

GUSTAVE CAILLEBOTTE

The Painter's Eye

In 1875 Gustave Caillebotte (1848–1894) submitted a painting of floor scrapers to the jury of the Salon, the official exhibition of the Academy of Fine Arts in Paris. The work was rejected, but Edgar Degas and Auguste Renoir admired it and encouraged him to exhibit with the impressionists. Caillebotte's canvas, depicting shirtless laborers finishing a wood floor, became one of the sensations of the second impressionist show in 1876. Describing the picture in terms of its realism and modernity, admirers praised its "truth" and "frank intimacy," while critics deemed it "crude" and "anti-artistic."

Caillebotte was thrilled by the impressionists' fresh, radical vision. Over the next six years he participated regularly in their exhibitions, submitting paintings of the people and places he encountered in and around Paris. Featuring skewed perspectives and modern subjects, the canvases reflect the visual drama of the capital—then undergoing radical transformation into a modern metropolis. Caillebotte established himself as an artistic force in the group, as well as a vital organizer who helped curate and finance their exhibitions. During his brief career he also became a significant patron, amassing a collection of more than seventy works, including masterpieces by Degas and Renoir as well as Paul Cézanne, Claude Monet, Berthe Morisot, Camille Pissarro, and Alfred Sisley.

Despite these accomplishments, Caillebotte remains perhaps the least known of the French impressionists. Because of his secure finances—derived from his father's successful textile business—he had no need to earn an income from his art. He therefore did not sell his pictures, and few entered public collections. After he bequeathed his collection to the state, it became the cornerstone of impressionist art in French national museums. But the impressive bequest, which included only two of his own works, overshadowed his artistic achievements and further contributed to his obscurity.

More than a half century after his death at age forty-five, interest in Caillebotte's art began to reemerge. *Gustave Caillebotte: The Painter's Eye* continues this rediscovery, gathering his best work for a fresh look. Although all periods of his career are represented, attention focuses on the years 1875 to 1882 when he was most closely allied with the impressionists. The following galleries not only include his most famous cityscapes and interiors, but also show his artistic range with a selection of portraits, nudes, river scenes, still lifes, and landscapes. Together they portray an artist deeply interested in his surroundings, preoccupied with the ways art can connect us to our environment: "I imagine," wrote Caillebotte to Monet, "that the very great artists attach you even more to life."

The exhibition is organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, and the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth.
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Looking In: Urban Interior

Caillebotte quietly dramatized images from his daily life, painting the interiors of his parents' Parisian town house and, after their death, the nearby apartment where he lived with his youngest brother Martial. Faithfully represented, the family home is ornate, with tasseled curtains, decorative wallpaper, and bourgeois accessories. The brothers' apartment, furnished with overstuffed sofas and a gaming table, is somewhat less stately. Yet gilded picture frames and paneling indicate that the denizens of this bachelor pad were men of means. Many of these paintings feature the people closest to the artist—his mother and younger brother René sharing a wordless meal; Martial playing piano; Martial gathered with friends to play cards; a close friend, Richard Gallo, reading on a sofa. Despite the intimacy of Caillebotte's interior paintings, they reflect an undercurrent of loneliness and isolation. The palette is subdued, even somber, and social interaction among figures is rare. Tilted perspectives amplify the unsettling mood and psychological tension of these domestic scenes.

Parisian Perspectives

In 1877 Caillebotte was the major force behind the third impressionist exhibition, assuming the role of primary organizer, financier, and curator. In the exhibition's grand salon he hung a trio of his paintings — *Paris Street, Rainy Day*; *The House Painters*; and *The Pont de l'Europe* — strongly asserting his presence as a leader. “[He] will certainly be one of the boldest of the group,” declared Emile Zola after viewing the exhibition. Each of these paintings depicts an ordinary urban scene: Parisians strolling along a drizzly avenue, workers painting a storefront, pedestrians on a bridge near a train station. Set on different boulevards in central Paris, all three canvases respond directly to the modernized capital, which was in the latter stages of a comprehensive urban redesign. Begun in the 1850s under the direction of Baron Haussmann to address a host of city ills, the so-called Haussmannization of Paris implemented stringent codes that unified building design, improved urban infrastructure, widened streets, and added sidewalks and streetlamps. Caillebotte's paintings capture the visual transformation of Paris into the city as it is known today.

