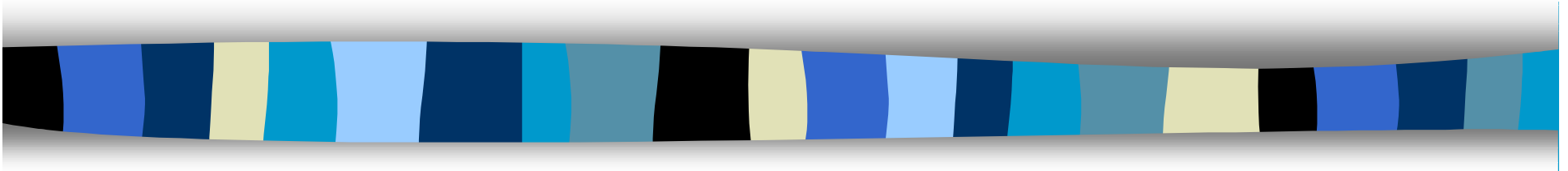


5. Courbet



Kenneth G. Hay

Professor Emeritus of Contemporary
Art Practice, The University of Leeds,
UK



“Despair”, Oil on Canvas, 45 x 54 cm (1841), Private Coll.



“Self Portrait with a Black Dog” (1842), oil on canvas 46 x 56 cm, Petit Palais, Paris



Rejected by the Salon of 1845 where it was presented with title “Baroness de M”, it was exhibited at the artist’s first retrospective in Paris, 1882.

“Juliette Courbet” (1844), 78 x 62 cm Petit Palais, Paris

“Man with Leather Belt” (c.1845)



- The work straddles two worlds..The pose and hands and forearm, and the facial expression are unmistakably 19th-century. The attributes of the artists: portfolio, book of prints, cast and chalk in its holder are managed deftly, but the colour sense is clear and dramatic - the crisp cuff against a black tunic is reminiscent of Titian, Giorgione and the Venetian Renaissance.
- Courbet is looking back to classic art and imbuing it with a 19th-century Romantic sentiment.

Courbet, "Man with a Pipe" (c.1846-47)



- When the critics saw it in 1851 they called it with some justification, “An imitation of Guercino” - It has the same casual handling, the same clear oval face marked with deep shadow round the eyes. But it is typical of Courbet that the painting should have another source in : Adriaen Brouwer’s self portrait as a “Smoker” (below)

Courbet journeyed to Holland in 1847 to study the Rembrandts and other Dutch Masters, and returned particularly impressed with Frans Hals. The Dutch school shared his celebration of everyday pleasures and fresh direct handling





“Portrait of Baudelaire” (1876) oil on canvas 53 x 61 cm, Montpellier, Musée Fabre:



“La Dormeuse” (1849)
Oil on canvas, 65 x 53 cm,
Paris, private coll

- Unsigned and dated, but Toussaint (1969) has identified it as exhibited at the 1849 private exhibition of the artist’s works.(1869).
- Reflects the influence of Rembrandt’s work, seen in Holland in 1847. Sold in 1881, it was bought by Juliette Courbet and later by Matisse.

