
Troyon, Constant

(*b* Sèvres, Aug 28, 1810; *d* Paris, March 20, 1865).

A. Daguerre de Hureaux

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Constant Troyon: *Road in the Woods*, oil on canvas, 581×483 mm, c. 1844–46 (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Collis P. Huntington, 1900, Accession ID: 25.110.19); photo © The Metropolitan Museum of Art

French painter. He was brought up among the Sèvres ceramics workers and received his first lessons in drawing and painting from Denis-Désiré Riocreux (1791–1872), a porcelain painter who was one of the founders of the Musée National de Céramique. Troyon began his career as a painter at the Sèvres factory while also studying landscape painting in his spare time. He became a friend of Camille Roqueplan, who introduced him to a number of young landscape painters—especially Théodore Rousseau, Paul Huet and Jules Dupré—who were later to become members and associates of the

Barbizon school. After an unremarkable début at the Salon of 1833, where he exhibited three landscapes depicting the area around Sèvres (e.g. *View of the Park at Saint-Cloud*; Paris U., Notre-Dame), he took up his career in earnest and made several study trips to the French provinces. Following the example of contemporary collectors, he began to take a great interest in 17th-century Dutch painting, particularly the work of Jacob van Ruisdael, whose influence is seen in such early paintings as *The Woodcutters* (1839; La Rochelle, Mus. B.-A.). At the Salon of 1841 he exhibited *Tobias and the Angel* (Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz Mus.), a biblical landscape that attracted the attention of Théophile Gautier. The subject was intended to satisfy the critics, but the painting served as a pretext for portraying a realistic and sincere representation of nature, even though its ordered and classically inspired composition perfectly fitted the requirements of a genre, the origins of which were the 17th-century paintings of Claude and Poussin and their followers.

At the Salon of 1846 Troyon was awarded a First Class medal by Louis Napoleon (later Napoleon III) for the four paintings he exhibited there, all landscapes inspired by the countryside around Paris, confirming a reputation that continued to grow year by year. In 1847 he travelled to the Netherlands and Belgium, where he discovered the work of the painters Paulus Potter and Aelbert Cuyp; this trip was to have a profound influence on the direction of his career. He was made Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur in 1849, and it was from this time that he devoted himself almost exclusively to the painting of animals, a genre that ensured him substantial financial success due to its popularity with his admirers. He was extremely prolific, and his canvases are often large in format, usually depicting farm animals and labourers in the extreme foreground against a low horizon with dramatic, cloud-filled skies or splendid sunrises or sunsets; examples are *Oxen Going to Plough: Morning Effect*, shown at the Exposition Universelle in Paris of 1855, and *View from the Suresnes Heights (Hauts-de-Seine)* (Paris, Mus. d'Orsay), painted in 1856 and exhibited at the Salon of 1859. Troyon was no innovator, but his painting technique was excellent, and he had a sensitive, yet broad-based and solid mastery of his craft. His more exploratory paintings were executed on the coast of Normandy during his last years. These paintings reveal that he was looking closely at variations of light and was expressing a sensitivity not too far removed from that of the precursors of Impressionism.

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Troyon, Constant. <http://oxfordartonline.com/benezit/view/10.1093/benz/9780199773787.001.0001/acref-9780199773787-e-00185632> in Oxford Art Online. <http://oxfordartonline.com>

External resources

Troyon, Constant: The Approaching Storm, 1849, National Gallery of Art (Washington, DC) <http://www.nga.gov/cgi-bin/pinfo?Object=91303+0+none>

Troyon, Constant: Watering Cattle, early 1850s, Wallace Collection (London) [http://wallacelive.wallacecollection.org:8080/eMuseumPlus?service=direct/1/ResultLightboxView/result.t2.collection_lightbox.\\$TspTitleLink\\$1.link&sp=10&sp=Scollection&sp=SfieldValue&sp=0&sp=3&sp=2&sp=Slightbox_3x4&sp=0&sp=Sdetail&sp=0&sp=F&sp=T&sp=0](http://wallacelive.wallacecollection.org:8080/eMuseumPlus?service=direct/1/ResultLightboxView/result.t2.collection_lightbox.$TspTitleLink$1.link&sp=10&sp=Scollection&sp=SfieldValue&sp=0&sp=3&sp=2&sp=Slightbox_3x4&sp=0&sp=Sdetail&sp=0&sp=F&sp=T&sp=0)

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