

# Paris, a XIX<sup>th</sup>-century City

- Presentation
- Objectives
- Preparation for the visit
- Follow-up to the visit
- The visit: list of artworks
- Bibliography

## Presentation

Paris was completely transformed during the XIX<sup>th</sup> century. It became a “city of the industrial age” (Maurice Agulhon): “an organised space, with straight paths, buildings that stood clear of one another, harmonious architecture” (Marcel Roncayolo). The important urban demographic growth that accompanied the first years of industrialisation was the initial cause of this upheaval. The armature of the city exploded: from 547 000 inhabitants in 1801, Paris reached a million in 1835, two million in 1860, three million in 1885, four million in 1900. The influx of population at first concerned the areas around the Châtelet, les Halles, Saint-Antoine, Saint-Marcel, and then towards the end of the century the surrounding towns, giving birth to a new urban reality that became an emblem of the XX<sup>th</sup> century: the suburbs. The economic mutations of the time directly modified the face of the city: workshops and small factories proliferated, railways, after the first line linking Paris to Saint-Germain opened in 1837 opened, spread around Paris and necessitated the installation of specific track and stations. Long before Haussmann, the social divisions were inscribed in urban geography: a miserable proletariat, workers from rural areas coming to work in the manufactures, packed in the old and insalubrious quarters of the centre. The need for a radical transformation of urban structures became clear to many decision-makers at the beginning of the century.

## The actors

The transformations of the Second Empire were outlined as early as Louis-Philippe’s reign (1830-1848). Rambuteau, prefect of the Seine département (1835-1848), made the first trench in the old fabric of the town with what is now the Rue Rambuteau linking Les Halles to the Marais district. The Champs-Élysées, the Arc de Triomphe on the Place de l’Étoile, the Place de la Concorde were finished, and Notre-Dame and the Sainte-Chapelle were restored. The economic crisis and then the 1848 revolution prevented the completion of the works, but the necessity for a comprehensive urban policy remained evident. An authoritarian regime, the Second Empire met the conditions of dynamic and long-lasting action. The urban development of Paris was supervised directly by Napoleon III, assisted by the prefect of the Seine département, the baron Haussmann (1809-1891). Promoting circulation and sanitation were the two key words of their policy. Modern urbanism is conceived in terms of networks (traffic and transports, sewers, fresh water supply, lighting). Air and light must circulate freely and disperse the “miasma”. An analogous inspiration lead to appraise the advantages in terms of security and law and order brought about by wide avenues, which were less likely to be scenes of riots and barricades than the traditional urban fabric. Yet this preoccupation did not have the importance sometimes conferred to it by republican historiography: the most “dangerous” districts (Belleville, Ménilmontant) were also the least concerned by Haussmannisation. Paris must fulfil its functions as political capital and crossroads. Embellishment, sanitation and hygiene, social progress, political prestige were all connected. Besides, the emperor wanted to associate the social and economic project: “The napoleonic idea is not an idea of war, but a social, industrial, commercial, humanitarian idea”, he wrote as early as 1839. Napoléon III set the broad lines of the works. He drew them in large colour pencil on a map hanging in his office. The supervision and implementation of the renovation of Paris were entrusted to Georges Haussmann, prefect of the Seine département (1855-1870) and de facto “minister” of the capital city, assisted in particular by the engineer Eugène Belgrand (1810-1878), director of the water supply service, and by the landscape designer Jean-Charles Adolphe Alphand (1817-1891), director of the promenade and plantations service, both polytechnicians and engineers of the Ponts et Chaussées inspired by the doctrines of Saint-Simon and Fourier. In 1857, Haussmann was awarded the double honour of baron and senator for his action. Haussmannisation resulted from the co-ordinated action of public intervention and of building societies and banks. It could command the necessary judiciary apparatus (decree of March, 1852): the right to expropriate owners for reasons of public utility was extended. The system was

based on loans through the intermediary of the Caisse des travaux, whereas previously, from 1815 to 1848, constitutional monarchies had financed their urbanisation works solely through the recourse to private investors, entrepreneurs and architects. The new roads generally doubled the network of existing roads, as the extremities of plots are generally cheaper to expropriate and this solution is more compatible with the uses and interests of the inhabitants, in particular shopkeepers, craftsmen and industrials. Urban development under Haussmann was often the result of a compromise between the will of public authorities and the interests of private owners.