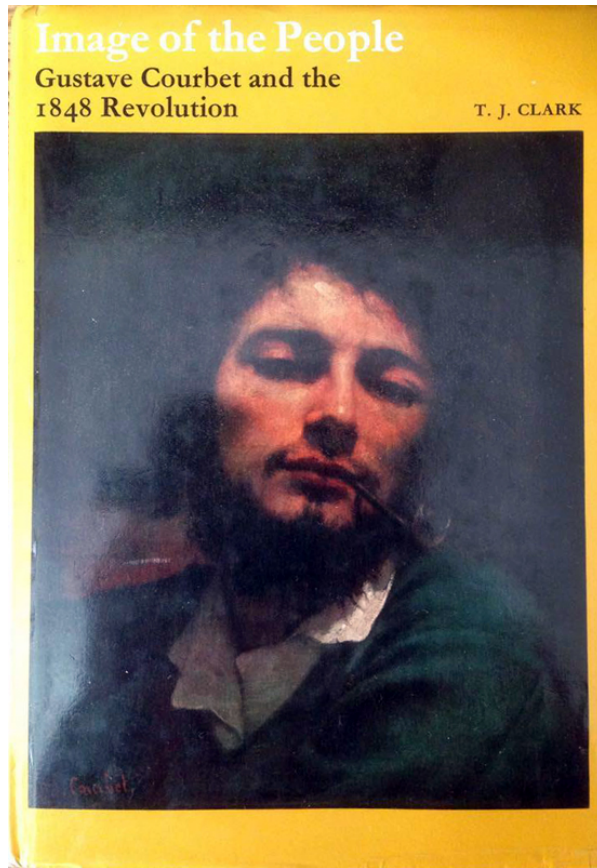


“After Dinner at Ornans” (1849), Lille, Musée des Beaux Arts 195 x 257 cm



Louis Le Nain, "Peasant's Lunch" (1642) Paris, Louvre

Timothy J. Clark



- “Image of the People:
- Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution.”
- (London, 1973)
- Landmark in the social history of art.
- Explores the interrelationships of painting, politics and publics.



Pierre Jean David D'Angers (1840)
“Portrait of Louis AugusteBlanqui”

- A police spy sat next to Courbet in the pub one day in 1873 and reported back on his beer-drinking, garrulous, impatient, eloquent political demeanour: He had, he noted: ‘the air of a jeering peasant.’
- Clourbet himself observed: “Behind this laughing mask of mine which you know, I conceal grief and bitterness, and a sadness which clings to my heart like a vampire. In the society I which we live, it doesn’t take much effort to reach the void” (letter to Alfred Bruyas, Nov. 1854).

Blanqui was a leading revolutionary figure in the 1840s whom Courbet much admired. His brother Adolphe was a conservative economist and observer of peasant life and the ascension of peasant power in the Assembly.



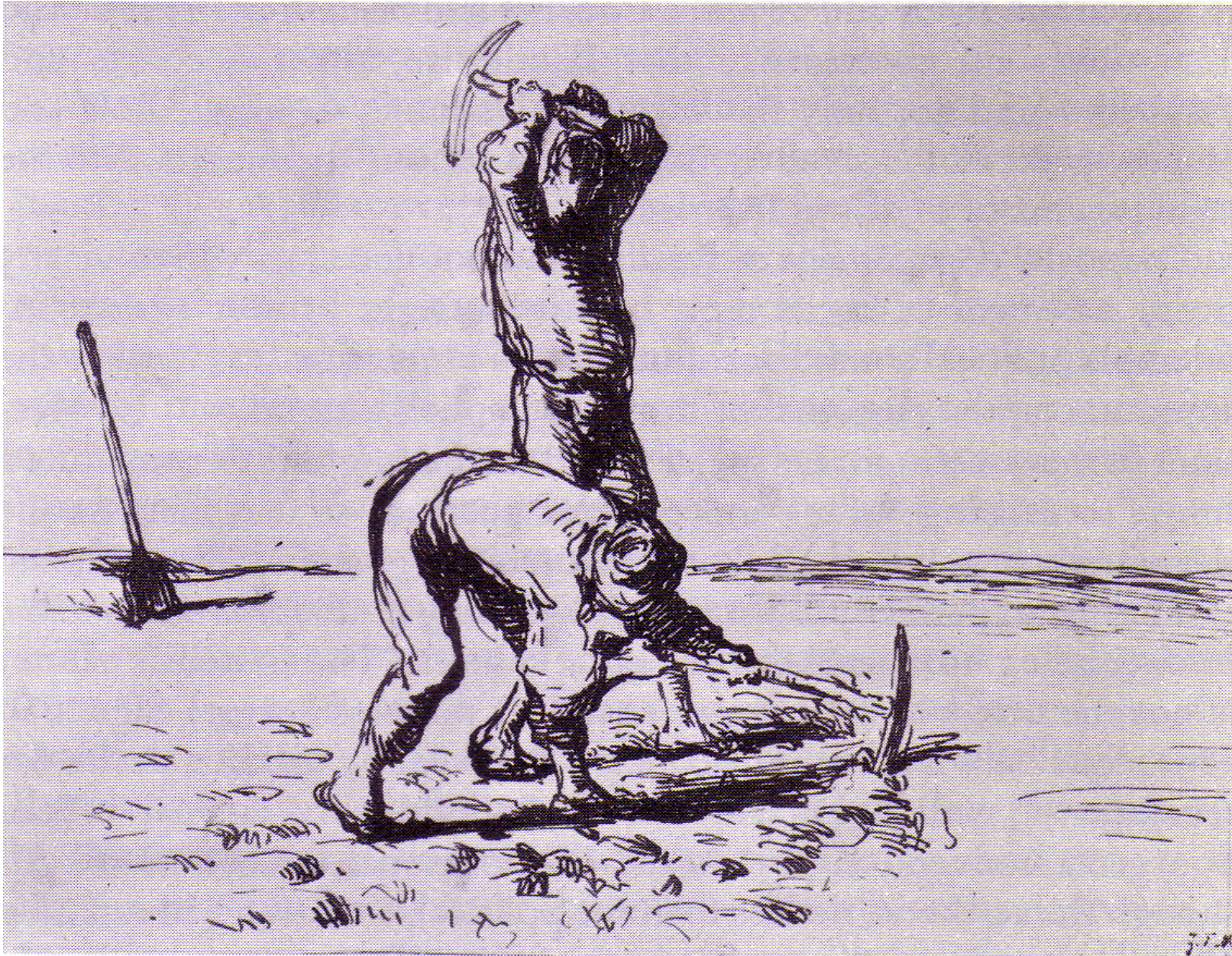
G. Courbet, "The Brasserie Andler"(1848)



