



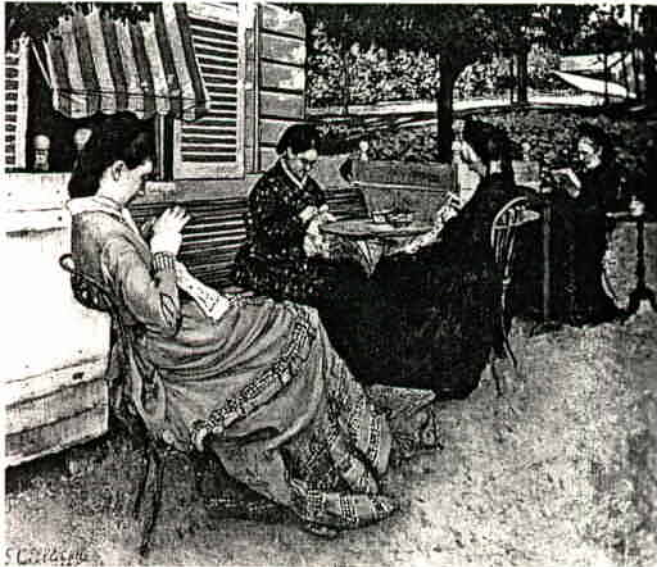
Gustave Caillebotte

URBAN IMPRESSIONIST

The Art
Institute
of Chicago

February 18 -
May 28, 1995

The Daniel F.
and Ada L.
Rice Building



GALLERY 2
 Portraits in the Country,
 1876. Oil on canvas. Musée
 Baron Gérard, Bayeux.
 (fig. 1)

Gustave Caillebotte: *Urban Impressionist* commemorates the one-hundredth anniversary of the death of the artist whose *Paris Street; Rainy Day* (fig. 3), along with several other scenes of modern Paris, stands among the most creative and original works of later nineteenth-century art. Apart from a handful of paintings, however, Caillebotte's art and his contributions to modern painting remain relatively unknown.

The circumstances of Caillebotte's life have worked against a wider dissemination and recognition of his works. Born in 1848 to a wealthy textile

Many of Caillebotte's paintings portray life in his family home in Paris, and, as shown here, at the Caillebottes' summer home in the suburban village of Yerres. In this work, which he exhibited at the third Impressionist exhibition, in 1877, Caillebotte depicted his relatives absorbed in and isolated from one another by their activities. The resulting sense of emotional detachment, which suggests alienation, would become a hallmark of Caillebotte's paintings of modern life.



GALLERY 3
 Floor Scrapers, 1875
 Oil on canvas. Musée
 d'Orsay, Paris
 (fig. 2)

Rejected by the jury of the 1875 Salon, Caillebotte submitted this painting, which features men scraping the floors of an apartment interior, to the second Impressionist exhibition, in 1876. Thereafter, Caillebotte would be identified with *Floor Scrapers*, which was the only one of his works to enter the French national museum at the time of his bequest.

manufacturing family, he trained as a lawyer and later joined the Impressionist group when, in 1876, Degas and Renoir invited him to show his work at the second Impressionist exhibition. Among Caillebotte's submissions was *Floor Scrapers* (fig. 2), the painting of common laborers that brought him instant notoriety and made his name synonymous with a bold new realism. Although controversial because of its daring perspective and audacious subject matter, *Floor Scrapers* was critically acclaimed for its painterly qualities. In the following year, Caillebotte was again praised by critics for his tightly composed and highly



GALLERY 5
Paris Street; Rainy Day,
 1877. Oil on canvas. *The Art*
Institute of Chicago (Charles
H. and Mary F. S. Worcester
Collection, 1964.336).
 (fig. 3)

In 1877, Caillebotte exhibited Paris Street; Rainy Day and The Pont de l'Europe (cat. 29), two monumental and painstakingly executed street scenes that contributed considerably to his reputation as the painter of modern Paris. In these cityscapes, Caillebotte brilliantly realized a poetic vision of the complexity of contemporary urban life, suggesting at once the energy, the vastness, and the sense of isolation felt by the inhabitants of Paris.

finished monumental street scenes (fig. 3), which were more acceptable to the public than the sketchlike and seemingly unfinished paintings by other Impressionists, such as Monet and Renoir.

