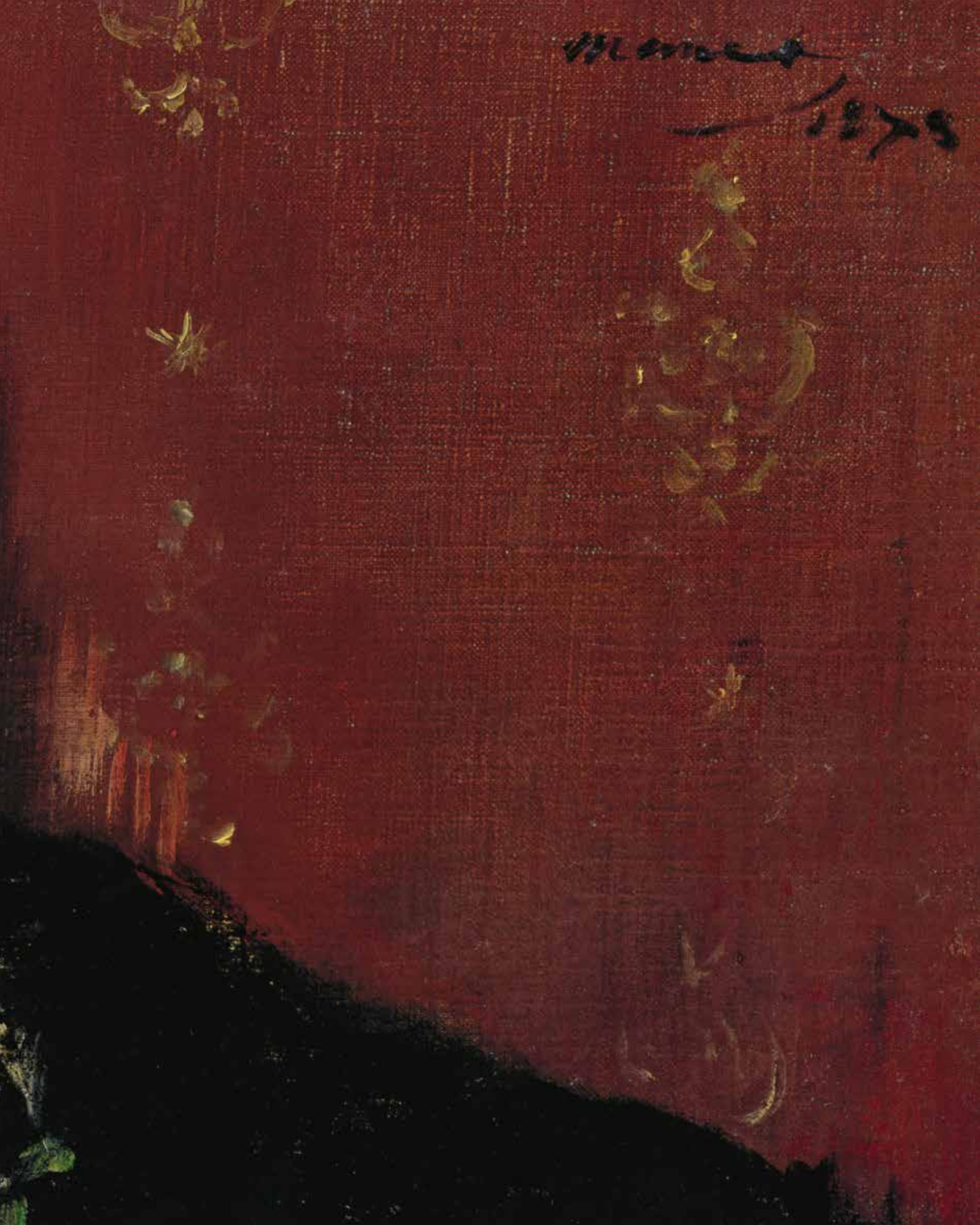
MUSEUM BARBERINI

POTSDAM




Manet
1879

With the generous support of
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The Impressionists

Monet, Morisot, Renoir, and Their Network

Exhibition and Catalog
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Foreword

How did the work of a small group of radical painters become the most popular movement in modern art? In the 1860s, Claude Monet, Berthe Morisot, and their Impressionist comrades-in-arms not only began exploring a new approach to light and color; they also formed a network of friends, supporters, and collectors who would carry their influence around the world. In the years that followed, their work was championed in reviews by the most important writers of the day. New groups of buyers resonated with the revolution in painting, and enterprising collectors began purchasing Impressionist art on a large scale. World's fairs and galleries in Paris, New York, and Berlin provided international exposure for the movement.

The exhibition *The Impressionists: Monet, Morisot, Renoir, and Their Network* traces the web of relationships that gave rise to the breakthrough of Impressionism. Presented on the tenth anniversary of the Museum Barberini, it tells the story of the movement in ten episodes based on ten paintings from the Hasso Plattner Collection.

In 2017 the Museum Barberini opened with the exhibition *Impressionism: The Art of Landscape*. Since 2020 the collection of museum founder Hasso Plattner—currently comprising 115 works of Impressionism and Neo-Impressionism—has been on permanent display, making the institution one of the major centers of nineteenth-century French landscape painting worldwide. Since then, over three million guests have visited the Museum Barberini. Numerous exhibitions have focused on the artists represented in the collection, including Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro, and Paul Signac. A series of shows documented the internationalization of Impressionism, exploring its reception in Russia, Holland, and Germany. Each exhibition was preceded by a scholarly symposium whose proceedings are published by the Museum Barberini. The twenty-second symposium, which took place on November 12, 2025, focused on this anniversary exhibition; the research results presented there now appear as essays in this catalog. For the exhibition, the team of the museum—Sterre Barentsen, Dorothee Entrup, Michael Philipp, and Nerina Santorius—embraced the collaborative spirit of Impressionism in their studies of ten paintings from the collection.

Today, friendship and trust still form the basis of collaboration. We are grateful to our lenders for generously supporting the exhibition with many important works of Impressionist art. Sterre Barentsen has composed these works into a show that explores the founding of this movement from new perspectives. For the first time, the exhibition also addresses the role of women

who supported Impressionism through the stories of collectors Bertha Palmer and Winnaretta Singer and curator Sara Tyson Hallowell.

Most of the ten episodes were developed from the provenances of the paintings. The show examines the people who painted the pictures, owned them, exhibited them, wrote about them, and identified with them. In recent years, provenance research has demonstrated the importance of studying the people involved with the works as well as the network of artists, collectors, and dealers. Though museums and galleries now devote considerable attention to provenance research, centralized research instruments for grasping and representing the complexity of this network are still lacking. In response, the Museum Barberini has created the digital platform Networks of Impressionism (networksofimpressionism.org) in collaboration with two other organizations of the Hasso Plattner Foundation, the Plattner Institute of Art and Navigating.art. Concurrently with the opening of the exhibition, the platform will be launched with stories using the data of the Hasso Plattner Collection. In the future, it will also be augmented by information from other museum collections. As a cooperative project of Impressionist collections worldwide, it offers a research tool that will be accessible to all friends of Impressionism. I am grateful to Linda Hacka for conceiving the online platform, to the Hasso Plattner Foundation for supporting the project, and to my colleagues Elizabeth Gorayeb, director of the Plattner Institute of Art, and Martin Lorenz, managing director of Navigating.art, for their collaborative effort, as well as to Jörg Schulze, for expanding the platform to include its engaging and educational modules.

How did the work of a small group of radical painters become the most popular movement in modern art? Our exhibition, presented to commemorate the first decade of the Museum Barberini, uses select examples to answer this question. But the Museum Barberini will continue to explore networks of Impressionism in the future as well: The paintings in the Hasso Plattner Collection have their counterparts in London, New York, and Paris as well as in Weimar, Hamburg, and Stuttgart, offering ideal connections and presenting any number of opportunities for future cooperation.