Observing the Nude

Caillebotte painted only a few nudes, and they were rarely if ever exhibited. They are significant, however, in demonstrating not only his technical skill, but also his artistic independence and willingness to push aesthetic boundaries. Approaching the subject of the reclining female nude, Caillebotte shunned conventional representations of an idealized seductress who beckons the viewer with her gaze and erotic pose. Instead, his *Nude on a Couch* (1880) depicts a woman sprawling on an untidy sofa with her clothing strewn about. Looking worn from her day and her life, she makes no attempt to engage the viewer. His equally radical *Man at His Bath* (1884) explores the traditional genre of the nude bather, but substitutes a male for the expected female subject. The model, whose muscular body recalls figures from academic studies, finds himself, uncharacteristically, in an intimate, modern setting. The almost life-sized scale of the painting adds to its provocative nature.

Viewing Others: Portraits

With his finances secured by the family business, Caillebotte had no need to derive an income from his art. The portraits he painted, therefore, were not commissioned works that prioritized commercial considerations over artistic ones. Instead, they were intimate paintings that he made of his family and friends, and often gave to the sitters as gifts. Portraying upper middle-class Parisian men—editors, scholars, painters, and collectors—seated in either the artist’s or the subject’s apartment, these works give a sense of Caillebotte’s private life, which remains largely unknown. He gave equal weight to his sitters and their setting. Elaborate armchairs and wildly patterned divans threaten to overwhelm the men, but their sturdy postures, penetrating gazes, and deep concentration impart a commanding presence that stands up to the brash decor.

An Eye for Display

Still life is not generally considered a central impressionist subject, but several artists, Claude Monet and Edgar Degas in particular, experimented with the traditional genre. Caillebotte, too, became seriously interested in it and painted a variety of still lifes in the early 1880s. Many depict foods sumptuously arrayed in Parisian markets to lure passersby into opening their wallets. Caillebotte was captivated not only by the brightly colored fruits and sugary confections at produce stands and pâtisseries, but also by the more provocative window displays of butcher shops, where beauty and brutality commingled. His still lifes complement his better-known cityscapes, taking viewers from sweeping scenes of Parisian streets to close-ups glimpsed in individual shops and restaurants.

Suburban Views

In 1881 Caillebotte purchased a country estate on the Seine in Petit Gennevilliers, where he settled permanently in 1887. In this retreat from city life, he more fully explored the impressionist landscape. A series depicting the fields near his new home explores changing seasons and was influenced by the serial works of his close friend Claude Monet, who had been experimenting with painting a single subject in varying light conditions. As Caillebotte's connection to artistic currents in Paris waned, his dedication to avant-garde painting relaxed and he devoted himself to other pursuits. He shared with Monet, who had also left Paris for the country, a passion for gardening. Both painted images—some of Caillebotte's more ambitious from this period—of their privately designed landscapes. In Petit Gennevilliers Caillebotte also became a passionate boat designer and competitive sailor. In *Regatta in Argenteuil*, completed shortly before his death in 1894 at age forty-five, he portrayed himself sailing with a partner. Caillebotte's impressionist colleagues mourned the premature loss of their friend. "If he had lived . . . he would have benefited from the same turn of fortune as us," wrote Monet, "because he was full of talent . . . when we lost him he was still only at the beginning of his career."

Looking Out: View from the Window

Artists have been attracted to painting views from windows ever since the Renaissance when a painting itself was described, metaphorically, as a window onto another world. Caillebotte frequently painted people gazing out windows, providing a glimpse of the outside world through the frame. By showing viewers these interior spaces and the world beyond, he contrasted private and public spaces, domestic intimacy and urban spectacle. Often, however, Caillebotte implied but did not depict the window, showing surrounding architectural details such as sills, casement jambs, and decorative iron balconies. In more radical paintings, he eliminated all evidence of the window, save for the plunging perspectives that alone suggest an elevated vantage point and the window through which the scene must have been observed. In these paintings, which hint at the cityscapes for which Caillebotte is best known, Paris itself emerges as the main subject.

