Special issue
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The Representation of Nature in Art

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Cover and pp. 2-3: This 695m-long sculpture took form on an crumbling old wall found in the Storm King Art Center (sculpture park, New York State) and has its older counterpart in the north of England, in Grizedale Forest (Cumbria). By following the line of trees that had grown beside and on the original wall, the artist rediscovered its route and rebuilt the path, this time in harmony with the trees, creating a walk through them, knowing however that one day they would probably destroy it.

Andy Goldsworthy (1956-) is one of the most eminent artists representing *land art*. This work is incorporated in the pursuit of his dialogue between stone and wood.

© A. Goldsworthy from his book *Wall* (Thames and Hudson) / *Mauer* (Zweitausandeins) / *Mur* (Editions Anthèse)

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The Representation of Nature in Art

Over the 50 years of its existence the Council of Europe has acquired a reputation for producing relevant, effective and reliable legal instruments. The public rightly regards the Council as a forum in which experts debate, draft and develop international law, which then becomes part of national legislation affecting the everyday lives of European citizens.

Yet it is this last aspect of the Council of Europe's work that is the least visible and least recognised product of European co-operation: a gradual, imperceptible process of change in people's day-to-day existence, attitudes and ways of thinking over half a century.

The Council of Europe's duty to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with European citizens was written into its founding Statute, Article 1 of which requires it "to achieve a greater unity between its Members". Its role was firmly based on the concepts of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. All those who signed up to its principles now had a framework of reference for translating those values into their social, educational, cultural, health and environmental policies, in pursuit of improved quality of life, informed by a humanistic vision of Europe.

But unity could not be achieved simply through conventions and agreements between states. It had to be rooted in greater cohesion – based on common values and a certain shared concept of humanity – between the individuals who make up the body of society. Through its work, the Council of Europe clearly pursues this aim, which is an essential element in the process of building Europe: it has stimulated, supported and steered a change in outlook, whereby people have become increasingly demanding in terms of democracy.

Culture and art have played their part in this change, through the ever-more-intense circulation of ideas that has characterised the period. For almost all of those 50 years, the Council itself has organised a prestigious series of art exhibitions. At the same time, the people of Europe have become increasingly aware of their surroundings – the natural and built environment and their conditions of life within it – and have begun to take a broader, longer-term view of the heritage they will pass on to future generations.

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Since 1967, with the establishment of its Centre Naturopa dedicated to disseminating information among the public, the voluntary sector and politicians, the Council of Europe has contributed to this growing awareness. In 1999 it launched the "Europe, a Common Heritage" campaign, explicitly linking the natural and cultural heritage. While the campaign will conclude at the end of 2000, it has been valuable in highlighting the many strong bonds between nature and the traditionally recognised forms of cultural heritage, especially painting, sculpture and other media of representational art.

And so the idea emerged of looking more closely at some of those bonds in the current issue of *Naturopa,* under the theme "the representation of nature in art". What is proposed is by no means an exhaustive overview: only a few forms of visual expression are considered, but they bear witness to the enduring connection between nature and art in the domain of European aesthetics.

Nature – just like a painting, sculpture or building – only becomes meaningful when we make an active connection with it. Like a canvas in a gallery, a landscape comes to life in the eyes of the people who look at it. The act of observation brings pleasure and enrichment and sometimes poses questions. In return, the observer confers meaning on the works of nature and artists and the hybrid forms produced through human action on the environment, and transmits that meaning to others.

I hope this issue of *Naturopa* will help to spread the idea of continuing interaction and harmonious co-existence between humanity and the environment as a whole, in the interests of finding the right balance for the lives of future generations.

Walter Schwimmer
Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Representing or Constructing Nature

In one way or another, nature has always been the preferential theme of creative art. It has sometimes been treated in a mythical or animist register, or else perceived as the very framework of existence, a framework very often remote and difficult to capture. Apprehended in a picturesque form, nature has also been a source of joy and pleasure, but is the measure of the absolute when viewed as the quintessential sublime object – there is something sublime in the fact that everyone is part of the universe and transcends his insignificance through the sense of belonging. When it is given the form of earth as life's foundation, nature personifies truth and authenticity imperilled by technology. Not a few philosophers have taken this firm earthly foundation as evidence of the roots which the individual always seems to need. When Heidegger made his polemical analysis, already a classic, of the shoes painted by Van Gogh, he was as attentive to the path beneath the shoes worn, he thought, by a peasant woman as to the actual shoes: it was a path of trodden earth, of continuity and solidity, a path which was not deceptive or artificial.

Nature: Raw Material

There has been a transition from representation of nature to "fashioning" or, if you will, utilising it; as such, nature is the "raw material" for the *land art* works of Walter De Maria, Robert Smithson and Richard Long. In Smithson's work entitled *Spiral Jetty*, nature, the earth, the lake and the stones but also the sky are the fashioned material, as if man wanted to pit himself against nature itself, to transform it and thus attain a sublimeness that seems to be denied him in everyday life. When Walter De Maria created his *Lightning Field* sculpture in the desert, he seemed to be compelling nature to behave in a given way. He does not take a passive attitude in the presence of the elements, which he does not just represent, but rather seeks to feel what is natural and dynamic in them and to make an aesthetic experience of it. The *land art* of the 1960s and 1970s seems to make a fresh attempt to come to terms with nature in a way resembling or at least related to the approach of primitive artists.

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Artistic commitment does not always go the way of the grandiose and universal. Smithson's jetty, Long's lines and circles and De Maria's lightning are immeasurable to the individual contemplating them. Turrell's spaces can be like dwellings for anyone enclosed in them but also vantage points from which one might almost take possession of the firmament. On the other hand, Calder's mobiles, the wax and coal dust used by Eva Lootz, or Adolfo Schlosser's birch branches and skins, which are also natural and also form the "raw material" for their artistic activity, give a clear-cut and minimal measure of nature. Examples are the draught that sets in motion a Calder mobile, the wax, paraffin or coal dust lightly accumulating on the object or on a level surface, and the tension of the frail bent branch built into one of Schlosser's artefacts. In the work of all these artists, far from asserting itself by its grandeur and solemnity, nature proclaims its self-effacing fragility.

With the passage of time, the relationship with nature has marked creative art; the conception of nature entertained by the various human communities has determined this relationship while in fact reinforcing or transforming it. Primitive man made use of the natural elements; Baroque artists perceived a harmonious ideal in nature which works of art were expected to render, irrespective of incidental and temporal peculiarities, whereas the Romantics passionately yearned to capture a nature that eluded their grasp. Friedrich's traveller gazing from lofty heights upon the sea of clouds spread out at his feet can only reach what he has before him, and has raised the subject of romantic frustration and nostalgia. The painter Constable, viewing the garden from his studio window, delights in the companionable picturesqueness of the landscape, and an artist like Pissarro wandering a tree-lined path can enjoy the play of light produced by the air, the atmosphere, the glancing sunlight and shade, the motion of the leaves and branches, all blended into a single retinal image.

Nature: Dialogue

No discoverable common meaning or motivation seems to underlie such different artistic intentions; artists "representing" nature and those "utilising" it cannot be measured with the same yardstick. The Cuban artist imbued with a culture that senses a magical transcendence through everyday signs appearing in the *monte* – which may be a garden, a patch of land with vegetation – cannot function in the same way as another fed on a diet of Neoplatonism, whether his name is Raphael or Michelangelo. The vital force revealed by Michelangelo in his sculptures contrasts with the serenity and the ideal

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proportions sought by Raphael in his frescoes. They each invoke nature in very different ways, and the ideal transcendence which they discover in it is quite unlike the magical transcendence found in everyday things.

On that basis, it would plainly be pointless and exaggerated to look for a general rule and a master key to such contrasting works and dissimilar periods. There is perhaps just one common feature, and this is the need felt in every age for reference to and sustained dialogue with nature so as to define it within that dialogue, I would even say to construct it. Indeed, this great diversity of approaches and productions demonstrates if anything that nature is not so much what actually exists, rather our own construct of what exists. Nature is "utilised" when branches are used to construct an object, in the scattering of coal dust, and in taking advantage of draughts to activate a mobile. It is utilised in painting or drawing a landscape, whether picturesque in the style of Constable or sublime in Turner's. The same thing happens when nature is "reduced" to a scheme or a law, or conversely when artists emulate Michelangelo and portray the very impossibility of subjecting it to any law. Nature is treated as a vital force through the vigour of Michelangelo's *Slaves* as well as in awesome images like Grünewald's *Crucifixion* or sublime ones like Turner's locomotive blending its inordinate violence with the cosmic power of the elements. Natural cruelty can be extreme as represented in Goya's *Disasters of War* drawing of a man impaled on a tree which passes through the mutilated body and protrudes at the back of the neck; the tree is an instrument of torture, not pleasure.

Nature: Experience

In every case, nature is "what is there", either within our reach or before us, to be contemplated, utilised, represented, enjoyed and appreciated, to be ours or to show our helplessness, to constitute a vital force whether as a smiling dawn or a dismal night, or in its sheer violence. What these many different images have in common is their very uniqueness, their property of denoting something which is present and by virtue of its presence can be viewed with a sense of "proportion". It is something different each time, seen through different eyes, and possessing a meaning which excludes or supplants all others. Nature is nothing if not the object of experience which gains a material profile in experience alone. It does so in the experience of Friedrich's monk gazing at the sea, Goya's colossus under the starry firmament or Runge's ideal morning; the experience of the object chanced upon, the stone, the snail's shell and the root which Angel Ferrant uses to create a small sculpture, and the ambitious and impossible experience of Christo attempting to wrap nature up and appropriate it.

This is an impossible pretension, for nature is still there; Christo's huge package does not turn it into an object, and finally all that remains of an extravagant yet frustrated act will be the photograph while the packaging, however sturdy, "destructs" in nature's own good time. The salt lake finally prevails over Smithson's jetty, which will completely merge with the water in the end. Marguerite Yourcenar once wrote this about ruins: "Those man-made structures of which nature finally takes possession". She meant the Roman ruins drawn by Piranesi, but this theory is applicable to many other works that are "not yet" in ruins. Each artistic experience of nature is complete and consummate but at the same time limited. It is complete, consummate and dreadful in Goya's impalement scene, sublime for Friedrich's traveller, and tragic for Géricault's shipwrecked mariners in *Le Radeau de la Méduse*. The firmament which we view from Turrell's site and the jetty along which Smithson leads us are perfect and unforgettable experiences, but it is possible for us to go through still other experiences because nature resembles another Medusa with a thousand faces and, like her, can turn us to stone if we persist in our will to dominate. Still, dominating nature is the whole purpose of this experience, and therein lies the paradox from which art draws sustenance.

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Captions

1. R. Smithson (1938-73), *Spiral Jetty*, earth, black rock, salt, water, ≃ 1500' long x 15' wide, 1970, Great Salt Lake, Utah, USA © Adagp, Paris 2000 © photo G. Gorgoni/Courtesy James Cohan Gallery, New York, Collection: DIA Center for the Arts, New York, USA
2. T. Géricault (1791-1824), *Le Radeau de la Méduse*, 1818-19, Musée du Louvre, Paris, France © E. Lessing/AKG Paris
3. F. de Goya (1746-1828), *Colossus*, 1808-12, Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain © E. Lessing/AKG Paris
4. C. D. Friedrich (1774-1840), *The traveller above the sea of clouds*, about 1818, Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany © AKG Paris

Images of Hunting and Farming in Prehistoric and Classical Art

The modern European perception of the natural world is no guide to the way it was seen by our prehistoric forebears. Completely immersed in nature, they depended on it much more than we do, and for that reason were more concerned with experiencing it than with interpreting it through representation. Besides, what we regard as primitive art (and all prehistoric art as well as much popular art, even today, falls into that category) is not the reflection of conscious aesthetic considerations on the part of those who created it. The works that we, from our modern standpoint, deem "artistic" were, for them, expressions of feeling or of ideologies or spiritual beliefs. It is, moreover, very difficult to summarise such a complex and varied phenomenon, spanning 30 000 years of European experience in figurative art, in the space of a short article.

Evocations of Nature in Prehistoric Art

With those provisos, however, we may proceed to examine one of the most fascinating chapters in art history – the art of the Palaeolithic period. We are still drawn to the beauty of the bison depicted at Altamira (Spain) and the bulls at Lascaux (France), evidence both of an astonishing ability to observe nature and of an interpretive or "mythic" approach to it. Those works of art described as "moveable", inasmuch as they are engraved on stone, bone or horn, exercise an equally powerful attraction. Yet, despite the accuracy of observation and a degree of "realism" in the work, the animals represented seem isolated and devoid of context (even in the most flawlessly "natural" pictures such as those of the "Bison with Turned Head" at La Madeleine, the herd of reindeer at Teyjat or the stags and horses depicted on plaques at Limeuil, all in Dordogne, France) – a reflection perhaps of their symbolic function and of the fact that representing nature was no part of the artists' intention.

At the start of the Holocene period, some 10 000 years ago, Palaeolithic art disappeared. Works of art became more abstract and did not depict nature.

In fact, although vultures, bulls and other animals are represented in certain sanctuaries at the preceramic Neolithic site of Çatalhöyük (Turkey), dating from the 7th millennium BC, most Neolithic imagery (excepting some zoomorphic vases from Karanovo in Bulgaria and Vinca in Serbia) is related to the sea goddess and to symbols associated with new beliefs about procreation. At the same period, the Mediterranean area and the Megalithic cultures of western Europe were dominated by an abstract, geometric style that eschewed any reference to nature until the 3rd millennium BC.

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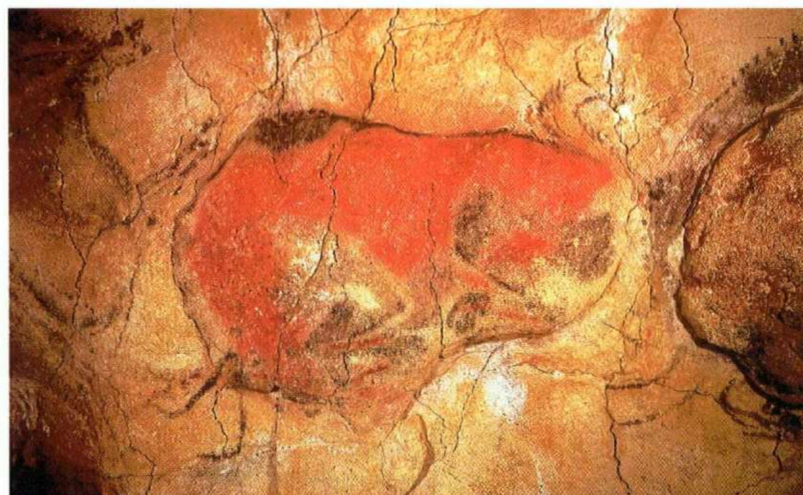
In this context, the Levantine rock art found in dwellings in Mediterranean Spain is in a category apart. Although the dwellings date from the very earliest farming period, the scenes include animals, hunting and honey collecting and represent the beginning of attempts at depicting nature. Similarly, among the thousands of diagrammatic images carved on rock at Val Camónica (Italy) and Mont Bego (Mercantour, France) we find hunting scenes and carts drawn by oxen, identifiable from their horns.