Ortrud Westheider
Director
Museum Barberini, Potsdam

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Lenders

Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
Georg Kolbe Museum, Berlin
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kunstbibliothek
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Nationalgalerie
Stiftung Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin
Kunsthalle Bremen
Archives Départementales de l'Essonne, Chamarande
Art Institute of Chicago
Cleveland Museum of Art
Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen
Ordrupgaard, Copenhagen
Denver Art Museum
Association des Amis du Petit Palais, Geneva
Osthaus Museum Hagen
Kunstmuseum Den Haag, The Hague
Hamburger Kunsthalle
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
National Gallery, London
Royal Academy of Arts, London
Victoria and Albert Museum, London
Kasser Mochary Collection
Musée Fabre, Montpellier
Bibliothek des Zentralinstituts für Kunstgeschichte, Munich
Brooklyn Museum, New York
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk
Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo
Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris
Collection Lucile Audouy, Paris
Fondation Singer-Polignac, Paris
Musée Carnavalet—Histoire de Paris
Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris
Musée national Picasso-Paris
Musée d'Orsay, Paris
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Staatsgalerie Stuttgart
National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo
Tokyo Fuji Art Museum
Palazzo Contarini Polignac, Venice
Belvedere, Vienna
National Gallery of Art, Washington
Klassik Stiftung Weimar, Museen
Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach
Clark Art Institute, Williamstown
Kunst Museum Winterthur
Kunsthaus Zürich

Private collection, Basel
Private collection, courtesy Alon Zakaim Fine Art, London
Private collection, Tel Aviv
Private collection, USA, courtesy Ward Moretti Ltd., London

and private collectors who wish to remain anonymous

Networks of Impressionism

Collaborative Artistic Practices

Ortrud Westheider

"In writing a history of the Impressionists," wrote ➤Théodore Duret, the art critic and champion of the movement, in his 1906 book *Manet and the French Impressionists,* "it is necessary continually to take account of the influence which they exerted upon one another and of their mutual indebtedness. Their ideas and their aims were the same; their development proceeded on parallel lines. . . . Each brought day by day his own particular contribution of knowledge to the common fund; each profited by what the other had discovered, but adapting and modifying it in accordance with his own temperament."[1]

The young progressive painters who in 1874 would become known as Impressionists first met in the early 1860s. They shared an enthusiasm for plein-air painting and sought out training and exhibition opportunities beyond the confines of the Academy and the Salon (see Renoir chapter, pp. 118–29).[2] In an age of social upheaval and rapid technical progress, their joint study of nature *sur le motif* gave rise to a stylistic resemblance that was perceived by contemporaries as a group style. This collaborative spirit also strengthened their numerous connections with role models, intellectuals, journalists, and collectors among the liberal bourgeoisie. In 1885 Duret used the term *avant-garde* to describe this united front of artists and supporters.[3] The following essay investigates the rise of this network of artist friendships and early patrons.[4] The model of social networks, developed in the context of twentieth-century sociology,[5] will here be applied to the interdisciplinary relationships between artists, writers, collectors, and dealers under the conditions of modernity. From the 1870s on, public awareness of their association with each other was manifested in the media as well as in institutional and social spaces. The term *avant-garde,* on the other hand, was a contemporary designation popularized by Duret to characterize both the Impressionists and their supporters. It already bears witness to their perception of themselves as a network.

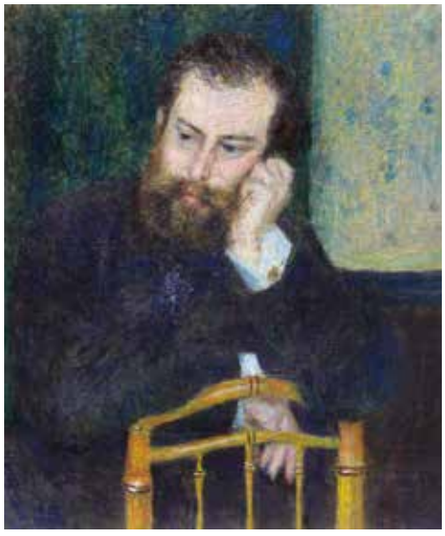
This investigation of the avant-garde network will revolve around the first group exhibition of 1874, where for the first time the Impressionists experimented with the idea of a jury-free exhibition that was self-financed and independent of state control.[6] The show will be described as the first producers' gallery, foregrounding its role as a precursor to the artists' cooperatives of the mid-twentieth century,[7] and the genesis of the exhibition will be examined in terms of the strategies for network development it reveals.



1
Frédéric Bazille,
Self-Portrait, 1865–66,
Art Institute of Chicago



2
Pierre-Auguste Renoir,
Claude Monet, 1875,
Musée d'Orsay, Paris



3
Pierre-Auguste Renoir,
Alfred Sisley, 1876,
Art Institute of Chicago



4
Frédéric Bazille,
Pierre-Auguste Renoir, 1867,
Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Painting Together Outdoors: The Rise of a Group Style

In 1862 four students met in the studio of Swiss history painter ➤Charles Gleyre: ➤Frédéric Bazille, ➤Claude Monet, ➤Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and ➤Alfred Sisley (figs. 1–4). Gleyre's studio was one of the few *ateliers libres* in Paris.[8] With the exception of Renoir, these aspiring painters all came from middle-class families and had asserted their desire to pursue an artistic career against the will of their parents. Only Renoir contributed to his own livelihood early on; the others were still supported by their families. Their regular table at the brasserie La Closerie des Lilas became their first think tank.[9]

The painting students sought contact with the artists of the Barbizon School, the first landscape painters to enjoy success in France,[10] and organized joint painting excursions in the Forest of Fontainebleau (cats. 3, 4, 5, 14). Monet remained in touch with his teacher, Eugène Boudin, who had instructed him in plein-air painting in Le Havre. In 1859 Boudin had also introduced Monet to one of the most important Realist painters, Gustave Courbet, who had presented his work in a pavilion of his own at the 1855 Exposition Universelle in Paris—an example that suggested the idea of independently organized exhibitions. The materiality of Courbet's paint, applied with a palette knife, showed the younger artists how to position themselves against the polished academic style.[11] Monet took Bazille with him to Le Havre and Honfleur, a hub for the circle around Boudin and Johan Barthold Jongkind. Bazille also went with Renoir to Chailly, a large town north of the village of Barbizon in the Forest of Fontainebleau. During Easter 1863, they shared accommodations at the hotel Au Cheval Blanc in Chailly during a painting excursion together. In 1865 Renoir organized a trip down the Seine all the way to Le Havre for his fellow students Sisley and Bazille. When Sisley became a father, Monet took his place as Renoir's primary partner for plein-air study on the Seine and in the suburbs of Paris.

These excursions in varying groupings gave rise to a collective style: a sketch-like approach to painting that responded to specific, changing conditions of light as well as a standard format that was still manageable outdoors but was larger and more ambitious than the oil sketches artists typically produced in the open air. The new aesthetic was indebted to the present moment and characterized by a new way of immersing oneself in nature.[12]

Five years after beginning their studies, the alumni of Gleyre's studio felt compelled to adopt a cooperative approach to career-building as well, since they had little success as individuals. In his letters to Bazille, Monet repeatedly described his precarious financial circumstances and the lack of public interest in his work.[13] The others had a similar experience, and this lack of an audience served as an incentive for the group.