Although Caillebotte's inherited wealth freed him from the financial necessities of exhibitions and sales, he made it his mission to support the Impressionists' enterprise. Not only did he purchase paintings from his struggling and unrecognized friends, he organized and subsidized the Impressionist exhibitions in 1877, 1879, and 1880.

After 1882, however, the growing dissension among the original group of Impressionists discouraged



GALLERY 6
Young Man at His Window,
 1875. Oil on canvas.
Private collection.
 (fig. 4)

him. His interest increasingly shifted from painting to gardening and building racing boats. He did not participate in the last Impressionist exhibition, in 1886, and he subsequently moved to the village of Petit Gennevilliers to retire from the art world of Paris.

In 1894, at the age of 45, Caillebotte died suddenly of a stroke. His outstanding collection of Impressionist paintings, bequeathed to the French State, was finally accepted after much controversy, and his foresight proved to be invaluable. Caillebotte's collection formed the first "modern art" collection in a national

With this portrait of his youngest brother, René, Caillebotte first broached the theme of looking out at Paris, which later played an important role in his work (see fig. 5). Turned away from the viewer and looking out a window, René assumes the pose, often associated with Romanticism, of a person communing with nature. In Caillebotte's painting, however, it is not nature that captures his attention, but the man-made spectacle of the new city.

RELATED EVENTS

Programs range from lectures by distinguished scholars to family workshops which take place in the Kraft General Foods Education Center (KGFEC). Events are free with museum admission except where indicated. Call (312) 443-3680 for more information.

FREE PUBLIC LECTURES

Tuesdays at 6:00
Fullerton Auditorium

February 28 *Caillebotte's Modern Vision*. Kirk Varnedoe, Chief Curator of Painting and Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

March 14 *The New Paris: Site and Schema of Caillebotte's Urban Vision*. Michael Marrinan, Associate Professor of Art History, Stanford University.

April 4 *Hardworking Riches: Caillebotte, Impressionism, and the Floor-Scrapers*. Julia Sagraves, art historian and catalogue essayist.

April 25 *Gustave Caillebotte: Urban Impressionist*. Tamar Garb, Professor of Art History, London College.

May 16 *Caillebotte and the Wonder of Haussmann's New Paris*. David Van Zanten, Professor of Art History, Northwestern University.

Sundays at 3:00

March 12 *Caillebotte: Impressionist or Realist?* Gloria Groom, Associate Curator, European Painting, The Art Institute of Chicago.
Fullerton Auditorium

March 26 *Caillebotte and Genre Painting*. Gabriel Weisberg, Professor of Art History, University of Minnesota.
Price Auditorium, KGFEC

Weekdays at 12:15

March 6, 17, 28; April 5, 10, 27; May 3, 12, 16, and 26
Consult Calendar of Events for auditorium or gallery locations.

VOICES AT 12:15

February 21, March 22
Urban Perspectives: Caillebotte, Cassatt, Degas, Pissarro, and Toulouse-Lautrec. Dramatized readings of letters, journals, and other writings.
Price Auditorium, KGFEC

FAMILY WORKSHOPS

February 25 *Big City Adventures*
April 29 *Fun in the City*
Ages 4-6, 10:30-11:30
February 25, 26
Impressions of the City
April 29, 30 *April in Paris*
Ages 7 and up, 2:30-4:00
Studio 18, KGFEC

SUBSCRIPTION SERIES

Fridays OR Saturdays, 10:45-12:00, February 17, 18-May 19, 20 *Toward a New Vision: 19th-Century Artists*.
Purchase single tickets or four-week segments at the door.
Call (312) 443-3680.
Morton Auditorium

TEACHER WORKSHOP

February 25, 10:30-3:30
Gustave Caillebotte: Urban Impressionist. Mark Bouman, Associate Professor of Geography, Chicago State University, and Gloria Groom. Fee: \$25.
Call (312) 443-3575.