River Views

Caillebotte grew up between his family's home in Paris and their large country estate in Yerres, fifteen miles south of the capital. Yerres offered respite from the city and ample opportunity for outdoor pursuits, including those on the river. Boating was especially popular, and Caillebotte frequently painted Sunday visitors from Paris as well as more serious club rowers dressed in uniform. The river pictures are notably freer in their handling than his Parisian works: paint application is thicker, brushstrokes are more rapid, and the palette is bolder. In these paintings Caillebotte captured the play of color and light through its reflections on the water—a subject of great interest for many impressionists, but absent from Caillebotte's urban paintings. After the family estate at Yerres was sold in 1879, Caillebotte bought his own suburban retreat north of Paris on the Seine in Petit Gennevilliers, where he continued to paint the river.

Self-Portrait at the Easel

1879 – 1880

oil on canvas

Private Collection

Seen in his living-room studio, Caillebotte depicts himself as both artist and collector and gazes out directly from the canvas. Although he appears to engage the viewer, his look is self-reflective: the artist stares at himself in a mirror used to help capture his likeness. The painting hanging above the couch — reversed in the mirror's reflection — is Auguste Renoir's *Ball at the Moulin de la Galette*, which Caillebotte had recently acquired. Reading a newspaper on the sofa is most likely the artist's friend Richard Gallo, who also appears in the adjacent painting (as the standing figure) and in several portraits later in this exhibition.

Auguste Renoir, *Ball at the Moulin de la Galette*, 1876, oil on canvas,
Musée d'Orsay, Paris. © RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY.
Photo: Patrice Schmidt

A Game of Bezique

1881

oil on canvas

Louvre Abu Dhabi

An old friend and Caillebotte's brother Martial (seen on the far right with pipe in mouth and hand outstretched) play bezique, a two-person card game popular in nineteenth-century France. The opponents are locked in an intense moment of cerebral sparring as spectators look on; another friend, Paul Hugot, rests on the sofa in the background. Although card playing was a subject popular with Dutch artists, *Game of Bezique* most closely resembles the card players painted almost a decade later by Paul Cézanne, who almost certainly saw Caillebotte's canvas when it was exhibited at the 1882 impressionist exhibition.

Paul Cézanne, *The Card Players*, 1890–1892, oil on canvas,
The Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia. Image © 2015
The Barnes Foundation, BF 564

46

Boating on the Yerres

1877

oil on canvas

Milwaukee Art Museum,
Gift of the Milwaukee Journal Company,
in honor of Miss Faye McBeath

The subject of this painting closely relates to *Skiffs*, which is displayed on the adjacent wall. In both canvases the oarsmen are identically dressed—identifying them as members of a rowing club—and navigate the shallow Yerres River in boats specially designed to skim the surface.

Calf in a Butcher's Shop

c. 1882

oil on canvas

Private Collection

This rendering of a butchered calf reinterprets a classic art-historical subject. Caillebotte would have known Rembrandt's *Flayed Ox* (1655), which had been acquired by the Louvre when Caillebotte was a young boy. Whereas the Dutch master's animal carcass hangs in a cellar enveloped in blackness, Caillebotte's eviscerated calf is set against a bright red wall and white curtain, and is decorated with a garland and rose. By providing this new context, he transformed a meditation on mortality into a reflection of modern commerce, where even death is put on display and made attractive for consumers.

Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Flayed Ox*, 1655,
oil on wood, Musée du Louvre, Paris.
© RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY.
Photo: Gérard Blot

Self-Portrait at the Easel

1879–1880
oil on canvas
Private Collection

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Auguste Renoir, *Ball at the Moulin de la Galette*, 1876, oil on canvas,
Musée d’Orsay, Paris. © RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY. Image: Patrice Schmidt

[DEX 19]

A Game of Bezique

1881
oil on canvas
Louvre Abu Dhabi

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Paul Cézanne, *The Card Players*, 1890–1892, oil on canvas,
The Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia. Image © 2015 The Barnes Foundation, BF 564

17

Interior, a Woman Reading

1880

oil on canvas

Private Collection

15

Luncheon

1876

oil on canvas

Private Collection

At this somber family lunch, painted soon after the death of the artist's father, Caillebotte's mother is depicted in mourning attire. The artist's younger brother René eats intently and silently, plunging into his meal even before his mother is finished being served. The dramatically tilted perspective enhances the scene's discomfort. By including a cropped place setting in the foreground, Caillebotte seats the viewer at the table of this awkward meal. Less than a year after this canvas was completed, René died unexpectedly at age twenty-five.

27

Self-Portrait

1888–1889

oil on canvas

Private Collection

Young Man Playing the Piano

1876

oil on canvas

Bridgestone Museum of Art,
Ishibashi Foundation, Tokyo

Martial, seen in their parents' home, is the artist's youngest brother. Some critics were alarmed by the painting's unusual perspective: "The young man at the piano inspires in me serious fears...the musical instrument threatens to become an instrument of torture; one fears at any instant to see it fall on this young man, who will surely be crushed. One should not make people afraid like this."

The Floor Scrapers

1875

oil on canvas

Musée d'Orsay, Paris, Gift of Caillebotte's heirs
through the intermediary of Auguste Renoir, 1894

At age twenty-six, Caillebotte submitted this painting to the jury of the French Salon. The canvas was rejected, but it caught the eye of a group of young avant-garde painters, who invited Caillebotte to show his work the following year at the second impressionist exhibition. There, hanging alongside works by Edgar Degas, Auguste Renoir, Alfred Sisley, and Claude Monet, *The Floor Scrapers* garnered considerable attention. Some critics praised the work's depiction of shirtless urban laborers for its startling realism, while conservative reviewers found the unidealized figures offensive: "Do nudes," wrote one, "but do beautiful nudes, or don't do them at all!"

7

Portrait of a Man

1880

oil on canvas

The Cleveland Museum of Art,
Bequest of Muriel Butkin

ROOM 2

[DEX 47]

12

***The Rue Halévy,
Seen from the Sixth Floor***

1878

oil on canvas

Private Collection, Dallas

This painting, along with several others in this room, depicts the convergence of boulevards near Caillebotte's apartment. The artist's building is visible on the right; the Paris Opéra stands just beyond it. Caillebotte experimented with multiple perspectives of this subject—some canvases, like this one, reflect the artist's gaze into the distance, while others suggest the plunging view toward the street below. In the most radical, *The Boulevard Seen from Above* (adjacent), space is dramatically foreshortened, as if the artist had captured the scene while leaning over the balcony rail and looking almost straight down.

[DEX 14]

13

***The Boulevard
Seen from Above***

1880

oil on canvas

Private Collection

***A Traffic Island,
Boulevard Haussmann***

1880

oil on canvas

Private Collection

Looking out a window high above the Boulevard Haussmann, Caillebotte captured the geometry of the newly designed city. Eliminating the horizon, he focused on the interplay of the round traffic island, curved sidewalk, and rectangular street, punctuating the vast space with streetlamps, tree trunks, carriages, and a top-hatted figure who reappears across the canvas. The figure on the lower edge of the composition is severely cropped above his waist, echoing the fragmented view from the window and the constant motion of modern life.

[DEX 10]

Interior, Woman at the Window

1880

oil on canvas

Private Collection

[DEX 77]

***Man on a Balcony,
Boulevard Haussmann***

1880

oil on canvas

Private Collection Courtesy of Christie's

Caillebotte painted the view from his apartment balcony with windows thrown wide open, creating a seamless flow between his home and the street beyond. The intertwined balcony greenery and boulevard trees echo the merging of these private and public spaces. The man, standing jauntily high above the expansive street, is ready to see and be seen. In stark contrast, the subject in *Interior, Woman at the Window* (at left) appears trapped behind glass panes, her body language withdrawn and timid. These two similarly scaled pictures, painted the same year, were very likely conceived as a pair.