Bazille, who came from a wealthy family, provided his friends with financial assistance and from 1864 onward, over the course of several years, shared various studios with Renoir (cat. 8). He was friends with ➤Édouard Manet, an older artist whose painting *Luncheon on the Grass* (1863, Musée d'Orsay, Paris) had caused a scandal at the Salon des Refusés in 1863. Manet made a lasting impression on the younger artists,[14] and his circle in the Batignolles quarter was important for cultivating contacts. But Bazille's primary concern was to strengthen his own group. When he introduced ➤Camille Pissarro and ➤Paul Cézanne to his friends, he reportedly said, "I've brought you two fine recruits!"[15]

In 1870—the first year of the Franco-Prussian War, a conflict that would cost Bazille his life in November—the artist painted his friends in his studio (fig. 5). It was located near the Gare Saint-Lazare in a district that had been modernized by Baron Haussmann. The painting shows the artist working at his easel, palette in hand, in front of a four-meter-high window looking out onto the Rue de Rome. Facing Bazille is his role model Manet, while his best friend, musician Edmond Maître, is seated at the piano.[16] The other artists depicted in the studio have been variously identified: Some interpret the man to the left of Manet as writer, painter, and journalist Zacharie Astruc, and the other two figures on the far left as Sisley, seated on the corner of the table, and Monet, standing on the stairs.[17] Another reading identifies the artist to the left of Manet as Monet, with writer ➤Émile Zola on the stairs speaking with Renoir, who is seated on the edge of the table.[18] Whichever interpretation is correct, the painting certainly depicts a gathering of painters who knew each other from the school of Gleyre and who had encountered their role model Manet in Bazille's studio, along with a writer and musician—a constellation characteristic of the Impressionist network.

Bazille's studio picture shows a group of artists among works of art that had been rejected from the Salon: Above the sofa is Bazille's unframed painting *La Toilette* (1870, Musée Fabre, Montpellier), while his *Fisherman with a Net* hangs at the upper left (1868, Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck). Like Bazille, the

others, too, had failed to find Salon acceptance for their large-scale figural images, often painted *en plein air.* Emperor Napoleon III had even organized a salon for the rejected works in 1863, the aforementioned Salon des Refusés, an exhibition that garnered the artists not only scandal, scorn, and mockery but also their first audience.[19] The still life above the piano, a work Bazille had acquired from Monet, also documents the friends' activity as each other's first collectors. They would continue to offer financial support to one another for years to come, in varying amounts according to their ability.[20]

Henri Fantin-Latour's painting *A Studio in the Batignolles Quarter,* created the same year as Bazille's group picture, also shows the friends at the beginning of their careers (fig. 6). The work portrays the circle from the Café Guerbois near Manet's studio in the Batignolles district.[21] Manet is shown painting a portrait of Astruc; behind them to the left is German painter Otto Scholderer, followed by Renoir, Zola, Maître, Bazille, and Monet.[22] Nicknames such as "Le Groupe des Batignolles" or "L'École des Batignolles" were already used for the group at the time. Not represented, however, are Cézanne, ➤Edgar Degas, and novelist and art critic ➤Edmond Duranty; their absence indicates that the work was not intended as a formal portrait of the group. By the time the painting was created, the decision to organize an independent group exhibition had already been made.[23]

Believers and Mentors: Points of Entry on the Rue Laffitte

Before establishing their exhibition society, the artists' first supporters were colormen. Although the assistance was modest, the relationships that resulted from this ongoing exchange often developed into friendships. The paint and frame shops were located on the Rue Laffitte in a district that had been modernized under Haussmann; a little later, the art dealers important for Impressionism would also establish themselves here, along with the Drouot auction house. The colormen gave advances to the young artists, provided financial guarantees on the artists' behalf, and allowed them to display their work in their shop windows.

The paint shop of Julien Tanguy was a gathering place for the artists. Tanguy, one of the first dealers to buy and show Cézanne's work, maintained a small gallery in a back room of his shop and repeatedly bought works from the artists.[24] Landscape painter and pigment dealer Louis Latouche also began selling their art and showed works by Monet in the window of his shop on the Rue Laffitte. Latouche befriended Pissarro and took part in the first group exhibition, as well as in shared painting excursions from the seaside resort of

Berck on the English Channel. The shop of Alfred Cadart also served as a launching pad for the new art (fig. 7): As a printmaker and founder of the Société des Aquafortistes, he was instrumental in popularizing reproductions of paintings by Manet and Courbet. Later, Monet too would take advantage of this possibility and use reproductions to introduce his painting to a broader audience.[25]

Another member of the Café Guerbois circle was photographer, caricaturist, and poet Étienne Carjat.[26] His portraits of the artists, published in magazines, contributed early on to the visibility of the group. Carjat photographed Bazille, Degas, Fantin-Latour, Manet, Monet, and Renoir, as well as members of their wider intellectual circle including Baudelaire, ➤Stéphane Mallarmé, and Zola. His photography studio, also located on the Rue Laffitte, likewise served as a meeting place for avant-garde artists, who integrated reproductions into their marketing strategy and disseminated photographs of their paintings as their fame increased.

Trauma and New Beginnings: The Return After the War

The Franco-Prussian War tore apart the circle of friends and put their newly formed relationships to the test.[27] In 1870 and 1871, France suffered numerous defeats at the hands of its eastern neighbor, Prussia, a new economic power. The traumatic experiences of the siege of Paris, the proclamation of the German emperor in Versailles, and the revolt of the Communards in Paris had a lasting impact on the Third Republic. The mixture, even among artists, of Republican sensibilities and patriotism, of pacifism and romanticized militarism, of sympathy with the proletariat and personal connections to Communards and members of the government also posed challenges for the Batignolles group. But even in the conservative and restorationist atmosphere of the postwar period, the friends from Gleyre's studio made efforts to resume their painting and advocate for the new art in the same place where the war had separated them.[28] They reconvened in the Paris suburbs of Argenteuil, Louveciennes, and Pontoise, as well as later in the Café Guerbois, and established a new gathering place at the Café de la Nouvelle Athènes.

Manet had lost his studio in Paris, and when Pissarro returned to his home in Louveciennes, he found it devastated by invading Prussian troops. Sisley lost the early works in his studio in Bougival and became impoverished when his parents' firm went bankrupt due to the war. The ravages of the conflict made a return to painting in nature an act of renewal, and after 1871 plein-air painting also emerged as a political symbol of freedom and reconstruction.[29]



5
Frédéric Bazille,
Bazille's Studio, 1870,
Musée d'Orsay, Paris



6
Henri Fantin-Latour,
A Studio in the Batignolles Quarter, 1870,
Musée d'Orsay, Paris



7
Pierre-Georges Jeanniot,
Cadart's Shop Window, 1879



8
Ernest Meissonier,
The Ruins of the Tuileries, ca. 1871,
Musée d'Orsay, Paris



9
Claude Monet,
The Tuileries, 1876,
Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris



10
Claude Monet,
Boulevard des Capucines, 1873–74,
Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City

The group countered the pathos of heroism with the optimism of new beginnings. A picture by history painter Ernest Meissonier from around 1871 shows the ruins of the royal Palais des Tuileries, which was located near the Louvre and had been burned by the Communards. Meissonier chose a view through the former ballroom toward the Arc de Triomphe du Caroussel (fig. 8). The quadriga of Victory points away from the viewer and toward the Louvre; Meissonier reinterprets the allegorical figure as one that is turned away in defeat.[30] While Meissonier's image of the ruins laments the loss of the monarchy, Monet's scene from five years later (fig. 9) seems to bear no trace of the recent conflict. Monet painted the garden of the Tuileries from the apartment of customs officer and collector Victor Chocquet on the Rue de Rivoli. To the left, he omitted the ruins of the royal palace, which still stood until 1883, and included only the unscathed Louvre in the composition. To the right, he ignored the Arc de Triomphe du Caroussel erected by Napoleon I in the early nineteenth century. Instead, he showed the corridor between these monuments of the past, seeking a new beginning in the sunlit gardens on the banks of the Seine. By cropping the image in this way, he allowed himself a subjective view, revealing the role his own observation and perception played in his art.