## An urban policy

The most visible aspect of Haussmannian works is the “urban surgery” the city underwent. In order to ensure the circulation of air, water and light in lodgings and to limit the overcrowding of people in the poorest quarters, concerns of hygiene which emerged in the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century, it was necessary to renovate the urban fabric and to create straight axes of circulation around which the city would find its articulations. These changes sometimes fed nostalgia: “*The old Paris is no more ; the shape of a city / Changes more quickly, alas! than a mortal’s heart*” Charles Baudelaire), but they also had their defenders: “*Civilisation carves wide avenues in the black maze of back streets (...)* lodgings fit for men in which health comes down with the air and serene thought with sunlight” (Théophile Gautier). The building of new streets and avenues allowed for “new links”. The city was conceived as connecting varied neighbourhoods, each being organised around a central element, the square. Buildings were subordinated to streets and boulevards. Public buildings were high points of a very hierarchical representation of the new urbanism. Besides, during the conception and implementation of their works, architects were expected to respect the engineer’s pre-eminence. Large urban breakthrough determined the hierarchy of the new urban space. The boulevard, wide and planted with trees, became the Haussmannian way par excellence. Paris was structured around the cross made by the east to west axis of the Rue de Rivoli and by the north-south axis of the Boulevard de Sébastopol. Unlike American urbanism, these breakthroughs end in defining monuments situated at their intersections. The importance of these monuments was reinforced by the new urban pattern: they had a symbolical institutional function, but also served as identification and spatial landmarks. They were mostly townhouses, churches, schools, train stations, hospitals, sometimes Palais de Justice and theatres, in addition to which, but not on a par with them, were offices, factories and shops. The parks and public gardens (“verdant spaces” according to the terminology of the time) replaced the old rural plots. They had an autonomous

existence in the neighbourhoods and not, as in London, inside the courtyards. Two woods, in Boulogne and Vincennes, were designed as sources of air for the capital and integrated within its boundaries by the 1859 reform. To these were added new parks and public gardens (Monceau, Montsouris, Buttes-Chaumont), totalling 1854 hectares in all. Avenues bordered with trees (the first of which dating from Louis XVI's reign) became the norm. Decorations also gave rhythm to the urban landscape: the ground covering with cobbled streets and pavements of grey asphalt and urban furniture grids around the trees, lamp posts, sewer plates, corresponded to models defined by the administration and unified the public space. Yet decorative elements prevented excessive monotony, such as fountains, including that of the Luxembourg (Grauck, 1864) or that of the Observatoire (Davioud, Carpeaux and Fremiet, 1874). What made the Haussmannian project most original, nonetheless, was certainly the development and organisation of the underground, with the constitution of a large network of sewers (560 km were added to the 100 existing previously) and water pipes, anticipating the construction of the metropolitan underground railway at the end of the century. The city was enlarged by annexing surrounding towns on January 1, 1860. The city toll barrier no longer delimited the city. Eight new arrondissements (districts), from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup>, had to be connected to the centre. The massive destructions of the Second Empire were sometimes contested by the first defenders of the "Vieux Paris". The case of the Ile de la Cité, particularly touched, is to this day the most often denounced. This was not to be the case of the dismantlement of the fortifications, long debated before being voted in 1919. This was only to lead to the question of the urban development of "the zone", recurrent during the first decades of the twentieth century and marked by the projects of Henri Sellier (1885-1943) in the name of the Seine General Council. Council houses, sporting equipment and schools, parks and public gardens eventually appeared in a somewhat erratic way.

## The consequences

The poorest inhabitants left the new neighbourhoods, thus reinforcing the social segregation between a bourgeois west side and a popular east and the development of disadvantaged suburbs. This evolution, quite real, was not as systematic as it has sometimes been thought: the popular Paris was "fragmented", "not swept" (Roncayolo) and the embourgeoisement of the new quarters was often an ongoing process not devoid of nuances. Still the imperial regime's authoritarian stance, linked with fierce financial speculation (cf. *La Curée* by Zola), was often criticised. The success of the pamphlet by Jules Ferry entitled *Les Comptes fantastiques d'Haussmann* (1868) finally caused the prefect's departure from office and a pause in the

Emperor's urban policy, which in any case was already a victim of financial restraints before being one of the war and defeat. Napoleon III's Paris also neglected workers' lodgings (the Cité Napoleon remained an exception), and all connected with the functions of industrial production (factories, workshops...). Generally speaking, the construction of workers' lodging estates was left to private initiatives of entrepreneurs.