[DEX 80]

10

***The Rue Halévy,
Seen from a Balcony***

1877
oil on canvas
Private Collection

[DEX 62]

11

***The Rue Halévy,
Seen from a Balcony***

1878
oil on canvas
Joan and Bernard Carl, Washington

ROOM 3

[DEX 3]

5

On the Pont de l'Europe

1876–1877
oil on canvas
Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

[DEX 23]

21

Portrait of Paul Hugot

1878
oil on canvas
The Lewis Collection

Hugot was a close friend of Caillebotte's and owned more of his paintings than anyone outside the artist's family. Depicted in full boulevard attire, accessorized with top hat, gold pocket watch, and walking stick, this dapper figure is ready to stroll about the city.

The Pont de l'Europe

1876

oil on canvas

Association des Amis du Petit Palais, Geneva

This bridge overlooks the Saint-Lazare train station, just visible on the right and suggested by the plumes of engine steam rising to meet the clouds. The sidewalk and boulevard were part of Baron Haussmann's redesign of Paris, which eliminated narrow, medieval streets, thereby facilitating movement through the city and connecting isolated quarters. Caillebotte emphasized these changes through the width of the sidewalk and the diversity of his pedestrians: men and women, aristocrats and the working class, share these integrated streets. Their interactions are ambiguous, leaving viewers to puzzle over potential narratives and elusive relationships.

Paris Street, Rainy Day

1877

oil on canvas

The Art Institute of Chicago,
Charles H. and Mary F. S. Worcester Collection

When this canvas was exhibited at the 1877 impressionist exhibition, it elicited numerous comparisons to photography, recalling the wide angles, deep focus, and severe cropping of figures seen in the new medium. Like a snapshot, the composition captures a haphazard moment, as if the artist had stumbled upon this scene — foreground figures on the verge of colliding; a pair of disembodied legs poking out from an umbrella (midcenter, to the left of the streetlamp). Yet Caillebotte carefully composed the painting and left little to chance: the lamppost bifurcates the canvas; the umbrellas and lines of perspective draw viewers' eyes from the foreground into the deep recesses; and the strategic positioning of the figures emphasizes their isolation within a crowd. Their similar umbrellas and clothing underscore the anonymity and uniformity of the modern city, while the size of the canvas — the largest Caillebotte is known to have painted — suggests its artistic ambition.

6

At a Café

1880

oil on canvas

Musée d'Orsay, Paris,

On deposit at Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen

A mirror placed behind the central figure creates a complex interplay of spaces. The mirror shows the reflection of two men seated at a table in front of the protagonist, as well as the café entrance with its striped awning. Other impressionists, especially Edouard Manet and Edgar Degas, favored the theme of the café, though they generally depicted the women seen there. Caillebotte instead inserted a male subject, a recurring substitution in his oeuvre.

[DEX 4]

3

The House Painters

1877

oil on canvas

Private Collection

ROOM 4

[DEX 27]

28

Nude on a Couch

1880

oil on canvas

Lent by The Minneapolis Institute of Arts,

The John R. Van Derlip Fund

Man at His Bath

1884

oil on canvas

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston,

Museum purchase with funds by exchange from an Anonymous gift,
Bequest of William A. Coolidge, Juliana Cheney Edwards Collection, and from the
Charles H. Bayley Picture and Painting Fund, Edward Jackson Holmes Fund,
Fanny P. Mason Fund in memory of Alice Thevin, Arthur Gordon Tompkins Fund,
Gift of Mrs. Samuel Parkman Oliver-Eliza R. Oliver Fund, Sophie F. Friedman Fund,
Robert M. Rosenberg Family Fund, and funds donated in honor of George T. M. Shackelford,
Chair, Art of Europe, and Arthur K. Solomon, Curator of Modern Art, 1996–2011

Portrait of Eugène Daufresne

1878

oil on canvas

Private Collection

Daufresne, shown here at the Caillebotte family home,
was a cousin of the artist's mother.

Portrait of Monsieur R.

