Paris, a XIXth-century City

Presentation

Paris was completely transformed during the XIXth century. It became a “city of the industrial age” (Maistre-Aubin): “an organised space, with straight paths, buildings that stood clear of one another, harmonious architectures” (Maurice Ronchaylo). The important urban demographic growth that accompanied the first years of industrialisation was the initial cause of this upheaval. The armature of the city exploited by 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 territories, giving birth to a new urban reality that became an emblem of the XIXth 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, 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 factories, packed in the old and multiethnic 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 (1850-1848). Rambuteau, prefect of the police department (1851-1848), made the first breach in the old fabric of the town with what is now the Rue Rambuteau linking les Halles to the Marais district. The Champ-de-Mars, 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 crises 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 police department, 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, avenues, 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 scen of riots and barricades than the traditional urban fabric. Yet this preoccupation did not have the importance sometimes attributed to it by republican historiography: the most “dangerous” districts (Belleville, Monfartimont) were also the least concerned by Haussmannisation. Paris must fulfill its functions as political capital and residence. Emblems, sanitation, hygiene, social progress, political prestige were all connected. Rambuteau wanted to make the capital as “mortal’s heart” (Charles Baudelaire), but they also had their defenders: “Civilisation carves wide avenues in the black maze of back streets (...)” (Théophile Gautier). The building of new streets and avenues allowed the “new links”. The city was conceived as connecting varied neighbourhoods, each being organised around a central element, the square. Buildings were subordinate 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-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 semiotic institutional function, but also served as identification and spatial landmarks. They were mostly townhouses, churches, schools, train stations, hospitals, sometimes Palaces of Justice and theatres, in addition in which, not on a path 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

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existence in the neighbourhoods and not, as in London, inside the courtyards. Two mosques, in Boulogne and Versailles, were designed as sources of air for the capital and integrated within its boundaries by the 1899 reform. To these were added new parks and public gardens (Monceau, Buttes-Chaumont), totalling 1,154 hectares in all. Avenues bordered with trees (the first of which dating from Louis XV’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 (1940), or that of the Observatoire (Haviland, 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 (500 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 13th to the 20th, 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 Île de la Cité, sometimes contested by the first defenders of the “Vieux Paris”, was particularly touch, as to this day the most often denounced. This was not to be the case of the dismantlement of the fortifications, long debated and denounced. This was not to be the case of the “Vieux Paris”. The case of the Île de la Cité, sometimes contested by the first defenders of the “Vieux Paris”, was particularly touch, as to this day the most often denounced. This was not to be the case of the dismantlement of the fortifications, long debated and denounced. This was not to be the case of the “Vieux Paris”. The case of the Île de la Cité, sometimes contested by the first defenders of the “Vieux Paris”, was particularly touch, as to this day the most often denounced. This was not to be the case of the dismantlement of the fortifications, long debated and denounced. This was not to be the case of the “Vieux Paris”. The case of the Île de la Cité, sometimes contested by the first defenders of the “Vieux Paris”, was particularly touch, as to this day the most often denounced.

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 so systematic as it has sometimes been thought: the popular Paris was “fragmented”, not swept (Bombée) and the enlargement of the new quarters was often an ongoing process not devoid of nuances. Still the imperial regime’s authoritarian stance, linked with loose financial speculation (e. La Cité by Zola), was often criticized. The success of the pamphlet by Jules Ferry entitled Les Comptes Fantastiques d’Haussmann (1886) finally caused the prefect’s departure from office and a pause in the

The visit: list of artworks

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**Images of Paris before Haussmann**

- **Alexandre Antipas**: L’Éclair (Lightning), 1849
- **Alfred Stevens**: Ce qu’on appelle le vagabondage (What is Called Homelessness), 1885
- **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 Barthold Jongkind**: Ruïne de l’abbaye de Ste Foy (Ruins of the Abbey of Ste Foy), 1872
- **Victor Navarre**: Vue de Paris en balloon (View of Paris from a Balloon, 1855

