GUSTAVE CAILLEBOTTE AND THE CITY IN ART

Teacher Packet

The Art Institute of Chicago
Department of Museum Education
Division of Student and Teacher Programs
The Elizabeth Stone Robson Teacher Resource Center
Gustave Caillebotte and the City in Art

A Teaching Manual
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Produced by
Teacher Programs, Department of Museum Education
The Art Institute of Chicago

The exhibition, Gustave Caillebotte: Urban Impressionist, its catalogue, and this publication were underwritten by SARA LEE CORPORATION

Additional support was provided by a grant from THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

This exhibition is organized by
La Réunion des musées nationaux, Musée d'Orsay, Paris
and
The Art Institute of Chicago

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PREFACE

This teachers’ manual has been designed to complement *Gustave Caillebotte: Urban Impressionist*, a retrospective exhibition of the work of a seminal artist and patron of French Impressionism, held at The Art Institute of Chicago, February 18 - May 28, 1995. The exhibition examines the work of a key member of the Impressionist inner circle who painted the radical physical changes that transformed Paris into a modern city a century ago. The manual analyzes the political, social, and artistic developments which affected, and were in turn affected by, the rise of modern Paris and of modern Chicago at the same time.

Caillebotte’s work clearly and concisely illuminates one of the central issues faced by his fellow artists: how does one represent the emerging city and its effect on the populace? With the Art Institute’s celebrated *Paris Street; Rainy Day* as its pivotal moment, the exhibition presents Caillebotte’s insightful solution to this question.

The teachers’ manual, while organized around related issues, expands this objective. The modern city itself becomes a focal point. Particularly relevant to us is the phenomenon of modern urban planning, virtually invented by Haussmann in Paris and eagerly paraphrased by Burnham in Chicago.

The manual consists of an essay, bibliography, glossary, slides and slide list meant to facilitate discovery of the artist, his work, and his milieu. Classroom suggestions are intended to guide the teacher in the presentation of this material to students. It is our hope that *Gustave Caillebotte and the City in Art* will act as a valuable resource in the classroom and an incentive to visit these works at first hand at The Art Institute of Chicago.

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INTRODUCTION

For almost one hundred years, Gustave Caillebotte has been remembered primarily as a patron*, rather than a painter, of the avant-garde group of artists known to us today as the Impressionists. Independently wealthy, Caillebotte purchased some of the period's finest works, and it was his foresighted bequest to the French nation of these acquisitions made over many years that today comprises the core of the world's greatest collection of Impressionist art, now housed in the Musée d'Orsay in Paris. Yet at Caillebotte's death in 1894, he left a body of his own work—an oeuvre--of approximately five hundred works. These included landscapes, portraits, still lifes, genre scenes, and, in particular, a series of paintings of the newly reconstructed city of Paris that formed the bright and airy stage set for much Impressionist art. Caillebotte's remarkable urban images were created during a five-year period of intense activity in the mid-1870s, after which time he slowly withdrew from participation with the Impressionist cause. His last exhibition in Paris was in 1882, at age thirty-four. Most of his work remained in family collections, and it was not until 1964, after The Art Institute of Chicago acquired his 1876-1877 masterwork Paris Street; Rainy Day, that a large public became aware of his distinctly original urban vision and he was once again recognized as a key artist in the Impressionist group.

To expand upon Caillebotte's striking series of urban life, each of the works chosen for this packet elaborates upon the image of the city transfigured into something new, a prime subject of Impressionist artists. Camille Pissarro's Crystal Palace, 1871, depicts the most celebrated modern structure in London at that time. In The Arrival of the Normandy Train, Saint-Lazare Station, 1877, Claude Monet captures the excitement of a redesigned train station in Paris. With Sunday on La Grande Jatte--1884, 1884-86, Georges Seurat portrays an afternoon of leisure on an island in the Seine, the river that flows through Paris and its suburbs. And Jules Guérin's rendering from Daniel Burnham's 1909 Plan of Chicago shows how Burnham hoped to transform the midwestern capital of Chicago into a Paris on the Prairie. At the center of this urban hub is Caillebotte's Paris Street, Rainy Day, 1876-1877, his spare and striking vision of a new and modern Paris.

*Note: Glossary words are italicized the first time they appear in the text.
GUSTAVE CAILLEBOTTE AND THE CITY IN ART

THE NEW PARIS

The movement that became known as Impressionism was initiated by a diverse group of avant-garde artists who mounted a series of eight independent exhibitions from 1874 through 1886. To pursue their interest in weather and light, the Impressionists were known for en plein air painting, the use of bright colors, and short, sketchy brush strokes. Their subjects, in large part, were people and scenes drawn from their constantly changing modern world.

Like most of the artists who later became Impressionists, Gustave Caillebotte (1848-1894) came of age during France’s glorious Second Empire (1852-1870). Emperor Louis Napoleon (Napoleon III, 1808-1873) -- nephew of the famous Napoleon I (1769-1821) -- fostered the growth of modern France and restored Paris as the center of European life. Through the emperor’s prefet, Baron Georges Haussmann (1809-1891), picturesque medieval Paris, with its narrow, crooked, and crowded streets, underwent massive urban renovation. Haussmann’s bold alterations of Paris determined the face of the city today.

During the prefect’s influential tenure (1853-70), there was wholesale leveling of the old, regardless of its history. These razed areas, many of which were slums, were replaced by elegant, middle-class housing. The uniform facades of these apartment blocks adhered to a strict building code; some select interiors even contained such recent amenities as central heating, plumbing, and gaslight. To facilitate traffic flow (passengers in horse-drawn omnibuses grew from 40 million in 1855 to 116 million in 1873), hundreds of miles of old boulevards were altered and widened and then connected with broad, new, straight thoroughfares. Lined with trees, they pierced through the residential areas, criss-crossed the city, and converged with monuments -- historic and newly created -- at significant points. The monuments themselves were surrounded by open spaces and vistas. Haussmann also placed the great
railway stations in a circle outside the old medieval city and provided them with broad approaches. The stations were architectural marvels made possible by technological progress in the iron and glass *industries.* In commenting on this sleek new city, author Victor Hugo (1802-1885) used as a metaphor the rue de Rivoli, one of these expanded boulevards that crossed the city's center and ran straight out of town: "Old Paris is no longer anything more than one eternal street/ Which stretches out elegant and straight like the j (pronounced e)/ In saying `Rivoli, Rivoli, Rivoli.'" Landscaped parks punctuated these spacious renovated areas, as did streamlined new bridges over the Seine River bordered by *quais.* The streets themselves contained expansive sidewalks, along with gaslights, benches, and stalls. These embellishments, in turn, attracted shops, cafés, hotels, theaters, and a lively street life. New sewer systems washed everything down. In a mere twenty-year period, Paris had opened up to become "the first great modern metropolis, an airy sunlit permanent theater for seeing and being seen." [Kirk Varnedoe, *Portfolio*, December/January 1979-80, p. 43]

Caillebotte, from a wealthy family whose generations-old textile business supplied heavy duty cloth to the French army, grew up in one of these stylishly modern areas of Paris. There was nothing to predict an artistic future in his comfortable and conventional upbringing. He was born August 19, 1848; by age five, he had two younger brothers. Although they kept their country home, the family moved from Yerres to Paris when Caillebotte was fourteen. After attending boarding school (where his forte was literature), he studied law. He was just about to receive a license to practice when, in July 1870, Napoleon III recklessly declared war on Prussia (Germany) and one of the shortest wars in history, the Franco-Prussian War, began. Less than six weeks later, Napoleon III was captured by the Germans and deposed.

Called to active duty, Caillebotte served until March 1871, the month the revolutionary French Commune seized control of Paris. France had already suffered a shocking defeat by the Germans, and now the bloodshed and siege to establish an official government was internal. Political stability finally came in May 1871 upon the crushing of the Commune, and the Third Republic, which lasted until 1940, was established.
A NEW WAY OF SEEING

These swift and startling events ricocheted. Caillebotte dropped law, turned to art, and entered the atelier of the successful painter Léon Bonnat (1834-1923). Bonnat trained and taught at the Académie des Beaux-Arts, the conservative state-sponsored art school whose annual Salon was the main venue for artists to exhibit their work and receive recognition. Although thousands of works in all media from many countries were shown, annually or biennially, crowded together, one piece on top of the other, the Salon's criteria were rigid and narrow. Art functioned as a role model, to be inspirational, to instruct. Preferred subjects, apart from portraiture, were drawn from the past -- from history, mythology, or religion -- and executed in highly finished, representational style. "One must always think of classical antiquity!" teachers like Bonnat would exhort.

