

FOREWORD

Almost all of us are involved in the project of aestheticizing our domestic environment. The "aesthetic" encompasses the choices we make through myriad, often daily, decisions – how to arrange the furniture, where to hang the pictures, how to display the tsotchkes – as well as the tactile pleasures of running water while doing dishes or climbing into a freshly made bed. But such aesthetic domestic experiences are of a different order than that of living with sublime works of art. Morton and Tobia Mower's "domestic space" is suffused and intertwined with marvelous works of art – beautiful, intoxicatingly effulgent with light and color and art-historically inviolable.

On our first visit to the Mowers' home, Toby offers us coffee. "Yes, thank you," we politely reply, as we glance at the coffee maker on the kitchen counter. On the kitchen wall, not three feet away, hangs a quintessential Fernand Leger (Composition with Dancer, 1935), a work that pulsates with the synchronic dynamism that one looks for in a really terrific Leger. "Cream or sugar?" Spending time in the Mowers' home, one begins to expect these kinds of experiences – the stunning recognition of Matisse's languorously splayed dancers in the entry hall, the incandescent Renoir outside the powder room. Above the living room fireplace hang a magnificent triumvirate of oil paintings – Claude Monet's River and Mill Near Giverny (1885), Pierre-Auguste Renoir's The Young Mother (1898), and Camille Pissaro's The House in the Woods (1872). We are so habituated to seeing masterworks within the exalted and rarified environments of major museums that it takes a moment to realize that this is how such paintings were meant to be seen, as objects of "lived with" experience. Another aspect of their collection's "domesticity" is that while the Mowers are highly astute and cultivated collectors, they see little use in the accumulation of works they are unable to display in their home. They insist on living with their acquisitions - on having the works available for the kind of continual contact and "seepage" that nurtures the depth and constancy of their appreciation of them and provides the environment that best reveals them. Unlike many collectors, the Mowers aren't especially interested

in filling warehouses with exquisite trophies that – except for the occasional loan – go unseen and unappreciated.

The Art Gallery at the Fulginiti Center for Bioethics and Humanities takes great pride in presenting Masterworks from the Collection of Tobia and Morton Mower. Like so many of the amazing things that happen in our lives, this exhibition didn't come about through our heroic efforts, an exhausting courtship, or persistent nudging but through the play of auspicious coincidences and close relationships. The Mowers' daughter, Robin, is a graduate of the University of Colorado Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, and the Associate Dean of the School is Dr. David Thompson, a close and beloved member of the family. David himself escorted Mort to the Fulginiti Pavilion to take a look at our gallery, and we began a conversation then and there about how to make an exhibit happen, guided by the enthusiastic support of Dean Ralph Altiere from the Skaggs School of Pharmacy and the Mowers themselves.

The Mowers are transplants to Denver since Mort's retirement from Johns Hopkins University and Sinai Hospital in Baltimore as an eminent cardiologist and co-inventor of the automatic implantable cardioverter defibrillator. For that device and others, he was inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame in Akron, Ohio, in 2002. He continues to be professionally active as adjunct Distinguished Professor in the Department of Medicine, Division of Cardiology on the Anschutz Medical Campus. Toby Mower has long been active in philanthropic work and community activism, primarily in the establishment of residential recovery homes for men and women in early stages of drug and alcohol addiction. She was awarded an honorary doctorate from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev for her support and leadership in creating the first-ever training of addiction counselors in Israel.

The Mowers' art collection began in the early years of their married life. Mort was, at the time, primarily attuned to Pop Art and its derivatives, and they acquired major works by Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein and Keith Haring among others. However, Toby's love for Impressionism eventually won Mort over, and they narrowed their collecting

focus to that area. There are occasional departures such as the above mentioned Leger; an exquisite, deftly rendered Louis Legrand; a darkly expressionist Chaim Soutine still-life and an archetypally classic Marc Chagall, *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba*, which beautifully reflects the dichotomies inherent in Chagall's embrace of modernism and his love for biblical and Judaic subjects.