“The Stonebreakers” (1849, destroyed 1945), 159 x 169 cm, formerly Gemälde Galerie, Dresden!³



Henry Wallis, "The Stonebreaker", (1857), 65 x 79 cm. Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery¹⁴



“Farm Labourers”, Jean François Millet (1814-75)



Les Bêcheurs (The Diggers). 1855-56. Etching. 9 1/4 x 14 (sheet 12 3/8 x 15 7/8)



“A Burial at Ornans”, (1849) Oil on Canvas, 314 x 665 cm, Paris, Louvre



- 1849, Courbet's first monumental painting. his "statement of principle" and made this clear by calling the work "Painting of Human Figures, the History of a Burial at Ornans".
- Inspired by group portraits of Dutch civic guards in the 17th century
- The rigorous frieze-like composition and the gaping grave strewn with bones invite us to think about the human condition.
- The scale of the canvas was usually reserved for **History Painting**, a "noble" genre, and here he has used it to present an ordinary subject, with no trace of idealisation, and which cannot pretend to be a genre scene either.
- At the Salon in 1850-1851, many people decried "the ugliness" of the people, and the ordinariness of the whole scene. Yet it is the idea of "universal understanding" which prevails, a constant preoccupation in the 19th century and for the 1848 generation in particular.



“Peasants of Flagey returning from the Fair”, (1850-51), 206 x 275.5 cm Beasanzon, Musée des Beaux Arts



Bought by Alfred Bruyas together with the *Sleeping Spinner*” entered for the Salon at the same time (1853) and subsequently donated to the State.

“Bathers”, (1853), oil on canvas 227 x 197 cm. Montpellier, Musée Fabre



“The Sleeping Spinner”, (1853), Oil on Canvas, 91x 115 cm, Montpellier, Musée Fabre



“Wounded Man” (1844--47), 81.5 x 97.5 cm, Paris, Louvre.



