Van Gogh Museum Journal 2000

bron

Zie voor verantwoording: http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_van012200001_01/colofon.php

© 2012 dbnl / Rijksmuseum Vincent Van Gogh
**Director's foreword**

The opening of the Musée d'Orsay in Paris in 1986 rekindled a long-running debate here in the Netherlands about the desirability of founding an equivalent Dutch museum for the 19th century. Various arguments for and against were aired in the press and in scholarly journals. The level of interest was such that in 1989 the University of Amsterdam organised a symposium entitled ‘The Dutch museum of the 19th century: utopian dream or reality?’ There was discussion about the exact period the new museum might cover, and whether or not it should be confined to the fine arts or should include the decorative arts and architecture as well. Different sites were proposed - in The Hague and in Amsterdam - and it was suggested that the collections of various museums, including the Rijksmuseum, the Stedelijk and the Museum Mesdag, could be pooled to create this new institution. These discussions were not just fuelled by intellectual curiosity. There were real practical concerns about the inadequate display of 19th-century art in the Netherlands. At the time this period was not a priority for either of the two main art museums in Amsterdam, the Rijksmuseum and the Stedelijk, although both could boast important holdings in the area. Many works were said to be hidden in the depots, and there was certainly no clear logic to the distribution and display of the works of art from this period.

The debate was fervent and coloured with idealism, but in truth there was no real prospect of creating a grand new museum of the 19th century along the lines of the Musée d'Orsay. In an interview in 1988, the minister of culture, Elko Brinkman had made government's position clear: ‘A new museum for the 19th century [...] is not a priority. It may not be spectacular, but we are going to have to enter the new century with what we have. I am not on the look out for any grands travaux [...]’

As we slip into the new millennium, it is clear that we are not only managing with what we have, but managing very well indeed. Across the country, the display of 19th-century art has improved dramatically in the past decade or so. The renovation and new installations in a range of museums - for example, the Gemeentemuseum and the Museum Mesdag in The Hague - allow the art of the 1800s to be appreciated in different settings and stimulating contexts. And here on the Museumplein in Amsterdam the new division of responsibility between the collections of the Rijksmuseum, the Van Gogh Museum and the Stedelijk, which we reported on in last year's *Journal*, makes sensible use of the national collections. The reopening of the expanded Van Gogh Museum in 1999 confirmed our position as the foremost museum of the 19th century in the Netherlands. The Dutch museum of the 19th century may have taken on a different form than some people envisaged in the late 1980s, but there can be little doubt that it now has a vibrant existence.

The acquisitions, the research and the exhibitions reported on in this volume of the *Van Gogh Museum Journal* are evidence of our effort to promote the knowledge and awareness of the art of the 19th century in general and Van Gogh in particular. Although the holdings of our museum provide the starting point, the *Journal* is open to contributions that touch on all aspects of our area of interest. This year the *Journal* is largely devoted to the papers presented at a symposium held here in July 1999, to accompany the Theo van Gogh exhibition. I am very grateful to the speakers for reworking their papers for publication and to all the authors for their distinguished contributions. As with previous volumes, the *Journal* has benefited greatly from the
skilful attention and care of our managing editor, Rachel Esner. I am also grateful to our new Head of Research, Leo Jansen, and to Sjraar van Heugten, Head of Collections, for their work on the editorial board, and to Benno Tempel for gathering the material for reproductions. Finally, I would repeat my previous invitation to outside authors for contributions to future issues of the *Van Gogh Museum Journal*. Your comments and proposals are most welcome.

*John Leighton*

*Director*
fig. 1
Review
August 1999 -July 2000

Introduction

After the successful completion of the building programme and the reopening in June 1999, work at the Van Gogh Museum has returned to a more normal pace. Following the many hectic months of preparation, planning and work that went into the development of a new exhibition wing and the renovation of the existing building, the museum has at last been able to give its full attention to its core business: looking after the collection and serving the public.

In many respects this has been an excellent 12 months for the Van Gogh Museum. The rejuvenated museum has enjoyed a record attendance. At the time of writing, we have welcomed over 1.5 million visitors since the reopening. We have been able to offer these visitors improved service on all fronts, as well as a wider range of educational materials to enhance their enjoyment and understanding of the displays. The new building has continued to attract international attention, and it has been a delight to observe how the architecture has provided a stunning setting for a variety of exhibitions. The welcome support of the Vincent van Gogh Foundation has enabled us to make a spectacular acquisition of an entire collection of late 19th- and early 20th-century prints. And, less visible but equally important, the museum has continued to support an active programme of research into Van Gogh and 19th-century art.

The collection

The bulk of the permanent collection on display at the Van Gogh Museum is on loan from the Vincent van Gogh Foundation. The museum works in partnership with the foundation not just to conserve the collection for the enjoyment of future generations but also to expand it through new additions. The Vincent van Gogh Foundation has helped with a great many acquisitions in our history, but this year it made its most impressive contribution to date with the purchase of a collection of over 800 prints, mainly by artists associated with the Nabis group. From its origins in the works assembled by Vincent and Theo van

fig. 2
Third floor of the Rietveld building with Kees van Dongen's Blue dress, purchased in 1999 with the support of the Dutch Sponsor Lottery
Gogh, the collection has always represented works on paper, but this acquisition gives an important new core to the holdings of graphic art, and allows us to present some of the most exciting developments in printmaking in the later 19th century. The newly acquired pieces include the majority of the best Nabis prints made in Paris between 1890 and 1905, with superb works by Henri Toulouse-Lautrec, Pierre Bonnard, Edouard Vuillard, Maurice Denis and Félix Vallotton. Assembled over many years by a private collector, the prints are generally of the highest quality and in excellent condition. A selection of highlights from the collection was shown on the second floor of the Rietveld building this past summer, and a number of works are reproduced in this volume of the *Van Gogh Museum Journal* (see also colour plates pp. 114-19).

Another important acquisition, also published in this *Journal*, is the gift of Camille Pissarro's *Still life with peonies and mock orange* from the Sara Lee Corporation. In
an unprecedented and enlightened act of generosity, the company has given away the lion's share of its impressive art holdings to 40 different museums across the world, from Chicago to Singapore. The Van Gogh Museum is proud to have been selected as a beneficiary for part of this millennium gift, and we are delighted to add the first oil painting by Pissarro to the permanent collection (see also colour plate p. 120).

As well as displaying our collection here in Amsterdam, the Van Gogh Museum has lent generously to museums and exhibitions both in this country and abroad. Of particular note this year was the museum's major contribution to Van Gogh: face to face (on show at The Detroit Institute of Arts; The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; and The Philadelphia Museum of Art), and to the Van Gogh exhibition organised by Ronald Pickvance for the Gianadda Foundation in Martigny in Switzerland.

Closer to home, in last year's Journal we reported on a series of exchanges with the Rijksmuseum and the Stedelijk Museum. This programme has continued, with Whistler's Portrait of Effie Deans arriving on loan from the Rijksmuseum. Another initiative - a long-term loan of a group of paintings by Van Gogh to enrich the displays at the Rijksmuseum Twenthe - had to be postponed when the museum was badly damaged in a horrendous explosion at a nearby fireworks depot in May of this year. We wish our colleagues in Enschede every success in their efforts to restore and reopen their building to the public.

Research

Through our own research programmes and by acting as a forum for outside scholars and other institutions, the Van Gogh Museum has become a focal point for the research and study of Vincent van Gogh and his period. The museum is currently engaged in two long-term research projects: the production of a series of catalogues of our
holdings of Van Gogh, and a new edition of the artist's letters. The latter will result in a new scholarly edition of Van Gogh's complete correspondence, with revised texts, new English translations and annotations. Although the edition is not due for publication until 2004, the research continues to provide a steady stream of new insights into the content and dating of the letters, and their significance for the understanding of Van Gogh (see the article by Leo Jansen, Hans Luijten and Wouter van der Veen in this year's Van Gogh Museum Journal).

The Van Gogh collection will be catalogued in a series of eight volumes. Three of these have already been published: two volumes on the drawings (until 1885) and one on the early paintings. Work is now proceeding on the third volume of drawings (to be published in 2001) and the second volume of paintings (to be published in 2002), both devoted to the artist's period in Antwerp and Paris.

Original research in our museum is not an isolated activity with its own ends and means, but rather feeds into and supports virtually all our activities. In particular we are committed to using the results in order to engage not just the scholarly community, but our audience as a whole. The technical, archival and curatorial work carried out in conjunction with the exhibition of the collection of Dr Gachet (see below) is a good example of how such research can enhance a presentation for the public. The detailed investigation into the authenticity of a single painting, Van Gogh's Garden of St Paul's Hospital, was presented on the Internet and in a video shown in our auditorium. The researchers' detective work not only dispelled any lingering doubts about the genuineness of this picture, but also made for an engaging exposition on Van Gogh's working methods.

In 1996 a project was initiated to produce an inventory of all the French 19th-century paintings in Dutch public collections. This work, carried out by Aukje Vergeest, is now complete and the corpus, entitled The French collection, was published by Amsterdam University Press in November this year.

Exhibitions

Over the past year the new wing has proved its worth as a practical and beautiful setting for temporary exhibitions. Shows can now take place without disrupting the permanent collection and with the luxury of a space that not only allows plenty of room for the public but also encourages experimentation with different approaches to installation. Diversity, variety and the surprise of the unfamiliar are essential ingredients in our effort to present the broadest possible range of subjects from the 19th century, and the versatile architecture of the wing is an excellent backdrop to this programme.

Our major exhibition for the reopening in 1999 was consecrated to Theo van Gogh (see the Van Gogh Museum Journal 1999) and was quickly followed by another important international touring presentation: Cézanne to Van Gogh: the collection of Doctor Gachet, organised in collaboration with The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Musée d'Orsay in Paris. The Gachet family's gift forms an important element in the French national holdings of impressionist and post-impressionist art. The eccentric and colourful Paul Gachet is probably best
known as the friend and patron of several artists, including Cézanne, Pissarro, Guillaumin, Monet and Van Gogh. A homeopathic physician and enthusiastic amateur artist, he acquired seminal examples of his friends' work, which were later donated to the French state by his son. The show was the first occasion on which the Gachet donation had travelled abroad, and was enriched by other loans, including copies made by Gachet, his son and other amateurs in their circle. It has been alleged that certain works in the Gachet donation are not genuine, and this provocative display gave the public the chance to compare originals and copies and to examine the results of the art-historical and technical research. A comprehensive catalogue, edited by Anne Distel and Susan Stein, was published to accompany the exhibition.

The print room in the new wing was the venue for a show concerned with the artist Van Gogh once described as ‘Father Millet.’ Today, Jean-François Millet is perhaps best known for his monumental paintings of peasant life, but the emphasis here was on his superb and highly influential drawings, many of which were produced as works of art in their own right. Curated by Alexandra Murphy, the show originated at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute in Williamstown and, after the Amsterdam venue, travelled to the Frick Art Museum & Historical Center in Pittsburgh.

The large and ambitious exhibition *Prague 1900: poetry and ecstasy* made full use of the new wing's architecture, combining furniture and decorative objects with paintings, drawings and graphic art in a lavish display. Following on from Glasgow and Vienna, this was the third
in a series of shows at the Van Gogh Museum to explore the dynamic changes in an important artistic centre at the turn of the century. The show, developed by Edwin Becker, evoked the sensuous language of forms and the poetic symbolism characteristic of Art Nouveau in Prague. It was possible to trace links with artistic movements elsewhere in Europe - from impressionism to expressionism - yet at the same time to experience a rich local and national artistic tradition. The generous collaboration of The National Gallery and the Museum of Decorative Art in Prague allowed us to show examples of the highest quality from a period that deserves to be better known outside the Czech Republic. The accompanying catalogue gives an excellent overview of the period, with contributions from several specialists, including Petr Wittlich and Roman Prahl. After its Amsterdam showing the exhibition travelled to the Museum für Angewandte Kunst in Frankfurt am Main.

The exhibition Jugendstil in word and image was in many respects complementary to the Prague show, providing a view of another aspect of the creative surge that we associate with Art Nouveau in Europe. The close collaboration between artists and writers in the period around 1900 led to the creation of what can almost be described as a new art form in books and magazines. The exhibition included some 80 illustrations by artists such as Peter Behrens, Josef Hoffmann, Max Klinger and Koloman Moser, with texts by, among others, Stefan George, Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Rainer Maria Rilke. A thematic arrangement with suitably lyrical headings, such as ‘Dreams and fairy tales’ and ‘Enthralled by love,’ helped define the nature of this rich vein of material. Following its presentation in Amsterdam the show travelled to the Fondation Neumann, Gingins, Switzerland and the Museum Mathildenhöhe, Darmstadt.

In recent years the Van Gogh Museum has organised a number of exhibitions devoted to lesser-known artists of the 19th century. Often these were minor masters who were recognised in their own time, but whose work had since fallen out of fashion. This series was continued in the spring of 2000 with exhibitions on the Belgian artist Xavier Mellery and the French sculptor Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux.

Mellery's mysterious, intimate interiors attracted many admirers in the 19th century, including Vincent van Gogh, who, writing to his brother Theo about the Vingtistes in Brussels, stated in 1889: ‘I would like to exhibit with the Vingtistes in Brussels, but I feel inferior next to many Belgians who have great talent. That Mellery, for
example, is a great artist. And he has been for many years’ [801/604]. In the 20th century, however, Mellery was almost entirely
forgotten, and this show, organised in cooperation with the Centre pour l'étude du XIXe siècle and shown subsequently at the Musée d'Ixelles in Brussels, was the first since 1937 dedicated to the artist. The exhibition was accompanied by a book by Vincent Vanhamme, the first monograph on the artist.

The Mellery exhibition included a number of his impressive designs for large-scale mural paintings. The artist had to live with the frustration that none of these were ever realised. Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux, by contrast, had no shortage of official commissions. This eclectic artist was the leading sculptor of the Second Empire in France, executing numerous portrait busts and several large sculptural groups in Paris, of which La danse for the Opéra and the Fountain of the four continents in the Jardin du Luxembourg are probably the most famous. This show, however, highlighted a more intimate aspect of Carpeaux's oeuvre, focusing instead on his paintings. This is a body of work Carpeaux made largely for his own satisfaction. His landscapes, portraits and history scenes are painted in a fluid, dramatic style, which emphasises their extraordinarily personal nature. The exhibition was organised with the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Valenciennes. A catalogue in French by Patrick Ramade, Laure de Margerie and Laurence des Cars was published by the Réunion des Musées Nationaux to accompany the show.

The year 2000 represents the 400th anniversary of the first contact between Japan and the Netherlands. As part of the wide-ranging celebrations in honour of this historical date, the Van Gogh Museum organised the show Reflections: Japan and Japonism. The exhibition provided an image of Japan as seen through the eyes of Vincent van Gogh and his contemporaries. Japanese objects and prints traded in Europe from about 1850 were shown alongside Japoniste objects inspired by oriental works from private collections, including the splendid Herman Dommise Collection. On 23 May 2000 the museum was honoured to welcome their majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan, who were in the Netherlands on a state visit. Their majesties toured the permanent collection and paid a visit to the new wing to admire the architecture of Kisho Kurokawa.
Perhaps our most innovative display of this season was the design evolved for the exhibition *The spirit of Montmartre: cabarets, humour and the avant-garde 1875-1905*. Organised in collaboration with the Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, this show focused on the artistic and intellectual environment in Montmartre during the last decades of the 19th century. Using illustrated newspapers, prints, posters, a shadow theatre, drawings and a range of ephemera such as theatre programmes, the show evoked the heady, anarchistic world of Paris’s earliest avant-garde. A novel installation - with empty wine glasses, tables strewn with newspapers and with background ‘noise’ - helped visitors make the imaginative leap to a lively Montmartre café. A specially published ‘Montmartre magazine’ in the form of a newspaper provided information and background about the period. The accompanying book was edited by Phillip Dennis Cate and Mary Shaw.

**Future project: Van Gogh - Gauguin exhibition**

Together with the Art Institute of Chicago, the Van Gogh Museum is planning a major exhibition devoted to the collaboration of Van Gogh and Gauguin. The show will set the work of both artists in parallel and, although there is a natural focus on their brief spell of working together at Arles in 1888, will in effect entwine their entire careers, offering many insights into their mutual influence. The exhibition opens in Chicago in September 2001 and moves to Amsterdam in February 2002. The show at the Van Gogh Museum is made possible with the generous support of ABN-AMRO Bank.

**Education**

The Van Gogh Museum pursues an active educational policy designed to meet the various needs of our diverse public. Information and explanatory material is provided...
in various forms, including wall texts, brochures and audio tours; much of this is made available in up to seven languages. A new video, produced in association with The National Gallery in London, is now shown continuously in our auditorium. Entitled *Face to face with Vincent van Gogh*, it is intended to provide a general introduction to the museum and to the artist's work.

Our new study area on the second floor consists of an open depot (where all the paintings by Van Gogh not in the main installation may be viewed), reading tables and a
bank of computers offering access to the museum's website. Since its launch in January 1999, the website has been updated and extended to include more works from the collection. The site is popular, attracting some 500 to 600 visitors a day. A new three-dimensional extension to the site went online in the autumn of 2000.

With the reopening of the museum in 1999 we launched our new programmes for schools. The education department now provides an extensive service designed to complement the courses followed by pupils at various stages in their education. The emphasis to date has been on secondary education, and a range of material - including a Van Gogh Museum newspaper, brochures on relevant themes and lessons guidelines for teachers - is now available. This material is much in demand, while the number of visits from schools has increased considerably.

Friends of the Van Gogh Museum

From 1990 to 1998 the Van Gogh Museum enjoyed the support of a small but energetic organisation of Friends. Their many activities over the years included the running of the Information Desk, which was manned by a group of loyal volunteers. With the closure for renovation and the decision to make the Information Desk an integral part of its operations, the museum decided to disband the organisation in its then form. An appropriate construct for a supporting organisation in the future has yet to be fixed, but in the meantime the museum would like to express its gratitude to all those who contributed in different ways over the years through the Friends organisation. We are delighted that the Friends have left a parting gift, providing the funds to purchase the exquisite neo-impressionist watercolour on canvas by Louis Hayet (see p. 122) and also making a contribution towards our programme of improving the framing of the permanent collection.

The Museum Mesdag

In 1996 the Museum Mesdag reopened after a major renovation and with the incorporation of the adjacent private dwelling of H.W. Mesdag (see the Van Gogh Museum Journal 1996). The publicity surrounding the reopening ensured a record attendance in 1997, but since then the visitor numbers have been disappointing. Occasional activities such as lectures have been well attended, but although it was always planned as a tranquil museum with an authentic atmosphere from the last century, it has not yet found the audience that it deserves locally nor - given the quality of its collections - has it become truly established as a national or international tourist attraction. Plans are being developed to reinvigorate the museum, for example with changing presentations and small exhibitions in combination with more activities aimed at serving and building up a loyal local audience. A full-time curator/manager will be appointed later this year. A new, fully illustrated guide to the museum was published in English and Dutch in 1999. The guide includes an introduction to the
paintings by Fred Leeman, texts on the Japanese objects by Menno Fitski and on Colenbrander by Christien Smits.

Attendance figures

From the reopening in June 1999 until December 1999, the Van Gogh Museum attracted 763,448 visitors. From 1 January to 30 September 2000 the museum has received 1,032,687 visitors. A total of 8,513 people visited the Museum Mesdag in 1999

John Leighton
Director
[Theo van Gogh and the 19th-century art trade]

fig. 1
Theo van Gogh in 1887, Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum (Vincent van Gogh Foundation)
**Theo van Gogh and the 19th-century art trade: introduction**

In the summer of 1999, following its complete renovation and extension, the Van Gogh Museum devoted its reopening exhibition to the life and work of Theo van Gogh. *Theo van Gogh, 1857-1891: art dealer, collector and brother of Vincent* - which was developed in collaboration with the Musée d'Orsay in Paris - paid homage to a man who may be regarded as one of the most important founders of the Van Gogh Museum and its collection, albeit indirectly.

In the exhibition, Theo van Gogh's life as a collector and his activities as a dealer for Boussod, Valadon & Cie. were set within the context of the time. Unlike the modernist approach, with its focus on the description of (the history) of the avant-garde, this method produces not a neat linear development, but rather a complex picture with room for interplay between traditional and progressive art forms.

An exhibition about an art dealer and collector is no everyday occurrence. However, the research required for the show can be said to fit into a specific art historical tradition in which the central concern is not the form, content or function of the work of art, but rather its production and distribution, and the social environment in which it was created. A special field of study within this more exogenous approach is the study of the art market and its operation. One of the pioneering works in this area has for many years been Harrison and Cynthia White's 1965 publication, *Canvases and careers: institutional change in the French painting world*. The Whites' broad, sociologically based methodology has been considerably modified in recent times, partly as a result of the introduction of new social, economic or history-related methods, and/or the demarcation of the subject according to thematic, chronological or geographical criteria. The more traditional, biographical or monographic approach also remains an alternative. Here, the aim is to present the art dealer in his time, using as a resource the information acquired through the type of broad-based investigation mentioned above.

In order to gain insight into the current state of research on the 19th-century art market, the Van Gogh Museum organised a symposium in conjunction with the Theo van Gogh exhibition; entitled *The art trade in the 19th century*, it was held on 1 and 2 July 1999. Eight scholars presented papers on a variety of subjects within the field. Seven of these are published, in slightly modified form, in this volume of the *Van Gogh Museum Journal*. One author, Martha Ward, preferred not to make her lecture (‘Art critics and art dealers in late 19th-century Paris’) available for inclusion. Two further essays, by Monique Nonne and Aaron Sheon, respectively, complement the symposium papers.

These writings all attest to the breadth of the current investigation into the 19th-century art market. They can be divided into three related groups. The first is chiefly concerned with Theo van Gogh: Chris Stolwijk describes the young man's apprenticeship at Goupil's in The Hague, while Richard Thomson considers the tactics Theo, as a full-fledged art dealer in Paris, later employed in order to bring work to the attention of collectors and artists. Monique Nonne surveys Theo's clientele and Aaron Sheon describes his activities as a print publisher. The contributions by Patricia Mainardi and Linda Whiteley offer a wide-ranging view of the role of copies and replicas in the art world and the increasingly important role prints played in promoting artists. Finally, Caroline Durand-Ruel Godfroy and Frances Fowle discuss
two other art dealers who played a major role in this period - Paul Durand-Ruel in Paris and Alexander Reid in the United Kingdom - and Madeleine Fidell-Beaufort examines the emerging art trade in America.

Finally, the editors of the *Van Gogh Museum Journal* would like to thank the authors for releasing their texts for publication.

*Chris Stolwijk*
fig. 1
Goupil & Cie. in The Hague (Plaats 20), The Hague, Gemeentearchief
An art dealer in the making: Theo van Gogh in The Hague

Chris Stolwijk

Introduction

In recent years Theo van Gogh's youth, his years as an art dealer in Paris and his contribution to the development of modern art have all been the subject of extensive study. Far less is known about his formative years (1873-79) as the youngest employee at Goupil's in The Hague, a period which would make its mark on his later activity. This lacuna in Theo's biography is easily explained. Although many family documents for his childhood years have been preserved - providing a fairly accurate picture of his emotional evolution - and a relatively large amount of archive material exists on his ventures in Paris, there is only scanty information on his early career in The Hague. For this period the biographer must resort to Vincent's early correspondence, where evidence of Theo's professional development can sometimes be gleaned from between the lines, and to secondary sources and data principally connected with the 'climate' in which Theo worked. However, since this material does not enable us to give a precise account of Theo's early career, the following will set his years in The Hague in the broader context of the Dutch art market and the city's artistic life that time.

The young art dealer

Alongside his talent, insight, drive and education, chance played a role in Theo's career. At a time when Dutch society was still subtly configured by class distinctions and the labour market dominated by a traditional structure in which family connections determined profession, Theo's background as the nephew of three major Dutch art dealers was the deciding factor in his choice of vocation. In 1873 Theo's father, Reverend Theodorus van Gogh (1822-1885), had little problem persuading his brothers Vincent (1820-1888) - Uncle Cent - and Hendrik (1814-1877) - Uncle Hein - to arrange a suitable apprenticeship for his son, who had proved more practical than academic, as an employee at the latter's Brussels art gallery.

Vincent, who in similar fashion had started what would ultimately be a failed career as an art dealer at Goupil & Cie. in The Hague in 1869, was delighted that he and Theo would henceforth be working in the same 'splendid business'; he predicted a fine future for his brother if he was 'tenacious' [3/3]. Vincent was prepared to give that future a helping hand, playing his part in the direction of Theo's education through an unremitting stream of advice about matters of art history. Looking back in July

1887, Theo wrote to his then-fiancée Johanna Bonger (1862-1925) that Vincent had taken him under his wing during these early years and had passed on his love of art.\(^2\)

With his brother already an impassioned mentor in the field of art history, Theo's transfer to Goupil & Cie. in The Hague in November 1873 meant that he would now be working for one of the most prestigious galleries in the country (fig. 1), and at a time that was particularly exciting for Dutch art dealing in general. The opening of Goupil's lavish branch in The Hague in 1861 had resulted from the association of Goupil & Cie.'s owners, Adolphe Goupil (1806-1893) and Léon Boussod (1826-1896), with Theo's Uncle Cent. Since the 1820s Goupil had built up a monopoly in the print trade; in the 1840s the firm began
serving contemporary painting and for a long time the business had been in search of new channels of distribution. Vincent van Gogh, a dealer in The Hague since 1840 and a specialist in the field of present-day Dutch art and French painting of the juste milieu, could provide just what was needed.

Once Uncle Cent had moved to Paris in 1862, The Hague gallery was managed in succession by his brothers Hendrik Vincent (until the summer of 1863) and Eduard Reinhold (1841-1867). In 1867 Hermanus Gijsbertus Tersteeg (1845-1927) (fig. 2), who had already been working in The Hague for several years, was appointed gérant. Together with his brother Vincent, Tersteeg can be regarded as Theo's most important mentor, instructing him at an early age in the ins and outs of the art dealer's trade. Until his retirement in 1914, this energetic dealer steered the firm's policy for almost 40 years. Under Tersteeg's management The Hague branch grew into the most important company of its kind in the Netherlands, and played a prominent role in the further professionalisation and internationalisation of the Dutch art market.

[Anon.], ‘Adolphe Goupil,’ *Art Journal* (1893), p. 3L.


Goupil & Cie. offered its young employees good career opportunities, as Vincent stressed to his younger brother [3/3]. A number of renowned art dealers - Michael Knoedler (1823-1878), Ernest Gambart (1814-1902) and Elbert Jan van Wisselingh (1848-1912)⁶ - had, like Theo, been employed at Goupil's from an early age. Although Theo was never able to establish an independent gallery - to his great chagrin and in sharp contrast to the colleagues mentioned above - he did enjoy a steady career. Following his apprenticeships in Brussels (1873) and The Hague (1873-1879), he moved to Paris in 1879. Two years later, in 1881, he was appointed gérant of Goupil's oldest establishment in Paris, at 19, Boulevard Montmartre, at the age of just 23.

The Hague as an art centre

When Theo started work at Goupil & Cie. in The Hague the Dutch art market was experiencing a period of unprecedented growth. Appreciation for contemporary Dutch works had gradually increased after 1830, following 150 years of stagnation and even decline, when business had flagged and only a marginal market existed for trade in older art and top pieces by renowned contemporary masters.⁷ Growing demand for modern pictures and considerable expansion in art production meant a more prominent role for art dealers, who sought to structure supply and demand in a burgeoning market. The last quarter of the 19th century even experienced what might be described as a mass market for contemporary art; more art dealers were active in the Netherlands than ever before.

The Hague was the perfect place for Goupil & Cie. to thrive, and for a young inquiring art dealer to further his education through visits to museums and exhibitions. Although The Hague was no metropolis, as a result of positive economic developments it enjoyed substantial growth during the second half of the 19th century. Theo was able to experience at first-hand the city's assumption of metropolitan elegance, as it became an art centre of national significance.⁸

at Plaats 20, which had housed the gallery since 1875, was sold and the remaining stock auctioned by Kleykamp (The Hague) on 12 June 1917.


7 Unlike France, where the government played a central role in the distribution of new works, the Netherlands had had an art market in which products had been traded with relative ease since the late 16th century. See Annemieke Hoogenboom, De stand des kunstenaars: De positie van kunstchilders in Nederland in de eerste helft van de negentiende eeuw, Leiden 1993, pp. 129-56, and Stolwijk, op. cit. (note 4), pp. 187-221.

8 For the history of The Hague in the 19th century see P.R.D. Stokvis, De wording van modern Den Haag: De stad en haar bevolking van de Franse Tijd tot de Eerste Wereldoorlog, Zwolle 1987, pp. 11-20.
The Hague was a magnet for artists, thanks to its location near the sea and the Dutch polders, the presence of a substantial group of major collectors and the establishment of a large number of important cultural institutions - museums, a drawing academy (fig. 3), galleries and the artists' society Pulchri Studio. The city had traditionally accommodated a considerable colony of painters. Well-known Hague School artists such as Johannes Bosboom, the brothers Jacob, Thijs and Willem Maris, and Johan Hendrik Weissenbruch all lived in the city, as did Frederik Hendrik Kaemmerer, who would eventually cause a stir in Paris with his pretty 18th-century costume pieces, and lesser-known artists such as the Verveer brothers Sam, Mauritz and Elchanon.

At the beginning of the 1870s a large number of new painters settled in the court capital, including Bernard Blommers, Jozef Israëls, Anton Mauve and Hendrik Willem Mesdag. Their arrival heralded the dawn of a new golden age for Dutch art in general and The Hague art world in particular.9 These artists, who became known as the Hague School, used accurate studies of nature to transform Dutch 17th-century realism and their most important source of inspiration, the works of the Barbizon School, into a new painterly idiom that would dominate the contemporary art scene from the mid-1870s onward. In their letters, Theo and Vincent praised the work of many of these painters, including Israëls, the Maris brothers and Mauve. In June 1879, for example, Vincent wrote to Theo: ‘A painting by Mauve or Maris or Israëls says more and says it more clearly than nature herself’ [151/130].

The newcomers met at Pulchri Studio, where over the years they filled the most important offices on the society's board. Pulchri was the ideal breeding ground for their ‘explicit sense of artistic solidarity.’10 The society endeavoured to promote ‘the visual arts in general, and the

---


interests of artists in particular,’ and to foster ‘the artistic sense’ by organising exhibitions and art viewings.\textsuperscript{11} Pulchri Studio was particularly famous for the latter which, according to one critic, ‘always [held] an exceptional attraction’ for the public.\textsuperscript{12} Theo probably did not attend any of these events, as they were mainly for artists and art-lovers from higher social circles. However, Tersteeg, who was on friendly terms with many Hague School artists, was a welcome guest and he may well have informed Theo about them. Moreover, Theo could have visited the exhibitions organised by the association in 1875 and 1876. In 1875 its galleries in the Hofje van Nieuwkoop on the Fluwelen Burgwal displayed an ‘exhibition with drawings’; a year later the works on view were ‘paintings destined for the Paris exhibition.’ Among the shows Theo could not afford to miss were the ‘Tentoonstellingen van Levende Meesters (Exhibitions of Living Masters)’ - the so-called ‘Driejaarlijksche’ or triennial exhibitions of contemporary art. These were held at the Teekenacademie on the Prinsesgracht from May through June in 1875 and 1878. Such large sales exhibitions had taken place in major Dutch cities since 1808. Until about 1850 they offered contemporary painters one of the few opportunities to show new work, thereby considerably increasing the public’s exposure and access to the latest in art. By the 1870s, however, they had long been failing to meet the needs of artists and art lovers. Distribution was now largely effected through more specialised channels. Artists' societies, such as Arti et Amicitiae in Amsterdam and Pulchri Studio, and art dealers provided a extensive circuit of similar, small-scale and highly exclusive exhibitions. Nevertheless the Dutch Salon continued to play a modest role in the presentation and distribution of contemporary art until the First World War. During Theo's time in The Hague it still formed the city's cultural high point.

In the halls of the Teekenacademie in 1875 Theo would have been able to view 473 works of art by 280 contemporary painters from the Netherlands and abroad, including Bernard Blommers, Adolphe-William Bouguereau, Charles Landelle, Jacob Maris and Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema. Although there were so many pictures on display, various critics, including Johan Gram, perceived a clear theme amongst the entries: ‘One peculiarity of this salon that one may mention is that one finds snow and mothers with children in great abundance. Elsewhere I

\textsuperscript{11} Reglement van het Genootschap Pulchri Studio, [The Hague] 1872, article 1. Unlike its elegant Amsterdam counterpart, Arti et Amicitiae, which annually organised substantial exhibitions of the work of ‘living masters,’ Pulchri was for many years mainly a social meeting place with a vigorous and interesting club life.

have called it a “snowy” exhibition, for last winter's frozen rain has enticed our St Luke's brethren to such a degree with its wet pitch effect and rich contrast that one finds landscapes, figures, sheep, oxen, in short everything in the snow, even a courting couple whose warm love is not quenched by either snow or cold.’

Nevertheless the critic concluded with the words: ‘There is more than enough choice; and when so many exhibitions are later recorded for posterity, the 1875 one in The Hague will be distinguished in that series by golden letters in our art calendar.’

For Goupil & Cie. the period of the Levende Meesters exhibition was a busy one. The firm regularly lent a considerable number of works by masters with whom it did business. The exhibitions thus formed a lucrative, albeit local, sales market where many works were sold over the years.

---

Many works were also sold at the annual exhibitions of the Hollandsche Teeken-Maatschappij (Dutch Drawing Society), which were held in The Hague from 1876 onwards in the months August to September. This association was founded by a number of Goupil's best-selling Hague School artists - Blommers, Bosboom, Israëls, Mesdag, Jacob and Willem Maris and Anton Mauve - for the purpose of drawing the public's attention to the watercolour as an independent medium. It is no longer possible to deduce the real extent of the gallery's involvement in the Teeken-Maatschappij's foundation. Clearly, however, Goupil's Hague branch was closely involved in the project: Tersteeg was the society's secretary for many years, and in that capacity he was responsible for organising the annual exhibitions - for which he could freely draw on the firm's stock.

These exhibitions were particularly successful. The press praised the consistently high quality of the entries and the shows' elegant setting, as in 1876: 'The extremely graceful salon, decorated with flowers, carpets and draperies, holds 120 drawings. The majority outstanding thanks to their size and import, watercolours whose masterly treatment splendidly illuminates the strength of Dutch painters in this discipline.'

As Tersteeg's employee Theo probably carried out a variety of tasks connected with the organisation of the exhibitions, and he would certainly have visited these important events, where the latest drawings by renowned masters, Dutch and foreign, were on display. In August 1877 he tried to persuade Vincent to visit the society's second exhibition with him. However, not even a money order could convince his impecunious older brother to travel to The Hague [125/105].

In his spare time Theo could visit a number of public art collections in The Hague. The most important of these was found in the Mauritshuis, the Royal Cabinet of Paintings, whose charming, intimate character and exceptional range of Old Masters pictures had made it a popular venue already in the early 19th century. Soon after Theo arrived in The Hague Vincent urged him to go 'to the museum often,' writing: 'it is good that you know old painters, too' [15/12]. In the same letter he also advised Theo to write and tell him which artists he liked the most, 'both the old and the new.' In the Mauritshuis Theo could admire many of the most famous works of the Golden Age. Masterpieces such as Carel Fabritius's *Goldfinch* (fig. 4), Paulus Potter's *Young bull*, Rembrandt's *Anatomy lesson of Dr Tulp* and Johannes Vermeer's *View of Delft* must have particularly appealed to him.

Theo kept his brother informed of his museum visits in his letters. At the beginning of September 1875, for example, Vincent replied that he would have very much liked to have seen the painting 'in question' by Jan Symonsz Pynas that Theo had told him about [42/35]. Theo's activities increased his interest in old (Dutch) paintings and his knowledge of the subject. His print collection, which he started on Vincent's advice and assembled in close consultation with his brother, also contained

---

14 [Anon.], 'EerstententoonstellingderHaagscheTeeken-Maatschappij,' *Kunstkronijk N.S.* 18 (1876), p. 44: 'Dezeer smaakvol, met bloemen, tapijten en draperieën ingerichte salon bevat 120 teekeningen. De meesten uitstekend door omvang en beteekenis, aquarellen wier meesterlijke behandeling de kracht der Nederlandse schilders in dit kunstvak schitterend in het licht stelt.'

15 Theo may have been referring to the panel *Mary and John at the cross*, which the museum had acquired in 1874; see Mauritshuis: the royal cabinet of paintings. *Illustrated general catalogue*, The Hague 1977, p. 188, no. 131.
As a Goupil employee Theo came into daily contact with contemporary painting - of the Barbizon and Hague Schools - that had been inspired by the celebrated Dutch works of the 17th century; an interest in and understanding of this art was therefore essential.

For contemporary art in The Hague Theo could visit the Museum van Moderne Kunst. From 1871 to 1881 this small museum was housed in the former home of an art collector at Korte Beestenmarkt 9, a continuation of the Lange Beestenmarkt where Theo lived. In addition to pieces connected with the history of the city and owned by the municipality, the museum contained works that belonged to The Hague's Vereeniging tot het oprigten van een Museum voor Moderne Kunst (Association for the Foundation of a Museum of Modern Art). Thus, on his doorstep, Theo had an opportunity to see pictures by the Dutch romantics and other artists from the middle of the century - works such as Bosboom's *St Peters Church in Leiden*, Wijnand Nuyen's *The old mill in winter* (fig. 5) and Charles Rochussen's *The suspicious house*.