In a sense, the Commune de Paris (March 18 - May 28, 1871) may also be considered to be a re-appropriation of Paris by the working class: this is the view supported by the historian Jacques Rougerie. It can but barely provide a "counter-memory" of a popular Paris. The urbanism defined by Napoleon III and Haussmann prevailed as a model for the rest of the country (Marseilles, Lyon, Bordeaux, etc.) and abroad. The following generation broadly pursued their work at a slower pace due to the consequences of war, and then to economic difficulties: the Boulevard Raspail, the Tolbiac-Convention rocade of the southern districts date from the end of the century. The lines of "Belle Epoque" buildings became less rigid and solemn, but working-class lodgings remained long neglected, even after the passing of the Siegfried Act (1894) that created cheap lodgings. The world fairs (1878, 1889, 1900) encouraged the construction of prestigious monuments (Trocadéro, Eiffel Tower, Grand Palais, Petit Palais, Gare d'Orsay, metro). Paris became then the modern capital par excellence, the city of light.

## Objectives

This visit aims at showing both the outlines of the transformations of Paris in the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, in particular in the Haussmannian period, and various aspects of urban life at the end of the century. It will associate architectural models and paintings including a "panorama", a specific genre of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, thus promoting an initial reflection on the nature and functions of an artwork.

## Preparation for the visit

This visit of the Musée d'Orsay is primarily about historical and social aspects, but includes the observation of a few important artworks of the period. It therefore encourages questioning the relationships between art and society, a subject to be tackled differently following the age of the pupils. It should be explained to the pupils that the essential function of the museum is to exhibit artworks and not to illustrate a history course with documents, and that therefore one should not expect a comprehensive vision of the transformations of Paris in the XIX<sup>th</sup> century. For an optimum understanding of the artworks, it is necessary to give first an overview of the political, economic and social evolution of the period.

## Follow-up to the visit

It is possible to complement the visit to the museum with a circuit in the streets of the capital. Visits to the Musée Carnavalet, the Louvre, the Musée National d'Art Moderne (Centre Pompidou) or to the Musée de la Ville de Paris may of course also be considered. In the literature class, the corpus of texts that may be used is enormous. We shall only mention one reference, *La Curée* by Zola (1872), for the financial aspects of Haussmannisation. The city was also evoked in the cinema by the reconstructions used by Marcel Carné (*Les Enfants du Paradis*) or the transcriptions of Zola's books: *The New Babylon* by Kozintsev (1926), *Nana* by Jean Renoir (1926) or by Christian-Jaque (1954), or of Maupassant's works: *Bel Ami* by Louis Daquin (1954). Amateurs may use *Si Paris nous était conté* by Sacha Guitry (1955). The importance of underground life in modern cities fed the imagination of Fritz Lang in *Metropolis* (1925), a pessimistic version of the future of industrial cities.

## The visit: list of artworks

Nota bene: this list of artworks is for information only. The guide is free to chose artworks supporting his or her intention, provided that it does not exceed 12 to 15 pieces for a visit.

## Images of Paris before Haussmann

- Alexandre Antigna: *L'Éclair (Lightning)*, 1848
- Alfred Stevens: *Ce qu'on appelle le vagabondage (What is Called Vagrancy)*, 1855
- Stanislas Lépine:  
*Montmartre, Rue Saint-Vincent*, undated
- Stanislas Lépine:  
*Quai des Célestins. Le Pont-Marie*, 1868
- Johan-Barthold Jongkind:  
*La Seine et Notre-Dame de Paris*, 1864
- Johan-Bathold Jongkind:  
*Rue de l'Abbé de l'Épée*, 1872
- Victor Navlet: *Vue de Paris en ballon (View of Paris from a Balloon)*, 1855

## The transformations of the capital

- Models of façades of first and second-class buildings, circa 1860
- longitudinal section of the Opera House, circa 1880
- Model of the Opéra neighbourhood in 1914
- Model of the Crédit Lyonnais, 1878-1915
- Model of the Palais des Machines, 1889
- Claude Monet: *La Gare Saint-Lazare*, 1877
- Gustave Caillebotte: *Toits sous la neige (Rooftops in the Snow)*, 1878
- Maximilien Luce: *Le Quai Saint-Michel et Notre-Dame*, 1901
- Edouard Vuillard: *Jardins publics (Public Gardens)*, 1894

## Urban life

- Pierre-Auguste Renoir: *Le Bal du Moulin de la Galette (Dance at the Moulin de la Galette)*, 1876
- Claude Monet: *Rue Montorgueil, Paris. Fête du 30 juin 1878 (Rue Montorgueil, Paris. Celebration of June 30, 1878)*, 1878
- Edgar Degas: *L'Absinthe (Absynthe) or Dans un café (In a Café)*, 1875
- Edgar Degas: *Femmes à la terrasse d'un café (Women on the Terrace of a Café)*, 1877
- Édouard Manet: *La serveuse de bocks (The Waitress)*, 1879
- Vincent van Gogh: *La Guinguette à Montmartre (The Dance in Montmartre)*, 1886
- Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec: *Danse au Moulin-Rouge (Dancing at the Moulin-Rouge)*, 1895
- Giuseppe de Nittis: *La Place des Pyramides*, 1875
- Maximilien Luce: *Une rue de Paris en mai 1871 (A Paris Street in 1871)*, or *La Commune*, 1903-1905
- André Devambez: *La Charge*, 1902