But there was a new spirit of republicanism and a modern Paris now, one that was changing momentarily. After the defeat of the Commune, monuments that had been destroyed were rebuilt. Enjoying the reconstructed public spaces -- the boulevards, streets, cafés, train stations, and countryside destinations -- was an emerging, prosperous bourgeoisie. Modern technology had created products and conditions inconceivable a half-century before. The camera, steam boats, locomotives, elevators, even collapsible paint tubes and commercially available paints were among these recent, remarkable developments.

In 1873, Bonnat sponsored Caillebotte's entrance into the Academy's Ecole des Beaux-Arts (School of Fine Arts). Meanwhile, a group of young artists had begun to gather at the new cafés and night spots. With diverse artistic goals, styles, political views, and backgrounds, they were united in wanting to throw off the shackles of the Salon that had frequently rejected their work and promoted what they thought was the dead art of the past. The ideal or moralizing aspect of art did not engage them. Instead these young artists were interested in everyday life; they wanted to capture the quickly changing world around them -- the fleeting moods
of nature as well as a moving train or the passing glance of people, like themselves, on the street. They wanted to observe the world directly, to paint en plein air, using pure, bright colors applied with short, quick strokes of the brush. As one of their leaders, Edouard Manet (1832-1883), exclaimed, "An artist has got to move with the times and paint what he sees."

Two of these avant-garde artists were Claude Monet (1840-1926) and Camille Pissarro (1830-1903). Unlike Caillebotte, both fled to England in 1870 to escape the Franco-Prussian War. Rapid industrialization, a growing middle class, new urban and suburban vistas, and the urge to capture the here and now were not confined to Paris and its environs. "I found myself in London with Monet," Pissarro later wrote of this period. "We were struck chiefly by the landscape painters who shared in our aim with regard to 'plein air' light and fugitive effects...." Both artists studied the subtleties of the seasons and the misty light in London's parks and streets.

A splendid example of this new way of seeing, The Crystal Palace, 1871, is one of the finest paintings Pissarro completed during his London exile [see Slide 1]. He chose as his subject the largest and most celebrated modern building of its era. Comparable to Chicago's McCormick Place today, the Crystal Palace was designed by Joseph Paxton (1803-1865) for London's Great Exhibition of 1851, an international trade show of unprecedented scale. Paxton, a British architect and landscape designer, drew on the technology he had used to design conservatories, whose glass- and-iron construction signified modernism to a vast public. The Crystal Palace's enormous vaults of glass and iron stretched over almost seventeen acres of endless displays. Full-grown trees were used as decorative touches. In 1852, the modular structure was dismantled at its original Hyde Park site and reassembled, with an even more elaborate design, in Sydenham, where Pissarro stayed in 1870. Called the Palace of the People and used as a recreational center as well as a showcase for the wonders of science and industry, Paxton's building was for years an enormously popular gathering place. Fire destroyed it in 1936.
A bright, sunny sky and stiff breeze permeate Pissarro's comfortable scene of families out for a leisurely weekend stroll. The four-quartered British flag stands to attention in the wind, and sunshine rims the full, luminous clouds. Figures are sketched-in and simplified, as is the Crystal Palace. In a major departure from traditional art, Pissarro has not made his subject of the Crystal Palace his central motif. Instead the famous building is far away from us and to one side, just part of the scene. Light and reflections bounce off its sheath of glass, making the immense structure seem almost weightless. In contrast is the dark solid mass of the recently constructed middle-class housing across the street. A wide roadway and two sidewalks, filled with activity, run down the center of the painting. This bright, balanced, and harmonious composition evokes a sense of calm leisure, far removed from war-torn Paris.
1874: A PIVOTAL YEAR

The year 1874 was one of changes, for Caillebotte, for the Parisian art world, and for the subsequent course of modern art. Caillebotte's father died, leaving him a substantial inheritance. Unlike most other artists, he could live a life of perpetual and infinite ease without ever having to sell a single painting. It also marked the year that thirty of these artists mounted the first of what would be eight independent exhibitions (1874, 1876, 1877, 1879, 1880, 1881, 1882, and 1886), in defiance of the Salon. No doubt Caillebotte saw the 165 works on view, all hung at eye-level with space between them. Among these daring artists were Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), Edgar Degas (1834-1917), Auguste Renoir (1841-1919), as well as Monet and Pissarro. Critics were, in general, appalled and filled local journals with their outrage at the paintings because of their seemingly unfinished quality and unimportant subject matter. "This was awful, stupid, dirty," a critic recalled later. "This painting had no common sense."

Pissarro would be the only member of the original group to exhibit in all eight shows. Monet had the dubious distinction of creating the work that gave the group its name. In reaction to his painting of a harbor entitled *Impression, Sunrise*, 1872, a critic wrote sarcastically: "Impression -- I was certain of it. I was just telling myself that, since I was impressed, there had to be some impression in it ... and what freedom, what ease of workmanship! Wallpaper in its embryonic state is more finished than that seascape." And thus Impressionism, a movement that changed the course of modern art, was launched.
Caillebotte's work under Bonnat's tutelage featured traditional subjects -- studio scenes or female models -- painted in a realistic manner with a clear and pale palette. In 1875, he produced his first major work: a large canvas depicting three floor scrapers, stripped to the waist, planing and scraping wooden floors of a vacant room down to a smooth finish. With their skilled, albeit hard, manual labor, these three anonymous workers are also helping to build a new and modern Paris. Like his previous work, the detailed modeling and dark tonalities of The Floor-Scrapers revealed Caillebotte's academic training with Bonnat. But the painting also displayed the hallmarks of Caillebotte's mature style: a modern urban subject, starkly and realistically depicted; a peculiar and insistent spatial order, with unusual viewpoints; and a sense of time momentarily arrested. When the painting was rejected by the Salon, Caillebotte abandoned the official art system and embraced the rebellious group of Impressionists.

By 1876, upon Renoir's and others' recommendations, eight of Caillebotte's paintings were in the second Impressionist exhibition. Their subjects were also from the working class or bourgeoisie and were unposed and realistically depicted. Consistent with the Impressionist goal of presenting a sense of life in motion, Caillebotte also presented his images from uncommon -- such as unexpectedly high or low -- vantage points. His canvases received relative praise. Still resistant to the Impressionist endeavor, critics called Caillebotte's works "the least bad of the exhibition." Continuing in this same vein, a critic commented on his idiosyncratic and insistent spatial construction, "One of the missions that Impressionism seems to have set for itself is to torture perspective."

Two of these works featured the same young bearded man. This was Caillebotte's youngest brother, René, who died that same year at the age of twenty-six. The deaths of his father and brother within two years caused Caillebotte to fear that perhaps the same fate awaited him.
Whatever the motivation, the result was a remarkable bequest that would benefit not only the Impressionist cause but the French nation as well. Using his considerable inheritance, Caillebotte had already begun to buy the work of his young and penniless friends, forming what would ultimately be the single most important collection of the work of his Impressionist colleagues. In his will, written in 1876, he bequeathed these paintings and pastels by such artists as Cézanne, Degas, Monet, Pissarro, and Renoir to France, with Renoir named as executor of his estate. Now installed at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, Caillebotte's gift to the nation forms the heart of the world's most celebrated collection of Impressionism.

