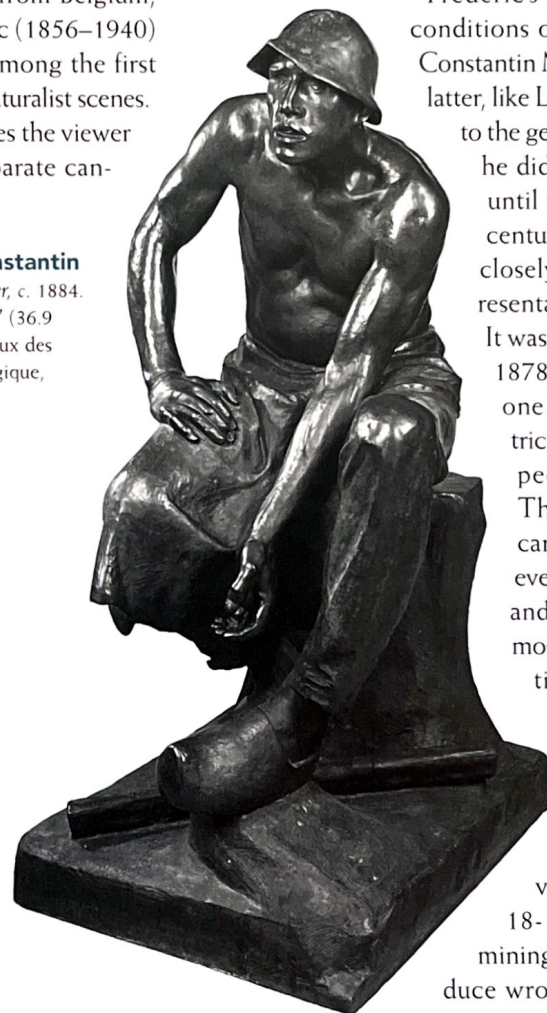
Among the numerous Naturalist painters from Belgium, two deserve special attention. Léon Frédéric (1856–1940) is interesting, especially, because he was among the first painters to lend symbolic overtones to his Naturalist scenes. His *Chalk Sellers* (FIG. 18-17), of 1882–3, strikes the viewer at once because it is painted on three separate can-

vases that are attached to one another. This format harks back to medieval and Renaissance triptychs, paintings composed of three hinged panels that were commonly hung behind altars in churches and chapels. Frédéric's choice of this traditional format suggests that *Chalk Sellers* was more than just an objective rendition of ordinary life and had some larger, moral significance. In the center panel of the triptych, subtitled *Noon*, a family of itinerant chalk sellers has just finished blessing their meager roadside meal of boiled potatoes. Shoeless and dressed in patched-up clothes, they are the image of desperate poverty. In the distance is a gray town, with a church on the left and a smokestack on the right. On the two side panels, called *Morning* and *Evening* respectively, another family of itinerant salesmen sets out on the road (left) and returns (right) to whatever it calls "home"—a shack or a room in a tenement building on the city fringe. Together, the three panels comment on the fate of common people in the new industrial age. Bereft of traditional havens such as church, community, land, and home, they have become homeless wanderers, displaced by the very revolution that was supposed to improve their lives. The triptych format emphasizes the inescapable routine of the life of the poor, in which one miserable day follows another, without interruption or escape.

Frédéric's concern with the social conditions of his time was shared by Constantin Meunier (1831–1905). The latter, like Leibl in Germany, belonged to the generation of the Realists, but he did not become well known until the end of the nineteenth century. Meunier's reputation is closely bound up with his representation of mines and miners. It was a subject he discovered in 1878, when chance led him to one of Belgium's mining districts—dismal locales that few people visited by choice. Though he had started his career as a painter, Meunier eventually moved to sculpture and became one of the foremost Naturalist sculptors of his time. At the exhibition of 1889 he received a grand prize for *Puddler*, a subject that he treated several times during the later part of his career. The version reproduced in FIG. 18-18 shows a laborer in the mining industry, who has to produce wrought iron by stirring hot