As a centre for the arts The Hague accommodated various important galleries. The Koninklijke Bazaar in the Zeestraat, opened in 1843, was a renowned establishment where Theo could have seen a permanent exhibition of contemporary painting, alongside a wide range of curiosities and antiques. The Bazaar was typical of those establishments that combined the sale of works of art and decorative objects, still the custom in the art world around 1850. However, by the 1870s dealers were increasingly fitting out elegant galleries where an orderly selection of contemporary art could be viewed at leisure - a far cry from the crowded halls of the Levende Meesters shows. By presenting pictures by artists working in a similar manner as an
ensemble, art dealers were able to give contemporary art an exclusive character it had nearly lost as a result of the jumbled installation at the Driejaarlijksche. On Lange Poten, for example, not far from Goupil's establishment on the Plaats, there was the Koninklijke Nederlandsche Boek-en Runsthandel Couvéé, which boasted a ‘gallery with top light’ where permanent exhibitions of contemporary paintings from stock were held. From 1876 Theo could also have visited an art dealer of Amsterdam origin, Hendrik Jan van Wisselingh (1816-1884), father of the more well-known Elbert Jan. In 1876 Van Wisselingh's ‘relatively small house’ on Westeinde housed an exhibition
with artworks ‘that one does not often see in the Netherlands: Corot, Diaz, Dupré.’
Van Wisselingh, one of the earliest champions of Barbizon, was highly regarded by
many artists of the Hague School; he also kept works by them permanently in stock.

**Goupil in The Hague**

The favourable artistic climate in The Hague offered Theo countless opportunities
for viewing (contemporary) art. And from November 1873 he was also confronted
by an immense quantity of new works at the ‘consummately’ neat and ‘suitably
appointed’ gallery on the Plaats. Goupil's flexible commercial policy, which
combined the sale of paintings, drawings and illustrated books, generated a lively
trade in works by Dutch and foreign masters, although the most progressive art of
the day was virtually excluded from the premises. The heterogeneous selection of
art objects executed in diverse techniques and of varying price made the establishment
a luxury department store for exclusive craft products.

In order to gain and maintain a position in the expanding market(s) for
contemporary art, it was essential for dealers to effectively promote the work and
the artist who made it; in other words, to increase the visibility and saleability of
what was on offer. Goupil's was able to benefit from the knowledge the firm had
built up dealing in prints, and the new technologies it had already employed, such
as the photogravure and photography. The establishment successfully marketed
prints, (artists’) albums, reproductions, illustrated magazines, catalogues and special
series such as the *Galérie photographique* and the *Musée Goupil*.

The Hague branch of the company offered its clientele a wide range of prints and
reproductions after works by old and modern masters in various price categories.
The most popular genre painters from the Paris Salon, such as Bouguereau and
Jean-Léon Gérôme (fig. 6), were the best represented; it was not until the end of the
19th

---

19 *Kunstkronijk* N.S. 18 (1976), p. 79, quoted after Heijbroek and Wouthuysen, op. cit. (note
6, p. 23; for H.J. Van Wisselingh see pp. 17-25.
20 [Anon], ‘Berigten, mededeelingen, enz.,’ *De Nederlandsche Spectator* (17 August 1861).
21 Thomson, op. cit. (note 1), pp. 69-78. The Hague branch of Goupil's had access to its own
restoration workshop and the firm also acted as a publisher.
22 It was not until March 1888 that a consignment of French impressionists was displayed at
the Hague branch. This consignment had been arranged by Theo; see ibid., pp. 81 and 201,
note 90. At the time there was hardly any interest in the Netherlands in this type of modern
painting; see Benno Tempel, “Such absurdity can never deserve the name of Art”;
23 For these series see P.-L. Renié, ‘Goupil & Cie. à l'ère industrielle: la photographie appliquée
à la reproduction des oeuvres d'art,’ in Hélène Lafont-Couturier (ed.), *Etat des lieux*, vol. 1,
Bordeaux 1994, pp. 96-97.
century that work by painters of the Barbizon and Hague schools appeared in print form.\textsuperscript{24} Once Theo had proved his worth as an employee, Tersteeg made him responsible for the print department; from 1876 to 1879 Theo made annual trips with new merchandise from stock, the so-called \textit{nouveautés}, to business associates around the country.\textsuperscript{25}

As a print dealer Theo profited from the knowledge he had acquired about (reproduced) graphic works in preceding years. In 1873 he had started his own print collec-

\textsuperscript{24} Verhoogt, op. cit. (note 5), pp. 23-24.
\textsuperscript{25} Stolwijk, op. cit. (note 1), pp. 49-50. Theo made extensive use of Goupil's stock catalogues, for example, \textit{Extrait du catalogue général de Goupil & Cie., imprimeurs et éditeurs à Paris} of 1874, and \textit{Gravures, photogravures, lithographies et photographies} of 1877, in which the items are classified according to technique (and price).
tion, at Vincent's instigation. Their letters bear witness to this early passion for collecting. Both brothers enthusiastically sought out prints after Dutch Old Masters and contemporary artists such as Jean François Millet, Israëls and Philip Sadée.  

Theo continued to be attracted to such works in his later career. As a collector he bought many prints, while as gérant of the Goupil branch on the Boulevard Montmartre he endeavoured to further stimulate the trade in ‘illustrations.’ At the end of the 1880s, for example, he handled the publication of various important albums of prints for Boussod, Valadon & Cie. These included George William Thornley's *Quinze lithographies d'après Degas* (1889), Paul Gauguin's set of ten zincographs (1889) and August Lauzet's *Adolphe Monticelli: vingt planches d'après les tableaux originaux de Monticelli et deux portraits de l'artiste* (1890).  

Although the importance of print sales must not be underestimated, turnover at Goupil's branch in The Hague was largely determined by the growing commerce in contemporary painting. Unlike the majority of Dutch art dealers, who concentrated on ‘average’ works for the domestic market, Goupil's specialised in the sale of contemporary masterpieces both nationally and internationally. To this end the firm combined a highly speculative commercial business strategy with more traditional forms of business, such as low-risk commissions and auctions. By explicitly investing in the work of a limited number of artists - an approach derived from the print trade - Goupil endeavoured to monopolise the market. To meet the specific demands of its extensive clientele the firm put contemporary masters on contract, engaging them to supply their work to the firm at ‘fixed’ prices. These pieces were then resold in the relatively short term, with an average profit margin of around 30 to 40 per cent.  

In the 1860s and 70s Goupil's in The Hague dealt in important works by established Salon painters such as Bouguereau, Alfred de Neuville and Gérôme, all of whom were highly regarded by Dutch collectors. These collectors were also interested in cheaper works by artists such as Benjamin-Eugène Fichel, who was popular for his 18th-century costume pieces; Léon Perrault, known for his paintings in the style of his master Bouguereau; and Félix Ziem, whose seascapes found a ready market. The knowledge Theo acquired of these artists' work in The Hague proved useful to him in Paris, where he continued to occasionally deal in their paintings.  

In contrast to their feelings about French academic painting, Theo (and Vincent) conceived a great passion for the works of Barbizon School masters such as Camille Corot, Alexandre Gabriel Decamps, Narcisse Diaz de la Peña, Charles François Daubigny and Charles Troyon. Theo must have thus regretted the fact that their work was only sporadically traded while he was working in The Hague. Corot's work did not find a market in the Netherlands until after 1880. Theo was partially responsible for these contracts between art dealers and painters in Holland see, especially, Dieuwertje Dekkers, ‘“Zeer verkoopbaar”: Zakelijke afspraken tussen de Hollandse schilder en zijn kunsthandelaar (1860-1915),’ in J.L. de Jong and E.A. Koster (eds.), *Onverwacht bijeengebracht*, Groningen 1996, pp. 33-40, and Stolwijk, op. cit. (note 4), pp. 208-15. Until about 1900 Goupil bought more than five works directly from around 40 artists.
for these sales: in Paris he was Goupil's most important dealer in Corot, and in this capacity supplied several paintings by him to his former employer.\textsuperscript{30}

During the 1860s Goupil's in The Hague still sold mainly genre pieces, landscapes, cityscapes, village views and seascapes by the Dutch painters of around 1850 - Alexander Bakker Korff, Charles Leickert and Cornelis Springer. From about 1870 Tersteeg began to invest cautiously in work by the future masters of the Hague School. It proved to be a winning move. Initially the main interest came from foreign collectors. However, from the mid-1870s important Dutch collectors also shifted their attention from French academic painting to more modern work by their compatriots.\textsuperscript{31} In subsequent decades The Hague branch of Goupil became the most important supplier of paintings by artists such as Blommers, Israëls, Jacob and Willem Maris, Mauve and Hendrik Jan Weissenbruch. Jacob Maris, for example, a painter whose work was frequently discussed and praised by Theo and Vincent, turned over his entire production exclusively to Tersteeg (fig. 7). From 1873 to 1879 the dealer handled several hundred of

\textsuperscript{30} For example: \textit{Les deux bouleaux} (no. 17087), \textit{Soleil couchant} (no. 18366), \textit{Bords de rivière} (no. 20440), \textit{Ruines à Rome} (no. 20649), \textit{Etude côteau boise} (no. 20701) and \textit{Figure} (no. 20857). The numbers refer to the ledgers of Boussod, Valadon & Cie.

\textsuperscript{31} See Dieuwertje Dekkers, “‘Where are the Dutchmen?’: promoting the Hague School in America, 1875-1900,” \textit{Simiolus} 24 (1996), pp. 54-73.

\textit{Van Gogh Museum Journal 2000}
Jacob Maris's paintings, drawings and watercolours.\textsuperscript{32} Despite his great admiration for the Hague School artists, Theo only occasionally managed to sell their canvases in Paris; in France there was little interest in the pictures he had come to know so well and appreciate during his apprenticeship.

**Epilogue**

During his time in The Hague Theo was taken under Tersteeg's wing, a man about whom Vincent wrote in 1875: ‘Keep [your] regard for Mr Tersteeg; you will see later on, better than now, that he deserves it’ [48/38]. Tersteeg had great confidence in Theo's abilities, as he regularly intimated to his employee's parents.\textsuperscript{33} Although Vincent became extremely negative towards Tersteeg in the 1880s - in March 1882 he wrote to his brother: ‘Theo, remain a little better than H.G.T.! H.G.T. was better than now when I first knew him’ [210/181] - Theo maintained friendly relations with him throughout his career. In 1890 he took his former mentor into his confidence after a serious conflict with his superiors in Paris, probably connected with his attempts to open up new markets for the most progressive art of the period. Tersteeg advised Theo: ‘Above all take care to do no business that Valadon could rightly seize on as a weapon against you. In the event of doubt it is better to refrain [...] you should start by being far less concerned by all the issues and arguments and simply continue to do business in a manner, and employing the knowledge, that has seemed most appropriate to you for the Boulevard. Be brave, stay calm and carry on prudently [...] this will also continue to be the best rule of life for you.’\textsuperscript{34} Theo's ‘courageous’ investments of 1885 in impressionist and post-impressionist paintings, his ‘calm’ and ‘prudent’ dealings in the work of established masters, and his efforts to promote and modernise the print trade, show that as gérant of the Goupil branch on the Boulevard Montmartre he employed the modus operandi had encountered daily in The Hague.

\textsuperscript{32} On the relationship between Maris and Goupil's see Bart Boon, 'Jacob Maris en kunsthandel Goupil,' *Jong Holland* 15 (1999), no. 3, pp. 15-27 and 63 (summary).

\textsuperscript{33} Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum, Vincent van Gogh Foundation, family correspondence, Theodorus van Gogh to Theo, 7 January 1874, letter b 2681 V/1982.

\textsuperscript{34} Loc. cit., H.G. Tersteeg to Theo, 7 April 1890, letter b 1368 V/1962.

*Van Gogh Museum Journal 2000*
fig. 7
Jacob Maris, *The mill*, 1879, The Hague, Museum Mesdag
fig. 1
Trading the visual: Theo van Gogh, the dealer among the artists

Richard Thomson

The 1999 retrospective exhibition on Theo van Gogh's career put our knowledge of his life on a much firmer factual footing, set his activities as an art dealer in the context of the Parisian art world of the 1880s and examined the collection that he and Vincent built up. The exhibition itself consisted of artworks Theo himself had handled, traced through the ledgers of the company for which he worked, Goupil & Cie., which became Boussod, Valadon & Cie after 1884. That change of proprietorship was important, bringing with it a distinct shift in the business. The new owners, Etienne Boussod and René Valadon, made many changes. In 1887 they opted not to renew their contract with the elderly academic painter William Bouguereau, one of the winners of the Prix de Rome in 1850, whose work had been a money-spinning staple for Goupil's since he had first signed an agreement with the company some two decades earlier. That same year, they made a contractual arrangement with Léon Lhermitte, a painter of rural life whose career had been established by the French state's purchase of his Payment of the harvesters (Paris, Musée d'Orsay) at the Salon of 1882. They also held a large three-day auction in May 1887 at which they sold over 500 works, dropping old stock and raising ready capital for fresh purchases.

The company needed to upgrade and modernise its holdings in the face of competition from other Paris art dealers, notably the successful and entrepreneurial Georges Petit. Finally, it was from the spring of 1887 that Theo van Gogh, gérant of the Boussod & Valadon branch at 19, Boulevard Montmartre, began to buy impressionist paintings in substantial numbers, chiefly by Degas and Monet.

Thus, from this time onward, Theo van Gogh was a dealer in modern art. However, he had been working for Goupil's since 1873, and was thoroughly trained in their business practices and policy. The purpose of this essay is to explore two issues that are not unrelated. Did Theo's activities as an art dealer have any impact on painters beyond the buying, selling and promoting of their work? And, if this was the case, to what extent did Theo's long-standing experience with the company influence the advice and assistance he gave that might have shaped artistic practice? how he was

fig. 2
Paul Gauguin, Les vieilles filles (Arles), zincograph, 1889, The Art Institute of Chicago


Van Gogh Museum Journal 2000
able to give advice or assistance that shaped artistic practice? At different stages in their respective
careers Vincent made contrasting comments about Theo. In the autumn of 1884 he told his younger brother that he considered him very much a Goupil man, shaped by the company's business ethic [465/380]. Yet in his last letter to Theo, written in July 1890, he stated that he considered him more than a dealer, and in fact someone who had exercised a creative influence on his painting [907/652]. To unravel what seems to be a paradox, we need to investigate some of the ways in which Theo interacted with artists and how he may have had an impact upon their work.

**Replicas, the market and artistic identity**

Replicas - meaning in this context both copies and variants on works of art - were common in the 19th century, and for a variety of reasons. Some artists were fascinated by the creative act of reconsidering and reinvigorating a composition, perhaps even one initially designed many years before. Both Ingres and Degas, for example, relished the opportunity to work afresh on an earlier idea, at one level at least 'in pursuit of perfection.' Another incentive was to satisfy the demands of collectors. Owning a major work was a matter of prestige, and a celebrated painter, such as Cabanel, might be requested to produce one or more replicas of an important painting - for example of his Birth of Venus, of which at least three were made. From another point of view, a variant on an established composition, a particular pose or grouping, or - more loosely - a typical subject, made for simplicity of effort on the part of both artist and dealer. Repeating existing ideas allowed the painter to produce his canvases more quickly, while for dealers it was easier to sell proven images that had the stamp of an accredited artist than those that deviated from the customary. This was a particularly ‘Goupil’ practice. A number of artists closely linked with the gallery regularly made pictures with this ‘production-line’ quality. This could take various forms. Bouguereau did not so much repeat images as adhere to a visual identity that was recognisably his own; Gérôme both recycled the same composition with minimal changes and crafted designs around well-worn poses; and Lhermitte produced replicas of the same composition in different media. This was the case with his First communion, a successful pastel of 1888 (present location unknown) that was copied in an oil painting two years late, both of them passing through Boussod & Valadon's books. Adjustments might be made in this kind of work, whether for aesthetic or commercial reasons, but the fundamental economic unit remained the same.

---


There has been much discussion in recent art history about Monet’s use of pairs and the origins of his series method. Certainly his practice of using pairs dates back to the 1860s, and the Gare Saint-Lazare paintings of 1877 are indeed a set of variants. The ‘multiple’ in his work thus pre-dates his association with Theo van Gogh, which effectively began in 1887. However, among the ten Antibes canvases the artist exhibited at his first one-man show at Boussod & Valadon in June 1888 was a pair of paintings representing the same bank of pine trees with the Mediterranean sparkling beyond: Pines trees at Cap d’Antibes (Switzerland, private collection) and Under the pines trees at the end of the day (USA, private collection). While these two pictures, painted in different lights, clearly belong to the plein-air rather than the studio tradition, they nevertheless use a repetitive mode not far from, say, Gérôme’s: Monet has simply made a slight visual difference to what is essentially the same image. The artist repeated this gambit several times in the exhibition he shared with Rodin at the Galerie Georges Petit the following year. His increasing use of the replica tactic at just this time is surely significant. Neither Theo nor any other dealer may have explicitly asked him to paint these close variants, but the way this practice became entrenched during these months, as dealers competed fiercely for his pictures, may well have resulted from a new understanding that the art market was quite accustomed to the replica. Indeed, the suc-

---

7 See, for example, John House, Monet: nature into art, New Haven & London 1986, chapter 12.
cessful sale of both versions of the pine tree motif during the course of the Antibes exhibition may well have whetted his appetite for the procedure - appropriately enough while showing ‘chez Goupil,’ the company so geared to marketing reproduced works of art.30

One might even examine Vincent's own creation of replicas in this light - again a subject about which much has been written.11 Vincent had various sources of inspiration and motives for producing copies and variants of his own work. Knowledge of his native Dutch tradition meant that he was well aware of the repetitive nature of, for example, Jan van Goyen's pictures, while motifs such as the bedroom were copied as gifts for his family rather than for any commercial purpose. That said, it is worth speculating on the extent to which Vincent's repetitions increased after he left Paris and settled in Provence. Of course, being far from family and friends - whom he naturally wished to see and own his work - it was necessary to make copies to send to them. But by making these copies he was also selecting what he saw as the key works in his ‘oeuvre,’ the images that he considered gave real substance to his achievement. In addition, the two years he had spent with Theo in Paris (March 1886-February 1888) had undoubtedly reminded him of the character and demands of the art market - in which he had himself worked as an employee of Goupil from 1869 to 1876. His time in Paris would have brought the market back into focus for him, not only through his daily contact with Theo, but also thanks to discussions with others in the business - from the colour merchant Tanguy to the Scottish dealer Alexander Reid. Indeed, Vincent's own neologism for the painters in his circle - the petit boulevard - was an economic one, differentiating the likes of Gauguin, Anquetin and himself, who had little or no market profile, from grand boulevard artists such as Monet and Degas, who had by now established themselves as saleable artists with major dealers. Vincent's knowledge of commercial practice, moulded by Goupil and sharpened on the petit boulevard, meant he recognised the value of having an identifiable ‘name’ and a recognisably individual set of motifs. The contemporary artists he most admired, among them Millet and Meissonier, had both. His determination to produce ‘an oeuvre’ came from his own artistic ambition and belief in himself. His desire to have it in some sense registered, as it were to patent his creative identity, was aided by the practice of the replica. By this means both his mother and sister in the Netherlands and Theo in Paris could have versions of his Bedroom (Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum and Paris, Musée d'Orsay). Vincent's tactics for promoting his work combined the determination of the avant-garde with the habits of the more established art market.

The reproduction as a promotional gambit

Goupil's business had its origins in the reproduction of works of art. By the 1880s the company had been at the forefront of this market for half a century, moving with

10 For the sale of these paintings see John Rewald, ‘Theo van Gogh as art dealer,’ Studies in post-impressionism, New York 1986, p. 92.
the times and adopting new technologies such as photography and photogravure. The new proprietorship of Boussod & Valadon did not fundamentally change the company’s core interest in this field; they merely altered its direction to echo changing tastes and markets. Thus while the old staple photogravures of the most popular paintings from the annual Salons were gradually falling out of circulation, Boussod and Valadon actively responded by entering the burgeoning market for illustrated magazines.¹² One way or another, the reproduction of works of art remained central. Goupil's activities as a merchant of original works of art had followed his domination of the reproduction market, and came about thanks to an alliance with a Dutch art dealer, Vincent van Gogh - Theo and Vincent's ‘Uncle Cent.’ From the 1860s selling unique works and publishing reproductions went hand-in-hand. By purchasing a relatively cheap photo-gravure or other print, the client ‘bought in’ to the work of art reproduced; framed on the wall, the image revealed his admira-

---

tion for that particular painter. A low level of art collecting was thus established. It helped the dealer's grander designs both by spreading the word that such-and-such an artist was popular (and in demand) and by encouraging the buyer to eventually move up the art market and acquire authentic works - perhaps beginning with original prints such as etchings, then works on paper and, ultimately, oil paintings.

Gauguin included an album of 11 zincographs at the exhibition he staged at the Café Volpini, on the site of the Exposition Universelle, during the summer of 1889. These were available for purchase by visitors. A number of these prints either reproduced the compositions or adopted the motifs of Gauguin's paintings. Les vieilles filles (Aries), for example, was a simplified copy after a painting of the same title (figs. 1 and 2), while the Baigneuses bretonnes (Buenos-Aires, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes) was a variant on a painting Theo had displayed at 19, Boulevard Montmartre in February 1888, Gauguin having placed it on commission there. The purpose of the zincographs was frankly practical and commercial. They were intended to promote Gauguin's work, disseminate his style, develop his market identity and encourage the purchase of his paintings. This was a procedure in the Goupil mode. It thus comes as no surprise to read in one of the artist's letters to Vincent that he had made the prints 'afin de me faire connaître' and that the project was undertaken 'd'après le conseil et sous les auspices de votre frère.' And so we find Theo encouraging Gauguin and seeking to extend Boussod & Valadon's range into the most radical modern art by using one of the commercial devices he knew best: by linking the circulation of reproductions and the marketing of original works - the Goupil strategy par excellence. And one that Theo had used before: in April 1888 he had exhibited four lithographs by William Thornley after works by Degas, publishing a full album of 15 in 1889. He employed it again the next year, with the publication of 20 lithographs by Lauzet after paintings by Monticelli. Theo's method of promoting modern painting was thus deeply rooted in his company's long-standing marketing policy.

The artist-collector: art as investment and example

Another aspect of Theo's commercial activity that deserves attention is his sale of work by one artist to another. This side of his business operated in different ways. During the spring of 1887, for example, he sold a Degas drawing to Lhermitte and arranged for another Degas, a pastel over monotype, to be exchanged with Monet, apparently for a painting of Belle-Ile. Here Theo acted as an intermediary with

16 See Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum, Vincent van Gogh Foundation, family correspondence, Léon Lhermitte to Theo, 23 May 1887, b 1341 V/1962; and the letter from Monet to Theo.
Degas, who was increasingly curmudgeonly and a close acquaintance of neither Lhermitte's nor Monet's, and at the same time took practical steps to please two artists with whom Boussod & Valadon did business. On other occasions the reasons for one artist purchasing the work of another are still clearer. Jacques-Emile Blanche had known Degas as a boy, and had appeared in a group portrait the older artist had made on holiday in Dieppe in 1885. As a long-standing admirer of Degas's work it is not surprising he should have purchased the Dance rehearsal (Glasgow, The Burrell Collection) from Theo, a major painting of the mid-1870s. Likewise, Anna Boch was an appropriate buyer for Gauguin's Shepherd and shepherdess (Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts), which she acquired through Boussod & Valadon after seeing it at the 1889 Les XX exhibition. As a neo-impressionist painter herself she would have appreciated the tapestry-like surface of Gauguin's canvas, while her brother, Eugène, knew the Van Gogh brothers personally. Both Blanche, son of a celebrated doctor, and Boch, daughter of a porcelain manufacturer, were wealthy, and bought paintings consistent with their own aesthetics.

The pattern is slightly more perplexing with other sales to artists. In November 1888 the ledgers record the sale of another Gauguin painted at Pont-Aven, Pond by a road (present location unknown), to a certain Chéret. This was the poster designer Jules Chéret, several of whose vibrant images Theo had displayed at 19, Boulevard Montmartre that spring. Chéret's work - overtly commercial with its dynamic drawing and ostentatious colour - was utterly different from Gauguin's. So, too, was Henri of 21 April 1887, reprinted in Ronald Pickvance et al., exhib. cat. Monet in Holland, Amsterdam (Van Gogh Museum) 1986-87, p. 183.
17 See Six friends at Dieppe, 1885, Providence, Rhode Island School of Art and Design.
18 Rewald, op. cit. (note 10), p. 89
19 Ibid., p. 90.
20 Ibid.
Lerolle's. A well-off painter whose work balanced the influence of Puvis de Chavannes with a harmonious naturalism, Lerolle was then engaged in a mural decoration for the Hôtel de Ville in Paris: the Teaching and the Crowning of science. For him to buy in June 1889 Negresses at Martinique, one of Gauguin's exotic Caribbean paintings of 1887, again seems at least adventurous, even inconsistent. No doubt Chéret and Lerolle liked the pictures they bought. There may have been other persuasive forces at work as well, in Chéret's case the prudence of buying from a major gallery that was supporting his own work, and in Lerolle's the advice of his friend Degas, then keen on supporting Gauguin. However, commercial thinking probably also played a role. Both canvases cost only 300 francs. For these modest outlays - Monet's Antibes canvases were then selling for nine times the price - Chéret and Lerolle had made well-informed investments in new art. Just as Monet's prices had risen during the 1880s - climbing by another 20 per cent or so in Theo's hands during the course of 1887-88 - so, it might reasonably be expected, could Gauguin's. Theo's business approach with more modernist art seems to have been to encourage his clients to see it as a strategic investment, and he could note the examples of Daubigny in one generation and Monet in the next, painters whose reputations and prices had risen steadily, to prove his point. Chéret and Lerolle may well have followed his prompting and belief that Gauguin would be next in line. Gauguin himself considered sales to other artists very important, writing to Theo in July 1889 in the wake of the Lerolle purchase: ‘Je considère l'achat par les artistes comme le meilleur attendu que c'est la bonne démonstration du talent vis à vis le public.’

Flattered he may have been, but both these artist-collectors were unlikely to have been entirely innocent of speculative considerations.

The paintings Theo sold to artists seem on occasion to have had a significant impact on their own work. During the summer of 1888 John Singer Sargent worked at Calcot Mill, on the banks of the Kennet not far from Reading in Berkshire. There he painted a number of plein-air canvases,

![fig. 3](image)

Claude Monet, *La promenade (Five figures in a landscape)*, 1888, The Art Institute of Chicago

---


22 Rewald, op. cit. (note 10), p. 90.

including Dennis Miller Bunker painting at Calcot (Chicago, Terra Museum of American Art), which is almost square in format, quite varied in touch, mid-toned and with figures in contrasting poses. While visiting the Exposition Universelle in Paris in July 1889 Sargent went to his friend Monet's exhibition - shared with Rodin - at the Galerie Georges Petit. The works in the show obviously impressed him, for he purchased no. 111, La promenade (fig. 3), from Theo on 20 September - Boussod & Valadon having presumably lent the painting to Petit for the dual exhibition.  

Sargent's acquisition of that particular picture was practical. On his return from Paris he worked first at Fladbury

Rectory near Pershore. Canvases painted there show a development from those of 1888 apparently sparked off by the square La promenade. Two girls with parasols at Fladbury (fig. 4), for example, has a unified brushstroke and a higher keyed palette, and shares with the Monet a processional quality held in an almost square format.  

Theo's exhibitions and their artistic repercussions

More frequently, however, it was the paintings Theo had on show at 19, Boulevard Montmartre that had an impact on other painters' work. In January 1888 he staged the first one-man show of an impressionist artist at Boussod & Valadon. At least nine ‘articles,’ as Degas called them, were on display: pastels of female nudes at their toilette, some of them over a monotype base. Their influence on Gauguin is evident from the sheet of copies he made in his sketchbook (Paris, Musée d'Orsay), crucial evidence of this little-documented show. One of the pastels he copied also features in the Thornley album, while another - of a kneeling nude (private collection) - clearly lodged in his visual memory, for he made a variation on it with Otahi, painted in Tahiti five years later (private collection).

In May-June 1890 Theo staged a Jean-François Raffaëlli show. This exhibition had considerable import because alongside paintings and drawings some unusual sculptures were also on display. Several pieces, such as the Young housemaid (private collection), were moulded as silhouettes within an irregular frame, thus creating an open-relief sculpture intended to hang on the wall like a picture. Critics commented appreciatively on this innovation, and these works seem also to have impressed

Toulouse-Lautrec. His poster for Jane Avril's performances at the Jardin de Paris (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale), designed in 1893, frames the image in a grey ‘metallic’ border to which the head of the musician's double-bass is linked, the overall effect being very close to Raffaëlli's silhouette-sculpture. It instances such as these, then, it seems that work Theo exhibited had a creative impact on the artists who saw it. By choosing to display challenging new art and by making 19, Boulevard Montmartre a centre for innovative work, Theo's gallery took on something of the role of a creative intermediary.

**Summer 1890: Theo's stock, Vincent's responses**

Finally, it is worth asking whether the pieces Theo had on view or in stock had any influence or impact on Vincent. Once again, there are various levels at which this may have occurred. Vincent knew Daubigny's work well, both from his own experience at Goupil's and from Theo's holdings and other examples he would have seen while in

---

Parisin1886-88. Daubigny's canvases were a staple on the Paris art market, and the Goupil ledgers indicate that Theo handled almost 50, while other branches would have dealt in still more. This, coupled with the fact that the stockbooks often use only minimal titles (sometimes merely ‘paysage’!) and rarely give dimensions, means it is impossible to establish exactly which paintings Vincent might have seen.

On his return from Provence in May 1890 Vincent spent four days in Paris before travelling on to Auvers. It is reasonable to assume that during this time he visited his brother's gallery. The Daubignys listed for this period are two riverscapes, but neither motif is relevant to the pictures Vincent produced during the next two months. Nevertheless, Auvers was the village where Daubigny had lived for many years, and the younger painter demonstrably associated aspects of his work there with his dead predecessor's, painting the house where his widow still lived and mentioning him in letters. We can only speculate whether Daubigny's broadly handled panoramas of the wheatfields to the north of Auvers, painted in an elongated format (fig. 5), were known to Vincent via the art market and had an impact on his work, or whether the two painters independently found similar solutions to representing that broad open terrain.

What we do know, however, is that during the summer of 1890 Theo was trying to dispose of four over-door paintings of the seasons (Madrid, private collection) painted by Camille Pissarro in 1872 for his patron Gustave Arosa. On 5 July Theo wrote to Pissarro explaining that he had tried to sell them to the collector Émile Boïvin, his mention of trying ‘de nouveau’ prompting one to speculate whether they had been at 19, Boulevard Montmartre in May when Vincent passed through. Pissarro's canvases are long, thin panoramas of the Vexin countryside, and had Vincent seen them they would also have provided him with

---

29 These were Village au bord de l'Oise (no. 20136) and Bords de rivière, bateaux et chevaux (no. 20204), both present locations unknown. I am indebted to Chris Stolwijk for this information.

30 The two pictures of Daubigny's garden are now in Basel (Rudolf Staechelin'sche Familienstiftung) and Hiroshima (Hiroshima Museum of Art), respectively. Daubigny's relevance for Van Gogh's Auvers paintings is noted, inter alia, in Griselda Pollock, exhib. cat. Vincent van Gogh in zijn Hollandse jaren, Amsterdam (Van Gogh Museum) 1980-81, pp. 17-18.

an example of how to treat the extensive landscape around Auvers. In *Summer* (fig. 6) Pissarro employed broad zones of colour and an insistent perspective to create a sense of the expanse, much as Vincent did in *Wheatfields* (fig. 7), while his *Autumn* (fig. 8) represents crows wheeling over the crops in a way that reminds the modern viewer of the *Wheatfield with crows* (fig. 9). Such pictorial structures, it might be argued, were dictated by the lie of the land, while flocks of crows are merely typical of that particular habitat. Nevertheless, had Vincent seen Pissarro's *Four seasons* at Boussod & Valadon that May, they would have reminded him how landscapes with similar motifs can be orchestrated to vary in mood - as the ‘double square’ canvases made at Auvers so deliberately do - and also how observation of natural elements - in this case a flock of crows - might be used to accent deep space and to invest a canvas with emotion.

Such connections and speculations may seem distant from Theo van Gogh's day-to-day activities as the manager of a busy branch of Boussod & Valadon in central Paris. The works of art he handled were, in business terms,
merely commercial units to be bought at one price and sold at another, for profit. But they were also images: pictures to be looked at, admired, remembered, even used. Images, of course, were the stock-in-trade of the Goupil empire. It had been founded on and prospered through the transmission of them, whether printed or painted, replica or illustration, high art or low reproduction. Theo van Gogh served his company well by buying and selling works of art, by building up a clientele and by co-ordinating a successful business that involved established names such as Daubigny, rising stars like Monet, and challenging independents like Gauguin. There was, however, another aspect to his work, probably invisible to him at the time but more obvious to us today. In an oblique but significant way, Theo's activities had a creative impact on some of his artist contemporaries. This functioned not just by bringing work to their attention or encouraging them to buy; it might even have affected how they made their own works. In that sense, there was a creative side to Theo - just as Vincent had suspected.
fig. 1
M. Verveer, Hendrik-Willem Mesdag, The Hague, Museum Mesdag
Theo van Gogh: his clients and suppliers
Monique Nonne

With peace established in Europe at the end of the 19th century, the favourable economic climate encouraged a considerable expansion of the art market. An extension of commercial structures increased competition. To augment their influence, art dealers had to establish international networks, which took advantage of the freedom of movement of men as well as of goods. In the early 1880s Paris still maintained its place as the indisputable capital of the arts. London, however, with 108 ‘art dealers’ in 1881, was not far behind the French capital, which counted 112. Other major European cities such as Brussels and The Hague had also established their positions. Düsseldorf, Cologne, Berlin and Vienna, too, were developing art markets that could not be ignored, while the increasing importance of the United States had to be taken into consideration as well.

Employed by Goupil & Cie., Theo van Gogh arrived in Paris in 1879. Two years later he was appointed gérant of this prestigious company's branch at 19, Boulevard Montmartre. Theo had all the qualifications necessary to carry out his new responsibilities. His name was an honourable one, well known within the profession thanks to his family's relations. He already had eight years of experience, which enabled him to forge a place for himself in the closed world of French art dealers. Paris offered him the potential of a highly diversified clientele. Foreigners tended to stay there longer than in other European cities. The accounts of the Goupil firm, which was transformed into Boussod, Valadon & Cie. in 1884, provide a daily record of the transactions of the different branches. Between 1880 and 1890, during the period Theo worked there, approximately 350 clients - buyers and suppliers, professionals and amateurs - dealt with the gallery at 19, Boulevard Montmartre.

Unfortunately, an analysis of this information, along with the many but often-incomplete archival resources, can only provide a partial description of Theo's clients during these ten years. Nevertheless we are now able to see how he built up a network from his very beginnings in Brussels, never ceasing to enlarge it, especially at the end of his life when he ventured into the market for ‘modern’ art.

The art dealers' network

In a field where names mattered, businesses were most often handed down from father to son. Apprenticeships were done at an early age, either in the family firm or

1 For Paris see Almanach du commerce de Paris, and for London The post office London directory.
3 See Thomson, op. cit. (note 2), passim
4 See the list established by Chris Stolwijk of the Van Gogh Museum. This list is based on the ledgers of Goupil & Cie., which are housed in Los Angeles, Getty Center, Special Collection, Dieterle family collection of 19th century French gallery records, acc. no. 900239, Series II. Galerie Boussod Valadon, 1879-1919.
at a colleague's. This was the path followed by Vincent and Theo van Gogh, nephews of three major art dealers.\(^5\) Theo began his training in Brussels, worked next in The Hague, and then went on to Paris. Alexander Reid, Elbert Jan van Wisselingh and Harry Gladwell followed similar career paths in Glasgow, Amsterdam and London respectively. The new arrivals Obach, Schmidt and Dietrich all began by working for established dealers before opening their own galleries. Each was an ‘employee’ or a ‘salesman’ before becoming director of his own business. Over the years Theo carefully maintained the relations he had established with his colleagues and competitors in the most

---

\(^5\) These were Hendrik Vincent, known as Uncle Hein (1814-1877); Vincent, known as Uncle Cent (1820-1888); and Cornelius Marinus, known as Uncle Cor (1824-1908); see Chris Stolwijk, *Uit de schilderswereld: Nederlandse kunstschilders in de tweede helft van de negentiende eeuw*, Leiden 1998, pp. 310-14.
important cities in Europe and in America. Of course, he also benefited from the extensive commercial network of the Goupil firm. At the same time he developed his independence from the parent company by cultivating personal ties with other dealers.