In addition to his extraordinary bequest, Caillebotte also performed other generous acts. Not only did he purchase key Impressionist works, but he purposely paid above-market prices. He also lent money to artists in need. One was Renoir to whom, in an 1883 codicil to his will, Caillebotte made "complete remittance...of his debt," releasing him "completely from all...liability." And finally, he provided financial support for at least three of the five Impressionist exhibitions in which he would participate. Thus Caillebotte intended not only to guarantee a future for the Impressionist cause, but to ensure the movement's exposure -- collectively and individually -- during its very creation.
CAILLEBOTTE'S EXHIBITION

The aid Caillebotte provided for his colleagues' exhibitions went beyond that of pure financial assistance. The third Impressionist show of 1877 has been called "Caillebotte's exhibition" [See Bibliography: The New Painting, p. 190]. The young artist found and rented the exhibition space, sent out the invitations, hung the show with Renoir, and paid for the publicity. He also lent from his rapidly growing collection significant works by Degas, Pissarro, Monet, and Renoir. By 1877, the Impressionist movement had reached its full maturity, and the exhibition has been considered the finest of all eight shows.

Somehow, Caillebotte managed to find time to create and contribute six of his own works to the exhibition. Three were street scenes featuring a startling, suctioning perspective that both immortalized the fierce geometry of Haussmann's restructured Paris and characterized Caillebotte's best work. Like his portrayal of floor scrapers two years before, The House Painters, 1877, shows a piece of contemporary urban realism: two workers examine a shop facade they are painting, while behind them a bullet-straight street shoots back suddenly. Both Pont (Bridge) de l'Europe, 1876-77, and Paris Street: Rainy Day, 1876-1877, depict the same new residential area, the Europe Quarter, so-called because the streets were named after capitals of European countries. The first of these paintings represents one of the recast city's engineering wonders, the immense, sexpartite, iron-grid bridge that spanned the railroad tracks leading into the Gare Saint-Lazare. Spare, striking, and monumental, these two works are considered among the finest of Caillebotte's career; Rainy Day, in fact, was singled out by a critic in 1877 as "the most outstanding work in the exhibition" [see Slide 2].
PARIS STREET; RAINY DAY, 1876-1877

"I do not mean that the boulevard is Paris," a late nineteenth-century observer noted about Haussmann's spacious new streets, "but surely, without the boulevard we should not understand Paris." To capture in true en plein air technique this new urban vision, Caillebotte literally took his easels and paints to one of these streets and worked, it is said, from inside a glassed-in omnibus. His site was the Europe Quarter, centered by one of Haussmann's complex, star-formed intersections of six major streets and constructed entirely during the artist's lifetime. Caillebotte grew up five streets away from this deluxe residential quarter, and actually moved there in 1888, to numbers 29 and 31 boulevard Haussmann (now occupied by a major Parisian bank). Just off this boulevard was the building which housed the 1877 exhibition; its windows looked out onto these sleek new streets. Six of the Impressionists' eight shows, in fact, would be held in this area.

Considered by many to be the masterpiece of his career, Paris Street: Rainy Day gives us Caillebotte's vision of Haussmann's new Paris -- its rigorous architecture, its wide straight streets, its impersonality, its order. Like its vast new site, the canvas is grand, measuring almost seven-by-ten feet. The gray-blue palette captures the mistiness of the "fleeting" moment that the Impressionists sought to convey. The limestone buildings are damp; the cobblestones and sidewalks are rainslicked and reflective. Even the sky, with its delicate hint of peach, bears the burn-off of the shower. Likewise, Caillebotte's near life-size foreground figures portray the Impressionists' emphasis on a moment in time. These elegant urbanites wear the latest winter fashions; even the curved steel-framed umbrella had just arrived on the scene, having been invented only two years before.

Caillebotte's rigorously controlled technique mirrors the relentless modernity it describes. He made numerous preparatory drawings and oil sketches, in which he relied on both photographs and traditional
Renaissance perspective to order his composition. In the final painting, though, he has skewed both to create his unique urban view. The image is far deeper and wider than a normal eye (or 1870s camera) would see. Foregrounds are too large, backgrounds too tiny; streets zoom back with a suddenness that startles. Buildings have been widened and the space between them made too broad. The composition is divided into a giant plus sign formed by the green lamppost and horizon. The deepest point is almost the painting's exact center -- a suctioning reinforced by the receding pattern of the cobblestones, chimneys, and umbrellas. Onto the overpowering buildings and funneling streets, Caillebotte has literally plotted his people. He constantly tinkered with and manipulated his preliminary figure studies until, ultimately, he stuck people on in *collage-like* fashion, according to his intentions. Instead of the Impressionist flux, they seem glued to their positions, frozen in time, permanent. Like the stark and rigorous impersonality of the restructured city, the figures are anonymous and isolated, separate from their surroundings and each other. Every aspect of *Rainy Day* adheres to the demanding order of Caillebotte's meticulously devised technique, the epitome of which is in the right foreground: beneath a delicate veil, a single pearl gleams in the woman's ear.
ARRIVAL OF THE NORMANDY TRAIN, SAINT-LAZARE STATION, 1877

Had it not been for another one of Caillebotte's generous acts, this work [see Slide 3], which was also featured in the 1877 exhibition, might not have been done. It was Caillebotte who rented the small apartment near Gare Saint-Lazare that Monet used as a temporary studio to create this quintessentially modern urban scene. Originally built in 1836, Gare Saint-Lazare and the surrounding streets were redesigned by engineer Eugène Flachat (1802-1873) in 1868 under the Haussmann plan in order to handle the significant increase in traffic generated by the train station. Thirteen million passengers used the station in 1869, the first year after its renovation. Bustling with movement, filled with steam, the enormous glass-and-iron vault exemplifies the excitement of the new industrial age. Over 80 percent of the trains' passengers were commuters, often including the young Impressionists since the station linked Paris to many of the suburban and rural sites where they boated on the Seine, danced in cafés, and set up their easels. Beyond the suburbs, one of their favored destinations was Normandy where, in fact, Monet first practiced his en plein air technique during the 1860s.

He continued this technique for Arrival of the Normandy Train, receiving special permission from the railway authorities to paint in and around the station. In winter 1877, he began work on a campaign that produced about a dozen paintings. For several of them, Monet positioned himself within the tangle of tracks and train switches. In other works, as seen here, his vantage point was from within the station proper. There is even a story that he convinced the stationmaster to stop all the trains and cram their engines with coal so that he could capture the enormous billows of smoke and steam.

Using an unorthodox head-on perspective and rapid, often sketchlike, brushwork to imply rather than describe shapes, Monet captures in the Art Institute painting the intensity and flux of this modern marvel. The travelers -- workers, clerks, business people, and shoppers -- are
dwarfed by the industrial shed. Unlike Caillebotte’s frozen, monumental figures, Monet treats his people as \textit{staffage}. Reduced to a mass of simple, dark strokes that heighten the sense of motion, they flicker in and out on the surface of the painting, like butterflies. Time has halted for an instant, but not stopped: if we blink our eyes, the people will have moved on. Also Impressionistic is the supremacy of light and air. Against a backdrop of luminous sky, clouds of steam and smoke fill the gabled glass roof, rising beyond the train shed toward the sky. The most vaporous substance is given the most materiality with layers of \textit{scumbled} paint. Beyond this radiant haze, our eyes are drawn by the receding lampposts and train tracks to the urban vision that Monet shared with Caillebotte: the new streets, bridges, and buildings of Paris.

Monet exhibited seven of these station paintings in one room of the 1877 Impressionist exhibition, thus inaugurating a variant of what would evolve into his famous method of working in series, in which he repeatedly examined the same subject at different times and under different atmospheric conditions. Caillebotte purchased three of Monet’s \textit{Saint-Lazare} paintings, and they later formed part of his bequest to the French nation. Upon seeing these seminal paintings, novelist Émile Zola (1840-1902) remarked: “This year [M. Claude Monet] is exhibiting some superb station interiors. One can hear the rumble of the trains surging forward, see the torrents of smoke winding through vast engine sheds. This is the painting of today: modern settings beautiful in their scope. Our artists must find the poetry of railway stations as our fathers found the poetry of forests and rivers.”
A DECADE OF CHANGE: 1878 - 1888

Caillebotte continued his active involvement with the Impressionist endeavor, although the group, while always diverse, was becomingly increasingly split by factions. Upon the death of his mother in 1878, he sold his family home in Paris and country home at Yerres and moved with his remaining brother Martial to the very area of Paris he had so strikingly depicted in *Rainy Day*. Shaken by three family deaths in four years, he painted very little in 1879, but he did show twenty-five earlier works at the fourth Impressionist exhibition of 1879. These included boating and bathing scenes, worked in a brighter palette and with looser brushstrokes. Others were still lifes, portraits, and melancholy rooftop city views that moved yet further away from his original vantage points at street or balcony level. Although Caillebotte's unusual viewpoints and distorted sense of space were still in evidence, with varying degrees of success, none of these works had the bold scale and finish of his former urban images. He also continued helping his colleagues. Monet had twenty-nine works in the fourth exhibition, some of them borrowed from owners by Caillebotte and occasionally even framed by him, because Monet, struggling financially and discouraged about his work, was both unable and unwilling to attend.