**The transformations of the capital**

- **Models of façades of first and second-class buildings, circa 1860**
- **Inaugural section of the Opera House, circa 1860**
- **Model of the Opera neoclassical in 1914**
- **Model of the Credit Lyonnais, 1878-1915**
- **Model of the Palais des Machines, 1889**
- **Claude Monet**: La Cité Saint-Lazare, 1877
- **Gustave Caillebotte**: Toits sous la neige (Roofs in the Snow), 1878
- **Maximilien Luce**: La Place des Pyramides
- **Edouard Vuillard**: Jardin publics (Public Gardens), 1894

**Preparation for the visit**

This visit aims at showing both the outlines of the transformations of Paris in the XIXth 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 XIXth century, thus promoting an initial reflection on the nature and functions of an artwork.

**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 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 XIXth 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 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 XIXth 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.

**The city was also evoked in the cinema by the imagination of Fritz Lang in Metropolis** (1927), or La Curée by Sacha Guitry (1955). The importance of underground public spaces for the capital and integrated within the Musée National d’Art Moderne (Centre Pompidou) and the musée de la Ville de Paris may of course 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 XIXth 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.

**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 1874 (Rue Montorgueil, Paris. Celebrating June 30, 1874), 1876
- **Edgar Degas**: L’absinthe (Absinthe) en Danse un café (in a Café), 1873
- **Edgar Degas**: Femmes a la terrasse d’un café (Women on the Terrace of a Café), 1875
- **Edmond Maussion**: La revue de boulevard (The Boulevard Review), 1879
- **Vincent van Gogh**: La Guinguette à Montmartre (The Dance in Montmartre), 1886
- **Heinrich Tischmueller**: Dans au Moulin Rouge (Dansing at the Moulin Rouge), 1888
- **Gustave Caillebotte**: Peint rose au neige (Roofs in the Snow), 1878
- **Maximilien Luce**: Le Quai Saint-Michel à Notre-Dame, 1901
- **Édouard Vuillard**: Jardin publics (Public Gardens), 1894

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existence in the neighbourhoods and not, as in London, inside the courtyards. Two woods, in Boulogne and Vincennes, were designated 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, Buttes Chaumont), totalling 1,534 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 (1844, or 1845) and the Observatory (Haydon, Carpueaux 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 (500 km were added in 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 wall no longer delimited the city. Eight new arrondissements (districts), from the 13th to the 20th, 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 recalled. “Vieux Paris”. 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 Cité et Zola), was often criticized. The success of the pamphlet by Jules Ferry entitled Les Compas, Fantastique d’Haussmann (1860) 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 of 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 Jungorre. It can butt hence 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 (Marseille, 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 Tbilissi–Convention round of the southern districts date from the end of the century. The lines of “Belle Epoque” buildings became less rigour and solemn, but working-class lodgings remained long neglected, even after the passing of the Jugefert Act (1894) that created cheap lodgings. The world fairs (1878, 1889, 1900) encouraged the construction of prestigious monuments (Trocadéro, Édith Tower, Grand Palais, Petit Palais, Garé d’Orly, métro). Paris became then the modern capital par excellence, the city of light.

Objectives

The visit aims at showing both the outlines of the transformations of Paris in the XIXth 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 XIXth 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 XIXth 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

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The visit: list of artworks

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Images of Paris before Haussmann

Alexandre Antipas, L’Église (Lighting), 1848
Alfred Stevens, Ce qu’on appelle le vagabondage (What is Called Vagabondage), 1855
Stanislas Lépine, Montmartre, Rue Saint Fiacre, 1850
Stanislas Lépine, Rue des Cité, Le Pont-Neuf, 1866
Johan Barthold Jongkind, La Seine et Notre-Dame de Paris, 1864
Johan Barthold Jongkind, Bar de l’Aube de l’Oise, 1852
Victor Navre, Rue 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 1900
• Initial section of the Opera House, circa 1860
• Model of the Opera 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 Castlebolt: Treis vu le weige (Roofs in the Snow), 1879
• Maximilien Luce: Le Quai Saint-Michel et Notre-Dame, 1901
• Édouard Vuillard: Jardins publics (Public Gardens), 1894