CONCERT

April 9, 2:00 *Chicago Symphony Orchestra Chamber Music Series: Paris Street; Rainy Day*. The Athenaeum Quartet featuring music by Fauré, Franck, and Saint-Saëns, introduced by Gloria Groom. Call (312) 435-6666. Fullerton Auditorium

RELATED EXHIBITION

May 9-28 *Chicago Visions: Urban Photography by High School Students*. KGFEC

A fully illustrated catalogue of the exhibition with essays by Anne Distel, Douglas W. Druick, Gloria Groom, Rodolphe Rapetti, Julia Sagraves, and Kirk Varnedoe is available in the Museum Shop for \$65.00 (hardcover) and \$35.00 (softcover).



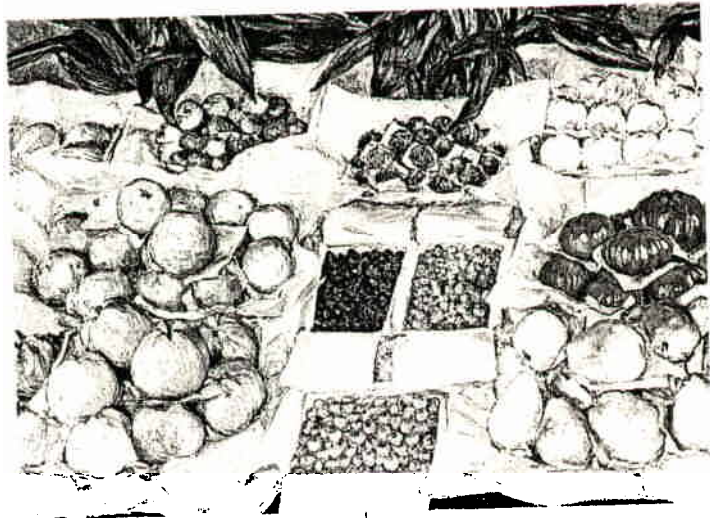
GALLERY 6

A Balcony, 1880. Oil on canvas. Private collection. (fig. 5)

museum and is now the core collection of the Musée d'Orsay. But with the exception of *Floor-Scrapers*, the only painting by Caillebotte added to the bequest, the artist's importance as a highly original painter has remained largely unknown. His posthumous reputation as a painter has been overshadowed by his role as a great collector and benefactor.

Gustave Caillebotte: Urban Impressionist brings the artist to the forefront and highlights the full range of his work. This retrospective includes numerous paintings and drawings that have remained with the Caillebotte family, many of which have never been seen

More than any of the other Impressionists, Caillebotte was attracted to the urban landscape as seen from a balcony or a window (fig. 4). These highly original views of Paris alternate between paintings with a precise, narrative style and more spontaneous works such as this balcony scene, painted with the lighter, broken brush strokes associated with the Impressionist aesthetic.



publicly. Organized both chronologically and thematically, these works reflect the artist's attraction to modern life—the interiors and exteriors of his residences in Paris and the suburbs (figs. 1 and 4); the bridges and boulevards of the “new” Paris (figs. 3 and 5); and the flowers and animals he fashioned into extraordinary still-life paintings at the end of his life (fig. 6). As seen in the exhibition and accompanying catalogue, Caillebotte's ambitiously scaled, carefully crafted, and often highly ambiguous paintings offer a fresh new vision that should be recognized as a unique contribution to the Impressionists' achievement.

GALLERY 9

Fruit, also known as Display of Fruit, 1880/82. Oil on canvas. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

(fig. 6)

Caillebotte's unique vision transformed even the most traditional subjects of portraits, nudes, and still lifes. Here, he presents a decorative arrangement of fruit as if seen by a person walking by a store window in the fashionable area of Paris where he lived.

The exhibition and catalogue were underwritten by SARA LEE CORPORATION. The exhibition is organized by the Réunion des musées nationaux/musée d'Orsay, Paris, and The Art Institute of Chicago. Additional support was provided by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The exhibition has also received support in the form of an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities. Travel assistance has generously been provided by United Airlines.