Caillebotte sent eleven works -- largely interior views and portraits conveying his former theme of urban alienation -- to the fifth Impressionist exhibition of 1880. The groups' constant in-fighting, however, was beginning to wear him down. "I ask you," Caillebotte wrote in one of many such letters to Pissarro, "isn't it our duty to support each other and to forgive each other's weaknesses rather than tear ourselves down?... All of this depresses me deeply." As a result, he did not participate in the coalition's sixth exhibition in 1881. In the seventh show of 1882, he submitted seventeen works. The display of these depictions of bourgeois interiors, the boulevard seen from a balcony, and marine views marked his final exhibition, both with the Impressionists
and in the city that had inspired so many of his finest works. He would exhibit twice more: once in the United States in 1886 in an exhibition organized by the Impressionists' principal dealer, Paul Durand-Ruel (1831-1922), and two years later in Brussels, at the Salon des XX, a major exhibition of modern art.

By the time the Impressionists mounted their eighth and final exhibition in 1886, the group had all but disbanded. Like his colleagues Monet and Pissarro who settled outside Paris, Caillebotte had already purchased a country home in Petit-Gennevilliers, on the banks of the Seine River across from Argenteuil. He would ultimately settle there in 1887, following his brother Martial's marriage. He spent much of his time pursuing two of his favorite hobbies: sailing and gardening. What painting he did reflected these interests, and his work was mainly a series of landscapes and boating views, done in the more loosely executed Impressionistic style. He corresponded frequently with Monet, often about gardening, and occasionally visited his friend at Giverny. The two artists even exchanged flower seeds. Caillebotte also instigated and attended regular dinners with fellow artists and writers at the Café Riche in Paris. These latter kept him in touch with new artistic investigations, such as the painting that Georges Seurat was working on that signaled, to a degree, the end of the movement Caillebotte had so ardently championed [see Slide 4].
"On certain sunny Sundays," wrote Émile Zola, "it has been estimated that a quarter of the population, 500,000 people, take vehicles and (railway) carriages by assault, and spread out over the countryside." Here, Georges Seurat (1859-1891) has depicted this typically Impressionist scene: Parisians enjoying their day off in a suburban park, in this case on the island of La Grande Jatte. The island, whose name translates as "the big platter," was a popular place for boating and leisure in the Seine River. To tackle the issues of color, light, and form, Seurat based his technique on the most up-to-date scientific treatises in color optics and visual perception. But in his meticulous application of these theories in paint, he differentiated his art from the Impressionists' more spontaneous and intuitive method -- an approach they themselves had compared to painting "as the bird sings." The result -- notable for the rigorous precision of Seurat's tiny brush strokes, all dots and dashes, as well as for its size (it is over ten feet long) -- caused an uproar when it was first unveiled in the last Impressionist exhibition of 1886. "Bedlam," "scandal," and "hilarity" were among the epithets hurled at what is now considered Seurat's finest work, and one of the most remarkable paintings of the nineteenth century.

Seurat began visiting La Grande Jatte to make the first of his extensive studies for the painting in spring 1884. Like Caillebotte, he made numerous preliminary drawings and oil sketches, the latter often painted on the tops of his father's discarded cigar boxes. He worked on the canvas until spring 1885, covering its surface with small horizontal brush strokes of complementary colors. He turned to other projects until October 1885, when he resumed work. It was during this second campaign that he added a mass of petits points, or tiny dots, of complementary colors that, through blending in the viewers' eyes, form a single and, Seurat believed, more brilliantly luminous hue. To add even more intensity, Seurat later (in 1889) restretched the canvas and added a border of painted dots, which he enclosed in a pure white frame. The painting is exhibited today at The Art Institute of Chicago in a replica of this frame.
Subsequently called "pointillism" or "divisionism," the term Seurat preferred, this technique of creating a tapestry-like surface of small regularized dots and brush strokes gives the painting its radiant shimmer. Seurat also hoped this technique, with its sense of harmony and order, would evoke permanence. Some fifty figures fill the picture's surface. Like Caillebotte's people, they seem glued to positions that have been carefully plotted. Silent and enigmatic, predominantly profiled, they are frozen like statues. Who are they? There are single women, mothers and children, and couples out for a stroll. A rower rests on the grass, as does a woman with her embroidery and a top-hatted dandy. By the river's edge, two cadets snap to attention, perhaps at the sound of a French horn-player's refrain. In front of them, as solid as a boulder, is the back of a nurse with her elderly, umbrellaed charge. Only the painting's centerpiece, a white-frocked child, faces us directly. Seurat has fixed in our minds forever a vision of the newly emerged middle-class Paris in the 1880s.

Seurat was only fourteen when the Impressionists held their first group show and was seventeen when Caillebotte's *Rainy Day*, whose enigmatic poetry strangely prefigures *La Grande Jatte*, was exhibited. He was twenty-four when he began initial studies for his monumental painting. He died of diphtheria at the age of thirty-one. By then, modern technology had produced in Paris the Eiffel Tower, built in 1889 as the world's tallest structure. Like the latest research in color and optics on which Seurat had based his work, this spectacle of engineering resulted from the most advanced investigations and techniques. Seurat's vision of Parisians at leisure heralded further exploration and depiction of light and space that, ten years after *La Grande Jatte*'s unveiling, would be dubbed by English critic Roger Fry (1866-1934) "Post-Impressionism," meaning simply a movement on to something new. As Pissarro, who experimented briefly with Seurat's technique, said after seeing the groundbreaking picture, "I am personally convinced of the progressive character of his art, and certain that in time it will yield extraordinary results."
LEGACY

As he had feared, Caillebotte died prematurely of congestive heart failure on February 21, 1894, at the age of forty-five. Despite his brief, active artistic life, he left an oeuvre of over five hundred works. That June, Paul Durand-Ruel held a posthumous retrospective of 122 of Caillebotte's works. But the furor over his legacy, made public upon his death, overshadowed the exhibition, and few works sold.

Opposition from academic painters and an uncomprehending public to the government's acceptance of Impressionist works was pronounced and prolonged. Only after three years were thirty-eight of the sixty-seven paintings and pastels that were originally bequeathed to the nation accepted and put on view at the Musée de Luxembourg, then the museum for living artists.

"He was a truly rare colleague," critic Gustave Geffroy (1855-1926) later remarked, referring not only to Gustave Caillebotte's gift, but to the man himself, "of absolute self-denial, thinking of others before himself -- if he thought of himself." Caillebotte did not include any of his own paintings in his bequest. His executor Renoir and brother Martial added to the bequest a gift of one painting, that of his earliest major work, The Floor-Scrapers, 1875. Appropriately, this work was the first of what was Caillebotte's other legacy: a striking and memorable series of images of late nineteenth-century urban life in the newly restructured city of Paris.
PARIS ON THE PRAIRIE

Like Paris, Chicago in the nineteenth century had boomed. As centers of finance, industry, transportation, and culture, both cities had witnessed population explosions. Immigrants from abroad and within the nation had flooded both the capital of France and that of the midwest, hoping to take advantage of more job opportunities and higher pay. By 1900, Paris's population had quintupled from its half-million citizens a century before. Chicago had grown from thirty thousand to two million inhabitants within the second half of the nineteenth-century alone.

Before Haussmann's modernization, vegetable fields sprouted around national monuments; flea markets were held beneath the royal palace; and the medieval city's narrow streets and bridges were clogged with people, shops, and traffic. In Paris, industries were located beyond city limits; in Chicago, rail tracks, bridges, stockyards, and black-belching smokestacks seemed everywhere. The city sprawled out incoherently and, it appeared, endlessly. Tall buildings were juxtaposed with a shanty or weed-infested lot, whose sole occupant might be a grazing cow. As in Paris prior to renovation, a burgeoning middle class had forced poor Chicagoans into foul and overcrowded housing, where sanitation was poor, parks practically nonexistent, and disease widespread. Chaos, crime, and the risk of stunted future growth ensued.

