



The Dissolute Household

ca. 1663–64

[Jan Steen](#) Dutch

On view at The Met Fifth Avenue in [Gallery 964](#)

Steen often made himself the butt of his own jokes, placing his self-portrait at the center of domestic chaos. Here, the artist entwines his fingers with those of the maid, who pours his wife a generous serving of wine. Broken glass, a mischievous cat, and romping young boys contribute to the general impression of a household run amok. Suggestions of an ominous fate hang literally over the family's heads, in the form of a basket containing a beggar's crutch and can, as well as clappers, then used to warn of leprosy or the plague, and the jack of spades, signifying misfortune.

Merry Company on a Terrace

ca. 1670

[Jan Steen](#) Dutch

Not on view

Another of Steen's self-deprecating depictions of his own unruly household, this painting centers on the inviting figure of his wife, who looks out at the viewer with an empty wineglass in her hand. Steen, his face flushed with drink and a comic hat on his head, sits at the far left; next to him, with a sausage in his cap, is Hans Worst, the same theatrical figure depicted by Hals in a nearby work. To this day in the Netherlands, "a household by Jan Steen" remains proverbial for disorder and domestic chaos.

Young Man and Woman in an Inn

1623

[Frans Hals](#) Dutch

On view at The Met Fifth Avenue in [Gallery 964](#)

Painted with the characteristically bold brushwork that Hals had learned from Flemish painting, this picture provides a gleefully nonjudgmental depiction of a young couple carousing in the doorway of an inn or brothel. Flushed cheeks and open-mouthed grins indicate that the pair has broken with contemporary rules of comportment. Yet even the humble interior in which they find themselves boasts a landscape painting above the mantelpiece.

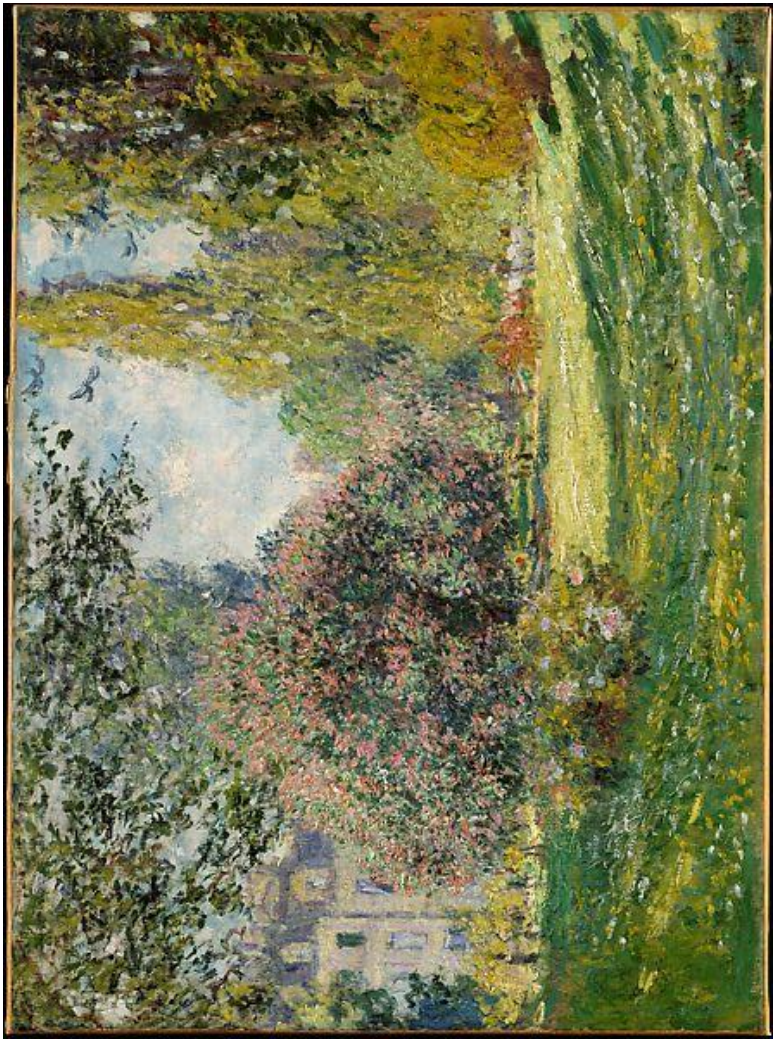
The Disillusioned Medea

ca. 1640

[Paulus Bor](#) Dutch

On view at The Met Fifth Avenue in [Gallery 964](#)