The experience of the war gave rise to a new feeling of community—a generation that perceived itself as having been forced to start over. When Bazille died, the artists lost their first networker. From that point on, the cooperative thinking of the group was shaped by Pissarro, who identified with the socialist ideas of the Commune.[31] The new beginning also brought the first woman artist into their circle: ➤Berthe Morisot, whose portrait had been painted by Manet numerous times (cats. 23, 24, 25). Like Pissarro, she was a pupil of Camille Corot. Unlike many other European and American women painters of her generation, she did not confine herself to interiors and portraits. After 1871 she, too, continued the project her artist friends had begun before the war with figure studies executed *en plein air*.[32]

The caesura of the war was a setback for the artists, but it also brought them experiences that would accelerate developments after the conflict. During their exile in London, Monet and Pissarro had met art dealer ➤Paul Durand-Ruel, whose parents had owned an art supply shop. Now, in his gallery on New Bond Street in London, he represented painters of the Barbizon School. For Pissarro, the London years were decisive: It was there that the group came to see they needed a public of their own—free and independent of the official Salon. The private market system was based on speculative buying. In postwar Paris, Durand-Ruel transformed the role of the dealer from that of a supplier into that of an art entrepreneur and venture investor. Between 1871 and 1875, he bought

hundreds of pictures by Monet, Pissarro, Renoir, and Sisley, often without any initial expectation of profit. In the 1880s, Durand-Ruel presented the Impressionists in solo exhibitions and in 1886 took a show of three hundred paintings to New York. In 1887 he opened a branch there, where his sons sold Impressionist paintings in America on a grand scale (see Palmer chapter, pp. 216–31, and art market chapter, pp. 266–77).

Producers' Gallery and Independent Journalistic Arena: The Exhibition of 1874

The first group exhibition organized by the artists themselves made Impressionism a modern movement in terms of both aesthetics and organization: This initial short-term producers' gallery gave birth to a republican form of art business.[33] In December 1873, the artists founded the Société Anonyme Coopérative des Artistes Peintres, Sculpteurs, Graveurs, etc. (Joint Stock Company of Artists Painters, Sculptors, Engravers, etc.), a cross between a corporation and a cooperative association, and entered it in the commercial register. The partners were not personally liable; they were only accountable for their share. Members had one vote each, regardless of the size of their capital contribution. In the wake of the social upheaval of the war and the Commune, a new law had been passed, paving the way for such cooperatives, and associations of workers and bakers had already been formed on the basis of this model.[34] Not all of the twenty-two shareholders were plein-air painters like the initiators Monet, Renoir, Sisley, Pissarro, and Édouard Béliard; many had been solicited by Degas simply to pull together the necessary capital. All, however, endorsed the articles of association, which specified that the exhibition would proceed without jury and prizes, facilitating direct interaction between the artists and the public for the first time.[35] The friends from Gleyre's studio were represented at every level of the organizational structure: Monet was a member of the management board, and Renoir oversaw the hanging committee.[36] Meanwhile, Pissarro served as chairman. The artists from Degas's circle gave the overall exhibition a somewhat eclectic character; but given their association with sophisticated Parisian circles, the young painters were willing to include them in order to obtain the greatest possible acceptance.

The choice of exhibition venue likewise reflected the desire for visibility and recognition. The shareholders rented the former photography studio of ➤Nadar on the Boulevard des Capucines, which had served as a gathering place for the progressive Parisian bourgeoisie since the 1850s. The photographer was a regular at the Café Guerbois, where Degas asked him for a floor

plan of the premises and probably negotiated the contract.[37] A short time before, Nadar had moved his studio to a different location for financial reasons, so as to be able to rent out his space in the elegant Paris Opera district for profit. With its large windows and façade boasting one of the first gas-illuminated signs, the architecture of the building exuded modernity.[38] In 1867 Nadar had flown a hot-air balloon over the grounds of the world exposition, taking aerial photographs that remained as permanent records of the event, though he himself was not one of the official exhibitors. The spirit of the place thus mirrored the ambitions of the Société Anonyme.

Nadar installed an elevator to provide access to the two upper floors where his premises were located, and the artists added a turnstile at the entrance to collect the admission fee of one franc—a modern form of visitor management they had copied from the Salon. The floors of the gallery were covered in the new material of linoleum, while the glass ceiling overhead inspired descriptions of the place as a crystal palace, alluding to the architecture of the world's fair.[39] In the rooms themselves, which seemed private compared to the Salon, the artists covered the walls with brown-red fabric, while artificial illumination enabled them to keep the exhibition open until ten o'clock in the evening.[40]

Shortly after the venue was found and still during the winter, Monet painted the view from the exhibition spaces. His painting captures the impression of carriages driving past and people hurrying along the boulevard (fig. 10). The trees in the middle ground seem delicate and transparent and allow the urban space to breathe. The blue in the background evokes a serene atmosphere, which Monet may have associated with this moment of new beginning.

Morisot and her male colleagues immediately engaged their collectors, requesting loans to showcase their already established circle of supporters.[41] Of the 165 exhibited works, 15 were loans, with the owners mentioned by name in the catalog. In addition to artists Manet and Henri Rouart, lenders included friends such as physician Paul-Ferdinand Gachet, as well as Durand-Ruel and his best customer, bass baritone ➤Jean-Baptiste Faure (see art market chapter, pp. 266–77).[42]

Numerous announcements of the exhibition were already published during the four-month preparation period.[43] Among the exhibitors was Astruc, who had been a friend of Monet's since 1860 (fig. 11). As a member of the circle around Manet at the Café Guerbois and the Café de la Nouvelle Athènes, he forged a connection with journalists Philippe Burty, Edmond Duranty, and Armand Silvestre, who did the preliminary reporting and launched the publicity.[44] Critics such as Burty, Jules-Antoine Castagnary, Ernest Chesneau, and Zola

had already mentioned the artists in their Salon reviews prior to the war. The successful reestablishment of the artistic and literary network in the cafés within a very short time following the war was due in large measure to the participation of highly influential critics. In nineteenth-century France, Salon reviews were considered a literary genre and were written almost exclusively by authors such as Charles Baudelaire and Théophile Gautier, and later Zola, Duranty, Duret, and Burty. The Salon was not merely an exhibition; it was a social event that was reported on in the culture pages, where the writers enjoyed interpretive authority. In 1874 anyone who had been excluded from the official Salon—like most of the participants in the group exhibition—still had no way of reaching the public. The painters thus had to create a public relations arena of their own, soliciting writers to provide them with a vocabulary and exposure in the media.