But it is the Minoan civilisation, which flourished in Crete in the second and third millennia BC, that offers the best examples of art inspired by nature. The finely executed images of animals and plants (from bulls to octopuses and irises, adorning jewellery, vases and walls) are evidence of a highly sensitive approach not found elsewhere in prehistoric Europe and undoubtedly reflecting eastern influences. The "Harvesters' Rhyton", the "Vapheio cup" with its bulls, and the frescos at Knossos and Haghia Triadha are examples of naturalist art inspired directly by nature.



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Evocations of Nature in Classical Art

From the 1st millennium BC, Bronze Age abstract art was superseded by new figurative styles that emerged in the Iron Age influenced by the new language of narrative from the east and Greece. Initially geometric, these became increasingly naturalistic, taking their lead from classical art, which was gradually spreading throughout the ancient world from the Eurasian steppe to the west of the Iberian peninsula, leaving its mark, too, on Celtic and Germanic art in central and northern Europe, although each

culture would retain its own perceptions and styles. Yet, although animal forms began to be featured along with hunting scenes and even images of ploughing – as, for example, on the bronze chariot from the Bisenzio Valley (Tuscany, Italy) – nature as such was not yet a subject, or was merely referred to summarily through images of animals or trees. Even the beautiful Etruscan school of painting, influenced by oriental and Greek art, portrayed nature only via diagrammatic representations of trees (as in the Tomba degli Auguri), birds or hunting scenes (as in the Tomba della Caccia e Pesca). The notion of depicting the natural world in the form of countryside or landscape was equally foreign to Greek art until the Hellenistic period in the last centuries BC.

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Nature Featured in Hellenistic Art

In fact, it was only at the end of the 3rd century BC that landscape began to feature in Hellenistic painting as it absorbed classical art's facility for capturing reality, as well as a sense of the anecdotal. The same process shaped the development of Theocritus' bucolic poetry, which is influenced by Virgil's Eclogues and the work of later poets. Landscape and rural scenes – first developed in Alexandria, the chief metropolis of Greece, founded by Alexander the Great – became a specific genre of painting and mosaic.

Nature as mythologised by urban observers is a recurring theme in the so-called "Pompean" style of Roman painting, which is the direct heir to the Hellenistic tradition. With pictures that opened out like windows, and frescoes that covered entire walls, Roman painters fully mastered the art of representing nature, although the naturalism of their work is often more apparent than real. The scenes from the Odyssey painted in a Roman dwelling on the Esquiline hill, and now housed in the Vatican museums, are a good example and they also demonstrate a high level of skill in the use of colour and perspective. The frescoes in the Villa of Livia near Prima Porta depict a garden with flowers, plants and birds. At other sites we find seascapes with fishing boats, and country scenes. Yet although these pictures include animals, plants and other real subjects, the landscapes themselves are imaginary, their naturalism merely apparent, as in the tradition of Theocrites.

This refined Hellenistic tradition peaked in the reign of Augustus at the turn of the millennium. It later became more and more populist, depicting, for example, hunting scenes in which nature was once again gradually relegated to accessory status as painters followed the trend in classical art towards increasingly formalistic and decorative imagery – a style that ultimately made its way into the medieval world via Byzantine art.

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Captions

1. Rock carving, Vallée des Merveilles, Parc du Mercantour, France © E. Menthon
2. Charging bison, wall painting, relief treated in red, with black outline, dating from the Magdalenian period, Altamira, Santander province, Spain © AKG Paris
3. Wall painting, Lascaux, Dordogne, France © AKG Paris
4. Fresco from Knossos palace dating from the Minoan, Archaelogical Museum, Heraklion, Crete, Greece © AKG Paris
5. Detail of a fresco in the Garden Room of the Livia's Villa (wife of Augustus), in Pompeii (Italy), 30-38 BC, Museo Nazionale Romano delle Terme, Rome, Italy © AKG Paris

Dutch Landscape Painting

In the Netherlands three major rivers flow into the sea: the Rhine, the Scheldt and the Maas. There have been settlements on the fertile land along these rivers since early times, though the advantages of water have always gone hand in hand with flood danger and the struggle to preserve arable land situated below sea level. The construction of river dykes also began very early, land management in the Netherlands being largely determined by the opposite concerns of land lost to the sea and land reclaimed from the sea in the form of polders. In Dutch art, in which love of the national countryside is a key influence, there is constant reference to the benefits and hazards of water.

Water – A Mixed Blessing

One of the earliest of Dutch landscape paintings portrays the countryside rather primitively but splendidly. The panels of a diptych painted around 1500 by an anonymous artist show the city and region of Dordrecht, with many smaller towns and villages along the navigable waterways. Dordrecht lies in a part of Holland where, until the middle of the 20th century, the sea was able to travel a considerable way up the delta. In 1421 a huge storm swallowed much of the land here, drowning 21 villages. This disaster, known as the St Elizabeth's Day flood, is shown in the diptych. In the upper right corner the dyke can be seen breaking, and elsewhere drowning people and rescue operations are depicted. By 1500, at a time when art was still used almost exclusively for religious purposes, memories of the event were still so present that it was made the subject of this major work of art.

Windmills

Around 1600, new methods were found for more swiftly and safely reclaiming land from the sea. One of these innovations, windmills, was also found to be a valuable tool for canal management. It was probably the windmills used to drain the Kinderdijk polder that Aelbert Cuyp (1620-91) portrayed around 1640 in a magnificent painting of a peaceful scene. A number of fishermen are out on the water and there is early summer greenery. In the distance a little church can be seen standing next to the mills. The soil, the wind and the water are gifts of God. This is still a region of many windmills, now a tourist attraction.

Polder Landscapes

In the Middle Ages, slowly but surely, turf cutting made inroads into the peat bogs. The usefulness of peat for heating homes in winter is gloriously celebrated in a 17th century song which goes: "Happy is the country where children burn their land" – "land" here meaning both marshland and the nourishing earth. In the 17th century windmills were used extensively to drain the large lakes which had formed in these excavations. The meadowland of the resulting polders provided a livelihood for herdsmen. Polder landscapes continue to fascinate visitors to the Netherlands. On one side of the dykes, down below, are large meadows, while on the other side the water comes almost up to the dyke-top path. A vivid etching by Rembrandt (1606-69) from around 1650 shows this scene. A man carrying two buckets slung across his shoulders can be seen walking along a dyke towards a farm standing on the polder down to his left, while on his right there is the water, with a boat in the distance.

Livestock and the Myth of Arcadia

Many paintings sing the praises of livestock, which many have seen as the source of Dutch prosperity – milk, butter and cheese have been synonymous with the wealth of the Netherlands since the 16th century. The Dutch saw their farmland, which they had learned to use to advantage, as their own version of Arcadia – not a vision shared by Dutch people today, who flee the cold and damp *en masse* in the holiday season, leaving their agricultural heaven on earth to the frogs. Yet the Dutch Arcadia inspired a good many poems and paintings. A work by Paulus Potter (1625-54) is a good example of this: in the golden rays of the declining sun a contented peasant can be seen returning home across a willow-lined meadow in which a woman is milking a cow.

Dunes

However, Holland means more than polders and water. Even around Utrecht there are higher areas of sand surrounded by stretches of woodland. The land further east, where the countryside is hilly, was formerly planted with wheat fields. This region of the Netherlands, with its streams and watermills, was immortalised by Jacob Van Ruisdael and Meindert Hobbema (1638-1709). Towns were separated from the sea by a line of dunes, sometimes of considerable width. Jacob Van Ruisdael must have been on a high dune when he painted his *View of Haarlem*. Water filtered through the sand to flow as brooks across the fields. It was here that the people of Haarlem washed their freshly woven cloth before leaving it to bleach at the foot of the dunes outside the town. Ruisdael's portrayal of this humble human activity and of the distant city, which is at once both large and small, as shown by the tiny mills under the vastness of the sky, is an ode to his country and to the hand of God, which people in the 17th century identified in nature as well as in human life.

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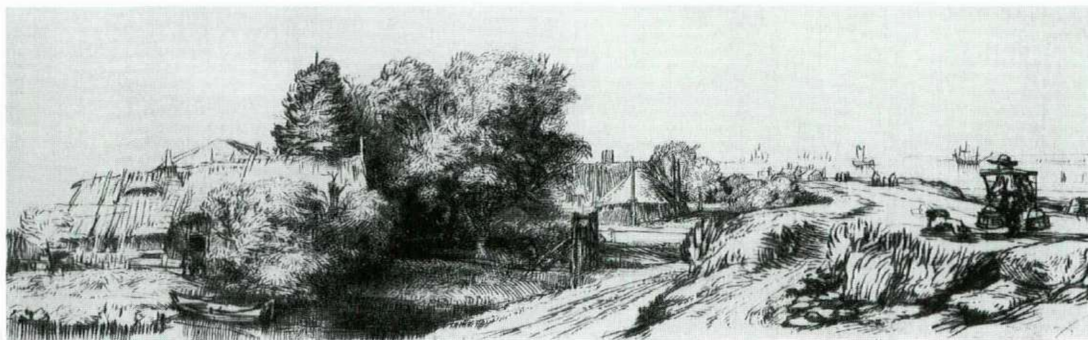
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Captions

1. Rembrandt (1606-69), Landscape with man carrying two buckets slung across his shoulders (*Landschap met man met emmers aan juk*), etching, 7 x 17.5 cm, Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Netherlands © Rijksmuseum Amsterdam
2. Master of the St-Elizabeth Panels, *St-Elizabeth's Day Flood*, 18-19 November 1421, diptych, right side, 127 x 110 cm, painted around 1500, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Netherlands © Rijksmuseum-Foundation

2

Romantic Landscape in Europe

Man and Nature – A Modern Relationship

The popularity of the *jardin anglais*, the wave of thought inspired by Jean Jacques Rousseau and the first ascent of Mont-Blanc in 1786 were all indicators of a shift in the human perception of nature[1]. While the concept of "landscape" is not the exclusive preserve of romanticism, it was in the late 18th and early 19th centuries that it emerged as the expression of the new relationship between people and nature: landscape was a slice of nature as perceived by an observer, it implied an aesthetic ordering of nature and its purpose was to offset the deeply felt loss of a direct connection with the cosmos[2]. The concept also had an ideological dimension: that landscape was associated with the political question of control of national territory is clear from the fashion for representations of local places and the development of cartography. A number of painters reflected this dimension in their work: Runge, Friedrich and Constable, for example, did not make the traditional trip to Italy. But the documentary function of painting was soon overtaken – notably in the cases of the "topographic" artists Alexander Cozens (1717-86) and Paul Sandby (1725-1809) – by that of subjective representation, a trend encouraged by the development of watercolour techniques.

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The Question of Genres and the System of Representation

Nevertheless – and despite the first Salon showings of landscape studies, the taste of the art-buying public and Diderot's writings on the landscapes of Claude Joseph Vernet – landscape continued to suffer in the academies from a strict insistence on the primacy of the human figure. Yet from relegation to the status of backdrop to human activity and domination by an Italianate ideal (typified in the work of Nicolas Poussin and Claude Lorrain), this genre – previously no more than the representation of the inanimate – was to assume pivotal importance in the critique of the neo-classical system. While the model of idealised landscape still prevailed, particularly among the German classicists (Mechau, J.C. Reinhart, Koch and Hackert), painters such as Thomas Gainsborough (1727-88) and Pierre Henri de Valenciennes (1750-1819) were already producing astonishingly modern compositions and studies[3].

In Germany, Philipp Otto Runge (1777-1810) and Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840) were tending to subvert, rather than break with, the old rules. The former proposed a subtle role reversal in which human attributes were transferred to landscape. While his work was not pure landscape, he saw his conception of *"Landschafterey"* as paving the way for a style of painting that did not include the human figure, and his *Times of Day* cycle, combining symbolic compositions and painted settings marks a departure from the classicist approach to landscape[4]. The latter, by making landscape the subject of an altar piece[5], gave the genre historical status. The focus was no longer on the direct representation of the human figure, whose role was to dignify the surrounding landscape, but on a perception of landscape that now gave it a symbolic dimension. The pressing case for this shift was underscored by recognition of the dangers inherent in the invention of panoramas and dioramas as means of reproducing nature[6]. Increased subjectivity threatened not only the hierarchy of genres but also the system of representation that had underpinned it since the Renaissance.

Focus of Reflection and Experiment

Landscape became a focus of theory and experiment, challenging not only artistic resources but also the act of perception (of both nature and works of art). Cozens, for example, in *A New Method for Assisting the Invention in the Composition of Landscapes* (1786), called into question the pre-eminent function of the sketch, his use of "blots" introducing an element of chance into the composition process[7]. In promoting the idea – reinforced by the phenomenon of synesthesia and the rise of purely instrumental music – that landscape and music were analogous, artists and thinkers showed that they no longer wished to be bound by the rules of classical *mimesis*, or indeed representation. The concept of imitating nature was taking on new meaning. A scientific interest in transient weather phenomena led Constable (1776-1837) to produce veritable portraits of the English countryside[8], using, in some cases, brush and blade strokes to create an illusion of movement. Artists turned to imitating *natura naturans* rather than *natura naturata*. Drawn to landscapes of the sublime, about which Burke and Kant had theorised in the previous century, they tended to choose to represent places uncorrupted by culture (see, for example, the work of Philippe Jacques de Loutherbourg, Caspar Wolf, Thomas Girtin and John Martin). Turner (1775-1851) – whose landscapes were reportedly described as "pictures of nothing"[9] – harked back in *Light and Colour (Goethe's Theory) – the Morning after the Deluge – Moses writing the Book of Genesis*[10], to a primal landscape, abandoning rules of perspective and planes as well as the classical landscape format.

2

Probably because it had been neglected in academic doctrine, landscape offered painters scope for the most innovative experimentation. And they brought that fresh spirit with them when they rediscovered "classical" territory – Venice in the case of Turner and Bonington, Naples and Amalfi for Karl Blechen, and the countryside around Rome for Camille Corot, while Delacroix and the Orientalists opted for Greece and the East in place of Italy.

