fusing to write about all three arts in a simultaneous chronological sequence. In the architecture chapter I have stressed connections with the painting because these are not always made manifest, and in any case I am not an architectural historian. I am extremely aware of the omissions in this chapter and elsewhere, but in any book of this kind a great deal has to be left out.

There are no references in the text, but the bibliography at the end provides sources and a guide to further reading. My own debts are considerable, and will be recognized by specialist scholars, who will appreciate better than anyone that a book like *Modern European Art* can be written only with the help of others. In this respect I should like to make a particular acknowledgment to my teachers, colleagues and students at the Courtauld Institute, to all of whom I am in different ways extremely grateful.

ALAN BOWNESS
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From Modern European Art by Alan Bowness

CHAPTER ONE

Manet at the *Salon des Refusés*: The Birth of Modern Art

In Paris in the spring of 1863 a young painter, Edouard Manet (1832–83), submitted a picture to the jury of the Salon, which, along with hundreds of other works, was refused. The disgruntled artists appealed to the Emperor of France, Napoleon III, who agreed that there might have been a measure of injustice in the jury's decisions. He gave permission for an exhibition of the rejected paintings and sculptures: this was the *Salon des Refusés*, which marked a turning point in the history of art, and the most convenient date from which to begin any history of modern painting.

The entries in the *Salon des Refusés* would not seem very impressive today. With the exception of Manet's painting and two or three others, the work on view was indistinguishable from that in the official Salon – worthy but uninspired landscapes, portraits and figure subjects, painted for the most part in rather dark, dull colours. Then as now – or at any time since the early 19th century when art production began to rise rapidly – the great bulk of contemporary art was designed for ready appeal to popular tastes, and had no lasting qualities.

Yet the *Salon des Refusés* was important for several different but related reasons. Firstly, it undermined the prestige of the Salon, in the eyes both of the public and of the artists. It is hard now to appreciate the dominant role played in the mid-19th century by the Paris Salon, or the Royal Academy in England, or similar bodies elsewhere.

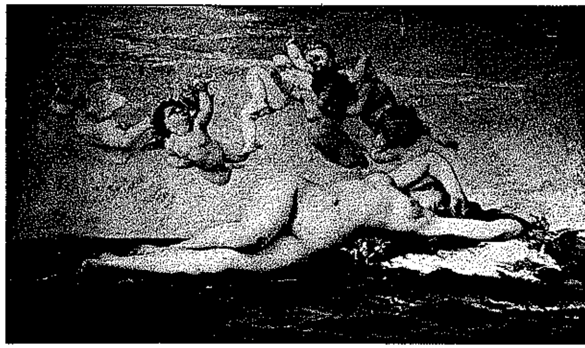
Their large mixed annual exhibitions provided the normal channel for the public exposure of artists' works. There were no alternatives, and for an artist to say that he was not going to exhibit at the Salon was rather like an artist today saying he does not believe in selling his work, or would have nothing to do with museums.

But after the *Salon des Refusés* the situation was never the same. Artists began to arrange their own exhibitions,

as the Impressionists, for example, did in 1874; and, more significantly, the activities of the art dealers increased rapidly in importance. Very quickly there emerged the pattern familiar in advanced capitalist countries today, where the dealer acts as the artist's agent, administering his business affairs, and organizing the public exhibition of his work. There was a marked shift of attitude from one generation to the next: whereas Manet could never quite break with the Salon and until the end of his life still sought Salon success, Monet, eight years his junior, with the support of dealers like Paul Durand-Ruel, could afford to be completely independent.

And this is the second reason for the importance of the *Salon des Refusés* – as a sign of the growing independence of artists. Painters and sculptors had once worked for patrons – kings, princes of the church, aristocrats, wealthy merchants. It would not have occurred to them to demand the kind of freedom a modern artist takes for granted. But the more independent spirits – a Michelangelo or a Caravaggio, for example – rebelled against the restraints of patronage, and slowly conditions changed. At first artists were still prepared to accept the judgment

1 ÉDOUARD MANET (1832–83) *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe, 1863. Oil on canvas, 6' 11" × 8' 10" (211 × 270). Musée d'Orsay, Paris*



2 ALEXANDRE CABANEL (1823-89) *Birth of Venus, 1863. Oil o[n] canvas, 4' 3" × 3' 8" (129.5 × 111.5) Musée d'Orsay, Paris*

of their fellow-practitioners, and the 18th century was the great age of Academies, when the authority of men like Joshua Reynolds was recognized by artist and public alike.