Belgium

In January 1873 Theo began working in the Brussels gallery directed by his uncle, Hendrik Vincent van Gogh, who had taken over a Goupil branch in the Belgian capital. Because of health problems, Uncle Hein had entrusted the day to day business to a certain Victor Schmidt. The gallery was located at 58, Montagne de la Cour, the most fashionable street for galleries in a city some writers compared to Paris. The business was prosperous, and young Theo - he was 15 years old at the time - made the acquaintance of several of the dealers he would continue to see regularly throughout his life. The Bernheim brothers were not far away. Meyer, known as Bernheim-ainé, had a shop at 94, Montagne de la Cour; his son-in-law, David Rothschild, worked with him and took over the business in 1884. Aron, who added his wife's name to his own and was known as Bernheim-Brunswick, was referred to as a ‘dealer in modern painting’ in 1871 and was located at number 16 on the same street. Nearby, at 42, Rue Neuve, Alexandre differentiated himself from his brothers by taking ‘Bernheim-jeune’ as his trade name. The first brother to take up residence in the gallery district in Paris was Aron, who shortened his name back to ‘Bernheim.’ In 1878 Alexandre moved to 16, Boulevard Montmartre. Still known as Bernheim-jeune, he remained there until 1882. The location he added in 1880, at 8, Rue Laffitte, soon became his centre of activity. For a brief period David Rothschild also ran a subsidiary in Paris. As director of the Boulevard Montmartre gallery, Theo

7 Tobias Victor Schmidt (1842-?) resided in Ixelles and then at 58, Montagne de la Cour; see Brussels, Archives de la Ville, 1866 census, E 1286. He took over H.V. van Gogh's business around 1875 and signed his correspondence: ‘H.V. van Gogh/ V. Schmidt success;’ see The complete letters of Vincent van Gogh, London 1958, p. 578. The 1878 edition of the Almanach du commerce de Bruxelles lists ‘Schmidt V. (ancienne maison Goupil dt Cö, succ. de Van Gogh H.V.);’ after this, only his name is ever mentioned.
9 Joseph Bernheim (1795-?) had opened a shop selling paintings in Paris around 1840. In 1846 the family lived in Liège, and then, in 1855, in Brussels, where Meyer (1825-1883) had a boutique specialising in art objects and paintings. David Rothschild (1846-?) married Mathilde Bernheim in 1874; see Brussels, Archives de la Ville, Acte de mariage 1527-74, Registres de recensement 1866 D 313 and 1866 D 297. Aron's shop was located at 36, Fossé-aux-Loups in 1869, then from 1871 at 16, Montagne de la Cour; see Brussels, Archives de la Ville, recensement 1866 K 180. His Paris gallery was located at 10, Rue La Fayette; he specialised in the ‘écoles française, belge et hollandaise;’ see Almanach du commerce de Paris, 1874, and Archives de Paris, D1P4 596, 1862. Rothschild's subsidiary was located at 3, Rue Scribe; see Almanach du commerce de Paris, 1887-90.
had dealings with all three colleagues, who specialised in the Belgian and Dutch schools. In 1882 he sold Meyer a painting by Corcos, an artist he had under contract; and in 1884 he sold a Detaille to Aron. His relations with Bernheim-jeune seem to have been more constant. He sold Theo his first work by Monet in 1887, as well as seven works by Daumier in 1890.

Another Belgian dealer who was gaining in importance was J. Hollender, who began working in Brussels at the end of the 1850s. Theo undoubtedly met him there and ran into him again in The Hague, where he frequently did business with Tersteeg, Theo's second Goupil employer. Around 1880, Hollender joined forces with Jean-Pierre-Joseph Cremetti, another Brussels dealer. Together they opened a gallery in London known as ‘Hollender & Cremetti,’ located on New Bond Street. In 1884 they launched an exhibition space called the ‘Hanover Gallery,’ where art dealers could organise sumptuous presentations of paintings. Theo did as much business with Hollender in Brussels as in London (Corcos, Madou).

Theo reinforced his position in Belgium by occasionally working with Guillaume Paul Dietrich, a former employee of Schmidt's who had set up his own highly successful company. One of Theo's most important contacts was a newcomer whom he referred to as ‘the good Clarembaux’.

10 *The church at Vétheuil*, 1880, Southampton City Art Gallery; see Theo van Gogh, cit. (note 2), no. 107.

11 See *Almanach du commerce de Bruxelles*, 1873. The firm closed after his death in 1888; see the posthumous sale, Brussels (Leroy, de Braumere), 10-12 April 1888.

12 Cremetti (1811-?) settled in Brussels in 1852, first on the Rue Montagne Potagère, then at 58, Rue Montoyer. He dealt in paintings, prints and frames as well as photographs, and he made reproductions of various art objects; see Brussels, Archives de la Ville, registres du recensement 1856 T 278, 1866 T 894, 1876 W 506.

13 Dietrich (1855-?) began as Schmidt's employee in 1873. In August 1879 he opened his own gallery at 23a, Rue Royale; see Brussels, Archives de la Ville, registre du recensement 1866 E 1286.

- Emile Clarembaux. He appears to have admired the man's ability to eat as much as his knowledge of Belgian collections. Since the trip between Paris and Brussels was relatively short, the two could easily meet. Nonetheless no trace exists of any transactions between them before 1889, when Clarembaux acquired two works by Alfred Stevens from Theo. In May 1890 the latter purchased six works by Van Goyen for Clarembaux at a public auction at the Hôtel Drouot. Occasionally, the dealers tried to pool their resources when affairs proved difficult. On his way back from The Hague in July 1890, Theo met Clarembaux at the Antwerp railway station. Together they tried to sell a Diaz to a collector in the city, but without success.

Dutch contacts

In November 1873 Theo left Brussels to work at Goupil's branch in The Hague. It was then directed by H.G. Tersteeg, who was 25 years old at the time. He took an interest in the artists of the Hague School, and actively organised exhibitions in the Netherlands and abroad. Numerous Americans, English and Belgians visited his gallery, as did his own compatriots. Theo made their acquaintance and transacted business with them; having proven himself worthy, he was given ever-increasing responsibilities.

The professionals he knew in The Hague naturally included his two uncles, Cent and Cor; later, in 1881 in Paris, they were among his first and best clients. Tersteeg, too, remained loyal to Theo right up to the end of the latter's life. There was also a certain Sala, an art dealer from Leiden.

The man Theo's brother Vincent called ‘my old friend Wisselingh’ occupied a very special place. Son of an art dealer established first in Amsterdam and then in The Hague, Elbert Jan van Wisselingh began his career at the Goupil gallery in the royal city, moving on to Paris before going on to work in London with

15 Theo travelled to Brussels in October 1888; see his letters to Vincent of 23 [716/T2] and 27 [718/T3] October 1888.
16 Brief happiness, cit. (note 14), nos. 82, 83 and 90; see also Theo's letter to Vincent, 14 July 1890 [905/T41].
19 The ledgers list ten transactions under the name Van Gogh in 1881. When he retired from business, Uncle Cent devoted his time to his collection and regularly went to the French capital. In 1881 he acquired from Theo a canvas by Jacque entitled Shepherdess, undoubtedly no. 75 in his posthumous sale (Collection de feu M. Vincent Van Gogh de Princenhage/Tableaux modernes, The Hague [Pulchri Studio/C.M. van Gogh & H.G. Tersteeg], 2-3 April 1889), and he bought two more works from him in April 1884. Uncle Cor, a dealer in Amsterdam, acquired paintings from his nephew up until May 1887.
20 The quotation is from a letter of 23 February 1882. In March of that year Theo must have mentioned to his brother that Van Wisselingh was in Paris [332/275]. See also J.F. Heijbroek and E.L. Wouthuysen, Portret van een kunsthandel: de firma Van Wisselingh en zijn compagnons, 1838-1999, Zwolle & Amsterdam 1999.
the English dealer Daniel Cottier. In 1882 he opened a gallery at 52, Rue Laffitte, not far from the Boulevard Montmartre. Vincent thought Van Wisselingh might be a potential buyer of his own works, and suggested that Theo show him his sketches [352/289]. After the death of his father in 1884, Van Wisselingh left Paris in order to concentrate on the gallery in The Hague, which he would soon transform into an international business. It was during this period that he carried out the greatest number of transactions with Theo, including the purchase of three paintings by Daumier on 31 July 1890.

Later, Theo continued to do business with a number of Dutch collectors as well, for example H.D. Salomonson from Rotterdam, C P. Van Eeghen from The Hague and Pieter Langerhuizen from Bussum. Two art lovers from The Hague enjoyed international renown, and their collections were frequently admired by visitors. One was the painter Hendrik-Willem Mesdag (fig. 1), who had brought together an exemplary selection of paintings by the Hague and Barbizon schools; he sometimes made purchases from Theo, who actively sought his business. In the summer of 1890, Theo visited him to discuss a Corot [905/T41]. From the 1860s the banker F.H.M. Post was also a regular customer at the Goupil gallery in The

23 Van Wisselingh went to see Vincent in August 1883 [383/318].
24 These were *Don Quixote and Sancho Panza* (London, The National Gallery), *Don Quixote and Sancho Panza* and *Omnibus interior* (both present locations unknown).
27 See also *Brief happiness*, cit. (note 14), no. 54, Amsterdam, 23 July 1890.

*Van Gogh Museum Journal 2000*
Hague.\textsuperscript{28} His collection deeply impressed Vincent van Gogh, who hastened to share his admiration with his brother.\textsuperscript{29} For Theo, however, he was a prestigious but infrequent client. In 1881 Post purchased a painting by Troyon at the Boulevard Montmartre gallery, which he disposed of the following year. Later he sold back to Theo works by Bouguereau and Brascassat.

**English and Scottish dealers**

From the moment he settled in Brussels in 1873, Theo was in contact with a number of English dealers, whom he saw again in The Hague and then in Paris, and whom he also visited in London. He was even tempted, when things later began to go badly with his superiors in Paris, to move to England, and was encouraged in this plan by Vincent. Having worked from May 1873 to June 1874 at the London branch of Goupil's, then directed by Carl Obach,\textsuperscript{30} Vincent had often described the artistic life of the city to his brother. ‘Monsieur O.’ [456/374] dealt directly with Theo after June 1873, with Schmidt, the Brussels manager, being absent. Vincent emphasised the event: ‘Mr Obach was happy to have met you’ [11/10].\textsuperscript{31} Theo saw Obach again in The Hague, where he came frequently\textsuperscript{32} and, of course, in Paris, home of the Goupil empire's headquarters. Although Obach left Goupil's and opened his own business in London in 1884 he maintained his relations with Theo. Thus, in 1886, he purchased from him 11 ‘landscapes and figures’ by Adolphe Monticelli for a total of 4,000 francs and then, nine months later, nine more canvases by the same artist.

Monticelli was popular with the British, and numerous dealers competed to sell his works. The Van Gogh brothers, who greatly admired this painter from Marseilles, discovered him through Alexander Reid,\textsuperscript{33} ‘Van Gogh's Scottish friend.’\textsuperscript{34} Reid was a frequent visitor to the gallery of the Parisian dealer Delarebeyrette, who owned a considerable stock of works by Monticelli.\textsuperscript{35} In order to complete his education, Reid

\textsuperscript{28} See Stolwijk, op. cit. (note 5), pp. 217-18.
\textsuperscript{29} In July 1882 Vincent related that he had visited the exhibition of French art from the ‘Mesdag, Post, etc’ collections and that he had seen ‘beautiful things’ [247/215]. He also later remembered seeing ‘the most beautiful’ Mauves there [503/406].
\textsuperscript{30} Obach (c. 1841-?) directed the London branch of Goupil's from around 1873 (with thanks to Martin Bailey). In circa 1884 he left the firm to begin his own business. Hoping to convince his brother to set up on his own, Vincent referred to Obach as ‘the one who waited so long, who experienced so much tension that he wound up being crushed’ [398/333]. For more on Obach see Martin Bailey, ‘Dealing in art,’ in exhib. cat. Van Gogh in England: portrait of the artist as a young man, London (Barbican Art Gallery) 1992, pp. 29-35 and note 5.
\textsuperscript{31} The letter also mentions a ‘very beautiful’ painting by Linder, perhaps an indication that Theo sold a canvas by this French painter to the London dealer.
\textsuperscript{32} See Stolwijk, op. cit. (note 5), p. 216, note 97; Obach purchased 39 paintings there between 1861 and 1900.
\textsuperscript{33} See Ronald Pickvance, A man of influence: Alex Reid, 1854-1928, Glasgow 1967. See also the article by Frances Fowle in this volume of the Van Gogh Museum Journal.
\textsuperscript{35} On 11 January 1885 Delarebeyrette wrote to M. Piquet in Marseilles: ‘There are too many works by Monticelli in Paris, I alone have 49’; Marseilles, private archives.
had been sent to Paris in 1887, where he worked alongside Theo at 19, Boulevard Montmartre and briefly shared in the lives of the Van Gogh brothers. Monticelli remained at the centre of commercial relations between Theo and Reid when the latter opened his ‘Société des Beaux-Arts’ in Glasgow in 1889. In September 1887 Reid purchased six canvases by Monticelli from Theo.

In London, another firm, Dowdeswell & Dowdeswell, was also interested in this painter from Marseilles. 36 Around 1886 they acquired ‘so many works by Monticelli that they were able to spread the rumour that they were the artist's exclusive dealers.’ 37 They were of course privileged clients of Delarebeyrette's, but they also bought from Theo, who was one of their main connections in Paris. Dowdeswell was certainly one of the first to have launched modern art in Great Britain. In April 1883 the gallery inaugurated an impressionist exhibition organised by Durand-Ruel. Dowdeswell seems to have reserved his more ‘avantgarde’ purchases for the latter gallery. Out of the 21 works he acquired from Theo, there was only one Degas and only one Manet.

Two other London dealers were important for the Van Gogh brothers. Vincent, recounting his visit to the art

36 C.W. Dowdeswell (1832-1915) was associated with his sons Charles and Walter; see Frits Lugt, Les marques de collections de dessins & d'estampes, The Hague 1956, supplement, pp. 690, 799. See also the entry on Dowdeswell in The dictionary of art, 34 vols., London 1996, vol. 9, p. 204.


Van Gogh Museum Journal 2000
dealers’ district in London in 1876, occasionally evoked their memory. First of all there was Th. Richardson: ‘Then I chanced upon Mr Read and Mr Richardson, who were already old friends. Last year, around this same time, Mr Richardson was in Paris and we took a walk together in the Père Lachaise Cemetery’ [92/76]. This ‘Read’ has not been identified, but Vincent, who worked with Richardson in 1873 at Goupil’s in Paris, would again see the man he referred to as ‘the travelling representative for Goupil and Co.’ [276/239]. Richardson frequently went to the branch in The Hague where Theo worked. Later they would do more business together, with Richardson purchasing from him works by Pasini, Monticelli, and Monet. Vincent also liked another London dealer and reminded Theo that he knew ‘Wallis well’ when he asked his brother to find a buyer for one of his watercolours [512/413]. Henry Wallis and his son Thomas directed the French Gallery. For many years Henry travelled all over the continent, visiting collectors and dealers. Theo could have met him in Brussels in 1873, where the American agent Samuel P. Avery noted his presence, or in The Hague, as he was associated with Tersteeg. Wallis may have bought paintings by Corcos from Theo, as the young dealer had the exclusive rights to sell the works of this fashionable painter.

**The American market**

In the years following the Civil War, numerous Americans became prosperous businessmen and began to buy works of art. Some of them developed into important collectors as well as discerning supporters of museums. They chose exquisite decorations for the palatial mansions they constructed, and their painting galleries were greatly admired by their fellow citizens. Increasingly informed by the art press of the numerous Old Master fakes and mediocre works being sent from Europe, collectors became more exacting and turned to living artists. The market had enormous potential. In 1846 Goupil established himself in New York, where he opened two galleries. His International Art Union was entrusted to William Schaus, and Michael Knoedler was charged with the promotion of prints. Each founded his own gallery

38 In the hierarchy of important clients at the Hague branch in the years 1861 to 1900, Richardson follows Henry Wallis with 49 transactions; only two of these took place during Theo’s employment there, however; see Stolwijk, op. cit. (note 5), p. 216, note 97.

39 With 15 transactions Richardson was a good client of Theo’s in Paris. On 21 April 1888 he purchased a canvas by Monet *Trees in winter: view of Bennecourt* (Columbus, OH, The Columbus Museum of Art); see also Theo van Gogh, cit. (note 2), no. 110.


41 On 25 July 1873 Wallis was in Brussels on business, and three days later he visited Goupil’s in The Hague; see *The diaries of Samuel P. Avery, art dealer (1871-1882)*, ed. Madeleine Fidell-Beaufort, New York 1979, pp. 189-90.

42 Stolwijk, op. cit. (note 5), p. 216, note 97; Stolwijk cites Wallis & Son as among the principal clients of the Hague branch between 1861 and 1900, with 67 transactions for a total of 42,694.02 guilders; 11 of these took place in the period 1873 to 1879.


*Van Gogh Museum Journal 2000*
towards the end of the 1850s. However, they continued to maintain their commercial relations with Goupil. While Schaus only occasionally purchased from Theo, Knoedler was his best client among the American art dealers. In all 28 transactions took place between them. Among the painters whose works were traded were Diaz, Corot, Dupré, Landelle and, of course, Corcos. Roland Knoedler, Michael's son, regularly travelled to Europe in order to renew his stock - in the collaboration with his Paris agent, a certain Hamman. In 1890, he opened a branch of his New York gallery at 3, Rue Scribe.

In Paris, George Lucas served as the agent for a great number of American art dealers and collectors, who appreciated his familiarity with European artistic circles. A client of Uncle Cent's, after 1881 he faithfully stopped in to see Theo, his friend's nephew. Their dealings mainly concerned bronzes by Barye, which were highly appreciated by Lucas's compatriots, particularly the Baltimore collector, William T. Walters. Theo kept Lucas informed about the important pieces he acquired.

---

44 Knoedler (1826-1878) opened a gallery in 1856, Schaus opened his around 1858. William Schaus retired in 1886. He died a year later in New York. His nephew took over as his successor.
45 Little is known of Hamman except that he worked for Georges Petit.
46 George A. Lucas (1824-1909); see The diary, cit. (note 34), vol. 1, pp. 3-42.
48 The diary, cit. (note 34), vol. 2, p. 710, 10 May 1890: ‘Call from [...] Van Gogh to say had bought Martin Barye collection.'
bought watercolours and prints. Theo specialised in original engravings, and Lucas came to his gallery regularly for these. He also notes having seen works by Monticelli (1888) and Daumier (1890) exhibited there.

The art dealers from across the Atlantic generally debarked in England in April. In two or three months they made the rounds of the principal European artistic centres, visiting galleries and artists' studios in order to gather up a choice of works to bring back to the United States. On 7 June 1890, two New York dealers introduced themselves to Theo at his gallery. One was Christ Delmonico, a client of Durand-Ruel's who in just a few days purchased works by Diaz, Raffaëlli and Pasini. This representative of the firm Reichard & Co., who acquired 27,800 francs worth of art between 1882 and 1890, chose a seascape by Courbet and a work by Troyon on his very first day. The other New Yorker, Adolf Kohn, directed a company located at 166 Fifth Avenue. Before 1884 he had already purchased from Theo works by Daubigny, Mauve and Corcos, who was very much in vogue in America.

Ever since the Exposition Universelle of 1867 Samuel P. Avery had regularly returned to Europe. Theo must have met him in The Hague where, as an important client, he dined at Tersteeg's home. In Paris Avery dealt mainly with Georges Petit and with the Goupil gallery on the Rue Chaptal. He had occasional contact with Theo, however, as did James S. Inglis, director of the New York branch of Cottier's in London.

The enterprising Philadelphia dealer Charles Field Haseltine (fig. 2) was also a client of Theo's. Haseltine actively supported American painters and became interested

---

51 Inglis died in New York in 1908. He became director of the branch in 1873. Following Cottier's death in 1891 he took over New York gallery entirely; see New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Ex-collection file (with thanks to Helen Taylor Lane, The Thomas J. Watson Library). While in Paris he stayed at the Hôtel de Turin. In July 1887 he sold Theo the Bay of Naples by Renoir (New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; see also *Theo van Gogh*, cit. [note 2], p. 216) and purchased a work by Carrière, Child with feeding bottle (present location unknown).
fig. 2
in European art relatively early. With the purchase of 11 canvases between August 1881 and 1885, for a total of 35,550 francs, he was one of Theo's most important customers. Among the painters whose works he chose were well known names like Jean-Léon Gérôme, whose Excursion of the harem (Norfolk, VA, The Chrysler Museum of Art) he acquired in 1885.53

While American collectors often entrusted their transactions to intermediaries, they also made purchases during their own voyages in Europe. Some came from Saint Louis, like the businessman J.W. Kauffman or the lawyer George E. Leighton, others from New York, like G.N. Curtis, Christ Kahn or the distinguished Latin scholar George N. Olcott,54 not to mention the famous railway magnates Vanderbilt55 and Johnston56 - just a few of those influential Americans who frequented Theo's gallery. All were actively wooed by many of the Paris dealers. Some, like William Crocker, a San Francisco banker, were beginning to be seduced by impressionism. A regular client of Durand-Ruel's, he bought a Dupré from Theo,57 while A. Pope,58 a Chicago industrialist, acquired two works by Monet and a Carrière in 1889.

The Parisian market

The ledgers indicate that Theo worked with approximately a third of all Parisian dealers, most of whom, like him, specialised in works of contemporary art. Many sought to put artists under contract, which could be advantageous to both sides. They also tried to have a great number of works by the same painter or sculptor in stock, as was the case with Delarebeyrette for Monticelli,59 and Theo for, among others, Corot. Other actors on the scene included restorers, framers and print dealers who sold works of art as a sideline.

As we have seen, Theo maintained commercial relations with his neighbour Alexandre Bernheim-jeune, but also with another dealer who was widely known and who ‘carried himself like a gentleman’: Hector Brame, who was located on the

53 Reproduced in Theo van Gogh, cit. (note 2), no. 61.
54 On Leighton and Olcott see Who was who in America, Chicago [1996], vol. 1, pp. 719 and 913 respectively
55 In his mansion on Fifth Avenue in New York, William Henry Vanderbilt had a gallery with an overhead lighting system installed for his painting collection, which was open to the public. His eldest son, Cornelius (1843-1899), was one of the founders of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. It has not been possible to determine which of these two Vanderbilts purchased from Theo.
56 John Taylor Johnston (1823-1893) was also one of the founders of The Metropolitan Museum of Art; see Who was who, cit. (note 54) p. 437. See also Dekkers, op. cit. (note 18), p. 61 and Lois Marie Fink, ‘French art in the United States, 1850-1870: three dealers and collectors,’ Gazette des Beaux-Arts 92 (September 1978), p. 94.
57 William Henry Crocker (1861-1937); see Who was who, cit. (note 54) p. 277. The work he purchased was Dupré's Feeding time (Jen-te-Village, Taiwan, Chi-Mei Fine Art Museum); see also Theo van Gogh, cit. (note 2), no. 65.
58 Alfred Atmore Pope (1842-1913); see Who was who, cit. (note 54) p. 982.
59 Joseph Delarebeyrette (?-1886). From 1870 to 1879 his gallery was located 23, Rue de la Pépinière, then at 98, Boulevard Haussmann; he moved to 43, Rue de Provence in 1881; see Almanach de commerce de Paris. After his death, his son Gabriel took over the gallery; see Archives de Paris, DQ7 12470.
Boulevard des Italiens. This former associate of Durand-Ruel's sold works by Corot and the painters of the Barbizon School, but Theo also found canvases by Degas at his gallery. Both Bernheimjeune and Brame were soon to move to the Rue Laffitte, the entire street being 'transformed into what seemed to be a long gallery of paintings.' Other dealers already established there with whom Theo did business included Salvador Mayer, called 'la Boule'; Suret; Legrand; Tempelaere; Detrimont; Diot and, for a short time, Van Wisselingh.

The commerce of art was fixed throughout the entire district surrounding the Hôtel Drouot. Theo participated in numerous sales there, some of which were organised by Boussod & Valadon. After 1887, when he had a greater autonomy in running the gallery, Theo purchased works by Corot (6), Diaz (1), Chintreuil (2), as well as Manet (2) and Monet (7). Theo dealt with Oppenheim and Gérard fils, who were on the Rue Le Pelletier. Former Goupil employees Arnold and Tripp, as well as Pierre-Firmin Martin, had galleries on the Rue Saint Georges. Nearby, on the Rue de la Grange Batelière, were Bourgeois and Guyotin. Delarebeyrette had his business on the Rue de Provence. Tedesco was in the Rue de la Victoire, and Sedelmeyer in the Rue de La Rochefoucault.

60 Hector Brame (1831-1899). These were the words used by Emile Zola to describe Naudet (who was certainly modelled after Brame) in his novel L'oeuvre, which appeared in 1886; see Nancy Yeide, ‘An art dealer in 19th-century Paris,’ Apollo (March 1998), pp. 40-47.
Higher up on the Butte Montmartre, the restorer Gillet was located on the Rue Houdon, and there was a private dealer, Portier, at 54, Rue Lepic. It was to the latter that Theo showed *The potato eaters* (Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum), which Vincent had sent him to sell.\(^{62}\) Obviously, Goupil's account books make no mention of Père Tanguy on the Rue Clauzel, where, following his marriage, Theo stored his brother's canvases. Works by Cézanne were also displayed in this art supplies shop, but Theo does not seem to have taken any interest in them.

The neighbourhood of the Opéra and Gare Saint Lazare became very fashionable in these years. In 1870 Goupil inaugurated his most prestigious gallery on the very attractive Avenue de l'Opéra, and Tedesco opened a gallery there as well. Nearby, on the Rue Scribe, were Rothschild and eventually Knoedler. Slightly further away, on the Chaussée d'Antin, were Bague & Co. and the art expert Barre. Henri Garnier was on the Rue Mogador, and Cottée and Thomas were located on the Boulevard Malesherbes. In 1882 Georges Petit celebrated the opening of his sumptuous new gallery 8, Rue de Sèze.

On the Left Bank, near the Rue du Bac, ‘the Rue Laffitte of the Faubourg Saint Germain’\(^{63}\) in the 1850s, there were now fewer dealers. However, Theo worked with the painter and restorer Charles Mercié on the Rue de Lille. Montaignac, a long-time employee of Petit’s,\(^{64}\) moved into 1, Rue Christine around 1886.

To this inventory of Theo's relations with the most prestigious galleries in the major European capitals, should be added his transactions in Marseilles. While occupying a modest place in Theo's business dealings, the famous port was nevertheless unique among French provincial cities. As it supplied Theo with at least five clients, Monticelli's native town was an important market. Artist, writer, expert and antiques dealer Paul Martin organised exhibitions at the Marseilles Cercle Artistique. In 1883 he purchased a work by Roybet from Theo. On 24 December 1884 he acquired one by Pasini and two by Ziem.\(^{65}\) Other clients included Arthur Warrain, who lived at 6, Cours Pierre Puget, and a certain Heilborn, a man of independent means, who lived at 2, Rue Lafon.\(^{66}\) In 1886 Theo acquired 11 ‘landscapes and figures’ - including the charming *Italian Woman* (Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum) - for 3,500 francs from César Boyer, undoubtedly the owner of the Café de l'Univers where Monticelli was a regular customer.\(^{67}\) According to the ledgers,

\(^{62}\) For over a year the Van Gogh brothers lived in the same building as Alphonse Portier (1841-1902).

\(^{63}\) Frédéric Henriet, ‘Le musées des rues: le marchand de tableaux,’ *L'Artiste* (1 December 1854), p. 133.

\(^{64}\) According to Pissarro, ‘He occupied the same position at the gallery of Georges Petit that Van Gogh held at Boussod & Valadon, he was his right hand man. He seemed to me to be intelligent and likeable’; see the artist's letter to his son Lucien, reprinted in *Correspondance de Camille Pissarro*, ed. Janine Bailly-Herzberg, 5 vols., Paris 1986, vol. 3, p. 47, Eragny, 23 March 1891.

\(^{65}\) Paul Martin (1830-1903); see Jean René Soubiran, exhibit. cat. *Le paysage provençal et l'Ecole de Marseille avant l'impressionnisme 1845-1874*, Toulon (Musée de Toulon) 1992, p. 327, notes 55-58. With thanks to Jacqueline Henry for having called this dealer to my attention.

\(^{66}\) See *L'indicateur marseillais*, 1882 This information was kindly provided by Mme G. Cenda, Archives de Marseilles.

\(^{67}\) In Goupil's ledgers, Boyer has a Parisian address: 62, Rue Rodier. He is not, however, listed in the *Almanach du commerce de Paris*, the cadastral registers or in the electoral lists. Perhaps he had a correspondent at this address and the reference is nevertheless to César Boyer, who
another art collector from Marseilles, Viellard, like Bartdemy, sold Theo two canvases by Monticelli in 1886. Perhaps these transactions were what inspired Vincent to think of settling in Monticelli's city as an art dealer.

There are very few indications of the nature of Theo's relations with his other Parisian colleagues. Pissarro tells us that Durand-Ruel resented what he considered Theo's too-frequent incursions into the impressionist market. Theo bought eight paintings from him on 9 April 1888 - four works by Georges Michel, three by Monet and one Pissarro. Several allusions in the family correspondence hint at Theo's friendship with the Belgian Clarembaux, but there is too little information to make any more comments here.

**Art lovers of traditional taste**

Among the names in Goupil's account books are several members of the aristocracy - traditionally collectors - and, in greater numbers, the financial barons, industrial magnates and important businessmen of the day, as

had several works by Monticelli. On Monticelli's café life see Charles and Mario Garibaldi, op. cit. (note 37), p. 74.

well as collectors with more modest means: musicians, literati, doctors, bureaucrats, etc. While much research has been done concerning the collectors of impressionism, little is known of those who bought of ‘Salon’ paintings or the Barbizon and Hague schools. We can only single out a few personalities.

Theo's client with the most expensive taste was an unscrupulous businessman named Cornélius Herz, also known as Doctor Cornélius (fig. 3). Made a grand officer of the Legion d'honneur in 1886 and a friend of the president of the Republic, Jules Grévy, he participated in some of the most dubious affairs of his time. When the Panama scandal broke in 1891, Pissarro exclaimed: ‘This Cornélius Herz, what a formidable and grandiose rat!’ He was only able to save his skin by fleeing to England. Herz bought a great number of works of art in a very short time. In 1887, during the struggle between Herz and the banker Jacques de Reinach, the latter estimated that Herz's gallery of paintings was worth 800,000 francs. Herz bought from the most prestigious dealers in Paris, such as Georges Petit and Durand-Ruel, who interceded for him with Monet. Between 1884 and 1886 he spent more than 200,000 francs for works he purchased from Theo, who provided him with over 56 canvases. The names were those of already established painters. The Barbizon School was represented by two pieces by Daubigny and works by Rousseau and Troyon. Boussod & Valadon's 'house' painters were well represented as well: Gérôme (3), Bargue (4) and Corcos (2), but there were also pictures by Henner, Carolus Duran, Meissonnier, Isabey, etc. Herz's collection contained no masterpieces but rather many works that were considered good value according to the criteria of the period. His more modern purchases - i.e. of Monet - were made through the intermediary of Durand-Ruel.

69 Cornélius Herz (1845-1898). Herz's parents emigrated to the United States, while he remained in Europe to study in Heidelberg and later in France - where he failed to finish his medical training - before leaving to try his luck in America; see Jean-Yves Mollier, Le scandale de Panama, Paris 1991, pp. 165-208.

70 Correspondance de Camille Pissarro, cit. (note 64), p. 292.

71 Mollier, op. cit. (note 69) p. 339.

72 Having gone into exile, Herz sold part of his collection in Paris in September 1893; see Mollier, op. cit. (note 69) p. 428 and note 54. His widow put more up for auction in 1899: Catalogue of the collection of very choice modern French pictures [...] The property of Mrs Cornelius Herz, London, (Christie, Manson & Woods), 15-17 April 1899.
fig. 3
M and Mme Cornélius Herz, cover of *L’Illustration* (28 January 1893), Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la Photographie, collection Laruelle
Taking into account the purchases at the Goupil branch in The Hague during the six years that Theo worked there, his most important client was indisputably Cornélis de Gheus d'Elzenwalle. He lived in Brussels, and most probably began frequenting Uncle Hein's gallery there in 1873. He knew Theo sufficiently well to send him a very personal letter of condolence following Vincent's death. During the period under discussion here, when Theo was the manager of the gallery at 19, Boulevard Montmartre, de Gheus made numerous acquisitions during three years, then disappeared from the account books, reappearing with fewer purchases between 1887 and 1889, in all 37 for a total of 134,000 francs. It should be noted, however, that he often resold the works soon after purchasing them; for example, he disposed of Jules Breton's *Woman of the Artois* in August 1881, having acquired it only in March of the same year. In 1888 he sold more than he bought. It is impossible to know whether this was in order to make some major purchase, if the canvases no longer pleased him, or if he was having financial difficulties. At any rate, his taste never evolved. Among the artists he favoured were Corot (9), Daubigny (6), Heyerdhal (4), Maris (4), Corcos (2), Mauve and Breton.

While the collections of Herz or De Gheus have long been forgotten, the gallery of prestigious canvases put together by Alfred Chauchard (fig. 4) is now prominently displayed at the Musée d'Orsay. Having amassed a fortune, Chauchard left the world of business in 1885 in order to devote himself entirely to philanthropic endeavours.

---

73 He bought four paintings between 1873 and 1879 and Stolwijk (op. cit. [note 5], p. 216, note 97) ranks him among the principal clients of the Hague branch in the years 1861 to 1900, with 12 transactions for a total of 23,731 guilders. A doctor of law, Camillus Julianus Degheus was born in 1831 at Voormezele near Ypres. When he died at his home in Ixelles on 12 May 1912 he was declared ‘without profession.’ With thanks to Annick Vandenbicleke of the Archives de la Ville d’Ixes, and Françoise Fontaine, archivist of the Commune d’Ixelles.

74 See Ronald Pickvance (ed.), ‘A great artist is dead’: letters of condolence on Vincent van Gogh's death, Zwolle 1992, no. 11: ‘I know the affectionate dedication that you showed for this brother [...].’

75 This picture was last auctioned in the late 1980s (under the title The water carrier); see New York (Sotheby's), 23 May 1989, lot 29.

76 De Gheus's collection remains particularly mysterious.
and his art collection. He was a good client of Boussod & Valadon, but since he dealt mainly with the directors, he was rarely seen at 19, Boulevard Monmartre. He did, however, buy a Diaz from Theo in 1889 and a Carrière the next year.

---

77 Alfred Chauchard made his fortune with the Magasins du Louvre department store. He bequeathed his collection to the French state in 1906; see Catalogue de la collection Chauchard, Paris 1910. Millet's Angélus, purchased for 800,000 francs in 1890, was the most famous work he owned.

78 Diaz de la Peña's Venus and cupid was purchased on 4 July 1889 (Paris, Musée d'Orsay); Carrière's Mother holding her child on 17 February 1890 (present location unknown).
Other more modest collectors were regulars at Theo's gallery too, for example the well-known perfume manufacturer Edmond Coudray.\(^79\) He appears to have had confidence in the young art dealer, who put his name in his address book. Coudray turned to Theo for advice when the painter Pierre Emile Metzmacher, whose *First steps* present location unknown) he owned, asked permission to paint a replica after its success at the Salon of 1878.\(^80\) Between 1883 and 1890, Coudray spent 27,225 francs on 12 paintings. He favoured genre scenes by Toulmouche, Salmson and Roybet, as well as landscapes by Jongkind, Lépine and Jacque.

No correspondence has survived from most of the collectors who were Theo's clients. Sometimes an address or a few indications of identity are the only trace that remains. Victor Dobbé, who spent 43,250 francs for 15 works by Jongkind, Dupré and Isabey between 1881 and 1886, was independently wealthy. The catalogue of the sale following his death confirms his love of Corot, Dupré, Diaz and Troyon, but also of the genre scenes by Roybet that were so popular at the time.\(^81\) In some cases, an address or an initial in the account books next to a surname can provide information about the identity of the collector. J. Cahen, for example, was the administrator of a company of public works. He bought and sold several pictures beginning in 1883. Frédéric Flersheim, owner of a private mansion on the Boulevard Malesherbes, purchased a nymph by Henner in 1882 and a painting by Jules Dupré in 1885. Through Theo, Félix Godillot, a grain and flour broker, ordered two portraits of his wife from the painter Corcos in 1882 and in 1885.\(^82\)

**Some collectors of modern painting**

Converted to the painting of the impressionists, Theo became one of their ardent supporters and from 1887 tried to find clients for them. He convinced certain collectors to sell off their ‘outmoded’ works and modernise their collections. Gustave Goupy, who directed a leather and varnish company in the Rue Charlot, had purchased works from Theo beginning in 1885 (Miralles and Kaemmerer).\(^83\) Around 1888, he became interested in Courbet, Besnard and Monet. He bought two canvases by Monet.

\(^79\) Together with his father, Edmond Auguste Coudray directed the Société Coudray et fils. Their shop was located at 13, Rue d'Enghien and their factory was in Saint Denis.

\(^80\) Salon of 1878, no. 1578, reproduced in *L'Illustration* (12 April 1879). The artist wrote to Theo: ‘Mr Coudray, to whom I said all that, leaves the decision to you, assuring me that if you see no harm for the original it would be as good as done’; see Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum, Vincent van Gogh Foundation, family correspondence, letter b 1209 V/1962. Coudray sold the Metzmacher back to Theo on 11 October 1890.

\(^81\) Louis Antoine Victor Dobbé was born in Montdidier in the Somme around 1813 and died on 20 May 1888 at his home in Paris; see Archives de Paris, 5MI 1223. His collection was auctioned: *Collection de Feu M. Dobbé - Tableaux modernes […]*, Paris (Hôtel Drouot), 18-19 February 1889. The sale was directed by his son-in-law, the auctioneer Couturier.

\(^82\) J. Cahen, 8, Rue de Berlin (Archives de Paris, D1P4 115, 1876); Frédéric Flersheim, 32, Boulevard Haussmann and, from 1883, 124, Boulevard Malesherbes (Archives de Paris, D1P4 681 1876); Félix Godillot was the brother of Alexis Godillot, who donated drawings and objects to the Louvre (see exhib. cat. *Les donateurs du Louvre*, Paris [Musée du Louvre] 1989, p. 219). On the portrait commission see Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum, Vincent van Gogh Foundation, family correspondence, letters b 1143 V/1962 and b 1144 V/1962.

\(^83\) Gustave Goupy (1844-c. 1897).
Following Theo's death he continued as a customer of his successor, Joyant, and began to buy works by Degas, Monet and Sisley. Other collectors show a similar evolution. Cheramy, solicitor in the first magistrate's court and active in various arts organisations acquired his first Degas from Durand-Ruel in 1888, while his purchases from Theo concerned less ‘modern’ artists such as Corot (4) or Marilhat.

With 90 transactions at Theo's gallery, the banker Victor Desfossés was an exceptional client. Desfossés lived in a private mansion at 44, Rue de Douai, a stone's throw from the Rue de Laval where Theo resided until May 1886. Desfossés had acquired a Manet at the Salon of 1879. Among his purchases from Theo were works by artists such as Bargue (4) and Pinchart, but also some very beautiful paintings by Corot (8), Daubigny (5), Millet and Delacroix. Soon, he sold off these ‘old’ paintings in order to buy more daring canvases. Starting in 1885 he acquired works by Monet (3), Degas (1), Pissarro (3), Sisley (1), and Renoir (1).

