Johan Barthold Jongkind (Dutch, 1819–1891)

The Cathedral of Notre-Dame as Seen from the Pont de l'Archevêché, 1849

Oil on canvas

Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Museum purchase with funds provided by the 19th-Century Acquisition Fund

Monet acknowledged the Dutch artist Jongkind as the source of inspiration for his own art. Indeed, Jongkind anticipated the Impressionists by some thirty years in his commitment to sketching outdoors and his abiding interest in treating landscape motifs serially at different times of day. Like Van Gogh, Jongkind's earliest role models were the 17th-century Dutch landscape masters (Aelbert Cuyp, Jacob van Ruisdael, Meindert Hobbema). And like Van Gogh, study in Paris would send Jongkind irrevocably in the direction of progressive painting, despite critical incomprehension at the lack of finish that characterized his freely brushed landscapes.

In this painting, we see many things that would have delighted Van Gogh. Although the picturesque outline of the cathedral of Notre Dame is conspicuous, the focus is on working-class Parisians occupied with their everyday lives—in this case the washerwomen of the floating barges, toting their fresh bundles of laundry. The loose brushwork, high-keyed palette, and overall luminosity of the scene, observed from life, is precisely the kind of painting that brother Theo exhorted Vincent to emulate.

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (French, 1864–1901)
***A Convalescent*,** 1891

Oil on canvas

Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio, Museum purchase, Howald Fund

Toulouse-Lautrec first met Van Gogh in the studio of Fernand Cormon, where both artists studied, along with their mutual friends Louis Anquetin and Émile Bernard. Lautrec was fascinated by the *demi-monde* social 'types' that he observed in Montmartre, which abounded in dance halls, circuses, *cafés-concerts*, and brothels. The aristocrats, streetwalkers, artists, writers, models, and cancan dancers he counted among his friends became the subjects of his art.
As is frequently the case in Lautrec's work, the main figure (a recovering patient) is shown as though unaware of being watched, while seated on a park bench, presumably taking the fresh air as a restorative to good health. Lautrec's ill health (he suffered from an undiagnosed bone disorder that stunted his growth) and terminal alcoholism would result in his own status as a recovering patient in an asylum in Paris, where he was confined in 1899. Important to note is Lautrec's interest in representing solitary figures either lost in reverie or seemingly idle, a kind of slowed experience of time that is distinct from the Impressionists' interest in the rapid flux of modern life.

Vincent van Gogh

***The Outskirts of Paris*,** Autumn 1886

Oil on canvas

Private collection, in memory of Marie Wangeman

Unlike the Impressionists, Van Gogh shied away from the centralized areas of the city, where wealthier Parisians promenaded along the major thoroughfares and in gas-lit parks. By the time Van Gogh made this painting, he had been living in Paris for six months or so, but his palette still had not entirely departed from the earthen tones to which he was accustomed. His attraction to decidedly un-picturesque locales such as this one parallels that of established progressive artists like Jean-François Raffaëlli, who made rag pickers and the disenfranchised of the suburbs his preferred subjects.

The shuffling figure of a Zouave (a soldier for hire), identifiable through the crisscrossed banding of his uniform, along with a single lamppost, occupy the composition's center. The newfangled gaslight lamp is bleakly contrasted with the muddy wasteland of the outskirts of Paris and the monotonous outline of factory buildings, which would eventually replace the few remaining windmills just visible in the city skyline.

SCAN ME

Vincent van Gogh

***Shelter on Montmartre*,** July-August 1887

Oil on canvas

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Bequest of Frederick J. Hellman

The bustling suburb of Montmartre, where Van Gogh lived in his brother Theo's apartment, had not yet been entirely annexed into the rapidly expanding city of Paris. The neighborhood included all the necessities for bohemian existence, including paint shops, artists' studios, cafés, brothels, and entertainment spots. More often than not, Vincent still sought out more rural motifs such as this one, a small shed near an old farmhouse, located on the relatively undeveloped northwest side of the hill. Here we see clear evidence of Van Gogh's assimilation of Impressionism in the sketch-like brushwork, applied to take full advantage of the contrast created by the complementary hues of blues and oranges.