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[1] See *Le paysage en France et en Allemagne autour de 1800, Revue Germanique Internationale*, 7, 1997

[2] See Joachim Ritter, *Landschaft. Zur Funktion des Ästhetischen in der modernen Gesellschaft* (1963), republished *in* J. Ritter, *Subjektivität. Sechs Aufsätze*, Frankfurt am Main, Germany, 1974, pp. 141-163

[3] Pierre Henri de Valenciennes, *Les environs de Roca di Papa dans les nuages* (1782-84), Musée du Louvre, Paris, France

[4] Philipp Otto Runge, *Morning* (first version) [*Der Morgen (erste Fassung)*], 1808, Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany

[5] Caspar David Friedrich, *Cross in the Mountains* [*Das Kreuz im Gebirge* (Tetschener Altar)], 1807-08, Gemäldegalerie, Dresden, Germany

[6] See Roland Recht, *La lettre de Humboldt: du jardin paysager au daguerréotype*, Paris, 1989, pp. 121-132

[7] Alexander Cozens, *A New Method of Assisting the Invention in Drawing Original Compositions in Landscapes,* plate No. 14, "A Close or Confined Scene with Little or No Sky", 1786, aquatint, 22.9 x 30.4 cm, Tate Britain, London, United Kingdom

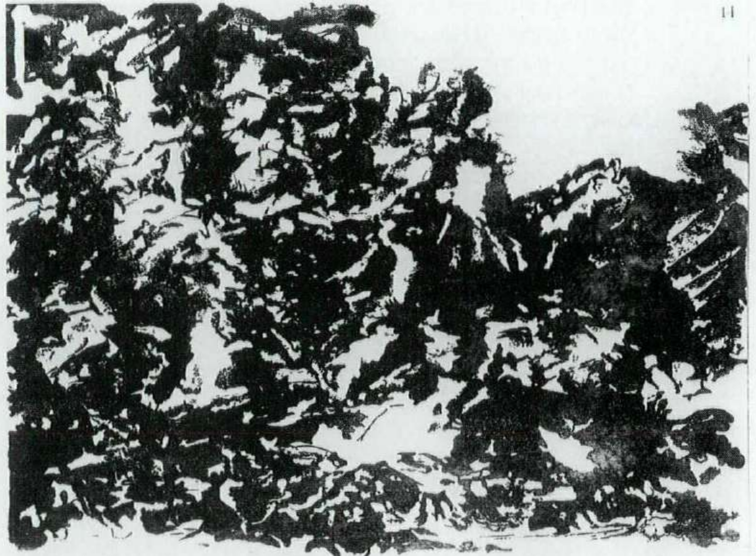
[8] John Constable, *The Hay Wain,* 1821, National Gallery, London, United Kingdom

[9] Comment reported by William Hazlitt in "On Imitation", *The Examiner,* 18 February 1816, reproduced in *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt,* London, 1930-34, vol. IV, p. 76

[10] William Turner, *Light and Colour (Goethe's theory) – the Morning after the Deluge – Moses writing the Book of Genesis,* 1843, Tate Britain, London, United Kingdom

Captions

1. C. D. Friedrich (1774-1840), *Cross in the Mountains* [*Das Kreuz im Gebirge* (Tetschener Altar)], 1808, Gemäldegalerie, Neue Meister, Dresden, Germany © AKG Paris
2. P. O. Runge (1777-1810), *Morning,* 1808, Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany © AKG Paris
3. A. Cozens, *A New Method of Assisting the Invention in Drawing Original Compositions in Landscapes,* plate No. 14: "A Close or Confined Scene, with Little or No Sky", 1786, aquatint, 22.9 x 30.4 cm, Tate Britain, London, United Kingdom © Tate, London 2000



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From Landscapes to Abstract Art

In his study on the landscape artist Alexander Cozens, *L'Art de la tache,* Jean-Claude Lebensztejn observes that "the representation of nature is bound up with the nature of representation"[1]. Romanticism's legacy to modern landscape painting consists precisely in this convergence of interest in nature and the desire for a specific kind of representation. In the 19th century, the main symptom of this trend was the gradual demise of the principle of *historia,* and subsequently of the human figure itself, a process which cleared the way for formal experimentation.

A New Look at Nature

With its tight framing and monumental balance, Gustave Courbet's 1864 painting *The Oak at Flagey* transposes portrait techniques into the representation of nature, elevating nature to the status of subject. The Ornans-born artist provided inspiration for the painters from the Barbizon school, whose efforts are a perfect illustration of the new interest in pure landscapes, an area which, in France, had failed to attract the Romantic generation. The use of a knife to depict the motif through dense, broken colour masses, a technique previously used only in studies, became part of the finished picture with Courbet and the Barbizon painters (such as Charles François Daubigny and Théodore Rousseau). This resulted in a more general approach to space, abandoning the traditional use of an ordered series of planes converging, in perspective, on the horizon line.

In Impressionist painting, the landscape was treated very much in global terms, rather than as a set of hierarchies. This revolutionary way of looking at things, of which Monet was the prime exponent, drew in a sense on Turner's fluid patches of colour, which the French artist discovered during his stay in England in 1870-71. *Impression: Sunrise,* a view of Le Havre painted in 1873, which Louis Leroy likened to "wallpaper in its embryonic state"[2], gives a foretaste, through its homogeneous depiction of the water and the sky, of the spatial tension present in the major series produced by Monet in later years: the *Haystacks* (1891), the *Cathedrals* (1893-94) and the *Waterlilies* (1899-1925). At the turn of the century, these radical works touched on the borders of abstract art, emphasising the effects of light rather than the object itself; vibrant, irregular strokes assumed greater importance than representation. The "objective eye" which the Realists, and subsequently the Impressionists, aimed to cast over nature, in reaction to academic art – and, equally, to the development of mechanised culture in the industrial age – itself became a tool for a new visual approach to painting.

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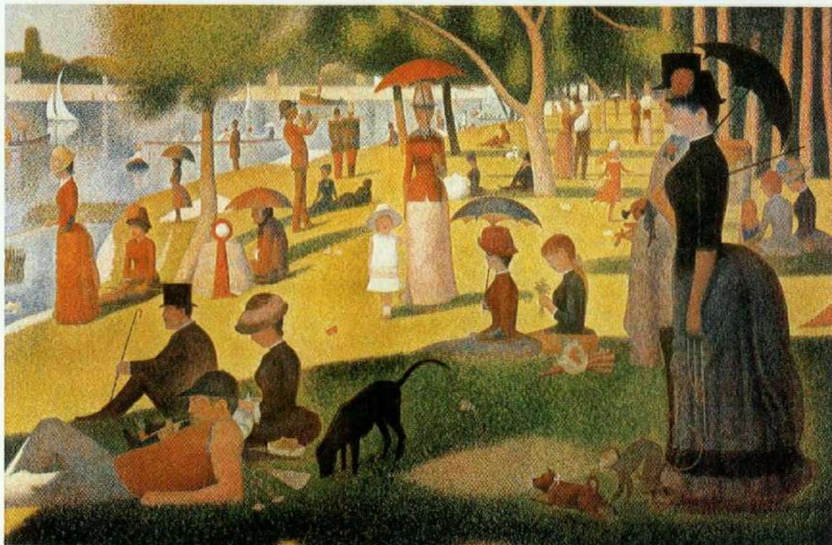
Post-Impressionism

The Post-Impressionist movement developed from the 1880s onwards, in reaction to a style of painting regarded as formless. Cézanne began to use even, structured strokes, blending in with the contours of each motif. In contrast to the purely retinal approach to nature as advocated by Monet, he was primarily concerned with a "sensation" in which sight and touch were closely intertwined. His famous recommendation, "treat nature by means of the cylinder, the sphere, the cone"[3], called for a depiction of the landscape in terms of a range of individual aspects, as is illustrated by his often unfinished images of Mont Sainte-Victoire. Georges Seurat, on the other hand, challenged Impressionism by exper-

imenting with form, returning to the tradition of the preparatory drawing. In *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* (1884-86), presented at the Impressionists' last exhibition in 1886, the lines and colours received specific attention, being the result of free interpretation of scientific references. The figures, distributed across the canvas in accordance with "golden section" proportions, visibly take the form of simplified arabesques. The colour, added by means of extremely fine, individual strokes, deliberately accentuates the phenomenon of "simultaneous contrast", a concept formulated by Michel-Eugène Chevreul in 1839[4]. Other artists rejected the Impressionists'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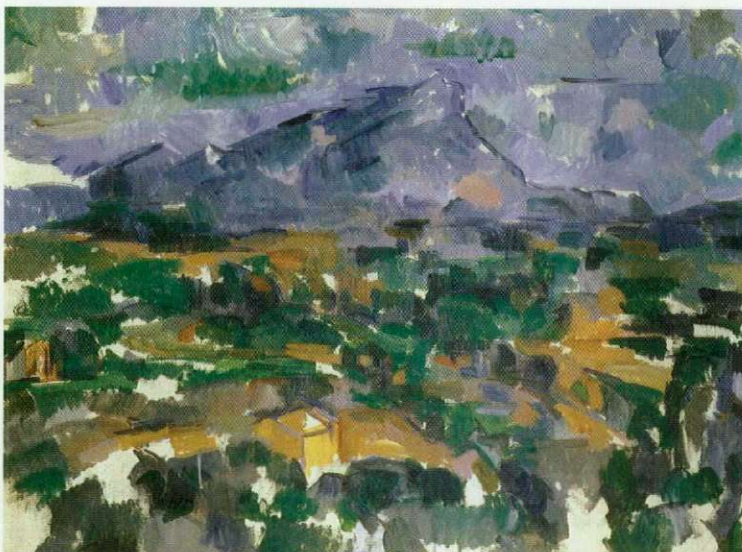
spontaneity by subjectively altering the landscape to reflect a religious conception of the world. Gauguin and Van Gogh, for instance, allowed colour to assume an expressive, symbolic kind of power, making nature the final refuge of a mystic quest.

Colour and Geometry

Fauvism may be considered the direct consequence of Post-Impressionist research on colour in the sense that colour became, for a time, practically the sole focus of the artists who caused a scandal at the Salon d'Automne in 1905. The Southern sunlight, observed in Saint-Tropez and later in Collioure, inspired a violent range of colour: "That colour screwed me up completely. I gave in to colour for colour's sake", as Derain wrote to Vlaminck from Collioure in July 1905[5].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La Moulade, a small oil painting by Matisse dating from the same summer, offers a drastically simplified interpretation of the landscape. The seaside view takes on the appearance of an assembly of individual surfaces, a mass of random shades, where the only connection with reality is the expanse of sea. The vertical depiction of space has a highly destabilising effect on the eye, marking the permanent destruction of the classical *veduta*. Kandinsky and Mondrian were the first artists to conceptualise this emergence of a pure form of painting, taking symbolist thought as the inspiration for a philosophy to underpin a new spiritual era. Between 1909 and 1912, Kandinsky produced a series of landscapes inspired by Fauvism, pervaded by fantastic visions conjuring up vague references to legends and religious sources, with reality gradually giving way to an independent world where shapes and colours are released from the forces of gravity. Mondrian, during his stay in Paris immediately before the Great War, took the geometric approach developed by Cézanne and the Cubists to its absolute limits. His *Pier and Ocean* series, painted between 1914 and 1916, depict the gradual transformation of the sea view into a network of black lines, distributed across the surface according to a purely representational pattern.

Since landscape painting moved away from the representation of figures, it has become the most suitable genre for transgressing the principle of *mimesis*. In modern times, it has assumed particular importance, as its various manifestations have illustrated the profound changes in our relationship with the world, reflecting the transition from a rural to an urban culture, and the ensuing development of a new visual sensibility.

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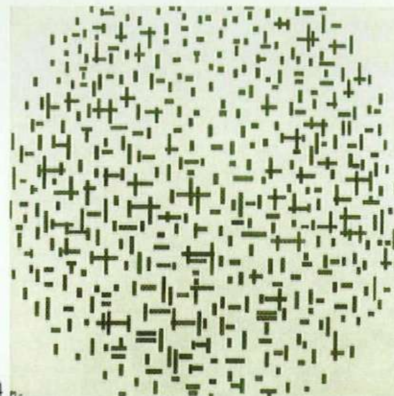
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[1] Jean-Claude Lebensztejn, *L'Art de la tache – Introduction à la Nouvelle méthode d'Alexander Cozens*, Paris, Editions du Limon, 1990, p. 268

[2] Louis Leroy, "L'Exposition des impressionnistes", *Le Charivari*, 25 April 1874. This polemical article gave the group its name

[3] Letter to Emile Bernard, 15 April 1904, cf. *Conversations avec Cézanne*, ed. P.M. Doran, Paris, Macula, 1978, p. 27

[4] Michel-Eugène Chevreul, *De la loi du contraste simultanée des couleurs...*, Paris, Pitois-Levrault, 1839. For a comprehensive study of this subject, see Georges Roque's book *Art et science de la couleur: Chevreul et les peintres, de Delacroix à l'abstraction*, Nîmes, Jacqueline Chambon, 1997

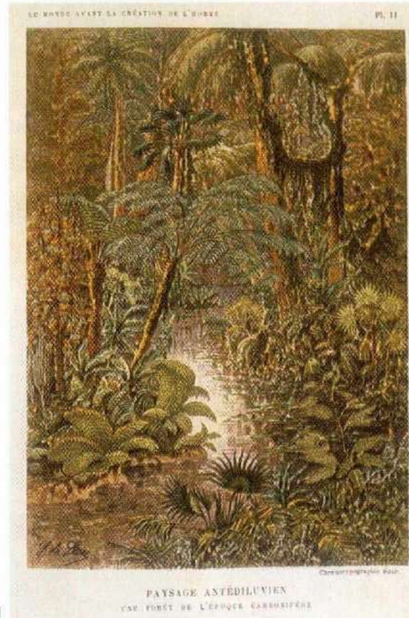
[5] Letter to Vlaminck, 28 July 1905, cf. André Derain, *Lettres à Vlaminck, suivies de la correspondance de guerre*, compiled and edited by Philippe Dagen, Paris, Flammarion, 1994, p. 163

Captions

1. C. Monet (1840-1926), The *Haystacks*, at Summer's end, Giverny, 1891, 60,5 x 100,5 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France © Adagp, Paris 2000 © photo E. Lessing/AKG Paris
2. G. Seurat (1859-91), *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte (Un Dimanche après-midi à l'île de la Grande Jatte)*, 1884-86, The Art Institute, Chicago, USA © AKG Paris
3. P. Cézanne (1839-06), *La Montagne Sainte-Victoire (Le Mont Sainte-Victoire vue des Lauves)*, 1904-06, Kunsthaus, Zürich, Switzerland © E. Lessing/AKG Paris
4. P. Mondrian (1872-1944), *Composition de lignes*, 1916-17, h/t, Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo, Netherlands © Mondrian/Holzman Trust/Adagp, Paris 2000 © photo AKG Paris

From the Garden of Eden to Illustrated Natural History Journals

In order to develop, science needs to be communicated and discussed, either orally in the lecture room, with texts through monographs, articles, textbooks, journals and correspondence, or in a semiotic manner through pictures, figures, graphs and films. Throughout the history of these means of communication, the different medias intermingle, associating texts and pictures. Art, through illustrators who are often both artists and scientists, has therefore contributed to the improvement of knowledge and the popularisation of nature.