The suburbs

• Armand Guillaumin: Noël couchant à Iry (Sunset in Iry), 1875
• Claude Monet: Les déchargeurs de charbon (The Coal Unloaders), 1875
• Vincent van Gogh: Le Restaurant de la Struve à Asnières, 1887
• Frantisk Kupka: Les Chemins (The Chimneys), 1906

Urban life

• Pierre-Auguste Renoir: Le Bal du Moulin de la Galette (Dance at the Moulin de la Galette), 1876
• Edgar Degas: L’Absoute (dancers) or Dans un café (in a Café), 1873
• Edgar Degas: Femmes à la terrasse d’un café (Women on the Terrace of a Café), 1877
• Édouard Manet: La servante de bois (The Waitress), 1876
• Vincent van Gogh: La Gare Saint-Lazare (The Gare in Montmartre), 1886
• Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec: Dans le Moulin Rouge (Dancing at the Moulin Rouge), 1885
• Guiseppe de Nolli: La Place des Pyramides, 1875
• Maximilien Luce: Une rue de Paris en mai 1871 (A Paris Street in 1871), or La Commune, 1901-1905
• André Devambez: La Chaudière, 1902

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 Veil Baby and Keesom (1924), Nana by Jean Renoir (1926) or by Christa-Laque (1934), or of Maupassant’s works: Béjart by Louis Itünquin (1916). Adopters may see Si Paris nous rajeunit coulôt by Sacha Guitry (1931). The importance of underground life in modern cities led the imagination of Fritz Lang in Metropolis (1927), a prophetic vision of the future of industrial cities.
Presentation

Paris was completely transformed during the XIXth century. It became a “city of the industrial age” (Maurois, Agulhon) “an organised space, with straight paths, buildings that stood clear of one another, harmonious architecture” (Marc Rancoulot). The important urban demographic growth that accompanied the first years of industrialisation was the initial cause of this upheaval. The armature of the city exploited from 1847 000 inhabitants in 1801, Paris reached a million in 1835, two million in 1880, 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 suburbs, giving birth to a new urban reality that became an emblem of the XIXth century: the suburbs. The economic fortunes 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.
Paris, a XIXth-century City

• The visit: the artworks

Images of pre-Haussmannian Paris

1. Alfred Stevens (1825-1900): 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 the gait of a vagrant. This tentative is doomed to failure, as shown by the soldier's gesture of refusal. A similar scene may be found in Choiseul rue (Place du Bac) by Victor Hugo, before the 1848 revolution, where the conjunction of the gap between high society and the poor seemed supporting the social order is presented as potentially explosive. Parisian streets are assimilated here to a theatre act, with posters contrasting the paupers shown with speculation on buildings ("auctions of adjudication") and with the pleasures of the high society ("dance"). The long walls of the booths of "La Goulue" at the Foire du Trône were undulating, but more enormous that it rose between two cube, its flanks harkened by any roughcast, muck-coloured, unadornably scaled like pawn walls. The windows, deprived of shutters, dotted uncurtained, windrows, the present colour of an unclean water... From top to bottom, the undernourished loisings burst outsides, revelations of their misery out through all the cracks...

2. Stanislas Lépine (1835-1892): Les Chasseurs de Vincennes (Les Chasseurs de Vincennes), 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 immediate surroundings of Paris. The Rue Saint-Vincent suggests the everyday settings of a painter who lived on Montmartre, an old village annexed to Paris with the 1859 administrative reform that created eight new arrondissements (districts) in Paris. The Rutelle des Chasseurs de Vincennes is also known as Les Chasseurs de Vincennes, Montmartre, rue Saint-Vincent, undated.