## The suburbs

- Armand Guillaumin:  
*Soleil couchant à Ivry (Sunset in Ivry)*, 1873
- Claude Monet: *Les déchargeurs de charbon (The Coal Unloaders)*, 1875
- Vincent van Gogh:  
*Le Restaurant de la Sirène à Asnières*, 1887
- Frantisek Kupka:  
*Les Cheminées (The Chimneys)*, 1906

## Bibliography

- Jeanne Gaillard, *Paris, la ville (1852-1870). L'Urbanisme parisien à l'heure d'Haussmann*, Chamion, 1976, reed. L'Harmattan, 1998
- Maurice Agulhon et Georges Duby (under the supervision of), *Histoire de la France urbaine*, tome 4 (with Marcel Roncayolo), *La Ville de l'âge industriel, le cycle haussmannien*, Le Seuil, 1985
- Bernard Rouleau, *Villages et faubourgs de l'ancien Paris, histoire d'un espace urbain*, Le Seuil, 1985
- Leonardo Benevolo, *Histoire de l'architecture moderne*, tome 1, *La révolution industrielle*, Dunod, 1987
- François Loyer, *Paris XIX<sup>e</sup>. L'immeuble et la rue*, Hazan, 1987
- Bruno Girveau, *La Belle époque des cafés et des restaurants*, guide Paris/Musée d'Orsay, Hachette/RMN, 1990
- Jean-Louis Cohen and André Lortie, *Des Fortifs au périif. Paris, les seuils de la ville*, Picard, 1991
- Anne Roquebert, *Le Paris de Toulouse-Lautrec*, guide Paris/Musée d'Orsay, Hachette/RMN, 1992
- Bernard Marchand, *Paris, histoire d'une ville, XIX<sup>e</sup>-XX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Le Seuil, "Points-Histoire", 1995
- Gérard Bauer, *Paris, tableaux choisis*, Scala/Centre Georges Pompidou, 1995
- Alfred Fierro, *Histoire et dictionnaire de Paris*, Robert Laffont, "Bouquins", 1996
- Robert Tombs, *La Guerre contre Paris, 1871*, Aubier, 1997
  
- "Le Paris d'Haussmann, Au nom de la modernité", *TDC Textes et documents pour la classe*, n°695, April 1995
- "La sculpture dans la ville au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle", under the supervision of Catherine Chevillot and Nicole Hodcent, *TDC Textes et documents pour la classe*, n°727-728, January 15 to 31, 1997
- "L'habitat du peuple de Paris", *Le Mouvement social*, n°182, January-March, 1998
  
- *Paris, roman d'une ville*, film by Stan Neumann, scientific advisor François Loyer, VHS, 52 mn, joint production Musée d'Orsay, 1991

# Paris, a XIX<sup>th</sup>-century City

- The visit: the artworks

## Images of pre-Haussmannian Paris

### 1. Alfred Stevens (1825-1906): *Ce qu'on appelle le vagabondage* (*What is Called Vagrancy*), also known as *Les Chasseurs de Vincennes* (*The Hunters of Vincennes*), 1855

Location: ground floor, Seine gallery

Paris streets are here the privileged settings of an urban drama staged and represented at its final moment. Soldiers are taking a mother and her child in rags to gaol for vagrancy. A lady wants to intercede for her while an old worker, disabled, has already given up. This tentative is doomed to fail, as is shown by the soldier's gesture of refusal. A similar scene may be found in *Choses vues* (*Things I Saw*) by Victor Hugo, before the 1848 revolution, where the conjunction of the gap between high society and the paupers with the penal system supporting the social order is presented as potentially explosive. Parisian streets are assimilated here to a theatre set, with posters contrasting the pauperism shown with speculation on buildings ("adjudication auction") and with the pleasures of the high society ("dance"), the long, grey wall forbidding any hope in the protagonists' minds. The different social groups cohabiting in the city are here juxtaposed in a composition that affects through its representation of social misery as inescapable. The role of the state, purely repressive, is exposed. The emperor Napoleon III was upset when he saw the painting at the 1855 World Fair: he considered this job unfit for French soldiers and ruled that vagrants would from then on be led to the Conciergerie in closed coaches. The social drama thus went on, but at least scandal was avoided. In a less anecdotal manner, preventing such scenes from occurring again through the development of a coherent urban layout was one of the aims of Haussmann's policy.