“Bonjour M. Courbet!” (1854)

The Wandering Jew



- **Linda Nochlin:**,
“Gustave Courbet's Meeting: A Portrait of the Artist as a Wandering Jew”
- (Art Bulletin, Vol. 49 No 3)

“The Artist’s Studio: A True Allegory summarizing a Period of Seven years in my life as an artist”



(1854-55), Oil on Canvas, 361 x 598 cm, Paris Louvre, Rejected at the Universal Salon of 1855



Courbet, "The Young Women from the Village" (1851), 54 x 66 cm Leeds City Art Gallery



“Young Ladies on the Banks of the Seine” (1857), 174 x 200 cm, Petit Palais Paris



“J.P.Prudhon and his Family”,(1865), 147 x 198 cm. Paris, Musée du Petit Palais



“J.P. Prudhon and his Family”, (detail)

- Courbet presented this portrait of Proudhon at the Salon of 1865, an homage not only to the renowned anarco-socialist political theorist but also to a friend who had just died. Both men came from the French region of Franche-Comté and both shared the same political outlook. Courbet, an ardent republican, had been derided since 1850 for his kitchen-sink themes.
- His critical realism, for which he was the premier exponent, had brought him severe criticism – his subjects were working class and his manner was decried as «ugly, dirty and vulgar».
- Prudhon's last work, “Du principe de l'art et de sa destination social”e (On the principal of art and its social application), published posthumously, was similarly critical of Second Empire society and furthermore made direct reference to the painter.

Honoré Daumier,



- Between 1830 and 1871 there were a series of revolutions and counter-revolutions in France. After the Revolution of 1789, Napoleon I came to power and declared himself Emperor in 1804. His First Empire was succeeded by the Restoration of the Bourbon Monarchy of Louis XVII (1815) which gave way to the Second Republic in 1848. This immediately (1848) then gave way to the Second Empire of Napoleon III, and then in 1870, to “The Commune”(March-May 1871).
- Daumier here depicts the peasantry, now in the guise of Classical Rome, surveying their new Estate.



LE SALUT PUBLIC.

Courbet, "Frontispiece for Le Salut Public (Public Health) No.2, (1848)"

The “June Days” (1848)



- The Revolutions of 1830 and 1848 reanimated the Revolutionary ambitions of the first French Revolution (1789).
- **The 1848 Revolution** (February) ended the Orleans Monarchy of King Louis Philippe (1830-48) and led to the **Second Republic**.
- In June 1848, unhappy about the conservative trend of the Second Republic’s elected government, a second, bloody but unsuccessful, rebellion by Parisian workers occurred (**The June Days Uprising**).
- On 2 December 1848, **Louis Napoléon Bonaparte** (nephew of Napoleon I) was elected President of the Second Republic, largely with peasant support. Three years later, he suspended the elected assembly and established the **Second Empire**, as **Napoléon III**, (the last de-facto Monarch of France) which lasted until 1870.

Messonnier, “The Barricades” watercolour (1848)



“The city of Paris has a great mast, made entirely of bronze, with sculpted Victories and Napoleon as its lookout”. (Balzac’)

The Vendôme column designed by Lepère and Gondoin and made from melting down 1200 artillery pieces taken from the Russians and Austrians. It comprises a stone core enrobed with 425 bronze plaques amounting to a 280 metre-long frieze of bas-reliefs, from the Napoleonic campaigns designed from drawings by Bergeret, and executed by a team of sculptors (including Boizot, Bosio, Bartolini, Ramey, Rude, Corbet, Clodion and Ruxthiel)

Forty-two metres tall, the column was crowned with a statue of The Emperor in Roman dress. The statue was taken down by the Allies in 1814 and replaced during the Restoration by a flag bearing fleurs de lys.

Under the July Monarchy this was replaced with a statue showing Napoleon as 'Little Corporal'.

