

ODILON REDON

France, 1840–1916

Lady of the Flowers, ca. 1890–95

Oil on canvas

Purchase, Louise and Walter F. Dillingham
Fund, 1964 (3213.1)

A painter, draftsman, and printmaker, Odilon Redon conjured with the irrationalism lurking beneath the surface of human reason. *Lady of the Flowers* is typical of his work of the 1890s, when self-absorbed, eerily spiritual women in profile—often contemplating imaginary sprays of flowers—became one of his favorite themes. While the color and lyricism of these works contrasts with the macabre melancholy of his earlier black-and-white drawings, Redon's aesthetic was fundamentally unaltered. By advocating imagination, rather than realism, he transformed nature into dream and explored the suggestive potential of color, contributing considerably to Symbolism.

PIERRE BONNARD

France, 1867–1947

***Flowers on the Mantelpiece*, 1930**

Oil on canvas

Purchased in memory of Mr. and
Mrs. Theodore A. Cooke, 1974 (4224.1)

A painter of color, light, and decorative effect, Pierre Bonnard looked past the appearance of the natural world to its fundamental, underlying components, and he explored the expressive potential of line, color, shape, and design. Although a law student, Bonnard became a professional artist in 1889, after creating an influential poster design for a champagne company and joining the Nabis, a group of avant-garde artists inspired by Paul Gauguin and Japanese prints. Preferring the intimacy and familiarity of the domestic interior over the contrived artificiality of the studio, Bonnard composed still-lives—such as this arrangement of decorative objects and a vase of flowers—on table tops and other household surfaces. Typical of his late work, abstraction and individual expression have taken over, as Bonnard pushes the boundaries of Modernism.

CAMILLE PISSARRO

France, 1830–1903

***Rouen, Saint-Sever, Morning*, 1898**

Oil on canvas

Gift of Anna Rice Cooke, 1934 (4110)

Camille Pissarro was the only artist to show his paintings in all eight Impressionist exhibitions, held in Paris from 1874 to 1886. For most of his career, he depicted peaceful rural scenes. In the last decade of his life, however, his focus turned to the rapidly expanding urban centers of France. *Rouen, Saint-Sever, Morning* captures a moment in that city's life along the Seine River. The entire work is created with thickly applied strokes of paint that capture the play of light and shadow and cause surfaces to shimmer with the luster of a hazy summer morning.

PAUL GAUGUIN

France, 1848–1903

Two Nudes on a Tahitian Beach, 1891/94

Oil on canvas

Gift of Anna Rice Cooke, 1933 (3901)

In 1891, Paul Gauguin, seeking freedom from the material motivations and values of industrialized Europe, moved from France to Tahiti. There, he created works whose dazzling palette and simplified form were without precedent in Western art. In this depiction of two women on a shoreline, the depth and detail associated with the straightforward depiction of the physical world are suppressed in favor of brilliant tonality, bold outlines, and broad shapes that echo the flatness of the picture plane and reflect the artist's personal vision. Unfortunately, Gauguin never found the innocent paradise he had hoped for in Tahiti. Long before his arrival there, the island had seen an influx of Europeans, and Papeete, its capital, was dominated by French colonials.

CLAUDE MONET

France, 1840–1926

Water Lilies, 1917/19

Oil on canvas

Purchased in memory of Robert Allerton, 1966
(3385.1)

Claude Monet rented and then bought a country house in Giverny, a small village on the Seine River about forty miles west of Paris. In 1893, he acquired a lily pond adjacent to his property, which he redesigned, enlarged, and painted time and again. This painting belongs to the last of three series of works depicting the fugitive, fleeting play of light on the artist's beloved pond. In loose, curving lines and tightly knit strokes of multi-colored pigment, Monet captured the illusion of the reflective body of water. Suspended between reality and its shifting appearance, the lily pads dissolve equally into the shimmering water and the opalescent sky. Like his fellow Impressionists, Monet pursued the transient moment for its own sake and sought to capture nature in perpetual flux.

HENRI-EDMOND CROSS

France, 1856–1910

Landscape, ca. 1896–99

Oil on canvas

Purchase, 1974 (4225.1)

With Georges Seurat, Paul Signac, and Maximilien Luce (whose *Grand Ville Industrielle* hangs nearby), Henri-Edmond Cross was a principle exponent of Neo-Impressionism, a scientific response to Impressionism's fugitive nature that theorized the division of surfaces into their basic chromatic components, described in stippled paint strokes of uniform size and shape. Cross is known for his use of high-value colors and rectangular brushwork, both of which he employs in this landscape to capture the vivid light and intense color of the South of France. The pattern created by the field, dark forest, sloping mountain, and sky combines with the bright colors to create a strong decorative effect.

CAMILLE PISSARRO

France, 1830–1903

Morning, Winter Sunshine, Frost, the Pont-Neuf, the Seine, the Louvre, 1901

Oil on canvas

Bequest of Kathryn and Arthur Murray, 1996
(8439.1)

Camille Pissarro remained active as a painter until the end of his life and created numerous cityscapes during the 1890s and early 1900s. Working in series, he repeated and varied scenes from the daily life of four French cities: Rouen, Dieppe, Le Havre, and Paris. Departing from the drama and narrative of the typical genre scene, Pissarro's focus was on the shifts in light and atmospheric effects as the days progressed, weather conditions changed, and seasons passed. This canvas is one of at least forty-two paintings that he did of the view from his apartment on the Ile de la Cité, overlooking the Seine as it passed through the heart of Paris. In the foreground, two figures stroll along the raised terrace of the Pont-Neuf; in the middle ground is the Pont des Arts, with the ramparts of the Louvre in the distance. Less a precise record of city landmarks or even the expression of a modern city's energy, this painting shimmers with the chill of an early winter morning.