1877

oil on canvas

Private Collection

This sitter is known only as Monsieur R., the vague title given to this work when it was on view at the 1879 impressionist exhibition. His neatly tended hair and mustache, long tapered fingers, and seductive self-assurance cast him as a man of taste and class. The painting is as much a portrait of the interior decor as it is of the sitter, who is enveloped by the boldly striped divan and coordinating wall covering. Monsieur R. appears bathed in blue, which prompted one critic to sarcastically write, "There's room for one more on the sofa. . . . This young man dipped in blue has only one hand, M. Caillebotte. Of course you'll tell me it's big enough for two."

Portrait of Georges Roman

1879

oil on canvas

Galerie Michael Haas, Berlin

Roman was a painter from Lyon who became acquainted with Caillebotte while living in Paris for a short time.

Portrait of Richard Gallo

1878

oil on canvas

Private Collection,

On loan to Fondation de l'Hermitage, Lausanne

A journalist, editor, and close friend of the artist, Richard Gallo appears in Caillebotte's paintings more frequently than any other person. He posed for three portraits, all on view in this gallery, and is seen in several genre pictures and as a background figure in one of the artist's self-portraits. Unlike the painting in the center of the room, in which a newspaper is casually draped over Gallo's lap, this portrait gives no indication of the sitter's profession. Cropped below the knee and resting in a chair pushed forward, Gallo feels close as he stares directly at the viewer, yet his wary expression and tense posture foster an unsettling mood.

Portrait of Richard Gallo

1881

oil on canvas

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art,

Kansas City, Missouri,

Purchase: William Rockhill Nelson Trust through the generosity of Mrs. George C. Reuland through the W. J. Brace Charitable Trust and through exchange of the bequests of Mr. and Mrs. William James Brace and Frances Logan; the gifts of Harold Woodbury Parsons, Mr. and Mrs. Henry W. Bloch, and the Laura Nelson Kirkwood Residuary Trust; and other Trust properties

Portrait of Henri Cordier

1883

oil on canvas

Musée d'Orsay, Paris,

Gift of Mrs. Henri Cordier, 1926

Born in New Orleans of French parents, Cordier spent his early career in China and published several books about the country and French-Chinese relations. Caillebotte depicted Cordier, a faculty member at a school for Eastern languages, as a scholar, consumed by his books, thoughts, and writing.

***The Bridge at Argenteuil
over the Seine***

1883

oil on canvas

Private Collection

A Boating Party

1877–1878

oil on canvas

Private Collection

The top hat, bow tie, and vest suggest that the rower in the foreground is a visiting Parisian enjoying an excursion in the countryside, while in the distance two local men are wearing clothing more suited for sport. The city rower is pushed to the very front of the picture plane, revealing the artist's perspective from within the boat opposite the subject, whose identity remains unknown.

43

Prairie in Yerres

1875
oil on canvas
Private Collection

42

The Yerres, Effect of Rain

1875
oil on canvas
Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington,
Gift of Mrs. Nicholas H. Noyes

47

Richard Gallo and His Dog

1884
oil on canvas
Private Collection

46

Boating on the Yerres

1877
oil on canvas
Milwaukee Art Museum,
Gift of the Milwaukee Journal Company,
in honor of Miss Faye McBeath

The subject of this painting closely relates to *Skiffs*, which is in the Gallery's permanent impressionist collection. In both canvases the oarsmen are identically dressed—identifying them as members of a rowing club—and navigate the shallow Yerres River in boats specially designed to skim the surface.

Skiffs is on view in the West Building, Main Floor, Gallery 86.