We are immensely grateful to Mort and Toby Mower for so generously and happily offering us the opportunity to exhibit works from their extraordinary collection. We know that it gives them great pleasure to share these works with an eager and appreciative audience and that in doing so they believe that the highest purpose of their collection is optimally fulfilled. We also deeply appreciate Dr. Molly Medakovich's willingness to contribute her scholarship and insights to this project. This extraordinary exhibit is also an extraordinary opportunity for the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, and it was made possible by the support of the Office of the Chancellor, Office of Risk Management, CU Police Department, Office of Advancement, Center for Bioethics and Humanities, and Department of Medicine.

Finally, a very special thank you to the Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences for their support of this publication.

Simon Zalkind, Curator of Exhibitions
The Art Gallery at the Fulginiti Center for Bioethics and Humanities

Tess Jones PhD, Director of the Arts and Humanities in Healthcare Program

Exploring the Tobia and Morton Mower Collection: Impressionism and its Legacy

In his 1874 review of the inaugural exhibition of the Anonymous Society of Painters, Sculptors, Printmakers, etc., art critic Louis Leroy proclaimed the following about Claude Monet's *Impression, Sunrise*, a colorful, painterly seascape that was on view:

Impression, I was sure of it. I was just telling myself that, since I was impressed, there had to be some impression in it... and what freedom, what ease of workmanship! Wallpaper in its embryonic state is more finished than that seascape!^I

Leroy's sardonic quip had as its primary aim the sketch-like aesthetic of Monet's canvas, a departure from the centuries-long academic ideal of a highly finished oil painting whose carefully applied brush strokes and slick layer of varnish hid any trace of the artist's hand. For Monet and his artistic compatriots, many of whose works are featured in the pages that follow, this "freedom" and "ease of workmanship" allowed them to explore and translate their experience of the world around them with a new immediacy. Applying dashes, dabs and rapid strokes of colorful paint to their canvases, they used the medium to express perceptions and sensations rather than attempt to reproduce literally that which was visible, a radical prospect in the history of illusionistic representation. The artists subsequently adopted Leroy's pejorative term as their own, and by the time the Impressionists formally dissolved in 1886, they had staged eight exhibitions that would significantly impact the course of European avant-garde art, well into the 20th century. The paintings and sculptures in this exhibition, which, with two later exceptions, range from the 1870s to the 1930s, illustrate the vibrant trajectory of this spirit of innovation and its rapidly changing visual forms.

The setting for this artistic (r)evolution was Paris. The city had expanded and modernized in recent decades through the ambitious urban renewal project of Emperor Napoleon III and his administrative officer, Georges-Eugène Haussmann. Broad boulevards, sidewalks and gas-lit lamps greatly improved circulation through the city, and the rising number of cafés, performance venues and green spaces brought new opportunities for leisure. For those who tired of the city hubbub, steam engine trains whisked people away to the countryside or coast.

Poet, essayist and art critic Charles Baudelaire, whose 1863 essay, "The Painter of Modern Life,"

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I"Impression, j'en étais sûr! Je me disais aussi, puisque je suis impressionné, il doit y avoir de l'impression là-dedans...Et quelle liberté, quelle aisance dans la facture! Le papier peint à l'état embryonnaire est encore plus fait que cette marine-là!" Louis Leroy, "L'exposition des impressionnistes," *Le Charivari*, 25 avril 1874.

has long been interpreted as a nascent rallying cry for the avant-garde, encouraged artists to seek their inspiration in contemporary life as it was experienced in this time and place.² He urged them to paint "the passing moment and all of the suggestions of eternity that it contains" and extolled the "deep, joyful curiosity" of the artist who is a "passionate spectator...amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and infinite." Ultimately, he exclaimed, "...the pleasure which we derive from the representation of the present is due not only to the beauty with which it can be invested, but also to its essential quality of being present." Instead of ancient heroes and historical narratives, which took pride of place in the academic hierarchy of genres, the here and now should occupy the artist's thoughts and paintbrush. For Baudelaire, this modern subject matter called for a decidedly new approach to a visual language that could properly express it, suggesting that "... in the daily metamorphosis of external things, there is a rapidity of movement which calls for an equal speed of execution from the artist."