But submitting one's work even to one's peers became intolerable, which partly accounted for the outburst in Paris in 1863. Painters have increasingly demanded complete freedom to do what they want, with no obligation to please anybody. This freedom is sometimes more theoretical than real, and entails demands that perhaps no artist but a Michelangelo could in fact meet. It is, however, a characteristic of modern art, and a major factor in its development.

This brings us to the third and perhaps most fundamental reason for the particular importance of the *Salon des Refusés*. It marked the début of Édouard Manet as the leading young artist in Paris, taking over the position that had been Gustave Courbet's (1819–77) for almost fifteen years. Manet, more than any of his contemporaries, was thinking in a new way about art – a way, moreover, which is recognizably modern. Such a judgment can best be clarified and justified by a consideration of the picture which was the sensation at the *Salon des Refusés*, and of the reasons for its having seemed so disconcerting a work.

Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe (*Ill. 1*) shows two fashionably dressed young men with two undressed girls taking lunch in a woodland setting. Nudes were common enough at the Salons – perhaps the most admired picture at the official Salon in 1863 was the *Birth of Venus* (*Ill. 2*) by Alexandre Cabanel (1823–89) – but to juxtapose nudes with elegantly attired men smacked of

ÉDOUARD MANET (1832–83) *shing at Saint-Ouen, near Paris, 60–61.* Oil on canvas, 2′6″ × 1″ (77 × 123). *The Metropolitan useum of Art, New York (Mr l Mrs Richard Bernhard Fund, 57)*

impropriety. In addition, one of the girls stares provocatively out of the picture, not so much in invitation, as to remind the spectator that it is only a painting he is looking at.

Manet was probably unaware of his picture's potential. He was not a communicative artist, and the only real evidence we have of his ideas is in the paintings themselves. He seems to have been genuinely surprised at the public reaction to his work. He was after all following a traditional composition and subject – did not the *Concert Champêtre*, one of the most popular pictures in the Louvre, show a similar scene? And had not Manet also borrowed from a well-known engraving after Raphael in working out the design?

Manet was in fact a traditionalist, but of a special kind. He was attracted neither by the conventional art of the Salon, nor by the naturalism that appealed to his more adventurous contemporaries. There were qualities in the art of the past – and especially that of Velasquez, of Rembrandt, of Rubens and of Titian – that he admired, and wanted to re-introduce into modern painting. An early landscape like *Fishing* (*Ill. 3*) might appear to be nothing more than a pastiche of Rubens, just as the *Spanish Artist's Studio* (*Ill. 4*) frankly crosses Velasquez with the recently rediscovered Vermeer. These pictures show the young Manet learning by imitating the Old Masters, yet unmistakably reveal his personal touch.

ÉDOUARD MANET (1832–83) *oanish Artist's Studio, 1860. Oil on nvas, 18″ × 15″ (46 × 38). Private ollection*

For there is a quality of self-awareness about even these early pictures: the young couple in the corner of *Fishing* seem to be the artist and his wife, in fancy dress, inviting us to consider the contrivances of the picture. And again in the *Artist's Studio* the barrier between the spectator's world and the world inside the painting is broken down by the artist's stare. It is as if Manet wanted to point out the essential artificiality of picture-making, to disabuse us of the idea that the world of the painting is a real world with an independent existence.