Due to the close personal relationships between the exhibitors and the journalists, their articles constitute an important source. An announcement by Silvestre, for example, reveals that the exhibition opening was scheduled for April 15 not merely to secure the attention of the press before the start of the official Salon but also to avoid the impression that the show was merely a catchall for works rejected from the Salon.[45] Silvestre, Burty, and Zola were concerned that the exhibition would not be interpreted as a protest against the official Salon, in order to keep the focus exclusively on the art. In the spirit of the articles of association, they praised the exhibition as a form of presentation in which participants could interact directly with the public without the need for middlemen such as art dealers or juries.[46]

Although the exhibition catalog called the artists by the neutral name "Société Anonyme," critics accused them of having an agenda. Five reviews referred to the plein-air painters around Monet as *intransigeants*, or "intransigents"[47]—a word that also raised suspicions of a political agenda. This may have been prompted by the plein-air style and its origin in the Realism of Courbet, who was a Communard, as well as by the presence of former members of the Commune among the exhibitors.[48] In this context, the term *political* had a double connotation, suggesting not only progressive social engagement but also disingenuous action.[49]

Monet's *Impression, Sunrise* (fig. p. 39)—one of the few paintings in the exhibition to immediately find a buyer in collector and later art critic ➤Ernest Hoschedé (see Hoschedé chapter, pp. 144–57)—showed that the artists identified with the term *impression*; their christening as "Impressionists," therefore, may not have been the result of a critic's insult.[50] But that name was preceded by other labels: Soon after the opening, just as the artists had feared, the show was



11
Édouard Manet,
Portrait of Poet Zacharie Astruc, 1866,
Kunsthalle Bremen



12
Pierre-Auguste Renoir,
Madame Georges Charpentier [Marguérite Charpentier] *and Her Children, Georgette-Berthe and Paul-Émile-Charles,* 1878,
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

called an "exhibition of the voluntary *refusés* [rejected]." When a commentary of April 21 described it as a "dissident exhibition" and an "exhibition of *révoltés* [rebels]," Silvestre wasted no time in publishing a refutation the next day. On April 29, he was seconded by critic Émile Cardon, who had been writing Salon reviews since 1861.[51] In his article, Cardon emphasized the independence of the artists and the freedom of their entrepreneurial spirit and explained the meaning of "free exhibition" in accord with the artists' own views.[52]

Despite some hostile responses, many critics greeted the new painting with open arms. Silvestre asserted that while at first only painters would be able to appreciate the style, it would likely gain in influence when the public learned to value its "singularly cheerful tones."[53]

Expanding the Network: The Success of the First Group Exhibition

In the four weeks between April 15 and May 15, the exhibition was attended by around 3,500 visitors. Sales too were modest.[54] Many artists were left with the impression that cooperative exhibitions were no substitute for participation in the official Salon. Following Manet's example, they once again began submitting their works to the annual exhibitions of the Academy,[55] and the Société was liquidated in December 1874.

The seven other group shows that were to follow between 1876 and 1886 resulted primarily from the new contacts established through the first exhibition.[56] Along with collectors and writers,[57] it was above all ➤Gustave Caillebotte, a new friend in the circle, who played a decisive role. Caillebotte had become aware of the group through the first exhibition. The son of a wealthy textile merchant, he had decided against joining the family business after the war and had instead begun studying painting at the École des Beaux-Arts.[58] In 1874 another floor was added onto his parents' home on the Rue de Lisbonne, where the aspiring painter set up an atelier. His neighbor Henri Rouart exhibited at Nadar's studio and introduced Caillebotte to the Impressionist group.[59] Not only did Caillebotte join their circle as an artist; he also made a financial and organizational contribution to the exhibitions that followed. He hosted weekly gatherings in Paris, where they discussed future group exhibitions.[60] And like Bazille before him, he also purchased several paintings from his artist friends.

The growing interest in Impressionist art generated by the first exhibition manifested itself the following year at an auction at the Hôtel Drouot organized by Renoir, Morisot, Monet, and Sisley. There, new collectors such as Victor Chocquet and publisher Georges Charpentier appeared for the first time, figures who would become important patrons of Impressionism.

For Renoir, these encounters resulted in numerous portrait commissions, which enabled him to introduce his circle of friends to new collectors. Charpentier was the publisher of Zola, Gustave Flaubert, Guy de Maupassant, and Joris-Karl Huysmans. The salon of Marguerite Charpentier soon brought the artists into contact with politicians such as Léon Gambetta and ➤Georges Clemenceau, composers Emmanuel Chabrier and Camille Saint-Saëns, and stage actors including Yvette Guilbert, Jeanne Samary, and Sarah Bernhardt. In 1878 the Charpentiers, who acquired Monet's painting *The Port of Le Havre, Night Effect* (1872, Hasso Plattner Collection, Museum Barberini, Potsdam)—the pendant to *Impression, Sunrise*—commissioned Renoir to paint a large-scale portrait of Marguerite Charpentier and her children (fig. 12). The following year, they founded the journal *La Vie moderne* and began mounting Impressionist exhibitions in their editorial offices. In 1885 Théodore Duret's *Critique d'avant-garde* was issued by their publishing house. The expansion of the network of artists into the sphere of journalism and high society was a result of the first group exhibition. From then on, the Impressionists were not simply seismographers of modernity; through their collaborative efforts to gain visibility for their art, they themselves became part of the *vie moderne*.

Translated from German by Melissa M. Thorson

1 Théodore Duret, *Manet and the French Impressionists: Pissarro, Claude Monet, Sisley, Renoir, Berthe Morisot, Cézanne, Guillaumin* [1906], trans. J. E. Crawford Flitch, London and Philadelphia 1910, 129.

2 Cynthia A. White and Harrison C. White were the first to describe the emergence of the group in the context of the declining significance of the Salon and the rise of the dealer-critic system; see White/White 1993.

3 Théodore Duret, *Critique d'avant-garde,* Paris 1885.

4 Michael P. Farrell was the first to study the collaborative character of the group; see Farrell 2001, 5. On the artists' initial meeting, see Peter Kropmanns, "Renoir's Friendships with Fellow Artists—Bazille, Monet, Sisley," in Basel 2012, 237–54, here 238–42.

5 On the concept of the social network and its establishment in sociology, see Stanley Wasserman and Katherine Faust, *Social Network Analysis: Methods and Applications,* Cambridge, UK, 1994.

6 To mark the 150th anniversary of the first Impressionist exhibition in 2024, the Musée d'Orsay presented *Paris 1874: Inventing Impressionism* with catalog essays that reflect the current state of research; see Paris 2024a.

7 See Petra Lange-Berndt and Isabelle Lindermann, "Kollektive Energien in der Kunst: 1968 bis heute," in Lange-Berndt and Lindermann, *Dreizehn Beiträge zu 1968: Von künstlerischen Praktiken und vertrackten Utopien,* Bielefeld 2022, 7–25.

8 In *ateliers libres* the artists were not required to pay tuition but only to contribute toward rent and model fees.

9 See Farrell 2001, 31.

10 The term *Barbizon School* comes from the late nineteenth century; in their own day, the group was known as the "Belle École de 1830" or "École naturaliste." Works by its members had already been acquired by Emperor Napoleon III, who also designated the Forest of Fontainebleau as a nature reserve at the artists' request. Durand-Ruel began selling their paintings, as did the galleries of Bernheim-Jeune and Goupil; see Paris 2014.

11 See Callen 2000.

12 See Mary Morton and Ann Hoenigswald, "Plein-Air Painting," in Paris 2024a, 174–81, here 175.

13 Letters from Claude Monet to Frédéric Bazille, in Wildenstein 1974–91, vol. 1, esp. letters from 1867, 423–24.

14 In 1890 Monet solicited contributions from his wealthy collectors for the donation of a painting by Manet to the French State in order to secure a place for him in the museum.

15 Vollard 1925, 36.

16 His portrait was painted by both Bazille (*Edmond Maître,* 1869, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC) and Renoir (*Portrait of Edmond Maître: The Reader,* 1871, private collection).

17 See Moreau-Nélaton 1926, 116.

18 See Gaston Poulain, "Chronique Artistique: Un peintre méconnu; Frédéric Bazille," in *L'Eclair du Midi* (November 1, 1926), 2; Poulain 1932, 179–80.

19 See Juliet Wilson-Bareau, "The Salon des Refusés of 1863: A New View," in *The Burlington Magazine* 149,1250 (May 2007), 309–19.