All history has a beginning. Natural history started in the Garden of Eden. *Paradisus* literally means garden. This is also where Adam gave names to all the animals. Thus it is quite natural that botanical gardens also contained animals and, as teaching areas, they were considered the emblem of comprehensive natural history. Every specimen known at that time was in principle represented in the garden of Linnaeus (Swedish naturalist, 1707-78) in Uppsala (Sweden), called "the second Adam" as Linnaeus wanted to name all organisms on earth.

Let us now go to the museums, working places for collectors and connoisseurs. The old *savant* writing in his study communicated with his colleagues through letters. The situation is peaceful, the dog sleeps at his master's feet. The room is full of specimens from the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms.

Let us move on: the printing office, bookstore and library, sometimes in the utmost state of disorder, where books are produced, bought and borrowed. From the 18th century onwards, natural history becomes relatively popular: botany is for the fair sex, zoology for the male hunter.

And so we come to books, and especially dictionaries and lexicons, ideal means for storing knowledge: comprehensive, easy to handle, focusing on facts rather than opinions. Dealing with words in alphabetical order, they differ from encyclopaedias – a tradition going back to Pliny's *Historia naturalis* written in the first century AD – which aim at classifying the totality of human knowledge. You could say that Noah's Ark was an encyclopaedia.

During the Renaissance, the great encyclopaedias of Conrad Gesner and Ulysse Aldrovandi contain both mythical fauna and newly discovered species. Buffon (French naturalist, 1707-88) in his *Histoire naturelle* criticised Linnaeus' work, considering living creatures too complex to be classified according to one single characteristic, and challenged the dogma of the fixity of species on which the Swede based his classification. The death-blow against divine and eternal order came with Darwin (British naturalist, 1809-82) in his *Origin of species* (1859).

However, nature became too vast to describe in one single volume as Linnaeus wished; Noah's Ark could simply not carry so many animal species. More and more specialities developed within natural history, such as ornithology, entomology, lichenology; more and more specialists participated in the scientific endeavour and new techniques made it possible to publish good illustrations for a growing public. Alfred Brehm's *Thierleben,* for example, was a publisher's success.

The first scientific journals appeared in 1665 with the Journal des savants in Paris and with the English publication, *Philosophical Transactions.* Both are written, at least partly, in vernacular language and in epistolary form. The articles are often illustrated by artists specialising in science.

Among all encyclopaedias, dictionaries and journals existing then, *The Botanical Magazine* is one of the most long-lived. In this publication, started by William Curtis in 1787, each plate was hand-coloured up to 1948!

A special profession of natural history artists developed. Different techniques were used: woodcuts, copper etchings, lithographs, xylographs, photographs (which despite initial enthusiasm have not replaced the artist's illustration). Pictures could be individualised as well as archetypal, excelling in detail or concentrating on impressionistic beauty.

Certain areas are especially popular, such as bird books. What will happen to this world in the new website era?

All these books are works of art and have exceptional educational quality. The naturalist in his study, the flower painter, the printer, and you and I all agree.

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Captions

1. History of the Earth: Paleozoic, *Paysage antédiluvien. Une forêt de l'époque carbonifère,* colour print, 1886. Taken from Camille Flammarion, *Le Monde avant la création de l'homme,* 1886, Book III, chapter IV, plate II, Paris, France © AKG Paris
2. Entomological works: R.-A. Réaumur, *Histoire des Insectes,* 1740; A.J. Rösel von Rosenhof, *Insecten-Belustigung,* 1761; G. Cuvier, *Le règne animal,* 1816-17, etc., Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle (MNHN), Paris, France © G. Mermet/AKG Paris

Curiosity Cabinets in 16th and 17th Century Europe

Renaissance humanism, as it found expression in the works of Petrarch, Cusanus, Paracelcus and others, formed a break with the closed and complete Aristotelian cosmos of the Middle Ages. The discovery of new parts of the world, interest in science and new technical possibilities (along with re-interpretation of antiquity) led to a perception of nature as an open universe, in principle without boundaries. Within this perception of nature, and within the arts as well, space was thus created for innovation, wonderment and appreciation of the rare. As a result, during the 16th and 17th centuries, princes, noblemen and academics founded collections all over Europe containing antiquities, art objects, ethnographic artefacts and *naturalia* – i.e. all kinds of zoological, botanical and geological specimens and samples.

Famous Collections

The earliest and most distinguished collections were begun by the Medicis in Florence and by Emperor Rudolph (1576*-1612) in Prague and Vienna. There were also famous collections at Schloss Ambras near Innsbruck, established by Arch-Duke Ferdinand, and in Munich, set up by Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria. Of particular importance for the establishment of comparable *Kunstkammers* or curiosity cabinets in northern Germany and Denmark was the Grünes Gewölbe, the curiosity cabinet founded by Elector August of Saxony (1553*-86) in Dresden. The *Kunstkammer* in Kassel also became a centre of German Renaissance learning under Elector Moritz "the Learned" of Hessen-Kassel, who had inherited the rich art collections established by his father, Elector Wilhelm IV (1567*-92).

In addition to art objects, most of these collections contained *Naturalia* and were regularly visited by the learned scientists of the time. At the beginning of the 1600s, the collections of Bernhard Paludanus (1550-1633) in Enkhuizen achieved great fame because of their ethnographic contents. In Denmark in the 1620s, Ole Worm, academic and researcher in medicine, history and natural science, set up his renowned *Kunstkammer* "Museum Wormianum"; after his death in 1655 it was incorporated into the *Kunstkammer* of the Danish King, Frederik III.

Teatrum Mundi

The curiosity cabinets of the Renaissance reflected a particular interest in rare natural and artistic phenomena, a curiosity about them and a deep admiration of them, of their exotic or ancient origins or their bizarre character and possibly monstrous appearance. *Artificalia* – i.e. art objects, ingenious technical innovations or archaeological artefacts – together with *naturalia* – i.e. fossils, metals, precious stones, exotic plants, sea-shells and strange, sometimes deformed animals – made up a thematic and geographical microcosm, a *teatrum mundi*, which in reduced form reflected the endlessly complex macrocosm.

The larger and more varied these collections became, the greater was the opportunity, naturally, to engage in deeper study of the symbols and messages left by the Creator's hand – the relationships and similarities which revealed the cosmological connections. But even relatively modest curiosity cabinets had their justification. There are many examples, from princely as well as noble and academic contexts, which show that the contents of a *Kunstkammer*, with all its symbolic artefacts, could be housed in a single room or even in a single chest of drawers or cupboard.

Public Access

In some instances these collections were made accessible to a wider public at an early date. This was true, for example, of Ferrante Imperato's famous museum in Naples, and Ulysses Aldrovandi's museum and botanical garden in Bologna, which was opened to the public in the 1590s. The Danish king opened his *Kunstkammer* to the public in the 1670s, and the collections instantly began to serve as a source of inspiration for scientists, humanists and artists. There was an important underlying didactic purpose in this, anticipating the museum philosophy of the following centuries. When Peter the Great, in 1714, opened his *Kunstkammer* in St Petersburg to the public, he is reported to have declared: "I want people to look and to learn".

Many of the European princely collections were dissolved in the 18th and 19th centuries. Their contents were dispersed to form the core of newly created national museums of history, decorative art, natural science, coin collections, art galleries, ethnographic museums, print rooms, armouries, etc.

The creation of these modern museums, which were based on the empiricism of the age of enlightenment, constituted a shift from collection to classification. This naturally had consequences for the

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physical appearance of the museums and the principles governing the displays. The objects, however, were the same. What was new was the perception of the beholder.

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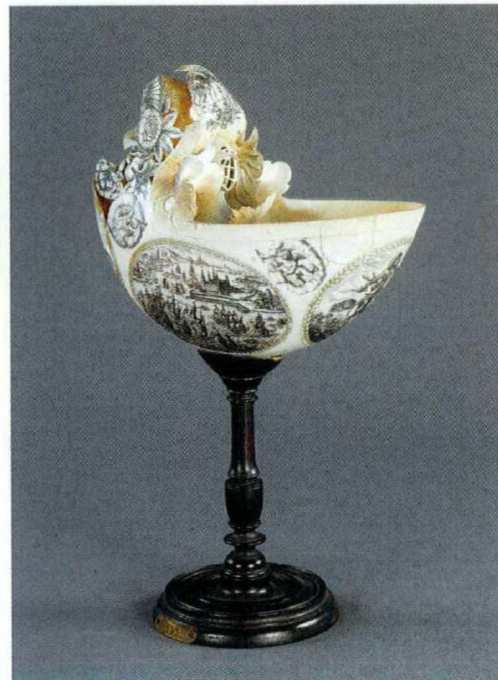
*These dates indicate the start of the reign or of taking up duties



Captions

1. The Danish queen Charlotte Amalie's curiosity cabinet from the end of the 17th century. According to an inventory from 1755 this Japanese lacquer-cabinet contained almost a thousand seashells, ethnographic objects, coins, etc. The queen was known as a keen collector of almost everything ranging from landed property to porcelain to "moors and monkeys, dwarfs and Norwegian boys" © Danish Royal Collection, Rosenborg Slot, Denmark
2. Museum Wormianum. The Danish collector, doctor and scientist Ole Worm founded his, at the time, internationally well-known collection in the 1620s. A full catalogue with this depiction of his cabinet of curiosities was published in 1655. In the same year, King Frederick III acquired Worm's collection and included it in his Royal *Kunstkammer* © Danish Royal Collection, Rosenborg Palace, Denmark
3. Nautilus Goblet. The engraving shows the Swedish siege of Copenhagen in 1658 and the Copenhagen coat of arms. Signature: IH for Jeremias Hercules. Height: 28.5 cm © Kit Weiss/Danish Royal Collection, Rosenborg Slot, Denmark

Still Life in Western Art

An Underrated Genre

For centuries, western artists marginalised the object. As accessories in religious scenes and then in portraits of the powerful, objects were generally used as symbols. The flowers in Annunciation scenes, crown jewels, the mirror in Jan Van Eyck's *Arnolfini Marriage* convey messages and are rarely shown alone. With the Renaissance, humanism broadened the field of human enquiry and artists were drawn towards objects from the crafts, agriculture and commerce. Although Caravaggio was not the first to portray the object in isolation, his fruit baskets, painted at the end of the 16th century, conclusively gave it a pictorial dignity that was exploited to the full in the 17th century. The name given to the new genre varied from language to language, reflecting how it was initially perceived.

The German word *Stilleben,* and its cognates in the other Germanic languages, gave the object a place in the great cycle of life and lent it a contemplative dimension. In Spain, the more prosaic term *bodegón* related still life to the everyday places which the objects, for the most part unimpressive, came from. In France, the term *nature morte* clearly connoted second-class status. But of course the genre then developed, attracted a range of talents, and flourished in a variety of circumstances.

Still Life and Symbolism in Northern Europe

In northern Europe, the objects portrayed so far transcended their mere outward appearance that most still-life paintings took on symbolic meaning. Table settings, as in Willem Kalf's *Still Life with a Nautilus Cup* (1660), are the ostentatious demonstration of rising social status conferred by political and financial success. Still lives with desserts and sweets, such as Georg Flegel's *Still Life with Bread and Confectionery,* show off both the glassblower's skill and the artistry acquired so rapidly by confectioners working with sugar, a recent arrival from distant lands. Traditional earthenware is set beside oriental ceramics, an indicator of worldwide trading links. Ambrosius Bosschaert's *Flower Vase in a Window Niche* (c. 1620) portrays the then extremely valuable tulip. Jacob Gerritsz Cuyp painted a field of the same flower in 1638. In a Protestant country, though, wealth, as a transient gift of God, was not allowed to obscure spiritual truths. Willem Claesz Heda's partially peeled lemons, foraging mice and crushed hazelnuts (1645, Dresden) remind us that "All is vanity". Barthel Bruyn the Elder's 16th century *Memento mori* (Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo), painted on the reverse of a portrait, bluntly depicts a skull, just as in the not-so-distant time of devastating epidemics.

The cruelty of the slaughter of Willem Van Aelst's *Dead Birds* (1660) is accentuated by the presence of various hunting instruments. It was no doubt to Rembrandt's *Flayed Ox* (1655) and Goya's paintings of meat that Soutine and Otto Dix were referring when they developed the common theme of slaughtered animals into a meditation on callous human butchery of innocent beasts.

The splendour of northern European still-life painting obsessed 19th-century Belgian and Dutch artists, who, until the arrival of Ensor's masks and skulls, preferred to express their skill in virtuoso depiction rather than symbolism. Through its near-childish images, Magritte's *Ceci n'est pas une pipe,* the now famous metaphorical to-and-fro between the object and the word denoting it, set out to shake our confidence in our perceptions. Henceforth it was no longer possible to trust the Five Senses so frequently alluded to in 17th century still life.

In the Catholic Low Countries, allegorical flowers and fruit were frequently only a frame for religious images. In staunchly Catholic Spain, however, a mystic quality is apparent in objects as simple as earthenware pots painted by Zurbarán, whose *Still Life with Lemons, Oranges and a Rose* (1633), or Juan Sánchez Cotán's *Quince, Cabbage, Melon and Cucumber* (c. 1602, San Diego), call to mind the aura in the writings of St Theresa of Avila. The gospel account of Martha and Mary's kitchen provides an opportunity for Velázquez to immortalise Spanish glazed pottery.

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Still Life in France

Places change, times change, and so does imagery. Gathered for Louis XIV's royal festivities, the leading lights in France rated still life as the lowest of art forms. This did not prevent the talented Maiffren Comte from becoming wealthy or Lubin Baugin from portraying musical instruments with a curiously poetic geometry. Chardin was heard to say that his work, as in the simplicity of *The Brioche* (1763), was anything but "great art" – not a criticism anyone would have dared make of Desportes or Oudry, the official artists of the Royal Hunt, for their celebration of a monarch who was as much master of nature as of his subjects.

3

In the following century French still life continued in official disfavour. It resisted and survived nonetheless. Northern France remained true to Vallayer-Coster. A major Parisian school of flower-painting emerged, largely thanks to the northern artists working at the Sèvres porcelain factory and the Natural History Museum. Redouté and his rivals, such as Van Dael and Van Spaendonck, held sway in Paris, while in Lyon Berjon was making his name a silk designer and, more particularly, as a leading painter of plants and stone objects. Even in the Romantic period, which gave the genre short shrift, studios turned out still lives far more consistently than has been suggested. Fantin-Latour's talent was unparalleled in England, while Courbet's realism breathed powerful life into flowers and Bonvin rehabilitated the depiction of objects rendered imperfect by wear and tear. Antoine Vollon put a virtuosity into his still lives that was acquired by hard labour, while the Ribots and others resuscitated the toothless skull. Manet devoted a good deal of time to objects and flowers, and floral artists such as Furcy de Lavault made good use of Impressionism's light effects in the race to capture the cut sprig before it withered. Primary education, which was now compulsory, included study of the basic shapes which Cézanne – conjuring unexpectedly powerful images from something as simple as a piece of fruit on a plate – was to swear by. Starting with the Nabis, all innovators made still life their favourite genre for pictorial experimentation. Aubergines, clematis or a few café objects were enough for Matisse, Braque and Picasso to create an entire universe joining the works of man to those of nature.