Manet's interest in paintings of artists in their studios is significant for this reason. He would certainly have regarded Velasquez' *Las Meninas* as one of the greatest pictures ever painted, and here the theme of the artist's awareness of his own art is for the first time tentatively stated. This idea becomes the explicit subject of Courbet's enormous picture, *L'Atelier du Peintre* (*Ill. 5*), which Manet saw in 1855 when he was still a student in the studio of Thomas Couture (1815–79). The *Atelier* was too difficult and subtle a picture for the audiences of 1855, who, like many of their successors, could see little in it but an assertion of self-love on the artist's part. But while we may admit Courbet's egotism, we must acknowledge that he was as concerned with the freedom of others as with his own.

Courbet's *Atelier* was clearly important for Manet, but not in easily definable ways. Courbet's fame rested on his realism, and he claimed the term realist when he thought it could be of use to him. But the *Atelier* is not a realist picture; it does not show what Courbet's studio was actually like while he was at work, or imply that there was ever such an incongruous assembly of people in the

5 GUSTAVE COURBET (1819–77) *L'Atelier du Peintre, 1855.* Oil on canvas, 11′11″ × 19′7″ (359 × 596). *Musée d'Orsay, Paris*

studio at any one time. In other words, this is not a picture like the *Funeral at Ornans* or the *Stonebreakers*, with which Courbet made his name. In such works he had painted exactly what he saw, without regard for pictorial conventions or social implications.

The *Atelier's* subtitle, *Real Allegory, summing up seven years of my artistic life*, helps to clarify Courbet's intentions. The painting was to be an artistic testimony, on several levels of meaning, open to interpretation by the spectator. But essentially it demonstrates that the artist can draw only from his own experiences, that all his acquaintances – the models who pose for him, his friends and supporters – are subservient to his own creative drive. In the centre of the picture, in the centre of the studio, is a landscape to which the artist puts the finishing touch: this seems to represent an order of reality more permanent, more truly real, than anything going on in the studio itself.

That Manet thought much about Courbet's picture seems evident. One has only to consider the way in which two of Manet's most ambitious early works, *The Old Musician* and *La Musique aux Tuileries*, relate respectively to the left and right halves of Courbet's *Atelier*. *The Old Musician* (*Ill. 6*) is a random assembly of Manet's models – there is no other explanation for the grouping of figures with no apparent psychological justification – the gypsy girl, the absinthe drinker, the Velasquez Philosopher, the Watteau-type child. They are raw material for Manet's early painting: that is the only reason for their existence, just as it is for the motley assortment of models

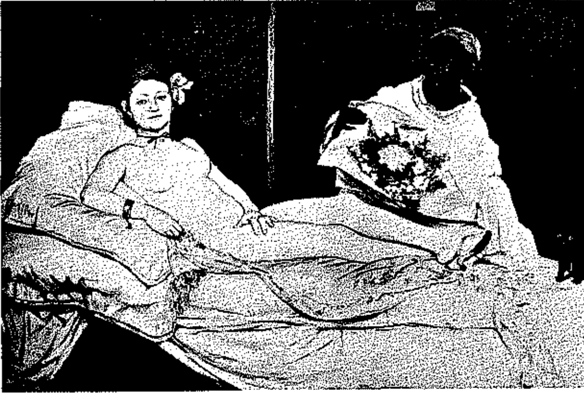
6 ÉDOUARD MANET (1832–83) *The Old Musician, 1862. Oil on canvas, 6′ 2″×8′ 2″ (187×248). The National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. (Chester Dale Collection, 1962)*

7 ÉDOUARD MANET (1832–83) *La Musique aux Tuileries, 1862. Oil on canvas, 30″×46½″ (76×118). By courtesy of the Trustees of the National Gallery, London)*

on the left of the *Atelier*, whom Courbet dismissed as 'the others – those whose lives are of no consequence'.

La Musique aux Tuileries (*Ill. 7*), on the other hand, shows Manet, on the extreme left, among his friends in the fashionable Paris of the early 1860s. It seems at first sight a more or less faithful rendering of an actual scene, until we realize just how artificial the whole composition is. The haunted figure of Baudelaire appears in both paintings, though neither Manet nor Courbet shared that sense of personal damnation which was so fundamental to their poet friend.