This painting was a genuine gift of pre-Haussmannian Paris. The outlines of the general map of the city are easy to recognize; the main axes, the landmarks monuments, the city toll barrier, the suburb. A comparison with the present city reveals the broad lines of Napoleonic III and his prefect's project. On the 1853 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 separation by suburban lines (roads and railways) allowed many rural plots to sustain social aspects in the city, with the stations and railways, a few remarkable factories like the gas plant on the Avenue de Châtelet in the lower left corner, which has since been replaced by a public garden. But the fortifications (1841-1844) encircling Paris are not visible, covered by Thiers but thought of by the Paris working class ("le mur murant Paris mur and Paris rurum""). The Paris metro was the first underground line to be constructed in the city. The Paris mur on the walls of the building of "La Goulue" at the Foire du Trône ("Vincennes"").

The panorama was a fashionabile genre in the XIXth century, practiced by specialists, it allowed a large public to apprehend space in a time when aerial photographs were not yet fashioned. 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.
The transformations of the capital


Location: ground floor, room 24

These two models give an idea of the concerns 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 "mobil floor", here the second floor (sometimes it is the fifth) 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 lift was occupied by servants and maids who were from then on housed outside their masters' homes, an evolution decried by certain moralists. Third-class buildings were characterized 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 let or sold like the others (cf. the dormer on the roofs of the Haussmannian buildings)

7. Model of the Opera House neighbourhood in 1914

The Haussmannian quarter was organised around a monument, as shown by this model of the neighbourhood of the Opera House in 1814. 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) are located prominently in an atmosphere of sadness and hopelessness. A woman sitting at a table in front of a glass of absinthe, with sad and downcast eyes, seemingly raised her elbow on her table, dishevelled, smoking her pipe. The models were tree of Degas' friends, the comedian André and the painter Marcelline Bodinou. 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, a contemporary and yet much happier painting, but then beer and wine were considered to be nutritious and healthy beverages ("wine is the most hygienic drink", Louis Pasteur).

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 toit (Eiffel tower), this painting focuses on the zinc coverings usual in Paris. Yet in photographs are precedents to this vision of the city to be found, in the works of Hippolyte Paris and Edouard Piot, in particular. The snow, here in its urban, dirty aspect, accentuates the contrasts. The limited places left to the sky strengthens the impression of lodgings invisibly intersected, covering human activities hidden from outside eyes. The caricatured painter described this painting as a "Sensational nine-piece full of poetry. Inspired by L'Assomoir in the 24th April 1876 room of the Chardron. In fact, it is a way to understand the maze of the Haussmannian interior that is exposed here. Caillebotte anticipated the end-of-the-century mythology of tom cats and cat burglers to be found in serials and crime novels as well as in Scénic's posters or Folies-Frill's films.