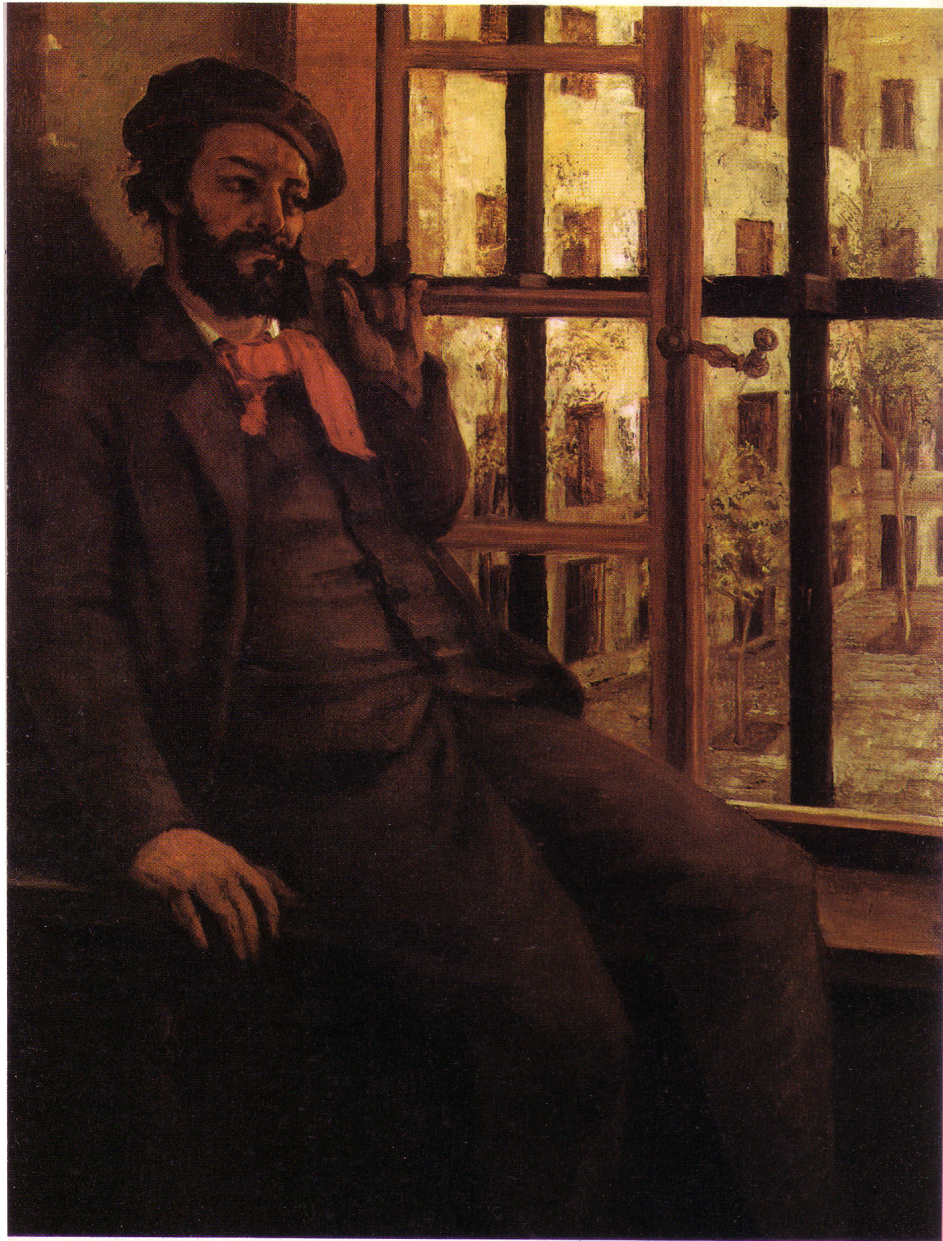
Dismantled during the **Commune** at the instigation of Gustave Courbet, the Vendôme column was restored and re-erected once more in 1873 at Courbet's expense. It was rthe casue of his imprisonment, bankruptcy and exile.