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Captions

1. W. Claesz Heda (1594-1680/82), *Breakfast Table with Blackberry Pie*, 1631, Gemäldegalerie, Alte Meister, Dresden, Germany © AKG Paris
2. L. Baugin (1610/12-63), *Nature morte à l'échiquier*, 1630, Musée du Louvre, Paris, France © E. Lessing/AKG Paris
3. Rembrandt (1606-69), *Flayed Ox*, 1655, Musée du Louvre, Paris, France © Roger-Viollet
4. H. Matisse (1869-1954), *Intérieur aux aubergines*, 1911, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Grenoble, France © 2000 Succession H. Matisse © photo Musée des Beaux-Arts de Grenoble

Steps in a Work of Art

For a long time, I sought out moments when I could spot animals at rest, but gradually I became more interested in drawing movement and groups. I stopped trying to copy nature exactly. I observe as thoroughly as possible, then I begin to draw. […] When I watch animals, I identify with them, I move alongside them and, more often than not, I then use my muscles (rather than my visual memory) to recapture this movement

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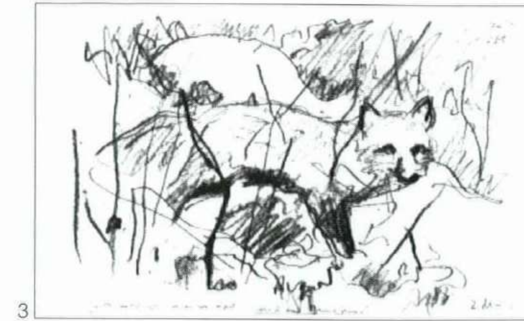
Captions

1. Fox emerging from its earth, 22 x 28 cm, 1975
2. Robert Hainard engraving in his studio
3. Field sketch (fox emerging from its earth)
4. Tracing
5. 1/5 black
6. 2/5 grey
7. 3/5 burnt sienna
8. 4/5 natural sienna
9. 5/5 ultramarine, violet, black
10. Fox emerging from its earth, 22 x 28 cm, 1975

1-10 © Editions Hesse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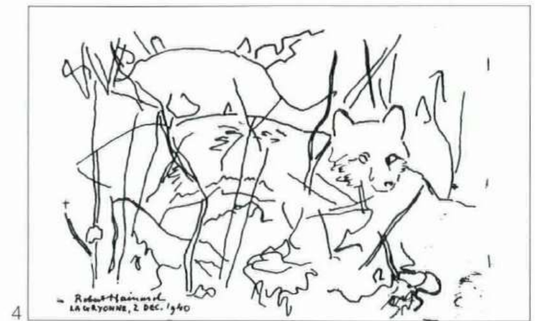
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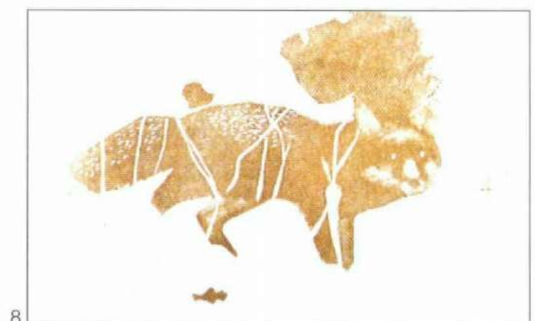
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Woodcutting as a Means of Expression. *It was Japanese prints that first made me want to try engraving. I liked their extremely accurate but very stylised aspect. […] I brought in other elements that the Japanese did not use, such as sunlight, shadows… My main motivation in wood engraving is the challenge of capturing nature at its most immediate and sensual, using a methodical and thought-out approach. I believe that style (which I see as the intellectual aspect of feeling) plays a greater role in engraving than in other processes.*

[…] You have the well-planed wood and the tool's cutting edge, abstract in its evenness. All this should come down to feeling. I believe there is an existential aspect, the tension of irreconcilable elements, in this wish to reconcile nature in all its rich sensuality with reflective craftsmanship. Ultimately, I set great store by this craft dimension, this elementary instrumentation and rather simple process.

[…] I do not draw lines, but I often sketch shapes with distinct or flowing contours. I make a tracing of my drawing which reproduces these contours fairly well. I turn this over and use carbon paper to transfer it to a piece of wood and line it up with the tracing paper, then I cut either the whole picture if it is in black and white (which requires only one piece of wood), or the exact colour that I want.

When I do a coloured engraving, I begin by thinking about it. I say to myself – I need black, grey or such and such a colour. It's almost like a musical scale with intervals which I select, which then come together and are superimposed and juxtaposed in a kind of melody. Then I cut the first board. I have to make a series of proofs, because one of the difficult things in this craft is that you obtain the final version as soon as you start printing, and so you can only do the final check at the end of the process. I do a small number of proofs, keeping each one and each colour separate. Then I think about it again: this particular feature should be removed, that one should be added, this tone should be darkened, another lightened, until I finally start on a second series of proofs, then a third, and sometimes a fourth […]. There may be a single piece of wood for a black and white cutting. Often, when the gradation is not perfect, two woods are used. If I want a full range of shades, I choose a black that fades to a particular shade of grey, then a grey that fades to a paler grey. I sometimes use three greys. For coloured engravings, I use ten woods on average. Once you have a certain number of woods, the theory of combinations comes into play: there are so many combinations that you can do anything. As soon as you have around ten woods, you can do whatever you like. I have a very particular method of engraving that I discovered by accident. I had great admiration for Japanese engravers, who did not use the hatching that one sees in contemporary engraving. I tried to do something that resembled their work. One day, I had some fairly soft Japanese paper and a very light inking. I simply tilted the surface and obtained such a pure graduation of colour that I was filled with enthusiasm, but also with some misconceptions, since the procedure didn't always work so well with slightly thick inking. From then on, I began to adjust my tones systematically by changing the surface of the wood. I am the only person doing this methodically, but the technique has been used in the past. Gauguin, for example, did this regularly, but used sandpaper. He obtained a colour graduation through variation in pressure, but with visible scratches from the sandpaper.

[…] I believe that my work is both realistic and very abstract, since I seek to represent nature in all its complexity and variety, wildlife in its most indefinable aspects.

Excerpt from Robert Hainard, *Entretien sur la gravure* (1998), Editions Hesse. From childhood, Robert Hainard (1906-99), Swiss, was fascinated by wildlife. The artist's fondness for nature was such that he became one of Europe's leading experts on mammals, his favourite animals. Several thousand nights were spent in observation and he is estimated to have made 35000 drawings – studies which he used for hundreds of sculptures and more than 900 engravings. Robert Hainard was also a scientific and philosophical writer. His writings on the *Mammifères sauvages d'Europe* are regarded as authoritative in scientific circles, and challenged many received ideas about certain animal species. His work is distributed in France by Editions Hesse (engravings and sculptures by Robert Hainard), which have published several of his writings: *Croquis d'Afrique* (1989), *Sculptures* (1993), *Et la nature?* (1995), *Entretien sur la gravure* (1998). Editions Hesse, 4 rue de la Brigaudière, F-41350 Saint-Claude de Diray, E-mail: edhesse@aol.com.

19th Century Animal Artists

Even before the Lascaux cave paintings were discovered, images of wildlife played a distinct – and sometimes isolated and important – role in the history of art. Lions, watchdogs and fierce hunting scenes feature in the Vatican's antique collections, in 17th and 18th century painting and in rococo plate work. But it was not until the Salons of 1827 and 1831 that works of sculpture with animals as the sole subject first went on show. Antoine-Louis Barye (1795-1875) broke new ground by establishing animalier art as a distinct genre. He was bold enough to place animals on an equal footing with Greek and Roman heroes, deeming lions, tigers and crocodiles no less worthy subjects than the likes of Horace or Niobides. The precursor of many wildlife sculptors including Frémiet and Cain, Barye combined painstaking scientific observation with a violent and exotic theatricality. As the years passed, however, the public had its fill of high drama and, feeling the need for a return to more familiar reality, sought it out in tamed nature, in the forests and villages of Ile-de-France. Here was a natural world at the service of human needs, and domesticated animals were a part of it.

"The Michelangelo of the Ménagerie"

It was Théophile Gautier[1] who dared to compare Barye to Michelangelo, admiring the fierce and forceful approach of the two artists and highlighting the creative genius of Barye, the historical romantic, and the tenacity with which he demanded attention for his animal subjects at Academy and Salon showings and among critics and collectors. It was at the 1831 Salon that the art world first felt the dual impact of romantic and animalier sculpture. Barye's *Tiger Devouring a Gavial of the Ganges* (a gavial being a small crocodile) launched the genre of romantic wildlife sculpture in all its ferocity and exoticism. The following year he created his famous *Lion Fighting a Serpent*, celebrating the capture of Algiers by the troops of the July Monarchy and the arrival of large numbers of live lions at the Ménagerie du Muséum national d'histoire naturelle. Barye's preference for wild rather than domesticated animals was to last throughout his life: when free to chose the subject of his work (as he was when the Duke of Orleans, son of King Louis-Philippe, commissioned a table centrepiece[2]) he unfailingly opted for violent hunting scenes or animal duels. The Surtout de table created for the heir to the throne – a monument to bloody combat that combines a range of materials in a riot of colour – is one of the most successful works of romantic sculpture. Surmounted by the massive *Chasse au tigre (Tiger Hunt)*, featuring Indian hunters mounted on an elephant, it includes four other hunting scenes along the length of the table: a lion hunt, wild bull hunt, bear hunt and elk hunt. These groups in patinated bronze depict struggles to the death, as do the four pieces surrounding the pedestal for the central scene – duels between a lion and a wild boar, an eagle and an ibex, a python and a wildebeest, and a tiger and an antelope – in which Barye takes a sensual delight in emphasising the contrasts between hide and scale, plume and fur, claw and tooth.

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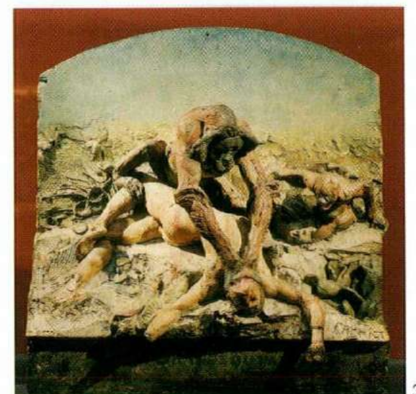
The sculptor based these dramatic depictions on scientific analysis and on measurements made during the famous dissections of wild animals that he carried out with, among others, his friend Delacroix[3]. Both artists drew the lion donated by Admiral de Rigny, which died on 19 June 1829 and was immediately taken to the anatomy lab for dissection. Barye took measurements with a pair of dividers, then, noting them on his sketches, used them time and again in his work. He always took this type of scientific approach, basing his sculpture partly on numbered diagrams and partly on scientific hypotheses of the day. The *Tiger devouring a Gavial* reflects, for instance, disputes between Cuvier and Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire on the subject of fossils, found in the cliffs near Caen, with a skeleton very similar to that of the modern gavial.

Dramatising Prehistory

While Barye's success inspired a number of other artists including Fratin, Gechter and Rouillard, his spiritual successor was undoubtedly Emmanuel Frémiet (1824-1910), a worthy heir to the master not only in his painstakingly professional and scientific approach but also in his taste for the dramatic. Works such as *Man of the Stone Age, Gorilla carrying off a woman and Orang-utang attacking a native of Borneo* also reflect the anthropological preoccupations of his time. Asked by the Muséum to design a number of cased displays of stuffed monkeys, Frémiet simply positioned the animals in the same way that Barye and Delacroix had installed their anatomical models for sketching. Frémiet also developed a more familiar style with works such as his *Chien courant blessé* (*Injured Dog Running*), and even a bucolic vein that provided an outlet for his sense of humour, as in *A young faun and bearcubs* at the Musée d'Orsay.



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"While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks..."

Whereas Barye and Frémiet evoked in their work the theory of evolution as the "struggle for life" (before that term was coined), other artists were to see the natural world as a retreat for the restoration of the human spirit, and to use animals to symbolise the peaceful life of simple beings, who, through the rhythmic pattern of their toil, nourished the seething populations of the modern cities.

Suddenly needing an infusion of calm and gentleness, society detected the distant scent of the hayloft borne on the breeze across the fields. Far from the stench of the city, it glimpsed the hard work, the joys and the simple, penetrating poetry of country life. Thus other artists began to take an interest in domesticated animals as emblems of a movement "back to nature" in search of restoration and sustenance. Their work depicts, on the one hand, gentle and simple creatures, reminiscent of some of the rural characters in George Sand's novels: there are sheep, goats and even grazing horses and cattle, such as the *Vache flamande et son veau (Flemish cow and her calf)*[4] that the sculptor Pierre-Jules Mène showed at the 1845 Salon. On the other hand, animals were coming to symbolise a natural world that was increasingly distant from the rampant industrialisation of the bustling cities. Following the example of Millet, Barye, Daubigny and others, painters and sculptors took up residence in the forest of Fontainebleau, hoping to find there the serenity that Constant Troyon (1810-65) evoked so effectively in his *Landscape with oxen*[5]. In this gentle realist study of an extremely commonplace subject, the delicate light surrounding the oxen heightens the sense of serenity that Troyon sought to convey.

But another aspect of the rural world that George Sand had made fashionable once again was the regular daily working of the land as the source of sustenance: this contrasted with the emerging industrial world and was the theme evoked by Rosa Bonheur (1822-99) in her large canvas *Ploughing in Nivernais* (musée d'Orsay) – a sensation in its day – depicting three pairs of mighty oxen straining to plough a heavy but fecund soil. The government of Napoleon III astutely sought to foster this genre of painting, just as it promoted appreciation of the railways and the mining industry. The choice of works for inclusion in the *Exposition Universelle* of 1855 clearly reflects this political intention.

Finally (although the theme could be explored at much greater length), I would point out that the genre created by Barye is still going strong: whatever the symbolism with which they are imbued, animals are still being used as images of humanity's obsessive and changing relationship with nature. On the contemporary scene, Barry Flanagan's giant hares express a sense of humour that helps modern-day citizens to face the terrors generated in the collective schizophrenia whereby, while obsessed with "naturalness", we continue to play the sorcerer's apprentice.

