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Major Exhibition of Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot's Paintings of Women; National Gallery of Art is the Only Venue, September 9 through December 31, 2018



Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot

The Muse: History, c. 1865

oil on canvas

overall: 46 × 35.2 cm (18 1/8 × 13 7/8 in.) framed: 73.7 × 61 × 11.5 cm (29 × 24 × 4 1/2 in.)

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, H.O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929

Washington, DC—Dressed in rustic Italian costume or nude on a grassy plain, rendered with a sophisticated use of color and a deft, delicate touch, Corot's women convey a mysterious sense of their inner lives. **Corot: Women** features 44 paintings created between the 1840s and the early 1870s: nudes, individual figures in costumes, and an allegorical series of the model in the studio. The National Gallery of Art is the only venue for **Corot: Women**, on view from September 9 through December 31, 2018.

"Recognized as a great master of landscape painting, Corot is among the best represented artists in the Gallery's collection of 19th-century French art. This unique exhibition presents an opportunity to examine a smaller and less well-known aspect of his career," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "We are grateful to The Edwin L. Cox Exhibition Fund, as well as Leonard and Elaine Silverstein, who helped to make this exhibition possible."

One of the greatest landscape painters of the 19th century, Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (1796–1875) bridged the French neoclassical tradition and the impressionist movement of the 1870s. His figure paintings constitute a much smaller and less well-known portion of his oeuvre, but are of equal importance to the history of art, in particular for the founders of modernist painting, such as Paul Cézanne, Pablo Picasso, and Georges Braque. **Corot: Women** both distills and expands upon the Musée Marmottan Monet's exhibition **Corot: The Painter and His Models** (Paris, February 8–July 22, 2018).

Exhibition Organization and Support

The exhibition is organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington.

The exhibition is made possible through the support of The Edwin L. Cox Exhibition Fund and Leonard and Elaine Silverstein.

About the Exhibition

Corot: Women focuses on Corot's images of women painted throughout his career but rarely exhibited in his lifetime. Corot's figural oeuvre is comprised largely of three major motifs: nudes, single figures in costume posed three-quarter and full-length, and a late series of allegories focused on his studio. The model served a series of established poetic types: modern, Italian, or Greek women reading, seated or walking; women at wells; girls weaving crowns of flowers; women playing mandolins or tambourines, seated or standing, in an interior or against a landscape.

The costumed, single-figure works make up the largest component of Corot's figural paintings. They range from vaguely neoclassical images of models in muted tones, antique garb, and simplified compositions, such as *The Blonde Gascon* (c. 1850), to more romantic evocations of sitters in richly colored exotic dress, as depicted in *Young Woman in a Pink Skirt* (c. 1845–1850). Incorporating Corot's sophisticated color sensibility in the costume details, each work conveys a distinct feminine subjectivity.

In the mid-1850s the nude became a way for Corot to give a new direction to his career and to establish himself as more than a landscape painter. Corot's engagement with the traditional genre of

the nude was complicated by the shifting social position of artists' models and the incursion of photography into artistic practice in France's Second Empire.

Corot's studio, recognized by his contemporaries as essential to understanding his method and the meaning of his art, embodied his artistic aspirations and achievements. Beginning around 1865 Corot transcribed and reinvented his studio in a group of paintings that reference the studio's broader artistic and cultural significance. More than just a working space, Corot's studio was integral to his identity and was a recurring theme in his art, especially in the final decade of his life.

Three highlights in this exhibition are from the Gallery's collection: *Agostina* (1866), Corot's largest figure painting; *The Repose* (1860, reworked c. 1865/1870), the only female nude he exhibited publicly; and *Corot's Studio: Woman Seated before an Easel, a Mandolin in Her Hand* (c. 1868), which is the most resolved from his series of studio paintings.

Corot's female figures hover between the sitter's likeness, art historical precedents, and formal innovations, resulting in mysterious images that go beyond the generic categories of portraiture, allegory, and erotica.

Exhibition Curator

The exhibition is curated by Mary Morton, curator and head of the department of French paintings at the National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Related Activities

Lecture

Introduction to the Exhibition—Corot: Women

September 9, 2:00 p.m.

East Building Auditorium

Mary Morton, curator and head, department of French paintings, National Gallery of Art. A signing of the exhibition catalog follows.

Concert

Living Art Collective Ensemble (LACE) and Elisa Monte Dance Company

September 16, 3:30 p.m.

West Building, East Garden Court

LACE and Elisa Monte Dance Company presents *Corot and His Circle*

Exhibition Catalog

The exhibition is accompanied by a 180-page, fully illustrated catalog with essays by Morton;

Sébastien Allard, head of the department of paintings at the Louvre, Paris; Heather McPherson, professor of art and art history at the University of Alabama, Birmingham; and David Ogawa, associate professor of art history at Union College, Schenectady, NY.

Published in association with Yale University Press, New Haven and London, this catalog reproduces some 50 paintings by Corot—from the single-figure bust and full-length images of the 1840s through the 1860s nudes and his allegorical series devoted to the model in the studio. Essays by leading experts address Corot's debt to the old masters and the impact of his pictures on both 19th- and 20th-century painting, the relationship of his figural work to his more famous landscape practice, his response to the shifting social position of artists' models, and the incursion of photography into artistic practice in the Second Empire and early Third Republic.

The catalog is available for purchase in the West Building and East Building Shops; shop.nga.gov; (800) 697-9350 (phone); (202) 789-3047 (fax); or mailorder@nga.gov.

Press Contact:

Laurie Tylec, (202) 842-6355 or l-tylec@nga.gov

General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets at Constitution Avenue NW, and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. For information call (202) 737-4215 or visit the Gallery's Web site at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt, Twitter at www.twitter.com/ngadc, and Instagram at <http://instagram.com/ngadc>.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

Department of Communications

National Gallery of Art

2000B South Club Drive

Landover, MD 20785
phone: (202) 842-6353
e-mail: pressinfo@nga.gov

Anabeth Guthrie
Chief of Communications
(202) 842-6804
a-guthrie@nga.gov

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Exhibition Press Release

[Exhibition Checklist](#) (PDF 214 kb)

Bio: [Mary Morton, curator and head of the department of French paintings](#)

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[Exhibition Page](#)

PRESS CONTACT

Laurie Tylec
(202) 842-6355
l-tylec@nga.gov

Questions from members of the media may be directed to the Department of Communications at (202) 842-6353 or pressinfo@nga.gov

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