### 2. Stanislas Lépine (1835-1892): *Montmartre, rue Saint-Vincent*, undated

Location: ground floor, room 20

In his compositions, Stanislas Lépine chose to represent the banks of the Seine, the Bassin de la Villette and the immediate surroundings of Paris. The Rue Saint Vincent suggests the everyday settings of the painter who lived in Montmartre, an old village annexed to Paris with the 1859 administrative reform that created eight new arrondissements (districts) in Paris. Lined with buildings the façades of which are irregular and curved, with steep roofs dividing the sky, mingling with foliage, tortuous, narrow,

uneven, the street evokes the "Ancien Régime" town. The face of pre-Haussmannian Paris, the Rue Saint-Vincent is enlivened in the foreground by picturesque figures. This painting evokes the Paris of Balzac: narrow, dirty, ill-lit streets, or that of Zola in *L'Assomoir* (1877): "The house seemed all the more enormous that it rose between two low, fragile constructions, stuck against her; and, square, like a block of mortar grossly mixed, rotting and crumbling in the rain, it profiled on the clear sky above neighbouring roofs its huge raw cube, its flanks barren of any roughcast, muck-coloured, unendlessly nude like prison walls. The windows, deprived of shutters, sported uncurtained, windows, the greenish colour of unclean water... From top to bottom, the undersized lodgings burst outside, letting pieces of their misery out through all the cracks...".

### 3. Victor Navlet (1819-1886): *Vue de Paris en ballon* (*View of Paris from a Balloon*), 1855

Location: ground floor, room 24

This painting is a panorama of pre-Haussmannian Paris. The outlines of the general map of the city are easy to recognise: the main axes, the landmark monuments, the city toll barrier, the suburb. A comparison with the present city reveals the broad lines of Napoleon III and his prefect's project. On the 1855 painting, one can see the ancient core of the city: the Ile de la Cité, the Latin quarter to the south, the commercial areas in the north. The urban development along the communication lines (roads and railways) allowed many rural plots to subsist. Industrial aspects are already there with the stations and railroads, a few recognisable factories (the gas plant on the Avenue de Choisy in the lower left corner, which has since been replaced by a public garden). But the fortifications (1841-1844) encircling Paris are not visible, conceived by Thiers but ill thought of by the Paris working class ("le mur murant Paris rend Paris murmurant").

The panorama was a fashionable genre in the XIX<sup>th</sup> century. Practised by specialists, it allowed a large public to apprehend space in a time when aerial pictures did not exist yet. The first photographic panoramas also date back to the mid-century. The use of a balloon to draw preparatory sketches made possible here an unusual overview of the capital city.



1



2



3

1. Alfred Stevens : *Ce qu'on appelle le vagabondage*, also known as *Les Chasseurs de Vincennes*, 1855
2. Stanislas Lépine : *Montmartre, rue Saint-Vincent*, undated
3. Victor Navlet : *Vue de Paris en ballon*, 1855

## The transformations of the capital

**4. Paul-Frédéric Levicomte (1806-1881): First-class apartment building, 125 Avenue des Champs Elysées in Paris, circa 1860, model by Enzo Bellardelli, under the supervision of Richard Peduzzi, 1986**

Location: ground floor, room 24

**5. François Rolland (1806-1888): Three Third-class apartment buildings, 36, 38 and 40 Boulevard Beaumarchais in Paris, circa 1860, model by Enzo Bellardelli under the supervision of Richard Peduzzi, 1986**

Location: ground floor, room 24

These two models give an idea of the concern for architectural, urban and social coherence of the Haussmannian project. In each case, the regularity of the façades is the crucial element. A prominent feature of the first-class building is the “noble floor”, here the second floor (sometimes it is the first) above the commotion of the street, but accessible without too much effort in buildings that were not yet equipped with lifts. Tap water was the principal innovation in these new buildings. The fourth-floor lodgings were obviously more modest, while the loft was occupied by servants and maid’s rooms who were from then on lodged outside their masters’ homes, an evolution deplored by certain moralists. Third-class buildings were characterised by the apartments on all floors having the same height, the ground floor often being occupied by shops or artisans’ workshops. These buildings often did not include garrets, and the lodgings at the top were lent or sold like the others (cf. the dormer windows).