In ancient myth, the sorceress Medea fell in love with the hero Jason and helped him to steal the fleece of a golden ram from her father. After having two sons with her, Jason abandoned Medea, driving her to murder their children as well as his new bride. Bor shows Medea before this dreadful act, slumped in melancholy. The artist devoted careful antiquarian attention to the backdrop of a pagan altar adorned with garlands, an ox skull, and a smoldering lamp, but his Medea resembles an ordinary young woman, prompting empathy and identification on the part of beholders.



Hortensia
1884

[Fernand Khnopff](#) Belgian

On view at The Met Fifth Avenue in [Gallery 829](#)

Knopff employed an unconventional, close-up viewpoint that boldly emphasizes the floral still life over the figure in the background. The artist underscored the prominence of the houseplant by titling this painting *Hortensia*, the French word for hydrangea. A single bright red blossom placed suggestively on the tabletop punctuates the inventive composition. When Khnopff painted this work, he was only twenty-six years old, but he was already a key member of the artistic vanguard that arose in Belgium in the 1880s and 1890s. He would soon abandon informal views of everyday life and turn to creating works rich in mystery and reverie.

Fontainebleau: Oak Trees at Bas-Bréau
1832 or 1833

[Camille Corot](#) French

On view at The Met Fifth Avenue in [Gallery 803](#)

Corot painted this study in the summer of 1832 or 1833 in Bas-Bréau, a section of Fontainebleau forest that was famous for its immense oak trees. It was executed in the naturalistic style that he had previously developed in Italy. The tree reappears in *Hagar in the Wilderness*, the large canvas he exhibited at the 1835 Paris Salon. Improbably, in his realization of that biblical scene, Corot transplanted the oak from northern France to the Palestine desert.

Corot gave this work to his friend Célestin Nanteuil (1813–1873), who made a reproductive lithograph after *Hagar*.

A Musician and His Daughter
1629

[Thomas de Keyser](#) Dutch

On view at The Met Fifth Avenue in [Gallery 964](#)

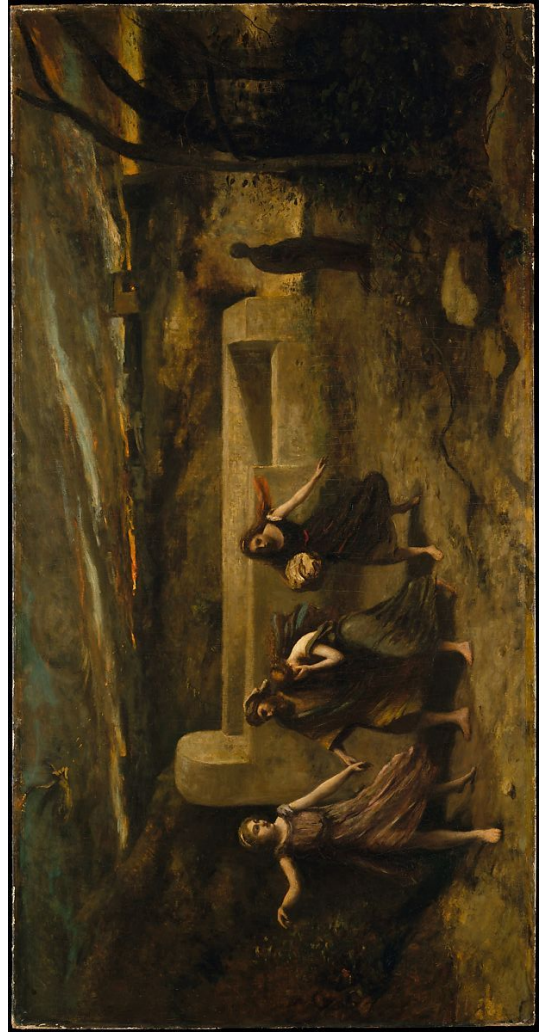
The father and daughter in this elegant interior display the wealth and confidence of the patrician class of seventeenth-century Amsterdam. They wear luxurious black clothing (the daughter is in the costume of a grown woman), and the father's lute is both a costly foreign import and a mark of refinement. De Keyser excelled in the depiction of objects in perspective, such as the worn lute case and the classically ornamented doorway.