The Impressionists have long been seen to have heeded Baudelaire's directive to observe and celebrate modern life in their slice-of-life scenes of public spaces of bourgeois leisure and private realms of domestic intimacy. Edgar Degas's Three Dancers offers a small taste of the artist's extensive and protracted interest in picturing the ballet - lessons, rehearsals, performances, dancers, orchestras and audiences – a wildly popular entertainment and consistently appealing subject in art that other artists turned to as well. In this exhibition, Henri Matisse's lithographs of *Ten Dancers* similarly attend to the costume and pose of the ballerina, while Fernand Léger's Composition with Dancer moves the figure to the margins and emphasizes instead a lyrical arrangement of abstracted geometric and biomorphic forms. The café makes an appearance here as well, part of a larger corpus of images of social outings in the modern city that included dance halls, public parks and the racetracks, where people met and mingled. Louis Legrand, though not an Impressionist, was surely indebted to their scenes of convivial conversation in this quintessentially Parisian institution. For women Impressionists like Berthe Morisot and Mary Cassatt, who didn't circulate freely in the city without a chaperone, vignettes of domesticity - the home, family life and women's leisure - were common themes in their paintings, and their models were typically friends and family members. However, Pierre Renoir's *The Young Mother* is a tender reminder that such subject matter was not the purview of women painters alone. A closer look at this everyday subject matter reveals individualized styles and an increasingly visible painterly touch with those qualities that had so roiled Leroy. Renoir's soft, feathery and saturated paint application, Morisot's multi-directional and

²All quotes are from Charles Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life," in *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, 2nd ed., trans. and ed. Jonathan Mayne (New York: Phaidon Press, 1995), 1-41.

energetic mark-making and Degas's distinctive embrace of the popular medium of pastel proffer a rich spectrum of creative approaches embraced by the Impressionists.

Landscape painting, too, offered artists an ideal subject for experimentation. Impressionist painters immersed themselves in nature, studying its perpetual shifts during the span of a day, in varying weather phenomena and across seasons. Monet's famed series of paintings - haystacks, cathedral facades and water lilies, for example - are a testament to this dogged and determined exploration of visual perception. As is evident in several of the landscapes in this exhibition, the reflective surface of water also offered the opportunity to play with the fluid, ever-changing conditions of outdoor light and color. Such an approach was, in part, enabled by newly available painting materials: manufactured oil paints, packaged in resealable metal tubes, were a welcome change from the practice of storing hand-prepared pigments in pig bladder pouches that had to be punctured with a tack to access. Painting en plein air was suddenly much more accessible and convenient.

Paris continued to be a thriving center of avant-garde experimentation beyond the Impressionists and across artistic mediums and became more international in scope by the early 20th century. Auguste Rodin's animated bronzes redefined sculpture as an increasingly expressive art form, and, like the Impressionists, an interest in the plasticity of the medium and its surface effects characterizes much of his work. Pablo Picasso, though Spanish by birth, spent much of his career in Paris, and his aquatint of a mother and child suggest the palette of his "Blue Period" (1901-1904) during his early years in the city. Russian-born Marc Chagall arrived in Paris in 1910 at the height of Cubism, a radical style pioneered by Picasso and Georges Braque and quickly adopted by Fernand Léger and others. As is visible in Chagall's much later *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba*, his was a long career with a unique vision and highly personalized, dreamlike style.

As a whole, this selection of paintings, drawings, prints and sculptures from the Mower's fine collection speaks to a vibrant and innovative period of French art, one that set the stage for extraordinary changes and unleashed new approaches to visual representation. From the Impressionists' pleasantly ordinary vignettes of everyday life to the expressive colors and increasingly abstract forms of the early 20th century, these masterworks continue to delight and intrigue with their universality and enduring freshness and appeal.