Gustave Caillebotte, *Skiffs*, 1877, oil on canvas,
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

37

Pastry Cakes

1881

oil on canvas

Bruce Toll

40

Cut of Beef

1882

oil on canvas

Private Collection

33

Hare and Thrushes

1882

oil on canvas

Private Collection

34

Calf's Head and Ox Tongue

c. 1882

oil on canvas

The Art Institute of Chicago,
Major Acquisitions Centennial Endowment

35

Two Ducks, Hanging

1882

oil on canvas

Private Collection

36

Game Birds and Lemons

1883

oil on canvas

Michele and Donald D'Amour

Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, Massachusetts,

The James Philip Gray Collection

30

Fruit Displayed on a Stand

c. 1881–1882

oil on canvas

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston,

Fanny P. Mason Fund in memory of Alice Thevin

The fruits at this upscale stand are carefully displayed to lure bourgeois passersby and turn a profit. White paper cradles each fig, pear, apple, orange, and tomato, while verdant leaves frame the arrangement. Caillebotte enhanced the allure by pushing the fruits to the front of the picture plane, so that they fill nearly every inch of the canvas and give viewers the sensation of standing directly before the assortment. It is precisely the kind of display that he would have encountered in his newly designed neighborhood near the Paris opera house.

31

Chicken, Game Birds, and Hares

c. 1882

oil on canvas

Private Collection

32

Calf in a Butcher's Shop

c. 1882

oil on canvas

Private Collection

This rendering of a butchered calf reinterprets a classic art-historical subject. Caillebotte would have known Rembrandt's *Flayed Ox* (1655), which had been acquired by the Louvre when Caillebotte was a young boy. Whereas the Dutch master's animal carcass hangs in a cellar enveloped in blackness, Caillebotte's eviscerated calf is set against a bright red wall and white curtain, and is decorated with a garland and rose. By providing this new context, he transformed a meditation on mortality into a reflection of modern commerce, where even death is put on display and made attractive for consumers.

Rembrandt van Rijn, *Flayed Ox*, 1655, oil on canvas, Musée du Louvre, Paris

38

Langouste à la Parisienne

1880–1882

oil on canvas

Private Collection, Europe

57

***Linen Out to Dry,
Petit Gennevilliers***

1888

oil on canvas

Private Collection

52

***The Gennevilliers Plain,
Group of Poplar Trees***

1884

oil on canvas

Private Collection

***Fields of the Gennevilliers Plain,
Study in Yellow and Rose***

1884
oil on canvas
Private Collection

The four landscapes on this wall depict the fields surrounding Caillebotte's property in Petit Gennevilliers. The pleasant setting was artificially constructed, its beauty unnatural. Organized into rectilinear swaths, the fields were irrigated by massive pumps that deposited Parisian sewage and transformed the plains into fertile soil—the result of an 1873 agreement between the capital and the Gennevilliers Township. Caillebotte painted multiple views of this landscape, recalling Monet's serial depictions of the Saint-Lazare train station, three of which Caillebotte owned.

***The Fields, a Plain in Gennevilliers,
Study in Yellow and Green***

1884
oil on canvas
Collection of Frederic C. Hamilton,
Bequest to the Denver Art Museum

***The Gennevilliers Plain,
Golden Fields***

1884
oil on canvas
Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Fondation Corboud, Cologne

***Dabliss,
Garden at Petit Gennevilliers***

1893
oil on canvas
Private Collection

54

***Roses,
Garden at Petit Gennevilliers***

1886

oil on canvas

Private Collection

53

***Sunflowers,
Garden at Petit Gennevilliers***

c. 1885

oil on canvas

Private Collection

The large-scale garden paintings in this room juxtapose planted areas of exuberant flowers with the paths and buildings of Caillebotte's estate at Petit Gennevilliers, along the Seine River. In this painting the artist played the flouncing, tilting heads of the sunflowers against the flat facade of the house, punctured by the black rectangles of the shuttered windows.

56

Regatta in Argenteuil

1893

oil on canvas

Private Collection

In his forties, Caillebotte devoted an increasing amount of time to designing boats and sailing competitively. In this work, one of the last he would complete, two sailors are nearing shore, heading directly toward an anchored vessel. The figure on the right staring out from the boat is a self-portrait, while the identity of his mate is unknown.

45

Skiffs

1877

oil on canvas

National Gallery of Art, Washington,
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

The exhibition
Gustave Caillebotte: The Painter's Eye
is on view from June 28 to October 4,
entrance in Main Floor Gallery 74
(by the East Garden Court).