**6. Crédit lyonnais (1878-1913): Model of the Crédit Lyonnais William Bouwens van der Boijen (1834-1907), later Victor Laloux (1850-1937) and André Narjoux (1867-1934), steel framework: Gustave Eiffel and Armand Moisant**

Location: ground floor, room 24

This model is a reconstruction of the central headquarters of the bank. Here too, the metallic structure is hidden by a stone façade. Yet, the steel

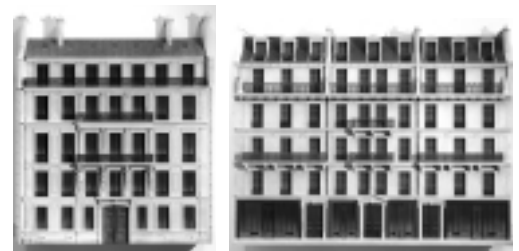
framework is apparent inside. Caryatids, clock and pediment decorated with sculptures (Bank, Trade, Industry) give the façade its rhythm. From the entrance hall onwards, the offices are distributed on three levels on each side of a long hallway. The impression of light is accentuated by the glass superstructure and the crystal cupola. The stairway evokes that in the Chambord castle with its double revolution. The bank symbolises the economic boom encouraged by the imperial regime. The flow of goods, capital and merchandise was considered to be a source of wealth that was to percolate throughout the society. Henri Germain (1824-1905), founder of the Crédit Lyonnais (1863) and member of parliament under the Empire and the Republic, was one of the key-men of the times.

**7. Model of the Opera House neighbourhood in 1914**

Location: ground floor, “Opéra” room

The Haussmannian quarter was organised around a monument, as shown by this model of the neighbourhood of the Opera House in 1914. The Opera house stands at the centre of a business district close to the Gare Saint-Lazare, where banks and department stores (Printemps, Galeries Lafayette) featured prominently in an atmosphere Zola sought to render in *Au bonheur des Dames*. Its metallic structure, covered with stone and glass, was also used for the buildings of the department stores. Note the dissymmetry of the two sides, with the double access that was devised to allow the imperial coach to avoid traffic jams that could favour murder attempts (the two former opera houses, that of the Rue Le Peletier and that of the Rue Louvois had been the scenes of the attempts on the life of the Duc de Berry by Louvel in 1820 and of Napoleon III by Orsini in 1858). Garnier’s Opera house was only completed after the fall of the Empire, in 1875. Garnier had won the architects’ competition for the design of the new opera house in 1861, ahead in particular of Viollet-le-Duc, and he had set about turning it into the emblematic monument of the Second Empire and of the “style Napoléon III”, characterised by its eclecticism. He had ensured that the Avenue de l’Opéra, the width of which was to be the same as that of the façade of his building, would emphasise the beauty of the opera house and be as a case to a jewel, which meant in particular that it should not be lined with trees.

The buildings with their regular façades were subordinated to rectilinear streets, the level of which was even. They contained interior yards, places of a popular sociability that declined with the arrival of tap water into the upper floors. The entrances to the metro, built from 1900 onwards, may be seen on the model.



4

5



6



7



8

4. Paul-Frédéric Levicomte : *Maison à loyer de 1<sup>re</sup> classe, 125 avenue des Champs-Elysées à Paris*, circa 1860, model by Enzo Bellardelli, under the supervision of Richard Peduzzi, 1986
5. François Rolland : *Trois maisons à loyer de 3<sup>e</sup> classe, 36, 38 et 40 boulevard Beaumarchais à Paris*, circa 1860, model by Enzo Bellardelli, under the supervision of Richard Peduzzi, 1986
6. Crédit lyonnais (1878-1913) by William Bouwens van der Boijen, then Victor Laloux and André Narjoux, gravure, *Revue générale de l'architecture et des travaux publics*, 1884
7. Model of the quartier de l'Opéra in 1914 made under the supervision of Richard Peduzzi, 1986
8. Gustave Caillebotte : *Toits sous la neige*, 1878

**8. Gustave Caillebotte (1848-1894):**  
*Toits sous la neige (Rooftops under the Snow)*, 1878

Location: upper level, room 30

Presented at the fourth impressionist exhibition (1879), and also entitled *Vue de toits (Effet de neige) (View of Roofs (Snow Effect))*, this painting focuses on the zinc coverings usual in Paris. Yet only in photography are precedents to this vision of the city to be found, in the works of Hippolyte Bayard and Alphonse Poitevin, in particular. The snow, here in its urban, dirty aspect, accentuates the contrasts. The limited place left to the sky strengthens the impression of lodgings inextricably intertwined, covering human activities hidden from outside eyes. The caricaturist Draner described this painting as a “Sentimental zinc piece full of poetry. Inspired by *L'Assomoir*” in the 25<sup>th</sup> of april 1879 issue of *Le Charivari*. In fact, it is in a way the hidden face of the Haussmannian order that is exposed here. Caillebotte anticipated the end-of-the-century mythology of tom cats and cat burglars to be found in serials and crime novels as well as in Steinlein’s posters or Feuillade’s films.