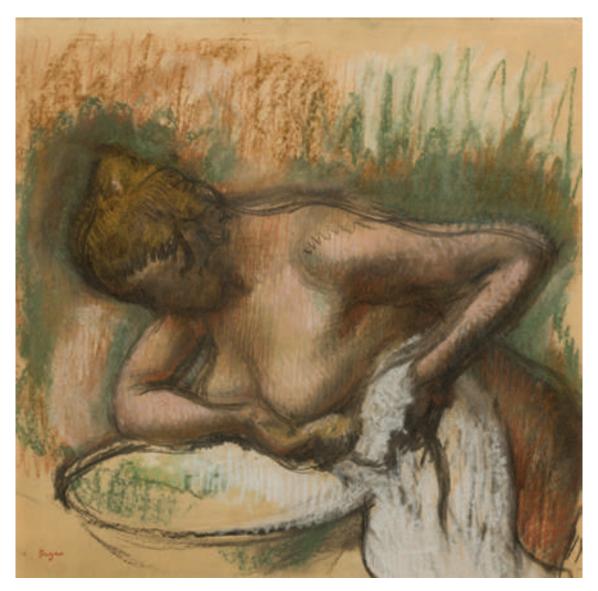
Molly Medakovich, Ph.D. Art Historian



Mary Cassatt, Woman with a Fan, (Femme à l'éventail), 1891-92 pastel on tan wove paper, 26" x 20"



Marc Chagall, *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba*, (Solomon et le Reine de Saba), 1977 india ink on paper, 30" x 22 1 4"



Edgar Degas, Woman at her Toilette, (Femme à sa toilette), 1897 pastel and charcoal on paper, 24" x 24 3%"

Edgar Degas (1834-1917)

Like his Impressionist colleagues, Edgar Degas looked to contemporary subject matter for inspiration, and this scenes of dancers have become inseparable from his artistic legacy. This sketch – one of innumerable studies of dancers' bodies, poses and movements - reveals Degas's tireless pursuit of understanding his subject and the rigorous working methods employed in the process. His was an artistic practice firmly rooted indoors, and he sketched his ballerina-models on the stage, in the classroom and as they posed in his studio, obsessively working, reworking and refining his figures and compositions. Here, the artist explores the lithe limbs and musculature of the dancer, the placement of legs and arms, and multiple vantage points of viewing the figure. These figures subsequently appear in final oil paintings and pastels as direct transcriptions or as variations of a pose.

Like other avant-garde artists of his generation, Degas didn't receive traditional academic instruction, but he studied and copied art from the ancient world through the Old Masters both at the Louvre and in Italy, where he had traveled in the 1850s. He also spent time in the studio of academic painter Louis Lamothe, which surely exposed him to the primacy of the human figure in narrative painting and the supremacy of contour in its visual articulation. – Molly Medakovich



Edgar Degas, *Three Dancers*, (Trois danseuses), ca. 1889 charcoal and pastel on paper, 15 ³/₄" x 15 ³/₄"



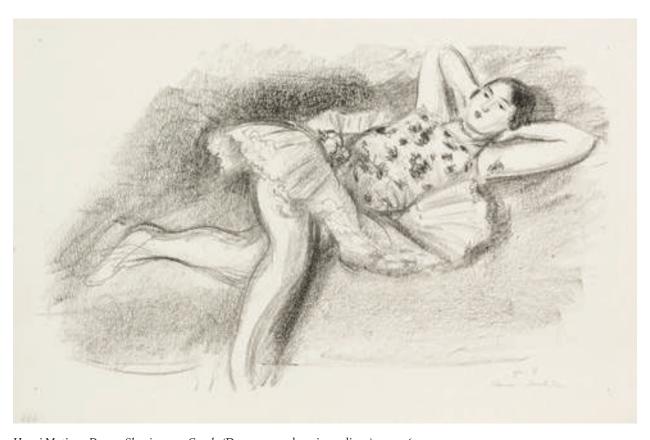
Fernand Léger, Composition with Dancer, (Composition à la danseuse), 1934 oil on canvas, 18 $1\!\!/\!\!s$ " x 14 $3\!\!/\!\!s$ "



Louis Legrand, *Figures in a Café*, late 19th century pastel and watercolor on canvas, 24" x 29"



Henri Matisse, Seated Woman Arms Crossed, 1925 drawing, 21 $^3\!4''$ x 17 $^3\!4''$



Henri Matisse, $Dancer\ Sleeping\ on\ a\ Couch,$ (Danseuse endormie au divan), 1925-26, lithograph, 20" x 13"

Claude Monet (1840-1926)

Claude Monet has become synonymous with Impressionism, and this tranquil rural scene exemplifies the tenets of the movement. The vibrant colors of nature, the shifting appearance of the river in response to changing light and the suggestion of atmosphere in the painterly sky speak to the Impressionist artists' desire to capture the experience of nature as perceived while painting en plein air. The poplar-lined river draws the eye toward the mill, but it is the trees' reflection on the water - the quivering blue lines suggesting movement and light on its surface - that activates the scene. Monet hints at a human presence with the worn footpath on the river's left bank.