Manet in particular was much impressed by Charles Baudelaire (1821–67) whom he met in 1858. For a short while the two became intimates and Manet's whole attitude to art was permanently coloured by Baudelaire's ideas. Baudelaire was greatly concerned with the 'painting of modern life'; at its most obvious, this meant taking one's subject-matter from contemporary Paris, accepting modern dress (which was thought inappropriate to great painting or sculpture), and making ambitious figure compositions out of things seen at the theatre or in the café. At its deeper level, it meant a search for that quality of modernity in art which was to be Manet's particular achievement.



8 ÉDOUARD MANET (1832–83) *Olympia, 1863. Oil on canvas, 4′ 3″ × 6′ 2″ (130 × 190). Musée d'Orsay, Paris*

9 ÉDOUARD MANET (1832–83) *The Balcony, 1868–69. Oil on canvas, 5′ 7″ × 4′ 1″ (170 × 124.5). Musée d'Orsay, Paris*

This modernity can be explained in yet another way, one that relates directly to Baudelaire. Baudelaire made a cult of the dandy, and to a certain extent Manet followed his example, as a young man always dressing most elegantly, and in later life perhaps somewhat vicariously transposing his own dandyism into an interest in women's fashions, which he shared with the poet Mallarmé. Dandyism was admired not for its own sake, but because the dandy was playing a part, disguising his own feelings beneath his often extravagant costumes.

To hide one's personal feelings may seem at first a strange artistic ambition, but at certain times in the history of art this becomes essential. The 1860s was such a time, as was to be the decade of the 1960s a century later. The excesses of abstract expressionism brought a cool, impersonal reaction; in the same way Manet knew that to break with the Romanticism of Delacroix and Ingres he needed to create an art which would permit him to establish a distance between himself and his audience. Hence the distancing stare of his model Victorine Meurent as she poses for *Le Déjeuner* or for *Olympia* (*Ill. 8*), the thoroughly Baudelairean picture with which Manet confirmed his position as leader of the Parisian avant-garde at the Salon of 1865.

One gets a clearer idea of the emotional coolness of Manet's art when one considers his major paintings of the later 1860s. In *The Balcony* (*Ill. 9*) the two couples are held enmeshed in the very complexity of the composition – a pattern of elongated rectangles with crossing diagonals, announced in the railings of the balcony itself, and repeated in the shutters and in the fans held in gloved hands. The two women are the Oriental-looking

10 ÉDOUARD MANET (1832–83) *Le Déjeuner dans l'Atelier, 1869. Oil on canvas, 3′ 11″ × 5′ (118 × 154). Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich*

Jenny Claas and the beautiful Berthe Morisot, for whom Manet had a more than passing affection: their withdrawn expressions suggest depths of hidden feelings. And *Le Déjeuner dans l'Atelier* (*Ill. 10*) of the same year, 1869, confronts us like an insoluble equation: what do these figures signify – the grey-clad serving woman, the elderly man smoking a pipe, and the boy who gazes at us, resting against the improbably laid luncheon table? The whole composition is a compound of the calculated, the artificial, the unreal; all the elements of painting – colour, tone, texture, shape, space – are here demonstrated with the mastery of a supreme painter.

Another major work, the *Execution of the Emperor Maximilian* (*Ill. 11*), painted only weeks after the event in Mexico in the summer of 1867, is altogether too emotionally detached for us to believe that Manet intended it as the political manifesto that some critics have suggested. But just as *The Balcony* echoes Goya's *Majas on the Balcony*, so does the *Execution* echo Goya's *Third of May, 1808*, which Manet had seen on his brief visit to Spain in 1865. Maximilian's death gave Manet

the excuse for painting Goya's subject again, but in the modern manner.

With a succession of such extraordinarily original masterpieces, Manet established a new kind of painting in the 1860s. He justified the greater measure of freedom given to the artist by asserting a more complete control over the work of art itself. Great art of the past had been made for the glory of God, or in accordance with an idea of the perfectibility of man, or in the service of Nature. Manet's art seems to turn inwards, to be made for art's sake alone. His painting was generated by the art of the past in a manner that went beyond the normal practice of learning from one's predecessors. The issues it concerned itself with were central to the nature of painting itself, and set in motion the chain of thinking that led directly to the radical experiments in artistic language made in the 20th century.