## Urban life

**9. Edgar Degas (1834-1917):**  
*L'Absinthe or Dans un café (Absynthe or In a Café)*, 1875

Location: upper level, room 31

Cafés, fashionable in the later half of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, were a privileged meeting place, sometimes centres of intellectual life. The Café de la Nouvelle Athènes, place Pigalle, near the Fernando circus (later Médrano circus) was frequented by the impressionist painters. This painting by Degas was inspired by its decoration. It certainly evokes a dark side of Parisian life: a woman sitting at a table in front of a glass of absinthe, with sad and downcast eyes, seemingly not even aware of the presence of the man resting his elbow on her table, dishevelled, smoking his pipe. The models were two of Degas’s friends, the comedian Ellen Andrée and the painter Marcelin Desboutin. The pathetic solitude emanating from this scene is accentuated by the off-centred composition and the empty tables in the foreground. One cannot help but think of Zola’s *L'Assomoir* in front of this picture. Alcoholism was the plague of society and particularly the working class (“work is the plague of the drinking classes”, Oscar Wilde). Besides, the smell of absinthe, made with gentian, a bitter plant, fits well this atmosphere of sadness and hopelessness. A particularly noxious beverage because of its effects on the nervous system, producing and selling absinthe was outlawed in 1914. This painting may be compared with *La Serveuse de bocks* (1879) by Manet, a contemporary and yet

much happier painting, but then beer and wine were considered to be nutritive and healthy beverages (“wine is the most hygienic drink”, Louis Pasteur).

**10. Claude Monet (1840-1926):**  
*La Gare Saint-Lazare*, 1877

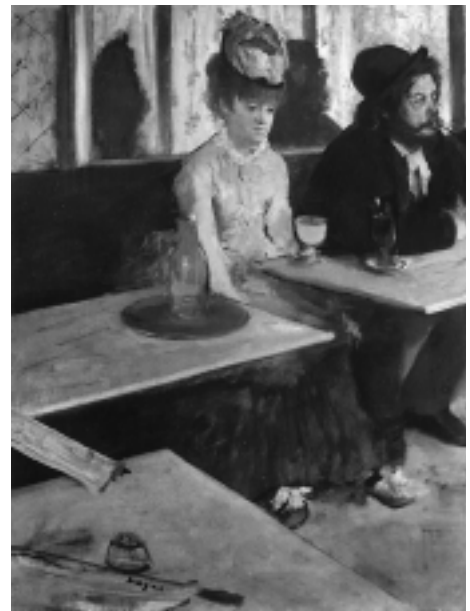
Location: upper level, room 32

Monet painted in the station itself, studying light and atmosphere, in particular the play of steam and fumes. Saint-Lazare is the Parisian terminal of the Chemins de fer de l'Ouest (Western Railways). Haussmannian buildings may be seen on the left. After Manet and Caillebotte, Monet renewed the representation of urban landscapes and tackled the “poetry of stations” as Zola urged painters to do. He was particularly interested in the steam produced by the engine, which he painted pink or blue, thus unveiling the optimism of the century about the potentialities of technical progress. He painted the station as a crossroads in perpetual motion, suggesting its noise and its agitation. The glass roof and the steel framework covering the oldest platform in the station may also be observed. Industrial buildings provided engineers with the opportunity to use new materials and modern construction techniques. Monet painted eleven different views of the station, now dispersed in several museums and private collections, preparing the path for his subsequent “series” on Rouen cathedral and of haystacks.

**11. Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841-1919):**  
*Le Bal du Moulin de la Galette (Dancing at the Moulin de la Galette)*, 1876

Location: upper level, room 32

Montmartre belongs to the surroundings of Paris that were incorporated into the capital by the 1859 reform but that kept their particular physiognomies. “A page of history, a precious monument of Parisian life of a rigorous accuracy”, thus Georges Rivière, a friend of the painter and a senior civil servant, described this scene of Parisian life in 1877. Renoir renders the picturesque and festive atmosphere of a dance on the Butte Montmartre, at the foot of the mill. Like many impressionist painters, he enjoyed reviving the leisure of a society mingling petty bourgeois and working class elements: i.e. what was called at the time “democracy”. These pleasures today look innocent enough, but in 1876 the political authorities still preached a “moral order” relying strongly on a conservative catholic church that was hostile to public dances, among other things. Facing the Montmartre Sacré Cœur, the construction of which was decided by the Assemblée Nationale in expiation of the crimes of the Commune, the dancing at the Moulin de la Galette also symbolised the joie de vivre of the “new classes” (Gambetta) who were about to establish the Republic.