Landscape: The Parc Monceau
1876

[Claude Monet](#) French

On view at The Met Fifth Avenue in [Gallery 818](#)

Situated on the boulevard de Courcelles in Paris and surrounded by fashionable town houses, the Parc Monceau was planned in the late eighteenth century in the form of an English garden. Monet painted three views of the park in the spring of 1876. This one, shown at the 1877 Impressionist exhibition, focuses on the swaths of green grass and blooming trees. The building visible at left in this painting also appears in two works from 1878, including one in the Museum's collection (59.142).



The Birth of the Virgin
1467

[Fra Carnevale \(Bartolomeo di Giovanni Corradini\)](#) Italian

On view at The Met Fifth Avenue in [Gallery 624](#)

Breaking with convention, the artist shows the Madonna's birth in contemporary terms. In the background the newborn baby is bathed by midwives while in the foreground women greet each other. The imposing palace, patterned on the Ducal Palace of Urbino, is decorated with reliefs derived from Roman sculpture. The picture is from an altarpiece commissioned in 1467 for Santa Maria della Bella in Urbino (a companion panel is in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston). In Florence, Fra Carnevale worked with Filippo Lippi; he also knew the paintings of Piero della Francesca and probably met the architect-theorist Leon Battista Alberti.

The Burning of Sodom (formerly "The Destruction of Sodom")
1843 and 1857

[Camille Corot](#) French

On view at The Met Fifth Avenue in [Gallery 803](#)

This Old Testament scene shows an angel in the sky hurling fire and brimstone down upon Sodom, to destroy the city for its wickedness. At the left, another angel leads Lot and his two daughters to safety. Behind them, Lot's wife, who looked back in regret despite a warning, has become a pillar of salt. Years after Corot exhibited the painting at the Paris Salon of 1844, he cut it down substantially, reducing the sky and the landscape at right. He repainted the foreground in a darker palette and exhibited the revised canvas at the 1857 Salon. By then his stature ensured a better reception from the critics.

Ancient Rome
1757

[Giovanni Paolo Panini](#) Italian

On view at The Met Fifth Avenue in [Gallery 620](#)

Ancient Rome is a pendant to *Modern Rome* and catalogs the most famous antique monuments in the city. It was commissioned by the Count de Stainville, later the Duke de Choiseul, who is seen at the center with a guidebook in hand. Panini includes himself behind the chair. The gentlemen are admiring a copy of an ancient fresco. The Pantheon, Colosseum, Trajan's Column, the Farnese Hercules, and the Laocoön can be identified. For the identification of the other monuments, visit metmuseum.org

Vaprio d'Adda
1744

[Bernardo Bellotto](#) Italian

On view at The Met Fifth Avenue in [Gallery 620](#)

By carefully staging the sunlight hitting the facades rising above the Adda River, Bellotto picks out the village of Canonica d'Adda at the right and Vaprio at the center. Located northeast of Milan, Vaprio was the site of Villa Melzi, where Leonardo da Vinci visited his pupil Francesco Melzi. On related drawings, Bellotto noted that this painting and its pendant were made in 1744 for Count Simonetta in Milan. The pendant, now in the Museo di Capodimonte, Naples, depicts the landscape from the opposite direction.