In his own time, however, the implications of Manet's paintings went largely unremarked. He seems indeed to have lost confidence a little in the 1870s, when his work clearly shows the influence of younger painters like Monet. His last major painting, *Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère* (*Ill. 13*), has the gravity and finality of a statement made only after a long period of indecision.

A few people did see the point of Manet's paintings of the '60s. One was Paul Cézanne, who was to build on Manet's foundations in his struggle to find a viable way of painting nature. Another was the poet Mallarmé who

11 ÉDOUARD MANET (1832–83) *Execution of the Emperor Maximilian, 1867. Oil on canvas, 8′ 3″ × 10′ (252 × 305). Stadtische Kunsthalle, Mannheim*

12 ÉDOUARD MANET (1832–83) *On the Beach at Boulogne, 1869. Oil on canvas, 12¾″ × 25¾″ (33 × 65). Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (Collection Mr and Mrs Paul Mellon)*

was to initiate a comparable post-Baudelairean revolution in poetry. Stéphane Mallarmé (1842–98) got to know Manet intimately in the late 1870s, and made it his daily habit to call at the painter's studio after he had finished his day's teaching.

Mallarmé greatly admired Manet's painting, which confirmed the direction in which his own poetry was moving. Both artists were looking inwards, but in an objective rather than a subjective way. Creating a poem was for Mallarmé the only durable, meaningful act in an otherwise godless, irrational existence. It became a distillation of experience so precious as to be almost impossible to achieve, and for most of the period of intimacy with Manet, Mallarmé was unable to write poetry. When he started again his work was markedly more abstract, concerned above all with formal values, exactly as in Manet's painting. Poetry is made with words, not ideas, Mallarmé told Degas, who fancied himself as a writer of sonnets; and in his rare essays on art Mallarmé was at pains to stress that a picture is made of oils and colours, and is not a substitute for or representation of anything.

Another side of Manet's art fascinated the poet: his introduction into the making of a painting of the element of chance. There can be no explanation for the appearance of certain early works of Manet's – *The Old Musician*, for example – unless we accept that he was interested in random composition. Figures touch without overlapping, thus flattening the space but in an altogether arbitrary manner. Sometimes the images may approximate to our visual experience, as for example *On the Beach at Boulogne* (*Ill. 12*), which is, however, far from being a naturalistic rendering of the scene. There is something quite erratic, illogical, absurd, about the construction of

13 ÉDOUARD MANET (1832–83) *Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère, 1882. Oil on canvas, 3′2″×4′3″ (96×130). The Courtauld Institute Galleries, London*

this picture, as if an element of chance had been permitted to challenge the artist's control.

Mallarmé was obsessed with the idea of chance, and it forms the subject of his last published work, *Un coup de dés n'abolira le hasard* (A dice throw never will abolish chance). Quite apart from the increasing abstraction of late Mallarmé (which reaches an extraordinary apogee in the posthumously published *L'Œuvre*), and the visual aspect of the poem's presentation (its typographical experiment is the main source for 'concrete poetry'), *Un coup de dés* is concerned with the role of chance in the creative act. A man is drowning (= the artist), a dice is thrown (= chance), a constellation of stars emerges (= the poem). The image of the drowning man may well have been suggested by Manet, who, according to Mallarmé himself, likened starting work on a new picture to a plunge into water by a man who cannot swim.

The significance of all this may not be immediately apparent, but some things will become clear in the succeeding pages, for many of the innovations of 20th century painting may be traced to Manet, as the comparable growth and development of modern poetry may be to Mallarmé. Both men were themselves deeply influenced by Baudelaire, but they belong to our own time, whereas Baudelaire was still enmeshed in a guilt-ridden, romantic past.

14 CLAUDE MONET (1840–1926) *Women in the Garden, 1866–67. Oil on canvas, 8′ 4″ × 6′ 9″ (235 × 205). Musée d'Orsay, Paris*