As the title indicates, the painting pictures a scene near Giverny where, two years earlier, Monet had discovered a property that would become the site of his famed gardens, a rural escape that provided him endless inspiration in the following decades. His beloved water lily pond became the subject of some of his most famous paintings, which similarly explored the ever-changing surface of water as it reflected the surrounding foliage and responded to a passing breeze. – Molly Medakovich



Claude Monet, *River and Mill Near Giverny*, (Rivière et moulin près de Giverny), 1885, oil on canvas, 28 $^3\!\!$ x 20"

Berthe Morisot (1841-1895)

For a genteel young woman in 19th-century France, the amateur pursuit of the arts was a sign of femininity, cultivation and grace. Berthe Morisot's young piano player exemplifies this ideal through her poised comportment and fine clothing and accessories, and the tightly cropped composition grounds her within the comforts of the domestic sphere. A vibrant variation of blues - from the dress she wears to the piano keys at her fingers to the floral wallpaper in the background - further connects her to the space. Not much is known about Lucie Léon or her relationship to Morisot. However, at the time this work was painted, Léon was supposedly training to become a professional pianist, an exceptional pursuit for a young woman of this era. Do her direct gaze, straight posture and active hands perhaps suggest more serious ambition?

Morisot was a seasoned artist by the time she painted this vignette, having surpassed such limiting expectations for her gender by embarking on a career as a professional painter with her first public exhibition at the Salon of 1864 and participation in seven of the eight Impressionist exhibitions. However, domestic scenes such as this and others that feature quiet, everyday moments of family life ensured the artist's own propriety in the public eye. – Molly Medakovich



Berthe Morisot, *Lucie Leon at the Piano*, (Lucie Léon au piano), 1892 oil on canvas, 25 % x 31 $\frac{1}{2}$ "



Pablo Picasso with Jacques Villon, Mother and Child, 1954 aquatint on paper, 25 $^{1}\!\!/_{\!2}"$ x 16 $^{1}\!\!/_{\!2}"$



Camille Pissarro, *The House in the Woods*, (La maison dans le bois), 1872 oil on canvas, 19 % " x 25 % "



Pierre-Auguste Renoir, $Harem\ Girl$, (Odalisque), 1914, oil on canvas, 13 $^{3}4"$ x 10"



Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *The Young Mother* (La jeune mere), 1898 oil on canvas, $22" \times 18"$

Auguste Rodin (1840-1917)

The theme of all-consuming, passionate love appears frequently in Auguste Rodin's sculptural oeuvre. In this small-scale bronze, a couple passionately embraces, their bodies intertwined and faces half-concealed by their fervent kiss. As is visible in *Love that Passes* and *Standing Faun*, Rodin was keenly interested in the expressive possibilities of the human form. His exposure to the sculpture of Michelangelo during a sojourn in Italy in the 1870s has often been credited with having a lasting impact on his animated approach to the body. Here, the criss-crossing of limbs and dynamic positioning of their forms in space reinforces the couple's mutual infatuation. The scene is further enlivened by Rodin's transformation of the traditional sculptural pedestal into an undulating base that envelops and supports the couple in this arrested moment.

In 1880, Rodin received a commission from the French government to create a set of monumental doors for a planned Museum of Decorative Arts in Paris. This work was perhaps one of many preliminary sculptural groupings that Rodin experimented with for the eventual masterwork, *The Gates of Hell*, whose narrative he borrowed from The Divine Comedy by 14th-century poet Dante Alighieri. Though this particular arrangement was not realized in the final composition of the doors, it was reworked and cast as an individual sculpture, as were many of the vignettes for the project, including *The Thinker*, one of his most iconic works. – Molly Medakovich



Auguste Rodin, *Eternal Springtime*, (L'éternel printemps), 1884 bronze, 19" x 15" x 13"



Alfred Sisley, Flood, Banks of the Seine at Saint-Cloud, (L'inondation, bords de Seine à Saint-Cloud), 1876 oil on canvas, 9 $^{1}/_{4}$ " x 25 $^{1}/_{2}$ "



