



Realism in 19th-Century French Painting

Dr. Nancy G. Heller

Tuesday, February 24, 2026 - 6:30 p.m. to 8:15 p.m. ET

A VERY BASIC BIBLIOGRAPHY

Introductory Surveys:

Linda Nochlin, *Realism* (Penguin Books, 1971)
Michelle Facos, *An Introduction to 19th-Century Art* (Routledge, 2011)
Tim Farrant, *Introduction to 19th-Century French Literature* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2007)
Whitney Chadwick, *Women, Art and Society* (6th ed.) (Thames & Hudson, 2020)

Individual Artists/Groups:

Petra ten-Doesschate Chu, *The Most Arrogant Man in France: Gustave Courbet and the Nineteenth-Century Media Culture* (Princeton University Press, 2007)
T. J. Clark, *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the Second French Republic, 1848-1851* (University of California Press, 1973)
Sarah Faunce, Linda Nochlin, et al, *Courbet Reconsidered* (Yale University Press, 1988)
Simon Kelly, et al, *Millet and Modern Art: From Van Gogh to Dalí* (Yale University Press, 2020)
Erin Duncan-O'Neill, *Art Against Censorship: Honoré Daumier, comedy and resistance in Nineteenth-Century France* (Manchester University Press, 2024)
Bruce Laughton, *Honoré Daumier* (Yale University Press, 1996)
Victor S. Navasky, *The Art of Controversy: Political Cartoons and Their Enduring Power* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2013)
Amélie Simier, *Jules Dalou: Le Sculpeur de la République* (Paris Musées, 2013)
Elizabeth Johns, *Thomas Eakins: The Heroism of Modern Life* (Princeton University Press, 1991)
Brandon Ruud, *The Ashcan School and the Eight: "Creating a National Art"* (Marquand Books, 2022)
David Peters Corbett, *An American Experiment: George Bellows and the Ashcan Painters* (Yale University Press, 2011)

RELEVANT NAMES, TERMS, & CONCEPTS

Realism (vs. realism, naturalism, & verisimilitude)
Neoclassicism vs. Romanticism
linear vs. painterly
formalist vs. social histories of art
Linda Nochlin
T. J. Clark

Ornans, in the Franche-Comté region of France
Pierre-Joseph Proudhon
Contemporary French writers: Émile Zola, Honoré de Balzac, Champfleury, George Sand
Photography: Louis Daguerre & Nadar
Le Salon
The Paris Commune
The Place Vendôme Column, Paris
lithography
caricature: political satire vs. social satire
bateaux laveurs in Paris
Other 19th-century French Realist [or quasi-Realist] artists: Jules Dalou, Jean-François Millet, Rosa Bonheur
19th-century Italian Realists: Filippo Carcano, Achille D'Orsi
19th-century German Realists: Adolph Menzel
The Ash Can School (U.S.): John Sloan, George Bellows, Edith Dimock, Abastenia St. Leger Eberle
John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*, 1939
Dorothea Lange, *Migrant Mother*, 1936
Martha Graham, *Steps in the Street: Devastation, Homelessness, Exile*, 1936

PRINCIPAL ARTWORKS DISCUSSED
(in the order in which they were presented)

Jacques-Louis David, *The Oath of the Horatii*, 1784 (Louvre, Paris)
Eugène Delacroix, *Dante and Virgil in Hell*, 1822 (Louvre)
Gustave Courbet, *The Stonebreakers*, 1849 (destroyed)
“ “ “ , *Burial/Funeral at Ornans*, 1850 (Musée d'Orsay, Paris)
Jean-François Millet, *The Gleaners*, 1857 (Musée d'Orsay)
“ “ “ , *The Angelus*, 1859 (Musée d'Orsay)
Rosa Bonheur, *Sheep and a Lamb*, 1886 (Sudley House, Liverpool)
Courbet, *Burial at Ornans*, 1850 (Musée d'Orsay)
Honoré Daumier, *Rue Transnonain, April 15, 1834* (various collections)
Daumier, *Le ventre législatif*, 1834 (various collections)
Daumier, *The Laundress*, 1863 (Musée d'Orsay)
Jules Dalou, *Le Grand Paysan*, 1889 (Duke University, Durham, North Carolina)
Filippo Carcano, *Break Time, Working on the Exposition of 1881*, 1887 (Gallery of Modern Art, Milan, Italy)
Achille d'Orsi, *Your Neighbor*, 1887 (National Gallery of Modern Art, Rome)
Adolph Menzel, *The Iron Rolling Mill*, 1875 (National Gallery of Art, Berlin, Germany)
Thomas Eakins, *The Gross Clinic*, 1875 (shared between Philadelphia Museum of Art & the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia)
John Sloan, *Hairdresser's Window*, 1907 (Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT)
George Bellows, *Cliff Dwellers*, 1913 (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA)
Edith Dimock, *The Old Snuff Taker*, 1912 (Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, FL)
Abastenia St. Leger Eberle, *Old Woman Picking Up Coal*, 1908 (Hirshhorn Museum & Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC)
Ben Shahn, *Sacco and Vanzetti* (series), 1932 (Museum of Modern Art, NYC)

PRÉCIS OF MODERN FRENCH HISTORY

The French Revolution (1789-1792)—began with storming of Bastille; King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette were executed.

First Republic (1792-1804)—included “Reign of Terror” (1793-1794), when 25,000+ people died; France was led by a 5-person committee called *le Directoire* (1795-1799) until it was overthrown by Napoleon I (Bonaparte). The so-called Consulate ruled France until the start of the First Empire.

First French Empire (1804-1814); Napoleon I (Bonaparte) was Emperor of France.

Bourbon Restoration (1814-1830), return of French monarchy, led by King Louis XVIII, who reigned 1814-1824. He died in office and was succeeded by his brother, King Charles X, whose rule (1824-1830) was ended by the Revolution of 1830.

July Monarchy (1830-1848), after “July Revolution” of 1830, which established a constitutional monarchy, led by Louis-Philippe. He was deposed by the 1848 Revolution.

Second Republic (1848-1852), established after Revolution of 1848, with Napoleon III (the nephew of Napoleon I {Bonaparte}) as President.

Second Empire (1852-1870), after Napoleon III declared himself Emperor.

Franco-Prussian War, 1870-71; France defeated by a coalition of German states; French monarchy abolished.

The Paris Commune (2 months in 1871); a radical government established by Parisian workers. After its fall Communards were sentenced to death or hard labor; many fled the country. [Gustave Courbet called for the destruction of the Place Vendôme Column; he was sentenced to six months in prison.]

Third Republic (1870-1940). After the suppression of the Commune, France’s government was relatively stable, though the 3rd Republic had more than ten different Presidents.

Vichy Government—during WW II, under German occupation (1940-1945.)

Fourth Republic (1946-1958), a postwar period of economic growth but continued political instability (France had 21 different administrations during this 12-year period). The 4th Republic ended with the Algerian War of Independence.

Fifth Republic (1958-present). French Presidents during this time have included Charles De Gaulle, Georges Pompidou, Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, François Mitterrand, Jacques Chirac, Nicolas Sarkozy, François Hollande, and Emmanuel Macron (2017+).

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