"The task which Haussmann accomplished for Paris corresponds with the work which must be done for Chicago, in order to overcome the intolerable conditions which invariably arise from a rapid growth of population," stated Daniel Burnham (1846-1912) in introducing the pièce de résistance of his career: The Plan of Chicago, 1909 [see Slide 5]. Burnham, a leader of Chicago's pioneering architects, was chief of works for the World's Columbian Exposition, the great world's fair known as the White City held in Chicago in 1893. Burnham's plan for the fair laid the foundation for the 1909 Plan for the city. The first comprehensive metropolitan plan in the United States, the document was also the first attempt to bring a grand
European design to an American city. In emulating Haussmann's boulevards, monuments, river promenades, and railway systems, Burnham intended to transform the midwestern capital into "a Paris on the Prairie." Not only had the French prefect's massive renovation created an ideal model of urban harmony, but it had turned Paris into a tourist and commercial capital -- a fact that indeed appealed to the group of business and civic leaders who sponsored the Chicago Plan, members of the city's Commercial Club.

Beautifully produced with texts, maps, diagrams, and, in particular, stunning perspective renderings, the Plan was co-authored by architect and planner Edward H. Bennett (1874-1954). Like many of Burnham's associates, Bennett trained at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts (School of Fine Arts), which emphasized the classical prototypes of the art of ancient Greece, Rome, and the Italian Renaissance. After Burnham's death in 1912, Bennett supervised the execution of many parts of the Plan through 1930. Another Beaux-Arts-trained collaborator was artist Jules Guérin (1866-1946), who rendered eleven of the Plan's seventeen perspective drawings. As shown here, his striking, impressionistic views, with their dramatic, endless perspectives and elegant, evocative use of color, bring the Chicago Plan to life, bathing it, as Burnham stated about his own aims, with the "magic to stir men's blood."

"Make no little plans," Burnham reputedly exclaimed around the time he made the Plan public. Sharing his Parisian predecessor's sense of urban grandeur, Burnham took aspects of Haussmann's program and applied it to the specifics of Chicago. "The Lake to the east and the prairies to the west" is how he described his city; "whatever man undertakes here should be without limit." First and foremost, the Plan recommended the transformation of the lakefront and river facilities. Some twenty-three miles of harbors, piers, parks, riverbank developments, and lagoons were to stretch from Evanston to the Indiana state line. As in Paris, a coordinated highway and street program was also planned, which took into account the city proper as well as its connecting suburbs. Burnham wanted his streets, like Parisian boulevards, to seem to stretch on forever. A drive would run continuously along the lake shore to the suburb
of Wilmette. A new bridge over the river was to connect Michigan Avenue to the south and Pine Street to the north. The widened and extended Michigan Avenue, with its cultural institutions, hotels, and expensive shops, was to become a grand landscaped boulevard, bordered by planted strips and fountains and divided by grass-covered islands. Consolidating and improving the railroads was also featured in the Plan, as was an extensive metropolitan park system. Modeled after those of Paris, the parks were to be connected by wide, tree-lined boulevards called "green corridors." Finally, against the backdrop of the lake and Grant Park, all of these improvements were to be coordinated with grand new buildings, including a new Civic Center, as well as already existing cultural institutions, such as the Art Institute, Chicago Public Library, the Auditorium Theatre Building, and Orchestra Hall.

Unlike Haussmann who confined his program to twenty districts within Paris, the Burnham Plan encompassed a sixty-mile radius from the city's center, but it took much longer to accomplish, and many of its recommendations have never been achieved. Every improvement came from city taxes or bond issues which had to be voted upon by Chicago's citizens.

Of his "no little plans," perhaps Burnham's greatest achievement is the green corridor of beaches and parks which wraps around the lakefront and is echoed by parks and more than sixty thousand acres of forest preserves throughout and surrounding the city. Seventy miles of major streets, bordered by railroads, have attempted to ease traffic flow and commuting. Two columns that frame Buckingham Fountain at Congress Street's entrance were to mark the boulevard leading west to the domed Civic Center and Plaza that was never built because of the city's expansion to the north after the opening of the Michigan Avenue Bridge, one of the Plan's most brilliant concepts. The widened Michigan Avenue was built on two levels as it approached the two-level, movable North Michigan Avenue Bridge, opened in 1920. Later, the double-decker Wacker Drive was built to ring the city's West Side. These bi-level streets kept truck traffic and deliveries off Michigan Avenue which thus became a grand boulevard as the Plan had proposed and Chicago's pride as the Magnificent Mile. Just as Gustave Caillebotte left the French nation a significant heritage,
so too did Haussmann and Burnham provide their respective cities with lasting legacies. Not only was there easier circulation in the streets and breathing space in the parks, but both cities now offer grandeur, scenic views, and a sense of urban pride. Almost a century after its conception, repercussions from the Chicago Plan still occur. The recent additions of planters down Michigan Avenue and the landscaped medians dividing Wacker and the Outer Drive were in the original Plan. Also, we can now walk all the way from North Pier to the Merchandise Mart along the river banks, thanks to new building codes that insist upon river promenades for buildings on the river bank, a dream of Burnham's to make the Chicago River a true civic amenity as is the Seine in Paris, with its plaisances. Caillebotte's startling urban visions; his bequest of art to the French nation; Haussmann's new Paris; Burnham's Paris on the Prairie -- all of these legacies live on today.
CLASSROOM SUGGESTIONS

This section includes discussion suggestions, questioning strategies, and activities based on five works of art explored in the preceding text and included in slide form in this manual. These suggestions can be used before, during, or after visiting the museum, and in other, non-museum related activities. Teachers may adapt this information to their classroom needs, grade levels, and subject areas.

CAMILLE PISSARRO (French, 1830-1903)
The Crystal Palace, 1871
18 9/16 x 28 15/16 in (47.2 x 73.5 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. B.E. Bensinger
1972.1164

Discussion
During the nineteenth century, major cities like London, Paris, and Chicago underwent rapid industrialization and staggering growth. This burgeoning urbanization and modernization, and the activities/lives of the bourgeoisie, became the subjects of such work by avant-garde artists as Pissarro. Ask the students to examine and describe what is happening in this painting. What can we learn from looking closely at who or what is painted (subject matter), where it is painted (setting), and how it is painted (technique)? How has the artist created an atmosphere in this painting? What do you think the artist is trying to tell us about the people, place, and time?

The image Camille Pissarro chose to paint in The Crystal Palace was the ultimate of the new and modern in 1871. The most celebrated architectural wonder of the mid-century, the Crystal Palace (seventeen acres enclosed by a glass-and-iron structure) served as a public park, exhibition hall, entertainment, and recreation center in a London suburb and for over forty years was one of the most popular attractions in the entire London area. Discuss this architectural wonder designed by Joseph Paxton and built in 1851.
Activities

1. Ask the students to write vivid descriptions of the world Pissarro created through images and color and discuss whether their words are grounded in the visual information found in the painting. Do the written words give an accurate sense of the artwork's subject, setting, and technique? Discuss the differences between the written descriptions and the actual artwork.

2. After viewing the painting, ask the students to research the construction of the Crystal Palace. What were the technological developments that made the creation of this huge structure possible? (The manufacture of iron and tempered plate glass; and the concept of prefabrication, which allowed the building components to be fabricated in factories and assembled quickly on the site.) Do we still use these technologies today? How have they changed? What are some contemporary analogies to the Crystal Palace? (McCormick Place and Navy Pier). Who would spend their leisure time in such an entertainment center? Ask the students to discuss their findings in groups and present them to the class.

3. Although the movement would not be labeled "Impressionism" for three more years, The Crystal Palace is an excellent example of an early Impressionist painting. To paint people in a constantly changing world, to observe the world directly, and to capture the fleeting moods of weather and light required a new kind of technique. Ask students to look carefully at how the subject matter and setting are painted, particularly the brushwork (how paint was applied) and the colors (how colors are placed next to one another). Where in the painting are Pissarro's brush strokes most visible? How can you tell what the weather is? Would it feel damp and cold? Ask the students to list all the ways in which this painting is an Impressionist work. [See Brettell, French Impressionists, 1987].