---


85 Victor Antoine Desfossés (1835-1899) was promoted to the rank of chevalier d'honneur in 1885; see Paris, Archives nationales de France, dossier of the Légion d'honneur, LH 2777/83.
Early collectors of impressionism and post-impressionism

Other collectors took even greater risks and purchased the work of young unknowns like Gauguin. Among them was Eugène Dupuis, whom Theo called ‘the loyal Dupuis’; he was a financier who frequently acquired ‘modern’ pictures. He bought 20 canvases between May 1887 and September 1890. There were not many collectors who owned four Gauguins in 1888. Just as early on, he added paintings by Toulouse-Lautrec, Monet, Degas and above all Pissarro to his collection. Another dedicated amateur was Hermann Heilbuth who resided in Hamburg and Copenhagen. He collected Degas and Monet, and purchased a canvas by Monet and another by De Nittis from Theo in December 1889.

Among the other good clients for ‘modernist’ painting was Paul Gallimard, a ‘highly valuable collector,’ who sought to purchase two canvases by Vincent he had seen at Père Tanguy’s. His friend Gustave Geffroy contacted Theo on the subject in May 1888. Later Gallimard sold Theo a work by Héreau and one by Dupré in order to purchase a Monet and a Degas. In the following months he acquired three other works by Degas and one by Pissarro. He sold off works by Daubigny, Bergeret, Bernier and Van Marcke de Lummen. Paul Aubry, a wealthy merchant, was also a collector of impressionism. In the years 1887 and 1888 he purchased three works by Monet and a Pissarro from Theo. Owner of a sugar refinery, Emile Boivin built a

86 Letter from Theo to Camille Pissarro, 30 September 1890, quoted in Lili Jampoller, ‘Theo van Gogh and Camille Pissarro: correspondence and an exhibition,’ Simiolus 16 (1986), p. 60. The cadastral register for 96, Boulevard Voltaire gives Dupuis’s profession as ‘keeping accounts for security transactions,’ and his place of work as 22, Rue Drouot (Archives de Paris, D1P4 1230); on his death certificate he is listed as ‘Dupuis, Jean Baptiste Casimir, 39 years old, banker’ (Archives de Paris, death certificate of 29 November 1890, no. 3981). He had no descendants and his estate was declared in abeyance (Archives de Paris, DQ8 1798).

87 Pissarro considered him to be his best collector; see the artist’s letter to his son Lucien, reprinted in Correspondence de Camille Pissarro, cit. (note 64), vol. 2, p. 378, Paris, 23 December 1890. He wrote further: ‘What is particularly sad, is that this man - who was too honest - committed suicide because he thought he was lost.’


89 Octave Mirbeau, ‘À qui de droit,’ in Des artistes, Paris 1886, p. 334.

90 ‘The other day I entered the shop of M. Tanguy right after you had left. I was with a friend who would like to acquire two canvases by Vincent van Gogh, and who would like to see you about this’; see Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum, Vincent van Gogh Foundation, family correspondence, Gustave Geffroy to Theo van Gogh, Paris, 29 May 1888, letter b 1199 V/1962.

91 Monet, Pyramid at Port Coton (Embraport, Fondation Rau pour le Tiers-Monde) and Degas, Races New York, Whitney Collection).

92 He appears on the lists of voters from 1879 to 1896 as ‘Aubry, Paul; born 8 February 1842 in Paris, merchant, 16, Boulevard Maillot.’ His business must have been a prosperous one, since the census records show a growing number of household servants; I would like to thank Sophie Rouyer, Archives de la Ville de Neuilly for this information. Roger Peyre wrote in his introduction to the posthumous sale of Aubry’s collection: ‘His enlightened judgment brought together works - which, while in the taste of the day, and sometimes of the next day - were nevertheless, on their own merit, protected from capricious changes of fashion’; see Catalogue de tableaux modernes, aquarelles, pastels, dessins par Bonvin, Daumier, Degas, Harpignies, Jongkind, Monet, Sisley, Vignon etc. provenant de la collection de feu M.P.A., Paris (Galerie Georges Petit), 10 May 1897, pp. 1-8.

Van Gogh Museum Journal 2000
private mansion in the new Quartier d'Europe district in 1880. A client of Petit, Montaignac and Durand-Ruel, he also bought from

fig. 5
Theo: from 1887 he acquired canvases by Degas, including *Woman seated beside a vase of flowers* (New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art), and work by Monet and Raffaëlli. Boivin also purchased directly from artists like Sisley.\(^93\) The journalist Henry Poidatz sold Theo 20 paintings from his collection in May 1886. The same day he purchased works by Daubigny, Millet and Dupré; he then he acquired a Boldini and two works by Monet in 1887. His last purchases from Theo were of paintings by Courbet and Monet in 1888. He organised a public sale of his collection in 1888, and then began collecting anew.\(^94\)

Several dealer colleagues who also collected put their faith in Theo. Eugène Blot, a merchant and art lover who later developed into an art dealer himself, frequented early traders in impressionism such as Portier,\(^95\) Père Martin and, of course, Durand-Ruel. In reference to the latter he quoted Tanguy: ‘Around this great gallery there were the small dealers,’ adding: ‘there was also Carmentron, associated with the Widow Martin [no relation to Père Martin].’\(^96\) Blot does not mention Theo, even though he bought a canvas by Vignon from him in 1886, and later, in 1890, a work by Gauguin. Recruited by Goupil’s in 1882, Michel Manzi directed the print workshop in Asnières.\(^97\) A friend of Degas and the sculptor Bartholomé, Manzi collected works by them but also by Monet, Raffaëlli and Daumier. He maintained friendly relations with Theo and was also a client.\(^98\) He 1888 he acquired a canvas by Gysis, the next year he purchased three more ‘modern’ paintings by Monet and Raffaëlli, and finally a Daumier (Moscow, Tretiakov Gallery) in 1890.

Among Theo's other clients was Louis Bouglé (fig. 5), a friend of Toulouse-Lautrec and Joyant. He purchased three paintings by Monet and three by Pissarro between 1888 and 1889.\(^99\) Léon Clapisson was a customer of Durand-Ruel’s, but he also bought from Theo.\(^100\) Raoul Guillemard, judge at the commercial court of the Seine, purchased Monet's *Pine trees at Cap d'Antibes* (Switzerland, private collection) during Theo's exhibition of these canvases organised in 1888.

One of Theo's last clients was the national museum in Oslo, which acquired *Rain, Etretat* (Oslo, Nasjonal galleriet) from among the pictures Theo sent to the city's

---

\(^93\) Jules-Emile Boivin (1830-1909) took over from his father as head of the family business. For Boivin and Degas see Loyrette, op. cit. (note 84), p. 478 and note 229.

\(^94\) Henry Poidatz Sannois (1854-1905) was a specialist in political economy; he contributed to the *Petit Journal*, among others, and became its general secretary in 1884; see Paris, Archives Nationales de France, LH2184/53. At the end of his life, he took over the direction of the daily paper *Le Matin*. On the sale see *Vente Poidatz et autres*, Paris (Hôtel Drouot), 15 March 1888. See also Thomson, op. cit. (note 2) p. 67.

\(^95\) Portier sold Theo pictures by Cals, Monet, Renoir, Jongkind and purchased from him Chintreuil, Girardet and two Corots.

\(^96\) Eugène Blot, *Histoire d'une collection de tableaux modernes: 50 ans de peinture* (de 1882 à 1932), Paris [1934], n.p. Anne Distel kindly pointed out this reference to me.


\(^98\) See *Brief happiness*, cit. (note 14), no. 83, Paris, 19 July 1890.

\(^99\) Bouglé was a sales representative for the Simpson company (makers of bicycle chains) and an amateur racing cyclist under the name of Spoke.

annual autumn art exhibition in 1890; these also included works by Pissarro, Degas and another Monet. He launched this adventure with the aid of several Norwegian painters. On 6 October 1890, Erik Werenskiold announced the arrival of the paintings: ‘We will make every effort to keep one of the works by Monet in this country. Please tell me your best price just in case.’ This was the first impressionist canvas to enter a Scandinavian public collection.

After sixteen years of activity as an art dealer, Theo had considerably widened his scope due to his good relations with artists. His dream was to open his own gallery, as so many other employees of the major galleries had done. Had he had lived to fulfil this dream his career would have been similar to the careers of his uncles.

101 The catalogue of the exhibition lists the following: ‘Monet, no. 87, The rocks at Belle-Isle (1,600 kr) and no. 88, Etretat, rainy weather (1,300 kr); Pisarro [sic], no. 125, Conversation (600 kr); Degas, no. 190, Dancers (pastel) (900 kr). With thanks to Birgit Jordan, librarian at the Nasjonalgalleriet.

102 For the letter see Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum, Vincent van Gogh Foundation, family correspondence, Erik Werenskiold to Theo van Gogh, 6 October 1890, letter b 1196V/1962. The year before, Theo had shown this artist some canvases by Vincent; see his letter of 16 July 1889 [793/T12].
fig. 1
Title page of *Adolphe Monticelli: vingt planches d’après les tableaux originaux de Monticelli et deux portraits de l’artiste*, Paris 1890
Theo van Gogh, publisher: the Monticelli album
Aaron Sheon

Introduction

In early December 1889 Theo wrote Vincent that he was involved in a project to publish an album of 22 lithographs with a biographical and critical text in honour of one of Vincent's favourite artists, Adolphe Monticelli, a French painter from Marseilles [827/T21]. From Theo and Vincent's letters we learn that it was Auguste Lauzet, an artist and lithographer also from the port city, who approached Theo about publishing and distributing the Monticelli album he was already preparing. Lauzet knew Theo as an established dealer in Monticelli's works and that he had published other artist's albums through his gallery, Boussod, Valadon & Cie. Lauzet had been acquainted with Monticelli and wanted to combat the rumours that the artist's somewhat 'wild' paintings, with their thick impasto and intense colours, were an indication that he had been mad at the end of his career. Lauzet lived most of the year in Paris, and at the time of his meeting with Theo he was still looking for works to lithograph for the album as well as seeking financial assistance. His apartment at 29, Boulevard Péreire was listed in Theo's address book.

Even before this, Vincent had thought someone should publish an album of Monticelli reproductions like the one Lauzet was planning. In September 1888, over a year before Lauzet and Theo began their collaboration, Vincent wrote from Arles: 'Isn't it sad that the Monticellis have never yet been reproduced in good lithographs or in etchings which vibrate with life? I should very much like to know what artists would say if an engraver like the man

![fig. 2](image)

Front cover of the Monticelli album

who engraved the Velasquez made a fine etching of them. Never mind, I think it is more our job to admire and know things for ourselves than to teach them to other people. But the two can go together’ [690/542].

1 Vincent mentioned Monticelli over fifty times in his letters. The album contains 20 lithographed reproductions of paintings by Monticelli and two portraits of the artist.
2 For Lauzet see Encyclopédie des Bouches-du-Rhone VI, Marseille 1914, p. 461.
3 Adolphe Monticelli: vingt planches d'après les tableaux originaux de Monticelli et deux portraits de l'artiste, texte par Paul Guigou, avec lithographies par A.M. Lauzet, Paris 1890.
The Monticelli album was published in June 1890, about a month before Vincent's death, in an edition of 100 copies.\textsuperscript{5} It is a large, thick cardboard-sided artist's folio (figs. 1 and 2) with cloth ties on three sides.\textsuperscript{6} Almost no

\textsuperscript{5} A note inside the album indicates the number; 75 were printed on ordinary paper and 25 on Japanese paper.

\textsuperscript{6} One copy of the album is in the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, another is in the Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh and the author owns one.
information has come to light regarding the buyers of the album or its reception by the public or art writers. A list of subscribers has never been found, nor do we know how much it cost.

The album’s frontispiece shows Monticelli in profile, dressed in an elegant black velvet jacket with a wide-brimmed hat and cane. The portrait is based on a drawing by Jules Monge that was originally published in 1881 in an article by Adolphe Meyer in *La Provence Artistique & Pittoresque*, a weekly published in Marseille.⁷ Vincent and Theo had probably read this article, which suggested that Monticelli had suffered from a type of madness or folie at the end of his life.

Lauzet’s lithographs must be seen as ‘artistic’ rather than reproductive, and were printed in brownish tones by the Lemercier firm in Paris.⁸ They are quite different from the more photograph-like Goupil reproductions, and less original than expensive autonomous prints by other artist-printmakers.

---

⁷ Adolphe Meyer, ‘Adolphe Monticelli,’ *La Provence Artistique & Pittoresque, Journal Hebdomadaire Illustre* (21 August 1881), pp. 82-86. Meyer notes that Monticelli often joked with clients who wanted him to rework his sketchy pictures to make them appear more finished (p. 83).

like Gauguin. In a manner comparable to the Monticelli album, Theo published Thornley's lithographs after Degas as a set in April 1888, bringing out another 15 in 1889. He also arranged the publication of a set of ten zincographs by Gauguin in January 1889, and he was interested in displaying and selling estampes originales by other artists as well.\(^9\) Boussod, Valadon's technical expert, Michel Manzi, was involved in all these promotions of original prints. Toulouse-Lautrec, for example, wrote his mother in January 1888 that Theo had sold one of his pictures to Manzi, who was planning to reproduce it in lithography or in a technique called photo-typogravure.\(^10\)

Theo owned two of the paintings included in the Monticelli album. The first one he purchased was *The Italian girl* (fig. 3), a richly coloured and thickly painted depiction of a woman in an Italian or Provençal costume.\(^11\) Lauzet's lithograph sought to suggest the heavy application of paint in the original work (fig. 4). The other was *Woman*.

\(^9\) Ibid., pp. 126, 128.


at a well (figs. 5 and 6). Theo probably intended to sell these two pictures, but his death intervened and they remained in his personal collection, which contained four other Monticellis as well. Two of these show fashionably dressed women. Woman with a parasol and The meeting are both projections of the fantasies of the artist, who longed to be surrounded by or to meet the kinds of women he painted. In addition, Theo owned Vase of flowers and an imaginary scene of Arabs and horsemen. All these works are now housed in the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam.

Of the remaining 18 paintings lithographed, two - Halte de chasse (no. 9) and Rendez-vous en forêt (no. 19) - were in the collection of Madame Jeanne Dupuis, who may have been the wife of a certain Monsieur Dupuis, who was one of Theo's most important collectors of vanguard pictures. Another work in the album was owned by Charles Faure, who later helped organise the large Monticelli retrospective in the 1908 Salon d'Automne. Delarebeyrette, who ran a gallery in Paris that sold Monticellis, provided Lauzet with nine pictures for the album (nos. 5, 8, 11-13, 18, and 20-22). Theo may have wished to let the dealer showcase his works here as he had longstanding contacts with Monticelli and his agents. Alexander Reid, a Scottish Monticelli collector who had worked briefly at Boussod, Valadon and had roomed with Vincent for a short period, allowed one of his pictures to be reproduced. We cannot identify the owners of the other paintings included with any certainty.

As noted above, the album appeared in the summer of 1890, at a difficult time in Theo and Vincent's lives. It coincided with Theo's struggles with the owners of Boussod, Valadon, his own failing health and the illness of his newborn child. Despite these financial and personal problems...

---

12 Paul Guigou's text for the Monticelli album includes a reference to the artist's belief that he was the reincarnation of the Venetian Old Masters. Monticelli was also inspired by Watteau's fêtes galantes in his scenes of costumed lovers in forest or park settings.


14 G. Arnaud d'Agnel and E. Isnard, Monticelli, sa vie et son œuvre (1824-1886), Paris 1926, p. 139.

15 B. Welsh-Ovcharov (‘Chronologie,’ Van Gogh à Paris, cit. [note 4], p. 30) dates Theo's encounter with Alex Reid to late October 1886, and suggests that the former's Monticelli collection was mainly acquired at Delarebeyrette's gallery. For more on the Van Gogh brothers and Reid see the article by Frances Fowle in this volume of the Van Gogh Museum Journal.
fig. 6
Auguste Lauzet, lithograph after Adolphe Monticelli's *Woman at a well*
he made certain the album was completed, printed and distributed to its subscribers and buyers. Vincent welcomed the album as a kind of rescue of the old Marseilles painter. The rumours about Monticelli’s madness had long troubled him; his letters from Arles and Saint-Rémy often touch upon the matter.  

Theo as a Monticelli dealer

Theo had begun trading in Monticelli in 1886 and over the next four years he sold a large number. Although he sold far more pictures by Corot, Monet, Corcos and Daubigny, he seems to have been eager to become known as a Monticelli specialist. Publishing the album was intended both to promote his gallery as a venue where discerning collectors could buy fine paintings by the artist, and to enhance Monticelli’s reputation as one of the foremost colourists of the French avant-garde.

Monticelli’s stature began to rise just at the time the album was being prepared. In 1886 he had been honoured by the Belgian group Les XX. In December 1885 Octave Maus contacted him in Marseilles, where the artist was still painting but was ill with the effects of two strokes, and invited him to show three of his late pictures at their exhibition in Brussels in July the following year. Monticelli’s letter of acceptance expressed his personal appreciation for this recognition. Vincent, incidentally, was invited to show with Les XX in 1890.

Theo, Vincent, Delarebeyrette and Reid naturally all knew of the Monticelli commemorative shows that took place in Great Britain in 1886. One of these was at the Edinburgh International Exhibition, where eight works were displayed. During the late summer of that year more and more dealers and collectors learned of Monticelli’s death and became interested in buying his works. Not surprisingly, the legends surrounding Monticelli helped his sales. This trend continued. In 1888 a retrospective group of his works was exhibited at the Glasgow International exhibit. The gallery of Daniel Cottier was known for its Monticelli exhibitions during the late 1880s in London and New York. Also in London, Dowdeswell & Dowdswell showed 75 Monticellis in 1888. Reid, the French critic Phillipe Burty, and Oscar Wilde lent their Monticellis to this event.

Theo usually bought his Monticelli paintings from Paris dealers or the artist’s friends or agents in Marseilles. Monticelli’s best-known Paris dealer was the elderly

16 For Vincent’s firm belief that Monticelli was in control of his mental powers see Aaron Sheon, ‘Monticelli and Van Gogh,’ Apollo 85 (June 1967), pp. 444-48.
17 Thomson, op. cit. (note 8), p. 89.
18 André Alauzun and Pierre Ripert, Monticelli: sa vie et son oeuvre, Paris 1969, p. 219, fig. 360. Monticelli’s reply to Maus is reproduced in Mario and Charles Garibaldi, Monticelli, Geneva 1991, p. 205. The text of the missive was surely written by someone other than Monticelli, as he was still suffering from the affects of his stroke. However, he did sign the letter in a typical manner, similar to the signature on his pictures.
19 For the history of Monticelli’s posthumous exhibitions see D’Agnel andIsnard, op. cit. (note 14), p. 138.
Joseph Delarebeyrette, who became ill in February 1886 and died on 20 September the same year. His widow - who may be the woman Vincent referred to in his letters as the 'la Roquette female,' whom he believed to have been responsible for spreading rumours about Monticelli's drinking habits [602/478] - and son, Gabriel (‘Gabriel de la Roquette’ [628/498]) continued to run the business. What we know of the gallery's Monticelli dealings after this time comes from the correspondence between Gabriel Delarebeyrette and Pierre Piquet, an old acquaintance of the artist who sent works to Paris dealers. In one of these notes Gabriel mentions that he had 37 Monticellis in stock in April 1884 and 43 in January 1885. On 4 July 1886 he wrote to Piquet to express his sadness at Monticelli's death.21

The Delarebeyrette gallery, located at 43, Rue de Provence, had been the chief place for collectors to purchase Monticellis before Theo became a major dealer in them around 1886.22 Delarebeyrette had known Monticelli since the 1860s, when the artist lived in Paris,23 and he continued to sell his pictures even after 1870, when the painter moved permanently to Marseilles.

In 1883 Delarebeyrette, who had not seen Monticelli in many years, went to visit him. The dealer returned to Paris with a sampling of his brightly coloured and thickly painted work from the early 1880s. In the aftermath of Delarebeyrette's call, Piquet began sending more Monticellis to Paris. These were displayed in the dealer's three-room shop, which Vincent and Theo visited in 1886 and later. These acquisitions, and the replenishment of Delarebeyrette's stock with the even more daring works of 1884-86, introduced Theo, Reid, Vincent and other young artists - including Gauguin and Cézanne - to the artist's late style.24

Following a visit to the Delarebeyrette gallery soon after he arrived in Paris in the spring of 1886, Vincent began emulating Monticelli's work, particularly his flower still lifes. It is important to note that Vincent not only imitated the older artist's style, he also felt he was following in his footsteps both formally and psychologically. He believed there was a strange destiny in his discovery of Monticelli only months before the painter died.25 Many writers promulgated the notion that it was Monticelli's alcoholism and 'madness'26 that were at the root of his pictures' 'savage' appearance and while in Paris, and later in Arles, Vincent tried to learn more about the artist's mental state at the time of his death in June 1886.27 Van Gogh might have seen such later 'wild' works as Sous les arbres (fig. 7), and these may have led him not only to wonder what had made the older

21 For the correspondence between Delarebeyrette and Piquet, see Alauzun and Ripert, op. cit. (note 18), pp. 447-48. According to these notes the prices of Monticelli's pictures were about 75 or 100 francs in the mid-1880s.
22 D'Agnel and Isnard, op. cit. (note 14), p. 136. The authors noted that an unnamed dealer 'installed on the Rue de Provence' charged somewhat inflated prices after Monticelli's death hoping to make potential buyers think the costs were rising.
23 See Louis Guinand, La vie et les œuvres de Monticelli, Marseille 1931, p. 12.
24 Pierre Ripert, ‘Van Gogh et Monticelli,’ Marseille Revue Municipale 45 (1961), pp. 27-42. He also gives details of Delarebeyrette's visit to the painter.
25 Sheon, op. cit. (note 16). This article also discusses Monticelli's seascapes and their similarity to Vincent's Little seascape at Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer (F 417 JH 1453) and related works, suggesting a stylistic connection between the two artists.
26 See, for example, Horace Bertin, Les Marseillais: moeurs et paysages, Paris 1888, pp. 11-12, where he discusses Monticelli's eccentric behaviour and drinking habits as the cause of rather 'messy' style. For a summary of the legends about the artist's madness, see A. Gouirand, Monticelli, Paris 1900, pp. 41-42.
fig. 7
Adolphe Monticelli, *Sous les arbres*, c. 1883-85, Private collection
painter adopt such an abstract and improvisational style, but also to question the validity of the rumours of Monticelli's madness. It may well have been Delarebeyrette who helped convince him that these stories were untrue.  

Theo's own activity in buying and selling Monticellis can be evaluated from the ledgers of Boussod, Valadon & Cie. He sold many to London dealers specialising in the artist's work, including Daniel Cottier and Dowdeswell & Dowdswell, who resold them at high prices. There were also sales to Glasgow, Edinburgh, New York and Boston. In 1888 a Monticelli was sold to the Goupil branch in The Hague, and there were also sales to E.J. van Wisselingh, the Amsterdam dealer. 

Theo's first Monticelli sale is listed in his account books on 2 February 1886, about a month before Vincent's arrival in Paris. It was of a pair of rococo-inspired pictures that had cost him 425 francs that he then sold for 600 to Thomas Richardson, a London dealer. 

Theo faced stiff competition in his quest to find and sell Monticellis. In addition to Delarebeyrette, there was the art dealer George A. Lucas, an American expatriate living in Paris who was Theo's rival in selling French pictures to wealthy foreigners. Lucas kept a diary of his activities and recorded how he bought inexpensive Monticellis in Paris and then sold them to clients in the United States. He purchased his first Monticelli for 35 francs in 1872 - the artist was already living in Marseille and sending works to Delarebeyrette. In 1882 he noted the purchase of two more pictures from the dealer, which he sent to the American collector Samuel Avery. On 22 March 1888 Lucas went to see some Monticelli work Theo had for sale, and five days later he wrote that he had again visited Delarebeyrette to look at some more. 

Theo scored a good financial success on a Monticelli sale to the London dealer Charles Obach and Company in 1886, bringing in 4,000 francs. This must have been very encouraging to Theo, who had paid 3,500 francs for the picture. He sold nine other works to Obach in April and September 1887. Most of these came from Delarebeyrette. The prices paid ranged from 150 to 1,400 francs. In May 1887 Theo sold seven paintings to the London Monticelli dealers Dowdeswell & Dowdswell. Again, most had been purchased from Delarebeyrette. Another supplier was Monsieur Boyer, who was Monticelli's principal agent in Marseilles. The Scottish dealer Alexander Reid bought six Monticellis from Theo in September 1887, at prices ranging from 100 to 250 francs. Thomas Richardson bought a third Monticelli from him in January 1890, and Vincent's friend, the artist Eugene Boch, bought three in

---

28 For an expanded discussion see Sheon, op. cit. (note 16).
29 The Monticellis sold at Theo's gallery were kindly communicated to me by Chris Stolwijk of the Van Gogh Museum. Alauzun and Ripert (op. cit. [note 18], p. 442) erroneously state that the number of such works that passed through Theo's hands was 19; it was actually 43.
30 For the sale of Cottier's collection of Monticellis in May 1892 see D'Agnel and Isnard, op. cit. (note 14), p. 139. For Monticelli's reputation and sales in Great Britain see Sheon, op. cit. (note 20), pp. 91-96 and passim.
33 For more on Boyer see the article by Monique Nonne in this volume of the Van Gogh Museum Journal.
July 1889, about a year after he and Vincent had painted together in Arles. One of Boch's paintings had been part of a group of six Theo had purchased from the Paris dealers Pierre-Firmin Martin and Camentron, at their gallery on the Rue Lafitte.\(^{34}\)

Monticelli sales were naturally only a small part of Theo's business. However, the one Monticelli transaction for 4,000 francs was larger than most of his impressionist sales put together, with the exception of works by Monet and Degas.\(^{35}\) Theo bought most of his Monticellis for less than 300 francs, and several cost him less than 100.

### The Monticelli album project: a chronology

The Van Gogh correspondence provides the chronology of the Monticelli album-publishing venture. In a letter to Vincent dated 8 December 1889, Theo mentions Lauzet's visit and his plans for the album. He also reminded his brother that Vincent had once expressed a hope that someone would soon honour Monticelli: ‘At the time you used to say that they ought to publish a book on Monticelli. Well, I have seen a score of very fine lithographs after his pictures, done by a certain Lauzet. There will also be an accompanying text. The artist is going to have a look at our pictures to see whether there are any he might want to reproduce. […] The lithographs are printed in different tones, and, with regard to the process used, are more or less like the etchings on stone which Marvy did in his time; the man who made them is a true artist’ [827/T21]. Vincent replied enthusiastically to the news of the publication: ‘What you tell me about a publication of coloured lithographs with a text on Monticelli is very interesting. Frankly, it gave me very great pleasure, and I shall be very curious to see them some day’ [830/617].

A week or so later Lauzet visited Theo again, and this was duly reported to Vincent on 22 December: ‘Mr Lauzet, the lithographer of Monticelli's pictures, came to see me at my home. He came to see ours, and he thought them very fine. As regards the flowers, he doesn't think he can reproduce them, for the slabs are monochrome, and he doesn't think he will be able to render the effect of that picture in a single colour. He will start with the “Italian woman.”’ He then went on to describe the lithographs Lauzet had showed him and the man himself: ‘I think he

---

34 See Rewald, op. cit. (note 13), appendix II.
has been most successful in that head of a child which we saw at La Roquette's that time. The artist made a very sympathetic impression on me. He is from the south and has something of the Spaniard about him, a pale face with a black beard, but at the same time he has something gentle, like an English poet. It is a great pity that he has not done any slabs in different colours, which Monticelli was one of the first to use, availing himself of a contrast in order to arrive at a strong effect, while preserving the harmony’ [833/T22].

On 22 January 1890 Theo once more wrote Vincent on a visit from Lauzet. A tentative title for the album had been chosen, Monticelli: épreuve d'artiste, although this was later changed. He also told his brother that the artist had liked the new canvases Vincent had shipped from the asylum: ‘[…] after he had seen some pictures he exclaimed, ‘Isn't Provence lovely!’’ He mentioned that Lauzet had left Paris a few days earlier on his way to Marseilles, and that on his return he would try to stop in Saint-Rémy. Finally, he asked Vincent to inform the artist, if he did come to the asylum, that Theo had sold another subscription to the Monticelli book [844/T25].

By late January 1890 Theo had apparently decided to publish the album through Boussod, Valadon & Cie. Taking on the role of publisher must have been a difficult decision for him. He knew he was not likely to get financial support from his employers, with whom he was in dispute about a variety of issues. Most of the funding for the project had to be raised by subscriptions before printing. To sell these, Theo and Lauzet contacted Monticelli's admirers. Regarding the costs, Theo had, however, written to Vincent on 22 December 1889 that the album was 'still far from completed, but [Lauzet] will finish it. Cottier and Reid have subscribed for several copies, so that his printing expenses are covered. He has got ready 16 of the 25 lithographs he intends to make' [833/T22].

The Monticelli album was finally printed and distributed in late June 1890, about four weeks before Vincent shot himself. Theo wrote to his brother on 13 June: ‘Lauzet came yesterday morning to see your pictures; he is very busy with his Monticellis, which are to appear within some ten days’ [892/T37].

Paul Guigou's text: rescuing Monticelli

An essay about Monticelli's life and his artistic goals was to complement the lithographs. Lauzet chose Paul Guigou for the task, an art writer and director of the museum in Marseilles. Guigou had known Monticelli during his time in the southern port. His essay expressed the wishes of the chief supporters of the album - Lauzet, Theo, Vincent and the other sponsors, in particular the Delarebeyrettes, Alex Reid

36 The name ‘La Roquette’ may refer to the wife of the Monticelli dealer in Paris, Joseph Delarebeyrette, as mentioned above. In Vincent's letters the ‘mother’ is called ‘Mme de Lareby Larouquet.’ This spelling may be a mistaken transcription of ‘Delarebeyrette’; if ‘Laroq’ is deleted, the text would be ‘deLarebyrette.’

37 Thomson, op. cit. (note 8), pp. 126, 128 cites the Monticelli album as one of Theo's many activities in 1890.

38 For information on Guigou see Alauzun and Ripert, op. cit. (note 18), p. 406.
and Cottier - who hoped it would rescue the artist from the rumours about his madness, alcoholism and eccentricity. 39

Theo may have assisted Guigou in understanding Monticelli by putting him in contact with the artist's main dealers in Paris, the Delarebeyrettes. In one section of the essay, Guigou depicts Monticelli as a turbulent, bohemian painter and he describes him as an artist driven 'mad' by Gypsy music (although he also notes that he never seems to have suffered from any mental torment). In a footnote, however, the author writes that after receiving some letters from Monticelli to his Paris dealer - we do not know through whom - his views had changed. While he had previously

39 Paul Guigou, 'Monticelli,' in *Adolphe Monticelli: vingt planches*, cit. (note 3), p. 10, uses the plural form 'we' to suggest he was writing for several persons in his praise of the artist, perhaps referring to Theo, Reid, the Delarebeyrettes and Lauzet.
thought Monticelli painted effortlessly, he now understood the amount of work that went in to achieving the artist's typically 'wild' look. He quotes Monticelli himself: ‘I can tell you that I do not just paint for my personal pleasure, absolutely, and that only rarely do I make a picture that makes me dream of a certain mood. [...] Speaking seriously, I don't just make my paintings from air, and they require more effort than you can believe.’ Clearly, all those involved in the project wanted to stress that Monticelli's style was intentional and not the result of illness.

**Vincent and the Monticelli album**

In January 1890, while the album was being prepared, Albert Aurier published his essay on Van Gogh as an ‘isolated’ and visionary artist. Vincent wrote to the art critic that he was grateful for the attention, but felt he should point out his psychological and stylistic debt to Monticelli, stressing how sensitive he was to his plight as an artist who had died unappreciated: ‘It seems to me that Monticelli's personal artistic temperament is exactly the same as that of the author of The Decameron - Boccaccio - a melancholic, somewhat resigned, unhappy man, who saw the wedding party of the world pass by, painting and analysing the lovers of his time - he, the one who had been left out of things’ [854/626a].

Vincent then urged Aurier to think of Monticelli as his mentor: ‘I feel uneasy in my mind when I reflect that what you say is due to others rather than to myself. For example, Monticelli in particular. Saying as you do: “As far as I know, he is the only painter to perceive the chromatics of things with such intensity, with such a metallic, gemlike lustre,” be so kind as to go and see a certain bouquet by Monticelli at my brother's - a bouquet in white, forget-me-not blue and orange - then you will feel what I want to say. But the best, the most amazing Monticellis have long been in Scotland and England. In a museum in the north - the one in Lille I believe - there is said to be a very marvel, rich in another way and certainly no less French than Watteau's Départ pour Cythère. At the moment Mr Lauzet is engaged in reproducing some 30 works of Monticelli's’ [854/626a].

By 1890 Vincent had another personal motive for desiring the Monticelli album to be published: he hoped that Dr Gachet would print a companion volume of etchings of his own pictures on Provençal subjects. Gachet owned an etching press that could be used to print the sequel album, and he had also known Monticelli many years earlier, when he was a medical student in Montpellier. The two probably met in

---

40 Ibid., p. 8: ‘“Je vous dirai que je ne fais de la peinture que pour moi, absolument, et que de temps à autre seulement j’obtiens un de ces tableaux qui font rêver un certain esprit [...]. Seriusement parlant, je ne fais pas mes tableaux à la vapeur, et ils me coutent plus de peine que vous ne croyez.”

41 For Dr Gachet's role in promoting etchings by Cézanne and Vincent see Carol Solomon Kiefer, exhib. cat. The hanged man: Cézanne and the art of the print, Amherst, MA (Mead Art Museum, Amherst College) 1999, pp. 9-52. For Vincent's work at Auvers in general see, most recently, Carol Zemel, Van Gogh's progress: Utopia, modernity, and late-nineteenth-century art, Berkeley 1997, pp. 107-245. On Van Gogh as a printmaker see Sjraar van Heugten and Fieke Pabst, The graphic work of Vincent van Gogh, Zwolle 1995 (Cahiers Vincent 6).
Marseilles in 1858.\textsuperscript{42} John Rewald has even suggested that Vincent became closer to Gachet when he learned that he had been acquainted with Monticelli\textsuperscript{43} and had actually painted and etched some portraits of the older artist.\textsuperscript{44} The artist may have thought that the ‘Vincent album’ would establish a further link between himself and Monticelli. In a letter he mentions that once when he was painting a picture of Provençal women gathering olives he thought the picture, reproduced in a lithograph, could one day be part of a sequel album dedicated to himself and similar to Lauzet's work on Monticelli [830/617]. Such a pairing of albums would serve to emphasise that both artists had worked in Provence and had been considered madmen because of the appearance of their paintings and their eccentric behaviour, but also to prove this image wrong.

Vincent hoped that once Lauzet had finished the Monticelli album he would be interested in working on this second album. He was encouraged in his hopes by Theo, who had written several times that Lauzet was an admirer: ‘But what pleased him most were your canvases and drawings; oh, my dear fellow, that man understands them!’ [833/T22]. In a later letter he noted that he was sure Lauzet would appreciate Vincent's new drawings when he came to visit the apartment next [840/T24]. He even went so far as to suggest that Vincent and Lauzet might rent a studio together [844/T25].

Vincent's plan for his own album was maturing just at the time when he may have had the opportunity to see a printer's proof copy of the Monticelli book on his way to Auvers in the third week of May 1890, when he stopped in Paris to visit Theo. Vincent wrote Gauguin on 16 June that he was thinking of etching images he had done in Provence [893/643]. In a letter to Theo of 17 June, with the publication date of the Monticelli album drawing near, Vincent returned to the idea of printing some of his own pictures, probably on Gachet's press, as a follow-up. He also hoped that Gauguin would collaborate on the new volume: ‘I hope [Gauguin] does some etchings of southern subjects, say six, since I can print them without cost at M. Gachet's, who is kind enough to print them for nothing if I do them. That is certainly something that ought to be done, and we will do it in such a way that it will form a sort of sequel to the Lauzet-Monticelli publication, if you approve. And Gauguin will probably engrave some of his canvases in conjunction with me [...]. Gachet will print these plates for us too [...].

\textsuperscript{44} Gachet, op. cit. (note 42), fig. 20, and for his Monticelli collection, p. 182.
[He] is coming to see my canvases in Paris someday and then we could choose some of them for engraving' [894/642].

Vincent may have seen the finished copies of the Monticelli album when went to visit Theo in Paris on 6 July.\textsuperscript{45} By late July Vincent had quarrelled with Gachet and there was apparently no further hope that he could produce prints after his own paintings on the doctor's press.

Theo and Lauzet probably spent several weeks distributing copies of the Monticelli album to subscribers. This heroic rescue of the Marseilles painter was one of the dealer's most important acts in the last months of his life. Theo was worried about his future activities with Boussod, Valadon.\textsuperscript{46} In addition, he was terminally ill - and would soon be committed to an asylum in Utrecht.\textsuperscript{47} Vincent was of course pleased that the album had finally been released, and that Monticelli was at last honoured with a publication. By the summer of 1890, when the volume was being sent out from Theo's his gallery and sold to the general public, Vincent was preoccupied with his own posthumous reputation and consumed with fear that he, like Monticelli, would be viewed as a mad artist. At the time of his death he at least had the satisfaction of knowing that Theo had carried out one of his deepest personal wishes and published a book on Monticelli.

\textsuperscript{45} A letter from Theo [901/T40], dated 5 July 1890, says that the family is counting on Vincent to come ‘next Sunday’ on the first train. That visit did not take place. In his next - and last - letter to Vincent [905/T41], of 14 July, Theo wrote about ‘business questions’ they needed to discuss. These may have had something to do with the Monticelli album, but were surely mainly about his financial troubles and his plans to vacation in Holland rather than spend time with Vincent in Auvers.