Vincent van Gogh (Dutch, 1853–1890)

***Bridge across the Seine at Asnières*,**
Summer 1887

Oil on canvas

Private Collection, Larry Ellison

Like Monet and the Impressionists, Van Gogh actively sought out the suburban leisure spaces now easily accessible by train to Parisians. However, like his new friends, Signac and Bernard, he selected motifs that prominently featured the markers of modernity, including gaslit bridges, such as this one over the Seine. This view is of the more industrial town of Clichy, as seen from the village of Asnières to which Vincent was able to walk from the city over the very bridge depicted. Evident in this painting is Van Gogh's rapid assimilation of lessons gleaned from the likes of Monet and Sisley, but also the pastel palette of pinks, blues, and purples that he so admired in the Japanese woodblock prints of Hiroshige.

Louis Anquetin (French 1861-1932)
***Advertisement for Le Rire*,** 1894

Lithograph

Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Museum Purchase: European Deaccessioning Endowment Income Fund and gift of Armond and Sara Fields

Anquetin was one of many avant-garde artists who produced prints for the popular magazine *Le Rire* (in English, Laughter). Although not as well known today as Théophile Steinlen and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Anquetin was an active member of the same group of bohemian artists who recorded the nightlife of Paris and used the pages of *Le Rire* both to glamorize its theatrical stars and to lampoon the politicians of the day. Anquetin met Van Gogh in the studio of Fernand Cormon, along with Émile Bernard, with whom Van Gogh would become close friends.

Lithography played a large part in the explosion of visual culture that served the growing leisure classes of urban Paris. The increased scale at which prints could be made resulted in an advertising revolution, especially with the addition of bright colors possible by the 1880s and 90s. In this image, we see a man (perhaps, Anquetin himself), hawking the sideshow attractions to which he gestures in the background, which includes not only circus performers, but supposedly upstanding members of society, mercilessly caricatured. Anquetin exploits the lithographic medium to capture the ghoulish effect produced by artificial light at night.

Jean-François Raffaëlli (French 1850–1924)

***The Ragpicker*,** ca. 1879

Oil on board

Collection of Raj and Grace Dhawan

By the 1870s, Raffaëlli had won the attention of several prominent art critics, who recognized the artist as a Realist bent on the sympathetic depiction, no matter how unflinching, of the urban poor. By the 1880s, the 'chiffonnier' (in English, ragpicker) had become synonymous with Raffaëlli's art. Ragpickers were the poor who scoured the area, collecting scraps and debris for salvage and resale. A common sight, especially in the suburbs of Paris, the ragpicker became a symbol of the negative outcome of the modernization of Paris for the impoverished, who were often one step away from beggars.

The very support of this painting (artist's board) becomes the soil through which the ragpicker sifts for the bits of cloth that he collects in his enormous sack. Rapidly and thinly brushed pigment, perhaps done on the spot, captures the man in the middle of preparing to hoist his burden back onto his shoulder. Incongruously, several blooming poppies emerge from the muddy ground, adding the only positive burst of vivid color to this otherwise bleak scene.

Jean-François Raffaëlli (French 1850–1924)
The Absinthe Drinkers**,** 1881

Oil on canvas

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Museum purchase, Roscoe and Margaret Oakes Income Fund, Jay D. and Clare C. McEvoy Endowment Fund, Tribute Funds, friends of Ian White Endowment Fund, Unrestricted Art Acquisition Endowment Income Fund, Grover A. Magnin Bequest Fund, and the Yvonne Cappeller Trust

This painting was the sensation of the 1881 Sixth Impressionist exhibition and is now considered to be Raffaëlli's masterpiece. It was hailed by the prominent critic J.-K. Huysmans for its authentic reportage of "the sad land of the déclassés." Dubbed "the Parisian Millet," Raffaëlli was praised for his dead-on depiction of the homeless and unemployed, in this case, described by Huysmans as "seated in front of glasses of absinthe, at a cabaret under a bower where, climbing up, thin vines stripped of leaves twist, with their depraved paraphernalia of clothes in rags and boots in shreds, with their black hats whose threads have gone brown and whose cardboard has warped, with their unkempt beards, their hollow eyes, their enlarged and seemingly watery pupils, head in hand or rolling cigarettes."

To Vincent, Raffaëlli's insistence on the unromanticized truth of what he called "characteristic beauty" rang true and was precisely what he would pursue in his own art.