4. Impressionism has been called the movement that changed the course of art history. Their "new" painting was a reaction to a style of painting that had been practiced since the Renaissance. During your visit to the Art Institute, visit gallery 218 to view the painting Santa Maria della Salute, Venice, 1735/40, by Michele Marieschi (1696-1743). After
examining this landscape and *The Crystal Palace* carefully, instruct your students to note the subjects, settings, and techniques. How are these two paintings similar? How are they different? Pay particular attention to the depiction of the people, and to the presence, location, and importance of the architecture within each composition.

**GUSTAVE CAILLEBOTTE** (French, 1840-1926)

*Paris Street; Rainy Day*, 1876-1877

Oil on canvas

83 1/2 x 108 3/4 in (212.2 x 276.2 cm)

Charles H. and Mary F.S. Worcester Collection

1964.336

**Discussion**

Considered the masterpiece of his career, *Paris Street; Rainy Day* displays the hallmarks of Gustave Caillebotte's mature style: a modern urban subject, realistically depicted; a peculiar and insistent spatial order; and a sense of time momentarily arrested. Have students examine the painting closely to find these stylistic hallmarks. Although the buildings may not look modern to us, they were new within the artist's lifetime. What in this painting would have been considered modern in 1876? What else might be modern about the subject matter? How are the people, buildings, and streets depicted? What gives the viewer the sense that time has suddenly stopped?

Caillebotte's rigorously controlled technique mirrors the relentless modernity of Haussmann's rebuilt Paris. The artist made numerous preparatory drawings and oil sketches, using photographs and traditional Renaissance perspective to order his composition. But in the final painting, he experimented with both perspective and the camera's "eye" to create his unique urban view. The composition is divided into a giant "plus" sign. Ask the students to locate the horizontal and vertical elements which divide the painting into four parts. What dominates the right side of the painting? What dominates the left? What is the difference between the two? The point or points on the horizon-line
where people become smaller and smaller and buildings converge and seem to disappear are called vanishing points. How many vanishing points can you find in the painting? Have students list the visual elements that draw the eye back to these vanishing points. How far do you think you can walk back into the painting?

Activities
1. To fully understand Caillebotte’s careful and deliberate organization of space within the painting, ask a group of students to recreate the scene. This can be done at the museum or in the classroom using the slide as a guide. Begin by placing the three main figures in the “foreground” of the space. Moving back in the “picture plane,” add those in the “middle ground” and “background.” Ask the students to pay close attention to the distance between each group of figures. How are the relationships between the “actors” different from the relationship between the figures in the painting? (The scale in the painting is not realistic; the figures in the foreground are too large in relationship to the figures in the middle ground.) Direct the “actors” to remain frozen in the moment while the remaining students become the viewers of the scene. Where must the viewers stand to have all characters in the correct spatial placement? If the “actors” are allowed to move at will, and then ordered to freeze again, how will the composition and the relationships among the figures change?

2. After viewing the painting in the museum, ask students to compose a contemporary urban scene from a familiar aspect of their own lives using the collage technique. Consider, among other things, subject, location, figures and activities. After cutting out figures and objects from magazines, ask students to experiment with perspective and scale to create their own modern city views. Remember, Caillebotte made many preparatory drawings and oil sketches before composing the final painting. Ask each student to discuss her/his unique urban view and how the visual elements of scale and perspective contributed to their interpretation.

3. Caillebotte literally plotted the figures onto his rigorously ordered composition, and there they have remained, caught mid-stride, cropped beneath the knees, scurrying off into the distance forever. Who are these anonymous city strollers? Where are they going? Where have they been?
Do they talk to one another? How are they dressed? The couple on the right are looking toward the left. What are they looking at? (Although there is no internal evidence in the painting itself, this pair was actually looking toward the Saint-Lazare train station [slide 3], one of Monet’s most celebrated subjects.) Have the students write stories or short plays about any two people in the painting, and share their efforts with the class.

4. Caillebotte’s life as a patron was invaluable to the Impressionist endeavor. You may wish to discuss the concept of patronage with your students. What institutions and individuals have traditionally provided patronage for artists? (The church, royal courts, wealthy and powerful individuals like popes, cardinals, and military leaders.) What kinds of institutions and individuals occupy that role today? (Governments, corporations, museums, and an expanded art-consuming middle class.) Assign the students research projects into this aspect of Caillebotte’s life. When did he start purchasing the work of his colleagues? In what other ways did he assist them? When did he discontinue his active involvement with the Impressionist movement and why? What did he hope to accomplish with his will? Did he succeed? Letters Caillebotte wrote to Pissarro and Monet are excellent original sources for further investigation into these issues. [See Varneboe, Gustave Caillebotte, 1987].

CLAUDE MONET (French, 1840-1926)
Arrival of the Normandy Train, Saint-Lazare Station, 1877
Oil on canvas
23 1/2 x 31 1/2 in. (59.6 x 80.2 cm)
Mr. and Mrs. Martin A. Ryerson Collection
1933.1158

Discussion
Upon viewing Claude Monet’s Saint-Lazare paintings in the third Impressionist exhibition of 1877, novelist Émile Zola wrote: “This year [M. Claude Monet] is exhibiting some superb station interiors. One can hear
the rumble of trains surging forward, see the torrents of smoke winding through vast engine sheds. This is the painting of today: modern settings beautiful in their scope. Our artists must find the poetry of railway stations as our fathers found the poetry of forests and rivers." Ask the students to study the painting carefully and to identify as many details as possible. What moment from everyday life does this painting capture? Where did the artist stand to paint this? What is the most important aspect of the scene and why? A year after the train station was redesigned in 1869, Gare Saint-Lazare handled more than thirteen million passengers. Who were they? Where might they have been going? What is a contemporary equivalent of this kind of public transportation center?

**Activities**

1. As Zola implied, the "modern setting" of Gare Saint-Lazare epitomized the excitement of the new industrial age. Have students research technological inventions of the nineteenth century. (Steam engine, internal combustion machine, typewriter, sewing machine.) What are some of the developments which helped turn medieval Paris into the first modern metropolis? (Electric lighting, reinforced concrete, tempered plate glass, first public telephone system, elevator, central heating, creation of the vast railway system.) Which innovations directly affected Monet and the Impressionists? (Collapsible paint tube, color photography, aerial photography, commercially available oil paints.) Have students list which of these discoveries can be seen, directly or indirectly, in *Arrival of the Normandy Train.* [See Denvir, *Encyclopedia of Impressionism*, 1990].

2. In this painting, Monet captured the fleeting and dynamic impressions of the city in motion. How did he accomplish this? Consider brushwork, colors, details, and point of view. Which part of the painting appears to be lightest? Which is the heaviest? Ask students to make a list of questions that cannot be answered from close observation of the painting. Encourage them to try to identify the Impressionist techniques used here. (Direct observation of the world, painting out of doors, use of pure bright colors applied with short, quick brush strokes, attempt to capture the effects of light.) [See Denvir, *Encyclopedia of Impressionism*, 1990].
3. To observe the world directly was of utmost importance to Monet and the Impressionist artists. After viewing and discussing this painting, lead students through the process of observing directly through drawing or painting. Choose a local transportation center as the subject of the exercise. Discuss the nature of train travel, and how a train differs from the El or the subway. (Trains are powered by diesel fuel, subways and els by electricity.) What are some of the types of transportation students use? Where are the vehicles housed? What do the depots look like? What sights, sounds, and smells are associated with the depot? Is there a sense of commotion and bustle? Encourage the students in their drawings to record some activities that occur within this structure or setting. Remember, clear concise details were not important to Monet; he wanted to capture general effects or impressions.

**GEORGES SEURAT** (French, 1859-1891)

*A Sunday on La Grande Jatte*, 1884-86
Oil on canvas
81 1/4 x 121 1/4 in. (207.5 x 308 cm)
Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection
1926.224

**Discussion**
The bright and airy park on the suburban island of La Grande Jatte was a perfect stage set for Impressionist art. Ask students to look closely and describe what is happening in this painting. What can we learn from looking closely at the activities, clothes, gestures, and expressions of the many figures? There are forty characters of different ages, sexes, social classes, and occupations. Ask students to identify them. What kind of day is it? What do the shadows tell us? Why are most of the people gathered at the edge of the river? Are they enjoying themselves?