EUGÈNE DELACROIX

France, 1798–1863

***The Justice of Trajan*, 1858**

Oil on canvas

Purchase, 1941 (4954)

Derived from the tenth canto of Dante Alighieri's *Purgatorio*, this painting depicts an encounter between a grief-stricken woman and the Roman Emperor Trajan as he leads his legions into battle. The woman implores the impatient Trajan to avenge the death of her son, invoking an ancient law that entitles her to the Emperor's immediate attention. Swayed by her plea, Trajan promises prompt retribution.

Eugène Delacroix's freely brushed and dynamic style captures the drama inherent in the woman's confrontation with Trajan. Close to the picture plane and compressed within the edges of the canvas, the chief protagonists and their bold gestures activate the energy of the scene, while theatrical lighting contributes to the excitement of the moment. With paintings such as this Delacroix led a departure from the austere and dispassionate rationalism of official academic practice toward a celebration of heightened emotions and personal expression. Known as Romanticism, this radical shift laid the groundwork for the Realist, Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, Neo-Impressionist, and Symbolist paintings on view in this gallery.

GUSTAVE COURBET

France, 1819–1877

Stream in the Jura Mountains (The Torrent), ca. 1872–73

Oil on canvas

Purchase, with funds derived from gifts of Mrs. Philip E. Spalding, Mrs. Clyde Doran, Renee Halbedl, Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Marcus, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred J. Ostheimer, by exchange; and with funds given in memory of William Hyde Rice, 1981 (4946.1)

Opposed to the classicism and literary conceits of early 19th-century art, Gustave Courbet pioneered the Realist movement in French painting. A view in the Jura Mountains on the border of France and Switzerland, this work depicts a fast-running stream and, in the distance, the waterfall that feeds it. Courbet was committed to capturing the appearance of the world around him, and he was deeply attuned to the palpability of matter; in his landscapes, he used color and impasto to replicate the tactility of the physical environment. Here, Courbet has applied paint thickly and vigorously: the rocks are scumbled and layered from the flat of his palette knife, while the foliage is loose and delicate from pigment flicked on with the knife's tip.

HENRI FANTIN-LATOIR

France, 1836–1904

***Vase of Peonies*, 1881**

Oil on canvas

Bequest of Kathryn and Arthur Murray, 1996
(8440.1)

The son of a classical draftsman, Henri Fantin-Latour trained at the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Paris and, as a student, copied the masterworks in the Louvre. But he also befriended the bohemian artists—among them Edouard Manet, Edgar Degas, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Paul Cézanne, and Camille Pissarro—who convened at the Café Guerbois in Paris to engage in lively and often heated discussions that gave impetus to Impressionism. In time, Fantin-Latour diverged from his academic training to work in a Realist mode tempered by Impressionism, creating the pictures of flowers and portraits of his artist friends for which he is best known. In *Vase of Peonies*, lush buds and blooms rendered in misty layers of pink and purple emerge glowing from the shadows of their dimly lit background. The diffused atmosphere and dreamy mood are characteristic of Fantin-Latour's work and brought him success in his time.

VINCENT VAN GOGH

Born Holland, active Holland and France,
1853–1890

***Wheat Field*, 1888**

Oil on canvas

Gift of Mrs. Richard A. Cooke and family in
memory of Richard A. Cooke, 1946 (377.1)

In February 1888, Vincent van Gogh moved from Paris to Arles, a small town on the Rhône River in the South of France. In Arles, all that had influenced him in Paris—Impressionism, Neo-Impressionism, and Japanese prints—coalesced into a mature style marked by energetic, relief-like impasto and riotous, ebullient color. *Wheat Field* belongs to the artist's "Harvest" series, a group of ten paintings from the last half of June 1888. Distinct horizontal compositional bands lead the eye from the sheaves in the foreground to the rows of wheat in the middle ground, to the trees and houses on the horizon and the sky above. Like his friend and fellow Post-Impressionist Paul Gauguin, van Gogh emphasized personal expression over material reality, and in doing so anticipated twentieth-century Modernism.

PAUL CÉZANNE

France, 1839–1906

Un Clos (A Thicket), ca. 1890

Oil on canvas

Purchase, Robert Allerton Fund and donations from Mr. and Mrs. Henry B. Clark, Jr. and Academy friends, 1980 (4845.1)

Paul Cézanne sought to delve beneath external appearances to express the essential order and stability of nature. In this painting of a thicket, he has deliberately composed his forms, building them into a structural whole by interweaving a limited palette—green, blue, violet, ochre, and tan—into a shimmering arrangement of parallel brushstrokes. Cézanne drew with color, creating movement and depth as tones advance and recede. Patches of blue sky are visible through the foliage, itself a magnificent web of interlocking triangles that further energize the composition. *Un Clos* brings the viewer into contact with the artist's mind, providing inspiration as well as instruction.

PAUL GAUGUIN

France, 1848–1903

Tahitians on the Riverbank

Oil on canvas

Private Collection (L39,172)

MAXIMILIEN LUCE

France, 1858–1941

***Grande Ville Industrielle*, 1899**

Oil on masonite

Gift of B. Gerald Cantor, 1970 (3692.1)