\textsuperscript{46} 899/T39 and 901/T40.

\textsuperscript{47} For Theo's illness and its mental affects see Sheon, op. cit. (note 27), pp. 173-91.
fig. 1
Eugène Delacroix, *Medea*, 1838, Lille, Musée des Beaux-Arts (photograph courtesy of the RMN)

fig. 2
Eugène Delacroix, *Medea*, 1862, Paris, Musée du Louvre (photograph courtesy of the RMN)
The 19th-century art trade: copies, variations, replicas

Patricia Mainardi

The question of replication has proved most troublesome for modernists, even those studying the 19th century, because modernism privileges chronological priority as the key to authenticity. The enterprise of replication, with its aura of duplicity, appears so contradictory to the basic modernist principle of originality that it seems only natural that, when comparing two similar paintings such as Delacroix's *Medea* of 1838 with his 1862 version (figs. 1 and 2) we should want to know which one came first. Insofar as we assume that the primary manifestation of a style or theme incorporates the quality of originality, while subsequent renditions need to be explained and justified in order to be valorised, we remain modernists and neglect centuries of studio practice by artists whose status in canonical art history is incontrovertible. This essay seeks to clarify the terms of earlier studio practice in order to reconsider the art production of the 19th century, positioned at the intersection of tradition and modernity.

It is a basic tenet of art historiography that classicism promoted imitation while modernism, particularly romanticism, encouraged originality and individualism. Delacroix, for example, is an artist whom we think of as representing the epitome of romanticism with his fecund imagination, virtuoso brushwork and vivid coloration. Repetitiveness is more commonly attributed to Delacroix’s rival Ingres who, throughout his life, produced numerous variations on his favourite themes. So closely has this practice been associated with Ingres that a major exhibition of 1983-84 and at least two subsequent essays have all focused on his studio practice, while no parallel investigation has ever been attempted of the oeuvre of Delacroix, whose methods were actually remarkable similar.

The explanation for this lies in Delacroix’s painterly style, problematic in any consideration of repetition. The free play of the artist’s hand - in short, virtuoso brushwork - seems less open to replication than the enamel-like finish and closed forms of classicism or 19th-century Salon painting. And yet atelier procedure from the Renaissance onward was analogous across the artistic spectrum; it is the prejudices and preconceptions of modernist art historians that - depending on whose work is under investigation - have caused them to either ignore certain practices, to explain them away as anomalies, or to focus on them as somehow defining.

I would like to thank John Klein and Madeleine Fidell-Beaufort for their advice and criticism. An earlier version of this essay was presented at the International Delacroix Symposium held in conjunction with the Delacroix exhibition at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in October 1998, and published in *Visual Resources* 15 (1999). Research was supported in part by a grant from the City University of New York PSC-CUNY Research Award Program.


2 On this subject see Jeffrey M. Muller, ‘Measures of authenticity: the detection of copies in the early literature on connoisseurship,’ in *Retaining the original*, cit. (note 1), pp. 141-49.
Copies

Like the famous example of Eskimos having dozens of words for snow, 19th-century artists had an entire vocabulary to describe the phenomenon that we identify with the single word ‘copy.’ The distinction between ‘copying’ and ‘imitation’ was still clear in 18th-century art theory but has gradually eroded until our own period when the two words are used virtually interchangeably. Even by 1884, when the Institut de France published volume ‘C’ of its *Dictionnaire de l’académie des beaux-arts*, their meanings had blurred to the point that the entry for *copie* noted that ‘to copy a master’ was often said when one really meant ‘to imitate his style, his colour, his manner.’


*Van Gogh Museum Journal 2000*
artist's later version of his own theme - what we see in Delacroix's second Medea (fig. 2) - was not copie, but répétition, the same word used in performance for a rehearsal. In performance we never assume that opening night is qualitatively better than later presentations - first performances are, in fact, usually weaker than subsequent ones, which gain in depth from greater experience and familiarity with the material. But when, by focusing on innovation, we shift the semantic model from performance to industrial production we valorise chronological priority and create a distorted problematic for 19th-century studio practice.

These nuances of meaning are important: when confronted with the many similar paintings by major 19th-century artists, we have tended to explain them, justify them, or condemn them in terms of our own art theory rather than theirs. And in so doing we have lost a unique opportunity to understand an aesthetic universe that is quite different from our own.

Copying in our sense of replication, i.e. the exact reproduction of an artist's work, was a procedure used chiefly by students ‘in the attainment of mechanical dexterity,’ as Sir Joshua Reynolds explained in his third
'Discourse.' 4 Mengs, in his *Gedanken über Schönheit und über Geschmack in der Malerei* (1762) wrote that a student ‘should copy beautiful works correctly, without questioning at the start the reasons for their beauty. This will train the justness of his eye, the most essential instrument of art.’ 5 Academic art instruction developed from the writings of theorists such as these, and emphasised the importance of copying in the education of artists. Virtually all 19th-century artists made drawn or painted copies, either from engravings or in museums, whether or not they attended academic art schools. As part of their course of study, students at Paris’s Ecole des beaux-arts who won the prestigious Prix de Rome, which gave them five years in the Italian city at government expense, were expected to complete a full-scale copy of a major work and send it back to France, where it then entered the national collections. 6

Delacroix did not attend the Ecole, but he copied all his life. 7 In his own ‘Dictionnaire des beaux-arts,’ which he began compiling shortly after his election to the Académie, he prepared a long entry on *copies, copier* that began: ‘This has been the education of nearly all the great masters. First he learns the manner of his master, just like an apprentice learns how to make a knife, without attempting to display

---

4 Sir Joshua Reynolds, ‘Discourse III: the great leading principles of the grand style. Of beauty. The genuine habits of nature to be distinguished from those of fashion,’ in *Discourses on art, with selections from The Idler,* ed. Stephen O. Mitchell, Indianapolis 1962, p. 26. The lecture was given on 14 December 1770 and first published in 1797.


his originality. Then he copies everything that he comes across by contemporary or earlier artists. Painting begins as a simple craft.  

Throughout the Journal Delacroix expressed his admiration for artists who made copies, noting when he was 49 that Tintoretto had made hundreds of them. Ten years later he wrote: ‘Rubens, when he was over fifty, during his mission to the king of Spain, spent his free time in Madrid copying the superb Italian originals that could still be seen there. In his youth he copied extensively. This exercise of copying, entirely neglected by the modern schools, was the source of immense knowledge (witness Albert [sic] Dürer).’

And Delacroix himself copied - Raphael, Michelangelo, Rubens, Titian. His estate inventory listed 13 of his own copies after Rubens alone, and he collected Géricault's copies after the Old Masters. Nor was Delacroix the only modernist to do this. Courbet, Manet, Van Gogh, Degas, Cézanne, and all the major painters of the 19th century adopt copies of paintings they admired.

**Variations, repetitions**

This is the sense in which we commonly understand the meaning of the word ‘copy’; but what if an artist copies his own work, making what we would call replicas or variations, but what the 19th century referred to as repetitions? This is certainly what Ingres did, painting, for example, seven versions of *Paolo and Francesca* (figs. 3 and 4). Although it has received less attention because it contradicts our preconceived notions of romantic practice, it is what Delacroix did as well.

In the extensive definition of the word *copie* in the *Dictionnaire de l'académie des beaux-arts*, which comprises several pages, its various meanings were ranked in a surprising order. The primary definition is given as: ‘Copies executed or signed by the authors themselves of original works. Properly speaking these are simple repetitions, recognisable often through some variation that the master himself has intentionally put there.’

In addition to insisting on the correct term, *répétition*, even while acknowledging its less precise common usage as *copie*, this definition makes an even more important point: that artists rarely made exact copies of their own work, or what we would call replicas. That was the task of students or studio assistants. We should be aware that

---


9 Ibid., p. 148 (23 April 1847).

10 Ibid., p. 616 (13 January 1857): ‘Rubens, âgé de plus de cinquante ans, dans la mission dont il fut chargé auprès du roi d'Espagne, employait le temps qu'il ne donnait pas aux affaires, à copier à Madrid les superbes originaux italiens qu'on y voit encore. Il avait dans sa jeunesse copié énormément. Cet exercice des copies, entièrement négligé par les écoles modernes, était la source d'un immense savoir (Voir Albert Dürer).’

11 *Dictionnaire*, cit. (note 3), vol. 4: p. 262: ‘Les copies exécutées ou signées par les auteurs eux-mêmes des œuvres originales. A proprement parler, ce sont là de simples répétitions, reconnaisssables souvent à quelque variante qu'y a introduite à dessein le maître lui-même.’
the existence of an exact copy may be evidence that it is not autograph, for as the 18th-century connoisseur Jonathan Richardson wrote: ‘In making an original we have a vast latitude as to the handling, colouring, drawing, expression, etc., in copying we are confined; consequently a copy cannot have the freedom and spirit of an original.’

Répétitions, however, were considered originals in their own right, and were expected to vary from the artist's first ‘performance’ of a theme. Today we call them variations - in order to assign them enough originality to signal their distinction from and superiority to an exact copy, a replica. This, however, is a classic Foucauldian example of how we have restructured the earlier ‘order of things’ to conform to our 20th-century values. We privilege the first rendition as the ‘original’ and then are obliged to either recuperate subsequent ones as ‘variations’ or dismiss them as ‘replicas.’ The problematic issue here is novelty.

Replicas

Previously, connoisseurs were concerned with originality primarily in order to detect the forgeries that threatened the market for Renaissance and Baroque paintings, while in modernism, as Walter Benjamin has pointed out, degrees of authenticity were established primarily as a response to the introduction of reproductive technologies that challenged the uniqueness of the original art object.\(^\text{13}\) The notions of copy, replica and variation were less problematic in the period preceding mass production and the widespread use of such technologies - which then established a standard of exactitude against which art was forced to distinguish itself. The best illustration of how this earlier mentalité differs from our own is the story that Vasari tells of how Federigo II of Mantua, passing through Florence on his way to visit Pope Clement VII in Rome, saw Raphael's Portrait of Pope Leo X with Cardinals Giulio de'Medici and Luigi Rossi (Florence, Uffizi Gallery), and begged it from Clement as a gift. The pope ordered the painting sent to Mantua, but its owner, Ottaviano de' Medici, not wanting to part with it, had Andrea del Sarto paint an exact copy which he sent instead. The copy was so good it fooled everyone, including Giulio Romano, Raphael's student and collaborator on this very painting. When Vasari finally managed to convince him it was by del Sarto and not Raphael - in other words that it was a copy and not an original - Giulio shrugged his shoulders and said: ‘I value it none the less than if it were by Raphael's own hand, on the contrary even more so because it is an extraordinary feat and a most excellent thing to imitate someone's style and do it as well as he.’\(^\text{14}\) In the era of mass production, however, and especially after the introduction of photographic processes, this ‘extraordinary feat’ would be dismissed as mere mechanical reproduction. In the modernist period the most esteemed art would, by contrast, make a feature of its ‘originality.’

The exact copies we call replicas are defined in the academy's Dictionnaire as the second order of copy: ‘Copies made in the atelier or under the very eyes of the author by his students, recognisable through a much greater similarity to the original.’\(^\text{15}\) The distinction between replica and repetition is illustrated by Amaury-Duval, Ingres's student and biographer, who tells how he painted a copy of Ingres's Portrait of M. Bertin (Paris, Musée du Louvre): ‘I set out to execute this copy with all the exactitude of which I was capable,’ he wrote. When Ingres saw it, he contemplated it for a while and then, ‘all at once, turning to me [he] said, to our great astonishment, “Why didn't you try another background colour... a greenish background?”’ Amaury-Duval was

\(^{13}\) See Walter Benjamin, ‘The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction [1936],’ in Illuminations, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn, New York 1955, pp. 219-53. Jeffrey M. Muller has challenged Benjamin's reading, but he discusses only copies (which connoisseurs had economic reasons for fearing) and not autograph repetitions, which were acceptable until the modern period about which Benjamin was writing; see Muller, op. cit. (note 2), passim.


\(^{15}\) Dictionnaire, cit. (note 3), vol. 4, p. 262: ‘Les copies faites dans l'atelier ou sous les yeux même de l'auteur par ses élèves, reconnaissables à une plus grande similitude de procédés avec ceux de l'original.’
horrified and replied: “‘How could you think that I would permit myself to make any change, even the most insignificant, in one of your works, and especially a change of this importance?’ ‘That's true... that's true...’ said Ingres, ‘you are right, but nonetheless I do regret that this experiment wasn't tried.’” And therein lies the difference between a repetition done by the master himself and a replica made by an assistant.

As successful artists had done for centuries, Delacroix had his assistants execute replicas of his well-known works, which he then retouched, signed and sold as his own. Lee Johnson lists many such paintings, now often reattributed to Delacroix's assistant Pierre Andrieu. There was nothing suspect in this practice, which was standard from the Renaissance on, i.e. from the moment when the demand for signed works from celebrated painters began to exceed the supply. David, Ingres and Delacroix all did it, with no attempt to dissemble. It was part of what Delacroix called ‘the simple craft’ of being an artist. Confusion results only when we try to sort out the multiple versions in an attempt to rank them in a modernist hierarchy of authenticity based on chronological priority.

16 Eugène-Emmanuel Amaury-Duval, L'atelier d'Ingres: édition critique de l'ouvrage publié à Paris en 1878, ed. Daniel Ternois, Paris 1993, pp. 339-41: ‘Je me mis à exécuter cette copie avec toute l'exactitude dont j'étais capable. Tout à coup, se tournant de mon côté, M. Ingres me dit, à notre grande stupéfaction, “Pourquoi n'avez-vous pas essayé un autre fond... un fond verdâtre?” […] “Comment avez-vous pu supposer, Monsieur, que je me permettrais de faire un changement, même le plus insignifiant, à une œuvre de vous, à plus forte raison un changement de cette importance?” “C'est vrai... C'est vrai... vous avez raison; mais je regrette pourtant que cet essai n'ait pas été tenté.”’

There are, for example, at least nine versions of Delacroix's *Christ on the Sea of Galilee*, two of which he kept in his studio all his life. A modernist interpretation holds this to be evidence of his personal attachment to the theme, but we might also note that for centuries it was standard studio practice to keep a model of sought-after subjects both to show to perspective buyers and to serve as inspiration for subsequent repetitions.

The practice of repetition was informal, either negotiated directly by the artist with collectors, or through dealer-representatives. It became institutionalised, and we might say, industrialised, later in the 19th century when it degenerated into replication. Beginning in the 1850s, the Maison Goupil arranged for replicas of well-known works to be executed first by the artists themselves, and later, in the 1870s, by a staff of professional copyists. These later canvases were signed by the artist and were even sold as autograph originals with the profits being shared by artist and dealer. We might see the later-19th century demand for exact replicas rather than repetitions as motivated by a combination of two factors: modernism's privileging of the chronologically earliest version of a subject, and industry's much-vaunted ability to make exact reproductions. As a result of this practice it is unclear, for example, which of the many repetitions of Cabanel's *Birth of Venus* (figs. 5 and 6) were executed by the artist himself, and which were done by his studio assistants or Goupil's copyists. This situation is unusual only insofar as these paintings did not all come directly from the artist's own atelier, produced by his own assistants. In a long essay on the word *copie*, Larousse's *Grand dictionnaire universel du XIXe siècle*, published in the 1860s, attributed the custom to the revered masters of the Italian Renaissance whose standard business practice it had been to have their students turn out replicas of their most popular works, which the masters then signed and sold.

fig. 5
Alexandre Cabanel, *Birth of Venus*, 1863, Paris, Musée d'Orsay (photograph courtesy of the RMN)

fig. 6
David, Ingres and Delacroix did the same thing, as did Courbet after them: ‘Painting begins as a simple craft.’

And others...

What today is the most common meaning of the word copie was actually the third level of definition in the academic dictionary: ‘Copies, most numerous, made outside the influence or after the death of the author of the original.’ These copies formed the basis of art instruction, and most artists continued to make them throughout their careers. Copies in this sense could be precise, in the nature of a replica, or freely done to isolate some aspect of the work. Delacroix, for example, made a pastel after a sea nymph in Rubens's *Disembarkment of Marie de' Medici at Marseilles* (Paris, Musée du Louvre), later transforming it into a female nude in his *Death of Sardanapalus* (Paris, Musée du Louvre).

Besides these three kinds of renditions - the autograph repetition, the assistant's replica and any copy after an unrelated master - there were two others. The reduced-size repetition was called a reduction. In 1852 Delacroix painted one of his 1841 *Entry of the crusaders into Constantinople* (Paris, Musée du Louvre), which Louis-Philippe had commissioned for the Crusades Room of the Pavillon du Roi at Versailles. The reduction is strikingly different from the Versailles painting. This may have been the result of Delacroix's working from sketches and memory, as he no longer had the earlier painting. But then again, this may simply be a modernist assumption, for in 1844 he had painted a reduction (Philadelphia Museum of Art) for himself of his 1827 *Death of Sardanapalus* before selling the picture. This time he did have the earlier piece right in front of him, and we must assume he had the intention of duplicating it as a souvenir; nonetheless, he made changes to both the coloration and composition.

The lowest ranking form of copie in the academic dictionary was the translation of an image into another medium, such as an engraving or a lithograph. This is no doubt a result of the general assumption that prints are merely faithful replications of prior images and thus more akin to a student's or studio assistant's copie than to the master's répétition. Delacroix often complicated this relationship, however, by conceiving images in prints years before he put them on canvas. The 1853 painting of *Ophelia* in the Louvre, for example, the most accomplished of several versions of the theme, followed by ten years his lithograph of the same subject, which in turn followed two small sketchy paintings. Ingres often reworked themes in collaboration with others...

21 Delacroix, op. cit. (note 8).
23 The picture is now in the Louvre. The copy was made for the collector Bonnat
24 *Dictionnaire*, cit. (note 3), vol. 4, p. 262.
with the engravers Luigi Calamatta and Achille Réveil, producing images distinctly different from the paintings that inspired them.26

Examining these multiple fine distinctions, we come to understand the problems modernist attitudes have created in our understanding of 19th-century art. By flattening the many diverse meanings of ‘copy’ into the simple concept of ‘replica’ we leave most of the period's work stranded. The contradictory fetish for both originality in the cultural realm and exact reproduction in the industrial realm - with the consequent devaluation of everything second-hand - has forced us to invent another category, variation, to recuperate all those works which our values have consigned to the aesthetic scrap-heap. But let us remember that in the 19th century a repetition was a performance to be judged on its own merits, neither necessarily better nor worse than its predecessors.

**Imitation**

This problem of variation and replica is a modernist conundrum. In 18th- and 19th-century art theory, the concept of ‘imitation’ was juxtaposed to that of ‘copying,’ a distinction which gradually vanished throughout the subsequent century. In his *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der Griechischen Werke in der Malerei und*

---

26 Stephen Bann discussed Ingres's working methods in the production of prints in his 'Ingres in reproduction,' paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the College Art Association, New York City, 26 February 2000; it will be published in a forthcoming issue of *Art History.*
Bildhauer-Kunst (1755), Winckelmann stated succinctly: ‘There is but one way for the moderns to become great, and perhaps unequalled; I mean, by imitating the ancients.’27 Ingres is often quoted as having said: ‘Raphael, in imitating endlessly, was always himself.’28 But Delacroix felt the same way; he wrote in his Journal: ‘Raphael, the greatest of painters has imitated the most. Imitation of his master, who left traces in his style which never disappeared; imitation of antiquity and of the masters who preceded him […].’29 Delacroix well understood the difference between the concepts of copying and imitation, for he was praising Raphael for ‘imitating’ - not copying - earlier artists.

Because this distinction was gradually lost during the 19th-century and had completely disappeared by the 20th, modernists discussing earlier work often use the two words interchangeably, thereby further confusing the issue. But if we think of the 19th century as a period of transition between 18th-century aesthetics and those of the modern age, we can see how traditional studio practice and attitudes towards it changed during the course of this period.

Diderot’s Encyclopédie gave the standard 18th-century definition of ‘imitation’: ‘A good imitation is a continual invention. It must, so to speak, transform its model and embellish its ideas; through the transformation that the artist gives to these ideas, he appropriates them. Whatever he takes, he enriches, and whatever he can't enrich, he leaves.’30 Nor was creation thought to be superior to imitation - the separation of these two concepts is itself a modernist idea. Diderot wrote: ‘The one who invents a kind of imitation is a man of genius. The one who perfects a kind of imitation already invented, or who excels in it, is also a man of genius.’31 And so when we try to determine whether David, Ingres, Delacroix or any other pre-modern artist painted his repetitions for money, out of friendship, or as vehicles for artistic exploration, we are in the wrong ‘order of things.’ We are forgetting that painting was a ‘simple craft,’ and we are adopting the modernist principle that innovation is primary and any repetition of themes needs to be explained and justified.

From imitation to replication

For centuries creation was envisaged as an unbroken continuum from antiquity to the present, with each generation passing the torch, so to speak, to the next. Imitation,

29 Delacroix, op. cit. (note 8), p. 738 (1 March 1859): ‘Raphaël, le plus grand des peintres, a été le plus appliqué à imiter: imitation de son maître, laquelle a laissé dans son style des traces qui ne se sont jamais effacées; imitation de l'antique et des maîtres qui l'avaient précédé […].’
30 Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers par une société des gens de lettres, 35 vols., Neuchâtel 1775, vol. 8, pp. 567-69, ‘Imitation’: ‘La bonne imitation est une continuelle invention. Il faut, pour ainsi dire, se transformer en son modèle, embellir ses pensées, & par le tour qu'on leur donne, se les approprier, enrichir ce qu'on lui prend, & lui laisser ce qu'on ne peut enrichir.’
31 Ibid. ‘Celui qui invente un genre d’imitation est un homme de génie. Celui qui perfectionne un genre d’imitation inventé, ou qui y excelle, est aussi un homme de génie.’
defined as taking inspiration from the highest standards of earlier art, was considered normal, praiseworthy - and inevitable. ‘Who among the great hasn't imitated?’ wrote Ingres, ‘One can't make something out of nothing.’ The shift we identify as modernism, despite all its complications, had one undeniable temporal change in that artists increasingly severed their ties with the past to look to the future, increasingly claiming themselves as *sui generis.* Novelty, newness, innovation, all these concepts gradually changed the climate in which artists worked. The process was gradual, of course, and much too complex to discuss in a short essay, but two factors indicate a founding moment of modernism. Before 1789, when the Salon was open only to members of the Academy, artists often exhibited the same works more than once. There was no particular cachet attached to novelty: if a painting was worth looking at one year, then it would be rewarding to see it again. And the practice of repetition continued, as we have seen, well into the 19th century, and was carried out by all major artists. While it is difficult to measure something as amorphous as changing attitudes, one factor we can point to is the moment when attitudes become crystallised into institutions.

In 1852 the published Salon regulations for the first time explicitly banned both copies and previously exhibited work, thereby institutionalising the values of originality and novelty, both of which had gradually displaced imitation in establishing hegemony over the aesthetic realm.  


33 See article three in the ‘Règlement’ of the catalogue for the Salon of 1852, *Explication des ouvrages de peinture [...] exposés au Palais-Royal le 1er avril 1852,* Paris 1852, p. 11.
We might think of 1852 as the moment when the aesthetic reception of repetition, which had gradually been growing chillier as the century progressed, dropped one more degree and froze over into ice-hard rejection. A decade later Larousse bemoaned the new values: ‘The 19th century has transformed everything. First it outlawed as plagiarism what in the three preceding centuries was considered only legitimate imitation, fortuitous borrowing [...]’.34

The problem with this new attitude was that the enterprise of being an artist involves making a living as well as inspired creation. Centuries of tradition had evolved into the studio practice of Ingres and Delacroix. They established their reputations by producing large commissioned pictures, often carried out in collaboration with studio assistants. The fees they received for these commissions were large, but expenses for materials and salaries reduced their earnings considerably. Repetitions and reductions of these large-scale pictures not only provided them with additional income but also enabled them to develop more fully ideas that had arisen in the earlier works. Delacroix, for example, later revisited several of the themes from his Palais Bourbon decorations (1838-47), including Demosthenes declaiming by the seashore (Dublin, The National Gallery of Ireland) and Ovid among the Scythians (London, The National Gallery), and his Journal is full of notes about returning to old half-finished canvases and reworking them.

Ingres said of his own practice: ‘It has been said of me, and perhaps with justice, that I too often reproduce my compositions instead of making new works. Here is my reason: most of these works, whose subjects I love, have seemed to me to be worth the effort of rendering them better by repeating or repainting them. This was often the case with the first works I made, the Sistine Chapel among others. When through his love of art and through his efforts an artist can hope to leave his name to posterity, he will never be able to do enough to render his works more beautiful or less imperfect. I have for example the great Poussin, who often repeated the same subjects.’35

In seeking to understand this practice of repetition, modernists have privileged aesthetic considerations, emphasising the artist’s ‘pursuit of perfection,’ to borrow the title of the 1983-84 Ingres exhibition. Post-modernists, on the other hand, and especially art-historical revisionists, have privileged economic considerations, particularly the ‘he did it for the money’ line of explanation. And yet, studio practice in the pre-modern period did not distinguish clearly between these two aspects. One might as well ask whether Michelangelo painted the Sistine Chapel for money or the glory or art.

In his Laokoon: oder über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie (1766) Lessing wrote ‘Consider now these two points: first, that invention and novelty in the subject

34 Larousse, op. cit. (note 20), vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 582-84, ‘Imitation’: ‘Le XIXe siècle a tout renouvelé. D'abord il a proscri...l'artiste peut espérer qu'il laissera son nom à la postérité, il ne saurait assez faire pour rendre ses œuvres plus belles ou moins imparfaites.’

35 Delaborde, op. cit. (note 28), p. 108: ‘On m'a fait observer, et peut-être avec justesse, que je reproduisais trop souvent mes compositions, au lieu de faire des ouvrages nouveaux. Voici ma raison: La plupart de ces œuvres, que j'aime par le sujet, m'ont paru valoir la peine que je les rendisse meilleures en les répétant ou en les retouchant, ce qui m'est arrivé souvent pour les premières que j'ai faites, entre autres pour la Chapelle Sixtine. Lorsque par son amour pour l'art et par ses efforts, un artiste peut espérer qu'il laissera son nom à la postérité, il ne saurait assez faire pour rendre ses œuvres plus belles ou moins imparfaites.’
are by no means what we chiefly require from the painter; and secondly, that a familiar subject helps and quickens the effect of his art.' In many ways, Ingres and Delacroix were closer to that aesthetic than to the modernist one that can only valorise repetition as intentional seriality. Both artists maintained an interest in an assortment of themes throughout their working careers, but to describe their repetitions as serial production à la Monet, as modernists have done, not only distorts their oeuvres, it also elides the major shift that did take place in 19th-century art practice from repetition to serial production.

The production of multiple unrelated versions of a theme - repetition - could persist only when work moved directly from the artist's studio to the collector. With the rise of the gallery system and the establishment of exhibitions as the primary means of marketing work, the door to the artist's studio became transparent, so to speak, and the existence of multiple renditions of the same image could not help but be known and, in an era that increasingly valued innovation, devalued.

Courbet was a product of this later period. He produced as many repetitions as Ingres and Delacroix, but neither he nor they ever conceived of exhibiting and marketing their work as unified series rather than as individual pictures. Had Courbet done so, he could have made his paintings' mutual resemblance a selling point rather than a drawback, for by the 1860s, after Delacroix's death in 1863 and Ingres's in 1867, we find him lying and dissembling about the uniqueness of his repetitions, four in the case of the Jo, la belle Irlandaise (figs. 7 and 8). When in 1863 he sent a crate of 33 flower paintings to his dealer Luquet in Paris, he advised him 'Either hide the paintings, or else organise a mysterious exhibition of them at your place only.' Had he conceived of a 'series exhibition,' he would have been spared the further embarrassment of explaining to Bruyas - when arranging a loan of paintings for his private exhibition at the 1867 Exposition Universelle - that he didn't want to include his patron's Solitude (1866, Montpellier, Musée Fabre) because 'the Empress has a

37 For examples of modernist concepts applied to the art of the past see the essays by Krauss and Shiff cited in note 1.
38 In addition to the two works illustrated here, there are repetitions of this picture in Stockholm and Zurich; see Sarah Faunce and Linda Nochlin (eds.), exhib. cat. *Courbet reconsidered*, Brooklyn (The Brooklyn Museum) 1988, pp. 163-66. See also my essay ‘“L’Exposition complète” de Gustave Courbet,’ in Jörg Zutter and Petra ten-Doesschate Chu (eds.), *Courbet artiste et promoteur de son oeuvre*, Paris 1999, pp. 101-28.

Van Gogh Museum Journal 2000
somewhat similar one that is in the Champ de Mars exhibition.\textsuperscript{40} \textit{Solitude} was, in fact, a repetition of the 1865 \textit{Puits noir} (Paris, Musée du Louvre) that belonged to the Empress Eugénie. Courbet had not found it necessary - or politic - to mention this when selling \textit{Solitude} to Bruyas. Instead he described Bruyas's painting in terms of its uniqueness, calling it ‘a splendid landscape of profound solitude, done deep in the valleys of my part of the world. It is the most beautiful one I have, and perhaps even that I have done in all my life.’\textsuperscript{41}

This prevarication was something neither Ingres nor Delacroix ever felt was necessary. If we can see both Ingres and Delacroix as artists of the previous period continuing an earlier studio practice, then Courbet had the misfortune of coming right at the moment of transition, when repetitions could no longer be publicly acknowledged by modernist painters, although Goupil and his Salon artists continued to produce all manner of copies. Even modernists, however, found that the economy of art production made it impossible to create completely original works each time they took up the brush, particularly since small easel pictures for private collectors had all but replaced the major public commissions that had supported previous generations. Such extremes of originality would not only be prodigal of artists' resources, but would also force them into superficiality as theme after theme was taken up, used once, then abandoned, in a virtual caricature of the modernist fetish for novelty.

\textbf{From replication to series}

Courbet's career ended precisely at the moment when a new type of exhibition was invented that could have resolved many of his difficulties. In the year of the artist's death, 1877, Claude Monet exhibited the first of his series, showing seven versions of the \textit{Gare Saint-Lazare} at the third impressionist show.\textsuperscript{42} Although this first presentation was not comprehensively organised - it included canvases of different sizes and views - in the following years Monet, in conjunction with the dealer Durand-Ruel, succeeded in creating a novel exhibition format. Paul Tucker has explored the genesis of Monet's series extensively, concluding that the 'problems of cultural production' - and he defines this in the broadest possible sense, including

\begin{itemize}
  \item Courbet, op. cit. (note 39), no. 67-11, to Alfred Bruyas, Ornans, 27 April [1867]: '[...] l'impératrice en a un à peu près semblable qui est à l'exposition du Champde-Mars'; English translation from \textit{Letters of Gustave Courbet}, cit. (note 39), no. 67-11.
\end{itemize}
both aesthetic principles and economic necessities - served as the impetus to their creation. In his reading, at the end of the 19th century Monet was attempting to maintain the avant-garde status of impressionism in the face of challenges from other stylistic camps, while at the same time remaining deeply committed to the principles and practices of plein-air painting. By the 1890s he had found a way out.
fig. 7
Gustave Courbet, *Jo, la belle Irlandaise*, 1866, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, H.O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H.O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.63)

fig. 8
of the impasse between the modernist demand for originality and the exigencies of art production by developing the concept of a loosely-structured series of paintings constituting variations on a theme, united by subject matter, size and format, but available for individual purchase."

Monet's exhibitions at Durand-Ruel's gallery in the late 19th and early 20th century of series such as the *Grainstacks, Poplars* and *Rouen Cathedral*, followed by Pissarro's cityscape, market and ports series, established an exhibition scheme that reconceived what for Courbet had been a drawback, namely the production of a large number of similar paintings. This new strategy could comply with unprecedented demands for originality and uniqueness, while at the same time allowing the old practice of repetition to continue; it thus represented a major advance in the economy of art production in the era of the middle-class collector. Courbet did not have this tool at his disposal, however, and so we find him constantly manoeuvring to both exhibit and sell his repetitions while maintaining the fiction of their uniqueness. Monet transformed the production of numerous similar paintings, which for Ingres and Delacroix had been standard practice, but for Courbet a guilty secret, into a modern marketing tool. In the form of ‘the series’ it has since become a standard feature of both modern and post-modern art production and exhibition.

---

fig. 1
Paul Delaroche, *Joan of Arc in prison*, 1824, Rouen, Musée des Beaux-Arts
Goupil, Delaroche and the print trade

Linda Whiteley

Following the death of Paul Delaroche in Paris on 7 November 1856, the dealer Adolphe Goupil wrote to the engraver Paul Mercuri (who had been working for more than 20 years on a copper engraving after Delaroche's *Jane Grey*) to express his personal grief: ‘It is a matter of public mourning, and for many it will be an irreparable loss. I shall feel his absence constantly, since for 30 years my life has been so linked to his that the day he died it was as if the work in which we had been involved in all those years had come to an end.’ Early the next year, Goupil organised a retrospective exhibition of Delaroche's work at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, and in 1858 he brought out an illustrated monograph devoted to him. This was one of the dealer's earliest photographic ventures, and of a kind in which his firm was later to specialise. The characteristics associated with Goupil in his later years - of outstanding commercial success based on the exploitation of Salon artists and an instinctive understanding of the nature of popular taste in the Second Empire - have led scholars to view him as the very archetype of the venal picture dealer of the 19th century. However, both his taste in painting and the solid capital that enabled his later activities were established during his career as a print publisher under the July Monarchy. In fact, they can be traced still further back, namely to the ambitions of John Arrowsmith, a picture dealer, half English, half French, who is chiefly remembered for bringing Constable's *Hay wain* from London to the Salon of 1824. But he also submitted another new acquisition, Paul Delaroche's *Joan of Arc in prison* (fig. 1), a life-size work of monumental terribilità and an exercise in a Michelangelesque vein common to a number of young admirers of Géricault - including Delacroix and Ary Scheffer.

Arrowsmith, following a commercial practice common in the English art market but almost unknown in France at the time, planned to have both works engraved. For this purpose he employed S.W. Reynolds, a minor English landscape artist and

---

1 Letter from Adolphe Goupil to the engraver Paul Mercuri, from a correspondence held in the national archives at Bucharest; quoted in Annick Bergeon, ‘Le temps ciselé,’ in Hélène Lafort-Couturier (ed.), *Etat des lieux*, vol. 1, Bordeaux 1994, p. 64: ‘C’est un deuil public et pour bien du monde un malheur irréparable. Pour moi c’est un vide de tous les instants car ma vie depuis bientôt trente ans a été tellement liée à celle de Mr Delaroche qu’il m’a semblé, le jour où je l’ai vu mourir, que j’allais cesser ces occupations auxquelles je me consacre depuis trente ans de concert avec lui.’


5 For a full account of the picture at the Salon see Marie-Pierre Aufrère, exhib. cat. *La Jeanne d’Arc de Paul Delaroche, Salon de 1824: dossier d’une œuvre*, Rouen (Musée des Beaux-Arts) 1983.
specialist in mezzotint then living in Paris. In addition to Arrowsmith, his clients included the latter's colleague Claude Schroth, for whom he engraved prints after pictures by a variety of contemporary artists, including Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa* and several subjects by Bonington.⁶ The dealer, who together with Schroth brought some 22 pictures by Constable to Paris.

during the 1820s, seems to have taken a particular interest in Paul Delaroche, at that time a promising young painter who had only recently made his Salon debut and was to make his fortune thanks to the enormous popularity of his work - mainly on subjects from English history - during the Restoration and July Monarchy. Arrowsmith owned his *Enfants surpris par l'orage* (present location unknown), from which he commissioned an engraving by Reynolds (fig. 2); he also asked Reynolds to engrave *Filippo Lippi* (Dijon, Musée Magnin) - a picture the dealer must have admired but was presumably unable to buy.

Small-scale pictures on historical subjects were the stock in trade of such men during the Restoration. Delacroix painted a number of these scenes and on at least one occasion received a commission from Arrowsmith. S.W. Reynolds wrote to his daughter-in-law from Paris at this time: ‘I have been painting little interiors of churches which are all the rage here.' This vogue for subjects from medieval history, associated with a marked taste for local colour and Gothic architecture (as Reynolds's letter suggests), can surely be related to two contemporary phenomena with which Arrowsmith had familial connections. The first of these was the diorama, patented by yet another artist specialising in church interiors, John Arrowsmith's brother-in-law, Louis Mandé Daguerre. The second was the publication in 1822 of Charles Nodier and Baron Taylor's *Voyages pittoresques*. In an early volume, Nodier wrote: ‘Begun in the interest only of poetic, picturesque memories, these voyages became, gradually, the picture of the doings of the Middle Ages. Such is the connexion between the

---

8 See Whitman, op. cit. (note 6), p. 100.
10 Whitman, op. cit. (note 6) p. 15.
history of monuments and that of men, that we were unable to close our ears to the solemn voice of the past, recounting memorable events in the midst of ruins.’

Arrowsmith's brother Charles was also a painter of the kind of church interior mentioned by S.W. Reynolds, and Daguerre made several prints for the Voyages pittoresques, as did Géricault and Bonington. Delaroche did not, as far as I know, contribute to the publication, although he did collaborate with Bonington on a smaller but comparable enterprise, Amedée Pichot's Vues pittoresques de l'Ecosse (fig. 3).