Like Caillebotte, Seurat made many preliminary drawings and oil sketches for his final work. He experimented with brushstrokes, color placement, and figure positioning until he achieved his desired effect. After viewing
this painting in the Art Institute, show students the nearby oil study in
gallery 233 which Seurat executed early in his career. Have students
discuss how the brushwork in the study differs from that in the final
painting. Study his use of colors. Do any of the figures from the study
appear in the finished painting? In the final painting, one sees a complex
and dense grouping of people precisely arranged on the picture plane.
Discuss with students how figures vary in size and position (vertical,
horizontal, diagonal) as the space recedes.

Activities
1. In facing the issues of color, light, and form, Seurat based his
technique on the most up-to-date treatises in color optics and visual
perception. In a sense, Seurat allows his viewers' eyes to create his
colors. He did not use brush strokes in the usual sense, but applied a
myriad of tiny strokes, dots and dashes to the surface of the canvas.
During your museum visit, ask the students to examine Seurat's color
placement closely and record which colors are placed next to each other.
Then direct them to move away from the painting. At what point do the
colors seem to blend together? What new colors have been created by this
optical mixing in the viewer's eye?

2. Georges Seurat did not arrive at his rigorous color theory by himself or
in isolation. Rather, he applied several nineteenth century scientific
developments to his painting. Ask students to research the work of the
French chemist, Michel Eugène Chevreul (1786-1889), author of On the
Harmony and Contrast of Colors; the Scottish physicist, James Clerk
Maxwell (1831-1879); and the American artist and color scientist Ogden
Rood (1831-1902). Ask students to try to determine which elements of
these color theories were utilized by Seurat. [See Denvir, Encyclopedia of
Impressionism, 1990].

3. Discuss the kinds of leisure activities which take place outside today
and ask the students to list some possible locations, such as parks, zoos,
urban high-rise sundecks or even shopping malls. Using cut-out pictures
from magazines, have students make a collage of a group of people
enjoying their leisure in a specific location. Place some of the figures
and groups close to the viewer; place others further away. Are there any "props" needed to further identify the setting, such as sailboats, animals, pipes, embroidery, or musical instruments? As an alternative activity, you may wish to have your class work on the preparation and creation of a large composition. Over a period of several weeks, students can create on-site preliminary drawings of a leisure activity, which can then be the basis for a final work of art, either a painting, pastel, or collage.

COMPARING IMPRESSIONIST PAINTINGS

Discussion
Like most of the diverse group of artists who banded together and became known as Impressionists, Caillebotte came of age while Paris was being transformed into the first great modern metropolis. The Impressionists’ remarkable body of work mirrors this change. Compare The Crystal Palace [Slide 1], Paris Street; Rainy Day [Slide 2], Arrival of the Normandy Train, Saint Lazare Station [Slide 3], and A Sunday Afternoon on La Grande Jatte [Slide 4]. How do these four works describe a moment in time of a quickly changing urban world? Consider similarities and differences, noting subject matter, setting, weather, color, composition, brush strokes, and the role of the viewer.

Activities
1. How does art reflect the time and place from which it comes? Suggest that the students investigate and then chart the significant political events, scientific discoveries, and cultural (literary, musical, artistic) milestones of the half century between 1850 and 1900. What do these timelines reveal? How did these events impact on the four works cited above? [See Grun, The Timetables of History, 1991].
DANIEL BURNHAM (American, 1846-1912)
EDWARD BENNETT (American, 1874-1954)
*View of Chicago from Jackson Park to Grant Park*, 1907, Plate 49 from *Plan of Chicago*, 1909 (detail)
Rendered by Jules Guérin (American, 1866-1946)
Watercolor and pencil on paper
41 x 187 7/8 in. (104 x 477 cm)
On permanent loan from the City of Chicago
RX 17016.2

Discussion
The process of planning to improve urban centers in order to provide healthy and safe living conditions, efficient transportation and communication, adequate public facilities, and aesthetic surroundings is called city planning. It is an ancient practice, dating back to Babylon and the cities of classical Greece and China. Discuss the concept of the city. What different types of buildings are found in a city? Who inhabits cities? What do they do? Where? How do people travel into and out of the city? Why do people gather in cities?

Medieval cities like Paris were built with military security in mind, which resulted in fortress-like walls around the city that enclosed cramped dwellings and narrow, crooked streets. (Similarly, Chicago began as a fort in 1803.) How do modern cities differ in organization and purpose from those of the Middle Ages? What do cities offer today? What are some city problems? What kind of planning might help? Where do city dwellers go for breathing space?

Activities
1. As centers of finance, industry, transportation, and culture, both Paris and Chicago witnessed population explosions during the nineteenth century. Immigrants flooded in from abroad and from other parts of the nation, hoping to take advantage of job opportunities and higher pay. Ask students to compare Paris during the reign of Napoleon III and Chicago at the turn of the century (or two other cities that experienced substantial growth and change during this time.) What were their similarities and
differences? Have students note historical context, predominant industries, distribution of wealth, transportation routes, and cultural institutions such as museums, concert halls, and theatres.

2. Baron Georges Haussmann's bold alterations of the layout of Paris determined the face of the modern city. Conceived during a time when America was looking over its shoulder at the grand classical designs of European cities, Daniel Burnham and Edward Bennett's first metropolitan plan in America was meant to turn the capital of the midwest into "a Paris on the Prairie." Have students compare and contrast these two great plans. Ask students to identify the features of the 1909 Plan of Chicago that are still evident today. [The Plan of Chicago: 1909-1979, 1979; Condit, Chicago 1910-1929: Building, Planning, and Urban Technology, 1973; Evenson, Paris: A Century of Change, 1878-1978, 1979; and Zukowsky, Chicago Architecture 1872-1922, 1987].

3. Help the students analyze Chicago today. What changes would improve the quality of life in the city? Ask them to create a new plan for a city on the threshold of the twenty-first century. Have them keep in mind the principal goal of city planning: to make metropolitan areas safe and efficient for large numbers of people. Their plans should include transportation routes, major buildings, residential, business, and industrial areas. Are there particular geographical features which must be taken into account, such as rivers or lakes? How many people could live in their city? How many could work there? Where would the inhabitants go for their leisure activities or open spaces?
GLOSSARY

Note: Glossary words are italicized the first time they appear in the text.

**Atelier**: a workshop or artist's studio.

**Avant-garde**: those artists, whether literary, visual, or musical, whose works are unconventional or experimental and considered to be ahead of their time.

**Bourgeoisie**: the middle class.

**Collage**: the use of paper and other flat materials to form a picture or design on a two-dimensional surface.

**Color wheel**: a circular diagram divided into six wedges, each designated as one of the three primary colors (red, blue, yellow) or one of the three secondary colors (green, purple, orange).

**Complementary colors**: colors having maximum contrast to one another. The complementary of a primary color (red, blue, yellow) is formed by mixing together the other two primary colors. For example, green is the complementary of red.

**En plein air**: painting "in the open air," removed from the constraints of the studio.

**Genre**: the portrayal of scenes from daily life, especially in painting.

**Impresario**: one who sponsors or produces entertainment or art exhibitions.

**Impressionism**: 19th-century French movement regarded as the culmination of realism. Impressionist painters analyzed natural effects and relied on optical blending to capture the impression of light at a given moment.

**Musée d'Orsay**: the Paris museum that now houses the entire range of French art of the 19th century. Formerly one of the premier railway stations of Paris, designed by Victor Laloux and completed in 1900, it was transformed into a museum between 1983-86 with the installation designed by Gae Aulenti.

**Oeuvre**: (French: *work*) the total output of an artist.

**Omnibus**: a bus.
Optical blending: the involuntary mixing of juxtaposed colors by the eye and brain. Thus, from a certain distance, dabs of red and yellow pigment produce the sensation of orange.

Patron: one who supports, protects, or champions, especially the arts; often used to describe the purchaser of works of art.