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[1] T. Gautier, *L'Illustration*, 19 May 1866, p. 315
[2] Leroy-Jay Lemaistre in *Un âge d'or des arts décoratifs, 1814-1848*, Paris exhibition, Grand Palais, France, 1992, pp 318-330
[3] Loffredo 1984, p. 147
[4] Leroy-Jay Lemaistre in *Nouvelles acquisitions du Département des sculptures 1992-1995*, Musée du Louvre, Paris, 1996, pp. 129-130
[5] Ed. Thierry, *Revue des Beaux-Arts*, 1855, p. 395

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Captions

1. A. L. Barye (1795-1875), *Tiger devouring a gavial of the Ganges*, bronze, 1833, musée du Louvre, Paris, France © Photo RMN – R. G. Ojéda/P. Néri
2. A. L. Barye (1795-1875), *Lion fighting a serpent* (also known as *Lion des Tuileries*), bronze 1832-35, musée du Louvre, Paris, France © Photo RMN – R. G. Ojéda/P. Néri
3. E. Frémiet (1824-1910), *Orang-utang attacking a native of Borneo*, roughwork, painted plaster, 1895, musée des Beaux-Arts, Dijon, France © AKG Paris
4. T. Constant (1810-65), *Landscape with oxen (Bœufs allant au labour, effet du matin)*, musée d'Orsay, Paris, France © Photo RMN – H. Lewandowski

4

Nature as Decoration: A Form of Idealism in 19th Century English

In western Europe during the second half of the 19th century, applied art and design were regarded as important ways of raising human activity onto a higher plane. It was believed that it was possible to improve public taste, dulled by industrialisation, through the carefully considered shaping and ornamentation of the day-to-day environment. In England and France, in particular, there was much discussion of this theory in arts circles. Natural decoration, using plant and flower motifs, was crucial to the design ideal to which people aspired. The high regard in which flowers were held in both countries must not blind us, however, to a fundamentally different approach to nature, which can be clearly seen if we compare the ideas of the English creative artist, William Morris, with those of a French representative of *art nouveau*, Emile Gallé.

Nature as Decoration, but...

Discussions of the ornamental role of flowers and plants began in England at the time of the Great Exhibition of Works of Industry of All Nations, held in the splendid Crystal Palace, London, in 1851. Among the organisers of the exhibition was an influential reformer in the design world, Henry Cole (1808-82), who one year later was appointed Director of the new South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum). He encouraged the Victorians to make large-scale use of what he termed "appropriate design", by which he meant natural ornamentation, shorn of any historical references. This fairly rapidly led to the ideas of the fundamental reformers of the early days of *art nouveau* in England, including the thinker, John Ruskin (1819-1900), and William Morris (1834-96), a creative artist, thinker and poet.

1

Morris and his associates had great influence on interior design in Europe, and took the view that decoration, especially floral decoration, had deeper meaning. When Morris gave a lecture on the "lesser arts" in 1877, he stated that decoration had both a purpose and a meaning, and was never gratuitous. "For ... everything made by man's hands has a form, which must be either beautiful or ugly; beautiful if it is in accord with nature, and helps her; ugly if it is discordant with nature, and thwarts her; it cannot be indifferent. [...] Now it is one of the chief uses of decoration, the chief part of its alliance with nature, that it has to sharpen our dulled senses in this matter: for this end are those wonders of intricate patterns interwoven, those strange forms invented, which men have so long delighted in"[1]. And Ruskin called on all artists, working on their own or under contract, not to regard themselves as mere decorators and "artificers", but to rely on their own perceptions and feelings and to study nature as closely as possible, since it was possible, through nature, to express the essence of life itself.

The same thinking was found in France, where Emile Gallé (1846-1904), a glass-maker and decorator, considered on the one hand that modernity in applied art meant making an item of use to modern people, and therefore producing it in a logical and practical spirit, without superfluous decoration, and, on the other hand, that beauty meant natural shape and decoration, with floral motifs being the most suitable of all the possibilities, in his opinion. So there are few fundamental differences, at least in theory, between Gallé, who seems to have been one of the most influential of the exponents of *art nouveau*, and the English reformers.

Applied art to some extent followed the same path as the visual arts, a field where the study of nature is an important dogma (think of the open air painters of the Barbizon School, for instance). In England, for example, especially among the pre-Raphaelites and their contemporaries, the divide between these two art forms tended to narrow as nature advanced from a background role to take centre stage. The same thing happened in Tennyson's pastoral poetry and in the works of other Victorian writers. And painters such as Edward Burne-Jones (1833-98) gave vegetation and flowers the same prominence as human beings. Nevertheless, the decorated vases and plates made by potter and author William de Morgan (1839-1917) seem more decorative than utilitarian.

...Which Nature?

Although nature provided the inspiration for all these artists, they did not all take the same view of it.

Morris, Ruskin, Burne-Jones and the innovators of the Arts and Crafts movement[2] sought inspiration in a far-off era, the Middle Ages, when, in their eyes, society and art had not yet been corrupted. They showed simple, traditional flowers and plants growing in their mediaeval-style gardens, species that have always existed in nature. In the early 1860s, Morris' first "mediaeval" house (the "Red House") had a garden much admired by his contemporaries, a private garden full of fruit trees, climbing roses, sunflowers, passion flowers and rose hedges. In *The Story of the Unknown Church* in 1865, he wrote a description of a mediaeval abbey garden very evocative of the motifs of his own very influential wallpapers and fabrics: "In the garden were trellises covered over with rose, and convolvulus, and the great-leaved fiery nasturtium; and specially all along by the poplar trees were there trellises, but on these grew nothing but deep crimson roses; the hollyhocks...".

All the flowers described were out of fashion in the second half of the nineteenth century, but they were typically English, including sunflowers, passion flowers, roses, hollyhocks, convolvuluses and nasturtiums. Like Ruskin, Morris was well known for his vehement opposition to cultivated flowers. In his view, it was immoral to uproot flowers from their natural environment (unless they were to be replanted in botanical gardens), and he felt that exotic species had no place in greenhouses. In his 1882 lecture on "Hopes and Fears for Art", Morris lashed out at "commercial florists", who altered flowers purely for the sake of change, paying no attention as they did so to the flowers' natural beauty. He went even further, arguing that theirs was an attitude "which has played such a great part in the degradation of art in all times".

and French Art

In France, Gallé is an example of an artist who, like Morris and his supporters, was active both in the area where applied art and the liberal arts intersected and in the literary sphere. He also had his own specific ideas about the flowers, plants and gardens from which he drew inspiration for his work. He was very much influenced by his father, Charles Gallé, who in 1844 had settled in Nancy, where he had married a mirror manufacturer's daughter. Charles Gallé diversified production into utilitarian glass inspired by the world of flowers: jugs with petal-shaped lips, glasses on stems shaped like stalks. Emile Gallé wrote at the turn of the century that it had been "fortunate that the love of flowers was a family trait, an inherited passion".

Unlike Morris and Ruskin, Emile Gallé had no objection to plants from far-off lands, even taking a close interest in out-of-the-ordinary species. He had no hesitation in travelling to other countries to seek out gardens containing exotic flowers, waxing lyrical in his writings about Prince Pierre Trubetzkoy's garden at Intra, on Lake Maggiore (in Italy). He constantly strove to grow the greatest possible number of species in his garden in Nancy, aspiring to create a "poetic and evocative microcosm of plants from the widest variety of climates". Thus he made use of the greenhouses reviled, as we have seen, by the Arts and Crafts movement.

As Gallé often wrote, he regarded botanical observation as the starting point of the work of the artist as a "great visionary". He mentions this view in his description of the vase given to Louis Pasteur to mark his 70th birthday, in 1893. It was his wish to be able, in the same way as Pasteur penetrated the "mysterious depths of nature", to penetrate, through his work, the mysterious depths of life and spirit ("to translate the life and the latent soul that lie below"). This symbolic view is very far removed from the more down-to-earth attitude of Morris, who considered simple daisies or poppies perfectly appropriate decorations for the modern home.

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[1] Gillian Naylor, 1989, p. 205

[2] At the end of the 19th century, the arts and crafts movement was dedicated to a reform of the decorative arts and the conditions of their production, based on reflections stated in 1853 by John Ruskin in "The Stones of Venice" and on initiatives launched by William Morris in 1861.
In reaction to increasing mechanisation, the principles retained by this movement and other institutions with similar aims elevated the craftworker above the system, restored freedom and spontaneity in his work, gave him control of the productive system, especially concerning the role of machinery and the research in high quality standards.
This movement's influence, which touched many forms of decorative art, including book covers, led to the history of crafts being taken in account and reaching the Netherlands, Germany and Austria, as well as the United States of America where these crafts continue in other forms after they had ceased in Great Britain.

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Saskia de Bodt and Maartje de Haan, *Bloemstillevens uit Nederland en Belgie 1870-1940*, Rotterdam (Kunsthal), Zwolle (Waanders Uitgevers), 1998

2

3

Captions

1. E. Gallé (1846- *id* 1904), Iris vase, glass marquetry, 1900, musée de l'Ecole de Nancy, France © musée de l'Ecole de Nancy
2. E. Gallé (1846- *id* 1904), illuminated centrepiece, Les Pontédéries, 1902, musée de l'Ecole de Nancy, France © musée de l'Ecole de Nancy
3. W. Morris (1834-96), "Bird" tapestry, wool, 1878, musée d'Orsay, Paris, France © Photo RMN – H. Lewandowski

Nature: a New Language for Art Nouveau

Nostalgia for Nature

Art nouveau first arose as a complete rejection of the prevailing eclecticism of 19th century historicism in areas as wide-ranging as architecture and the decorative arts. The new age had to go hand in hand with a new kind of art, freed from slavish imitation of the styles of the past. Thus it was that this new language gave rise to a new naturalist and linear form of stylisation.

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Art nouveau was a product of the industrial revolution, supported by a bourgeois, urban clientele harking back to nature and the pre-industrial society. To satisfy the needs of this "counter-movement", which advocated "decoration for decoration's sake", art nouveau drew its inspiration from the organic power of the plant world. The notion of "constant evolution" as the symbol of life and perpetual blossoming is intrinsic in the theme of nature. In art nouveau we can see the flowers, leaves, stems and sometimes even tree-trunks which are the genuine attributes of rhythm, life, the future and hence ornament as the artists of 1900 saw it. Though art nouveau flourished throughout Europe, it was in England and France that an interest in nature contributed most substantially to the theoretical underpinning of art nouveau.

The Main European Centres

Between 1890 and 1910 art nouveau spread throughout Europe. Each of the main centres helped in its own way to foster and define the style.

Art nouveau first emerged in London in around 1893 at the same time as the periodical *The Studio* which helped to promote contacts between countries. From England, the movement spread to the continent via Belgium (Brussels) and then France (Paris, Nancy) where it took on a curvilinear, phytomorphic appearance coloured in pastels. Towards the turn of the century, the style travelled to Germany and then Austria where it adopted a more geometric, rectilinear form and darker colours.

England provided the roots of art nouveau, particularly through Voysey who produced the first ever wallpapers with motifs from nature (tulips, lilies and birds) pictured in undulating lines close to the art nouveau style. However, it was in Brussels that the new style really flourished. France and Belgium were the main breeding grounds for the "abstract-structural-symbolic" trend. In these two countries art nouveau's natural shapes were often transformed beyond anything recognisable and the structural outlines of works were picked out by lines calling to mind the veins of an organic being. Guimard's Paris Metro stations are an interesting example of this, in which flowers and buds tend towards the asymmetric and the abstract.

When Henry Van de Velde produced his *"Bureau-haricot"* (literally, the "bean-desk"), he drew from nature both in the form of the furniture, the materials used (oak) and in the name he gave it. The bean becomes the expression of an evolving being just as a desk is used to create and to write.

In Paris the style was international, abstract and symbolic but in Nancy its inspiration was more traditional, national and floral. Majorelle's furniture, Gallé's glass and Lalique's jewels were the main representatives. Animals, flowers and seaweed were formed into gentle linear shapes which sometimes had a fairylike aspect, as with Lalique's peacock brooch. The disproportion between the peacock's head and body give it a fantastical quality.

The link between the curvilinear and the geometric sub-forms of the style was made by the Glasgow School where the symbolic ornamentation (buds, bulbs and egg shapes) can only be understood if it is associated with the expression of life and growth. In his *Tea-Rooms* Mackintosh produced a harmonious decoration composed of curvilinear seaweed and geometric roses.

In Germany, the rectilinear and geometrical form of art nouveau was given the name *Jugendstil*. The *Elvira* façade in Munich pro-

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duced by Endell in 1896 is undoubtedly the most original in Germany with its seashells mingled with acanthus leaves. Another designer, Pankok, decorated the ceiling of his smoking room with a series of lamps forming the image of an enormous spider's web in a dry, geometrical, uncluttered style.

Vienna, in Austria, was different from the other main centres of art nouveau in many ways. This great metropolis acted as the melting pot for all the spiritual forces of the age. It adopted a more rigorous stylistic approach than the variants of the movement inspired more by the plant kingdom. When decorating the façade of the *Majolikahaus* Otto Wagner used ceramic tiles with floral motifs resembling a family tree. Nature and life formed part of the dwelling, the art and the various generations who inhabited this house.

A Marginal Form of Art Nouveau

To these major centres of art nouveau we should add some other places where the art form has branched out in an unusual direction. One example is Barcelona where Antoni Gaudi coloured and decorated his architecture with extraordinary, multi-coloured mosaics and where chimneys in the form of mushrooms sprout on the roof of the *Casa Batllo.* In Scandinavia designers and architects developed a special style combining art nouveau with Romanesque Art. What they produced was a form of "Celtic-animal" art in which ornamentation in the form of animals (snakes) was combined with Celtic interlace.

By drawing from nature both for their iconography and for their style, the art nouveau designers were trying to incorporate into their works the purity and the life force of nature, which had became a fully-fledged symbol of the creative future and creative work in general.

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Captions

1. Staircase window, residential building, 1904, Strasbourg, France © a. feuer
2. H. Van de Velde (1863-1957), *Bureau-haricot*, musée d'Orsay, Paris, France © Photo RMN – J. Schormans
3. Main railway station, glass roof, north gable, Strasbourg, France © a. feuer
4. O. Wagner, façade of the *Majolikahaus*, 1898, Vienna, Austria © a. feuer

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Garden Art in Europe

1

In the *Decameron*, Boccaccio describes the pastimes of a group of Florentine young people who escape the plague ravaging their city to meet in the pure air and amuse one another with storytelling. In one passage the protagonists, having lunched, enter a park enclosed by walls whose splendour astounds them. The most pleasant place in this park is a great green lawn covered with a thousand kinds of flowers, in the middle of which stands a richly decorated white marble fountain. From the mouth of a central figure on the fountain comes a forceful jet of water which, before tumbling into the large basin, forms sheets of water that fall with an agreeable noise. After visiting every part of the park, the young people recline on the lawn and have several tables set up round the fountain. Having eaten, they make music and sit to tell their stories.

The sensual pleasures aroused by the poet's delightful garden find their natural echo in nostalgic memories of the paradise in Genesis: "And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed". The garden is the chosen spot for the perfect compact between humankind and creation, which is destroyed by sin. It was another poet, the blind 17th-century English visionary Milton, who became the impassioned teller of the Fall in *Paradise Lost*.