SCAN ME

Jean-François Raffaëlli (French 1850–1924)
***The Return of the Ragpickers*,** 1879

Oil on canvas

Collection of Raj and Grace Dhawan

Three ragpickers, accompanied by three equally scruffy-looking mutts, make their way down a dirt path at the close of day, somewhere on the outskirts of Paris. The air is thick with the pollution spewing from the factory chimneys on the far horizon; so thick that it nearly obscures the faint outline of the full moon in the upper corner of the composition. Incongruously, Raffaëlli's only formal training was with the academic painter, Jean-Léon Gérôme—the master of Orientalist fantasies flawlessly described through a polished illusionism. This accounts for the technical assuredness of Raffaëlli's paintings, which remain very distant from Van Gogh's more summary approach to landscape and to the figure. Nevertheless, Vincent singled out Raffaëlli as an artist who made paintings "with a will, with emotion, with passion, with love," an artistic course that he would plot for his own brief career.

Jean-François Raffaëlli (French 1850–1924)

The Woodcutter, late 1870s

Oil on canvas

Collection of Raj and Grace Dhawan

Raffaëlli was devoted to the observation of what he termed the "character" of the working poor, shown in their own environments, as if stumbled upon by an anthropologist, rather than posed in the studio. In this painting, he portrays a woodcutter pausing from his labor and lost in reverie as he gazes into the distance. As always with Raffaëlli, the landscape is hardly picturesque. It is the rough outskirts of the city, with slender factory chimneys, puffing smoke in the distant horizon. Unlike the better-known Impressionists, with whom Raffaëlli exhibited in 1880 and 1881, he did not often choose subjects that emphasized the fleeting quality of urban experience; but rather its opposite—the idleness of the unemployed or, in this case, the physical exertion of old-fashioned labor and the prolonged duration of repetitive motions like chopping wood. Journalistic in their detail, Raffaëlli's depictions of the lower classes somehow avoid condescension, neither soliciting our pity nor assuming any easy identification with their stations in life.

Jean-François Raffaëlli (French 1850–1924)

***We will give you twenty-five francs to start (Nous vous donnons vingt-cinq francs pour commencer)*,** ca. 1883

Oil on wood panel

Collection of Raj and Grace Dhawan

In 1889, Raffaëlli created seventy-nine illustrations for texts by a group of authors, including Alphonse Daudet, Edmond de Goncourt, J.-K. Huysmans, Maupassant, Gustave Mirbeau, Marcel Proust, and Émile Zola. The project was entitled *Les Types de Paris*, with verbal tableaux outlining every nuanced social rung encountered in modern-day Paris. This small painting corresponds to the lithograph of the same title (on display in the case nearby), illustrating the classed interaction between a bourgeois couple and a young servant to whom they are offering employment. Raffaëlli's unerring eye captures every last detail, from the drawing room, appointed with all the expected bourgeois décor, to the frosty avoidance of eye contact between this miserly couple and the stoic young girl. Even the plump calico cat refuses to engage and sits contentedly facing the warmth of the fire.

Gustave Doré, "A Chiswick Fête" and "A City Thoroughfare," from *London: a pilgrimage.* New York: Harper & Brothers, 1890

Edgar Degas (French, 1834–1917)

***The Breakfast*,** ca. 1885

Pastel and graphite pencil over monotype on cream paper, laid down

Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio, Gift of Howard D. and Babette L. Sirak, the Donors to the Campaign for Enduring Excellence, and the Derby Fund

The unexpected cropping, elevated point of view, and jewel-like tones in this monotype embellished with pastel likely derive in part from Degas's fascination with Japanese prints—a fascination shared by the Van Gogh brothers. Something of a loner, though Degas participated in the Impressionist exhibitions, he thought of himself as a Realist. His working-class subjects share little with the gaiety of Monet and Renoir's depictions of urban leisure in the public spaces of Paris. One of his preferred subjects was the representation of women engaged in everyday activities, such as bathing, or in this case, breakfasting in the privacy of a boudoir. Our illicit access to the woman's un-self-conscious nudity positions us as willing or unwilling voyeurs, while her turn away from our prying gaze refuses any easy access to either her thoughts or her body at the same time. In Degas, Van Gogh saw the true artist's unwavering dedication, no matter how perceived by others, something which he commented on admiringly in his letters to Theo.