Urban life

9. Edgar Degas (1854-1917): L'Absinthe ou Dans un café (Absinthe or In a Café), 1875

Location: upper level, room 31

Cafés, fashionable in the latter half of the XIXth century, were a privileged meeting place, sometimes centres of intellectual life. The Café de la Gare Saint-Lazare, place de la Gare Saint-Lazare and the Café des Champs-Élysées were particularly noxious beverage because of its atmosphere of sadness and hopelessness. A woman sitting at a table in front of a glass of absinthe, with sad and downcast eyes, seemingly raised her elbow on her table, dishevelled, smoking her pipe. The models were three of Degas' friends, the comedian André and the painters Marcelline Bodinou. 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, a contemporary and yet much happier painting, but then beer and wine were considered to be nutritious 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 d'Oréd (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 crescendo in perpetual movement, suggesting its noise and its oscillation. 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 (1841-1891): 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 Monet characterized by the 1870 reform but kept their particular physiognomy. "A page of history, a precious monument of the Parisian life of a rigorous accuracy," thus Georges Rivière, a friend of the painter and a senior civil servant at the Ministry of Finance in 1877. Renoir rends the picturesque and festive atmosphere of the Moulin de la Galette, at the foot of the mill. Like many impressionist artists, he enjoyed representing the leisure of a society pleasingly mingling bourgeois and working class elements: i.e. what was called at the time "amusing classes," Oscar Wilde). Besides, the smell of absinthe, made with a taste, a bitter plant because of the atmosphere of sadness and hopelessness. A particularly nutritious beverage because of its effects on the nervous system, producing and selling absinthe was outlawed in 1914. This painting may be compared with La Salle d'Attente (1879) by Manet, a contemporary and yet much happier painting, but then beer and wine were considered to be nutritious and healthy beverages ("wine is the most hygienic drink", Louis Pasteur).
The transformations of the capital

4. Paul-Frédéric Lecivonette (1806-1881):
First-class apartment building, 125 Avenue des Champs-Élysées in Paris, circa 1860, model by Enzo Bellardelli, under the supervision of Richard Peduzzi, 1886
Location: ground floor, room 24

5. François Rolland (1806-1888):
Three third-class apartment buildings, 56, 58 and 40 Boulevard Beaumarchais in Paris, circa 1860, model by Enzo Bellardelli under the supervision of Richard Peduzzi, 1886
Location: ground floor, room 24

These two models give an idea of the concerns 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 “mule floor”, here the second floor (sometimes it is the first) above the commissariat 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 accessible without too much effort in buildings. The fourth-floor lodgings were obviously more modest, while the loft was accessible without too much effort in buildings.

7. Model of the Opera House neighbourhood in 1914
Location: ground floor, “Opera” room
The Haussmannian quarter was organised as a monument, as shown by this model of the neighbourhood of the Opera House in 1814. 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 of light is accentuated by the glass framework is apparent inside. Caryatids, clock and sculpted decoration with statues (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 pervade throughout the society. Henri Germain (1824-1895), founder of the Crédit Lyonnais (1861) and member of parliament under the Empire and the Republic, was one of the key men of the times.

8. Gustave Caillebotte (1848-1894):
Toits sous la neige (Roof tops under the Snow), 1878
Location: upper level, room 30
Presented at the fourth impressionist exhibition (1880), and also entitled Vue de toits (View of Roofs Caillebotte), this painting focuses on the roof coverings usual in Paris. Yet only in photography are precedents to this vision of the city to be found, in the works of Hippiacus, Rejlander and Siphone Poulbot, in particular. The snow, here in its urban, dirty aspect, accentuates the contrasts. The limited fields left to the sky strengthens the impression of lodgings inscrutably interwoven, covering human activities hidden from outside eyes. The caricatural Lebreton described this painting as a “Sentimental niche piece full of poetry. Inspired by L’Estacade” in the 24th of April 1882 issue of Le Charivari. In fact, it is a way to a hidden face of the Haussmannian order that is exposed here. Caillebotte anticipated the end-of-the-century mythology of tomcats and cat burglars to be found in serials and crime novels as well as in Scerri’s posters or Fahrenheit’s films.

Urban life

9. Edgar Degas (1854-1917):
L’Absinthe ou Dans un café (Absinthe or In a café), 1875
Location: upper level, room 31
Cafés, fashionable in the later half of the 19th century, were a privileged evening place, sometimes centres of intellectual life. The Café de la Nouvelle Athènes, place Pigalle, near the Fernando circus (later Médrano circus) was frequented by intellectuals and the impresario of the circus, by Degas himself. A model of the café was painted by Degas and inspired by its decoration. It certainly denotes a dark back of the café and its concrete planes. A woman sitting at a table in front of a glass of absinthe, with sad and downturned eyes, seemingly not even aware of the presence of the man resting his elbow on her table, dishevelled, smoking his pipe. The models were tree of Degas’s friends, the comedian Élien Andrè and the painter Marcellin Bodinou. The pathetic solitude emanating from this scene is accentuated by the off-centre composition and the empty tables in the foreground. One cannot help but think of Zola’s L’Assommoir, in front of this picture. Alcoholicism 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 anise, a bitter plant that was for the effects on the nervous system, producing and fancied by absinthe was outlawed in 1914. This painting may be compared with La Serveuse de Bocks (1873) 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 flames. Saint Lazare was 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 potentials of technical progress. He painted the station as a crossroads in perpetual motion, suggesting its noise and its animation. 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.