20 Like Bazille, Manet also bought pictures from his painter friends, as did Caillebotte beginning in the 1880s. In the 1890s, Monet would lend Pissarro money for the purchase of his home in Éragny-sur-Epte; see Potsdam 2025, 26.

21 See Raymond Cogniat, *Sisley,* New York 1978, 37.

22 See Bremen 2021.

23 See Kropmanns 2012 (see note 4), 246.

24 See Hans Weevers, "Impressionism: Partaker of the First 'Impressionist' Exposition in 1874—Louis Latouche (1829–1883): Dealer, Collector and Landscapist," https://www.impressionism.nl/latouche-louis/ (accessed on August 24, 2025).

25 Monet commissioned lithographs of his paintings from French painter and graphic artist Georges William Thornley.

26 His review of the 1874 exhibition was reserved; see Catherine Méneux, "The New Painting: A Mixed Critical Response," in Paris 2024a, 208–13, here 212.

27 Renoir and Bazille were conscripted, while Monet and Pissarro fled into exile in London. In November 1870, Bazille was among the eight thousand French soldiers killed in the battle of Beaune-la-Rolande.

28 See Kimberly Jones, "Artists in the Shadow of the *Année Terrible,*" in Paris 2024a, 56–61.

29 See Morton/Hoenigswald 2024 (see note 12), 174–81.

30 Michael F. Zimmermann, "Naturalismus unter dem Eiffelturm: Die Kunst auf der Weltausstellung von 1889," in *Frankreich 1871–1914: Die Dritte Republik und die Französische Revolution,* ed. Gudrun Gersmann and Hubertus Kohle, Stuttgart 2002, 148–75.

31 See Callen 2000, 11.

32 See Washington 1987; Delafond/Sainsaulieu 1993.

33 See André Dombrowski, "Incorporating Impressionism: The *Société anonyme* and the First Impressionist Exhibition in 1874," in Dombrowski 2021a, 393–413.

34 See Callen 2000, 11.

35 See Catherine Méneux, "The Founding of the Cooperative Society," in Paris 2024a, 100–07; see also Paul Tucker, "The First Impressionist Exhibition in Context," in San Francisco 1986, 93–117; and Dombrowski 2021a, 393–413.

[36] See Anne Robbins, "Organizing, Promoting, and Hanging the First Impressionist Exhibition," in Paris 2024a, 134–39.

[37] See Hubert Naudeix, Sylvie Patry, and Anne Robbins, "In Nadar's Studio," in Paris 2024a, 62–63, here 62.

[38] See ibid.

[39] It was cooled with water in the summer and heated by radiator in the winter; see ibid.

[40] See Sylvie Aubenas, "Boulevard des Capucines: La gloire de l'Empire," in *Gustave Le Gray, 1820–1884,* exh. cat., Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris 2002, 87–155.

[41] The same approach is documented for Monet's joint exhibition with ➤Auguste Rodin at the gallery of Georges Petit in 1889. The majority of the 150 works by Monet were loans, augmented by paintings from his most recent production. Only a third of the exhibited pieces were for sale.

[42] See Léa Saint-Raymond, "The Exhibition of 1874: A Commercial Failure?," in Paris 2024a, 220–24, here 223.

[43] See Robbins 2024 (see note 36), 139.

[44] See Anne Robbins, "1874: An Impressionist Exhibition, or an 'Eclectic' One?," in Paris 2024a, 109.

[45] See Robbins 2024 (see note 36), 135.

[46] See Méneux 2024 (see note 26), 211.

[47] See Ernest Chesneau, "Au Salon: Avertissement préalable," in *Paris-Journal* (May 9, 1874) and *Le Soir* (May 9, 1874); reprinted in Berson 1996, vol. 1, 19.

[48] See Méneux 2024 (see note 35), 102.

[49] See Martin Papenheim, "'En ce monde chacun a sa politique': Aspekte einer Begriffsgeschichte von 'politique' in Frankreich vom 16. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert," in *Politik: Situationen eines Wortgebrauchs im Europa der Neuzeit,* ed. Willibald Steinmetz, Historische Politikforschung 14, Frankfurt am Main 2007, 162–205, here 174.

[50] As Sylvie Patry has recently demonstrated, the term *Impressionism* originated in the artists' own journalistic milieu and was not the invention of Louis Leroy in the satire magazine *Le Charivari;* see Patry, "'Impressionist,' Impressions," in Paris 2024a, 192–95.

[51] Ibid., 193; see also Émile Cardon, "Avant le Salon: L'Exposition des révoltés," in *La Presse* (April 29, 1874).

[52] Terminology suggestive of a marginal group, however, persisted into the year 1880, when Albert Wolff, a German-born critic and devotee of Meissonier, wrote in the newspaper *Le Figaro,* "Alongside a few very interesting sketches, one sees only canvases utterly lacking in value, works by madmen who mistake pebbles for precious stones. I make an exception for M. Degas and Mme Berthe Morisot. Nothing else is worth the trouble of seeing, much less discussing," in Albert Wolff, "Beaux-Arts: Les Impressionnistes," in *Le Figaro* (April 9, 1880), 1. Critics largely ignored the participation of a second woman artist besides Berthe Morisot, the Comtesse de Luchaire, whose work was discussed only by the sole female reviewer of the exhibition. Marie-Amélie Chartroule had been writing Salon reviews since the 1860s under the pseudonym Marc de Montifaud; see de Montifaud, "Exposition du boulevard des Capucines," in *L'Artiste* (May 1, 1874).

[53] See Catherine Méneux, "Defining a New Aesthetic," in Paris 2024a, 214–15, here 215.

[54] See Saint-Raymond 2024 (see note 42), 223.

[55] See ibid., 224.

[56] "You have succeeded after quite a long time in acquiring a public of select and tasteful art lovers." Letter from Théodore Duret to Camille Pissarro (July 2, 1874); see ibid.

[57] The first art-historical assessment of the movement, the book *La Nouvelle Peinture* by Edmond Duranty, was published in connection with the second exhibition in 1876. In it, Duranty traced Impressionism back to the tradition of the English landscape painting of John Constable. In 1878 Théodore Duret published *Les Peintres impressionnistes* with chapters on Claude Monet, Alfred Sisley, Camille Pissarro, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and Berthe Morisot.

[58] See "Biografie: Gustave Caillebotte—Ein Humanist, fasziniert vom Wasser," in Bremen 2008, 134–37, here 134.

[59] Edgar Degas portrayed the industrial heir with train tracks and billowing smokestacks in the background; see *Henri Rouart in Front of His Factory* (ca. 1875, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh).

[60] See Bremen 2008, 135.

Trading Strategies

Networks, Markets, Marketing

Sylvie Patry

At an auction in New York on May 14, 2019, ➤Claude Monet's *Grainstacks* (cat. 48) was the first Impressionist painting to surpass the 100-million-dollar mark; in 1986 it had sold for 2.5 million dollars.[1] Today it is one of the prized possessions of the Hasso Plattner Collection at the Museum Barberini. Record-setting prices of this kind help strengthen the association between Impressionism and the art market in the public's mind, especially given the highly publicized acquisitions of major international collectors such as Dillon, Goulandris, Mellon, Niarchos, Onassis, and Rockefeller in the 1960s, which led to a "glamorization"[2] of Impressionist painting and made it a symbol of prestige and social success. Within this context, Harrison C. White and Cynthia A. White's groundbreaking study *Canvases and Careers,* published in 1965, proposed a new understanding of Impressionism, placing the emergence of the movement in close relation to the development of the modern art market.[3] According to them, in the 1870s the "academic system" organized around the Salon was gradually replaced by a "dealer-critic system" based on the cooperation of dealers, critics, the press, and collectors. The value of a work now depended less on the institutions than on the ability to promote artists, establish their reputations, and generate curiosity. Although recent scholarship has qualified this interpretation, it continues to play an essential role in our understanding of networks in the rise of Impressionism. The artists relied on a range of figures—writers, musicians, critics, dealers, collectors, and art lovers—who helped disseminate their works and build their reputations. These complex, evolving relationships—the subject of numerous studies that have shed important new light on the field[4]—will be examined in this essay using four examples.