What Is Meant by Garden?

It was in the midst of nature, which was cultivated and offered its fruits to the first settled civilisations, that humans decided to clear a space for their pleasure alone and to decorate it with the beauty that they had recognised in these gifts of earth, water and sunshine. Alongside cereal crops, vegetables and fruits there were flowers, the patterns of shrubbery and the projecting sweep of leafy branches high in the tamed forests. In Boccaccio's text the principles of the garden's organisation can be identified: it is a distinct area enclosed by walls which separate it from "nature for nature's sake". The original meaning of the word *garden, jardin, giardino* is an enclosed space – within its walls it is protected, identified as belonging to a privileged someone who can while away the time there away from prying eyes and placed, so to speak, inside a frame which lends it status as a work of art.

Secondly, the garden is made for walking in, for contemplation and for the enjoyment of society, with its conversation, refreshments and music. It thus includes alleys for strolling, perspectives to inspire contemplation and other areas, largely shaded and covered, which are set aside for society's pleasures.

Thirdly, the garden displays nature's most beautiful masterpieces for artists to use to their advantage. Painters mix nature's colours at the end of their brush, sculptors shape their creations with the aid of the day's shifting lights from sunrise to sunset, and architects draw up their designs and organise the general contours. A new profession then emerges: gardeners, who are always closely dependent on their clients' tastes.

Fourthly and lastly, there is the presence of water. The western garden is the descendant of those planted in the Mesopotamian "Fertile Crescent", where the sacred rivers, the canals and the springs miraculously sustained life and civilisation amidst the dryness and heat, leading to the birth of new areas of knowledge such as botany, the cultivation of trees and shrubs and the establishment of new species.

In the Middle Ages, although the Crusades failed to bring western soldiers face to face with the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, they did reveal the unsuspected splendours of those in the Near East. Meanwhile, in Spain – at the Alhambra in particular – Islam was creating its most marvellous examples of walled gardens and secret areas enlivened by the music of water.

French Garden and Italian Garden

Walled gardens were introduced to France at the end of the Middle Ages, when the aristocracy, seeking to escape from the concerns of war, found their hearts' desire in these hidden places designed for enjoyment alone. Back from his regal ambitions in Italy, King René of Anjou became the most notable exponent of the art at his manors in Anjou and Provence. Walled gardens were gardens of love where the lady of one's heart could be

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courted. This search for a mother nature which would ensure inner peace and provide a permanent frame of reference for human existence is clearly expressed on so-called *millefleurs* ("thousand flowers") tapestries and hangings depicting courtly life and hunting scenes, whether real or the mythical chase after the symbolic unicorn.

In Renaissance Italy, garden art took on new forms as bankers and *condottieri*, popes and cardinals developed a taste for building pleasure palaces surrounded by gardens outside the towns, where hillsides and the abundance of streams allowed them to produce grandiose effects featuring staircases interspersed with terraces and sparkling fountains, as at the Villa d'Este at Tivoli. For the first time, the architect, one of the heroes of the age, was invited to incorporate gardens into designs for houses.

The Italian wars taught the French this new style, which they combined with the tradition of René of Anjou in the *châteaux* of the Loire (Amboise and Blois) and the Paris region (Fontainebleau). Garden art was combined with a revival of the feeling for nature, which was expressed in the poetry of Ronsard, took strength under Henri IV from the policy of returning the country to agricultural use and acted as inspiration for the great 17th-century writers, especially La Fontaine and Madame de Sévigné. The link between gardens and architecture became axiomatic and resulted in the "French" style, which consisted in organising the space around a large central axis which crossed the *château* and the garden, thus ensuring that the entire site was visible from the main building, with a clear division between open areas (alleys, flowerbeds, lawns, staircases and slopes) and covered areas (shrubbery, arbours, hidden spots and surprises).

This art, which was developed during the second half of the 16th and the first half of the 17th centuries, rose to its full glory when Louis XIV took the throne alone, thanks to André Le Nôtre, the tercentenary of whose death we are celebrating in 2000. Le Nôtre's genius lay in his mastery of perspective, ability to manage space on a grand scale, faithfulness to the spirit of the location, variety of effects and renewal of an appreciation of nature. These were combined with the scientific innovations of the age in the fields of spatial geometry and hydraulics. He first laid out Vaux-le-Vicomte for the *surintendant* Fouquet, following this with Versailles and its extension at the Trianon (which was as much the king's work as that of his gardener) and many other famous sites, such as Marly, Sceaux, Saint-Cloud and Chantilly. These places established the ideal of the "French" garden in Europe. In the Netherlands, meanwhile, advances were being made in horticulture, and new developments in botany introduced ornamental plants from the Middle East into gardens – especially tulips, which were sought after as real collector's items.

The English Garden

In England there presently emerged a different concept of the garden, one in which the wide open countryside in which the gentry went fox-hunting was prized for its pictorial nature, in the tradition of great landscape painters such as Claude Lorrain. The new style, which cocked a snook at French formality and symmetry, was born among men of letters and important landowners whose aim was to construct a new Arcadia – men like Shaftesbury, Pope, Walpole and Viscount Cobham, who began the transformation of his park at Stowe. Yet this version of nature must convey a message. It was sculpted in its general outline, and the gardens laid out by William Kent, Capability Brown and Humphry Repton were scattered with statues, Greek temples and gothic ruins whose purpose was to enhance the contemplation of beauty. Historical references and sublime inspiration were also drawn from more distant sources, notably the gardens of the Emperor of China.

During the 18th century, the English garden became extremely popular in France and throughout Europe, since it was favoured by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and other Enlightenment philosophers who were keen to blend in with nature unadorned. In the 19th century the English style moved on from the parks of the nobility and private individuals to influence the layout of public landscape gardens in large towns.

However, the concept of formal gardens has never been forgotten; in the early 20th century it even experienced a revival in the work of Duchêne. The idea of arranging sculpture and water features in regular patterns and using trees for their plastic qualities also inspired England's Russell Page and, closer to home, many contemporary designers such as Frenchman Gilles Clément, who laid out the Parc André Citroën in Paris.

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Captions

1. "Millefleurs" tapestry: *La vie seigneuriale: le bain*, early 16th century, South Netherlands, musée national du Moyen Age et des Thermes de Cluny, Paris, France © Roger-Viollet
2. The luxuriant Maltese garden at Queluz, Portugal © photo J.-B. Leroux
3. The gardens of the Eyrignac manor house blend harmoniously into the landscape of the Périgord noir region, France © photo J.-B. Leroux

Photos 2 and 3 are taken from the book *Jardins à la française* (1999, 310 p.), published by *Editions de l'Imprimerie nationale*. The texts are by Jean-Pierre Babelon and Mic Chamblas-Ploton, and the photos by Jean-Baptiste Leroux. *Jardins à la française* has been awarded two prizes. After having received the *Prix Pierre-Joseph Redouté 2000 du Meilleur livre sur l'art des jardins* in June 2000, it has been honoured by the *Académie Française*, which awarded it the *Prix Eugène Carrière* from its History and Sociology Awards for the year 2000.

Naturalist Art in Europe Today

There are currently two "schools" of naturalist art in Europe, both intrinsically figurative. They are the realist school started by the Canadian Robert Bateman and pushed to its limits by the Belgian Carl Brenders, and the "impressionist" school, which owes its origins to Robert Hainard from Switzerland and the British artist John Busby.

These two schools aim to convey an emotion by depicting nature, without artifice or mannerisms, in its unadulterated wild state. Animals are depicted in their natural habitat.

Unlike artists of the realist school, however, who are so captivated by nature's perfection that they faithfully record every detail, artists of the impressionist school set out to capture an atmosphere, a fleeting moment, or a particular light. To achieve this, they produce quick sketches on the spot, generally in watercolours.

For followers of both schools, a good knowledge of the subject is the key to success. Contemporary naturalist artists all devote a great deal of time to nature, observing it and sketching it. "Realists" may also resort to photographs, but only to make certain finishing touches insofar as "accomplished" artists will always work initially without such help.

The same dichotomy exists with animal sculptures. Some artists readily accept the challenge of realism, while, for others, working drawings bring equal success. There is also a third category who find that this kind of art lends itself particularly well to humour and fantasy.

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Other names amongst the most accomplished artists:

- in the "realist" movement: the British Alan Hunt, Chris Rose and Matthew Hillier; the French Christophe Drochon and the Belgian Johan De Crem
- in the "impressionist" or mixed movement: the Swede Lars Jonsson; the British Keith Brockie, Robert Greenhalf, Bruce Pearson and Darren Rees; the Dutch Hans Geuze; the French Eric Alibert, Jean Chevallier and Denis Clavreul; the German Christopher Schmidt and Wolfgang Weber; the Belgian Nicole van Ass and the Irish David Daly
- mixed influence, combining the two schools: the British Keith Brockie and Rodger McPhail; the Russian Vadim Gorbatov and the French Aurélien Raynaud.

Captions: 1. C. Brenders, *Take Five – Lynx* © Mill Pond Press
2. R. Bateman, *Fox and Grapes* © Mill Pond Press
3. R. Greenhalf, *Toward the Sea* © Pica Press

Animals in Expressionist Painting: Franz Marc

Franz Marc (1880-1916) was a German who produced expressionist paintings of nature. In about 1906 his interest in animal painting was aroused, and he made a very careful study of animal iconography, taking the view that animals were the very expression of nature's life force. With Kandinsky, who revealed to him the expressive power of colour use, he was a co-founder in 1911 of the *Blaue Reiter* group[1]. Such subjective colouring, free from any reference to reality, reflected animals' complete immersion in nature. Marc's love of nature, and especially of animals, and the spiritual principles of the colour blue are features of *Blue Horse I*, painted in 1911.

Animals as Ideal Images of Humans

Marc's knowledge of nature was acquired through study of animals, which he considered to possess the qualities of goodness, purity, beauty and truth that he did not find in humans. Animals were treated as moral creatures and as ideal images of human beings. Hence the effacing by animals of any human representations in his works. But his animal paintings can never be confused with genre art, for his landscapes are just places where animals live.

Painting the Way in Which Animals See the World

Marc aspired to a formal, chromatic simplification so that he could paint the "absolute essence" of things. No longer did the artist represent the animal as humans saw it, but the animal's view of the world. Purifying his art in this way, he managed to free his painting of any anecdotal element and show the purity of the landscape and of the silhouette of typical animals. This simplification principle also entailed a rejection of anything superfluous in his work.

As he studied contrasts between complementary objects, he also attached a quality to every primary colour. Blue reflected an austere and spiritual masculine principle, while yellow represented the gentle, lively and sensual feminine principle. Red was the attribute of the material and the violence which the other two clashed with and overcame. The mixing of these colours also led to an interpenetration of their respective quality. *Tiger* (1912) uses angular and colourful shapes to associate the animal with the landscape, with which it seems to blend perfectly harmoniously.

The Move to Abstract Art

Marc's career as an artist passed through three stages, the figurative period, the animal phase and abstraction. Having concluded that animals were as ugly as humans, he resolved to drop any reference to an "objectifiable" entity in an attempt to achieve spiritual, intangible purity. *Fighting Forms* (1914) is one example of the culmination of his pictorial thinking, no longer making any reference to the real world.

Thus it was thanks to nature, and, to be more precise, to animals, that Marc's artistic development in the early years of the century moved towards abstraction.

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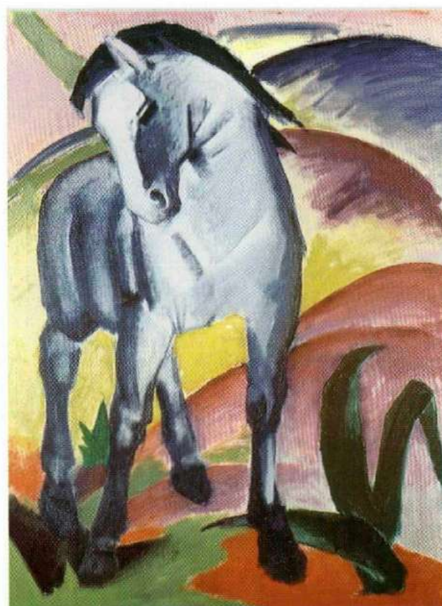
[1] The *Blaue Reiter* movement (1911-14) was the second stage of the avant-garde of German expressionism, represented by a group of Russians and Bavarians, among whom the main figures were Kandinsky, Marc, Macke, Gabriel Münter, Max Pechstein and Paul Klee. Modern social themes gave way to a nostalgic reconquest of nature.
The *Blaue Reiter* almanac was produced in the summer of 1911 by Kandinsky, Marc and Macke. It was published by such noteworthy figures in the art world, whose fundamental aim was to expand the frontiers hitherto restricting artists' expressive powers. It was based primarily upon a hope of seeing the birth of a new society full of spirituality, where the soul awakens as all the chains of materialism fall away.



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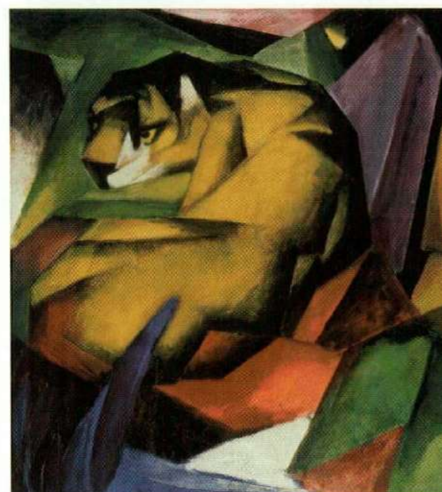

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Captions

1. F. Marc (1880-1916), *Blue Horse I*, 1911, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich, Germany © AKG Paris
2. F. Marc (1880-1916), *Tiger*, 1912, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich, Germany © Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus
3. F. Marc (1880-1916), *Fighting Forms*, 1914, Staatsgalerie moderner Kunst, Munich, Germany © Blauel/Gnamm – Artothek

About *Land Art*...

It is no coincidence that the term *land art* first appeared in the late 1960s, at a time when in developed societies the spirit of revolt among much of the student generation was intent on overthrowing established values. The art world was no exception. The very existence of the market system was called into question and the traditional workshop-museum-gallery circuit was rejected, along with the over-abundance of art objects that had come to be regarded as mere merchandise. For a great many artists, particularly British and American, the result was a new relationship with nature. Ever since ancient times much of art had been taken up with this relationship, but in the late 1960s it underwent a radical change. Whether from a desire for contemplative withdrawal, as a result of romantic abandonment or in an effort to escape the pressures of urban life, artists made nature the very setting for their work, meeting it head on. However, this reversion to realism is to be seen not as a deliberate return to the past faced with the modernist movement which set out to be free of it, but as a desire to perceive differently, and experiment afresh, our relationship with our surroundings; hence the wide range of *land art* sites away from traditional artistic settings.