18-18 (right) **Constantin Meunier**, *Puddler*, c. 1884. Bronze, height 14" (36.9 cm), Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels.



molten ore. Puddling was a physically demanding job that required strength and endurance due to the intense heat. In Meunier's sculpture, the puddler is resting, exhausted from his labor. Seated on an anvil, he supports his bare torso with his right arm, which is resting heavily on his thigh. It is all that he can do to lift his head to acknowledge the presence of the viewer. Millet's *The Gleaners* and Courbet's *The Stonebreakers* (see FIGS. 12-25 and 11-7) come to mind when we look at this figure, which inspires a similar mixture of empathy and admiration for the laboring classes.

Jozef Israëls and the Hague School in the Netherlands

One of the most widely admired works in the exhibition of 1889 was *Toilers of the Sea*, which won a grand prize for the Dutch artist Jozef Israëls (1824–1911). Israëls's paint-

ing is now lost, but another work, *Peasants' Mealtime*, also on view at the exhibition, is shown in FIG. 18-19. Like the sculptures of Meunier and the paintings of Leibl, the work of Israëls is often closer in style and spirit to mid-nineteenth-century Realism than to the Naturalism of Bastien-Lepage or Dagnan-Bouveret. This is no surprise, because Israëls was born in 1824 and was therefore closer in age to the Realists than to the Naturalists.

Peasants' Mealtime repeats a theme that Israëls had treated as early as 1882 and which may have inspired Vincent van Gogh's better-known painting *Potato Eaters*, of 1885 (see FIG. 17-27). To compare Israëls's painting with Van Gogh's is to understand the difference between the kind of painting that was popular in the second half of the 1880s and the new artistic course on which Van Gogh was embarking at this time. Van Gogh caricatured his peasants, capturing the coarseness brought on by a life of malnourishment and

18-19 Jozef Israëls, *Peasants' Mealtime*, 1889. Oil on canvas, 51 x 59" (1.3 x 1.5 m). Private Collection.





18-20 **Anton Mauve**, *Fishing Boat on the Beach*, 1882. Oil on canvas, 45 x 67" (1.15 x 1.72 m). Gemeentemuseum, The Hague.

back-breaking labor. Israëls, by contrast, painted a serene image in which a family of peasants, accepting its place in society, quietly enjoys the modest fruits of its labor. To the middle-class public of the 1880s, Van Gogh's painting was disturbing, for it reminded them that their own comforts had been obtained at the expense of the lower classes—a social group that, consequently, they both needed and feared.

Israëls was one of the oldest members of the so-called Hague school, a loose association of figure and landscape painters who worked in and around The Hague, a Dutch town near the North Sea. These painters developed a unique mode of Naturalist landscape painting that owed a debt both to the artists of the Barbizon school and to seventeenth-century Dutch landscape painters. Like the Barbizon artists (see page 240), Hague school painters emphasized the importance of *plein-air* painting. With the Dutch landscapists, they shared an interest in the capturing of atmospheric effects. To render subtle contrast between light and shade accurately, they subordinated color to tone, painting their landscapes in different gradations of beige or gray with mere touches of other colors. Although the practice of tonal painting earned the Hague school the unflattering nickname of the "Gray School," it was well suited to the depiction of the Dutch landscape, with its

flat polders and beaches, commonly seen under overcast skies and through rain and fog.

Among the twelve or so artists who were associated with the Hague school was Anton Mauve (1838–1888), a second cousin of Van Gogh and for some months his teacher. Mauve's *Fishing Boat on the Beach* shows several teams of horses pulling a heavy wooden fishing boat away from the sea and up towards the dunes (FIG. 18-20). The painting exemplifies the tonal style of the Hague school. Beige, brown, and bluish gray are the predominating colors in this painting, which resembles nineteenth-century photographs in the sensitive rendering of light and dark tonalities.

Russian Painting

Critics of the art exhibitions of 1889 were generally disappointed by the showing of Russian art, which, they felt, compared poorly with the exhibits of other countries. The problem, apparently, was not that there was no great Russian art in 1889, but that too little of it had been sent to Paris. The Russian exhibit was dominated by older, conservative artists, while young, promising painters were represented only with minor works.