Arrowsmith's tastes and activities thus placed him at the very heart of artistic fashion in Paris during the middle years of the Restoration. His capital was presumably insufficient to allow him to keep it tied up in stock for any length of time; he held a final sale of pictures in Paris in


13 Amédée Pichot, Vues pittoresques de l’Ecosse dessinées d'après nature par F.M. Pernot [...] ornées de douze vignettes d'après les dessins de Delaroche jeune et Eugène Lami, Paris 1826.
fig. 3
Eugène Lami after Paul Delaroche, *Mary Stuart at the castle of Loch Leven*, Oxford, private collection
1826, though he continued to publish prints for some time. Many years after his death sometime around mid-century, his daughter wrote of him: ‘My father painted a little, but he was above all an art-lover and connoisseur. He found the firm of Goupil and several others. He was intelligent and full of ideas, but unfortunately very extravagant. He had learned to behave like an aristocrat and that is how he lived.’

This curious statement - that John Arrowsmith was the founder of the firm Goupil & Cie. - though never, as far as I know, mentioned elsewhere, seems to be borne out by some circumstantial evidence. When the young Adolphe Goupil registered as a print dealer in 1829 it was in partnership with a German named Henry Rittner, some four years older than himself and who had been publishing prints since 1827. His name appears on a number of prints together with that of John Arrowsmith. These include those after Delaroche's *Filippo Lippi* and *Joan of Arc*, Bonington's *Meditation*, and a set of aquatints after drawings by Newton Fielding that Rittner and Arrowsmith published in 1828. Rittner was to meet his future partner Goupil through a mutual friend - a marine artist named Charles Mozin, some of whose work passed through Arrowsmith's hands. Several years after Goupil and Rittner went into partnership, Rittner married Goupil's sister-in-law. One of their early joint publications was a set of etchings by Paul Huet. The third etching in this series, *Maison du garde, sur le bord d'une forêt* is based on the picture of similar title dated 1827 (private collection). The composition resembles that of *The hay wain*, which Arrowsmith had so successfully introduced to the French public the previous year. There is, therefore, some reason to think that Arrowsmith was influential in directing the new firm towards the publication of prints after works by the young generation of romantic artists, most of whom he is said to have known intimately. He can thus be credited with having laid the foundations for Goupil's future fame and prosperity - the reproduction of popular Salon favourites - that ‘imaginary museum’ which was later to prove so stimulating to Vincent van Gogh, when, as a young man, he was an employee of the firm.

By the early years of the July Monarchy, Arrowsmith's tastes were less in evidence at Goupil's. The firm had altered slightly in character, having moved from publishing reproductions of paintings by celebrated artists to the lighter material of popular lithography. However, Goupil would soon again turn to Delaroche, this time as a

---

14 Paris (Schroth and Petit), Vente A, 20 April 1826 (Lugt 11148).
15 Paris, Archives de la Seine, dossier Daguerre, letter from Daguerre's niece (John Arrowsmith's daughter) to the Mayor of Bry-en-Marne: ‘[...] mon père peignait un peu, mais il était plus grand amateur et connaisseur, surtout. Il a fondé la maison Goupil, et d'autres encore, car c'était un homme intelligent, et rempli de bonnes idées, malheureusement très dépensier, il avait appris à être grand seigneur, et il vivait comme tel [...]’
17 Whitman, op. cit. (note 6), p. 97.
19 See Nonne, op. cit. (note 16), p. 344, note 16.

Van Gogh Museum Journal 2000
painter of singers and actresses, at the time when he had just completed his portrait of Mademoiselle Sontag (formerly Staatliche Kunstsammlung Dresden, Gemäldegalerie). This was followed by the likeness of Mademoiselle Alaunde Dorval, which was lithographed by Gigoux. 

Subsequently, prints after Delaroche appear with some frequency until 1839, when the firm brought out only three prints in all and it seemed they might be going out of business. But in 1840 there was a renewal of activity, and a significant change in the quality of the engravings published. A number of Salon works appeared, executed in expensive copperplate by the most famous printmakers of the period, Calamatta and Henriquel Dupont.

Chief among the artists reintroduced in these fine engravings was Paul Delaroche, now again established as the firm's favourite painter. In 1840 Goupil published his portrait of Guizot (Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek), engraved by Calamatta, and Strafford (private collection), engraved by Henriquel Dupont; then, in 1841, came the

---

Sainte Cécile (London, Victoria and Albert Museum), engraved by Forster. The significance of this movement towards fine copper engravings, which were extremely expensive to make, should be seen in the context of the new cheaper reproductive processes, like lithography and modern mezzotint using steel plates. These had formed the basis of the expansion in print publishing in the 1820s that had brought Goupil’s into existence in the first place, and no doubt it was reproductions of paintings by these methods that continued to provide the income for the fine engravings - none more successfully, probably, than those after works by Delaroche himself. Years later the great print scholar Henri Béraldi vividly evoked their popularity when he wrote, with some regret, of the contrast they offered to the diverting themes of 18th-century prints: ‘Look closely at any modern interior and notice the subjects of the prints. Entrance hall: Richelieu towing Cinq-Mars and de Thon to their execution and, opposite, The death of Mazarin. Dining room: The last banquet of the Girondins. Drawing room: Episode from the St-Barthélemy massacre and Cromwell at the coffin of Charles I. The master’s study: The execution of Lady Jane Grey. Madame’s room: Beatrice Cenci going to her execution; Marie-Antoinette. The nursery: A Christian martyr and The last prayer of the princes in the tower.’

We do not know the precise moment when Goupil began buying pictures for stock, but what is beyond question is that his activities as a dealer were intimately connected with his role as a print seller, as in the early years at least it would seem that he bought paintings primarily in order to establish his right to reproduce them - the ambiguous laws of copyright being such that he might otherwise have run the risk of litigation. The first recorded paintings bought for stock were a pair by Charles Landelle (a favourite pupil of Delaroche), called L'idylle and L'élegie. Goupil bought them on the opening day of the Salon, for a fee that included copyright and with a contract specifying first option on the reproduction rights of any future painting or drawing. He was soon to begin buying some of the later works of Delaroche, who had ceased to exhibit after the Salon of 1834. Goupil thus became in a real sense responsible for the publication of his work, not only in France but throughout Europe. Although the dealer owed some of his own financial success to their collaboration, it is clear that Delaroche considered Goupil essential to his very existence, as a letter from the painter in 1848 confirms. It therefore seems possible that he might also have chosen to bring his favourite pupils to the dealer's attention. There is no firm evidence for this, except that from the very first known contract those artists most closely associated

23 Ibid., vol. 4, p. 60, no. 18; vol. 7, p. 99, no. 61; and vol. 7, p. 146, no. 52.
25 Loi du 19 juillet, 1793, article 1er. For a discussion this issue see Bulletin de l’Alliance des Arts (June 1842), p. 7.
27 Procès de MM. Delaroche, Mme veuve Vernet, Mme Marjolin-Scheffer contre MM Goupil et Cie., éditeurs, Paris 1878, p. 4.
with Goupil, at least until the mid-1860s, were all from Delaroche's studio. These included the little group known as the ‘néo-grecs,’ among whom was Delaroche's closest pupil, Jalabert, and Gleyre, who was later to take over the master's teaching studio.

In 1859, three years after the artist's death and no doubt as a kind of tribute, Goupil commissioned Delaroche's follower and companion, Jean-Léon Gérôme, to paint a pendant to the *Assassination of the Duc de Guise* (Chantilly, Musée Condé), in order to sell the pair as photographs.\(^28\) This marked the beginning of the closest of all Goupil's ties with Delaroche's students. The *Death of Caesar* (Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery) translated the spirit and composition of Delaroche's original into antique form, and was characteristic of the vein of scholarly realism current

\(^{28}\) See Ernest Chesnau in his *Salon de 1859*, Paris, n.d., p. 35.
among his pupils and encouraged by Goupil. In 1863 Gérôme married the dealer's daughter. From this point onwards, it became the standard pattern for Goupil to buy nearly everything the artist painted, and to sell them to American dealers or agents. Many of these pictures were known in France only through published photographs or engravings - although these were to be seen, according to Zola, in every provincial household.\(^{29}\)

Though so many of Goupil's artists were pupils of Delaroche, few were as consistently faithful to his historicist ideal as Gérôme. There is, however, another, strongly marked strain of picturesque sentiment evident from the gallery's ledgers, deriving from the work of Léopold Robert and Ary Scheffer, and continued by Delaroche's students Landelle and Jalabert. It was to be most closely associated, though, with two other painters, Hugues Merle and William Bouguereau, particularly after Goupil had succeeded in attracting them away from his rival Paul Durand-Ruel (who was himself responsible for Bouguereau's conversion to this manner).\(^ {30}\) Scenes of brothers and sisters, simple meals, prayers and religious genre became a defining feature of Goupil's stock, especially when he began selling photographic reproductions. There were no more popular exponents of this style than Merle and Bouguereau, and between 1861 and 1875 over 300 pictures by them appear in the Goupil records. These works were frequently repetitions, and were sold almost without exception to English, American or Dutch dealers - evidence, if it were needed, of Goupil's ability to sound popular taste.

---


An issue related to the reproduction of popular works of art, and more specifically to the practice of an artist producing repetitions of his own work, was that of the studio copy. Goupil was eventually to work so closely with Delaroche's atelier that one might conclude that he did not distinguish between the work of the master and that of his pupils - although it is probably also true to say that in the 19th century the distinction was not as sharp as we now expect it to be. The practice was apparently acceptable to the artists involved, principally Delaroche, Cabanel, and Ary Scheffer. Adolphe Jourdan was one of Delaroche's pupils who specialised in making copies. He painted at least one replica of Cabanel's *Birth of Venus*, which Cabanel himself then retouched and signed. The latter's remuneration for this version was slightly larger than Jourdan's. Goupil published a number of paintings representing scenes from the lives of artists, a popular genre in 19th-century art, including a *Studio of Paul Delaroche*, painted by Louis Roux after the artist's death (fig. 4). It shows the painter working on his picture of the Girondins; the *Young martyr* is visible in the background - and to the right is Adolphe Jourdan, engaged in his usual task of copying. This painting, almost certainly commissioned specifically for photographic reproduction, was an image that allowed Delaroche and his studio to join - at least by implication - the ranks of the Old Masters. And no work better demonstrates the extent to which the process of reproduction, from the artist's easel to the point of sale in the marketplace, was organised on a highly commercial basis.

31 See the article by Patricia Mainardi in this volume of the *Van Gogh Museum Journal*.
fig. 1
Dornac, Paul Durand-Ruel, c. 1910, Paris, Document Archives Durand-Ruel (all rights reserved)
Paul Durand-Ruel's marketing practices

*Caroline Durand-Ruel Godfroy*

Paul Durand-Ruel's (fig. 1) career as an art dealer spans the years 1850 to 1922 and covers not only the whole of Europe, but also the United States. It would thus be impossible to contribute something new on this matter in the short space of this essay. I would therefore like to focus instead on my great-grandfather's marketing practices, practices that were entirely new in a business that was itself in its infancy.

It was in 1830 that Paul Durand-Ruel's father, Jean-Marie Durand, who ran a stationery and art supply shop with the help of his wife, Marie-Ferdinande Ruel, added art dealing to his activities. In fact, this branch of business did not exist independently at the time, not being considered lucrative enough. Instead, it was practised in conjunction with other, more important and far more remunerative trades, for example in luxury goods, bronzes or artist's materials. Moreover, in this period people were interested mainly in the works of the Old Masters, and admittance to the Salon was the only way for contemporary painters to become known. They were forced to adapt to what was fashionable and follow the rules of neo-classicism, which was still much in favour. Consequently, men like Durand, who championed the Barbizon School and the followers of Prud'hon, were an enormous help to less popular painters, even if they did not, in fact, buy many works of art. Without this support, these artists would have lived very precarious lives. They would have had to rely on their friends, a few ardent but only modestly wealthy *amateurs*, and dealers who were not organised enough to be real middlemen and truly promote their works.

In 1843 Jean-Marie Durand published his two-volume *Galerie Durand-Ruel: specimen les plus brillants de l'école moderne*, most likely as a form of advertising. It gave an overview of his stock, which mostly comprised works by the so-called School of 1830. In order to foster the kind of painting he really liked, Durand bought works by fashionable artists such as Cabanel or Bonnat, and sold them for a profit. He was then able to buy pictures by the Barbizon School with the money made by selling these ‘official’ artists. This, however, cannot yet be considered a proper commercial policy, and it was only with Paul Durand-Ruel that commercial techniques were actually implemented. Some of these techniques are still applicable today.

Paul Durand-Ruel, who had assisted his father from the age of 18, found himself head of the family gallery at the age of 34, following Jean-Marie's death in 1865. He was well travelled, had created extensive business networks in France and abroad, and had seen a large number of paintings. He enjoyed a good reputation and, as a writer for *Les Beaux-Arts* noted in 1863, he seemed ‘to be blessed with both tact and honour.’ Above all, he was passionate about his career. He believed a real art dealer should also be an ‘enlightened *amateur*, prepared if need be to put his artistic convictions before his immediate interests, and preferring to fight speculators rather than joining in their deeds.’ It is interesting to note that even at this early stage he

1 See the notice in *Beaux Arts* (5 April 1863): ‘Monsieur Durand-Ruel nous paraît réunir toutes les conditions de tact et d'honorabilité.’

2 See François Daulte, ‘Le marchand des impressionistes’ *L'Oeil* 66 (June 1960), p. 75: ‘“Un véritable marchand de tableaux doit être en même temps un amateur éclairé, prêt à sacrifier au besoin son intérêt apparent du jour à ses convictions artistiques, et préférant lutter contre les spéculateurs que s'associer à leurs agissements.”’

*Van Gogh Museum Journal 2000*
was already pursuing a policy of promoting artists he admired - much as he would later with the impressionists. From the time he took over the gallery, he sought to gain exclusive rights to the works of certain painters, such as Bougereau, who entrusted him with all his pictures for a number of years. If this proved impossible, he instead made massive purchases, for example from Corot, Courbet, Daumier and Rousseau. He bought not only directly from these artists, but also from collectors and at auctions. In this way he succeeded, as he said himself, in ‘giving the pictures by our favourites a value previously unknown.’


Van Gogh Museum Journal 2000
But my great-grandfather had one shortcoming. Although his purchasing policy bore fruit, he was too often taken with beautiful things. He let himself be carried away by pictures that were beyond his means, buying not only works by the School of 1830, but also by more ‘commercial’ artists and the Old Masters. He soon realised, however, that this was a mistake and acknowledged that ‘in order to maintain prices, you must never be in a hurry to sell and, on the contrary, always be prepared to support the works that interest you at auctions.’ This meant that he always needed a large financial reserve and an accordingly selective and cautious purchasing policy.

Paul Durand-Ruel also quickly came to the conclusion that in order to champion his favourite artists a specialised periodical was necessary, and he began publishing the *Revue Internationale de l’Art et de la Curiosité* in 1869. This, however, proved to be a disappointing and expensive venture.

By 1869, then, the guiding principles of Paul Durand-Ruel's commercial policy were already established: exclusive or mass purchases, price bolstering and the publication of a periodical. All he needed now was a venue for mounting prestigious exhibitions, which he searched for eagerly. He found the perfect location that same year: a *passage* between 16, Rue Laffitte and 11, Rue Le Peletier, which needed six months of extensive renovation to suit his taste (fig. 2). The exhibition rooms were very large, and although it was possible to organise fine exhibitions in them, the dealer realised too late that every object appears smaller in a big room, and that consequently the asking prices seemed higher than if they had been shown in smaller premises. Later, with more experience, he strongly advised against high walls, and recommended that paintings be hung as low as possible. He also noted that pictures shown in large galleries were seldom sold; the works most likely to be purchased were those taken out of the storerooms. In addition, he pointed out that a few

4 Ibid., p. 166: ‘Pour maintenir les prix il faut n’être jamais pressé de vendre et être toujours prêt, au contraire, à soutenir dans les ventes publiques les oeuvres auxquelles s’intéresse.’

5 Paris, Archives Durand-Ruel, letter from Joseph Durand-Ruel to Mr Robinson, 5 March 1904.
inferior paintings could serve to enhance the hanging, adding that this was a tactic every dealer employed. He suggested likewise that the works in the gallery window should be changed regularly and on a fixed day of the week. Despite all their shortcomings, however, the Rue Laffitte premises were later to become famous. They were home to all the impressionist exhibitions organised by my family until 1923, when the gallery was demolished due to the widening of the Boulevard Haussmann.

Our archives are more complete from the period when Durand-Ruel began his dealings with impressionists, and enable us to better understand the so-called ‘contract of exclusivity’ between the artists and the dealer. In fact, it was not a contract at all, but only a gentleman's agreement based on the word of both parties. In return for the right to sell their work, Durand-Ruel not only promoted their pictures, but also gave them as much financial and moral support as he possibly could, saving them from all worries. Maxime Maufra, although not always on good terms with him, nonetheless claimed ‘He was a father figure for the artists’; the dealer, for his part, regarded his protégés as ‘ [...] grown-up children [...]’. In addition to giving them a regular allowance in exchange for their works he also settled all kinds of bills - for canvas, paint, insurance, rent, and other supplies, even if his account book was not necessarily in the painter's favour. Later, when the works of the School of 1830 and the impressionists became scarcer and more sought after, Durand-Ruel's policy was to buy only beautiful canvases and not to bother with second-rate works, even if they were by great artists and could be had at a bargain. On the other hand, if the buying price appeared too high for him - as, for example, with Monet's works - he did not hesitate to come to an agreement and share the purchase with other dealers.

In his manuscript, entitled ‘Propos de peintre,’ Maufra describes how Paul Durand-Ruel would judge and scrutinise each picture. The dealer maintained that if a work was good, it would look good from all angles, and that once it had acquired a patina it ought to be pleasing not only to the eye but also to touch. A work of excellence was one in which the qualities of the artist were immediately recognisable. If they were not, it was bad.

How many paintings did Paul Durand-Ruel purchase during his lifetime? Unfortunately, we know nothing until after 25 August 1891; before this the archives are confusing and incomplete. But from this date to 2 February 1922, the day of the dealer's death, the Paris gallery registered 11,900 purchases, and New York 4,717 - although most of the latter were bought by Durand-Ruel Paris and sold to the American branch. This makes an average of about 390 pictures a year for Paris and 154 for New York.

---

6 Paris, Archives Durand-Ruel, letter from Durand-Ruel Paris to Durand-Ruel New York, 24 June 1913. Durand-Ruel also expressed his ideas about museums. He believed they should have several rooms of different sizes, the larger ones being reserved for the biggest canvases, as smaller ones are best seen in smaller premises. He also advised that the lighting should be oblique if it was not possible to illuminate the works from above; see the letter to Mr Robinson, cit. (note 4).


8 Paris, Archives Durand-Ruel, letter from Paul Durand-Ruel to Paul Cassirer, 16 December 1903.
It is difficult to analyse the changes in the purchase prices of the impressionists because, until 1890, there are no photographs of the works and their measurements are rarely mentioned. However, according to our ledgers, in 1874 Durand-Ruel paid 200-300 francs each for their canvases. In 1884 Monet received between 900 and 1,200 francs for the pieces he had just brought back from the Italian Riviera, while Pissarro was given only 400-500 francs for his paintings. In 1893 the gap between the two artists widened further, with Durand-Ruel buying Monet's works at prices ranging from 3,000-6,000 francs, while the value of Pissarro's seems never to have exceeded 2,500. The asking price, however, was far higher, and varied from twice to six times the buying price, depending on the quality and beauty of the picture. At first glance, the difference between the two may seem excessive, but one has to keep in mind the risk the dealer took in supporting artists whose reputation had still to be established. The capital investment, storage, maintenance, promotion, exhibition and insurance of a work of art all needed to be considered when fixing the asking price. Finally - in the interest of both dealer and artist - the price could not be too low, as this would in effect have devalued the artist's work. As far as we know, none of Durand-Ruel's artists ever complained about the margin, which they could easily have known, needing only to go to the gallery and ask for this information. Further-
more, the asking price is not always the selling price, which is often lower, if, that is, the painting could be sold at all.

Indeed, promoting artists could be a source of terrible problems, as Paul Durand-Ruel knew only too well; he recounts in his memoirs how he had ‘[...] made this harsh experience while working furiously on [his] two all-absorbing campaigns: the first to have the works of the beautiful School of 1830 assessed at their true value [...]’, adding: ‘[...] my second campaign, in favour of those who were later called impressionists, proved even more costly; it brought me dreadful worries and great losses [...]’.

Paul Durand-Ruel’s sales policy towards museums was both generous and wise: on the one hand, he was aware of the difficulties faced by directors, who had to win the approval of a committee. On the other, having one of his paintings hung in a museum was excellent publicity. He wrote: ‘[...] We have always considered museum curators to be very special clients, and we are always willing to sell to them at a very small profit, and sometimes without gain. That way we hope to create new clients among museum-goers; museums are our best advertisement [...]’. In spite of the exceptional terms he offered and the impressionists’ increasing success, particularly after 1900, it is astounding to note that of the thousands of their works to pass through our gallery, less than 100 were purchased by museums during Durand-Ruel’s lifetime.

In this regard Durand-Ruel did much for painters such as Moret, Loiseau and d’Espagnat, whom he referred to as ‘his youngsters’ and who were associated with the gallery from about 1893. Noticing that their works received mixed reviews, he readily donated several to American museums: the Art Institute of Chicago, for example, received a work by Maufra on 13 December 1905, entitled Douarnenez in sunshine.

The dealer used other means to promote his artists, exhibitions in particular. From 1870, the date of the first catalogue we have, to the day of my great-grandfather’s death, the Paris gallery organised 197 exhibitions and the New York branch 129. This of course does not include the shows for which the catalogues have not survived, or those

---

9 Durand-Ruel, op. cit. (note 3), p. 162: ‘[...] en avoir fait la rude expérience quand je me suis acharné à entreprendre mes deux intéressantes campagnes: la première avait pour but de faire apprécier à leur vraie valeur les œuvres de la belle École de 1830. [...] Ma seconde campagne en faveur de ceux que l'on a appelés les Impressionnistes m'a coûté encore plus cher, puisqu'elle m'a causé d'affreux tourments et de grandes pertes.’
10 Paris, Archives Durand-Ruel, letter from Paul Durand-Ruel to Paul Cassirer, 5 January 1910: ‘Nous considérons toujours les directeurs de musées comme des clients tout à fait spéciaux, et nous sommes toujours disposés à leur vendre avec un très faible bénéfice, quelquefois même sans aucun gain. Nous espérons ainsi nous créer des clients nouveaux parmi les visiteurs des musées qui nous procurent la meilleure des réclames.’
for which no publication was produced. In addition, there were the 11 exhibitions of the Society of French Artists organised at the London branch between 1870 and 1875, and those at the Brussels branch (4, Rue du Persil) between 1873 and 1875. These two galleries were forced to close due to Durand-Ruel's financial problems, but they were the first venues outside France to show impressionist works, hung among a selection of more traditional paintings. Durand-Ruel also conceived of the idea of the one-man exhibition as part of his sales policy. In 1878 he dedicated a show to Daumier, who had been scorned by the official art establishment, and in 1883 Boudin, Monet, Pissarro, Renoir and Sisley each had their own shows, marking the beginning of a trend. In this way, the dealer could enhance the works of a single artist and offer a large selection to potential buyers.

Paul Durand-Ruel was not content with organising exhibitions in his own galleries. The impressionists' works had provoked an uproar in France, forcing the dealer to use
his large network to try and make them known abroad, in order to find a solution to his financial problems. He entered the foreign market in 1883, sending some impressionist canvases to Fritz Gurlitt in Berlin, to Dowdeswell & Dowdeswell in London, and to Boston, where they were shown at the International Exhibition of Art and Industry. The dealer soon achieved considerable success in the United States, opening a branch of the gallery in New York in 1887 (fig. 3); later he even considered establishing one in Chicago. In Europe, however, Germany was the place where the impressionists found most of their amateurs, and from 1899 onwards Durand-Ruel had the Berlin dealer Paul Cassirer as his representative, with the exclusive right to handle his paintings for the whole of the country.

Great Britain and the Netherlands, on the other hand, were only interested in Old Masters and the School of 1830. Evidence for this can be found in the dealings between Durand-Ruel and his Dutch colleague Elbert Jan van Wisselingh. The latter owned two galleries, one in the Netherlands - first in The Hague and then in Amsterdam and one in London. The men had a courteous business relationship in the years 1885 to 1911. Although Van Wisselingh had bought a pastel by Manet (Tête defemme, present location unknown) as early as 1885, this was an exception to the rule. Later, in 1899, Durand-Ruel purchased from him a Manet pastel bearing the same title. Could this have been the same picture, which Van Wisselingh had failed to sell? If so, it is certainly confirms that the impressionists were not in favour in Great Britain. Van Wisselingh's other purchases were mainly works by Boudin, Corot and Daumier, but also by Puvis de Chavannes. The most important of these was a work by Troyon in 1904; entitled La vallée de la Touques (present location unknown), it had been exhibited at the Salon of 1885 and was held by every artist to be one of the painter's masterpieces. Van Wisselingh bought it for the considerable sum of 180,000 francs; it is interesting to note that Durand-Ruel bought back the Manet, together with a Monet, for only 2,020.95 francs. His other purchases from his colleague were only of a few insignificant works.

Unfortunately, as for Boussod, Valadon & Cie. - and Theo van Gogh - we know very little about his contacts with my great-grandfather. Since they both lived in Paris, there was no need for written correspondence, and most of the sales and purchases between the galleries in the years 1885 to 1891 concerned paintings of the School of 1830: works by Millet, Marilhat, Dupré and Michel. The only impressionist paintings Theo bought from Durand-Ruel (on 9 April 1888) were a Pissarro, Vue de Pontoise, and three Monets - Dégel à Argenteuil, Voiliers à Argenteuil and Falaises. Sometimes Durand-Ruel's promotion of their works did not meet with the approval of the artists themselves. One can remember Monet not wanting his canvases sent to the ‘Yankees.’ However, from the moment the dealer bought a picture, he was its owner and it was thus up to him alone to decide how best to make it known.

Since Durand-Ruel was not always able to show paintings from his stock or commissions, he frequently rented his premises out to individual painters or artists'11 The Durand-Ruel Archives do not contain a photograph of the pastel sold to Van Wisselingh; it is therefore impossible to identify it with any certainty. The second one, bought by Durand-Ruel, was RW8, vol. 2 (present location unknown).
12 Since the paintings were not photographed at the time, it is impossible to identify either Pissarro's Vue or Monet's Falaises. The latter's Thaw in Argenteuil is probably W255 (USA, private collection) and Monet's Boats at Argenteuil is likely W372 (USA, Mrs Norbert Natanson).
groups. This helped make the gallery more profitable. It was also a means of attracting a different audience and thus potential new customers. In 1892, for example, the dealer leased the Société des Parisiens de Paris part of his location, consisting of ‘an entrance at 11, Rue Peletier, two adjoining rooms, each of them lit by a glass lantern, and a following section of gallery, separated by a low partition from the other half of the room [...]’, which remained at Durand-Ruel's disposal. The cost of the rent was settled at 3,000 francs per fortnight. Durand-Ruel was not responsible for certain expenses, such as the cost of invitations, publicity and decoration, but agreed to open the rented rooms during three or four evenings a week and to pay the lighting and heating of the galleries, which were usually open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. from Monday to Saturday.

In 1892, the galleries were still lit by gas, and it was only in 1900 that this was replaced by electricity. There were, however, other innovations: in 1892 use of the typewriter became more common, and in 1896 a telephone was

13 Paris, Archives Durand-Ruel, letter from Paul Durand-Ruel to Monsieur Desbrosses, 8 December 1892: ‘ [...] d'une entrée rue Le Peletier, de deux salles adjacentes éclairées chacune par une lanterne vitrée et d'une portion de galerie faisant suite, séparée par une cloison basse d'une autre demi-salle qui reste à ma disposition.’
installed. But the most important of these modernisations was the introduction of another new technique, which was to play a crucial role in the art dealing business and would prove to be an essential tool: photography. This process, which was becoming increasingly widespread, would later make it possible to identify with near certainty the paintings that went through Durand-Ruel's hands. And it would help prevent confusion between paintings by an artist with the same title and measurement, which happened frequently. From 1890 Durand-Ruel had all the important works that came to the gallery photographed, and this practice was applied to other pictures as well beginning in 1896.

These photographs made the sale of paintings much easier as well: for example, a customer who for some reason could not come to see a picture could nevertheless get a first impression from a black and white reproduction. In this way, he could decide if it was worth his while to examine it in person. On the one hand, the process saved the dealer from having to ship works unnecessarily, and, on the other, it could help prevent possible disappointment on the part of the customer.

Photography was also infinitely invaluable in another major aspect of art dealing: the expertise. For a long time, Paul Durand-Ruel had understood the importance of connoisseurship, and had been an expert at an auction in as early as 1863. As we read in Les Beaux-Arts: ‘Mr Durand-Ruel has seen a great number of good modern paintings go through his father's gallery: therefore they are no newcomers to him. This is a real issue in avoiding erroneous attributions or deceitful copies.’ 14 During his lifetime, the dealer not only took part in most of the sales of modern and impressionist paintings, he also continually sought to enrich his photographic archive. These archives are a priceless resource, which show the works as they were when at his gallery. Joseph Durand-Ruel, for example, would later have the thousands of lots of the Degas studio sales photographed, in order to prevent forgers from completing the pastels and pictures the artist had left unfinished. Furthermore, paintings might be destroyed or disappear, and these photographs would remain the only records.

---

14 Beaux Arts, cit. (note 1): ‘[Durand-Ruel] a vu passer dans la galerie de son père une grande partie des bons tableaux modernes; ils ne sont pas pour lui des nouveaux venus. Cette question est fort importante lorsqu'il s'agit de fausses attributions ou de copies trompeuses.’
This was the case with several paintings from the Gerstenberg Collection, recently rediscovered in Russia. Photographs are thus an
important aide-mémoire and help provide the expertise with the necessary guarantees.

Photography is an excellent means of advertising as well. Of course, Durand-Ruel regularly placed text-based ads, but he also sold proofs of his photographs, the quality of which was as good, if not better, than today. There was no longer any need for the books of engravings Paul Durand-Ruel's father had published in 1843, or the one he himself had intended to bring out in 1873, which would have shown 300 paintings from his stock. From now on writers and journalists could instead distribute the images of the paintings supported by the gallery throughout their publications, which of course contributed to making them better known and admired.

Another means of advertising was publications. Durand-Ruel had already tried his hand at this with the Revue Internationale de l'Art et de la Curiosité. He began another review in 1890, L'Art dans les Deux Mondes, but this new effort, like the first one, was to be short lived. In 1892 he published a book by the critic Georges Lecomte, entitled L'art impressioniste, d'après la collection privée de Monsieur Durand-Ruel, which described in highly complimentary terms the collection of paintings hanging on the walls of Durand-Ruel's flat at 35, Rue de Rome (fig. 4). This fabulous collection had evolved over the years, and Paul Durand-Ruel often said he owed its development to the amateurs - or perhaps the lack thereof - as he eventually took home the paintings found to be too original and therefore left unsold. This is how many of the impressionists' most beautiful canvases - beginning with Renoir's Déjeuner des canotiers (Washington, DC, Phillips Collection) - came to our family. Anxious to make his favourite painters more widely known, Durand-Ruel also opened his collection to the public. Beginning 1898 callers could come every day from 2 p.m., provided they gave a day's notice. But in 1901 - no doubt due to their success and its effect on family life - visits were restricted to Tuesdays from 2 to 4 p.m., when museums were closed. By now the collection consisted of 400 canvases, chosen from among the most beautiful of the impressionist school. None of these paintings were for sale, except when the dealer was made an offer so much higher than the value of the painting that he could not refuse. This has been a short, and certainly incomplete, overview of the way Paul Durand-Ruel dealt in art. He used every means that seemed worthwhile to promote first the School of 1830, then the impressionists and, finally, from 1893, post-impressionists such as André, d'Espagnat, Loiseau, Durenne, Maufran and Moret. He rightly believed that a dealer was more useful to a painter when he took care of him from the very beginning, when his talent was still undiscovered and undiscussed, with all the risks entailed, rather than merely taking him on when his reputation was already established. He succeeded, as Arsène Alexandre once wrote, ‘through decision, tenacity [and] a good feeling for beautiful things (justum ac tenacem) in influencing the taste of his time in a way similar to the influence exercised by independent and farsighted critics.’

His practices, however - which were quite new and perfectly adapted to the promotion of art - would never have been as effective had Paul Durand-Ruel not had

---

15 Georges Lecomte, L'art impressioniste, d'après la collection privée de Monsieur Durand-Ruel, Paris 1892.
16 Arsène Alexandre, ‘Durand-Ruel, portrait et histoire d’un marchand,’ Pan (November 1911), p. 18: ‘[...] par sa décision, par sa tenacité, son juste sens des belles choses (justum ac tenacem) exerce sur le goût de son époque une influence parallèle à celle de la critique désintéressée et clairvoyante.’

Van Gogh Museum Journal 2000
confidence in the artists he championed. In a somewhat unexpected way, he was thus able to fulfil his two childhood dreams: that of being in the army and that of becoming a missionary; after all, he had had to fight tough battles and have faith and persistence in order to make his painters known.

An extract from an article published soon after the dealer's death in 1922 will end this brief examination: ‘He died at the age of 91, taking with him the vision of the masterpieces he had collected. He was not a dry businessman: he loved fine artists, beautiful works of art, he knew how to find them. He was, in an honest and modest way, the great worker of a noble task.’ The journalist also added that Durand-Ruel belonged to another era, and indeed fauvism and cubism had created the same uproar as impressionism 50 years before. But Paul Durand-Ruel had shown the way to art dealers, and had established the bases of the art dealing business.

fig. 1
Vincent Van Gogh, *Portrait of Alexander Reid*
(F 343 JH 1250), 1887, Glasgow Museums, Art Gallery and Museum, Kelvingrove
Vincent's Scottish twin: the Glasgow art dealer Alexander Reid
Frances Fowle

In 1928 de la Faille catalogued the Glasgow portrait of Alexander Reid (1854-1928) (fig. 1) as one of Van Gogh's many self-portraits. It was later identified by Reid's son, A.J. McNeill Reid, as a likeness of his father, who had lived and worked in Paris from 1886 to 1889. During this period Reid shared an apartment with the Van Gogh brothers at 54, Rue Lépic, and trained alongside Theo van Gogh at the firm of Boussod, Valadon & Cie.

De la Faille's error is understandable, since many who met them together remarked on the uncanny resemblance between Reid and Vincent. A.S. Hartrick, a fellow Scot who studied at Cormon's studio, wrote: 'The likeness was so marked that they might have been twins. I have often hesitated, until I got close, as to which of them I was meeting. They even dressed somewhat similarly, though I doubt if Vincent ever possessed anything like the Harris tweeds Reid usually wore.'

The Reid portrait is strikingly close to Van Gogh's Chicago self-portrait (fig. 2), and it has been suggested that the artist conceived the two works as a pair. Both show only the head and shoulders, are painted on cardboard and have similar dimensions, and both are executed in the same pointillist style.

Vincent, Theo and Reid lived together in the Rue Lépic apartment for about six months, and for around a year they remained close friends. At some point in the relationship, however, the brothers' opinion of Reid changed dramatically. Both claimed that the Scotsman's commercial concerns had affected his aesthetic sensibilities. Vincent accused Reid of loving dead artists and neglecting the living merchant’ to predominate over the ‘distinguished artist’ [617/492]. According to Camille Pissarro, Theo also questioned Reid's artistic judgement. And yet for almost

1 A.S. Hartrick, A painter's pilgrimage through 50 years, Cambridge 1939, pp. 50-51.
3 '[Reid] c'est le monsieur aux Monticelli [...] voilà quatre ou cinq ans qu'il a l'air de vouloir prendre en main les impressionnistes, du temps de ce pauvre Vincent, il en était fortement question, cela a tourné en eau de boudin, Theo van Gogh ne le tenait pas en haute estime comme connaisseur, finalement ils s'étaient brouillées'; see the letter to his son Lucien, reprinted
30 years thereafter no other dealer in Scotland came close to Reid in his promotion of modern French art and it is largely due to Reid's influence that the country inherited such a fine selection of impressionist and post-impressionist works.


*Van Gogh Museum Journal 2000*
Were the Van Gogh brothers justified in their criticism of Reid, or did their opinion stem from professional rivalry rather than genuine doubts about his taste? In an attempt to answer these questions, this article will investigate Reid's and Theo's activities as art dealers and identify their areas of mutual interest, thereby ascertaining the extent to which they collaborated in promoting certain artists, and where they might be said to have been competitors. Finally, in order to assess Reid's aesthetic judgement, a brief examination will be made of the works he brought back to Scotland during the 1890s.

Alexander Reid in Paris

Alexander Reid was born in Glasgow in 1854, when the industrial revolution in Britain was at its height. Glasgow was the second city of the Empire, enjoying huge economic expansion thanks to the growth of shipbuilding, engineering, textiles and other commercial enterprises. A new class of wealthy merchants and industrialists emerged, anxious to invest in the trappings of aristocracy and to decorate their bourgeois residences with rich furnishings and fine pictures. The second half of the 19th century in Scotland saw the rise of the art market and the ascension of the dealer, who acted as both intermediary and adviser to this new breed of collector.

During the 1870s and 80s Reid's father's firm, Kay & Reid, was one of the leading picture dealers in Glasgow, specialising in Scottish art and the Hague School, for which there was a burgeoning market. By the mid-1880s, however, a new taste had begun to develop for artists of the Barbizon School, and from the outset the younger Reid sought to encourage Scottish interest in 19th-century French art.
Reid was anxious to acquire French pictures at competitive prices and decided to investigate the market at first hand. In the summer of 1886 he gained a position at the Paris firm of Boussod, Valadon & Cie. He was placed under Theo Van Gogh in the modern paintings section of the gallery at 19, Boulevard Montmartre, where he remained for about 18 months, from June or July 1886 until January or February 1888. According to documents in the Reid archives, the two were allotted only minimal funds with which to stock the gallery. (The actual sum quoted is £400, but, given the market value of Barbizon and Hague School paintings at this date, £4000 seems a more probable figure.) McNeill Reid records that ‘for that sum [£400] they could have a stock of 50 paintings and that, as far as the living painters were concerned, they could get all they wanted “on sale” from the painters themselves.’