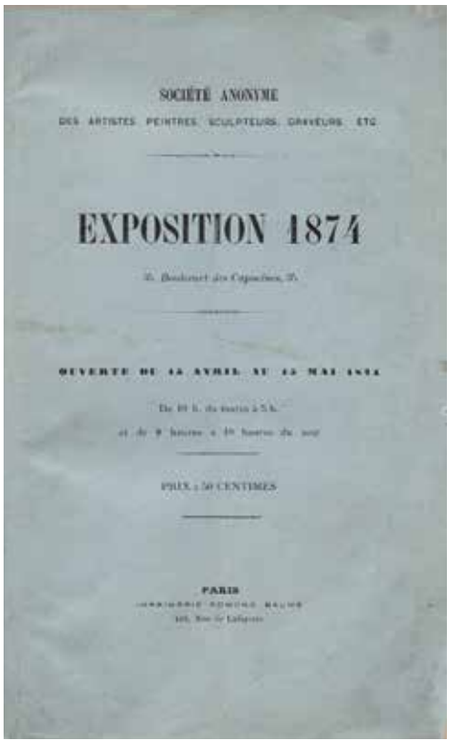
"Come In! Take a Look! And Buy Something If You Like!":[5] The First Impressionist Exhibition of 1874 as a Commercial Project

The birth of Impressionism is generally dated to the first exhibition organized by a group of artists in the spring of 1874 in Paris, along with the critical response it received. The collective concept of the exhibition exemplifies the notion of "art worlds" developed by Howard Becker:[6] In 1874 the production, dissemination, and reception of works of art resulted from the joint action of painters, critics, and collectors within a market context. Though often presented as the founding act of an aesthetic revolution, the exhibition was conceived above all as a commercial enterprise. The thirty-one participants—including still-famous artists such as ➤Paul Cézanne, ➤Edgar Degas, Claude Monet, ➤Berthe Morisot, ➤Camille Pissarro, ➤Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and ➤Alfred Sisley—were painters, sculptors, and printmakers who had formed the Société

Anonyme des Artistes to sell their works and liberate themselves from the dictates of the Salon.[7] A number of them had been rejected by the Salon jury toward the end of the 1860s and afterward, revealing the limits of its conservative and arbitrary system, especially in 1867. Delayed first by the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71 and then by the Paris Commune, the project was finally realized in late 1873 as a cooperative venture open to anyone who could pay the dues of sixty francs, regardless of artistic style.[8] The exhibition was not a forum for a preexisting avant-garde with shared ideals but rather an attempt to establish an alternative system. It was based on a simple business model in which organizational costs were covered by participants' dues, admission fees, catalog sales, and a ten-percent commission for each work sold.[9] Since the only requirement for participation was payment of membership dues, the event was as multidisciplinary as it was eclectic. Of the almost two hundred works shown, around a hundred were offered for sale, as indicated by the prices written in the annotated catalog of 1874 (fig. 1). The venture ended in financial failure: The society was dissolved by the end of the year, with members shouldering a deficit three times the size of their initial investment.[10]

Only four works were purchased. None of them were the most ambitious or expensive pieces in the show, such as Monet's large-scale painting *The Luncheon* (fig. 2), which had been rejected by the Salon in 1870 and for which the painter hoped to get 5,000 francs.[11] The buyers preferred modest-sized landscapes and spent no more than 1,000 francs, about twice the annual salary of a Parisian worker.[12] The price of the Monet was considerable, but it was lower than the amounts fetched by the stars of the art market. Jean-Léon Gérôme's painting *L'Éminence Grise* (fig. 3), which won the gold medal at the 1874 Salon, had sold for 60,000 francs.[13] This comparison serves to relativize the classical opposition between "academic" and "dealer-critic" systems. Gérôme owed his success as much to the market as to the institutions, if not more so: In 1873 art dealer Goupil had sold his painting to New York collector James H. Stebbins rather than to the State. Far from being sealed off from each other, the two systems seem to have been deeply interconnected.

Against this background, how should we interpret the few sales made at the 1874 exhibition? Renoir's *The Harvesters* (fig. 4), painted *en plein air* with loose brushwork, was purchased by music publisher Georges Hartmann, one of the first devotees of Impressionism. The same year, Hartmann commissioned the artist to paint a full-figure portrait of his wife (fig. 5). In his execution of this work, Renoir combined awareness of the model's social environment and a free painterly approach with the conventions of formal portraiture and the requirement of mimetic likeness. Another purchase made at the exhibition


SOCIÉTÉ ANONYME

DES ARTISTES PEINTRES, SCULPTEURS, GRAVEURS, ETC.

EXPOSITION 1874

OUVERTE DU 15 AVRIL AU 15 MAI 1874

PRIX : 50 CENTIMES

PARIS

1
Catalog of the first Impressionist exhibition,
Société anonyme des artistes peintres, sculpteurs, graveurs, etc.: Première Exposition 1874,
second edition (circulated between
April 29–30 and May 15, 1874)



2
Claude Monet,
The Luncheon, 1868–69,
Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main



3
Jean-Léon Gérôme,
L'Éminence Grise, 1873,
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



4
Pierre-Auguste Renoir,
The Harvesters, 1873,
private collection



5
Pierre-Auguste Renoir,
Madame Georges Hartmann, 1874,
Musée d'Orsay, Paris

was ➤Ernest Hoschedé's acquisition of Monet's *Impression, Sunrise* (fig. 6), the painting that gave rise to the polemical debate over Impressionism and its very name. The work shows the commercial port of Le Havre, almost unrecognizable and devoid of any picturesque character. But regardless of the motif—a landscape without qualities, according to the criteria of the day—it was the painting's summary brushwork, rapid strokes, and intentionally sketch-like execution that caused the real scandal. It was this "embryonic" character, as critic Louis Leroy ironically described it, that inspired Leroy's use of the word *Impressionists* to ridicule the group.[14] For him, a painting like this was a simple "impression" reminiscent of a spontaneous studio exercise and was not meant to be exhibited, let alone offered for sale. The acquisition of the work by Hoschedé, a businessman who became one of the first and most important collectors of Impressionism before his bankruptcy in 1878, thus takes on historical significance, although it was not an unequivocal endorsement of the Impressionists. Hoschedé's aesthetic progressiveness coexisted with a taste for established artists: In 1876 he had his own portrait painted both by Salon artist Paul Baudry, who depicted him against a dark red background in accord with the conventions of official portraiture, and by ➤Édouard Manet, who painted him outdoors with his daughter Marthe (fig. p. 149).

What role did the market play in this context? The first Impressionist exhibition took place on the margins of the official art business and gallery world and reflected the artists' desire to take charge of their own careers and communicate directly with their customers. Monet, Morisot, Renoir, and Sisley continued this approach when they submitted their works to an auction in March 1875. These initiatives, prompted in part by the market downturn that followed the encouraging signs of the preceding years, once again ended in commercial failure. Despite his decisive support for the future Impressionists in early 1870, ➤Paul Durand-Ruel suspended his purchases in 1874 in response to the economic crisis. For the first Impressionist exhibition, however, he did provide a number of works by Sisley as a way of signaling to potential buyers that, in the words of ➤Théodore Duret, "this painting sells."[15] In 1876 the second Impressionist exhibition took place in Durand-Ruel's gallery; the artists themselves rented the space, as they also did with the venues for their subsequent shows. It was not until 1880, when Durand-Ruel resumed his acquisitions, that he gradually began to establish what would become a genuine market for Impressionist art.