In Russia, as in western Europe, an anti-academic move-



18-21 **Ilya Repin**, *Barge Haulers on the Volga*, 1870–73. Oil on canvas, 4'4" x 9'3" (1.31 x 2.81 m). Russian Museum, St Petersburg.

ment had developed around the middle of the century. In 1863 thirteen Russian artists had seceded from the Academy and formed a society called the Wanderers (*Peredvizhniki*). The name was a reference to their practice of forgoing academic exhibitions in order to organize traveling exhibitions in the Russian countryside for the benefit of society at large. Like Realism in France and the Pre-Raphaelite movement in Britain, the Russian rebel movement was both anti-academic and anti-Romantic. The Wanderers believed that art should represent real life and comment on it. They rejected the "art for art's sake" philosophy of the older generation and insisted that art be an agent of social reform. They had use neither for the large-scale history paintings that were produced by the leaders of the St Petersburg Academy nor for the sentimental scenes of Russian life produced by older painters such as Vasili Perov (see FIG. 15-21).

One of the leading painters to exhibit his work regularly in the Wanderers' exhibitions was Ilya Repin (1844–1930). Before joining the group, Repin had made his debut at the Academy with a strikingly non-academic work, *Barge Haulers on the Volga* (FIG. 18-21), a large canvas that shows a team of ten men towing a heavy barge on the still waters of the Volga river. Although painted ten years after serfdom had been abolished in Russia, the painting shows that that edict had done little to alleviate the fate of the underclass in Russia. Indeed, the bargemen, yoked to the barge with leather straps and ropes, are doing the work that was more often done by animals.

Repin's work differs from that of the French Realists, most notably Courbet and Millet, in that the Russian artist has taken great pains to paint individual portraits of the barge haulers, a motley group of different ages and eth-

nic groups. While the French Realists had "de-individualized" their subjects to show how hard and demeaning labor takes away people's humanity, Repin instead shows the psychological effects that labor has on the haulers. Some look resigned to their fate, others seem rebellious, indifferent, or simply too exhausted to have any emotions at all. Like Millet, however, Repin presents his *Barge Haulers* both as an image of suffering and as an example of the dignity and strength of the lower classes.

Barge Haulers on the Volga was seen at the 1873 exhibition of the St Petersburg Academy by the Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821–1881), who was greatly impressed by it. Sharing, like many Russian intellectuals, Repin's feeling of personal responsibility for the fate of the poor, Dostoevsky wrote in his *Writer's Diary*, a monthly publication: "You can't help but think that you are indebted, truly indebted to the People . . . You will be dreaming of this whole group of barge haulers afterward; you will still recall them fifteen years later!"

Like many Russian artists during the 1880s, Repin turned away from Realist subject matter toward themes from Russian history. This trend was closely related to the growth of Russian nationalism, which caused Russians to become intensely interested in their history and folklore. *Ivan the Terrible and his Son Ivan on November 15, 1581* (FIG. 18-22) is one of the most famous and dramatic of Repin's history paintings. It depicts Ivan, Russia's first czar, who murdered his son and heir in a fit of rage. The event was important historically, because it led to the "Time of Troubles," a period of crisis that ended only with the establishment of the Romanov dynasty, which still ruled Russia in the nineteenth century. But Repin's painting was connected to contemporary events. In 1881 the Russian czar, Alexan-



18-22 **Ilya Repin**, *Ivan the Terrible and his Son Ivan on November 15, 1581*, 1885. Oil on canvas, 6'4" x 8'4" (2 x 2.54 m). State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

der II, had been murdered by a revolutionary terrorist, an event that led to a period of bloody government reprisals. Touched by the "unbearable tragism of history," Repin painted *Ivan the Terrible and his Son Ivan* as a way to show the senselessness of killing one's kin, one's fellow countrymen. Repin's painting stands out not merely by its convincing rendering of setting and costumes but also by the psychological insight he has brought to the two figures—Ivan's son, whose life is slipping away, and Ivan himself, who, his fury gone, realizes what he has done. His face and hands covered with blood, he embraces the limp body of his son as his features are distorted in a frightful expression of regret and despair.