Reid was introduced to avant-garde art for the first time in Paris: during 1887 alone Theo handled works by Degas, Monet, Sisley, Pissarro, Gauguin and Guillaumin. As McNeill Reid indicates, Theo often took the impressionists' work ‘on sale’ (i.e. on commission), paying the artist only after a picture had been sold, and taking a commission for himself. When Reid set up his own gallery in Glasgow in 1889 he employed precisely the same system when selling contemporary Scottish art. Like Theo, he also kept a stock of more established Barbizon and Hague School painters, from which he could expect a steady income. With the impressionists, however, dealers were reluctant to let him have more than one or two works on commission to market in Scotland and he was therefore anxious to buy their paintings at a lower price. This later became a cause of tension with Theo.

Shortly after Reid joined Boussod & Valadon, Theo invited him to move into the apartment at 54, Rue Lépic. At first the arrangement suited all the parties well and Vincent later recalled that Reid ‘was [very] good company for the first few months’ [580/464]. Apart from the portrait already discussed there is at least one other painted likeness and three sketches of Reid - the latter identified by Johannes van der Wolk6 - that provide a record of this brief and happy time. A letter from Robert Macaulay Stevenson to the art critic D.S. MacColl reveals that Reid eventually moved out not because of a breakdown in the friendship, but as a result of Vincent's volatile temperament. Stevenson records that before moving to Paris, Reid had been romantically involved with an American woman called Mary Bacon Martin, and had nurtured hopes of rekindling the relationship in Paris: ‘One day when, his hopes all shattered, [Reid] confided in Vincent van Gogh his troubles, Vincent gallantly suggested suicide - together. A. Reid, like a shrewd Scot, at once replied, “Topping, but I have sisters in Scotland and don't want to put them to needless trouble and worry - so if we wait till nightfall it will be all right.” Thus taken by the sentiments

6 See Johannes van der Wolk, The seven sketchbooks of Vincent van Gogh, London 1987, pl. 307 (SB 6/81), 308 (S/B 6/82) and 312 (S/B 6/38), pp. 279 and 281.
Vincent “fell to it” [...] Reid went out to “make arrangements” which resulted in him spending his last francs and getting as far away as Paris permitted.7

In the early spring of 1887 Reid moved to a small pension at 6, Place d'Anvers, where he set himself up as an agent en chambre. Boussod & Valadon allowed employees to buy and sell works ‘on the side,’ and during this period Reid made a number of purchases, only a few of which it has been possible to trace. One of the most outstanding pictures he acquired during this period was Manet's *Le bon bock* of 1873 (fig. 3), which he bought for £250 and sold towards the end of his stay to the French collector Jean-Baptiste Faure for twice the original price. We also know that he bought a number of Hokusai prints from Siegfried Bing (1838-1905), which he exhibited in Glasgow in November 1889. In 1887 he bought works by Puvis de Chavannes from Durand-Ruel and exhibited the artist's *Ludus pro patria* of 1883 (Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery) at the Glasgow International Exhibition in 1888. He also presented his father with two works by Van Gogh: *Basket of apples* of 1887 (F 379 JH 1341) and a third portrait of Reid that

---

7 Glasgow University Library, Special Collections, letter from Robert Macaulay Stevenson to D.S. MacColl, ref. S431.
has never been traced." According to Hartrick, 'Reid got into serious trouble with his father for acquiring or investing in some of Van Gogh's work, but I cannot believe he gave much money for them, or I should have heard about it from the painter! It was the contact with such atrocities, as they seemed, that roused the ire of the parent: for, in the view of the elder picture dealer, Reid was destroying his taste for what was saleable.' James Reid sold both works to an unknown dealer for £10.

In his old age Reid always admitted he had failed to recognise Van Gogh's true genius. The artists that really caught his imagination in Paris were the impressionists and the Marseilles painter Adolphe Monticelli. And it was as a result of their mutual interest in these artists that Theo, Vincent and Reid began to develop a sense of rivalry.

When Reid arrived in Paris, he realised that Monticelli's recent death would release a large number of pictures onto the market. A taste for Monticelli was already forming in Scotland, largely through the efforts of the dealer Daniel Cottier (1839-1891), and Reid was anxious to develop things still further. By contrast, Monticelli was still relatively unknown in Paris, although from 1883 to 1887 his work had been readily available from Joseph Delarebeyrette, who had a shop in the Rue de Provence. Theo van Gogh sold three Monticellis in 1885, but it was only after Reid's move to France that his interest in the painter really began to grow. Vincent also became fascinated with Monticelli's work, and in 1886 produced a whole series of flower paintings that reveal his growing concern with the artist.

The correspondence between Delarebeyrette and his Marseille agent Pierre Piquet, a friend of Monticelli's, reveals that it was not until October 1886 that the Paris dealer was able to sell the painter's work in any quantity. This was coincidentally around the time that Reid came to stay with Vincent and Theo at the Rue Lépic. On 26 October Delarebeyrette wrote to Piquet that 'un étranger de passage à Paris' (perhaps Reid) had been enquiring after pictures by Monticelli. He asked Piquet to send him several, as he now had the opportunity to sell a large number, he wrote again on 3 and 18 November to say he would be able to dispose of good quality pictures well and quickly. By the end of December 1886 the market for Monticelli's work had gathered such momentum that Piquet decided to raise his prices.

We know that Reid was investing heavily in Monticelli's pictures at this time, purchased mostly from Delarebeyrette, but also from Theo himself, all six were acquired in September 1887. The Van Gogh correspondence contains only two
rather vague references to the works Reid owned: a ‘lovely Monticelli landscape with poplars’ [612/488] and ‘the lovers that Reid had’ [690/542]. In general it was Monticelli's figurative works and rococo-style *fêtes champêtres* that appealed to Scottish collectors, rather than his landscapes and still lifes.

Under Reid's influence, both Theo and Vincent developed a passion for Monticelli. In 1887 they bought four works from Delarebeyrette for their own collection and were given a fifth by Reid, possibly *Vase of flowers* (Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum).\(^\text{14}\) Theo was later presented with a sixth, *The Italian girl* (Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum), by Boussod & Valadon.\(^\text{15}\)

In January 1888 Reid contributed a variety of works to the Monticelli retrospective held at Dowdeswell & Dowdeswell in London. Seventy-five pictures were on display, and as a result Monticelli's popularity in Britain began to soar. The dealers remarked on the Scottish enthusiasm

---

14 The other four are: *Woman with a parasol*, *The meeting*, *Woman at a well* and *Arabs and horsemen*.

for Monticelli in the introduction to their catalogue, and indeed, apart from Cottier's London agent, Elbert van Wisselingh, and a few Monticelli admirers such as Oscar Wilde and Phillipe Burty, the majority of lenders were Scottish, including R.T. Hamilton Bruce, Thomas Glen Arthur and Reid himself.

In February 1888, shortly after the Dowdeswell exhibition, Vincent wrote to Theo from Arles: ‘Reid has forced the price of the Monticellis up and, since we own five, it follows that these have gone up likewise’ [580/464]. To give an indication of the swift inflation of prices, in 1886 it was possible to buy Monticelli paintings from Delabeyrette for between 50 and 100 francs, but by 1888 they were being sold for nearer 500.17

Due to the rising prices in Paris, Reid planned to acquire new stock directly through Monticelli's cousin in Marseilles, Fernand Delas. We do not know when Reid and Delas first met, but the two were certainly well acquainted by May 1889, when they visited the American George A. Lucas in Paris,18 and it seems probable that it was Delas who later provided Reid with a regular store of Monticellis to market in Scotland.

As Vincent himself stated [580/464], the brothers' interest in Monticelli was only 'indirectly financial,' but when he moved to Arles, Reid somehow became convinced it was in order to corner the market in Monticellis. In the same letter Vincent dismissed Reid's allegations as absurd, but there can be no doubt that this marks the beginning of the Scotsman's quarrel with his two Dutch friends. Certainly Theo shared Reid's enthusiasm for Monticelli, and during his tenure at Boussod & Valadon there are as many as 43 of his pictures recorded in the ledgers.19 Between 1887 and 1890 Theo sold 19,20 but six of these were bought by Reid and several others went to Van Wisselingh, who probably sent them straight up to Scotland. The real boom time for Monticelli's work in Paris, however, did not come until after the sales of the Phillipe Burty and Daniel Cottier collections in 1891 and 1892. It thus seems that although Reid may have fuelled Vincent and Theo's admiration for this artist, they were never really competitors in the Monticelli market.

As for Reid's aesthetic judgement, it seems that both Vincent and Theo appreciated rather than questioned the Scots dealer's taste. Vincent described the Monticelli Reid gave them as 'a very fine picture,' one which he and Theo had themselves 'meant to get hold of' [580/464]. He also remarked to John Russell that he found Reid 'artistic in pleading the Monticelli cause' [600/477a]. It is true that Reid was adept at

16 'American and Scotch eyes and purses have been to the fore in appreciating Monticelli's works [...] History repeats itself in Art as elsewhere, and the story of Monticelli's pictures is a further proof that Englishmen, and even this artist's compatriots, must give way before Scotchmen and Americans in swift and unhesitating understanding of a new and felicitous pictorial interpretation of Nature's facts'; see Catalogue of a collection of paintings by Adolphe Monticelli (1824-1880), London (Dowdeswell & Dowdeswell) 1888.
19 See Thomson, op. cit. (note 5), p. 89.
converting his fondness for the artist into commercial gain, but at no stage did he give either brother cause to question his discernment in matters of art.

We have established that despite Reid's suspicions, Theo was never truly a rival in the Monticelli market. With impressionist art, on the other hand, the Van Gogh brothers came to regard the Scottish dealer as a direct threat. Theo, Vincent and Reid often discussed the possibility of selling impressionist pictures in Britain. Initially the Dutchmen contemplated using Reid as their agent in Scotland and even planned to hold an exhibition of impressionist works that Reid would set up on their behalf. However, in the late spring or summer of 1888, an unspecified incident led Vincent to believe that Reid had severely compromised his integrity as a dealer. The correspondence gives no exact details of the matter, but it seems to have concerned a work by Guillaumin, which Reid had apparently sold at a ‘ridiculous’ price [592/472]. Theo had made his first Guillaumin sale to Dupuis in the autumn of 1887 and was
fig. 4
Adolphe Monticelli, *The destruction of Pompeii*, Paisley Museum and Art Gallery

beginning to take a serious interest in the artist. He included Guillaumin in a mixed exhibition in December 1887 and even sent some of his work to Tersteeg\(^1\) in The Hague the following spring.\(^2\) No doubt he also held a number of pictures on commission, but these would not have been recorded unless sold. Theo was attempting to generate a market for Guillaumin and thereby raise the price of his work. Reid appears to have been doing precisely the opposite: his aim was to reduce the value of the painter's pictures in order that he himself might acquire them at a lower price.

We know that there was already a certain amount of ill feeling between Reid and the Van Gogh brothers over Monticelli, but it seems it was the Guillaumin affair that finally destroyed their friendship. Vincent's anger is clearly expressed in a letter of March 1888: 'I think that Tersteeg and not Reid ought to start the impressionist exhibition now. I do not like Reid's behaviour toward us at all' [592/472].

Nevertheless, there is still no evidence that Reid's aesthetic judgement was defective in any way. The few paintings we know he acquired in Paris were of high quality. The only other way of assessing his taste is by examining the works he took to Scotland.

**Back in Scotland**

Reid returned to Glasgow in the spring of 1889 and set up his own gallery, which he called ‘La Société des Beaux-Arts.’ One of his first aims was to corner the market in Monticellis, and he eventually became so obsessed with this artist and so successful in promoting his work that he was widely known as ‘Monticelli Reid.’\(^3\) As noted above, Reid did not introduce Monticelli to Scotland, but instead sought to capitalise on an already-established taste; and although he had succeeded in raising the price of Monticelli's pictures, he was now forced to compete with a number of other Glasgow dealers in the market. His main rival was Craibe Angus (1830-1899), Daniel

\(^{21}\) Tersteeg was Goupil's agent in the Hague and Theo's former supervisor; see also the article by Chris Stolwijk in this volume of the *Van Gogh Museum Journal*.

\(^{22}\) See Thomson, op. cit. (note 5), pp. 81, 123-24, and 201, note 90.

\(^{23}\) The Glasgow artist George Henry makes frequent references to ‘Monticelli Reid’ in his correspondence with E.A. Hornel; see, for example, Kirkcudbright, Kirkcudbrightshire, Broughton House, E.A. Hornel Library, ref. 2/18, letter dated 17 March 1892.
Cottier's agent in Glasgow, but dealers such as Thomas Lawrie (d. 1904) and W.B Paterson (1859-1952) were also beginning to stock his work. Since a large number of Monticelli's paintings have deteriorated over time, it is now difficult to judge the quality of many of the works Reid handled. However, given that
there was so much competition, one can only conclude that aesthetic quality was one of the most important factors in attracting new clients.

One of the most enthusiastic collectors of Monticelli's work during the 1890s was the textile manufacturer W.A. Coats (1853-1926). Coats loaned more Monticellis than anyone else to the International Exhibition in Glasgow in 1901, and at his death in 1926 he owned as many as 31 paintings by this artist.\(^{24}\) We know from existing receipts that Coats bought not just from Reid, but from a number of different Glasgow dealers, including Lawrie, Angus and Paterson, and that Reid was hard pressed to attract his custom. Between 1890 and early 1899 Coats bought 15 Monticellis, but none of them came from Reid.\(^{25}\) In 1899, however, he appears to have switched his allegiance and thereafter bought all his Monticellis from Reid, including the very fine *Destruction of Pompeii* (fig. 4), for which he paid an impressive £1,200 in 1900.

With Monticelli, Reid sought to gain control of an already existing market. With impressionism, he was attempting something far more ambitious and, in many ways, more idealistic - the creation of a new taste. One of his first aims on his return to Glasgow was to realise Theo and Vincent's dream and to hold an exhibition of impressionist art in Scotland.\(^{26}\)

Although Reid had invested in Manet during his stay in Paris, it was to Degas that he now turned. English collectors such as Henry Hill and Constantine Ionides had already bought works by Degas from Durand-Ruel, and it made sense to attempt to introduce Scottish buyers to impressionism through this artist. Reid's exhibition, entitled ‘A small collection of pictures by Degas and others’ opened initially in London and moved north to Glasgow in February 1892. It included a total of 46 works: seven by Degas - mainly pastels and representing a wide range of subjects; Monet's *View of Vétheuil in winter* (W552, present location unknown); a Sisley snow scene; and a Pissarro fan painting, *The fair at St Martin, Pontoise* of 1881 (P&V 1618, present location unknown). Reid also showed a selection of works by other 19th-century French artists - Puvis de Chavannes, Courbet, Corot, Daubigny, Millet and, of course, Monticelli - as well as pieces by Whistler.

Reid had acquired the Pissarro from Alphonse Portier,\(^{27}\) but the majority of works on show came from Durand-Ruel. These included Degas's *Woman at the window* of 1871-72 (London, Courtauld Institute), which he had bought on 20 October 1891 for 3,000 francs, along with a Degas pastel of racehorses and the Sisley snow scene, both at 1,200 francs.\(^{28}\) The remaining Degas pictures comprised a café scene, two ballerina pictures - one of which was the *Dancers in the rehearsal room with a double...
bass (New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art), catalogued simply as ‘Répétition’ - a nude study entitled *After the bath* (L787, present location unknown) and *At the milliner's* (fig. 5).

This was the first time any serious attempt had been made to market impressionism in Scotland. Thomas Glen Arthur (1857-1907), a Glasgow haberdasher, was the only buyer, purchasing *At the milliner's* for £800. It is certainly no coincidence that the next collector to acquire a work by Degas was Arthur's business partner, Arthur Kay (c. 1862-1939). Kay regarded himself as a true connoisseur and it is not impossible that he hoped to upstage his colleague by acquiring one of Degas's most controversial paintings, *L'absinthe* of 1875-76 (Paris, Musée d'Orsay). Reid had bought the picture from the sale of Henry Hill's collection at Christie's in London in February 1892. Initially Kay had

---

29 Reid bought *L'absinthe* (lot 209: *Figures at a café*) for £180 from the sale of Henry Hill's collection, held at Christie's in London on 19 and 20 February 1892. For an account of Kay's transactions with Reid see Arthur Kay, *Treasure trove in art*, Edinburgh 1939, pp. 27-29.
great misgivings about his purchase, but his attempt to return the picture to Reid only resulted in a second acquisition, the above-mentioned *Dancers in the rehearsal room*.

As there are no records of Reid’s sales until 1899 it is difficult to form a coherent idea of the number of impressionist works bought by Scottish collectors in the 1890s. However, it seems that during this period, and indeed right up until the 1920s, only a handful of impressionist pictures were sold in Scotland, and the type of works they were reflect the conservatism of the buyers. Reid was always careful to choose neutral subjects such as still-lifes, portraits or the popular Degas ballet dancers. He also stocked a few of the more simple landscapes of Monet and Sisley, which appealed to a limited clientele.

After Arthur and Kay, the next Scottish collector to buy an impressionist painting from Reid was Andrew Maxwell (1828-1909), a Glasgow iron and steel merchant, who acquired Monet’s *View of Vetheuil in winter* by November 1892.\(^{30}\) Three years later the Glasgow ship owner George Burrell (1857-1927), a regular client of Reid’s, exhibited a Degas ballet dancer at the Glasgow Institute. His brother William Burrell (1861-1958) also acquired his first works by Degas around the same time. A pastel from Burrell’s collection entitled *The encore* (L650, present location unknown) was reproduced in *The Art Journal* in 1894, and he made a second purchase, *La lorgneuse* (Glasgow, Burrell Collection) sometime around 1902. Another West Coast collector, Andrew Kirkpatrick (d. 1900) loaned a Monet landscape (listed under no. 231) to the Glasgow Institute in 1897 and the following year exhibited Sisley’s *A country village* (no. 46; present location unknown).

\(^{30}\) Maxwell exhibited this work as *Effet de neige* at the annual exhibition of the Royal Glasgow Institute in 1895 (no. 51). It had entered his collection by 1894, when it was mentioned by Robert Walker in ‘Private collections in Glasgow and the west of Scotland - Mr Andrew Maxwell’s collection,’ *Magazine of Art* (1894), pp. 221-27. It also seems probable that it is the Monet referred to in a brief article in *The Baillie* of November 1892, which reports: ‘Among the latest additions to the gallery of one of our chief Glasgow collectors is an example of Claude Monet, a picture distinguished by all the more distinctive characteristics of the great impressionist.’
Despite these early purchases, Scottish collectors in general were not immediately drawn to impressionism. The majority lived in large, rather gloomy, oak-panelled houses, and the brilliant colours and sketchy handling of impressionist art sat rather uneasily among the so-called ‘glue-pot’ painters who were then in fashion. In general Reid's clients seem to have been happier with early pre-impressionist works by artists such as Manet and Degas, and Reid also kept a selection of Monet seascapes, which he knew would appeal to the West Coast collectors, many of whom were enthusiastic sailors.

A typical purchase from this period was Monet's *A freshening breeze* of 1867 (Williamstown, MA, The Sterling and Francine Clark Institute), which was bought before 1901 by the Glasgow steel manufacturer Andrew Bain (1844-1926). Bain owned four racing yachts and was commodore of the Royal Western Yacht Club, and it seems more than likely that it was the subject matter of the painting rather than its style that appealed to him. A similar Monet picture, *Seascape: night effect*, dated 1864 (Edinburgh, The National Gallery of Scotland), was bought by D. McCorkindale of Carfin Hall (d. 1903) sometime before November 1903, when his collection was sold in Glasgow. Both these works could conceivably have come from the exhibition of French paintings Reid held at La Société des Beaux Arts in December 1898. The show may also have included Manet's striking *Portrait of Victorine Meurent* (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts) - acquired by William Burrell some time before 1901 - and another of the artist's works of the same date, *Deck of a ship* (Melbourne, National Gallery of Victoria), which the Edinburgh collector J.J. Cowan (1846-1933) bought from Reid in 1901 for a mere £230.

Clearly, it was no easy task for Reid to persuade Scottish collectors to invest in full-blown impressionism. Apart from Sir John Richmond (1869-1963), who acquired Pissarro's *Tuileries Gardens* (Glasgow Museums and Art Gallery) in 1911, Scottish buyers seem to have shown little further interest in impressionism until 1917, when William Burrell began taking a serious interest in Degas. After the war Reid held regular shows of impressionist art in Glasgow, culminating in a major exhibition - *Masterpieces of French art* - which opened at Agnew's in London in June 1923 and moved north to the McLellan Galleries in Glasgow in August. As a result of these shows, Reid succeeded in attracting a new generation of Scottish collectors, including William McInnes (1868-1944) and D.W.T. Cargill (1872-1939), both of whom formed important collections of impressionist and post-impressionist art.

Vincent Van Gogh had accused Reid of loving dead pictures and neglecting living artists, and yet even he came to realise that the only way to succeed financially was to sell. He wrote to Theo in June 1889: ‘How often I think of Reid when I am reading Shakespeare, and how often I have thought of him while I was worse than I am now. Thinking that I was far, far too hard on him and too discouraging when I claimed that it was better to care for the painters than for the pictures’ [786/597).

Many of the works Reid sold were of extremely high quality, and the fact that so many of the pictures he handled are now in major international collections is surely testament to his aesthetic judgement. No other Scottish dealer came close to him in the promotion of impressionist art, and yet it was not until the 1920s that he was able to reap the benefit. If anything, then - at least as far as impressionism was concerned

---

31 McCorkindale's collection was sold by Morrison, Dick & McCulloch at 98 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, on 6 and 7 November 1903.
- it was Reid's idealism and artistic sensibility that clouded his judgement as a dealer, and not the other way round.
fig. 1
Jules Emile Saintin, Michel Knoedler, 1859, New York, Knoedler & Co.
The American art trade and French painting at the end of the 19th century  
*Madeleine Fidell-Beaufort*

The aim of this article is to describe the market for French art in the United States during the years that Theo Van Gogh was active as a dealer in France. The material presented was found in a number of late-19th century American art periodicals. I have also consulted the scrapbooks and business accounts of several American art dealers and art agents who specialised in importing French art. These diverse sources reveal the issues that were of importance in the sale of contemporary French art on the American market at the time.

After considering the viewpoints of both European and American art dealers we will discuss the implications of the high American tariff on modern French art. Another concern during the period under consideration was the record auction prices for contemporary French art in the United States. Finally, we will examine the pivotal role of American art agents and students returning home after studying art in France.

**Prelude**

Selling art to Americans looked tempting from France as the audience seemed potentially inexhaustible, but it took some patience for French dealers to find ways to establish themselves in the new world. Adolphe Goupil (1806-1893), a key figure in the Parisian art market, sent at least two representatives to New York. Michel Knoedler (d. 1878) (fig. 1) arrived from France in 1846 and established a Goupil branch. He sold artist's materials as well as Goupil's publications and prints after Old Master and contemporary paintings. Knoedler was almost certainly also involved with Goupil and his associate Vibert's efforts to run the International Art Union, a lottery established around 1849. Within five or six years Knoedler had established a good rapport with American artists and began to buy their work. In 1857 he bought out Goupil's interest in the firm and conducted business under his own name, although he continued his association with his former employer on an informal basis. When Knoedler died in 1878, his 22-year-old son Roland became the head of the business. His younger brothers Edmond and Charles were involved in the firm until 1896. William Schaus (1820-1892) was another Goupil representative. Sent to New York around 1847 he, too, went on to establish himself as a dealer in his own right. In his

---

1 Mary Schmidt's *Index to nineteenth-century American art periodicals*, Madison, CT 1999 greatly facilitated this research.
2 A series of scrapbooks from the Avery Art Gallery, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art Library, contains clippings on the art market during these years. The Archives of American Art has a microfilm of these scrapbooks; see Washington, DC, Archives of American Art, Samuel Putnam Avery (1822-1904) papers, Avery Art Gallery, AAA Roll NMMM26.
3 See Lois Fink, ‘French art in the United States (1850-1870): three dealers and collectors,’ *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 17 (September 1978), pp. 87-100.
4 Protectionist critics (such as the one in *Literary World* 5 [13 October 1849], p. 318) attacked the organisation for the immorality of the paintings it offered; see Maybelle Mann, *The American Art Union*, Otisville, NY 1977 p. 21.
early career Schaus published lithographic prints after paintings by American artists William Sidney Mount and Lily Martin Spencer.5

American-born dealers were active in trading French art as well. They came from a variety of backgrounds. Some emerged from allied trades such as the sale of artist's materials, picture frames, mirrors, chandeliers.

and various objects and services connected with interior design. Others had had some art training, as was the case with Samuel P. Avery (1822-1904), a native New Yorker who began his career as a wood engraver. He befriended local artists and began representing them in 1864. Had Avery limited his business to American art alone, his profits would probably not have been very great. With the help of a client, collector William T. Walters (1820-1894), who was then living in Paris, Avery received a consignment of over 100 European paintings that he successfully sold at auction in April 1864. The auction went so well that Avery continued to ‘manage’ similar events for the rest of his career. Walters worked with George A. Lucas (1824-1909), a fellow Baltimorian who went to Paris in 1857 and remained there for the rest of his life. Lucas acted as an art agent and advisor during the careers of both S.P. Avery and his son, S.P. Avery Jr (1847-1926).6

American art buyers and collectors came into contact with - and developed a strong affinity for - contemporary French art at the time of the Exposition Universelle in 1867.7 This was just after the Civil War and American buying power had reached a new height.8 For these novice art buyers, a painter's acceptance to the yearly Paris Salon was of utmost importance. Samuel Avery, who had been responsible for bringing and installing the American works at the Exposition, had several months to study the French art market and assess its appeal for Americans. He saw clearly that there was a future for him in trading in this art. George Lucas introduced Avery to artists and helped him launch himself as an international dealer. Thomas Nast's

---

cartoon depicts Avery in this role, crossing the Atlantic with his neatly wrapped purchases (fig. 2).

The Franco-Prussian War and its aftermath slowed down the sale of contemporary French art in the early 1870s. For a year or so artists in France had been unable to
work and produced very little. Ever-eager American buyers found it difficult to purchase French academic painting. In 1871, just after the devastating Chicago fire, Adolphe Goupil created an opportunity to promote the sale of work by the artists he represented, or at least to keep their names before the American public: he asked ‘his’ artists (from Paris and Düsseldorf) to donate pictures for a charity auction sale in New York that would benefit victims of the catastrophe. The auction, held at Clinton Hall in 1872, was highly successful and brought in a total of over 43,000 dollars.\(^9\)

The infamous tariff

By the mid-1870s there were again enough Parisian Salon paintings to keep up with American demand. The future looked bright for French art in the United States when suddenly importing work from abroad became a much more expensive proposition. In March 1883 the American Congress raised the customs duty on foreign works of art from 10 to 30 per cent. The *London Art Journal* estimated that Americans alone had spent 1,754,000 dollars at the Paris Salon that year, adding to collections that consisted almost exclusively of modern works, the majority of them French.\(^10\) This repressive tariff was not reduced until 1892, and then only to 15 per cent.\(^11\) In passing

---

9 See New York (George A. Leavitt & Co., Clinton Hall, May 16-18 1872, ‘Works of art comprising modern paintings drawings, engravings, and bronzes donated by the artists of Paris and Düsseldorf to be sold at auction for the relief of Chicago sufferers.’ I would like to thank Nancy Gillette for providing me with a copy of the catalogue and the prices of the works sold.


it should be noted that American artists were very much against the tariff, and signed petitions in favour of the free admission of works of art into American ports.\textsuperscript{12}

**French art at American auctions**

There was surely a strong correlation between this tariff on imported foreign art and the rise of the American auction market. The number of art auctions rose from a handful before 1860 to 80 a year in 1876 and over go in 1882. Many works acquired by early buyers of contemporary French art changed hands during the mid - 1880s.\textsuperscript{13}

These auctions provided a means of `recycling' modern French works and were one way of avoiding the high import duties.

There were auction houses in all large American cities, but New York was the place where the major events took place. Out-of-town collectors came in person or had agents to bid for them. Chickering Hall, a plush new 1800-seat concert auditorium was designed and built by George B. Post in 1875. It was located on Fifth Avenue at the north-west corner of 18th Street, close to the warehouses of the piano manufacturer Chickering & Sons, and was the site of a number of prestigious auctions.\textsuperscript{14}

During the last 15 years of the 19th century a number of French Salon pictures fetched enormous or even record prices at New York auctions. A series of these were obtained at the Mary Jane Morgan sale, held at Chickering Hall.

\textsuperscript{12} I am most grateful to Charles Pearo for supplying me with a few of Elizabeth Gardner's comments about the tariff. In a letter to her mother of 1 June 1884 she wrote: `[…] the French artists are all suffering from the new tax and feel bitter against us because they have treated us so generously in their schools and exhibitions. They moved that no recompense should be awarded to any of us this year […].’ Gardner wrote to her brother, John, the following year (20 February 1885): `The tariff question remains unsettled and Americans are hated by most of the French artists. We should be shut out of the exhibition were it not for the firm protection of Monsieur Bougereau, who is president of the jury.’ Gardner and American artists living abroad also had problems sending their work home for sale. See also F.D. Millet, `On the duty on fine arts,’ Harper's Weekly 29 (10 January 1885), p. 27.

\textsuperscript{13} The data used in compiling this information was taken from Harold Lancour, *American art auctions, 1785-1942: a union list*, New York 1944.

\textsuperscript{14} Chickering Hall replaced Clinton Hall, a smaller facility in downtown Manhattan that had been built around 1850 on the site of an opera house at Astor Place.
Hall from 3-5 March 1886. Viewers were so eager to see this highly publicised collection that they were more than willingly to pay the fifty-cent admission fee. At the sale itself, Jules Breton's *Communicants* (fig. 3), for which Mrs Morgan had paid 12,000 dollars in 1884, was sold for 45,000. It set a record as the highest price ever paid for a work by a living artist.15

A year after the Morgan sale, another famous collection - that of Alexander Turney Stewart (1803-1876) - was sold under similar circumstances.16 In the 1880s it became standard procedure for the New York newspapers to report on who attended the sales, who was bidding and the prices and names of the buyers who made major acquisitions. Auctions were so popular that articles in the press discussed the need for changing an old statute restricting these events to daytime.17

**Changes in dealing practices**

Samuel Avery Jr (fig. 4) was in his early 40s when his father retired at the end of the 1880s. Although Sam Jr had been working in the business for over 30 years, his father did not wish him to continue as a dealer; in the end, however, his son prevailed upon him to allow him use the gallery name. With the help of an important backer, Sam Jr moved into new quarters on 5th Avenue and 36th Street, in the residential district known as Murray Hill.18 This was about a mile uptown from the area around 14th Street where most galleries had been located in the 1860s and 70s. Avery and Roland Knoedler were among the first art dealers in this new neighbourhood, but they were not alone for long.19

---

15 The success of this auction can be attributed to its very skilful promotion by the American Art Association and an auctioneer named Thomas E. Kirby. The great size of the Morgan collection, the mystery surrounding Mrs Morgan and the deluxe catalogue attracted a great deal of attention; see Wesley Towner, *The elegant auctioneers*, New York 1970, and Charles Dana in *The New York Sun* (7 March 1886). I am grateful to Annette Bourrut-Lacouture for her help in tracking this picture, which was last sold in New York; see New York (Sotheby's), 24 October 1996, lot 45.

16 Stewart, a Scottish-Irish immigrant to the United States, turned his dry-goods business into a multi-million dollar operation prior to and during the Civil War. As early as 1845 Stewart had a purchasing office in Paris that also helped him to acquire works of art for his personal collection.

17 ‘The law that hurts the art business,’ *Tribune* (16 November 1887) discusses the statute and advocates changes; see the Avery Gallery scrapbooks, cit. (note 2).

18 The backer was Charles Stewart Smith, art collector and old family friend. He was a retired dry-goods merchant, a trustee of The Metropolitan Museum of Art and president of the New York Chamber of Commerce from 1887 to 1894.

19 Durand-Ruel moved uptown to Murray Hill as well, first to 315 Fifth Avenue in 1890 and then to 389 Fifth Avenue in 1894. For information on another dealer, Thomas B. Clark, who was located at 4 East 34th Street in the early 1890s, see H. Barbara Weinberg, ‘Thomas B. Clark: foremost patron of American art from 1872 to 1899,’ *The American Art Journal* 8 (May 1976), pp. 52-83. Clark collected American art but dealt in oriental porcelains and Greek antiquities.
fig. 4
Samuel P. Avery, Jr. c. 1867, Glen Cove, NY, private collection
Avery's gallery, at 368 Fifth Avenue, was built according to the plans of his
architect-brother Henry, and had several distinctive and novel features. Although it
was but a modest two-story structure of Scottish redstone and Baltimore brick, it
housed not only Avery Jr's own business, but also the Fifth Avenue Art Galleries
auction house. For a short time, Henry Avery's architectural office was there as well.20
The lot on which the building stood was quite large, with a 35-foot front on Fifth
Avenue and a return of 86 feet on 35th Street. Avery's galleries occupied the second
floor, and were described in a promotional brochure as the largest local art gallery,
with 500 feet of line and 5,000 feet of floor space, which Avery used for a series of
one-man shows.

Between 1888 and 1900, when auctioneer John Ortgies (1836-1909) retired, the
Fifth Avenue Art Galleries organised 130 sales. Competition among European and
American dealers was particularly strong in the 1880s and 90s. James Sutton
(1843-1915), president of the American Art Galleries, another auction house and
gallery facility, invited Paul Durand-Ruel to exhibit paintings in New York in March
1886. This was the first major show of paintings by the impressionists in the United
States. In 1888 Durand-Ruel himself opened a branch of his gallery in New York,
mainly as a means of coping with tariff complications.21 Americans who visited
France were already familiar with his Paris gallery. Information about his professional
activities had long appeared in publications intended for English-speaking tourists,
and Americans began purchasing Barbizon paintings from him in the late 1860s.22

At home, American enthusiasm for the Barbizon School reached its peak on 1 July
1889, when James Sutton purchased Millet's *Angelus* in a heated battle at the Secretan
sale in Paris. It cost 110,000 dollars and broke another auction record. At the time
journalists boasted that Americans owned more masterpieces of French art than
France itself.23 In fact, in the 1880s French officials do appear to have been somewhat
concerned. They commissioned E. Durand-Greville (then on tour with his successful
novelist wife) to catalogue French works in American collections. He spent six
months on the task and published some of his findings in two articles in the *Gazette
des Beaux-Arts*.24 Durand-Greville estimated that he had seen between 2,000 and
5,000 works by contemporary French artists.

20 Architect Henry O. Avery studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris during the 1870s.
Clippings in an album at the Avery Library at Columbia University in New York (AA/Av3Q)
indicate that he was studying appropriate ceiling heights and lighting for art galleries at the
time of his death. I am indebted to Herbert Mitchell for helping me to locate material on the
Avery gallery. The building was discussed in the *Real Estate Record* (11 June 1887) and in
an article entitled ‘Opening of Ortgies new art rooms,’ *Tribune* (13 November 1887).

21 For an early account of the relationship between Sutton and Durand-Ruel see Hans Huth,

22 See, for example. *The American Register* 51 (27 March 1869), p. 3: ‘Mr. Durand-Ruel, the
well-known expert for paintings, is shortly expected back from Russia. This gentleman is
universally known for his great capacity of appreciating paintings of all schools, ancient and
modern, and chiefly to Americans for his fascinating manners and straight forwardness in
his dealings. Mr. Durand-Ruel went to St. Petersburg to inspect one of the richest and finest
picture galleries there, which very likely is shortly to come under the hammer in this City.’

23 E. Durand Greville, ‘La peinture aux Etats-Unis: les galeries privées,’ *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*
36 (July 1887), pp. 65-75 and (September 1887), pp. 250-55.

24 See ibid, and Laura L. Meixner ‘Jean-François Millet’s *Angelus* in America,’ *American Art
The Angelus, probably the best-known French painting in America, was the focal point of an exhibition entitled The works of A.L. Barye, his friends and contemporaries. It was held at the American Art Galleries and featured 100 French Barbizon works from private American collections. The public was required to pay fifty cents to see the Angelus, which received considerable attention. Thanks to American artists like William Morris Hunt, a Bostonian who had studied with Millet in the 1850s, Barbizon landscapes were appreciated in the United States quite early. Prices for these paintings rose slowly through the 1860s and 70s, but their true commercial success only began in the 1880s.

The Midwest and the expansion of the art market

From 1873 to 1891 huge trade fairs were arranged to promote the city of Chicago as the foremost Midwest trading and industrial centre. Potter Palmer (1826-1902), who made his fortune in Chicago real estate, was the head of a corporation selling stock to finance construction of a monumental iron and glass building inspired by Europe's

---

25 The Angelus was shown in the last gallery, draped in a sea of red velvet. Sutton made money from entrance fees, but was unable to sell the 110,000-dollar work at a profit in the US. He finally found a buyer in France, the collector Alfred Chauchard, who eventually donated the picture to the Louvre. See Meixner, op. cit. (note 24), pp. 78-84.
Universal Exhibitions. Photographs of the 1878 Chicago Inter-State Industrial Exposition bear witness to the symbiotic relationship between art and business. Industrial goods were artistically displayed amidst works of art, which occupied the same spaces.

Beginning in 1878, Sara Tyson Hallowell (1846-1924) (fig. 5) was clerk and secretary for the Industrial Exposition art committee. She was Chicago's most influential art agent and very active in getting work on loan from dealers and collectors. Established East Coast galleries were delighted to provide organisational support and lend paintings. Michel Knoedler was apparently the first dealer to go to Chicago, in 1875. Boston dealers Williams and Everett, Snedcor of New York, and Haseltine of Philadelphia followed in his footsteps. Just before the 1893 Columbian Exhibition, art journalists predicted that Chicago was going to become a major art centre.