"These People Are Crazy, but There's Someone Crazier Than Them, and That's the Dealer"[16]

In 1865 Paul Durand-Ruel, who was born in 1831, took over the prestigious gallery his father had founded in the early nineteenth century.[17] He specialized in landscape painters that he referred to as "la belle école de 1830," including the Barbizon School and Eugène Delacroix, whose works had become solid investments on the market. After returning to Paris from London in 1871, Durand-Ruel began to promote Manet and the future Impressionists, purchasing their works *en bloc* and acquiring dozens of pieces a year. Although they had previously worked with dealers, the Impressionists had never experienced anything like this. From 1874 to 1880, Durand-Ruel purchased no additional works but still retained his stock. When his financial situation once again improved, he found himself in possession of a major collection, which he expanded from 1880 on and whose marketing he now controlled. In this way, he came to exert a determinative influence.

In 1882, at the request of Monet and Renoir, Durand-Ruel himself selected the works to be included in the seventh Impressionist exhibition, drawing heavily from his own collection. Though it was an independent exhibition, the dealer became a central agent, signaling a remarkable shift from the cooperative experiment of 1874. This increase in influence was accompanied by a noticeable rise in prices. Degas's painting *Racehorses in Front of the Tribunes* (fig. 8), acquired by Durand-Ruel in 1873 for around 1,000 francs, was purchased twenty years later for ten times that price and was later resold for close to 30,000 francs. Around the turn of the century, some works by Monet, Degas, or Renoir might fetch 80,000 to 100,000 francs.[18] These record sums, however, were the exception; in general, prices were much lower and climbed only gradually. Nonetheless, they established the economic success of a movement that had long been denigrated, as we will see later with respect to Monet.

Durand-Ruel's success was initially based on aesthetic intuition and an exceptional eye. He quickly grasped the importance of Impressionism and chose to make a long-term investment in it. His correspondence reveals him to be not only a shrewd businessman but also a sincere, attentive observer of each painter's artistic development. The monetary advances he gave his artists often went beyond the mere acquisition of their works to include direct material support, from covering their rent to paying their ongoing expenses. This policy was part of a double strategy. On the one hand, Durand-Ruel followed a stock-building policy based on the purchase of large numbers of works. On the other, he also pursued a true *politique des auteurs*—a concept borrowed from film criticism in which the director is viewed as the "author" of a coherent oeuvre rather than

simply as the maker of individual films.[19] In other words, his strategy was to build long-term relationships with the artists and affirm the coherence and uniqueness of their artistic paths through solo exhibitions. This approach, then in its early stages, reflected a new conception of the artistic profession and provoked debate and resistance within the art world.

This policy of acquisition and exhibition was combined with an innovative promotional strategy. In line with the "dealer-critic" system, Durand-Ruel's approach was marked by the close association of trade, criticism, and distribution. He published prints, founded journals, and organized lectures and exhibitions both in and outside his own galleries in contexts such as the world expositions or with his partners. In keeping with his gallery tradition, his strategy was resolutely international. He gradually developed a network that extended to Brussels, London, and—from 1886 on—to the United States. Though he was not the first dealer to explore the American market, he made it his preferred arena and pursued recognition for the Impressionists there with unparalleled perseverance and ambition.

Finally, Durand-Ruel also undergirded his innovations with a strategic policy of legitimation. In his early exhibitions, he hung Impressionist works next to those by masters of the Barbizon School or other established artists. As the public gained familiarity with the new art, it progressively came to occupy the dominant position. This pedagogy of seeing was part of the dealer's role, as Durand-Ruel conceived it and channeled it through his own personality. As an upper middle-class collector, he received art lovers—especially Americans—in his apartment on the Rue de Rome, which he transformed into a veritable private museum. By exhibiting the masterpieces he owned in a refined domestic context, he demonstrated that this art, formerly considered outrageous, could now embody the most refined taste.

How Claude Monet Became a Millionaire

The question of how Claude Monet became a millionaire has been addressed by Simon Kelly, a specialist on Monet and the art market.[20] Kelly estimates that in 1912, when the artist had become a celebrity worldwide, he earned 369,000 francs a year from the sale of his paintings, the equivalent of two million dollars today.[21] Almost ninety percent of this income came from dealers, of which fifty-three percent came from Paul Durand-Ruel.[22] Monet's success thus seems to have been inseparable from the progressive formation of a market that revolved around increasingly professionalized, specialized dealers, with whose help the artist was able to build, diversify, and control his own network.

This development occurred in two major phases. In the second half of the 1870s, Monet remained faithful to the logic of the independent exhibition of 1874: Deprived of the support of Durand-Ruel and the dealers with whom he had worked at the beginning of his career, he sold directly to the few collectors who had already embraced his art, including Georges de Bellio, Georges Charpentier, ➤Jean-Baptiste Faure (see art market chapter, pp. 266–77), and Paul-Ferdinand Gachet, and close friends such as ➤Gustave Caillebotte. His paintings rarely brought more than a few hundred francs. His annual income was not negligible; at around 10,000 francs, it was almost ten times the salary of a schoolteacher or an office clerk. But in the long term, it was not sufficient to maintain the standard of living of an artist whose lifestyle reflected his bourgeois background and who was responsible for supporting two households: his own two children, as well as his later wife ➤Alice Hoschedé (cats. 16, 17), her then-husband Ernest, and their six children (see Hoschedé chapter, pp. 144–57), who in the difficult years after 1878 lived with the Monets, first in Vétheuil and later in Poissy.

In the early 1880s, this situation changed. The increasing withdrawal of the State from the organization of the Salon from 1880 on weakened the prescriptive role of the Salon in favor of the galleries. At the same time, Durand-Ruel, who once again had funds to invest, acquired a considerable portion of Monet's production between 1880 and 1885 and thus secured a dominant position in the market. But for Monet, this support was not enough. Determined not to be dependent on a single dealer alone, he quickly diversified his network of partners, placing them in competition with each other. He exhibited with ➤Georges Petit, whose luxurious gallery attracted a broader clientele than that of Durand-Ruel, but also worked with Boussod, Valadon & Cie., the successors of Goupil, whose Paris branch was managed by Theo van Gogh. In 1887 this gallery brokered the sale of ten of his paintings for more than 11,000 francs. At Van Gogh's initiative, Monet successfully presented his painting *Antibes Seen from the Salis Gardens* (fig. 7) there in 1888, the result of Durand-Ruel's advice to him four years earlier to paint the South of France. Boussod, Valadon & Cie. then offered him an especially advantageous contract that combined the purchase of works with profit-sharing upon resale.

This strategy of diversification, combined with the ongoing support of Durand-Ruel and the competition among dealers, strengthened Monet's position considerably and gave him control over his prices. This autonomy—a realization of the spirit of 1874—also increased as he began working in series in the early 1890s. By creating multiple versions of the same motif—whether grainstacks (cats. 48, 49), poplars, Rouen Cathedral (cat. 65), the morning Seine



6
Claude Monet,
Impression, Sunrise, 1872,
Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris



7
Claude Monet,
Antibes Seen from the Salis Gardens, 1888,
Hasso Plattner Collection, Museum Barberini, Potsdam



8
Edgar Degas,
Racehorses in Front of the Tribunes, 1866–68,
Musée d'Orsay, Paris



9
Ernest Meissonier,
Campaign of France, 1814, 1864,
Musée d'Orsay, Paris