Jean Louis Forain (French, 1852–1931)
***Portrait of Giuseppe De Nittis*,** 1884

Pastel on paper

Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Bequest of Margaret Mallory

A follower of Degas, whom he emulated in his devotion to the observation of urban experience and its endlessly fascinating participants, Forain was an active member of the Impressionist group. He is perhaps better remembered today as a biting caricaturist who followed in the footsteps of Daumier in his prints for magazines like *Le Figaro*. In this rapidly executed pastel, Forain captures the nimble step and fashionable attire of fellow artist, Giuseppe de Nittis. The Italian De Nittis exhibited in the First Impressionist exhibition in 1874. Tragically, he died prematurely of a stroke at the age of thirty-eight, at the height of his artistic powers and celebrity in 1884, the very year this pastel was done. One wonders if the talented Forain was able to swiftly conjure his good friend from recent memory or if this is one of the last direct portraits of De Nittis that we have.

Though Van Gogh possessed none of Forain's virtuosic facility as a draftsman, he recognized the accuracy of his depictions of social types, which he commented on approvingly to his brother Theo.

Ernest Ange Duez (French, 1843–1896)
***Woman in Grey on Board Ship, Gazing at the Sea*,** 1873

Oil on canvas

Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Museum purchase with funds provided by the Suzette and Eugene Davidson Fund

The technical polish of an artist like Duez was something that the young Van Gogh came to know through the reproductive prints that he sold as a clerk working for the art dealer, Goupil. In a letter to his friend, the artist Anthon van Rappard on September 19, 1882, Van Gogh fondly recollected his early admiration for the artistic facility of the likes of Duez, who today is considered one of the so-called 'juste-milieu' (literally, middle-of-the-road) artists who found favor with the State and were awarded commissions to decorate the interiors of public buildings. While he could still recommend to Van Rappard the "beauty" of Duez's art even a dozen years after first encountering it as a clerk at Goupil Gallery, Vincent firmly endorsed paintings of "a few rag pickers eating their soup while it's snowing and raining outside," rather "than the dazzling peacock's feathers of the Italians [far worse, according to Vincent, than Duez], who seem to multiply daily, while the more sober artists are no less rare than they always were."

Duez also painted in a more fluid manner, akin to his good friends, the American Impressionists John Singer Sargent and James Whistler. However, this is an example of the kind of luxurious detail that he lavished on such depictions of fashionably attired women—a talent that he shared with the likes of James Tissot and the Belgian, Alfred Stevens—two other artists whose gifts of observation impressed Vincent as a young shop clerk.

James Tissot (French, 1836–1902)

***Foreign Visitors at the Louvre*,** ca. 1883–85

Oil on canvas

Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Gift of The Estate of Barbara Darlington Dupee

"*I hear Tissot has an exhibition—have you seen it? It all comes down to the degree of life and passion that an artist manages to put into his figures. So long as they really live, a figure of a lady by Alfred Stevens, say, or some Tissots are also really magnificent*." —Vincent to Theo, May 4 and May 5, 1885

It may be surprising, but in the same time frame that the thirty-two-year-old Van Gogh was sketching the working-class weavers to whom he had access while living with his parents in the vicarage at Nuenen, he was still able to express admiration for the exquisite work of the likes of Tissot. Tissot specialized in lavishly meticulous images of beautiful women (his favorite model was his mistress, Kathleen Newton, pictured here), portrayed as if caught in the urban fabric as sumptuous spectacles for our delectation. In this masterpiece of its kind, Tissot uses the cropping inspired either by photography or just as likely, Japanese prints, interests which he shared with his good friend, Edgar Degas. It is likely that Tissot's recurrent interest in the theme of spectatorship at the Louvre was inspired by Degas' famous series of etchings, *Mary Cassatt at the Louvre*.

Edgar Degas, *Mary Cassatt at the Louvre (The Etruscan Gallery)*, 1879-80. Soft-ground etching, drypoint, aquatint. SBMA

Odilon Redon (French, 1840–1916)
***The Tell-Tale Heart*,** 1883

Charcoal on brown paper

Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Museum purchase

Symbolist artist Odilon Redon found a kindred spirit in the work of Edgar Allen Poe, publishing a series of six lithographs dedicated to Poe in 1882. Redon was famous for his "noirs," working with the sooty black of charcoal or lithography to create fantastic dream worlds and chimeric creatures. This charcoal drawing was not published as a print, but similarly explores the uncanny world of Poe's 1843 short story, "The Tell-Tale Heart." In Poe's tale, the narrator murders an old man because he is disgusted by his "vulture eye," burying him under the floorboards, only to later be haunted by the thumping sound of his still-beating heart. Redon's drawing reimagines this disturbing scene in the form of a human eye gazing up from between the floorboards, its disembodied gaze mirrored in the whorl of the wood grain.