Next to Repin, two important members of the Wanderers were Vasili Surikov (1848–1916) and Ivan Kramskoy (1837–1887). Surikov is famous for his enormous multi-figure history paintings that depict important events in Russian history. His *The Morning of the Execution of the Streltsy* (FIG. 18-23) depicts the notorious moment in Russian history when Peter the Great ordered the execution of hundreds

of Streltsy, members of a corps of musketeers from which the czar's bodyguard had traditionally been recruited. Peter the Great's distrust of the Streltsy was triggered by their undue political influence, which he intended to crush by having them exiled or put to death. Even today, tourists in Moscow are taken to the place, in front of St Basil's Church on Red Square, where the Streltsy were executed, suggesting that the event is etched deep into Russian historical consciousness.

Surikov's history paintings owe their impact to their epic proportions, their multi-figure compositions, and the meticulous care with which the setting and each figure in the scene have been depicted. His paintings seem to anticipate some of the huge film dramas of the twentieth century—*War and Peace*, most immediately, comes to mind—in the attention to historical truthfulness and the magnitude of their conception.

Kramskoy's *Christ in the Wilderness* (FIG. 18-24), in comparison, is a simple painting. It represents a unique attempt to create a modern Russian religious painting. Russian reli-



18-23 **Vasili Surikov**, *The Morning of the Execution of the Streltsy*, 1881. Oil on canvas, 7'2" x 12'5" (2.18 x 3.79 m). State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



18-24 **Ivan Kramskoy**, *Christ in the Wilderness*, 1872, 5'11" x 6'11" (1.8 x 2.1 m). State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

gious art had always taken the traditional form of icon painting. Icons, even in the nineteenth century, were painted in the Byzantine style, the origins of which went back to the Middle Ages. Most icons were painted by artists specializing in this genre, such as Ivan Bunakov, the earliest teacher of Repin. Kramskoy's preoccupation with the creation of a modern, Russian image of Christ was related to new attitudes toward religion among the Russian intelligentsia during the last decades of the nineteenth century. These attitudes, most clearly articulated by the writer Lev Tolstoy (1828–1910), are marked by a distrust of the Orthodox Church and its clergy and a new emphasis on personal faith. Christ, in this new belief context, was seen not in the first instance as a member of the Holy Trinity, but as a wise and moral being, who, during his life on earth, had followed his conscience and loved his fellow men.

Kramskoy's painting shows Christ in the wilderness, having fasted for forty days and forty nights. According to the Bible, the devil came to tempt him, telling him to use his divine powers by commanding that the stones be turned into bread. But Christ answered: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). In Kramskoy's painting the emphasis is on the psychological struggle that goes on within Christ as he considers his options. Shall he give in to his hunger and change the stones into bread, or follow his mission, namely to live out his life on earth

as a human being, according to God's will? The representation of Christ as a lone figure in a forlorn, deserted landscape exemplifies Kramskoy's view of the place of modern man in the world. Alone, living in a spiritual desert, he must follow his conscience, even if it appears that no one cares or even pays attention.

The 1889 Exposition in Review

Naturalism and nationalism were the two factors that determined the aspect of most of the art that was exhibited at the exposition of 1889 in Paris. Naturalism, by the late 1880s, had become an international style that lent a formal similarity to works from different nations. Nationalism, by contrast, led to difference, especially in content and subject matter. It caused artists to select scenes and subjects that, they felt, were characteristic of their own countries. Frequently their paintings represented traditional rural customs that were in the process of disappearing as urbanization and industry encroached upon the countryside. In addition, nationalism led some artists, beginning with Bastien-Lepage (for example in his *Joan of Arc*) and continuing with such artists as von Uhde, Repin, and Kramskoy, to return to historical and religious painting in an attempt to imbue both with a new spirit that was both chauvinistic and modern.