1

The term *land art* is used to cover an extremely wide range of artistic projects and attitudes. According to the English artist Richard Long, *land art* is an American expression, signifying bulldozers and large-scale projects, the aim being to make a large permanent monument. As such, it is of no interest to Long, who since the 1960s has been travelling the world on foot, punctuating his long solitary walks with ephemeral sculptures made out of materials found on the spot (stones, mud, branches, water), and whose photographs are the only record of his works – which nobody ever sees. *Land art* is therefore more the result of different intellectual, sociological and artistic paths than an aesthetic manifesto. The only thing the paths have in common is their medium: nature.

What is still striking is the great variety of resources used by these artists working *in situ*. What is there in common, for example, between James Turell, the American artist who since 1974 has been digging away at Roden Crater in Arizona to create areas for gazing at the stars, and herman de vries, whose "sanctuaries" are simply areas of land measuring only a few square metres, where nature is left to grow completely free from human intrusion. While Michael Heizer cuts up a cliff face and displaces 240 000 tonnes of earth, David Tremlett reduces the life perceptible in the spaces he crosses to a few coloured signs on the white surface of a sheet of paper.

Apart from the term, itself, therefore, what groups land artists together is their desire to work on the spot so that they can leave their mark, in one way or other, on whatever scale, and for however long, without deciding in advance how their works are to be accessed. They use photographs, film, maps and drawings to describe their work, which usually remains inaccessible. Sometimes, fragments are brought back to be placed on show in museums (e.g. stones arranged in geometric forms by Richard Long, or simply piled up by Robert Smithson). These artists use nature, not to reveal its beauty and evoke emotions but rather to dig, mark, plot, and transform.

In this way the sculptural dimension emerges. No longer a case of representational art, it becomes a question of subjecting what is real to artistic design, as in the delicate gesture of Denis Oppenheim who, in 1968, drew concentric circles in the snow across the border between Canada and the United States, or in the complex process of boring a hole 1 km deep and 5.08 cm in diameter in a square in Kassel in 1977, in which to sink 167 steel rods, each 6 m long, for Walter de Maria's *Vertical Earth Kilometer*.

This is a far cry from a romantic interpretation of nature, even though traces of romanticism may still be seen in the walks undertaken by such artists as Richard Long, Hamish Fulton or David Tremlett, or in the sublime efforts of herman de vries to keep a record of all the different kinds of soil that exist. Most of the time, the artists are engaged in a battle of wills with nature, defying it and leaving it to time to decide the future of their work.

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Very few artists pursue these ambitions nowadays, probably because of the particularly active trend towards reification in the art field. The utopian desire to break away from the stranglehold of the market has given way to more personal projects centred on urban issues. *Land art* has nonetheless shown that art still conceals unknown forces which enable it to envisage border areas of expression. There are no theories on which to base an overall analysis of these practices. On the contrary, they encourage us to experience the world differently, with the emphasis on movement, and bring into play, literally, resources that have little in common with the traditional approach to art, insofar as they fit into none of the usual categories of representation. Most sur-

prising of all, however, is the fact that these artists have tried, and in some cases are still trying, to push the specific nature of art to extremes while refusing to produce objects that are specifically objets d'art. Using the most basic of all materials – earth – with all that it symbolises, they try to get as close as possible to the very essence of a work of art. Whether through an architectural approach or the ephemeral transformation of a relationship with nature, they seek to ensure that their projects show empathy with their surroundings, while at the same time accepting the inevitability of their disappearance.

Far from wanting to halt the passage of time, they signal a remarkable break with tradition by accepting its consequences: deterioration and obliteration.

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Captions

1. R. Long, *Turf Circles,* 1988, Jesus College, Cambridge, United Kingdom © Anthony d'Offay Gallery
2. herman de vries, *Sanctuarium,* 1993, Stuttgart, Germany, 1 200 x 285 cm © E. Klapp/Aline Vidal Galerie
3. W. De Maria, *Lightning Field,* 1977. LF-123 © J. Cliett/Dia Center for the Arts

Art and Nature: a Singular Relationship

Some artists have a singular relationship with nature, which, full of surprises, incongruities, and even horrors, sometimes shows an unexpected face through their creations. Such is the case with the animalesque hybridisations of the German artist Thomas Grünfeld (1956-). "At pains always to highlight the paradox between the appearance of objects, which we can nearly always relate to reality, and their incongruity in terms of real-life experience, Grünfeld seems to move in a dialectic between the real and the imaginary. Reminiscent of a popular tradition in southern Germany (based on stories of improbable animals wandering the woods) and 17th century curiosity cabinets, Grünfeld's stuffed animal *Misfits,* which are sometimes a cross between more than one species, are an ironic aesthetic response that is enough to make anyone think twice about the apparent banality of things"[1].

A far cry from these unsettling experiments, which carry suggestions of the highly topical issue of genetic engineering, other artists care little for the traditional clichés about the general perception of nature and attitudes to art and invent new ways of appropriating art that put paid to its eternal quality from the start. Accordingly, after his sculptures made out of rotting fruits and vegetables, aimed not so much at dramatising nature as at encouraging observation of metabolisms on a dermatological level (e.g. mould, desiccation), the French artist Michel Blazy (1966-) has also come up with a new animalesque figure, that of a small animal made out of dry cat food. "A form that is archaic but akin to a synthetic image. Made out of small bone-shaped pieces reflecting the cat food's calcium content, the construction is based on a system that could have been the work of nature. It seems to behave like self-regenerating intelligent matter, not unlike skin. Ants feed off the pieces of dry cat food one by one, leaving it to the art gallery or collector to replace them as they are eaten"[2].

At the start of the new millennium, nature is ever present in the art world.

[1] Extract from the official site of the Jousse Seguin Gallery in Paris (www.patrickseguin.com) where Grünfeld's works are on display

[2] From the interview with Michelon Olivier, "Entre le jardin, l'atelier et la cuisine", *Journal des Arts,* No. 110, 8 to 21 September 2000

Captions

1. M. Blazy, *Les animaux en voie de disparition,* 70 x 100 cm, edition 1/5 © Courtesy Art: Concept
2. T. Grünfeld, *Haas & Fuchs Misfit* (work composed of a hare and a fox), 1998 – Taxidermy © T. Grünfeld

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Results of the European Photography Competition

As part of the "Europe, a common heritage" campaign, the Centre Naturopa organised a European photography competition, for which 5 600 entries were received. An international jury of professional photographers and heritage specialists met in June 2000 to choose the winners. The results were as follows:

An exhibition of some of the prize-winning photographs was mounted at the Uffizi in Florence to mark the Ministerial Conference on the European Landscape Convention on 20 October 2000. The exhibition is available for showing throughout Europe upon request to the Centre Naturopa, from which all the relevant details may be obtained.

1

Awareness to the Landscape

A European conference on the theme "Awareness to the landscape: from perception to protection" was held at La Granja, Segovia (Spain) on 6 and 7 April 2000, in the presence of, among others, the Spanish Minister of Environment. The themes of this multidisciplinary Conference dealt with the landscape problem from different angles: philosophical, artistic, musical, scientific, biological, geological, legal, etc. The La Granja Conference also contributed to supporting the draft European Landscape Convention prepared by the Council of Europe. The latter was opened for signature in Florence (Italy) on 20 October 2000. Furthermore, the La Granja Conference coincided with the 33rd Annual Meeting of the Centre Naturopa's National Agencies.

The Conference proceedings are being prepared for publication by Council of Europe Publishing.

The first prize went to Rudolf Hagenauer from Austria for his photograph "Bauminsel" (Tree island) taken at Dürnberg near Ottensheim in Austria. The jury found the photograph very beautiful and technically perfect. The scene was ordinary but nevertheless very optimistic. The photograph corresponded well to the theme and represented a type of landscape found throughout Europe. The fields could also be seen to represent the domestication of nature found almost everywhere in Europe. The photograph was inspiring, poetic and peaceful. The jury also liked the human presence, one of the priorities of the campaign.

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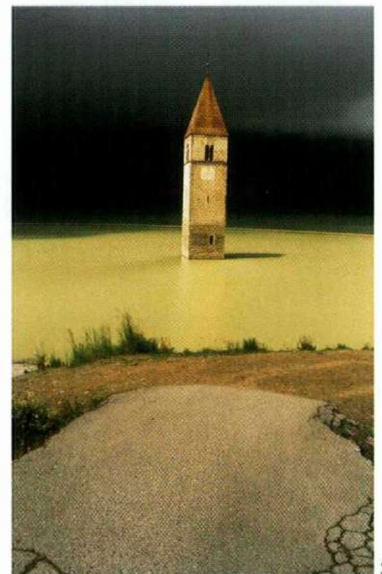
The second prize went to Patrick Bogner from France for his picture of Ribeauvillé, a small town in Alsace. The jury was divided over this photograph, which was interesting but perhaps difficult to interpret. They felt that it was original and ambitious, and reflected good European photographic tradition. It was graphically well constructed and illustrated Europe's architectural heritage in a very interesting way.

The third prize was awarded to Ludwig Kolm from Austria for his photograph of Lake Resia in Italy. The jury appreciated the dual atmosphere in the photograph: it was not optimistic but could nevertheless be uplifting with its out-of-the-ordinary and mysterious aspect. The tower rising from the lake gave a nostalgic touch. The picture was thought-provoking and could be seen to represent the perseverance of the cultural heritage even in adverse conditions.

www.nature.coe.int

In 1999 the Centre Naturopa opened a website presenting the Council of Europe's activities in the environment and regional planning field. This site aims at creating awareness in the public and decision-makers of environmental protection and becoming a working tool with the outside.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The following have recently been made available online:

- the *Naturopa* magazine as from No. 92;
- the *Strategy Bulletin* issues;
- working documents of the Standing Committee on the Bern Convention: www.nature.coe.int/CP20;
- the legal text and a presentation on the European Landscape Convention.

Moreover, the site www.nature.coe.int is linked to the Council of Europe website: www.coe.int

Captions

1. First prize © R. Hagenauer/Council of Europe
2. Second prize © P. Bogner/Council of Europe
3. Third prize © L. Kolm/Council of Europe

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27th Council of Europe Art Exhibition

The aim of the Council of Europe series of European art exhibitions is to increase knowledge and appreciation of European art as a particular expression of Europe's culture and common values.

The exhibitions that have been held since 1955 have illustrated most of the great artistic epochs and put the spotlight on outstanding European figures who left an indelible mark on their time.

The exhibitions in recent years have depicted the movements of people and ideas that have shaped European history, while also illustrating the interplay between society, art and artists.

Each exhibition aims to describe as widely as possible, and mainly through works of art, the cultural contribution of an epoch, a style or the work and influence of outstanding artists and schools.

The exhibition "The Centre of Europe around 1000 AD", the 27th in the Council of Europe series, is the fruit of co-operation between German, Polish, Slovakian, Czech and Hungarian museums. It was opened in Budapest on 19 August and will be staged in each of the participating countries. Its theme is the formation of this central European region, which began over a thousand years ago with the migration of western Slavs and Hungarians to the Christian West. It sets out to describe the history, culture and daily lives of the region's peoples, focusing on the differences and similarities that mark the subsequent history of the countries in question.

This outstanding exhibition includes many items from Prague, Vienna and other capitals that are on show for the first time in Hungary, but which all form part of the common cultural heritage of the participating countries.

After running at the National Museum in Budapest until 26 November 2000, the exhibition can be seen from 20 December 2000 to 25 March 2001 at the National Museum in Cracow (Poland), from 29 May to 2 September 2001 in the Martin-Groupius-Bau in Berlin, from 7 October 2001 to 27 January 2002 in the Reiss Museum in Mannheim (Germany), from 3 March to 2 June 2002 in the Riding School at Prague Castle (Czech Republic) and from 7 July to 29 September 2002 in Bratislava Castle (Slovakia).

For more details about this particular exhibition, how themes are selected and how the exhibitions are prepared and organised, visit http://culture.coe.fr/artexpo

In Brief

Council of Europe Museum Prize

Launched in 1977, the Council of Europe Museum Prize is awarded annually by the Parliamentary Assembly's Culture and Education Committee on the basis of recommendations from the European Museum Forum organising committee to a museum whose work helps increase awareness of Europe's cultural heritage and foster a spirit of intercultural tolerance. The prize consists of a bronze statuette, *La femme aux beaux seins* by Joan Miró, a diploma and a cheque.

This year's prize went to the "In Flanders Fields" Museum in Ypres, Belgium, in tribute to the victims of wars, past and present, in Europe in the 20th century. The award also ties in with the Council of Europe's "Europe, a common heritage" campaign, which conveys a message of cultural diversity and tolerance.

For more details about the prize, visit http://stars.coe.int

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Captions

1. Exhibition poster "The Centre of Europe around 1000 AD" © Hungarian National Museum
2. Bronze statuette, *La femme aux beaux seins* by Joan Miró © Council of Europe/J. Miró

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INFO

The National Agency of Norway

Norway has been a member of the Council of Europe since 1949 and (through the Ministry of Environment) of the Centre Naturopa network during its 33 years of existence.

The National Agency of Norway has followed up numerous campaigns dealing with nature management: these include the conservation and management of wetlands, the European Nature Conservation Year 1995, and now the "Europe, a common heritage" campaign. The Agency also places great importance on its national follow-up to the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy.

The National Agency always involves NGOs in its activities in order to ensure the best possible communication with the public.

In co-operation with the Council of Europe's secretariat, Norway hosted a European conference on voluntary organisations in the field of cultural heritage. NGOs from more than 30 countries participated with the aim of promoting and encouraging voluntary work to preserve Europe's cultural and natural heritage.

The National Agency also distributes the Centre Naturopa's bulletins and other information material, including *Naturopa* magazine, which is very popular.

In order to receive *Naturopa* or to obtain further information on the Centre Naturopa or the Council of Europe, please contact the National Agency for your country (see list opposite).

It would plainly be pointless and exaggerated to look for a general rule and a master key to such contrasting works and dissimilar periods. There is perhaps just one common feature, and this is the need felt in every age for reference to and sustained dialogue with nature so as to define it within that dialogue, I would even say to construct it. Indeed, this great diversity of approaches and productions dem[illegible] if [illegible] na[illegible] [illegible]ch what actually exists, rather our own [illegible]d" when branches are used to

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Created in 1949, just after the war, this intergovernmental organisation works towards a united Europe, based on liberty, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

With its 41 member States, the Council of Europe is a privileged platform for international co-operation in many fields – education, culture, sport, youth, social and economic affairs, health – including environment and regional planning.

The aim of the Centre Naturopa, information and documentation centre on nature conservation in Europe, is to raise awareness among Europeans. At the origin of important information campaigns, it also produces several publications, including the magazine Naturopa.

Naturopa *is published three times a year in five languages: English, French, German, Italian and Russian.*

In order to receive Naturopa *regularly, please contact the National Agency in your country* *(see addresses on pages 34-35).*

Next issue's theme
Environment in urban settings

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