Place Vendôme, Paris, with collapsed column, 1871



“The Trout”, (1871). Paris private collection, 65 x 99cm

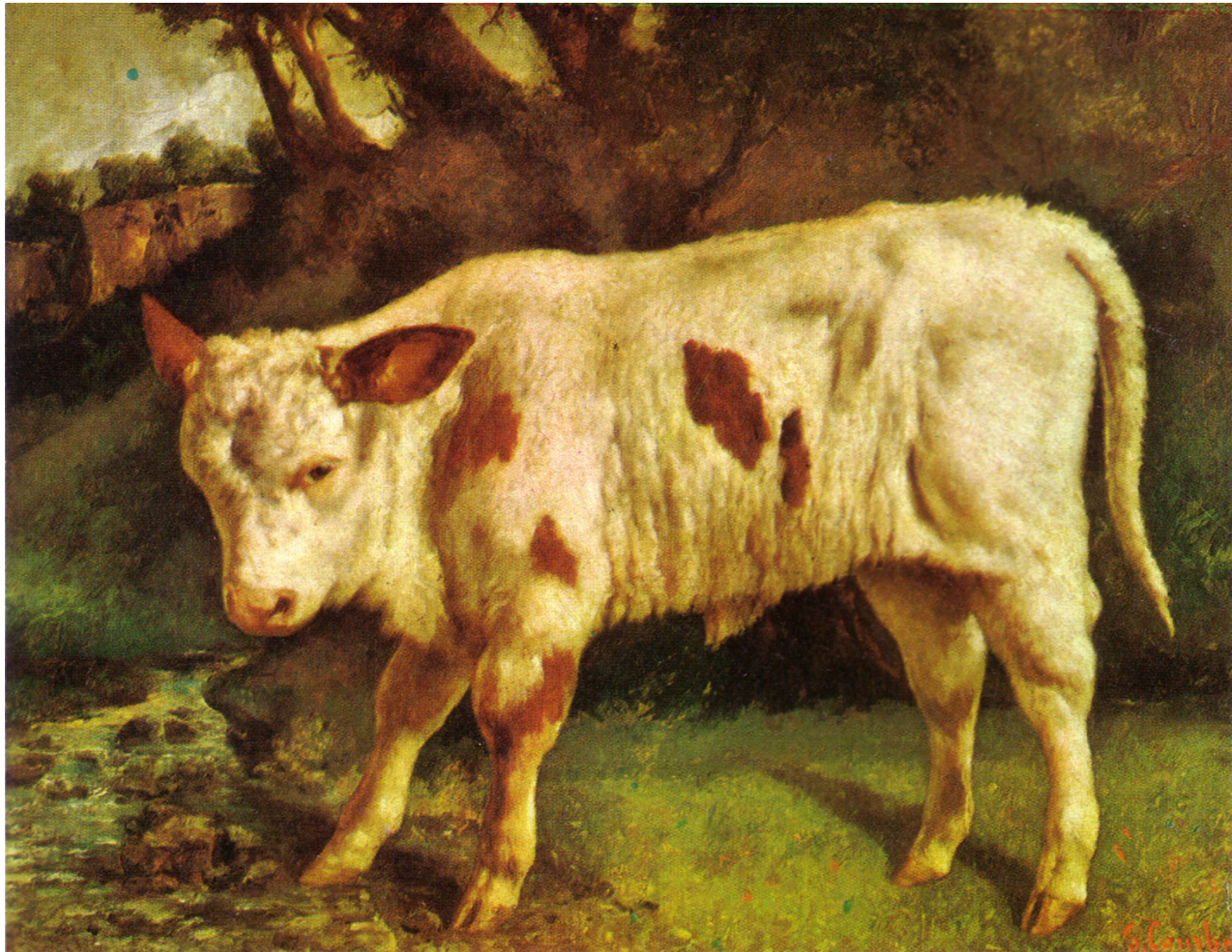


“Courbet in Sainte-Pélagie”, Ornans,
civic Collection 92 x 72.5 cm

(1871) Neither signed nor dated.
Given by Juliette Courbet to the Town
of Ornans in 1903. First mentioned by
Estingnard in 1897.

This is Courbet’s last self-portrait. He
had stopped painting self-portraits for
the previous 15 years, but painted this
one in prison as a record of his fate.

Courbet was sentenced to six months
in prison for his part in the destruction
of the Vendôme Column in 1871. His
last few months of confinement were
in the Hospital in Neuilly.



“The Calf” (1873), 88 x 116 cm. Paris, Coll. L. Bénatov



“The Château at Chillon”(1875), 62 x 69, Lons-le Saunier Museum