9



10



11

**12. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901): *Danse au Moulin Rouge (Dancing at the Moulin-Rouge)*, 1895 and *Danse mauresque (Moorish Dance)* or *Les Almées (The Almahs)*, 1895**

Location: upper level, room 37

Toulouse-Lautrec painted these wood panels covered with jute in order to decorate the lateral walls of the booth of "La Goulue" at the Foire du Trône. In reality named Louise Weber, nicknamed "La Goulue" (The Glutton) because of her healthy appetite, had to give up cabaret dancing and earned her living exhibiting herself to a crowd of onlookers tickled by her reputation. Toulouse-Lautrec chose to evoke her glorious past in Montmartre dances, when she performed in the Moulin-Rouge together with Valentin "le désossé" (the boneless). The orchestra stands in the tribune (upper right angle) while spectators appear to find a pleasure mixed with a pinch of bad conscience in these distractions of disputable refinement. The framing and the exaggeration of postures contribute to an overall impression of movement. The second panel depicts the Moorish dance performed by La Goulue at the Foire du Trône, with musicians whose clothes recall a fancy East (the Almahs are Egyptian dancing girls). Among the public, the writer Oscar Wilde, the dancer Jane Avril, Toulouse-Lautrec himself and the critic Félix Fénéon are featured in the foreground, from left to right. The presence of two victims of bourgeois conventions and chance, Fénéon, sued as an anarchist at the trial of "the thirty" (1894) and Wilde, condemned to gaol in 1895 for homosexuality, may be interpreted as a sign of protest against the prevailing social order.

**13. Armand Guillaumin (1841-1927): *Soleil couchant à Ivry (Sunset in Ivry)*, 1875**

Location: upper level, room 41

The end of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century gave birth to suburban landscapes, which became part of the urban fabric without always being integrated into urbanism. Communication lines and industrial plants often explain the more or less anarchic development of suburban houses, beyond the traditional faubourgs. As early as 1848, the socialist theoretician Victor Considerant evoked "the factory, the railway, the slums (that) together made up the industrial town, unshaped receptacle for a population of a few thousand souls". These new landscapes fed new themes in paintings. Factory chimneys, visible in the background of Guillaumin's painting, for instance, may from then on been considered to be one of the symbols of industrialisation and modernity, as were the steam curls of the engines in the Gare Saint-Lazare. They were part of the daily environment and marked

the town in zones contained in the periphery and yet connected to the centre precisely by the suburban lines of the railways. The painters often seem to have used these chimneys as details, more for their verticality than for their modernity. Industrial landscapes and working-class suburbs are little-represented in the collections of the Musée d'Orsay.

**14. Victor Laloux (1850-1937): *The Gare d'Orsay (1898-1900)***

The Gare d'Orsay is one of the last monuments of the century made in Paris. It was built on the site of the ruins of the Palais d'Orsay (Cour des Comptes), burnt down in May, 1871 during the commune. The construction begun in 1898 was completed in 1900, before the inauguration of the World Fair, where visitors were welcomed in provisory pavilions on the Esplanade des Invalides and at the Petit Palais and Grand Palais, both built for the occasion and therefore, like the Pont Alexandre III, contemporary to the station. Traffic jams had spoiled the success of the 1889 fair (25 million visitors). The new station, as well as the first line of the métropolitain (1900), solved this problem for the 1900 exhibition that was attended by 50 million visitors. The choice of a prefabricated metallic structure and political requirements explain the speed of the construction. The steel framework, particularly visible near the pavilion of architecture, was hidden behind freestone, both because the monument thus fits better its prestigious surroundings in the heart of Paris (close to the Louvre and the Jardin des Tuileries) and because such was the aesthetic choice of an architect trained at the School of Fine Arts. Napoleon III, and his contemporaries, had been prone to ostentatious modernity (Gare-Saint-Lazare). The end of the century, on the contrary, marked by a crisis of confidence in the values of progress, saw a massive return of architects who sought a decorative effect and were bent on a nostalgic quest for pre-industrial beauty. The façade of the station, corresponding to the type of the Haussmannian building, sheltered a hotel complete with restaurant and ballroom. Their preservation in the museum allows visitors to imagine the settings of receptions at the end of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century that were meant to give the public, bourgeois but nevertheless careful with money, the satisfactions of luxury for little expense.



12



15



14