Certain art dealing practices at the Chicago fairs and elsewhere may seem surprising to us today. When Schaus lent William Dannat's 1884 Salon painting The

---

26 Stefan Germer, ‘Pictures at an exhibition,’ *Chicago History* (Spring 1987), pp. 5-21, includes reproductions of these photographs and discusses the implications of the trade shows.


28 *The Collector* 3 (1 January 1892), p. 76 suggested that: ‘The time is coming when Chicago is going to be the centre of art commerce in this country. Already dealers make pilgrimages to it as the faithful travel to Mecca.’
Quatour (New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art) to the Chicago industrial fair in 1885 he charged a 1,000-dollar fee. This the exhibition committee paid, passing the cost along by asking the public to pay ten cents for a look at it. It was common at this time for certain European art dealers - for example, Charles Sedelmeyer (1837-1925) - to sponsor tours of single works of art. Sedelmeyer brought several large Salon paintings to the United States. He charged admission fees and also hoped to generate income through the sale of engravings after them.

The new American taste

The activities of private art agents at the end of the century did a great deal to make French art known to American buyers. Sara Hallowell, who lived in France for long periods of time, was on excellent terms with American artists abroad. She was especially friendly with Mary Cassatt and Gary Melchers. Hallowell worked closely with Paul Durand-Ruel and arranged for American collectors like Mr and Mrs Potter Palmer, Charles L. Freer and Charles Tyson Yerkes to meet French masters, among them Rodin.\footnote{29}

American artists who studied in Paris played an even more important role in determining the sort of French art Americans would buy. There was a long tradition for artists who studied abroad to act as informal advisors for their compatriots. In the 1870s Robert Wylie advised William Wilstach and helped him acquire French Salon paintings. Both men were from Philadelphia. In the 1880s Julius Alden Weir counselled an American named Erwin Davis, who began collecting while living abroad.\footnote{30} Weir bought Manet's *Woman with a parrot* and *Boy with a sword* (New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art) for Davis on his second trip to France in 1881. These were the first Manet paintings to enter American collections. Weir was actually following the advice of another American artist, William Merritt Chase, who had suggested that he go see Manet's work at the Durand-Ruel's.\footnote{31}

Upon returning from their studies in Europe, American artists like James Carroll Beckwith, Chase, Weir, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Wyatt Eaton and Walter Shirlow influenced taste through their teaching. As artists they also participated in organising committees for exhibitions such as the loan show for the Statue of Liberty pedestal in 1883.\footnote{32} Exhibitions arranged by art students coming home from France featured Barbizon School and other realist paintings, but showed very few French academic works. By the early 1890s prices for French Salon pictures were so inflated that it was rarely profitable for dealers to sell them. Their enormous size made them difficult

\footnote{29} The archives of the Musée Rodin in Paris contain correspondence from Sara Hallowell that reveal the scope of her role; see Paris, Musée Rodin, archives, ‘Hallowell, Sarah Tyson (1852-1929), agent 121, documents (1892-1915) lettres, cartes, télégrammes.’

\footnote{30} In 1880 and 1881 Davis commissioned J. Alden Weir to go to Europe and buy paintings for him. On the first trip he bought Bastien-Lepage's *Jeanne d'Arc* (New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art) for 4,000 dollars; in 1889 it sold for 6,700, Weir was among many American art students who admired Bastien-Lepage's work.


\footnote{32} O'Brien, op. cit. (note 10), p. 27.

*Van Gogh Museum Journal 2000*
to hang in the newly fashionable apartments that began to replace the palatial homes of the previous generation. Smaller French landscapes, on the other hand, sold well and they cost considerably less. In England and France Samuel Avery Jr could buy marines by Boudin for between 100 and 200 dollars and could thus make a greater profit on them than on larger academic works. Impressionist works, which were also much less expensive, entered American collections by the early 1890s.

At the same period there were new bargains to be had the areas of 18th and early-19th century English portraiture and landscape paintings. Italian Renaissance work appealed to collectors like Isabella Stewart Gardner, who was guided by Bernard Berenson. Around 1890, at the end of his career, William Schaus, who began as Goupil's agent in 1847 and then sold French academic work in the 1870s and 80s, was negotiating in sales for Old Master paintings. The art press noted that such works were all the rage. By the last decade of the 19th century, in fact, acquiring French Salon art, once seen by American buyers as the only viable investment, had become just one of a growing number of options.

33 According to Avery Jr's diary (Glen Cove, New York, private collection) he purchased over 50 marine views and beach scenes from at least a dozen different dealers on his buying trips to France in the late 1890s.
34 Avery Jr's diary entry for 15 May 1894 states: ‘all the dealers are going in for early English and Dutch pictures’; see ibid.
35 See ‘The re-opening of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,’ Harper's Magazine (29 December 1888), p. 1006, which praised the two Rembrandts lent to the museum by Henry O. Havemeyer, as well as English paintings lent by Henry Marquand.
[Van Gogh Studies]

fig. 1
Vincent van Gogh, *Portrait of Eugène Boch (Le poète)* (F 462 JH 1574), 1888, Paris, Musée d'Orsay (photograph courtesy of the RMN)
Crossed out: Vincent van Gogh to Paul Gauguin - a fragment
Leo Jansen, Hans Luijten and Wouter van der Veen

In the summer of 2000 the text research was completed for the new edition of Vincent van Gogh's correspondence. This means that there are now new reading texts for all the letters, over 900 in total, based on exact transcriptions of the original manuscripts, wherever these were available. This brief article will publish and examine a recently deciphered fragment, placing it in its proper context.

Vincent van Gogh's correspondence includes a single letter to the Belgian painter Eugène Guillaume Boch. Boch is the sitter in Van Gogh's beautiful Portrait of Eugène Boch, also known as Le poète (fig. 1). Although the artists surely corresponded further, these other letters must be considered lost. Van Gogh and Boch met in Provence around July 1888. Van Gogh was working in Arles and its environs; the painter Dodge MacKnight, an acquaintance of his, was staying in nearby Fontvieille and introduced them. Van Gogh did not have a very high opinion of MacKnight: 'C'est un yankee qui probablement fait beaucoup mieux que les yankees d'habitude. Mais un yankee tout de même._ Est ce là assez dire? - Lorsque j'aurai vu ses tableaux ou dessins j'admettrais pour l'oeuvre' [603/479]. Van Gogh's reserve towards MacKnight also made him initially sceptical of Boch, whom he believed was subject to the American's bad influence. But he soon developed an affinity for the Belgian. Following their initial introduction he wrote to Theo: ‘Ce Bock a un peu la tête d'un gentilhomme flamand du temps des compromis des nobles du temps du Taciturne et de Marnix. Cela ne m'étonnerait pas du tout qu'il fusse bon’ [642/506]. When MacKnight left the south of France a month later and Van Gogh began to associate with Boch on his own terms, he informed Theo around 27 August 1888: ‘Ah - Mac Knight a enfin décampé - je ne le regrette point/ Son copain le belge n'en paraissait pas fort attiré pas non plus lorsqu'il est venu hier me le raconter et que nous avons passé la soirée ensemble. Il est très raisonnable dans ses idées et sait au moins ce qu'il veut. Il fait maintenant de l'impressionisme timide mais très en règle/ très juste. Et je lui ai dit que c'était la meilleure chose qu'il pouvait faire quoi qu'il y perdrait 2 ans peut-être retardant son originalité/ mais enfin lui ai je dit/ il est aussi nécessaire de passer régulièrement par l'impressionisme maintenant que cela l'était autrefois de passer par un atelier parisien. Cela il l'admettait absolument en plein justement puisqu'aussi on ne choque personne et ne peut pas plus tard être accusé de ne pas être à la hauteur de la question. Il y songe sérieusement à aller peindre les charbonniers du Borinage et s'il est encore ici lorsque Gauguin viendra/ pas impossible alors qu'on lui demandera de faire pour nous dans le nord ce que nous ferions pour lui dans le

1 The Van Gogh Letters Project is a joint venture of the Van Gogh Museum and the Constantijn Huygens Institute in The Hague. We expect to complete the research in 2004; additional time will then be required for translation and production.
2 The letter fragments from Van Gogh's correspondence cited in this article are drawn from the new reading texts. As Van Gogh used little punctuation we have occasionally added it in places; our full stops and commas are rendered as _ and / respectively.
3 Van Gogh always spelt Boch's name with a k. This is how the French pronounce it, which indicates that it was imparted to Van Gogh orally.
4 Van Gogh is here referring to William the Silent (William I of Orange, 1533-1584) and Philips van Marnix, lord of St Aldegonde (1538-1598).

Van Gogh Museum Journal 2000
midi/ faire tout notre possible pour le faire vivre à meilleur marché que seul’ [673/528]. Van Gogh was thus able to relate to Boch in his favourite manner, as a fatherly mentor.

The postmark on the envelope helps us date the surviving letter to Boch to 2 October 1888 [696/553b]. It is a reply to a missive from Boch himself, who had in fact gone to
fig. 2
Sketch enclosed with letter 696/553b to Eugène Boch (recto), Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum (Vincent van Gogh Foundation)

fig. 3
Crossed-out text on the verso of fig. 2
work in the Borinage after his stay in southern France. Van Gogh congratulated him on this move and - never shy of giving advice - mentioned a few interesting subjects that his friend might be able to paint there. Van Gogh also told Boch which paintings he himself was currently working on. He provided him with an impression of a few of these works, drawing a small sketch in the letter of a bulbous cypress in a park and appending a separate sheet with a sketch showing his famous night scene over the river Rhône, *The starry night* (F 474 JH 1592) (fig. 2).

It is this sheet that is of concern here. The successful little drawing gave Boch a good idea of Van Gogh's work; he would have been much less interested in the verso, which contains a few lines of text by Van Gogh, expressly rendered illegible with a thick pen (fig. 3). Following the publication of the facsimile edition of Van Gogh's correspondence in 1977, in which both the sketch and the crossed-out passage are shown, several scholars became curious about its content. However, anyone using this edition is soon forced to abandon the attempt to decipher the passage, for there is hardly any nuance in the reproduction of the ink layers and almost everything has the same intensity.

During the research for the new edition of Van Gogh's correspondence these lines presented a downright challenge. Fortunately, the original document is in the Van Gogh Museum; this enabled us to subject the passage to close scrutiny, both literally and figuratively. After some patient analysis and trial and error virtually the entire text has been revealed:

> mon cher ami écrivez donc plutôt
> à mon frère de garder vos tableaux a prix
> au lieu de les offrir à bas prix
> Il n’est pas plus commode de les vendre a
> bas prix et plus difficile de les vendre plus
> chers croyez m’en si on les vend du tout
> J’ai évité de vous écrire à ce sujet

5 In June 1890 Eugène Boch's painting *The Crachet-Pecry mine*, which he produced in the Borinage, would find a place in Theo and Vincent van Gogh's collection (now Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum); for the brothers' collection, see Sijraar van Heugten and Chris Stolwijk, ‘Theo van Gogh: the collector,’ in exhib. cat. *Theo van Gogh: art dealer, collector and brother of Vincent*, Amsterdam (Van Gogh Museum) & Paris (Musée d'Orsay) 1999-2000, pp. 153-79. Theo exchanged Boch's painting for Van Gogh's *The Alpilles with dark hut* (*Montagnes à Saint-Rémy*) (F 622 JH 1766), assuming that his brother would like to own a memento of the Borinage. Theo judged the work as follows: ‘Je trouve que surtout le motif & l'intention de ce qu'il a voulu faire sont remarquables. Ce n'est pas très habile ni puissant, mais très sincère, comme le garçon lui-même’ [895/T38]. Shortly before this Boch's sister, the painter Anna Boch, had become the first person to buy a painting by Van Gogh, *The red vineyard: Montmajour* (*Montmajour* (F 495 JH 1626), at the Les XX exhibition in Brussels.

6 *Letters of Vincent van Gogh 1886-1890. A facsimile edition*, preface by Jean Leymarie, introduction by V.W. van Gogh, 2 vols., London & Amsterdam 1977. There is no pagination; the sketch and crossed-out text are reproduced in volume one, with letter 553b, which appears between letters 544 and 545.

7 The manuscript was acquired by V.W. van Gogh from Boch's descendants and entered the collection of the Vincent van Gogh Foundation in 1962. It is currently on permanent loan to the Van Gogh Museum (b 598 V/1962). J.B. de la Faille was the first to draw attention to the letter's existence; see idem, ‘Een onbekende brief van Vincent,’ *Kroniek van kunst en kultuur* 14 (March 1954), no. 3, pp. 52-54.

8 The text has been reproduced exactly. The sections between [ and [?] in the final line are doubtful readings.
preferant que nous en causions
plus amplement -
Je suis dans ce moment en plein dans
la besogne j’ai une demi douzaine
de toiles de 30 carrées en train
qui serviront de décoration à la maison
Ce sont 3 toiles du jardin public
4 d[e]??/s terres labourees /à la nuit étoilée/??

The fragment was thus the beginning of a letter; although the text continued it was lost when part of the paper was cut off. The works mentioned in the final lines are also referred to in Van Gogh's letter to Boch; the salutation also seems fitting, when we consider that Vincent wrote 'Mon cher ami Boch' in the definitive letter. Nevertheless, this fragment could not originally have been intended for the Belgian painter, for during this period there was no question of Theo ('mon frère') selling his work. We can therefore conclude that when Van Gogh decided to send the sketch to Boch he did not want him to read this passage, which had been addressed to someone else. This, in combination with the fact that the text concerns financial matters, helps explain why Van Gogh did his best to make it illegible.

It is not hard to imagine for whom these words were originally intended. Since it must have been someone whose work Theo sold and whose prices Van Gogh could presume to discuss, the only possible candidate is Gauguin. At this time Van Gogh and Theo were busy trying to induce Gauguin, who was then working in Brittany, to move to
Arles, as they believed this would prove beneficial to both painters' work: ‘Sais tu que si nous aurons Gauguin nous voila devant une très importante affaire qui va nous ouvrir une ère nouvelle’ [698/544]. Although Gauguin had promised to join Vincent in Arles, he did not simply want to abandon the people who had been kind to him in Brittany and had supported him financially. Nor did he have the money required for the journey. Still, his arrival in Arles was imminent; hence Van Gogh's statement in the fragment that he preferred to wait until he could discuss prices ‘plus amplement’ (at greater length) with him.

The fragment in question is probably a response to a remark made by Gauguin in his letter to Van Gogh of circa 28 September 1888: ‘J'ai peur que votre frère qui aime mon talent ne le cote trop haut _- S'il trouvait un amateur ou un spéculateur qui soit tenté par les bas prix, qu'il le fasse _- Je suis l'homme des sacrifices et je voudrais bien qu'il comprenne que ce qu'il fera je le trouverai bien fait _- ’ [694/GAC32]. Referring to this passage Van Gogh wrote in his next letter to Theo: ‘Maintenant j'ai une lettre de Gauguin qui paraît bien triste et dit que dès qu'il a fait une vente certes il viendra mais ne se prononce toujours pas si en cas qu'il aurait son voyage payé tout simplement il consentirait à se debrouiller là-bas. Il dit que les gens où il loge sont et ont été parfaits pour lui et que les quitter comme cela serait une mauvaise action _ Mais que je lui retourne un poignard dans le cœur si je croirais qu'il ne viendrait pas tout de suite s'il pouvait. Que d'ailleurs si tu pouvais vendre ses toiles à bas prix il serait lui content. Je t'enverrai sa lettre avec la réponse _ ’ [695/543]. Evidently the crossed-out text is a (discarded) version of that ‘réponse.’ No evidence remains of the reply Van Gogh actually sent to Gauguin via Theo.

The threesome - Gauguin and the Van Gogh brothers - formed a quasi business. Theo gave financial support to both painters and had been trying to sell Gauguin's work since the end of 1887. Vincent was busy setting up the ‘atelier du Midi,’ where he hoped to fulfil the artistic ideals of the painters of the *petit boulevard*, preferably in collaboration with Gauguin. Moreover, through exchanges of work and (modest) purchases, the brothers were jointly building up an art collection that would prove of lasting value.

In 1888 Gauguin found himself in impecunious circumstances in Pont-Aven, for the income from his work was not very high. He had therefore considered allowing Theo to sell his work at a lower price than usual. The standard price for his pictures in this period still fluctuated around 400, or sometimes 500, francs. Vincent believed there was no point in lowering their prices. Putting a typically Van Gogh spin on his first ‘reason’ for taking this line, he maintained that if one wasn't selling anything anyway, the price made no difference, there was no point in lowering it. His second reason, based more on principal, was that painters should uphold their value and not create the impression that their work was only worth, for example, 100 francs: ‘Il n'est pas plus facile/ je suis convaincu/ de faire un bon tableau que de trouver un diamant ou une perle/ cela demande de la peine et on y risque sa vie comme marchand ou comme artiste. Alors une fois qu'on a des bonnes pierres il ne faut pas non plus douter de soi et hardiment tenir la chôse à un certain prix’ [695/543]. Although Gauguin and Theo basically agreed with Vincent, they had a better idea of how to do business and understood that it was sometimes necessary to make a compromise. A short time before Theo had evidently sold several of Gauguin's ceramics at less than the asking price. The latter wrote to the dealer in connection with this transaction
around 29 September 1888: ‘Vous avez bien fait d'accepter les prix proposés. Je suis aussi d'avis (ayant été dans les affaires) que à certains moments il faut tenir les prix. Et cependant il y en a d'autres qui sont amenées par le bas prix mais pas pour 1 tableau (pour plusieurs) C'est à dire que l'amateur *spéculateur* une espèce à part est tenté pour une affaire en *block.*’

The three men therefore held to the same theory, but Theo and Gauguin were prepared to deviate from it in practice if necessary. The crossed-out fragment shows that Van Gogh was the only one to hold firm to the principle - not for the first time - and that he intended to use Gauguin to exert pressure on his brother not to capitulate. As noted above, the version of the letter Van Gogh ultimately sent has not survived; we will thus never know if he actually defended his unilateral position there as well. Since Theo was to be allowed to read the letter it seems most likely Van Gogh swallowed his criticism in order to avoid misunder-

---

standings. This supposition is also supported by the fact that in the crossed-out fragment he states that he would prefer to discuss the issue with Gauguin in person. There are several passages in Van Gogh's letters in which sensitive subjects are only briefly touched upon; the artist frequently sought to defer a discussion until the opportunity arose for a personal exchange. Words on paper are dangerous. From this point of view, it would have been wiser if Van Gogh had destroyed the rejected text and used a new sheet of paper for Boch's sketch.
Documentation

Colour plates

Edouard Vuillard
Paysages et intérieurs: la pâtisserie 1899
Henri-Gabriel Ibels
Au cirque 1893
Henri-Gabriel Ibels
Theatre programme for *Les fossiles* 1892-93
Pierre Bonnard
Quelques aspects de la vie de Paris: boulevard 1899
Pierre Bonnard
Poster for La Revue Blanche 1894
Maurice Denis
Amour: nos âmes, en des gestes lents 1898
Camille Pissarro
Still life with peonies and mock orange 1872-74 and 1876-77
Catalogue of acquisitions: paintings and drawings August 1999 - July 2000

This catalogue contains all paintings and drawings acquired by the Van Gogh Museum from August 1999 to July 2000. Each work has an inventory number made up as follows: the first letter stands for the technique (s = painting, d = drawing); this is followed by a reference number and then by a capital letter (B = loan, N = State of the Netherlands, S = Van Gogh Museum [after 1 July 1994], V = Vincent van Gogh Foundation) and the year of acquisition.

Paintings

Pissarro, Camille
French, 1830-1903

Still life with peonies and mock orange 1872-74 and 1876-77
Oil on canvas, 81 × 64.5 cm
Stamp lower right: C.P.; next to this, part of a signature, C. Pissarro, is visible, later painted over
s 502 V/2000

According to Pissarro and Venturi's oeuvre catalogue of 1939, Camille Pissarro produced more than 1, 300 paintings, only some 20 of which are still lifes. Fourteen of these are flower paintings; seven are dated. This work, donated to the Van Gogh Museum by the Sara Lee Corporation, belongs to the group of undated flower paintings. Although traditionally thought to have been executed in 1878, this dating is no longer accepted.

The still life has been worked at on two clearly separate occasions. The foreground, originally green, has been painted over in red, while the background and parts of the bouquet have probably been reworked as well. However, the paint surface is so uniformly dense, comprising numerous small dabs of colour, that it is difficult to determine the exact nature of the later changes and additions. Nevertheless, we do know that the artist initially considered his first version to be finished, for part of his signature, later painted over in red, can still be seen in the foreground.

Richard Brettell believes that these two painting sessions took place in 1872-74 and 1876-78 respectively, when Pissarro was engaged in creative rivalry with his friend Paul Cézanne. Although their still lifes from this period do indeed evince a certain amount of interplay, it is difficult to decide whether this work should be counted among them. Theoretically, the first version could have been painted in the period 1872-74, while the reworking might have occurred In 1876-78.

Pissarro's wife loved peonies, which may account for the composition of this summer bouquet. The vase, which is Chinese in appearance, does not feature in other Pissarro still lifes. Although the dimensions of the painting - unusual in the artist's still life group - correspond to the standard number 10 format (81 × 65 cm), it is no longer possible to tell whether the artist actually used a readymade canvas. At some point the picture was lined and the edges cut off.
Still life with peonies and mock orange is the first painting by Camille Pissarro to enter the Van Gogh Museum's collection. As such it is a valuable addition to the artist's two drawings already present, both of which came from the estate of Theo van Gogh and Johanna van Gogh-Bonger. Although Theo never owned a painting by Pissarro, his widow did: in 1892 she exchanged Vincent's *Mulberry tree* of 1889 (Pasadena, Norton Simon Foundation) for a Pissarro painting about which nothing is known but its format - 55 × 46 cm. In 1897 Johanna sold this work to the Parisian dealer Ambroise Vollard. Its absence from the family collection, today housed in the Van Gogh Museum, has now been compensated, as it were, by the Sara Lee Corporation's gift.

**Provenance** Ludovic-Rodo Pissarro, Rouen; Richard Semmel, New York; Sam Salz, New York (1959); Nathan Cummings, New York; Mrs Robert B. Mayer, Chicago; The Sara Lee Collection; Sara Lee Corporation Millennium Gift (2000).

Drawings

Hayet, Louis
French, 1864-1940

City view with carriage stop 1887-88
Pencil, transparent and opaque watercolour on canvas, 10.6 × 16.5 cm (the canvas 12 × 18 cm) d 1098 S/2000

Louis Hayet is best known for his association with the neo-impressionist movement in the 1880s. His oeuvre mainly comprises paintings and drawings of landscapes and city views. Hayet proved a skilled draughtsman at an early age. In 1881, long before his introduction to the Parisian avant-garde, he became familiar with the colour theories of Michel-Eugène Chevreul. In 1884 he settled in Paris, where he met Lucien and Camille Pissarro and, at a later stage, Signac, Seurat and the young artists in their circle.

Having read Chevreul, Hayet was naturally highly receptive to the scientific approach to painting and the colour theories then popular with the Parisian avant-garde. He made a serious study of these theories, producing the obligatory circles and other aids to understanding the colour issue. He worked in the pointillist vein and liked to employ complementary contrasts.

Such contrasts also feature in this small watercolour drawing on canvas. The dominant tones in the composition are blue and orange, a complementary combination often found in Hayet's work. The only other colour present is the green used for the trees and, less conspicuously, for the carriages and street. The colours are unmixed and are applied loosely over an extremely sketchy under-drawing. The modest format is also typical of Hayet's watercolour drawings: he seems to have preferred to work on this scale or only slightly larger. The piece can be dated to 1887-88 on stylistic grounds.

Although it is safe to assume that the drawing represents a view in Paris, the exact location cannot be identified. To the left is a horse and carriage. Behind these are two or three similar conveyances; here the stipple technique, particularly the relatively large foreground dots, has interfered somewhat with the readability of the image.

The painting collection of the Van Gogh Museum contains several examples of pointillist works. However, this is the first pure specimen of the technique to enter the drawing collection. The first known owner of the picture was the neo-impressionist scholar Dr Jean Sutter, who studied Hayet's oeuvre and also collected his work.


Neuville, Alphonse-Marie de  
French, 1835-1885

After the battle  
Black crayon, ink, highlighted with white, 26.8 × 41.2 cm  
Signed lower left: A. de Neuville  
d 1097 S/1999

De Neuville was a pupil of Edouard Picot and Eugène Delacroix. Along with Ernest Meissonier and Edouard Détaille he was one of the masters of French military painting. During the Franco-Prussian War he witnessed the horrors of battle at first-hand. Together with Détaille, he painted the celebrated panorama of the Battle of Gravelotte.

This drawing depicts the devastation following the blowing up of part of a bridge. Night has descended and the damage is now being assessed. Eight fallen soldiers - French, judging by their uniforms - lie on the riverbank, probably thrown there by the force of the explosion. De Neuville has seized on this catastrophe as an opportunity to depict the lantern effect and the stars.

Renié, Jean-Émile
French, c. 1835-1910

Portrait of the painter Diaz
Black and white crayon on paper, 40 × 33.4 cm
d 1096 S/1999

Renié's work is modelled on that of the masters of the Barbizon School. Thought to have received lessons from Théodore Rousseau, Narcisse Virgile Diaz de la Peña and Jean-François Millet, he usually painted scenes of the forest of Fontainebleau and views of Venice.

The subject of this work is probably Renié's teacher Diaz, whom he here shows at an advanced age. The rendering of the sitter's wiry beard, moustache and sideburns introduces an element of virtuosity and gives contour to the face. In both written works and pictures Diaz was often presented as a jovial character, who thought nothing of banging his wooden leg on the table. By not portraying the painter in full-length Renié avoids all allusion to such comical stories. The dark background and pose make no reference to the sitter's profession, suggesting that Renié produced the drawing either for Diaz or for himself, as a memento of his master.

The new collection of French graphic works

In the spring of 2000 the Vincent van Gogh Foundation, owner of the major portion of the works in the Van Gogh Museum, purchased an extensive and important collection of prints dating from the last two decades of the 19th century. These were acquired from a private collector who had accumulated them over a 50-year period. Thanks to this new acquisition, which comprises more than 800 works by artists such as Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Pierre Bonnard, Édouard Vuillard, Maurice Denis and Félix Vallotton, the museum can now boast a collection that includes most of the major prints produced in Paris between 1890 and 1905. A new focal point for the museum has been instantly created, providing a fine impression of art in the 15 years following Van Gogh's death that complements the existing range of works by the artist himself, his predecessors and contemporaries.

During the 1880s and 1890s the graphic arts underwent an evolution. Prints, particularly lithographs, had previously been regarded as mainly reproductive or used for political purposes, but by the end of the 80s the emphasis increasingly lay on their artistic quality and they became an independent art form. The majority of prints made in this period, largely coloured lithographs, were produced in limited editions (circa 100), intended for aficionados and collectors.

An important role in these developments was played by a group of artists known as the Nabis, or Prophets, who were active in Paris between 1890 and 1905. Although the association had no formal structure and its various members worked in widely differing styles, there were nonetheless similarities: compositions were often constructed of planes of colour, contours emphasized and some elements reduced to silhouettes. All these features can be largely attributed to the influence of Japanese prints.

The art dealer and publisher Ambroise Vollard was a great champion of the Nabis' graphic production. By publishing albums and print series by these artists he became responsible for some of the most impressive series of prints in the history of the graphic arts: Maurice Denis's *Amour* series, Bonnard's *Quelques aspects de la vie de Paris*, and Vuillard's *Paysages et intérieurs*. The Van Gogh Museum now has complete sets of all three. Vollard also brought out special collector's editions of books illustrated by Nabis artists, such as Verlaine's *Parallèlement*, with illustrations by Bonnard. This book and some 20 others like it have been added to the museum's collection as well.

The most striking works are the Nabis' contributions to the avant-garde journal *La Revue Blanche* and the albums of *L'Estampe originale*. This latter publication, which appeared nine times between 1893 and 1895 and on which 75 artists collaborated, constituted a veritable breakthrough in the acceptance of graphic art as an autonomous medium. The recent acquisition means that the Van Gogh Museum now owns a virtually complete set of *L'Estampe originale*.

The new collection of prints also includes an impressive group of applied graphic works. Artists such as Henri-Gabriel Ibels, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Pierre Bonnard, who were closely involved in avant-garde theatre, regularly produced magnificent designs for posters, theatre programmes and song sheets.

Before acquiring this splendid collection the Van Gogh Museum already possessed several hundred 19th-century French prints. However, these works were largely...

---

*Van Gogh Museum Journal 2000*
unconnected with each other, making it difficult to devise a focused collecting policy. Purchase of the Nabis collection has resolved this situation, as these works will provide a foundation on which to base future acquisitions.

In the months that have passed since acquiring the collection and the appearance of this volume of the Van Gogh Museum Journal it has not been possible to produce a comprehensive description of the new works. However, the colour pages (pp. 114-19) do include six reproductions to supplement this brief summary. Next year's Journal will contain a list describing all the works; at a later date a separate catalogue will be devoted to the new collection.

Marije Vellekoop
Exhibitions in the Van Gogh Museum 2000

Jean-François Millet: drawings, pastels, watercolours, paintings

22 October 1999 - 9 January 2000
(Organised by the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, MA, in association with the Frick Art & Historical Center, Pittsburgh, PA)
Exhib. cat. Alexandra R. Murphy et al., Jean-François Millet: drawn into the light, New Haven & London 1999
(ISBN 0 300 07925 7)

Prague 1900: poetry and ecstasy

17 December 1999 - 26 March 2000
(The exhibition travelled to the Museum für Angewandte Kunst, Frankfurt am Main)
Exhib. cat. Edwin Becker et al. (eds.), Prague 1900: poetry and ecstasy, Zwolle 1999
(ISBN 90 400 9391 1)

Van Gogh's Hiroshiges

14 January - 30 April

Jugendstil in word and image: illustrated poetry around 1900

4 February - 7 May
(The exhibition travelled to the Fondation Neumann, Gingins, Switzerland, and the Museum Mathildenhöhe, Darmstadt)
Exhib. cat. Willem-Jan Pantus, Jugendstil in Wort und Bild: Illustrierte Dichtkunst um 1900, Cologne 2000
(ISBN 3 930633 12 4)

Xavier Mellery: the soul of things (De ziel der dingen / L'âme des choses)

14 April - 2 July
(The exhibition travelled to the Musée d'Ixelles, Brussels)
(ISBN 90 400 9463 2)
Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux: painter, sculptor

21 April - 27 August
(Organised by the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Valenciennes and travelled to Valenciennes and the Musée du Luxembourg, Paris)
(ISBN 2 7118 3757 2)

New acquisition: a collection of French prints

3 May - 30 July

Reflections: Japan and Japonism

19 May - 17 September

The spirit of Montmartre: cabarets, humour and the avant-garde
1875-1905

14 July - 24 September
(Organised by the Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey)
Exhib. cat. Phillip Dennis Cate and Mary Shaw (eds.), The spirit of Montmartre: cabarets, humor, and the avant-garde, 1875-1905, New Brunswick, NJ 1996
(ISBN 0 8135 2324 9)

Montmartre collected

3 August - 5 November

Light! The Industrial Age, 1750-1900: art & science, technology & society, 1750-1900

20 October 2000 - 11 February 2001
(Organised in conjunction with the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh)
(ISBN 0 500 510 296)
Artists portraits

10 November 2000 - 10 February 2001

Compiled by Andreas Blühm
The Van Gogh Museum staff from January 2000

Supervisory Board Van Gogh Museum Foundation

Chairman
Dr Pieter Winsemius

Vice-Chairman
Mrs Truze Lodder

Members
Mrs Anne d'Harnoncourt, until 1 June 2000
Mr Max Koker
Mr Willem van Schendel

Hon. Secretary
Mrs Fien Willems

Board of the Vincent van Gogh Foundation

Chairman
Mr Vincent-Willem van Gogh

Members
Mrs Mathilde Cramer-van Gogh
Mrs Jantine van Gogh
Mr Bob Lodder, until 15 November 2000
(on behalf of the Minister of Education, Culture and Science)

Secretary / Research Curator
Mrs Han Veenenbos

The Van Gogh Museum Staff

Director
John Leighton

Deputy Director
Ton Boxma

Secretary to the Director
Fien Willems

Secretary to the Deputy Director
Marije Wissink

Collections

Head of Collections
Sjaar van Heugten

Secretary
Esther Hoofwijk

Curators
Louis van Tilborgh
(Paintings and sculpture)
Marije Vellekoop
(Prints and drawings)
Chris Stolwijk
(Research)

Curatorial Assistant
Benno Tempel
Roelie Zwikker

Head of Research
Leo Jansen

Editors Van Gogh Letters Project
Hans Luijten
Wouter van der Veen, until 1 August 2000

Special Project Researchers
Aukje Vergeest, until 1 July 2000

Conservators
Ella Hendriks
René Boitelle

Conservation Assistant
Alex Nikken
Frans Stive

Research and Documentation
Monique Hageman
Fieke Pabst

Van Gogh Museum Journal 2000
Librarian
Anita Vriend

Exhibitions and Display

Head of Exhibitions and Display
Andreas Blühm

Secretaries
Saskia Beukers
Mireille Melchers, until 1 July 2000
Samantha Da Rios, until 1 October 2000

Exhibitions Curator
Edwin Becker
Registrar
  Aly Noordermeer

Assistant Registrar
  Martine Kilburn
  Sara Verboven

Communication and Education
  Caroline Breunesse
  Sjoukje Posthuma, until 1 October 2000
  Melanie Verhoeven
  Berber Vinckemöller

Head of Press and Public Relations
  Rianne Norbart

Press Officer
  Heidi Vandamme

Information Desk
  Ineke di Gazar
  Judith Goes
  Yvonne Kuhfus
  Yvonne Kuijper
  Truus Matti
  Sija Speelman

Commercial Affairs

Head of Commercial Affairs
  Cor Krelekamp

Administrative Assistant
  Karim Verkuijl

Secretaries
  Sanne Bokkers, until 25 February 2000
  Greet van Geem

Museum Shop Museumplein
Shop Managers
  Marijke Blankman
  Biddy Messchaert, until 1 June 2000
Staff

Nita Chan
Sebastiaan Fontein
Mariëlle Gerritsen
Jasper Hillegers
Meinke Horn
Marten de Jong
Katinka Neyen
Lieke Noorman
Camilla van Rheenen

Reproduction Rights

Head of Reproduction
Melchert Zwetsman

Assistant
Josette van Gemert

Warehouse Assistant
Henk de Rover
Ruud Voorhaar

Finance

Head of Finance
Wilma Vermeulen, from 1 May 2000

Administrative Assistants
Yvonne de Jong-Knol
Malika Ouled Radi
Amien Salarbux

Cashiers
Loes Advocaat-van Amstel
Anita da Costa Fernandes
Bart de Graaf
Heleen Gerritsen
Marja Guina-Vos
Andrea Kammerstetter
Truus Rouet-Borgers
Marja Sandbergen-Tervoort
Jessica Sturkenboom-Kerkhoven
Paula Timmer-de Jong
Ana Rodrigues
Pereira da Silva
Tabita Valentijn

**Internal Affairs**

*Head of Internal Affairs*
Gees Tournier a.i.

*Controller*
Marion de Vries

*Personnel Officer*
Henk Ammerlaan
Margriet Boerma, from 1 September 2000

*Administrator*
Nico Basjes, until 1 June 2000
Ellen Spijkers, from 1 September 2000

**Facilities**

*Head of Facilities*
Jan Samuelsz

*Assistant*
Heleen van Es

*Reception*
Dzjamilja Maigua-Bijl
Brigitte van der Meulen

*Project Manager Technical Affairs*
Kees Posthuma

*Canteen*
Bep Pirovano-Mes
Cloakroom
Domenico Casillo
Remon Olij
Alexander van der Horst, from 1 July 2000
Jaime Nayem Carrasco
Karim Taïf

Head of Technical Affairs
Gerard van der Kamp

Technical Staff
Joost van Aalderen
Hans Beets
René Cairo
Antonio Pesare
Serge Taal
Johan Worell
Fehti Zammouri

Security

Head of Security
Ton Hoofwijk

Chief Warders
Wim Jaket
Fred den Ouden

Security Staff
Raymond Adhin
Mike Aramaké
Rina Baak
Abdel Ben Salah
Kenneth Blinker
Cornelis Blonk
Natascha de Boer
Edwin Boeren
Mohammed Bouanan
Victoria Brás Pinto
Henk Buma
Gerard Chin-A-Joe
Eli Choukroun
Yvonne Dobelman
Theo Doesburg
Jan de Jong
Marjon Kneepkens
Frank Labeij
Wils van der Made
Saeed Osman
Mischa van Poppel
Anneke de Ridder
Corina Roode
Dan Rosculet
Marga Thijm
Sylvia Tielman
Arnold Veen
Ko Vierbergen
Frank Vos
Fred de Vries
Theo Wallenburg
Peter Zaal
Peter Zeldenrust
Ans van Zoeren
Ron van der Zwaan
Dennis Zwemmer, until 1 May 2000

Staff Museum Mesdag
Martin Heijligers
(Manager)
Tonke Dragt
Edgar van Eyck, until 27 February 2000
Greet Grundeler-Kuijper
Bert Lammers
Henk Zuidam

Works Council

Chairman
Antonio Pesare

Vice Chairman
Greet van Geem

Secretary
Esther Hoofwijk

Vice Secretary
Heidi Vandamme
Members
Wills van der Made
Marije Vellekoop
Ron van der Zwaan
Tonke Dragt
(auditor)

Museum Tours (Acoustiguide)

Coordinator
Marja Damman

Museum Shop (Lanthuys BV)

Director
Vincent-Willem van Gogh

Manager
Frans de Haas

Museum Restaurant (Verhaaf Groep)

Director
Hans Verhaaf