Pièce de résistance: the most noteworthy or prized feature, aspect, event, article, etc. of a series or group; special item or attraction.

Perspective: the technique of representing three-dimensional objects on a two-dimensional surface, so that they seem to appear as in nature.

Plaisance: (French: pleasure) esplanade; stretch of pavement or grass used as a promenade; a place for strolling.

Prefect: a high administrative official; a person appointed to a position of command or authority.

Quai: quay, wharf, or pier.

Republicanism: the preference for a republican form of government, as opposed to a monarchy or other dictatorial form of government; adherence to republican principles.

Retrospective: of or pertaining to an art show exhibiting the work of an artist or school over a period of years.

Salon: annual official exhibition of painting in France from the early 17th through the 19th centuries.

Scale: the proportion used in determining the relationship of a representation to that which it represents; a progressive classification, as of size.

Scumble: to apply a thin layer of opaque color over an underlayer so that, seen together, the layers produce a softened effect.

Staffage: animal or human figures in architecture or landscape painting included for interest or to help establish scale and/or perspective.

Vanishing point: in perspective, the point, or points, on the horizon line at which receding parallel lines meet and seem to disappear.

Venue: the scene or locale of any action or event.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


SLIDE LIST

Slide 1

CAMILLE PISSARRO (French, 1830-1903)  
*The Crystal Palace*, 1871  
Oil on canvas  
18 9/16 x 28 15/16 in. (47.2 x 73.5 cm)  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. B.E. Bensinger  
1972.1164

*The Crystal Palace* depicts the most celebrated architectural landmark of the London suburb where the artist and his family were living. Joseph Paxton's imposing modular glass-and-iron structure was designed for the Great Exhibition held in London's Hyde Park in 1851. Afterwards, it was dismantled and moved to Sydenham in South London, where it stood from 1853 until it was destroyed by fire in 1936. (Syndenham was a neighboring town absorbed by the expanding city, like Rogers Park, for example.)

An acclaimed symbol of technological achievement in the nineteenth century, the Crystal Palace in this painting coexists almost modestly in its residential setting with the ubiquitous red-brick domestic architecture of the Victorian era. The world's largest building at the time is here seen at a distance from the viewer. Depicted as a simplified form, its immense expanse of glass reflects light and the shapes of nearby objects, in contrast to the dark solids of the fences, figures, and houses in the right foreground. The center of the painting is occupied by a wide road and two walkways, filled with moving pedestrians and carriages. To judge from the flag on the pole to the left, a brisk wind is blowing. The light that rims the edges of the clouds reflects off the glass expanses of the Crystal Palace and touches the pedestrians and carriages, uniting all in a vivid image of afternoon leisure.
GUSTAVE CAILLEBOTTE (French, 1848-1894)

*Paris Street; Rainy Day*, 1876-1877
Oil on canvas
83 1/2 x 108 3/4 in. (212.2 x 276.2 cm)
Charles H. and Mary F.S. Worcester Collection
1964.336

This complex intersection, just minutes away from the Saint-Lazare train station, represented in microcosm the changing urban milieu of late nineteenth-century Paris. Gustave Caillebotte grew up near the district when it was a relatively unsettled hill with narrow crooked streets. As part of a new city plan designed by Baron Georges Eugène Haussmann, every street was laid, every building raised during the artist's lifetime. In this monumental urban view, which measures almost seven by ten feet and is considered the artist's masterpiece, Caillebotte strikingly captured this vast, stark modernity, complete with life-sized figures strolling in the foreground and wearing the latest styles. *Paris Street*'s highly crafted surface, rigorous perspective, and grand scale pleased Parisian audiences accustomed to the academic aesthetic of the official Salon. On the other hand, the painting's asymmetrical composition, unusually cropped forms, rain-washed mood, and candidly contemporary subject provoked the disapproval of many critics. For these reasons, the painting dominated the celebrated Impressionist exhibition of 1877, largely organized by the artist himself. Caillebotte's frozen poetry of the Parisian bourgeoisie strangely prefigures Georges Seurat's luminous *Sunday on La Grande Jatte* -- 1884, painted less than a decade later.
CLAUDE MONET (French, 1840-1926)

*Arrival of the Normandy Train, Saint-Lazare Station, 1877*

Oil on canvas
23 1/2 x 31 1/2 in. (59.6 x 80.2 cm)
Mr. and Mrs. Martin A. Ryerson Collection
1933.1158

The modern urban landscape of Paris was the quintessential subject for many Impressionist painters. Their interest lay not in depicting new buildings or bridges literally, but rather in capturing fleeting and dynamic impressions of the city in motion. For Claude Monet, Saint-Lazare station was an especially appropriate choice. Its enormous vault of glass and iron, filled with steam and bustling with movement, epitomized the excitement of the new industrial age, and the station was a locus that linked Paris to many of the suburban and rural sites Monet and other Impressionists liked to paint. Legend has it that he convinced the stationmaster to halt the trains and cram the engines with coal to make smoke billow. Using head-on perspective and rapid, often sketchlike, brushwork to imply rather than describe shapes, the artist captured the intensity and flux of the celebrated depot. Of the twelve known versions of this subject by Monet, seven were exhibited in one room at the third Impressionist exhibition, in 1877, thus inaugurating a variant of his famous method of working in series, repeatedly examining a particular motif at different times and under different atmospheric conditions.
GEORGES SEURAT (French, 1859-1891)

*A Sunday on La Grande Jatte - 1884*, 1884-86

Oil on canvas
81 1/4 x 121 1/4 in. (207.5 x 308 cm)
Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection
1926.224

"Bedlam," "scandal," and "hilarity" were among the epithets used to describe what is now considered Georges Seurat's greatest work when it was first exhibited in Paris. Seurat labored extensively over *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte -- 1884*, reworking the original as well as completing numerous preliminary drawings and oil sketches (the Art Institute has one such sketch and two drawings). With what resembles scientific precision, the artist tackled the issues of color, light, and form. Inspired by research in optical and color theory, he juxtaposed tiny strokes of colors that, through *optical blending*, form a single and, Seurat believed, more brilliantly luminous hue in the viewer's eye. To make the experience of the painting even more intense, he surrounded it with a border of painted dots, enclosed within a pure white, wooden frame, which is how the painting is exhibited today. As to the meaning of these Parisians enjoying a day off on an island in the Seine -- who they are, where they come from, what they are doing -- their veryimmobility and that of the shadows they cast makes them forever silent and enigmatic. Like all great masterpieces, *La Grande Jatte* continues to fascinate and elude, with our explanations of it revealing perhaps more about us than about the painting itself.
Daniel Burnham (American, 1846-1912)
Edward Bennett (American, 1874-1954)
*View of Chicago from Jackson Park to Grant Park*, 1907, plate 49 from the *Plan of Chicago*, 1909 (detail)
Rendered by Jules Guérin (American, 1866-1946)
Watercolor and pencil on paper
41 x 187 7/8 in. (104 x 477 cm)
On permanent loan from the City of Chicago
RX 17016.2

"Make no little plans," Daniel H. Burnham reputedly exclaimed around the time he made public the pièce de résistance of his career: the *Plan of Chicago*, the first comprehensive metropolitan plan in the United States. Providing the vocabulary for Chicago architecture through the 1920s, the Plan was the legacy of Burnham, whose renown in large-scale city planning began when he was chief of construction for Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. Commissioned by the Commercial Club of Chicago, the Plan was developed with the assistance of architect and planner Edward H. Bennett, who refined parts of the Plan after Burnham's death in 1912 and was responsible for executing many of its recommendations. Emulating the grand classical design of European cities, Chicago was to become "a Paris on the Prairie." Features included the development of Chicago's lakefront and Lake Shore Drive, the construction of Grant Park, and the transformation of Michigan Avenue into a premier commercial boulevard following the completion. in 1920, of one of the Plan's recommendations, the Michigan Avenue bridge. Eleven of the Plan's seventeen perspective views were rendered by Burnham's frequent collaborator, the Beaux-Arts-trained artist Jules Guérin. Guérin's stunning, impressionistic views, with their unusual perspectives and dramatic use of color, bring the *Plan of Chicago* to life, imbuing it, as Burnham stated about his own aims, with the "magic to stir men's blood."