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 houses been characterized by the Haussmannian reform but kept their particular physiognomies. “A page of history, a precious monument of Parisian life of a rigorous accuracy”, thus Georges Buiére, a friend of the painter and a senior civil servant of the Government of the Avenue de l’Opéra, 1875. Renoir renders the picturesque and festive atmosphere of the Moulin de la Galette, at the foot of the mill. Like many impressionist painters, he enjoyed representing the leisure of a society pleasuring minstrelsy bourgeois and working class elements i.e. what was called at the time “democracy”. These paintings today look incredibly beautiful, but in 1870 the political authorities still preached a “moral order” relying strongly on a conservative Catholic church that was hostile to the new regime. The flow of goods, capital and merchandise was considered to be a source of wealth that was to pervade throughout the society. Henri Germain (1824-1895), founder of the Crédit Lyonnais (1861) and member of parliament under the Empire and the Republic, was one of the key men of the times.
Paris, a XIXth Century City

• The visit: the artworks

Images of pre-Haussmannian Paris

1. Alfred Stevens (1825-1908): 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 intervene for her while an old worker, disabled, has already given up. This situation is meant to fail, as it is shown by the soldier's gesture of refusal. A similar scene may be found in Choses rares (Things Rares) 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 act, with posters contrasting the paupers shown with spectacularisation on buildings ("auction house auction"), and with the pleasures of the high society ("dance"), the limp, 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 inscrutable. The role of the state, purely repressive, is exposed. The emperor Napoléon III was upset when he saw the painting at the 1855 World Fair, where 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 was not repeated. In a less anecdotal manner, preserving 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 (1853-1892): Montmartre, rue Saint-Vincent, undated

Location: ground floor, room 20

In his compositions, Stanislas Lépine chose to represent the banks of the Seine, the Rues de la Ville and the immediate surroundings of Paris. The Rue Saint-Vincent suggests the everyday setting of a painter who lived on Montmartre, an old village annexed in Paris with the 1839 administrative reform that created eight new arrondissements (districts) in Paris. Lined with buildings the façades of which are irregular and curved, with deep crevices dividing the sky, mingling with linkage, tumultuous, narrow, uneven, the street evokes the “Ancien Régime” town. The face of pre-Haussmannian Paris, the Rue Saint-Vincent is entered 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 monstrous that it rose between two low, fragile constructions, stuck against her; and, square, like a block of mortar grossly mixed, retting and crumbling in the rain, it perched on the clear sky above neighbouring roofs its huge raw cube, its flanks barred by any roughcast, muck-covered, unsoundly made like person walls. The windows, devoid of shutters, sported uncurtained, windrows, the greenish colour of unclean water... From top to bottom, the undersized lodgings burst outside, tell of sources 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 recognize: the main axes, the landmark monuments, the city tall barrier, the suburb. A comparison with the present city reveals the broad lines of Napoleon III and his prefect’s project. On the 1853 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 between the two main axes implied the opening of new streets which, as new lines (roads and railways) allowed many rural plots to suddenly take on spatial aspects. The suburban cities 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 (1843-1844) encircling Paris are not visible, contrary to Thiers but thought of by the Paris working class (“le mur mutant Parisien route Paris monastère”).

The panoramic was a fashion genre in the XIXth Century, practiced 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.