Alfred Sisley, The Dam on the Loing River – Barges, (Le barrage du Loing - Péniches), 1885, oil on canvas, 18 $1/\!\!s$ " x 21 $5/\!\!s$ "

Chaim Soutine (1893-1943)

A simple arrangement of flowers and fruit, Chaim Soutine's still life speaks to a long tradition of painting everyday objects of the domestic interior. To look a bit more closely, however, is to notice an impossibly tilted basket, a radically slanted tabletop and a scumbling of brushstrokes that loosely articulates a bouquet. Following in the footsteps of the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists like Vincent van Gogh and Paul Cézanne, whose bright colors and painterly brushwork characterize their paintings and who also frequently attended to the still life as subject, this work similarly departs from the conventions of illusionism. Soutine often drew from traditional subject matter such as this and, as his career advanced, he increasingly distorted objects, figures and compositional space.

Soutine came to Paris from his native Lithuania in 1913, one of many foreign-born artists who have collectively come to be known as the "École de Paris." Many of these expatriates, Soutine and Marc Chagall among them, were Jewish émigrés who lived in the thriving artistic neighborhood of Montparnasse between the turn of the century and World War II. Rather than a single artistic movement, the "School of Paris" represented myriad approaches to modern art, with the avant-garde city as its center. – Molly Medakovich



Chaim Soutine, Still Life with Bouquet and Basket of Fruit, 1919 oil on canvas, 28 $^3\!4''$ x 11 $^5\!8''$

Catalogue of the Exhibition

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Marc Chagall (1887-1985)

Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, 1977
(Solomon et le Reine de Saba)
india ink on paper
30" x 22 1/4"

Edgar Degas (1834-1917)

Three Dancers, ca. 1889
(Trois danseuses)
charcoal and pastel on paper
15 ³/₄" x 15 ³/₄"

Edgar Degas

Woman at her Toilette, 1897
(Femme à sa toilette)
pastel and charcoal on paper
24" x 24 3/8"

Fernand Léger (1881-1955) Composition with Dancer, 1934 (Composition à la danseuse) oil on canvas 18 1/8" x 14 3/4"

Louis Legrand (1863-1951)

Café Figures in a Café, late 19th century pastel and watercolor on canvas

24" x 29"

Henri Matisse (1869-1954)

Dancer Stretching on a Sofa, 1925-26
(Danseuse étendue au divan)
lithograph
20" x 13"

Henri Matisse

Dancer Sleeping on a Couch, 1925-26

(Danseuse endormie au divan)
lithograph
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Henri Matisse *Seated Woman, Arms Crossed*, 1925 (Femme assise, bras croisés) charcoal on paper 21 ³/₄" x 17 ³/₄"

Claude Monet (1840-1926)

River and Mill Near Giverny, 1885
(Rivière et moulin près de Giverny)
oil on canvas
28 3/8" x 20"

Berthe Morisot (1841-1895) Lucie Leon at the Piano, 1892 (Lucie Leon au piano) oil on canvas 25 5/8" x 31 1/2"

Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) *Head of a Faune*, 1954

(Tête de faune)

crayon and colored pencil on paper

14 ½" x II ½"

Pablo Picasso with Jacques Villon (1875-1973) *Mother and Child*, 1954 aquatint on paper 16 ½" x 25 ½"

Camille Pissarro (1830-1903) The House in the Woods, 1872 (La maison dans le bois) oil on canvas 19 5%" x 25 7%"

Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841-1919) *Harem Girl*, 1914 (Odalisque) oil on canvas 13 ³/₄" x 10"

Pierre-Auguste Renoir *The Young Mother*, 1898 (La jeune mere) oil on canvas 22" x 18 ½"

Auguste Rodin (1840-1917) Eternal Springtime, 1884 (L'éternel printemps) bronze 19" x 15" x 13"

Auguste Rodin Standing Faun, 1897 (Faunesse debout) bronze 23" x 10 5%" x 8 1/4"

Alfred Sisley (1839-1899)

Flood, Banks of the Seine at Saint-Cloud, 1876
(L'inondation, bords de Seine à Saint-Cloud)
oil on canvas
9 1/4" x 25 1/2"

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Still Life with Bouquet and Basket of Fruit, 1919
oil on canvas
28 3/4" x 11 5/8"

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